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**CLIPPING SERVICE USER'S MANUAL
(VERSION 1.3)**

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Clipping Service User's Manual

(Version 1.2)

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Clipping Service User's Manual

Version 1.2

The Clipping Service is a program that will send selected stories from the New York Times and other information sources to you via electronic mail. In order to use the Clipping Service, you first describe your interests to the Clipping Service in a simple full-text query language, and then mail this interest profile to the DARPA Internet mail address `clip@db.lcs.mit.edu`. Whenever a story is published that matches your interest profile the Clipping Service sends it to you via electronic mail. The Clipping Service was built as an experimental test of a new way to use electronic mail as an infrastructure for computer based applications.

Keywords: Clipping Service, electronic mail, full-text, database, query language

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Introduction

Welcome to the *Clipping Service* - one of the experimental computer systems that is part of the Boston Community Information Systems Project. The *Clipping Service* is an electronic mail based system that permits any authorized user with an electronic mailing address to take advantage of a full-text query language developed by the Programming Systems Research Group at MIT to receive articles of interest from the New York Times.

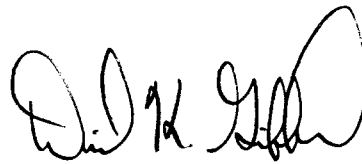
The *Clipping Service* is an experimental test of a new application of electronic mail. All communication to and from the *Clipping Service* is accomplished with electronic mail, which permits the clipping service to operate in locations where other forms of computer based communication are not available. Furthermore, the use of electronic mail permits the efficient processing of requests, and for information to be delivered when communication capacity is available.

This User's Manual is designed to tell you everything you need to know to use the *Clipping Service*, from becoming an authorized user to continued maintenance of your profile.

The *Clipping Service* is a test of a new way of providing customized information services to a mass population. Because the *Clipping Service* is an experiment, we are very much interested in your thoughtful evaluation. Not only do we want your first impressions of the system, *i.e.* your ideas on making the system easier to use during the initial set-up, but we also want your later impressions, *i.e.* your suggestions and advice (on all aspects of the system) from the perspective of an experienced user. Please feel free to send your comments and suggestions to us via Internet mail to `clip-request@db.lcs.mit.edu`.

As a participant in this experiment, you have signed an agreement concerning your responsibilities. Note that you must abide by this agreement, in spirit and in letter.

We welcome you to this experiment to test the *Clipping Service*, and we look forward to working with you in the coming months.



Professor David K. Gifford
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts
July, 1987

Organization of this Manual

This introduction is followed by three sections which describe, in turn:

- the capabilities of the Clipping Service and how to use it;
- the information services provided by the Clipping Service; and
- how to create your own personalized 'news filter'.

There are three appendices. Appendix I is the most important one for new users: it describes how to become an authorized user of the Clipping Service. Appendix II briefly discusses your responsibilities as an authorized user of the Service. Finally, Appendix III is the reference section of all valid commands.

How to Use this Manual

If you are not an authorized user of the Boston Community Information Services, you should read Appendix I and follow the procedure for becoming authorized. Though it is not necessary to be authorized to understand this manual, you will be unable to use the program. Therefore, we recommend that you follow the procedure outlined in Appendix I and then proceed to use the program by trying out things for yourself.

Once you are ready to begin learning about the Clipping Service, you will find that the three sections of the manual flow in a logical order. The first section describes how to communicate with the Clipping Service. The second describes the types of information you are able to receive via the service. And finally, the third section describes how to carefully form a filter that will best provide the information you wish to receive. A clear understanding of all three sections is essential to use the Clipping Service effectively.

Section 1 — Using the Clipping Service

1.1 — What is The *Clipping Service*?

The Clipping Service is a program which searches through the incoming data of our databases and sends to you any items which match your predefined filter. One of our databases is the full text of the *New York Times*. So you can, for instance, specify in your filter that any *New York Times* articles about toxic waste are sent to you via electronic mail. In this way, you are always kept informed about topics that are of interest to you. This service automatically searches for and sends appropriate articles to you via electronic mail, eliminating time consuming searches through the pages of a newspaper.

