

Silicon Valley™ TAROT

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

The Hacker's Journey

(traditional Tarot equivalents included for reference)

0. The Hacker (The Fool)
1. The Guru (The Magician)
2. The Futurist (The High Priestess)
3. The Garage (The Empress)
4. The Mogul (The Emperor)
5. The Consultant (The Hierophant)
6. IPO (The Lovers)
7. El Camino Real (The Chariot)
8. Double Latte (Strength)
9. Encryption (The Hermit)
10. The Server (The Wheel)
11. The Sysadmin (Justice)
12. The Hive (The Hanged Man)
13. The Layoff (Death)
14. Flame War (Temperance)
15. Spam (The Devil)
16. Firewall (The Tower)
17. Stock Options (The Star)
18. Venture Capital (The Moon)
19. Next Big Thing (The Sun)
20. Bugs (Judgment)
21. The Net (The World)

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Silicon Valley™ TAROT

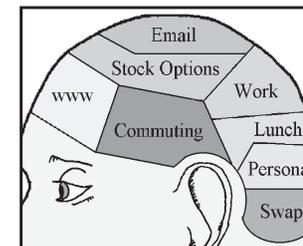
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Introduction

OK, I admit it: when I drew the first card of the **Silicon Valley Tarot** ("The Hacker," if you must know), I was making a joke. Silicon Valley culture and fortune-telling culture seemed about as far away from each other as two things can be. Shows what I know. Since then, my little cartoons have taken on a mysterious life of their own. Hidden forces and hermetic agents have brought them out of the darkness of obscurity and into the light of your hands. Now you and I are joined in fate; we're merely pawns of Larger Forces. From here on, there are no coincidences . . .

— Thomas Scoville
 Autumn 1998



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www.svtarot.com

Instructions

The **Silicon Valley Tarot** is a tool for unlocking your brain. It is an Oracle – you go to it when you are confused or hesitant, when you need to *decide*. To a skilled Tarot reader, choices become simple, and the complexity of life becomes visible as glowing paths of possibility, intricate but very navigable.

It's a metaphor, but aside from that we mean it.

The Tarot has a lot in common with computers. Both mystify the masses. Both are best described in languages to which a limited few are privy. Both are, when you get right down to it, stupid, and can't do anything useful without a person to (a) instruct them and then (b) to make decisions based on what the stupid thing spits out.

Computers spit out all sorts of things. Tarot cards just spit images.

The Tarot "answers" your question with pictures and symbols. By contemplating these, and discovering *how they connect to your quandary*, you'll find that your brain becomes *less congested*. You begin looking at your problem from fresh angles.

When we're worried, stressed, tired, and confused, decision-making becomes a chore. What typically happens is that we tend to obsess on a few frightening details, and we get lost worrying about them. We get into a rut – we can't make up our minds because our minds are locked into worthless patterns.

Along comes our pal, the **Silicon**

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Valley Tarot. While you're reading this, have said pal handy. Give it a good healthy shuffle. Draw a few cards at random.

The Images

Every card in the **Silicon Valley Tarot** is a slice of experience, a fragment of the Silicon Valley existence, that maze of cubicles and marketing decisions and undocumented compromise at the core of the Information Age. They're *archetypes*, universal ideas that stir something in everybody's memory. Let's examine one closely: The Marketeer of Cubicles.

The image is instantly suggestive of phony smiles, condescending glances, and lip gloss (the Marketeers are all like that). Her interpretation (taken from page 40) goes like this:



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Her skill with presentation managers is exceeded only by the style-to-substance ratio of the presentation itself. She'll make a beautiful pie chart in full color – about nothing at all. She's Occam's Razor turned inside out, needlessly multiplying entities.

Hyperbole, buzzword-veneered ignorance.

Reversed: Denial, deer-in-the-headlights.

You don't need to be part of the Silicon Valley culture to get a clear image of this archetype – her empty banter, her pointless details, her irritating chatter in the latest buzz-speak. She's all about taking nothing worthwhile and dressing it up to look pretty.

If you had gone to the **Silicon Valley Tarot** with a quandary, and the Marketeer of Cubicles appeared from the draw, the next step would be to decide *how the heck this relates to you*. Depending on your quandary, the images can represent people, places, objects, or an abstract idea/trend. Some possibilities:

People: There is a person like this in your life, somebody that the Marketeer reminds you of. Keep in mind that, although the Marketeer on the card is a woman, your own *personal* "Marketeer" doesn't have to be, nor does he (she?) have to work in Marketing.

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Once you've identified the person, relate the person to the quandary: Is your Marketeer part of your problem? Or maybe it's a person you hadn't thought of (until now) as being a potential part of a solution.

