

## Preliminary Report of the iSchool Elevators Committee

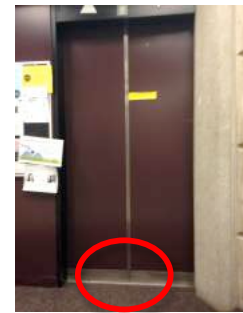
**To:** Dean Wendy Duff

**From:** Elevators Committee [*members' names redacted at committee's request*]

**Date:** 1 April 2016

**CC:** Glenn Cumming (Chief Administrative Officer), Glen Menzies (Facilities Coordinator)

As reported to the Faculty earlier this year, Elevator B in the Bissell building has not been levelling consistently. The Elevators Committee was formed to investigate this problem, and here presents its preliminary report. I should note that while the full committee membership approached its task with great energy and dedication, our investigation of the levelling anomalies resulted in competing theories and considerable dissent. The members of the committee have asked that their names be redacted from this report. Somewhat reassuringly, we found no safety threats—at least not from the elevator itself.



The Elevators Committee (hereafter EC) approached its task in the spirit of information research, and therefore undertook to gather data that might reveal patterns in Elevator B's odd levelling behavior.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to a Work Study placement, we have been able to hire an MI student to station himself at regular intervals throughout the term in a chair at the far end of the Bissell 6th-floor lobby, where he has been able to observe Elevator B's levelling anomalies first hand. The student was able to conceal his data gathering under the guise of studying, which helped to minimize the potential “observer effect” on Elevator B.

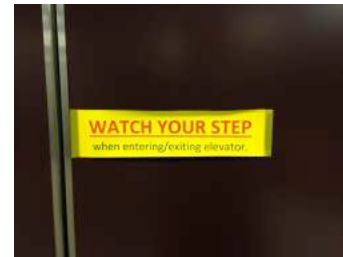


The data gathered over this two-month period have yielded conclusions that can only be described as disturbing. As our sample grew, patterns began to emerge in the allegedly insignificant levelling anomalies. Our analysis focused on the varying offset distances between the floor of the building and the elevator itself (see left). By measuring the offset distance on each arrival of Elevator B at the 6th floor, we were able to model the elevator's “behavior” as a quantifiable phenomenon. That's when we began to detect messages in the data.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the word *behavior* in this context was the subject of fierce debate among the EC members, given that the word attributes a sense of intentionality, and even subjective interiority, to the elevator itself. I use it here only as a concession to the faction of the EC that adheres to the discredited “spontaneous A.I.” theory.

The EC's work was initially animated by fierce epistemological debates about appropriate units of measurement, with some members holding that inches and fractions of inches would be sufficient, and others insisting on millimetres as the only unit granular enough to capture the subtlety of the phenomena. A compromise was eventually reached in the form of the ad-hoc Elevator Offset Unit (or EOU), defined in a separate appendix.<sup>2</sup>



At first we noticed that the same sequences of numbers began to appear in an average day's set of (critical) EOU's. One such repeating sequence was 1 1 2 3 5 8 13 21 34, which we realized are the first nine numbers in the Fibonacci Sequence. This set of numbers shows up frequently in the data from early February 2016, but then seemed to be replaced by another sequence: 4 8 15 16 23 42. One member of the EC with expertise in data analytics noticed that these corresponded to a set of numbers that held some mysterious significance on the J.J. Abrams television series *Lost*.<sup>3</sup> After much analysis—which was sidetracked by a debate over the declining quality of *Lost*'s later seasons—the EC agreed that these repeating sequences were *non-random*. More disquietingly, we cannot escape the conclusion that these repeating numerical sequences exhibit all the hallmarks of highly organized *information*—almost as though someone was trying to get our attention.