1.2 — Communicating with the Clipping Service

All communication with the Clipping Service is done via electronic mail, *i.e.* you submit commands to the Clipping Service via electronic mail and it responds via electronic mail. All mail sent to the Clipping Service must be addressed to:

`clip@db.lcs.mit.edu`

The Clipping Service sends all responses to your requests and your daily information to the address specified by you when you first become a user. The command is specified in the subject field of the mail message.

Each time you send a message to the Clipping Service, a response should be received relatively quickly (approximately ten minutes), allowing for network delays, etc. The response either confirms your request or notifies you of a problem with your message. If you fail to receive a response within a "reasonable" period of time, the mail message might have gotten lost somewhere along the way. If this does occur, try issuing your command a second time.

1.3 — Your Personal File

The Clipping Service stores certain information about you in a personal profile. Your profile is made up of the following items:

- FILTER - your personal interest profile (discussed in the next section).
- STATUS - whether or not the Clipping Service should be currently sending you articles. Your status is either 'active' or 'suspended'.
- ADDRESS - your electronic mail address for receiving the items that match your filter. All responses to your commands are also sent to this address.
- BUDGET - the maximum number of mail messages you wish to receive per day from the Clipping Service.

1.4 — Creating and Modifying Your Filter

Your filter specifies what information you would like the Clipping Service to send you automatically. It is composed of filter lines which follow the query language syntax outlined in Section 4 (refer to this section for more detailed information about creating a filter). If you want to send a filter you have created to the Clipping Service, send the filter command, where the actual filter text is the body of the mail message (see Figure 1-1).

```
To: clip@db.lcs.mit.edu
From: user
Subject: Filter
-----

"new york mets" (category: sports)
"national league" baseball
comput*
questionbox
(author: stuart taylor)
```

Figure 1-1: A typical letter to create a filter

You can replace your existing filter the same way, *i.e.* a filter command replaces your existing filter with the new filter. If the filter you send in contains a syntax error, the Clipping Service informs you of the error and your existing filter remains unchanged.

You can also add filter lines to your filter by sending the append command, where the filter lines to be added are the body of the mail message. If you wish to remove your filter file completely so that you no longer receive mail from the Clipping Service, then send the cancel command. When you wish to receive data again, simply send a filter command with your new filter text.

1.5 — Additional Help

If you are having difficulty using the Clipping Service, you can use one of the following commands:

- doc — This command sends an on-line help file as a reminder of the valid commands. Additionally, the on-line file notes corrections and additions to our service too recent to make this publication.
- help — same as above.
- samples — This command sends sample filter lines, in order to provide a model for constructing your own filter.
- examples — Same as above.

1.6 — Controlling The Volume of Mail

Your budget is a protection mechanism which prevents your mailbox from being flooded with mail. The budget specifies the maximum number of mail messages you wish to receive in one day from the Clipping Service. Once that number of mail messages has been sent to you, the Clipping Service will not send you any more messages that day, no matter what other data passes your filter. You can set your budget by sending the budget command (see Figure 1-2).

```
To: clip@db.lcs.mit.edu
From: user
Subject: Budget 50
-----
```

Figure 1-2: Setting Your Budget to 50 articles

To specify the budget desired, type the number after the command name. The budget command is the only Clipping Service command which takes its argument on the subject line of the mail message along with the command name. The default budget is twenty (20) and the maximum is fifty (50). You may set your budget for any number between zero (0) and fifty (50).

1.7 — Modifying Your Status

The Clipping Service provides an active status mechanism so that you can temporarily prevent the service from sending you mail without losing your filter. This option is useful if you are not planning to read your mail for a period of time, and you do not want your mailbox filled up in your absence. To suspend your status, send the suspend command. When you wish to receive Clipping Service mail again, simply send the continue command. Then, the Clipping Service will resume sending you information. The Clipping Service does not send you information it received while your status was suspended, even if the information would have matched your filter.

1.8 — Changing Your Mailing Address

The Clipping Service mails all of the data that passes your filter and any responses to your requests to one address that you specify when you initially sign-up. However, you can change this address by sending the address command (See Figure 1-3).

