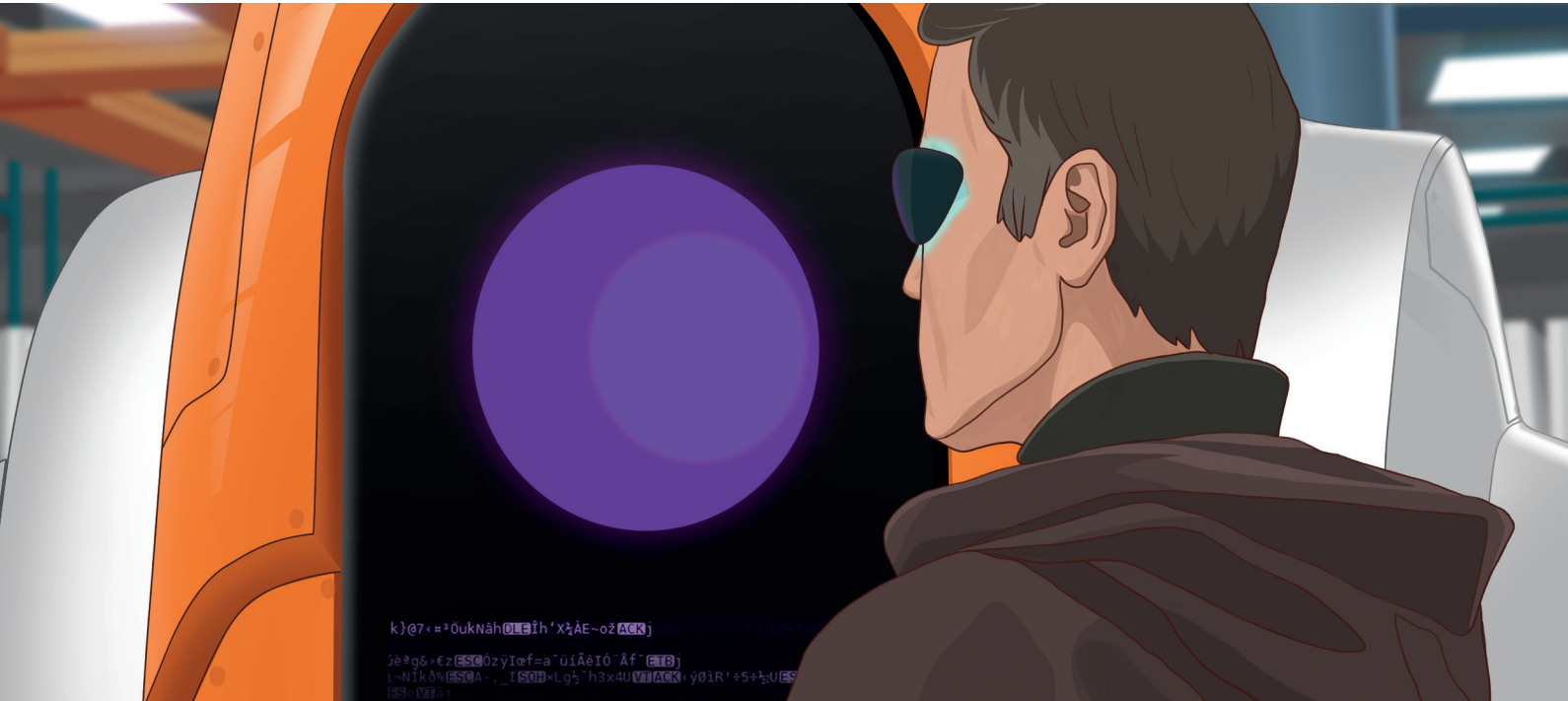


2038 A SMART PORT STORY: PART 2

A REVIEW

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So Part 2 of INFORM's ground-breaking Sci-Fi novella 2038: A Smart Port Story is here, and we're delighted once again to publish it exclusively. The review I wrote for Part 1 of 2038 last year proved to be one of our most popular downloads (along with the actual novella itself) and as I've had the fortune to review the second instalment, I can say with complete confidence that this next iteration is a far more multifaceted and extensive offering.

The first thing readers will note in Part 2 is the wonderful depth of characterization on display. Part 1 offered us some great insights; how the Port of Reykjavik has become a major transshipment hub for global trade passing over the recently developed Arctic passage (incidentally, this has begun to formulate already, with German port operator bremenports [sic] recently entering into a contract to develop a new facility in Iceland), how the future terminal will be deeply automated, and how despite this, the same old familiarities of the human condition are at play. It is on this note that, thematically at least, Part 2 begins.

