

theFactoryFloor eNews manufacturing news briefs out of New Zealand

FBI target Dotcom installed in New Zealand to boost manufacturing productivity: Saga started with the best of intentions: Outcome gauged as perversely beneficial

HASTINGS, HAWKES BAY, NEW ZEALAND, September 5, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Kim Dotcom Was Installed to Boost Productive Sector
Saga Started With The Best of Intentions:
Outcome Gauged As Perversely Beneficial.

Kim Dotcom's settling in New Zealand had much to do with the government's determination to boost the nation's high technology base. The subsequent saga surrounding the eccentric but forceful German technology tycoon underscores the law of unintended consequences. Yet his presence here was viewed by senior members of the government, notably by Maurice Williamson, as valuable in promoting employment opportunities in the entire technology sector.

Much official thinking in regard to Dotcom establishing himself here as an entrepreneur also centred on the Nordic technologist's ability to enhance international awareness of New Zealand as an international-grade

centre of technology.

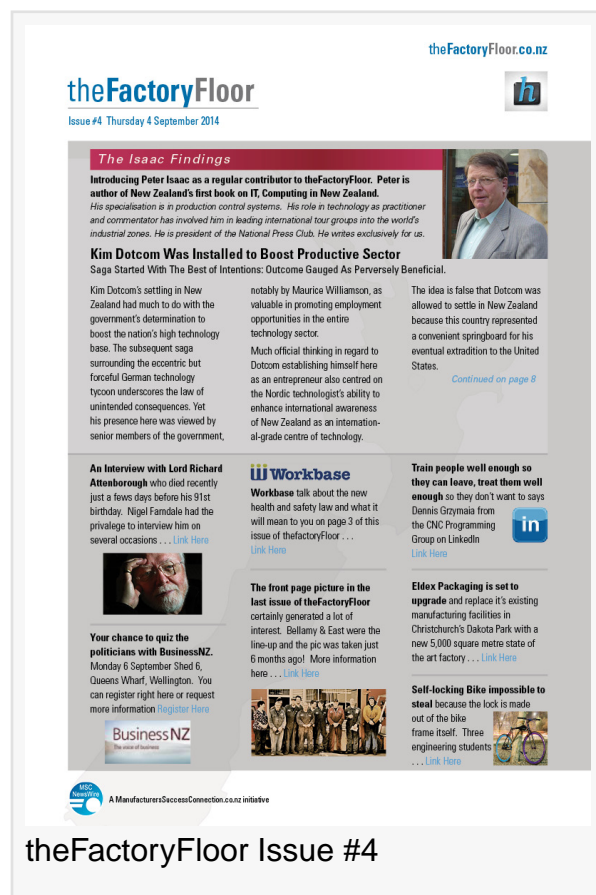
The idea is false that Dotcom was allowed to settle in New Zealand because this country represented a convenient springboard for his eventual extradition to the United States.

Dotcom instead was viewed as an asset who would attract resources here, and who would start generating employment in the advanced technology sphere.

The arrival here of Kim Dotcom was part of the government's continuing policy of deepening the technology sector by introducing a figure who was in a position to get things going and broaden the nation's technological employment balance.

This was especially so in regard to the earning of foreign currency. Soon after the start of the information technology era, there was a widely held belief that New Zealand could develop the IT version of an engine block economy.

In the event imports continued to outstrip exports. The entire problem became further exacerbated by persistent departmental implementation imbroglios of which the Ministry of Education's Novopay



The screenshot displays the 'theFactoryFloor' newsletter, Issue #4, dated Thursday 4 September 2014. The header includes the website 'theFactoryFloor.co.nz' and a logo. The main content area features several articles: 'The Isaac Findings' introducing Peter Isaac, 'Kim Dotcom Was Installed to Boost Productive Sector' (a headline repeated from the main text), 'An Interview with Lord Richard Attenborough', 'Workbase' discussing health and safety law, 'Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don't want to leave' by Dennis Grymala, 'The front page picture in the last issue of theFactoryFloor', 'Your chance to quiz the politicians with BusinessNZ', 'Eldex Packaging is set to upgrade and replace its existing manufacturing facilities', and 'Self-locking Bike impossible to steal because the lock is made out of the bike frame itself'. The footer mentions 'A ManufacturersSuccessConnection.co.nz initiative'.

implementation overruns are only the latest example.