People Part II: Rather than representing another person, the card represents the qualities of the Marketeer in *you*. OK, that's not very flattering, but all of us have engaged in hyperbole now and again, or padded out a detail that didn't need padding. Is this the root of your problem? Or maybe you need to *cultivate* that quality this time. Maybe a little hyperbole is called for?

Places and Things: Presentation over content. Overstatement and exaggeration of potential. Maybe what you need is a trip to Vegas, or a trip to a theme park. Or maybe you expect something like that from something that *should* have more substance? There's a stack of glossy magazines out in the lobby . . . Maybe you should give them a look, and see what images *they* suggest. Or veg out in front of MTV.

Ideas and Trends: The card signifies no particular person, place, or thing. Rather, it signifies a concept that's in the air just now. Maybe overstatement and style-over-substance are an unhealthy trend that's taking over your life, or the folks at the office, or the customers, or even your favorite TV show, and *that's* what's upsetting you. Or maybe that's what's missing.

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Now look at the card again. She contains a lot of possibilities, doesn't she? Sure, they're all vacuum and glitter, but sometimes we need that. Every card, even ones that seem to represent perfectly horrible or banal ideas, contains both positive and negative elements.

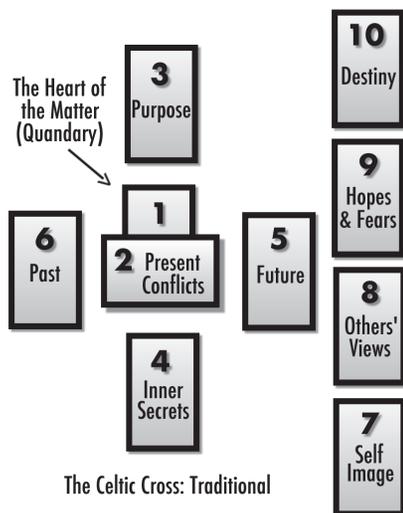
That's how the Tarot really works: Your brain, locked into patterns of concern and indecision, is assaulted by these random archetypes. In order to decide how these images relate to your quandary, you have to think about your problem in ways that you hadn't before. You also have to break down your problem in simple terms (since the archetypes themselves are simple). By doing this, you relearn your problem by (essentially) *teaching it to the cards*.

Reversed Cards

The occult interpretations provided in this guide include a "reversed" interpretation. Reversals are optional – what they do, essentially, is double the size of your Tarot deck by giving each card a fresh interpretation if it's drawn from the deck *with the picture upside-down*. Sometimes a reversal is an opposite – a shadowy twin to the "normal" interpretation. Sometimes it's just an aspect (usually negative) of the main card thrown into sharp focus. But, like all "negatives" in the Tarot, reversed-card negatives can contain positive elements, too.

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spreads focus more on deciding what caused the quandary, some focus more on its solution. Some spreads are designed for very specific and esoteric tasks, like interpreting dreams. One popular spread, the Celtic Cross (shown in the diagram below), takes a fairly balanced approach.



The Spread

If you want, you can stop reading now, and do a few single-card "readings" for yourself to get the feel of it. Define your quandary, draw a card, flip to the interpretation section of this booklet, and mull it over. You'll find that it really can help you think, in a weird little way.

Once you tire of that, there is room for much more weirdness and, consequently, much more help. Traditionally, Tarot readings aren't done by drawing a single card (except in cheesy movies from the '70s, in which case the card drawn is inevitably either *Death* or *The Lovers*, and the **Silicon Valley Tarot** doesn't have those).

Traditionally, Tarot cards are drawn, one by one, and placed on a table in the form of a *tarot spread*. The cards are interpreted as they're drawn, and then the entire spread is interpreted as a whole. Rather than bombarding your question with a single archetype, you bombard it with several different ones.

There are dozens and dozens of Tarot spreads used around the world, and new ones are created all the time. Some spreads are simple – three or four cards. Some unusual ones are hideously complex and time-consuming, using most or all of the entire deck! The most popular modern spreads use 10-12 cards or so.

In a spread, each card is dealt into a pre-set position, and each position has its

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The shape of your spread, and which order the cards are dealt in, is up to you. Traditional spreads are sometimes shaped like mystic symbols, or are arranged with symmetries that have special meaning to astrologers or numerologists. They have names that sound like a combo special from a Chinese take-out menu, with the names of Celtic and/or Egyptian myths thrown in for spice.

When designing your own spread, make something that means something to you. If Egyptian Chinese take-out is your bag, then go ahead and make the *Seven Delightful Valleys of Thoth Ascending*. If you prefer more contemporary metaphors, there's no reason not to make a spread in the shape of an ice cream cone, or to just dispense with symbolism and create the *Ten Cards To Help Me Make Up My Mind* spread.