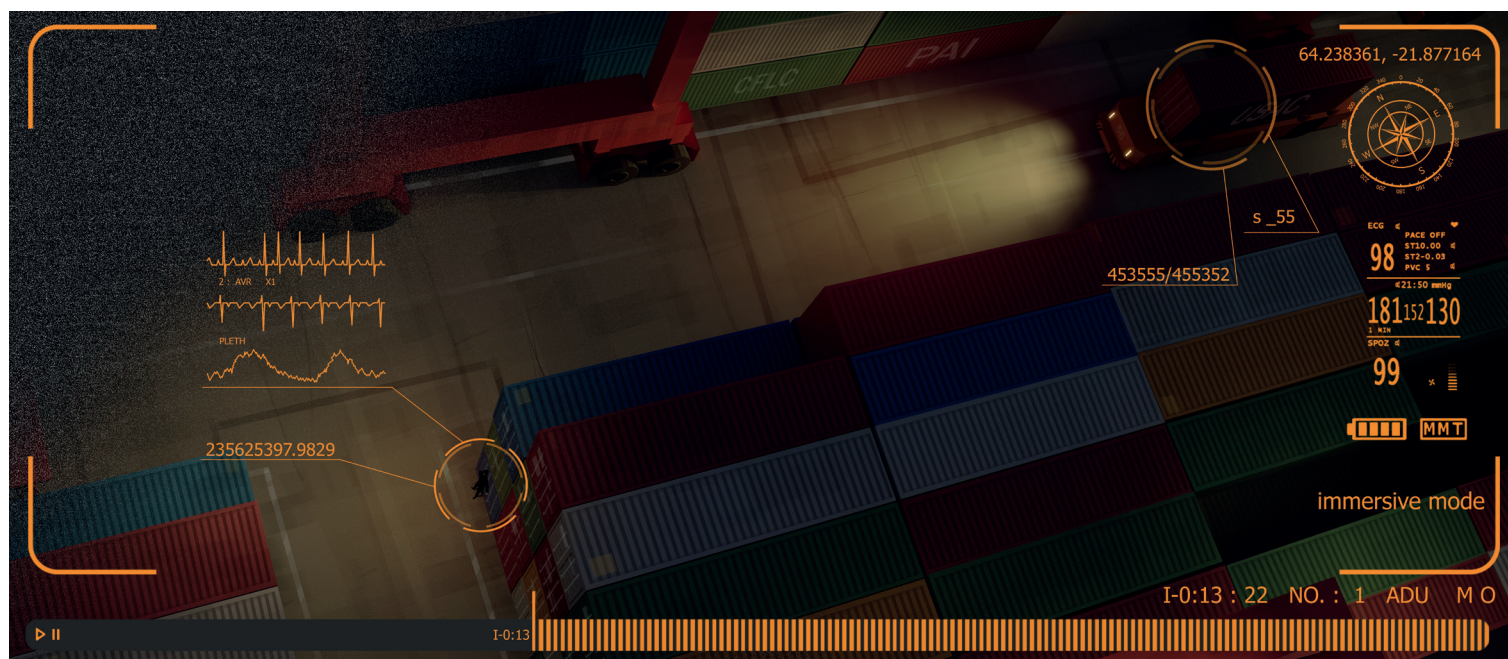
As I stated in my review of Part 1, I never expected to find myself reviewing a piece of creative writing in my role as Editor with Port Technology, and a lovely experience it was, but now I can say that I never expected there to be such care, craft and attention paid to the world of 2038 and the characters therein when reviewing Part 2. The authors – Dr Eva Savelsberg and Matthew Wittemeier – really have gone the extra mile in this regard. While one may think this novella is a simple piece of foresight into the industry, marking developments with a few metaphorical allusions to the present day, they may as well throw themselves into a great big bloody bin. Part 2 is a far more expansive piece of work than that. This is so much the case that when reading Part 2, I found myself identifying with the characters, even deeply empathising with them. Further still, I found myself appreciating that in the Smart Port world of 2038, the characters are conflicted with each other as well as with the broader systems around them as they strive to articulate their own perception of the

truth in a deeply complex situation. This is one of the pleasures in reading 2038, while the futuristic environment is faintly familiar yet simultaneously distant, the human stories are developed in such a manner that draws the reader into identifying with them via the realities of the human condition.

HUMANS & TECH

The rich characterization and deep, complex plot is of course buried in the broader theme of the story itself, which is humans and technology through the prism of the maritime container terminal. The issue of human-technology interaction isn't just a fundamental theme in maritime, it is arguably one of the biggest issues humanity faces, along with climate change and political imbalances.

The implementation of artificial intelligence has brought many promises in recent years, from the dystopian to the utopian. We've had repeated warnings from the great and good to prepare for major changes to our jobs and lifestyles. Some sound a cautious note (such as Bill



Ergo, the counter-argument focuses more on the human need for purpose and identity as acquired via work. Detractors further state that not all people are born with a deep creative desire, and would hence find such new found freedom bereft of the structure a career provides chaotic. This argument is the seedbed from which the 'Anti-Techs', the seditious anti-technology faction in 2038, have grown from. The Anti-Techs are another fantastic creation, representing the logical conclusion of artificial intelligence imple-

This stark distinction reminds us of one of the great facets of ourselves as humans; that we have an unexplainable soulful magic about us that cannot be replicated in simple algorithms. This poignant message is embodied in the ever-likeable main character Douglas, whom the plot revolves around. Douglas carries a world-weary charm about him, he has the air of a 'seen-it-all' cop without falling so far into cynicism that he becomes un-relatable. Given his age and his senior position, Douglas is clearly a product of an earlier time, and that earlier time is the time we inhabit

Part 2 forms the second instalment of the 2038: A Smart Port Story trilogy, the concluding Part 3 will be released in time for the Smart Port Conference in Rotterdam in October, 2019.