Digital Infrastructures and Communities in Resistance

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- Colonial substrate of internet infrastructures (the telegraph story)
- Techno-modernity and fixing digital divide (the Facebook story)
- Decolonizing internet infrastructures

Postcolonial Digital Humanities as a local, decentered, and anti-colonial mode of thinking
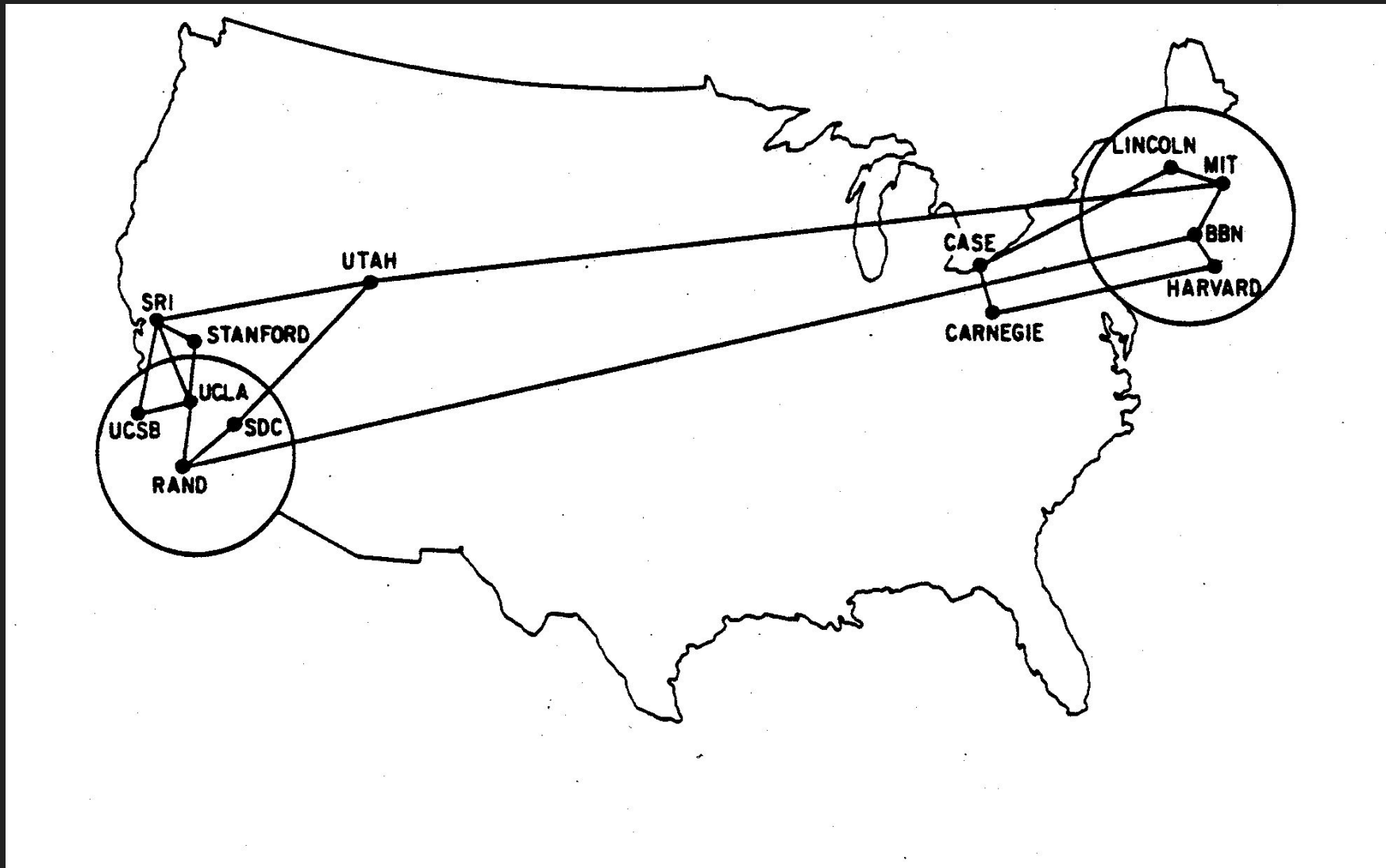
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How did this train get here?