Reading For Others

So far, we've pretty much assumed that you'll be using the **Silicon Valley Tarot** to get your own thoughts in order. After you've had some practice, though, you'll probably want to do readings for your friends (or charge money for readings in a carnival tent, or some such). When reading for somebody else, *they* become the questioner (the one with a quandary) and you are simply "the reader."

There are lots of traditions associated

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own meaning. To show what we mean, here's a very simple "line" spread.



The Line Spread: Simple and to the point

The cards are dealt in order, by the numbers. The meanings of the positions are very simple:

Card 1, Distant Past: The first card drawn will represent influences of the distant past, issues that relate to your current quandary. When you place this card onto the table, relate the card to memories from long ago.

Card 2, Recent Past: The second card drawn will represent recent influences, maybe only a few days old. When you place this card on the table, think of the archetype in terms of things that have affected you recently.

Card 3, The Quandary: The middle card represents the core of the issue. When you place it on the table, try to relate the image directly to your question, to where you are and what troubles you're facing right now. Just about every Tarot spread designed has a card like this – a card that represents the question itself (or the questioner). It's usually somewhere near the middle of the spread.

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with Tarot readers – too many to detail here. Some have a thing about storing their deck in a special pouch, wooden box, or cloth. Some people keep their deck oriented north-south or east-west whenever it isn't being used. Some do readings only on a special table, or in a special room, or only at specific times (or all three). Some insist that only the reader touch the cards during a reading – others insist the opposite. Feel free to create new traditions for your own readings if you find it enhances the mood.

As the reader, you speak for the cards. Usually, the questioner won't be as Tarot-savvy as you are, so it's your job to present the "questions" that the cards contain.

This means that if our old friend the Marketeer of Cubicles is dealt, you'll say something like (in a dramatic fortune-teller voice): "Aha! There is a person in your life . . . a co-worker, perhaps? Or a friend? This person is not concerned only with appearances, with labels . . . this person tells stories about nothing at all, and examines what is not there, creating a tangle of seductive confusion . . ." Feel free to ham it up. Squint menacingly. Roll your Rs.

Voice or not, a Tarot reading is a dialog, where you provide some abstract possibilities and then the questioner gives you feedback. You will prompt the questioner to *think*, and the important thing to keep in mind is that it's still up to him to interpret what

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Card 4, The Near Future: The fourth card represents where you're heading soon. If you're using your Tarot for "fortune-telling," then this card is meant to predict the future. For now, though, just try to relate the image to the possibilities in your life – things that you're afraid might happen, things that you hope will happen. By getting these thoughts organized in your mind, you might be able to "predict" the future yourself.

Card 5, The Distant Future: The fifth card represents long-term goals and long-term fears. When you place the final card on the table, relate the archetype to where you picture yourself years from now. Will you be with the same person? The same company? Have the same friends? When you're done with that, look back over the whole spread, and consider it as a whole. There's one version of the story of your life, with an emphasis on your current situation. Use it to find the answer you seek.

Roll Your Own!

Creating new Tarot spreads is easy, and it's a good way to help yourself learn the cards. Cards needn't represent the past and future; they can represent things like "sources of conflict" or "sources of energy." They can represent the hidden motives of influencing space aliens or angels (or your parents). They can represent places, your subconscious, masculine/feminine "urges," and so on. Some

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you say and find his own answers – it's up to you to bombard his thinking processes with the archetypes, and to give him somebody to sound off against. If you're a good showman, then your friend will thank you bunches, unaware that he did all the work.

Note that the sample speech above didn't include all the possibilities inherent in the Marketeer of Cubicles. When you're reading for somebody else, it's best to simplify things – pick one or two possibilities and toss them in front of the questioner, and let the rest develop in conversation.

The Cards

There are 70 **Silicon Valley Tarot** cards. The 22 cards of the *Major Arcana* tell the story of the journey of the Hacker, the archetypal seeker. The Hacker himself has no number, but the remaining 21 Major Arcana are numbered from 1 to 21, from the beginning of the Hacker's journey to the end. The remaining 48 cards comprise the *Minor Arcana*, which is divided into four *suits* of 12 cards each. The suits (Cubicles, Disks, Hosts, and Networks) each consist of four *court cards* (a Nerd, a Marketeer, a Salesman, and a CIO) as well as eight *pip cards*, Ace through Eight.

Some Tarot enthusiasts prefer a simplified deck, with either the Major or Minor Arcana removed. This can make readings a little easier.

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Oracular Interpretations: Major Arcana

When reading the cards, refer to this section to interpret cards of the Major Arcana. They are presented alphabetically for easy reference.