The story goes back to the earlier and optimistic era of computing in this country when several locally inspired technology breakthroughs seemed imminent. One was in New Zealand undertaking the manufacturing almost all the components of a training desktop computer for local use and for export to China. The other was a breakthrough in computer design which would see incorporated a degree of artificial intelligence equivalent to that of the human brain.

A consortium of local and global companies at this time brought to New Zealand Herb Grosch, one of the three or four leading scientists in the field. Grosch had been central to the Manhattan Project, and also to the US space programme.

One of Herb Grosch's comments during his New Zealand visit was that essential to any national innovative and productive groundswell was an environment that might appear chaotic, but which would nurture inventive people and their ideas. Established buttoned –down methodologies were not part of this, he insisted.

Meanwhile as time moved on, the government and its technology planners eagerly sought a technology stimulation approach which would replace that of the old DSIR and especially its Physics and Engineering Laboratory.

PEL had been crucial in weaning New Zealand manufacturers and production engineers onto NC, then CNC processes and similarly with CAD and CAM.

These had all been crucial in overcoming the main obstacle to New Zealand's competitive stance in this sphere which was the curse of short production runs. Now under numerical control setting up these production re-configuring chores had become automated.

Times, though were moving on and of course changing. What had been effective especially during the 1970s and 1980s was becoming blunted. . Full-fledged technology ventures on the old DSIR campus had proved disappointing. These included developments in semiconductors, and also in ultra-low temperature conductivity cabling. Something else was needed. Even someone.

Under the Grosch doctrine this growth catalyst could be embodied in a person and one whose past would indicate non-conformity, and perhaps a degree of anarchy.

Maurice Williamson, a former Minister of Science & Technology and one with high level academic qualifications in mathematics and with applied management executive experience certainly thought so. Williamson as a populist electorate politician has long cultivated a jokey larrikin persona in order to disguise his considerable abilities. This is a common practice among the abler National Party cabinet-echelon types.

It was now that Dotcom and his background came into view. Here was someone in whose gigantic form lay a human high technology job creator, and someone who could tilt employment from its drift into non-productive services into the kind of full-flow high margin product export generating jobs which are such a feature of parts of California.

What was not on the table was that Kim Dotcom had been targeted as an example and warning hit by the Motion Picture Association of America. The MPA was now under new management in the form of ex Senator Chris Dodd. Until his Motion Picture Association job Dodd had been chairman of the Senate's banking committee, a role which he occupied when the bottom fell out of US banking. His long career had been dogged by allegations of his taking out favourable loans from the very entities under his regulation.

Dodd now at the helm of the Motion Picture Association lobby was out to prove himself. The raid on the Kim Dotcom mansion followed. So did the pirating allegations from the FBI. So did all the other larger-than-life dramas which prove that reality is always stranger than fiction.

Yet in a roundabout way Kim Dotcom has lived up to and even surpassed all expectations. He has injected technology into the fabric of daily life. He has given technology a supercharged All Black level of daily interest and discourse. He has started a new global information storage enterprise based here to replace the one that the FBI closed down.

He is responsible for a political party which according to the New Zealand Herald at the end of August will achieve four seats in Parliament, albeit in opposition.

When the hysteria surrounding the Kim Dotcom Effect fades into history we will perceive that the saga will have had the value of shunting the daily chatter away from the repetitious doings of the urban unproductive sector notably bankers and other functionaries.

Instead the episode will come into a new focus as a manoeuvre by the government to demonstrate that an entrepreneur to use their own much favoured word can generate riches beyond the dreams of avarice by developing a technology and doing so with an idea blended with force of character.

Governments have this in common with manufacturing engineers. Every so often they must play a hunch. Everyone reading this will know that all played hunches also have something in common in that even the most informed person in the room can never tell exactly where they will end up.

So it was and is with the Dotcom hunch. It turned out to be a high powered rocket. But one without a stick because from the government's point of view it took off in every direction scorching most of all the sponsoring government itself.

It is still blistering through the undergrowth and as it does so it serves to remind us of the state's most recent and certainly most picaresque intervention in the area of fostering advanced technology.

This article penned by [MSCNewsWire's](#) Specialist Technical Journalist Peter Isaac. Peter is author of New Zealand's first book on IT, Computing in New Zealand. His specialisation is in production control systems. His role in technology as practitioner and commentator has involved him in leading international tour groups into the world's industrial zones. He is president of the National Press Club. He writes exclusively for MSCNewsWire and [theFactoryFloor](#).

Max Farndale
Manufacturers Success Connection
64 6 870 4506
email us here

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