

Mystery barges on US coasts set tech world abuzz

October 29 2013

Three mysterious structures that appeared on the water in California and Maine have the tech world abuzz.

Each of the boxy structures sits atop a barge and looks like a four-story building made up of metal boxes. Little is known about them, but they appear to have been registered by someone familiar with geek speak—and with a sense of humor.

The structures are registered with a Delaware corporation as BAL0001, BAL0010, BAL0011 and BAL0100. In [binary code](#) used in computing, the numbers spell out "one," "two," "three" and "four." Currently, Nos. 1 and 2 are on the water in San Francisco and No. 3 is in Portland Harbor.

Online speculation has focused on Google Inc., which has a patent for a floating data center that uses ocean water for cooling. Neither Google nor the company outfitting the vessel shed any light on the matter Tuesday.

Sharon Gaudin, a writer for Computerworld, told the Portland Press Herald that the way the vessels were named suggested a technology origin or use.

"That's a little telling," she said.

Also, the Delaware company to which they're registered is called Buy and Large, a likely joking reference to "Buy N Large," the fictional

mega-corporation in the 2008 film "WALL-E."

While the floating structures may one day have a high-tech purpose, their construction appears to be fairly low tech. They consist of shipping containers welded together and placed atop barges.

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Citation: Mystery barges on US coasts set tech world abuzz (2013, October 29) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-10-mystery-barges-coasts-tech-world.html>

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