Bugs (20)

Unwanted visitors crawl across your precious code, causing abrupt, graceless terminations and other unintended consequences. Perhaps your system just hangs; reboot and fire up the debugger. Can you crush them all? Not in a million years.

Trouble, unforeseen complications.

Reversed: Poor quality; shoddy workmanship, lack of attention to detail, overworked Q/A division.

The Consultant (5)

You will know him by his natty wardrobe and excellent hair. His arms are crossed, as if to say he knows more than you do, and he might just help you out – if you're nice to him. The clock is his friend and familiar; he bills by the hour. He stands against a money-green background; he has other clients.

Skill, experience, mastery.

Reversed: Incompetence, waste, arrogance, expensive lunches.

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The Guru (1)

Thirty years in the business and he's neither bitter nor burned out. He's already forgotten more than you know. He has the answers to your questions, and knows which questions are worth asking. He's got a PhD, but he owes more to the Marx Brothers than to Stanford. Keeps irregular hours. Appears grudgingly at conferences. Has troubling personal life.

Perspective, style, good humor, unconventional wisdom.

Reversed: Lack of direction, stagnation.

The Hacker

Concentration, resourcefulness, attention to detail. Aversion to authority, order, governance – the symbol of anarchy hovers nearby. The Hacker has few friends, but a prodigious appetite for caffeinated soft drinks. The computer might burn metaphorically with his innovation, or it might just burn, as he destroys it for fun. His powers are great; he could rule the Valley – if he could just see the big picture. The Hacker appears against a field of green, jealous of your resources.

Innovation, stealth, ability to do much with little.

Reversed: Destruction, perversity, immaturity, bad personal hygiene, profound personality deficits.

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Double Latte (8)

Humble coffee drink, or wellspring of inspiration and productivity? Depends what side of the spoon you're on.

Vigor, energy, direction.

Reversed: Torpor, indecision, cubicle-snoozing.

El Camino Real (7)

Street of Dreams, or Avenue of Crocodiles? The first road into the Valley, the King's Highway remains the ruling thoroughfare of commerce. Looking South, it recedes into California's lonely hinterlands and turbulent history. Follow the bells back to its origin, and you'll end up two worlds away in Mexico City. *Hasta la vista, baby.*

New arrivals, perspective, interminable endeavor, distant warning.

Reversed: Exit, termination, retreat from the action.

Encryption (9)

Strong computational magic hides sensitive data from prying eyes. A blindfolded man stands in a sea of encrypted data; he blindly gropes, but touches nothing.

Stealth, jealousy, secrecy.

Reversed: Subterfuge, ignorance.

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The Hive (12)

An expanse of workers' cells touches the horizon in all directions, a parking lot of lost souls. Only the murmur of tapping keys betrays any life. You wander in a

daze, looking for J-347. But there are no numbers or markings anywhere. You are marooned.

Loss of direction, inability to move or concentrate, necrosis, dissolution.

Reversed: Hazard and adversity, a great adventure.

IPO (6)

Partners toast their success against a field of royal purple. Princes today – but for how long? Charts and tickers sound the cheers of the marketplace and the enthusiasm of investment bankers.

Success, hard work, diligence, industry.

Reversed: Instability, unproven worth, irrational exuberance.

The Layoff (13)

The hand of management casts the terminated into a parking lot under darkening skies. Some are dejected and

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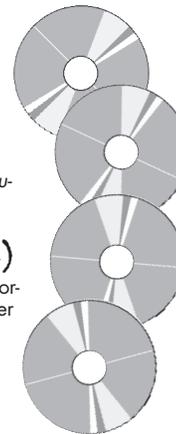
The Firewall (16)

The firewall stands guard against unwelcome packets and connections. Anarchy and mob rule may run rampant outside, but within the wall is law and order . . . you hope.

Protection, fortification, civility, courtesy, protocol.

Reversed:

Carelessness, absence of vigilance, false sense of security, barbarian conquest.



Flame War (14)

Two pedants, locked in mortal combat, scorch each other with fiery words. Angry, aggrieved, they wield their righteous furies in rhetorical joust. Insult, invective, profanity – they will stop at nothing until one or the other is humiliated or banished.

Quibbling, hair-splitting, dogmatism, nit-picking.

Reversed: Discord, misunderstanding, misinformation, mistaken opinion, perfectionism.

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resigned, but one turns back, head held high, and pronounces a curse. Or is it gratitude? Depends on the severance package.

Rejection, failure, incompetence, inability to recognize shortcomings.

Reversed: New beginnings, risk, promise.

The Mogul (4)

Our industry darling has hit the jackpot with his nifty new technology. He's taken his company public and made a gazillion dollars – on paper, anyway. No suit-and-tie, golf-and-martinis for him – strictly jeans, T-shirts, Frisbees, and microbrews. He's got that eerie, can't-fail, immune-to-calamity aura that fate awards the under-30 set. Jealous? Just wait a few years.

