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## Avoiding A Digital Delusion In 2025

By  
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On February 1, 1995, thirty years ago, two middle-aged African-American entrepreneurs bumped against a Digital Divide that segregated Black people from modern technology. They burst through spectacularly. The Divide was not merely black and white; it separated aware and ignorant, educated and poorly trained, oligarchy and proletariat, corporate and workers. Blacks were often stuck on the bad side of the Divide because of chronic systemic racism in America.

Rey O Harris and Stafford L Battle self-published a book called *The African American Resource Guide to the Internet*. This was perhaps the only publication focused primarily on the Internet for Black folks at that time. Subsequently, Harris and Battle were featured in the *Washington Post* (February 1, 1995), the *LA Times*, and dozens of publications nationwide. They spoke at the Library of Congress, the National Press Club, the Smithsonian Institution, libraries, churches, street corners, and bars. The Discovery Channel produced a documentary about their activities. McGraw-Hill approached the duo and republished their book a year later for nationwide distribution. Harris and Battle made very little personal cash. Instead, they used their energy and connections to persuade people of color to be aware of the digital future cascading upon us all. This was before most Black Colleges (HBCUs) had e-mail addresses or websites.

Bum-rushing the Digital Divide was crucial because some white folks were tragically conditioned by society to believe that people of color were not smart enough to comprehend the Internet and its technology. This was a big mistake. Emmitt McHenry, a Black man and co-founder of *Network Solutions, Inc.*, helped develop the DNS system (.com, .net, .org, and others) that powers the Internet. Many other talented Afrocentric internet-enthralled enthusiasts entered the arena to transform the world. Thus, the Divide was defeated.

Today, we all have smartphones, access to terabytes of conversations, clickbait, memes, AI, and factoids from around the globe. This Internet connectivity allows us to expand economically, intellectually, and spiritually, but (there is always a “but”) something far more hideous than a Divide is emerging. Consider it to be “The Digital Delusion.”

The Delusion pushes truth and fiction. It promotes the fear of the “other” -- anyone not exactly like you. The Delusion helped to elect a convicted criminal rapist to become President of the United States of America over a highly qualified, eloquent, multi-racial stateswoman. This is disgusting and embarrassing.

Personal data is being purloined and used to provoke us to vote against our own best interests and dump money into the bottomless pockets of the global oligarchy -- economic parasites who are so obscenely wealthy that additional profits are pure insanity.

We can educate, entertain, empower, and enlighten ourselves using the right digital tools. Just like we crushed the Divide, we can confront the Delusion. Social media is a jeopardy that we must understand. Keeping our young people mentally healthy and intelligently informed is essential. Ensuring that everyone, regardless of age or income, can stay interactive with family, friends, online resources, and vital services is necessary. Doctor consultations and ordering pharmaceuticals and proper nourishment can be done conveniently online. We can partner with creators in tiny rural villages or sprawling urban towers for goods and services. Progressive economics can benefit all of us. Listen, learn, and lead.

Harris and Battle sat in a McDonald’s restaurant thirty years ago, gleefully reading their full-page *Washington Post* newspaper article in the Style section. They pondered the future while sharing a small package of potato fries, two cheeseburgers, and a medium soda—no ketchup.

Rey hated unnecessary condiments. It was a precious moment for deep contemplation. Sadly, Rey is no longer with us on this level of existence, but Battle is still in the fight and enjoys generous, delicious, home-cooked meals with his grandsons, nieces, and nephews. Family is essential in the past, present, and future.

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Note: Stafford Battle is an AFROFuturist. His published websites include:

<http://www.staffordbattle.org>

<http://www.afrocyberspace.org>

<http://www.sbattle.com>

Amazon Latest Book:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DT8HN9TW>

*Washington Post* 1995 Article

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1995/02/01/a-net-gain-in-power/9138d027-ab34-4da2-af29-3c9a7dcffcb1/>