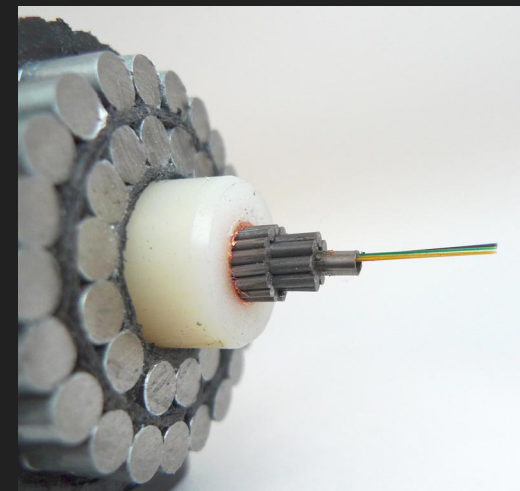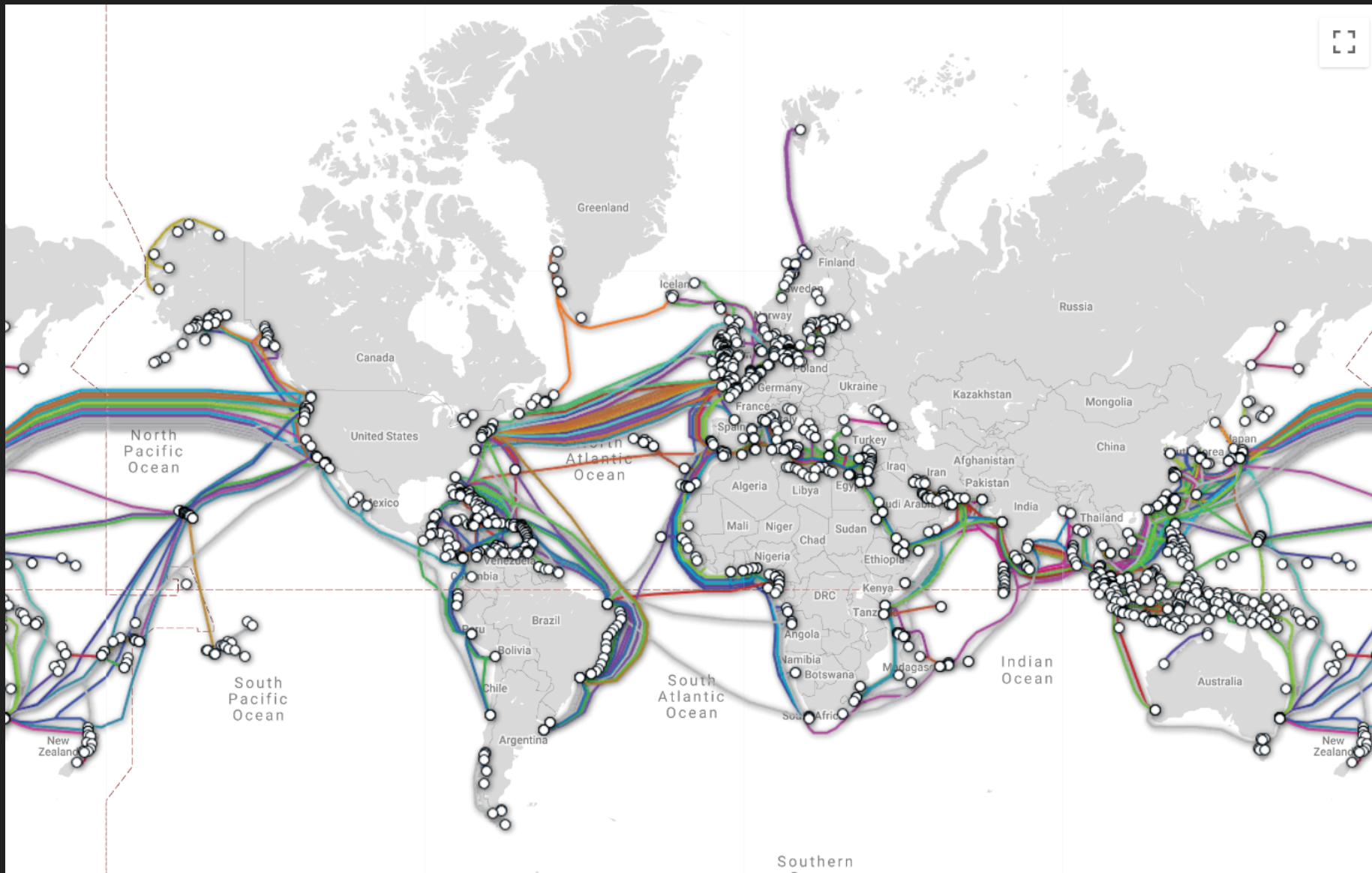# 1. The colonial substrate of Internet infrastructures