Success, riches, perfect positioning.

Reversed: Competition, rapid turnover.

The Net (21)

A packet flies through a yellow network – every node attached to every other – against an infinite sea of bits. The network conquers distance with cooperation and harmony. Without the network everything stops, and chaos reigns.

Productivity, understanding, coordination of effort, unity.

Reversed: Confusion, misunderstanding, loss of control.

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The Futurist (2)

Bolstered by a knowledge of the present and past, the futurist consults his crystal ball – or whatever stochastic modeling software passes for same – and tries to divine the future of technology. His rates are high, and he has little to show for his work. Still, he's very entertaining at company parties and staff meetings. Is he a wise man, or only a jester?

Anticipation, vision, foresight, alchemy.

Reversed: Eccentricity, hubris, con-artistry.

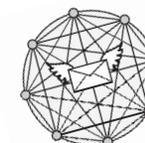
The Garage (3)

Historically, the Garage is the Valley's primary engine of creation. Big New Ideas are germinated in humble surroundings at odd hours. The moon smiles upon exploration unfettered by corporate constraint. Though it may seem the Garage is outgunned by mammoth office parks and grand laboratories, the real action has always been here – perpetrated by pathologically independent individuals in ramshackle workshops having original thoughts. All that mighty commercial squabbling and NASDAQ turbulence is just the foam in the Garage's wake. Don't breathe the fumes.

Creativity, inspiration.

Reversed: Megalomania, quixotic optimism, unrecognized opportunity.

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Next Big Thing (19)

Innovation, insight, craft, and dumb luck all conspire in the conception and birth of the Next Big Thing.

Empires will be built on it.

Competitors will be ruined by it. The originator is seen wide-eyed with the first flash of recognition; perhaps he's terrified by its promise. He will skip lunch and write a business plan.

Hope, good prospects.

Reversed: Obsolescence, hubris, a flop.

The Server (10)

The server stands on a raised floor, in an air conditioned room, in a locked building. It is a bank vault of precious corporate data.

The archetypal server's lemniscate indicates its 24/7 availability, ensuring its status as a totally abstract concept.

Service, aid, tactical advantage.

Reversed: Darkness, isolation, loneliness, dwindling MIS budget.



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Spam (15)

Frustration, stupidity, mindless repetition, wasted effort, lost bandwidth. The Spamee is consumed in fiery indignation, but the Spammer also wastes time and resources – nobody cares about his message. Lose/lose royale.

Unenlightened self-interest, stupidity, bad manners.

Reversed: Failure to comprehend the appropriate use of the Network.

Stock Options (17)

Your incentive is held in chains, prisoner of the company. So, it seems, are you. Kill enough time and your options will vest, unlocking their value. Will they be worth anything when the time comes?

Uncertainty, expectation, misgiving.

Reversed: Captivity, servitude.

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The Sysadmin (11)

The Systems Administrator glowers, submerging slowly in a dark bog of unfinished projects and stale trouble tickets. A throng of needy, dysfunctional systems looms in the background. The sysadmin will never leave work before 6 p.m. in this lifetime.

Unexpected trouble, conflict against the odds, uphill struggle.

Reversed: Obscurity, unappreciated labor, stress.

Venture Capital (18)

The hand of Venture Capital emerges from the clouds and bestows its blessings. Money falls like rain, refreshing the denizens of the under-funded startup. Are there invisible threads attached? Who can tell?

Aid, assistance, nourishment, help.

Reversed: Meddling, micro-management, unwelcome partnership, aversion to risk, cowardice.

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Oracular Interpretations:

Minor Arcana

When reading the cards, refer to this section to interpret any Minor Arcana cards. They are presented here in ascending order, from Ace to CIO.

A bit of practice with the **Silicon Valley Tarot** will reveal themes and patterns that will make understanding the cards even easier. Each of the suits, for instance, has a basic theme:

Cubicles: Labor, thought.

Disks: Memory, accumulation of intellectual capital.

Hosts: Hardware, technology, things physical.

Networks: Connections, communication, collaboration.

You'll find patterns of rank as well as file: Marketeers are generally about hype; Salesmen represent stupidity and greed; Nerds, enthusiasts and naive; CIOs, bureaucracy, authority, and management.

Ace of Cubicles

It is the dawning of the Age of the Cubicle. "Tell us again, Grandpa, of the days when office walls stretched all the way to the ceiling."

Effort commences, promise of intellectual property to come.

Reversed: Anonymity, facelessness.