With this realization, the EC turned to socio-technical research into Elevator B itself. Some digging in the University of Toronto archives revealed that when the

Bissell building was being constructed in the early 1970's, there was unusual government interference in the awarding of some of the contracts. Apparently, "Otis Elevators" (obviously a fake name) was only a front for a deeper conspiracy. The actual installation of the Bissell elevators was contracted to a firm called Aperture Laboratories, who were not known for their elevators but did a considerable amount of subcontracting for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (or DARPA), and also collaborated with something called "The Dharma Initiative." Much of this work was later classified by the U.S. military, but we were able to uncover that Aperture's research for DARPA in that period was in the area of highly theoretical physics, and specifically on the existence of tachyon particles. Supposedly, tachyons are subatomic particles that can persist forward *and backward* in time.<sup>4</sup> Evidently, Aperture Laboratories surreptitiously fitted certain of its early-1970's "Otis" elevators with tachyon sensors that are directly connected to the elevator's motor. With this key piece of "evidence"<sup>5</sup> the mystery of Elevator B's levelling anomalies began to make sense.



Claude Shannon poses with a prototype tachyon transmission device, circa 1968.

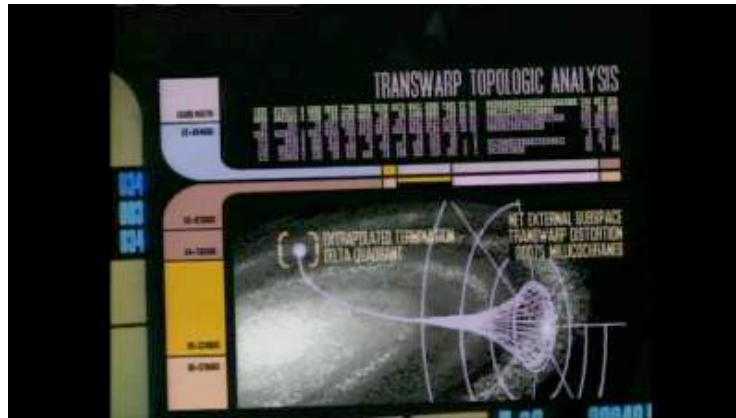
<sup>2</sup> Yet another faction of the EC held out for the name *Critical* Elevator Offset Unit, apparently to distinguish the iSchool's methods of elevator research from those of other, less critical institutions such as McGill.

<sup>3</sup> [http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/The\\_Numbers](http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/The_Numbers)

<sup>4</sup> Internet.

<sup>5</sup> I use scare-quotes here as yet another compromise with the EC's more skeptical members.

Although the EC's members have no expert knowledge in theoretical physics and temporal dynamics, we did Google some data visualizations that looked scientific. One in particular (shown below) reveals how tachyon particles can create temporal anomalies and serve as an information-bearing medium that bridges different points on the time-space continuum.



This brings me to the most troubling part of my report. **It is the conclusion of the Elevators Committee that Elevator B has been receiving tachyon transmissions from the future that are manifesting as levelling anomalies, and which contain messages—possibly sent backward in time by a future version of the iSchool.**<sup>6</sup> Although there are other possible explanations, the EC's dominant faction believes that this theory is the one that best fits the facts (or fits them in the most interesting way).

Proceeding from this premise, the remaining members of the EC have been contemplating a third repeating sequence of numbers which Elevator B began “transmitting” in the final week of March: 1 16 18 9 12 6 15 15 12. The elevator seems unusually insistent about this sequence, and we suspect it may be some form of substitution cipher corresponding to letters of the alphabet or (more likely) signs of the zodiac.

It is imperative that we decipher this message immediately, as it may be a warning **from the future** about some impending catastrophe. The probable scenarios include: a coronal mass ejection by the Earth's sun, causing planet-wide electromagnetic disruptions (which would affect the iSchool's websites, mostly negatively); an extinction-level impact by an asteroid (which would affect enrollment); a faculty retreat (to be avoided at all costs); or an external accreditation by the American Library Association (about which we're more optimistic).

The EC would like to request more resources from the Dean's Office to continue its analysis, preferably in the form of course release. I've also been instructed to request that the EC be exempted from the “no alcohol” policy for iSchool committee expenses.

Respectfully submitted,  
[name redacted]  
1 April 2016

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<sup>6</sup> It is unclear from which part of the future-iSchool's governance structure the messages originate, or whether they were approved by Faculty Council—or even if these concepts have meaning in the distant future.