Ties between colonial communication networks, neocolonial politics, and digital technologies

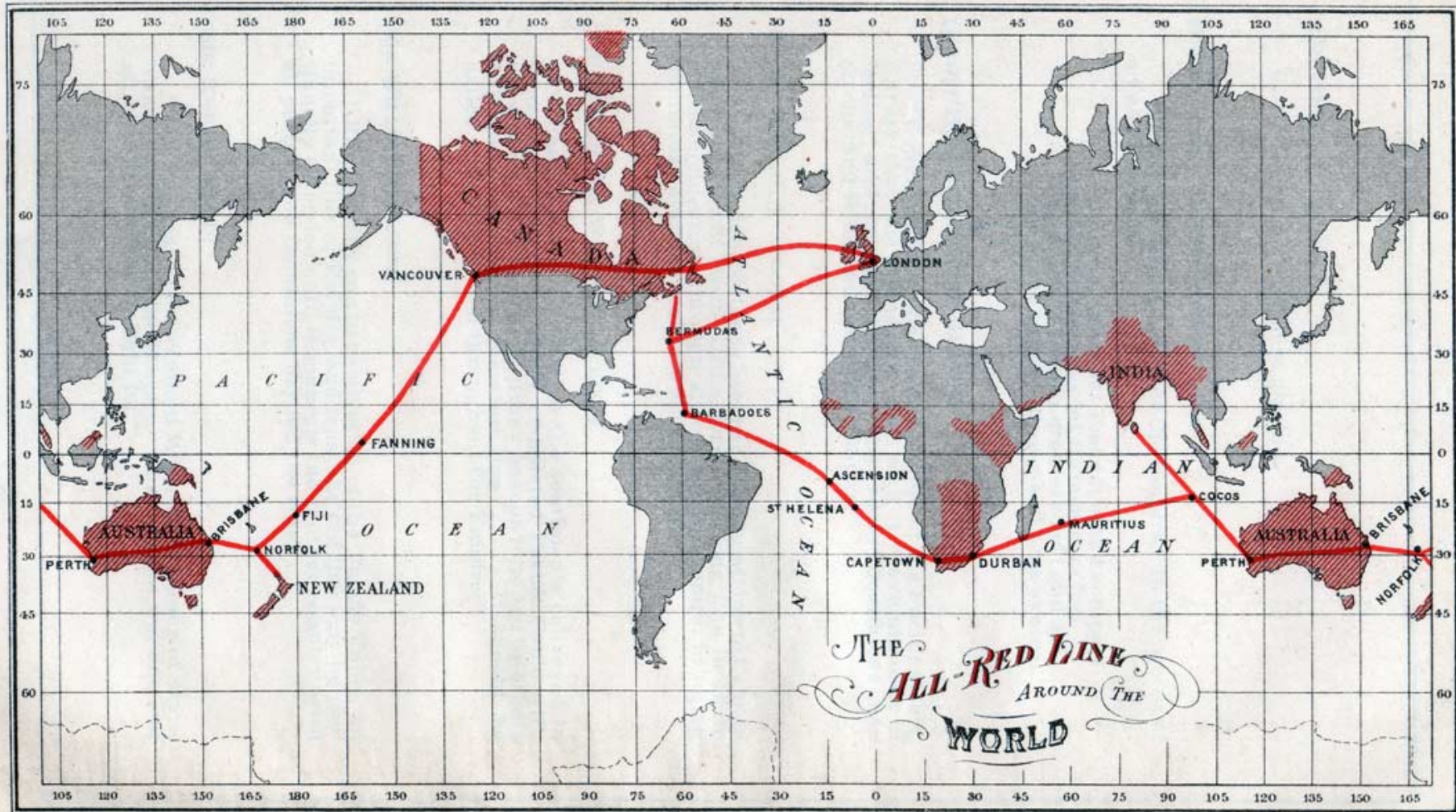What are the sedimented histories of the Internet infrastructures we rely upon?

