

BLIMP and ZEPPELIN

One was called the Biometric-Learning (IMmersive) Protocols (BLIMP), and the other was known as the Zero-Emission, Population-Planning (Extra-Legal Invasive) Network (ZEPPELIN). They were both functional artificial intelligences: BLIMP was created via a DARPA grant in 1965, while ZEPPELIN was a private research project that achieved sentience 1967. The records for both are spotty, since BLIMP and ZEPPELIN fought each other to presumably mutual destruction over the course of the next ten years.

It's not too hard to understand why. The records suggest that BLIMP was an essentially benevolent, yet decidedly forceful entity dedicated to winning the Cold War; ZEPPELIN was your standard 'kill all the meatbags' power-mad sentient computer, with a special obsession about restoring Earth's ecology to a pre-human state. The war the two fought was mostly done from the shadows, complete with rival organizations with paramilitary uniforms, secret bases, high-tech gadgetry, colorful personalities, the works. What remains of their archives -- on either side -- makes for fascinating reading, particularly if you're a fan of improbable super-spy intellectual

properties. In fact, some of the more lurid novels out there apparently owe their inspiration to a dry BLIMP after-report. Or perhaps one from ZEPPELIN; the two organizations were remarkably similar, probably to the mutual disgust of both.

So, who won? Presumably BLIMP, given that the human race didn't go extinct in the 1970s. The final records are understandably sketchy, but it would appear that ZEPPELIN's organization deserted *en masse* in 1977 when it looked like ZEPPELIN really was about to destroy humanity; they joined up with BLIMP's people, and then they all died in the process of destroying ZEPPELIN's final orbital bastion of Volcanic Kinetic Smashers. This was all the distraction BLIMP needed to create a vast EMP pulse that zapped both it and ZEPPELIN; in one of the grand ironies of this war, the two AIs were both physically centered in NYC. The federal government cleaned up the remainder of the two groups, under the guise of dealing with the "NYC Blackout of 1977" -- and the whole thing was swept under the rug for fifty years.

Well, forty. Somebody wrote down the wrong automatic declassification date. But, hey, it's just a set of reports. Very detailed, and very extensive, reports. And blueprints. And schematics. And, hey, here's a bunch of tape drives!

Unlabeled, too.

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