The Clipping Service then changes the address piece of your status to be the address located in the **From:** field of your mail message.

```
To: clip@db.lcs.mit.edu
From: user@new-address
Subject: Address
-----
```

Figure 1-3: Changing Your Mailing Address

NOTE — The new address must be an authorized address. That is, it must have been reported to `clip-request@db.lcs.mit.edu` at the time you became authorized to use the Clipping Service. If this is not the case, you must first notify `clip-request` of your new address, prior to sending the command to the Clipping Service.

1.9 — Help and Bug Reports

You can voice complaints or report bugs to the Clipping Service by sending either the *gripe* command or the *bug* command. You should include your gripe or bug report in the body of the mail message. These messages are read by one of the system maintainers and corrected as soon as possible. If you desire a response, you may send mail to '`clip-bug@db.lcs.mit.edu`' and a system maintainer will respond to the message usually within one week.

1.10 — Examining Your User Profile

If you wish to view your personal profile, you can do so by sending the *status* command (See Figure 1-4).

```
To: clip@db.lcs.mit.edu
From: user
Subject: Status
-----
```

Figure 1-4: Examining your profile

The Clipping Service will mail a copy of your profile back to you within minutes. This response includes all the information that was discussed in Section 1.3. Figure 1-5 shows a typical profile mailed in response to the status command.

From: clipsend@DB.LCS.MIT.EDU (Clipping Service)
Subject: Status Report
Apparently-To: user@address

A copy of your current account status follows:

Status: active
Address: user@address
Budget: 50
Sent Today: 0
Filter:

"new york mets" (category: sports)
"national league" baseball
comput*
questionbox
(author: stuart taylor)

Figure 1-5: A typical status report

Section 2 — Databases and Services

Currently, the Clipping Service provides you with access to the text of the *New York Times* for the past three months. Other database services are anticipated for the future.

The *New York Times* service includes the complete text of the articles appearing in that newspaper. In general, the *New York Times* provides highly polished and readable news stories, corresponding to the printed version of the *New York Times*. Developing news stories are usually updated once a day.

2.1 — Fields

All data base entries, or records, follow the same standard format: a record consists of several *fields*, including the TEXT field. Section 3 describes how to take full advantage of the information in the various fields when you form queries.

The set of fields is fixed; the use of the various fields is described below.

TYPE The TYPE field of a record identifies the source of the record. An example of the type of records is "nyt" (*New York Times*). As we expand our information services, new record types may appear. All users are notified by electronic mail of new types of records in our database. Additionally, the on-line help file notes additions to our service not covered in this publication.

DATE The DATE field indicates the date and time a record was written.

CATEGORY The CATEGORY field identifies the general subject area of a record. The categories used by the *New York Times* editors for their new articles are described in the next subsection.

AUTHOR The AUTHOR field identifies the author of a record. This field is sometimes left blank by the originating information source. Occasionally, the author of a news article is identified by a by-line in the TEXT field of the record.

PRIORITY The PRIORITY field indicates the priority of the record, usually in reference to a news article. The priority classification is selected by the originating information source.

The PRIORITY field of a record contains one of the following words or phrases:

flash	the highest priority; it is seldom used
bulletin	the priority level of prime news; it is also used for corrections, updates, and occasional retractions of previous stories
urgent	the priority level of important news
regular	the priority level of routine news
deferred	the lowest priority level; used for delayed sending of a completed story
Weekday advance	material for a future weekday

	Sunday advance	material for a future Sunday
	reruns	an article that was already published at least one other time
SUBJECT	The SUBJECT field contains a subject identifier that is assigned by the originating information source. Certain subject identifiers are used consistently; some of these are listed in Section 3.3. Some news articles are actually listings of upcoming news articles, and they give the subject identifier for each upcoming article (for example, "REAGAN-SPEECH"). If you are interested in such an article, you can append the filter line (subject: reagan speech) to your filter and the Clipping Service will send that article when it arrives.	
TITLE	The TITLE field contains the title of the record, if any. Most records do not have titles.	
TEXT	The TEXT field contains the text of the record itself.	

2.2 — Categories

As will be explained in *Section 3: The Query Language*, a query of the form (**category: <something>**) matches records whose CATEGORY field contains *<something>*. The CATEGORY field is very useful, because the *New York Times* editors put every news article in an appropriate category. The following is a complete list of the categories used.