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Ace of Disks

The disk is the primary receptacle in the Age of Information. Mass storage is fundamental, the primary mechanism of all intellectual capital accumulation. Keep that in mind next time you're cursing your local filesystem.

Accumulation, accretion, momentum.
Reversed: Corporate forgetfulness.

Ace of Hosts

Every time you boot that workstation, you're standing atop layers and layers of ever-increasing complexity. With literally millions and millions of potential hardware and software failures, isn't it amazing the thing holds together at all?

New technology, invention.

Reversed: Blind trust, irrational confidence.

Ace of Networks

The net emerges from the cold anonymity of IP namespace. It promises new dimensions in computing. So long, stodgy, cranky legacy systems. Bye-bye, stand-alone numbercrunchers. Hello, client/server. Did I mention terabytes of digitized porno, spam, and USENET flame wars, too?

New circuits, increased bandwidth.

Reversed: Confusion, lost connections, chaos.

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Two of Cubicles

It's your first day at the new job. See how fast you can learn the maze. Run, rat, run!

Confusion, ambiguity.

Reversed: Certainty, vindication.

Two of Disks

A disembodied brain hovers in deep space, with only disks for company. Its thinking processes are fast and powerful, but it can't connect socially. Nothing in, nothing out.

Misconnection, narrow views, social and intellectual detachment.

Reversed: Point of view so broad and all-encompassing as to be useless.

Two of Hosts

Two stand-alone workstations huddle lonely and forlorn in the bleak digital wasteland, dreaming of ethernet cards and network drops. Won't you please help?

Isolation, waste.

Reversed: Imminent partnership.

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Two of Networks

Network icons float above the Farm where much of the Valley's new tech is born. The tower is the most conspicuous landmark here, though the institution is largely superfluous to the Silicon Valley Zeitgeist. It's a receiver for transmissions from planet Nebulon. Enjoy your visit, but don't forget your lead-lined helmet.

Distraction, oversight, brooding.

Reversed: Fresh insight.

Three of Cubicles

Three cubicles stand in relief against complex equations. Math may well be the Queen of Sciences, but she's slumming in the Silicon Valley. Software engineers haven't had much to do with her for quite some time.

Rigor, method, incisive thought.

Reversed: Reservation, caution, a need for further inquiry.

Three of Disks

Three disks take their rightful places alongside other unstable elements. Bad things happen in threes, they say. Things break apart while you watch.

Destruction, dissolution.

Reversed: Apathy, anomie.

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Three of Hosts

They've put your brain on a pedestal and crowned you King of Workstations. You're really on top of things. Wait until after the rollout party to look in the rear-view mirror, though; you'll see Moore's Law bearing down on you. Thirty-six months from now, your precious little RISC machine will be a boat anchor.

State of the art, cutting-edge endeavor.

Reversed: Obsolescence, technical nostalgia.

Three of Networks

Cranky, brittle networks hover over the Administrator's keyboard. Can he patch the routing table before the help desk lights up like a Christmas tree?

Urgency, action.

Reversed: All's quiet on the Western front.



Four of Cubicles

Don't forget: on the cubicle farm, they're squeezing money out of your brain. What happens if they squeeze too hard?

Burnout, overwork.

Reversed: Reflection, insight.

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Four of Disks

Oh, the joys of quantitative information. So little room for argument. Such ease of interpretation. No wonder engineers and managers mistrust each other so; they live in completely different worlds.

Measurement, critical evaluation, performance review.

Reversed: Ambiguity, resistance to the inevitable.



Four of Hosts

Four workstations visit with a distant relative. They listen to tales of a simpler time: fewer beans to count, no OS, zero maintenance costs, and best of all, no consultants.

Simplicity, economy.

Reversed: Everything new is old again.

Four of Networks

Three lesser networks subordinate themselves to the backbone. All networks are not created equal. But on the desktop, it all looks the same. *E Pluribus Unum*, baby: The net is the computer.

Synergy, cooperation.

Reversed: Jealousy, intrigue.

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Five of Cubicles

Five cubicles oversee a phrenological analysis of the Silicon Valley cubicle dweller's inner life.

Distraction, lack of concentration, over-stimulation.

Reversed: *Mid-life crisis, career burnout.*

Five of Disks

Five disks stand in relief against oblique job requirements. Something about the wording gives you a queasy feeling – as if it came from a game of “telephone” between non-engineers.

Reservation, caution, need for further inquiry.

Reversed: *Phantom job openings.*



Five of Hosts

All hail the Penguin Army, come to free us from the slavery and oppression of the Evil Emperor of the North. Never mess with a penguin; he's zealous, he doesn't mind being out in the cold, and he works for free. He'll fight to the last feather.

Dedication, devotion, enlightened effort.

