V. Conclusion

This analysis points to several conclusions. First, although the notion of "security" is indeed relevant to the Internet environment, there is no single set of threats, policy prescriptions, and values that are covered by the term. Indeed, quite the contrary. Rather than a unified field, the Internet-security discourse is characterized by an array of competing paradigms, some of which conflict in several important respects. For example, the diffusion and advanced development of encryption technologies is vital to the network and private security collective images, but presents a major challenge to the state and national security collective images. This suggests that there is no simple solution to the Internet-security problematic that will satisfy all constituencies with a stake in the issue. Tough choices will have to be made that will entail losses for some and gains for others. There is no clear "middle-way."

Second, this disunity suggests that those who begin to embrace the idea that "security" is a priority for Internet communications must be careful to understand fully what particular type of "security" image they have in mind. Those who endorse security for Internet commerce, in other words, may not fully understand the extent to which the full ramifications of this paradigm may undermine values that they hold dear in other areas -- for example, cultural identity or state security. This is especially significant considering that the properties of the emerging communications environment appear to favor private and network, while constraining national and state security collective