Advisories	Listings of upcoming articles
Commentary	Editorials and columns
Domestic	Domestic news, except for news from Washington D.C.
Entertainment and Culture	Articles on entertainment, culture, and the arts, including reviews of movies, plays, books, and television programs
Financial	Business news, financial indicators, and some stock market information
International News	News about foreign events, including articles originating at the United Nations headquarters
Lifestyle	Social news
Presidential Election	Election coverage (when applicable)
Sports	Sports features and scores
Standing	Feature articles that are non-urgent
Travel	Travel information and human interest stories involving travel
Unknown	All other categories of articles
Washington News	News concerning national politics, the United States government, actions of the President, and congressional decisions

2.3 — Subjects

Our information sources provide a variety of information, such as news summaries, on a regular basis. Information of this kind is identified using the SUBJECT field; for example, the query (subject: newssummary) matches the *New York Times* news summary.

The following subject identifiers are used consistently by our information sources:

aboutcars	Articles on automobiles
advertising column	Regular article on advertising
advisory	Listings of upcoming articles or available services
anderson column	Dave Anderson's sports commentary
baker column	Russell Baker's commentary
bank*	Assorted articles on banking, including regular features
baseball	Assorted articles on baseball
berkow column	Sports commentary
bestsellers	Hardcover bestseller list
biz*	Business articles, including business week, health, law and people
book review	Reviews of new books
booktalk	Column about books
boxing	Columns about boxing
brf	Briefing on Washington news and political events
briefing	Briefing on Washington news and political events
budget	Listings of articles for upcoming publication
campaign*	Articles on the presidential campaign
careers	Features on interesting careers
claiborne	Cooking with Craig Claiborne
colleges	Stories on colleges, such as sports
column	Columns from the <i>New York Times</i>
commodities	Articles on the commodities market
comput*	Various columns about computers, computing, etc.
consumer notes	Consumer advocacy column
consumerrates	Consumer credit rates
credit	Reports on commercial credit markets
credit rates	Present commercial credit rates
databank	National economic indicators
econ	Various economic articles
edit	Editorials from the <i>New York Times</i>
fashion*	Articles about fashion
finbriefs	Collections of short news items about business and finance
findigest	A daily digest of top financial news from the <i>New York Times</i> . This digest is identical to the business digest on the front page of the <i>New</i>

	<i>York Times</i> business section.
followups	Follow up on the news
foreign affairs	Foreign affairs column
frontpage	A daily description of the layout of the front page of the <i>New York Times</i>
glass column	Andrew Glass' commentary
homevideo	Recent home videotape releases
investing	Assorted articles on investments
kisselgoff dance	A weekly column on dance
lewis column	Anthony Lewis' column
market	A daily report on the stock market
marketplace	Wall street news
matchups	Pre-game analysis of upcoming sporting events
mortgage	Articles about mortgages
movie*	Movie reviews and features about movies, including columns by Maslin and Canby
movie notes	Movie column
movie review	Movie reviews
music	Various columns on different types of music
nba	Assorted articles on the NBA
newssummary	A capsule summary of top news stories from the <i>New York Times</i> . The <i>New York Times</i> news summary comes out once a day around midnight, and is identical to the news summary that appears on the second page of the first section of the printed paper. Use the query (type: nyt) (subject: newssummary) for this summary.
obit*	Obituaries
on language	Column by William Safire on the English language
outdoors	Column on outdoor activities
patents	Patents of special interest that have been recently issued
paperbacks	Paperback bestseller list
personal health	Column on personal health
prospects	Financial prospects for particular business sectors
questionbox	Sports questions and answers
quindlen column	Anna Quindlen's regular column
racing	Horse racing news
reston column	James Reston's column
rosenthal	Andrew M. Rosenthal's commentaries
russell art	John Russell's art column
safire column	Column by William Safire that is not "On Language"
science q a	Science questions and answers

science watch	Short summaries of recent scientific news
scouting	Stories on sports players
silk column	Financial commentary by Leonard Silk
60 minute gourmet	What to do for dinner in one hour
ski	Column on skiing
sports column	Various sports columns from SportsMonday
tabletalk	Food column
tax column	A column on tax advice
theater	Articles about and reviews of the theater
trade	Articles about US Trade
travel notes	Vacation ideas
travel q a	Travel questions and answers
tv review	Reviews of upcoming television programs
tv weekend	Weekend television
vecsey column	Sports column
video	Column on home videotapes
wicker column	Tom Wicker's column
wine*	Articles on wine, including Wine Talk

Section 3 — The Query Language

The Clipping Service lets you describe data records that interest you using a simple language, called the *query language*. As described in Section 1, the Clipping Service consults your filter to determine which data records to send to you. Using the query language, you can tell the Clipping Service what data records interest you in terms of their contents, source, author, subject, and a variety of other attributes. In this section, we explain the query language, starting with the simplest queries.