Reversed: *Emancipation, empowerment.*

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Eight of Cubicles

Spend eight years of your sentence in a cubicle and maybe they'll promote you to a new cell – your very own box in the org chart. Less solitary confinement, more hard labor.

Responsibility, loss of autonomy.

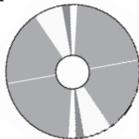
Reversed: *Time for a sabbatical.*

Eight of Disks

... This little diskie had a head crash, this little diskie went south. And this little diskie went “chunka-chunka-chunka” all the way back to the factory.

Data corruption, bit loss.

Reversed: *Time to beef up administration practices.*



Eight of Hosts

You bought eight new servers for your ISP. In three months, only seven of them will be running. See if you can guess which one. That's the one you don't want to configure as your firewall. Feeling lucky?

Hazard, chance.

Reversed: *New systems fail.*

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Five of Networks

Materials scientists work ever more frantically to build smaller, tighter, faster widgets. Soon we'll have machines that are infinitely fast, cost nothing, have zero moving parts, and fit inside a cocktail olive.

Impatience, hurry, diminishing returns.

Reversed: *R&D meltdown.*

Six of Cubicles

The oscilloscope shares its message of sinusoidal simplicity. Meanwhile, cubicle-dwellers fail to connect or agree on anything. Getting electrons to cooperate is easy; getting people to do the same is damned near impossible. Have you ever noticed how people can spend their days in adjacent cubicles, never speaking to each other, separated by corporate jealousies, warring projects, and competing spheres of influence?

Alienation, suspicion.

Reversed: *Failure to communicate.*

Six of Disks

An array of disks is often all that stands between your precious code and oblivion. Why do you curse them so?

Archival memory.

Reversed: *Forgetfulness, recklessness.*

34

Eight of Networks

A single brain radiates intelligence, mediating the space between a background of unintelligible bits and the foreground of overlapping enterprise networks. At the end of the millennium, your technology is only as good as the brains behind it.

Rigorous thinking, clean design, effective management of complexity.

Reversed: *Apathy, intellectual complacency.*

Nerd of Cubicles

“Hiya! Glad to meetcha! I'm Steve, the new guy in Tech Support.” He wants to make a good impression. So will you – in his backside. Isn't that how they treated you at the dawn of your Silicon Valley career – 18 months ago?

Apprenticeship, journeyman effort.

Reversed: *Incompetence, inconsistency.*

Nerd of Disks

Silicon Valley software companies prize creative and lateral thinking in their employees. The Nerd demonstrates these qualities as he ponders what he might buy when his stock options vest: “A Porsche? Uh, no . . . how about a Porsche? Or maybe a Porsche?”

No originality, lost inspiration.

Reversed: *Irrelevant self-interest.*

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Six of Hosts

The developer's fingers pound the keyboard, grinding out lines and lines of new code . . . or not.

Perhaps he has reinvented the wheel. Isn't there already a function in the standard library to do that?

Naive, unexamined effort.

Reversed: *Time to stop and reconsider.*

Six of Networks

Enie, meenie, mienie, moe. Pick a network, any network.

Indecision, network outages to come.

Reversed: *You need a vacation.*

Seven of Cubicles

Cubicles are arranged in a suspiciously QWERTY juxtaposition. Does this mean your home away from home is just a spring-loaded key-cap on the corporate keyboard?

Insignificance, modesty.

Reversed: *Intelligence from an unlikely source.*



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Nerd of Hosts

It's the new guy's first day – as raw meat for the corporate maw. What? He's got a CS degree? Grade-A Choice! They're already plotting the doomed projects they'll chain to him. Soon he'll be infected with New Hire's Disease. The primary symptom? He'll take corporate retreats seriously.

Naive dedication to unproven ideas.

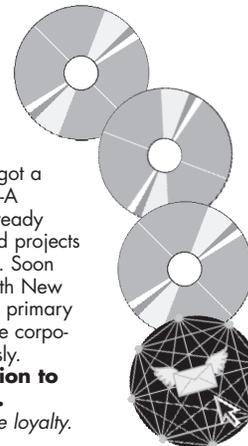
Reversed: *False loyalty.*

Nerd of Networks

He stands on the threshold of his latest career move. He is eager to please; he'd like to fit in. His nose is slightly elongated; his resume might not be entirely accurate.

Hunger, willingness to take on unglamorous tasks.

Reversed: *Unabashedly athletic job-hopping.*



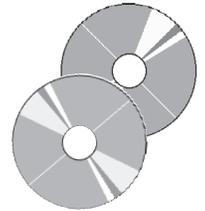
39

Seven of Disks

There comes a time in every programmer's life when, after months of design, development, and debugging, he discovers an architectural oversight, flaw in basic reasoning, or mistaken key assumption. In a rush it dawns on him that the whole project must be scrapped and rethought. Desolation reigns.

