Streaming:

An Intelligence Agency
for an unspecified city in a hot climate.

Streaming
Data is transmitted by copying: read the
data in, and write it out to a new location.
Streaming is when data is being read out
while it is still being written. Internet video,
for example, is often streamed: a sufficient
quantity of data is downloaded to begin
playing the video, while the rest of the data
is still being downloaded. The logical limit
of this condition is when the data is still
being recorded at the other end, as is the
case with internet ‘radio’. In this situation,
there is no ‘file’ being copied at all, simply
an ongoing process of reading out data.
Since the total quantity of data is
functionally infinite, what matters is the
rate at which this data can be processed.

Compression
Compression is the reduction of the size of
a dataset. It relies on the discernment of
patterns in the data which can be stored in
more compact fashion. Non-lossy
compression requires the entire dataset to
be able to be reconstructed. Lossy
compression tries to preserve the
important data by excluding the less
important.

Intelligence
Programmes such as ECHELON (run by
the US and UK) and Carnivore (FBI)
provide continual streams of data at a
massive rate. The problem with ‘Total
Information Awareness' is the awareness,
not the information. The difficulty is not
getting enough data, but in recognising
patterns in order to compress that data to
the point where it can be apprehended by
a person. Intelligence is pattern
recognition.

Strategic Inefficiencies
The 9/11 Commission reported that the
terrorist attacks exposed a "failure of
imagination", writing "Imagination is not a
gift usually associated with
bureaucracies." The report reflects on the
necessity of what it calls 'institutionalising
imagination'.

A heirarchical intelligence agency works
by the division of labour in departments.
Data is compressed every time it is
passed up the heirarchy (team leaders,
department heads, directors).
This project presents an architecture
which strategically interferes with these
operating hierarchies as a contribution to
the institutionalising of imagination.

A in-situ cast concrete shell is proposed,
which would be partitioned and filled in
according to the specific needs of the
agency (a sample program is given on the
far right). The subtle misfitting of the
heirarchical program and the concrete
shell will promote mismatches and
shortcuts through the hierarchy in an
attempt to multiply the accidental
meetings: noticing a piece of paper on
someone's desk; meeting someone over
the watercooler; double-bookings of
meeting rooms; encounters in the corridor;
one department overflowing into the next.
For this reason, importance is given to
circulation spaces and excess spaces (two
major courtyards, niches, balconies).

It is important that the architecture is not a
residue of objectual thinking. The shell
itself is only a temporary coming-together
of multiple patterns cut from a stream. The
patterns are always truncated, pointing
beyond the building envelope. The building
is apprehended through circulation. It is
not a building which shows you your place.
Although local fixity may be found in the
circles and niches, movement reveals the
continual streaming-away of the
architecture.

References: ammunition belts, barcodes,
gene-sequencing images, DSP processor
design, Husserlian phenomenology, Kahn,
Asplundh, Palladio, .torrent, telephones,
aerial photography, Banksy.