The simplest possible query is a single word. Imagine, for example, that you are interested in all data records that contain the word "peace". The corresponding query is the word **peace**. If you are interested in all data records that contain the words "war" and "peace", the corresponding query could be **war and peace**, **war & peace**, or simply **war peace**. Thus, you can combine two simple queries into a more specific query by means of **and**, **&**, or concatenation.

Next, imagine that you are interested in all data records that mentioned the Supreme Court. You could use the query **supreme court**, but this query matches all data records that contain the words "supreme" and "court", regardless of whether they appear consecutively. To indicate that the words "supreme" and "court" must appear consecutively as a *phrase*, simply put them in quotes: **"Supreme Court"**. A phrase may contain any number of words.

If you are interested in all the data records about computers, computing, computation, and so on, use the query **comput***: it matches all data records that contain one or more words beginning with the letters "comput". These queries are called *stem queries*, because they match any word that begins with a specified *stem*. There are two restrictions on stem queries: a stem query may not appear inside a phrase, and the stem must be at least two characters long.

Perhaps you wish to retrieve data records by a certain author, say John Smith. You could use the query **Smith**, but it matches every article that *contains* the word "smith", regardless of the context in which it appears. To rule out all these extra data records, use the query **(author: smith)**; it matches all data records that have an AUTHOR field containing the word "smith". Queries of this kind are called *field-specific queries*; the possible fields (besides AUTHOR) are listed in Section 2.1. Other examples of field-specific queries include **(subject: newssummary)** and **(type: cis)**.

Above, we showed how to combine two queries into a more specific query by means of **and**, **&**, or concatenation. This combining rule is very useful, especially in conjunction with field-specific queries. For example, the query **ibm (category: financial)** matches all data records that contain the word "ibm" and have a CATEGORY field containing the word "financial".

The following convention applies to all queries: uppercase and lowercase letters are considered the same, and all punctuation characters in data records are treated as spaces, except for apostrophes, which are ignored. The system will not accept queries that contain punctuation characters, except for hyphens, which are treated as spaces. Thus, the query **rogers** matches

the following words: "rogers", "Rogers", "Roger's", "Rogers'", and so forth. The queries "space cadet" and "space-cadet" match the following phrases: "space-cadet", "Space Cadet", etc.

The following examples illustrate the different kinds of queries, and the various ways in which they can be combined using **and**, **or** and **not**.

The Query	Matches Data Records that...
peace	..contain the word "peace"
"War and Peace"	..contain the phrase "war and peace"
comput*	..contain a word that begins with "comput", such as "computer", "computation" or "computability"
ski*	..contain a word that begins with "ski", such as "ski", "skiing", "skid", "skin" or "skiascope"
war and peace	..contain the words "war" and "peace". The three queries shown to the left are equivalent.
war & peace	
war peace	
war "and" peace	..contain the words "war", "and", and "peace"
war or peace	..contain either the word "war" or the word "peace". The two queries shown to the left are equivalent.
war peace	
not war	..do not contain the word "war". The two queries shown to the left are equivalent.
~war	
peace and (quiet or talks)	..contain the word "peace" and either the word "quiet" or the word "talks"
(peace and quiet) or talks	..contain the words "peace" and "quiet" or the word "talks"
(subject: movie*)	..have a SUBJECT field containing a word that begins with "movie"
(author: smith (not john))	..have an AUTHOR field containing the word "smith" but not the word "john"
harvard (not (subject: football))	..contain the word "harvard" but do not have a SUBJECT field containing the word "football". The two queries shown to the left are equivalent.
harvard (subject: (not football))	
harvard (subject: (~football))	
harvard (~(subject: football))	

The following are some examples of *invalid* queries, along with the reasons why they are invalid:

The Query	Is Invalid Because...
"comput* languages"	..a stem query may not appear within a phrase
(author: (subject: smith))	..a field-specific query may not be nested inside another field-specific query
Mr. Rogers' neighborhood	..punctuation (such as periods and apostrophes) must be omitted from all queries

(topic: reagan)

(a or (b) or c

..TOPIC is not a valid field name. The valid field names are listed in Section 2.1.

