

Deep Connections: Submarine Cables and Their Inseparable Ties To This World

The anthropocene marks the age of humanities activity and its impact on the ecosystems and environments that surround us, urging that humans make the environment and simply do not live in it. If this is understood, then us humans must also understand that we are largely responsible for its future direction and protection. To better understand how humans have altered the Earth, one would recommend we must go deep. Deep below the oceans breaking waves lies, approximately 700,000 miles of Submarine cables teething with communications.

This astonishing network of cables sits deep below the surface of the world's oceans and it's a part of our environment that humans hardly acknowledge. Of the nearly 4.57 Billion world wide web users today, it would be a shock to learn of such a connection, a physical tie to one another from land to land. Another shocking truth is that these cables facilitate the transmission of 99% of all data. If these pieces of information do not astonish you, you may need to grasp the reality of just how much data the world uses today.

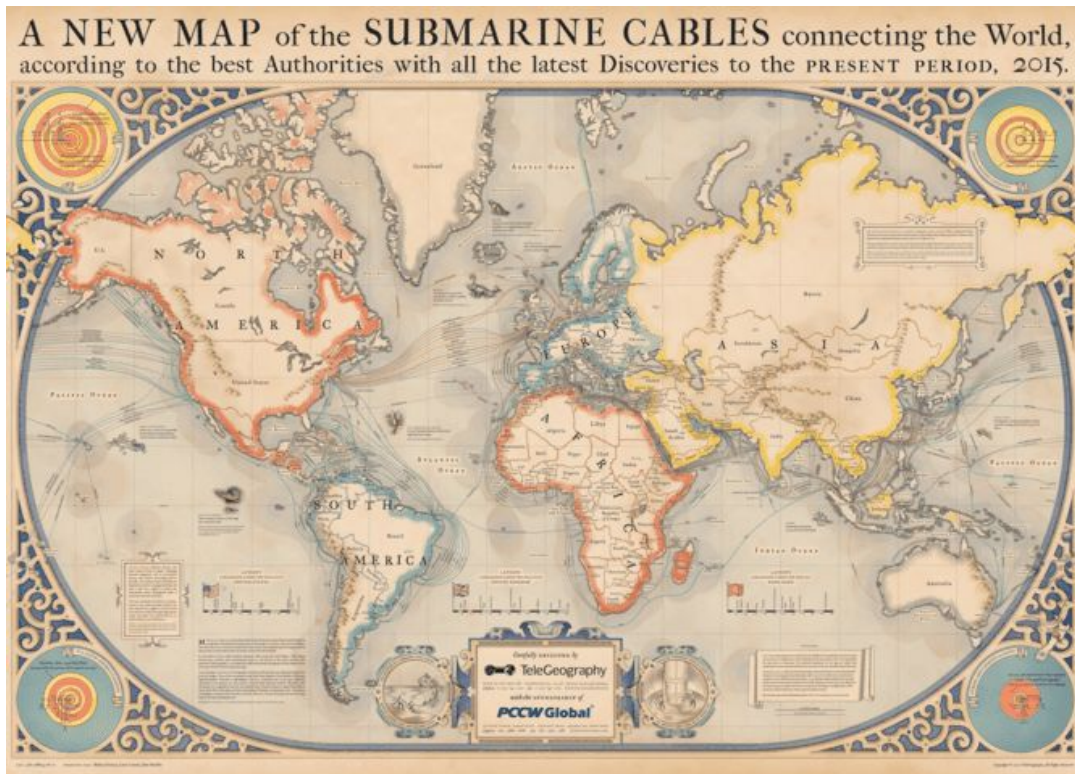
This stream of cables is a very real and tangible reality taking up plenty of space in the very thin biofilm in which we all exist. Though the first cables were laid so long ago, in the mid 1850's, it seems that humans have little interest in making reparations to the waters and space they run through. This is a problematic way of viewing the situation we are in now and this understanding about the cables and their influences on tides, microbes, and sway on human activity must be acknowledged. We must find a solution to slow the sourcing and privatization of new cables from interested companies such as Google and telecom carriers before our oceans are suffocated by the invasive vines of humankind's making.