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Map of ARPANET (1971)

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The undersea fiber optic cable network (2017)

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The All Red Line (1902)
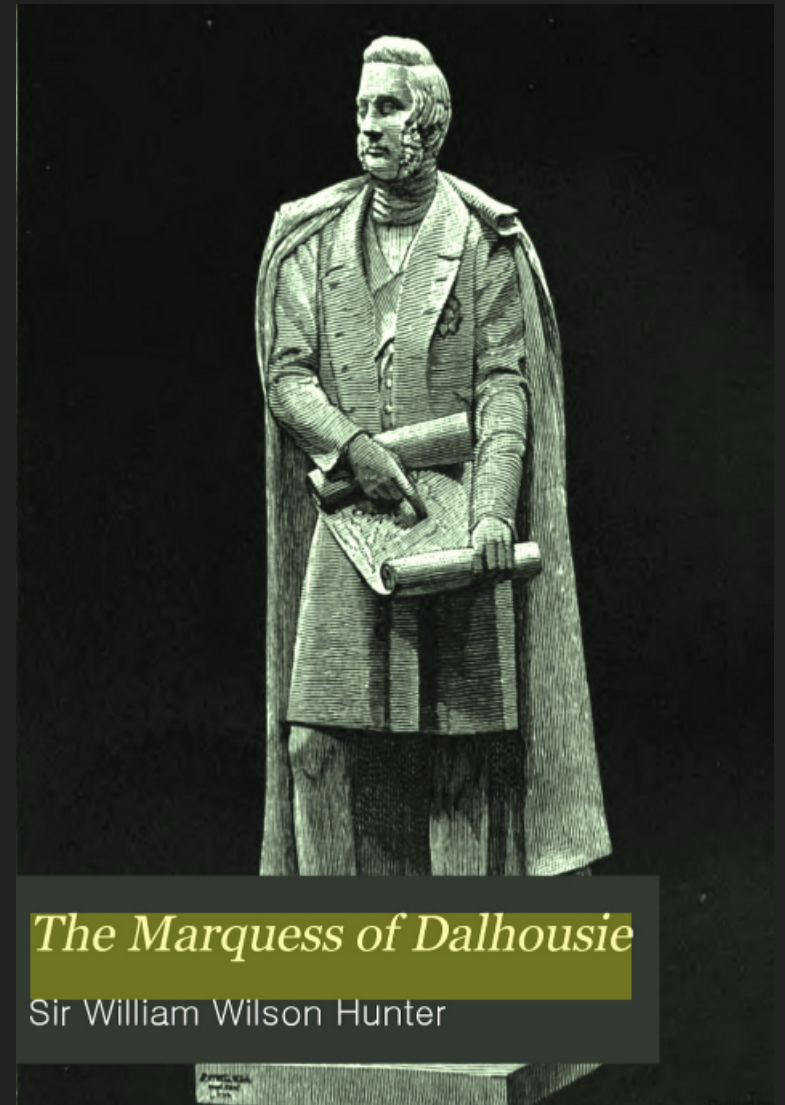
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Eastern Telegraph Company System Map (1901)