..parentheses must be balanced

Appendix I — Becoming Authorized

In order for you to use the Clipping Service, you need to be authorized. To become an authorized user, contact the Programming Systems Research Group via computer mail sent to `clip-request@cls.lcs.mit.edu`. You will be required to sign a legal agreement in order for us to authorize you, as outlined in the next appendix. You will also need to notify us of your computer accounts you will be using to communicate with the Clipping Service.

Appendix II — Your Responsibilities

Your Responsibilities Regarding Use of the Information Received

To conduct this research project in the distribution of news and information, MIT has entered into understandings and legal agreements with the Associated Press, the New York Times Company and Mead Data Central, Inc. As an authorized user in this project, you have agreed

1. not to make more than one copy — in any form — of any information received;
2. not to retain copies — in any form — of more than an “insubstantial part” of the information received;
3. not to transfer any of the information received — in any form — to third parties, whether or not for profit; and
4. not to retain any of the information received from the *New York Times* — in any form — for more than 90 days.

Because we believe the Clipping Service is an extremely useful and interesting program, we feel that the responsibilities outlined above are reasonable. If you do not act in keeping with the letter *and* the spirit of the agreement, we will be forced to discontinue your status as an authorized user of the Clipping Service.

Revised 29 September 1986

Full Name (printed): _____

Legal Agreement with Mead Data Central, Inc.

The above designated "Recipient" agrees that it will not retain any copies of data from the New York Times in any form, whether print, machine readable or otherwise for a period of more than 90 days, and that any such data retained will be 1) limited to single copies, 2) never consist of more than an insubstantial part of the entire database made available to MIT, and 3) will not be transferred, whether or not for profit to any third party. It is agreed that all copies of such data will be returned or destroyed earlier than the 90-day maximum retention period upon written request from MIT, The New York Times Company, or Mead Data Central, Inc.

Agreed

Signature of Recipient

Date

Understanding and Agreement with MIT

Whether or not for profit, I understand and agree not to transfer in printed or electronic form any information received via the Boston CommInS project to any third party.

I understand and agree that I must complete and return a questionnaire provided for that purpose to the Boston CommInS Project once a month or else have to return the receiver and software to the project.

I understand and agree that the software and hardware will remain the property of MIT and that I must return all the materials used in this test of the Boston CommInS system either (i) at the end of the experiment in approximately 12 months or (ii) upon written notice from the project -- whichever comes first.

I understand and agree that MIT has made no expressed nor implied guarantees to provide this information service without interruption throughout the duration of the experimental test.

Agreed

Signature of Recipient

Date

Figure II-1: Text of Agreement

Appendix III — Summary of Commands

The following is an alphabetical list of all the valid Clipping Service commands:

- address - change the address to which the Clipping Service sends your information to be the address the command was sent from
- append - append the body of the mail message to your filter
- budget *n* - change the budget of maximum number of data articles you may receive in a day to be *n*. *n* must be a positive number less than fifty (50)
- bug - report a bug to a Clipping Service maintainer. The bug report should be in the body of the message (If you wish a response, send mail to `clip-bug@db.lcs.mit.edu`)
- cancel - delete your filter and thereby discontinue sending Clipping Service information
- continue - continue sending Clipping Service mail again, removing your suspended status
- doc - send available on-line help to the sender of the request
- examples - send a sample filter to the sender of the request
- filter - replace your existing filter with the body of the mail message being sent
- gripe - report a complaint to a Clipping Service maintainer. The complaint should be in the body of the message.
- help - send available on-line help to the sender of the request
- samples - send a sample filter to the sender of the request
- status - send a report of your current status with respect to the Clipping Service
- suspend - suspend your active status, saving the existing filter

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS			
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) MIT/LCS/TR-398			
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