A visualization of the Underworld: Cable Streams

Below is a small collection of visuals that lends to bridge the gap of the unfathomable concept of hundreds of underwater cables to the reality that they exist. These maps and photos call to action the need for action and elicit the human capability of morality when viewing these man made impacts.



Men drowning telephone cables in the ocean waters connecting England to Northern Ireland
(<https://atlantic-cable.com/Cables/1929IrelandIOM/index.htm>)

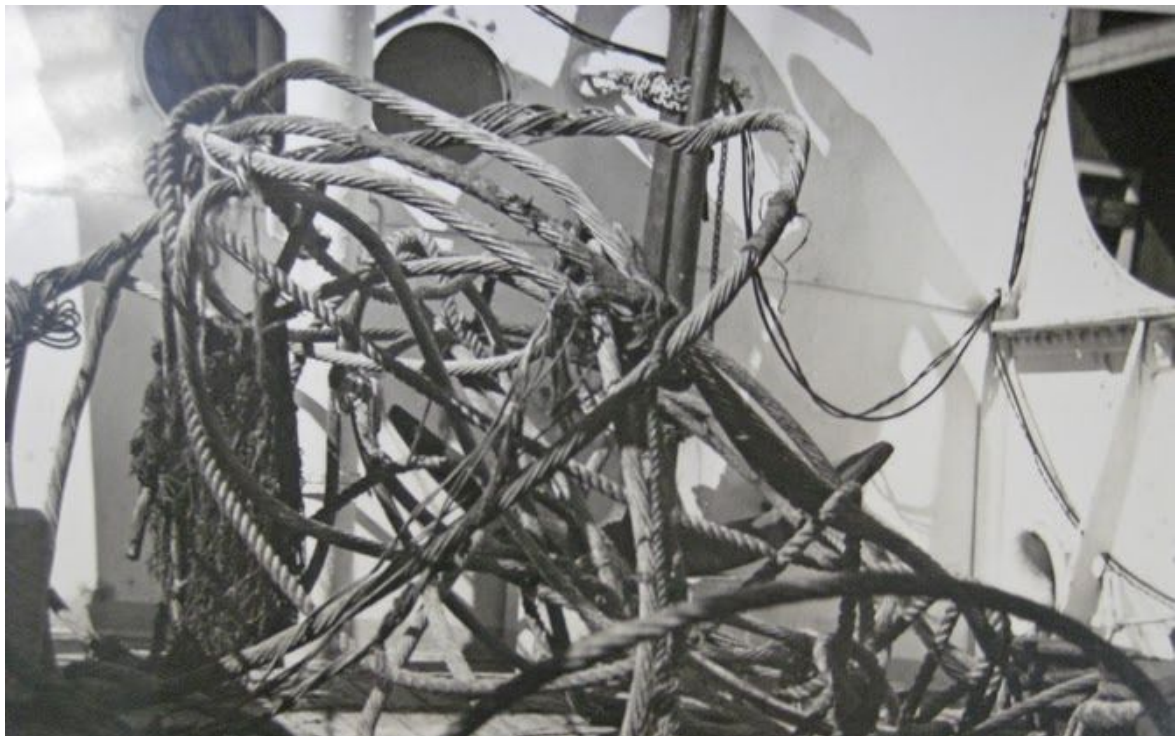


A 2015 map displaying the network of submarine cables beneath the ocean's surface, including 21 unplanned cables.
(<https://www.govtech.com/network/In-Our-Wi-Fi-World-the-Internet-Still-Depends-on-Undersea-Cables.html>)



A ship once owned by the general Post Office, was sold over to the operations of the British Telecom Marine, a private company which maintained submarine cables in the 60's.

(<https://atlantic-cable.com/Cableships/Alert/index.htm>)



A mess of tangled submarine cables caught by a fisherman in New Zealand

(<https://www.govtech.com/network/In-Our-Wi-Fi-World-the-Internet-Still-Depends-on-Undersea-Cables.html>)