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The "railway and the telegraph were worth thousands of men to us in the Mutiny of 1857 and it is by the railway and the telegraph that India is now strategically held"

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1894)

The Marquess of Dalhousie
Sir William Wilson Hunter

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The colonial substrate of Internet infrastructures

The telegraph was a technology of control, centered ambitions of colonial empires

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The fiber optic internet infrastructure was built atop this older network

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Precarity of this inherited colonial topography

2008 submarine cable disruption
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **2008 submarine cable disruptions** were three separate incidents of major damage to submarine optical communication cables around the world. The first incident caused damage involving up to five high-speed Internet submarine communications cables in the Mediterranean Sea and Middle East from 23 January to 4 February 2008, causing internet disruptions and slowdowns for users in the Middle East and India.[1] The incident called into doubt the safety of the undersea

1. 23 Jan - FALCON cable near Bandar Abbas, Iran
2. 30 Jan - SEA-ME-WE-4 near Alexandria
3. 30 Jan - FLAG cable near Alexandria
4. 1 Feb - FALCON cable between Muscat and Dubai, UAE
5. 3 Feb - DOHA-HALOUL between Qatar and UAE
6. 4 Feb - SEA-ME-WE-4 near Penang, Malaysia

FORTUNE
SUB

TECH • INTERNET

An Entire Country's Internet Was Cut Off for 2 Days After an Underwater Cable Broke