Despair, disaster, calamity, setbacks.

Reversed: *Time to question sacred assumptions.*



Seven of Hosts

Seven hosts are seen with their marching instructions. Remember: They were only following orders.

Compliance, obedience.

Reversed: *Single-mindedness.*

Seven of Networks

Seven networks – all cross-connected. Can you spot the bottleneck?

Unequal distribution of labor.

Reversed: *Overwhelming cross-talk.*

Too much communication.

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Marketeer of Cubicles

Her skill with presentation managers is exceeded only by the style-to-substance ratio of the presentation itself. She'll make a beautiful pie chart in full color – about nothing at all. She's Occam's razor turned inside-out, needlessly multiplying entities.

Hyperbole, buzzword-veneered ignorance.

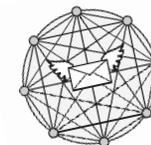
Reversed: *Denial, deer-in-the-headlights.*

Marketeer of Disks

Three days to go until COMDEX and the Big Product Launch, and no beta to show. Is that a smile, or is she clenching her teeth to keep from screaming? She must create a press release and dog-and-pony show. Thank goodness for her creative writing degree. Who says that a Liberal Arts education is wasted in the Silicon Valley?

Clutch performance, tap-dancing under pressure.

Reversed: *Your cover is about to be blown.*



Marketeer of Hosts

40 She'll commission extensive market research, then create elaborate fairy tales:

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"Once upon a time, there was a large, lonely market segment, waiting for Prince Charming."

Flush marketing budget. Big advertising push to come.

Reversed: *Invisibility to customers.*

Marketeer of Networks

The marketeer clings tightly to one of the few jobs in which her gender is grudgingly represented in the Silicon Valley. Her smile is forced. She is relentlessly upbeat. She is well-fortified from slings and arrows by industrial-weight shoulder pads within her smart Armani frock.

Optimism, enthusiasm.

Reversed: *Appearances begin to crumble.*

Salesman of Cubicles

The overconfident sales guy hustles the services of the organization – development, consulting, maintenance. Or was it maintenance and consulting? Or just development? He must make a note to acquaint himself with the products.

Cunning, double-talk, perfidy.

Reversed: *Insight, possibly dangerous, from unexpected places.*

Salesman of Disks

Start with a little Dale Carnegie, add some Tony Robbins, some fire-walking,

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and a slice of some musty, well-aged EST. Garnish with words like "synergy," "value chain," and "incent." Finish with hair spray just prior to serving. *Bon appetit!*

Annoying, formulaic rhetoric.

Reversed: *Garden-variety stupidity.*

Salesman of Hosts

He's incapable of speaking in sentences; he's addicted to bullet points. In fact, he actually *thinks* in bullet points. That's what gives his head that bumpy texture. If he uses the phrase "enterprise-wide solution" one more time, slug him.

Gloss, shallow understanding.

Reversed: *Absence of guile.*

Salesman of Networks

The salesman exudes confidence in his \$3,000 suit, basking in the afterglow of a sale. He'll brag that he never reads, has no idea how to use the product, but can sell anything. Don't spook him with a coherent thought; he may become alarmed and stab you with his Montblanc.

Brashness, incorrectly placed credit.

Reversed: *There is an impostor in your midst.*

CIO of Cubicles

The Chief Information Officer oversees all technical labors in the cubicle farm. He

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ensures that the infrastructure will inflict maximum frustration on the laborers. *You want access to the LAN? HAHAhahah! Oh, that's a good one . . .*

Bureaucracy, authority, management.

Reversed: *Impending managerial change.*

CIO of Disks

"I strongly believe that WidgetCorp's CyberInfo Virtual Interactivity Hypermedia Toolkit is strongly positioned to dominate the market." OK, so why is that executive recruiter holding on line 3?

Changes in development policy.

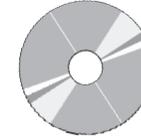
Reversed: *Lack of managerial commitment. Reorganization imminent.*

CIO of Hosts

"Management Information Systems" – what an impressive-sounding name. When you get close to it, though, it's the janitorial service of the chthonic digital domains. In MIS's heart of darkness, the CIO is the custodian-king; beware the plunger. The horror, the horror . . .

Management commits to new technology – for better or worse.

Reversed: *Managerial infighting at everyone else's expense.*



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CIO of Networks

The Chief Information Officer oversees all technical efforts. He attends senior-level management meetings and technical conferences. He holds the coveted "signature authority." In other words, people lie to him constantly. He can't help but lie to you.

Strategic alliances imminent.

Reversed: *Nitro-burning Peter Principle.*

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