

To Whom it May Concern

My name is Ken Ewell. I writing this letter as information to the effect that U.S. government scientists and science policy makers appear to be ignoring valuable contributions to the new "science of knowledge". I can make this claim because my company's science-based technology has been largely ignored by government purchasers, and large business even though there is proof by NIST that the technology performs better than most technology in its class.

Now it could well be claimed by any of those that might be questioned that I am just another zealot; that my company is not well-known or that no one really knows whether our products are real, that we have not published enough. Or you can get the classical answer "it is very complex science such that no one really knows which approach is best" while implying that the mainstream is the safe bet for funding. So I will began with an introduction of my history, and the timeline of the research company I founded, so there is no confusion of my character or my agenda, which is to produce technology to help people understand information and intelligence and make sense of the world.

First it is necessary to state that I am a patriot, a Vietnam veteran. After nearly a decade, I left the U.S. Army in 1977 and became interested in computer systems software. I was not trained in computer engineering or systems analysis but it came natural to me.

Though I have no University degree, by late 1980 I began working as an independent systems consultant. I worked on early word processing systems and sold a large system to the Georgetown University Law Center in 1981. It was used to cut the publishing time on the Georgetown Law Review and the Journal of Law and Policy in International Business, among many other tasks. That experience got me interested in international business and I looked towards other countries and languages.

By 1982 I had become involved in the production of word processing systems for Southeast Asian languages and in translation systems for the Arabic, English, Russian and German languages. I lived and worked in Saudi Arabia where I worked on computer and information systems at top levels of the Saudi government in most Saudi ministries.

By late 1984, I had founded a private company to research and develop linguistic information software. It was not long before Dr. Tammam Adi joined me and we began to develop a new kind software that would index computer data according to clarified natural language concepts. We became software developers to earn a living.

We called this new software Readware technology. Since 1986 I began looking at which government agencies might be interested in my new software. It turns out that a few government agencies are and were interested in my software. My company has customers today at the department of Defense, State and Veteran's Affairs. We had customers at Justice and HUD in the past, including those three letter agencies CIA, DEA and FBI. The Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress was our first customer and an august supporter of the company's early work.

Yet, because of what I believe is a well-documented bias in government contracting towards big business-academia consortia, I was never able to become very successful selling to the government-- though I made several attempts. This is largely because my software is controversial and leading-edge, and, as many contracting officers at NIST and DARPA and other agencies explained to me, the government is not in the business of researching solutions, they have to buy well-known commercial products.

Venture capitalists who do finance start-ups and research usually get involved in

businesses when they are generating millions in revenue or when they are backed by large institutions. They do not want to get involved in controversial software or in research that is not “mainstream”. So really there is only the luck-of-the-draw for a company like mine. We are on our own. We cannot get research grants. We cannot get business opportunities like our more commercial competitors. As a result, the work Dr. Adi and I have done is relegated to the back-pages of science and we are left to making whatever living we can out of the work we are fond to produce for nearly twenty years now.

So that there is no missed understanding, I am testifying that though my company produces well-engineered, scalable and reliable indexing and search technology based on leading-edge science, I cannot hardly get the time of day from American business or government purchasers or contractors. The reasons are always the same and none of them have anything whatsoever to do with the efficacy of the software we worked so hard and long to produce.

As a result, I have had to look to markets where I can get people to pay attention and where people can recognize a solution to their most costly problems. Though I am happy to contribute to the export of software and technology from America for the benefit of reducing the trade deficit, I am sad to report that those contributions are small and that most of the sales that funds our work, has come from Europe with work in German.

So you might imagine my excitement, when friends sent me newspaper articles and email messages about In-Q-Tel and its mission of funding companies that can meet the information needs of America. As it turns out, one of my business managers personally knew one of the civilian financiers or “venture capitalist's” hired by In-Q-Tel to evaluate proposals. There was also evidence that the firm was investing in companies that had software with functions similar to Readware technology. So, despite my reservations that we would only be ignored, I decided to make contact.

Mr. Andrew Halliday was an acquaintance of Pierre Wolff who was representing my company. Mr. Wolff made an initial contact and informal introduction of Readware technology and its suitability for funding. Mr. Halliday was eager to help and assist in getting material to the right people in the “agency” when he was informed that someone in the agency had already looked at Readware and that the agency was not interested.

Because of the personal relationship between Mr. Halliday and Mr. Wolff, and the out-of-hand dismissal, I asked Mr. Wolff to press for a reason. Mr. Halliday responded that they considered Readware already commercially available and they were of the opinion that it would not meet their needs because it is based on “a predefined set of concepts”. We found out that someone who believed in Readware did approach the CIA to take a look without my direct knowledge. It seems that they downloaded some functional though-crippled demo software we offer on the Internet. Since no one spoke to Dr. Adi or myself we were interested in learning how they informed their opinion. Because this opinion is based on ignorance, it amounts to little more than a lame excuse without any hint of reason. But soon after, Mr. Halliday left In-Q-Tel for a position with another firm and we did not pursue the matter further.

This kind of out-of-hand dismissal of our proposals to the Government are par for the course. I always considered myself and my company sort of singled-out for this treatment, until I was introduced to Dr. Paul Prueitt of George Washington University. He tells me that there is more than just unbridled ignorance at work.

Dr Prueitt believes it is more of an institutional and policy breakdown. I am still learning about Dr. Prueitt's position, but now I see that there are others with novel ideas

in the this new field of “knowledge science” that are being spurned by government contractors and purchasers This is comforting to me in knowing that I am not alone, yet it is also quite bewildering.

I cannot see or understand any reason why government decision makers would ignore any possible science that would help America defend against its enemies, the most important of which are the twin enemies of ignorance and surprise, as we know too well. On-the-other-hand denial of ignorance is also something people do very well.

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