TheJakartaPost

TODAY'S PAPER

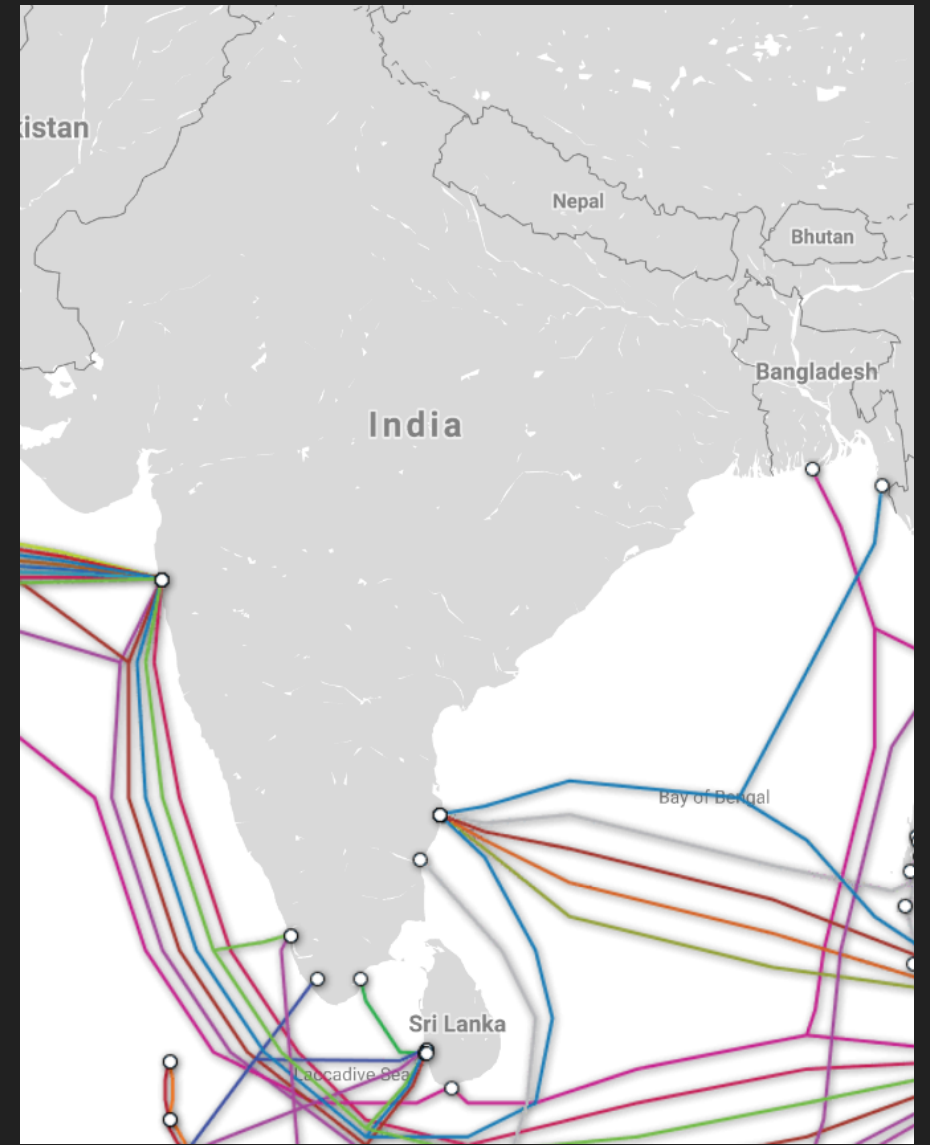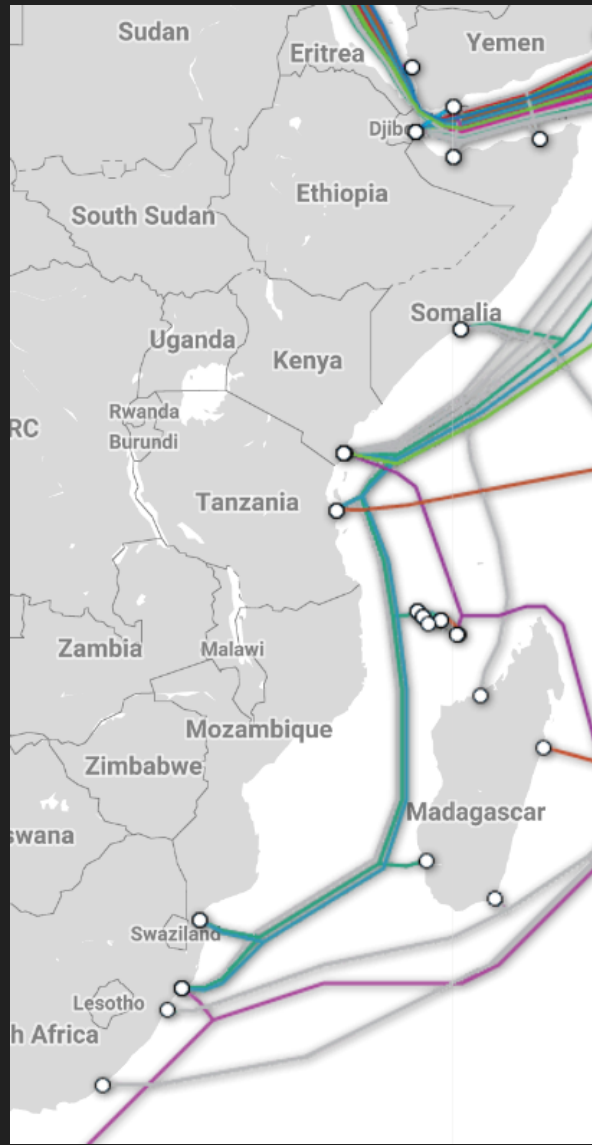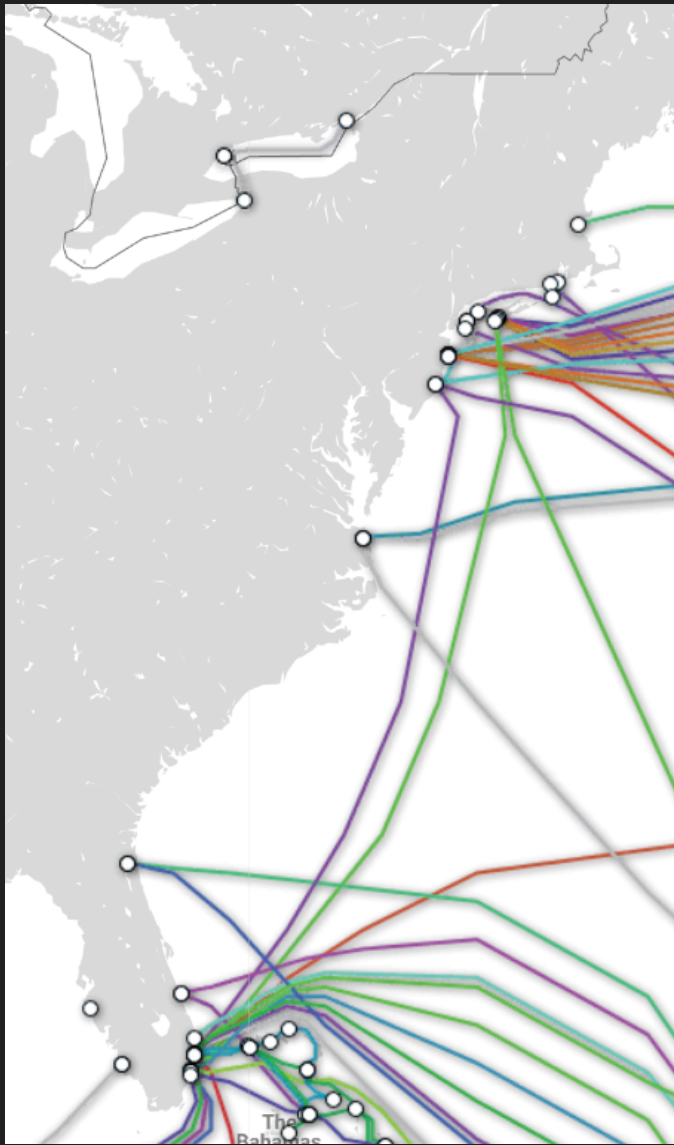### Internet capacity down to 10%

The Jakarta Post

Jakarta | Sat, March 1 2008 | 03:26 am

PREMIUM

The internet traffic capacity of PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia (Telkom) was down to 10 percent on Friday as undersea fiber optic connections to Singapore, which connect the country to the rest of the world, failed to function. Despite being the main provider for internet traffic connection, however, Telkom said its fiber optic failure did not completely cut

Cables and cable landing stations

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The colonial substrate of Internet infrastructures

The material infrastructure of the Internet is global AND bound to territorial and state politics

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2. Techno-modernity and fixing the digital divide

Initiatives to redress the global digital divide remain invested in colonial ideologies about progress and modernity

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India and Technological Abjection

Advertisement in The Times of India, December 2015

- "connected"
- "opportunities online"
- "better future"
- "digital equality"
- "move India forward"

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The Global South is not a lab

Techno-modernity and fixing the digital divide

Narratives about development, progress, and modernization are tied to the civilizing mission

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And cannot be the basis of infrastructural projects in the Global South

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3. Decolonizing Internet Infrastructures

Subversions

- The Indian Independence Struggle

Rejections

- Facebook's Free Basics

Transformations

- TATA Communications
- SEACOM Line

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SEACOM