

E-lit Pandemics

Chaired by

Anna Nacher, [Jagiellonian University](#), Krakow, Poland

Søren Pold, [Aarhus University](#), Aarhus, Denmark

Scott Rettberg, [University of Bergen](#), Bergen, Norway

Presentation

When Covid + lockdown hit us

- Attempts at understanding the situation
- What is happening? Where, who, how?
- Individual attempts: documenting, exploring
- How does it relate to the genres and traditions of e-lit
- Critical e-lit reflections on platform culture and metainterfaces
- Are we living through a general change, a paradigm shift, in our relations to technology, media, sociality, society, humanity, the post-human, ecology?

How is the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting measures, and movement of cultural life online reflected in electronic literature and other digital narrative practices online? With this roundtable we propose an exploration and discussion of electronic literature during this time of COVID.

- Earlier online meeting
- [Questionnaire](#)
- Building a research collection in Elmcip Knowledge Base
- Future research
- Sharing experiences, knowledge and opinions at this roundtable!

Where are we now?

At this point Florida alone has an average daily death toll roughly equal to that of the whole European Union, which has 20 times its population.

NY Times, July 16, 2020

Anna Nacher: Documenting efforts

Questions on documenting efforts:

- attempt at a broader understanding of creative responses to the pandemic;
- grasping the full spectrum of creative practices (professional and not);
- trying to pinpoint the otherwise elusive cultural moment



The Sky over Corona

Public group

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Twoja Widzialna R... 20+

Polskie Towarzystwo... 9

Poor Diggers 9

Przegląd Kulturozna... 9

Karpaty Magiczne / ... 9

Marek Styczyński: E... 9

Biotop Lechnica 9

Electronic Literature Or... 9

Critical Posthumanism ... 9

See more

About This Group

Description

You may have noticed, that since the lockdown due to Corona virus, the sky is much clearer than before. Wouldn't it be nice, to collect all the skies from all over the world? When this corona crises will be over and the planes will begin to zig-zag our skies again (?), we will have something beautiful to look at in this group. So tune in and post your photos of your sky!

Please only post your own pictures!

If you post pictures of someone else, please ask for the author's permission and write the authors name in the description. We respect intelletual property.

Read more here:

www.facebook.com/communitystandards/respecting_intellectual_property

Public
Anyone can see who's in the group and what they post

Visible
Anyone can find this group.

General

Members · 19,493



Dolores, David and 11 other friends are members.

Admins



Olivia is an admin.

HISTORY

Group created on March 24, 2020

See More

INVITE MEMBERS

+ Enter name or email address...

INVITE FRIENDS

Ask your friends to join the group and add to the discussion.



Marek Styczyński

Invite



Anne Sofia Karhio

Invite



Søren Pold

Invite



Mirek Filiciak

Invite



Zofia Koczur

Invite



Talan Memmott

Invite



Natasza Maja

Invite

Sponsored

Create Ad



Zalando



Massive and Microscopic

Private group

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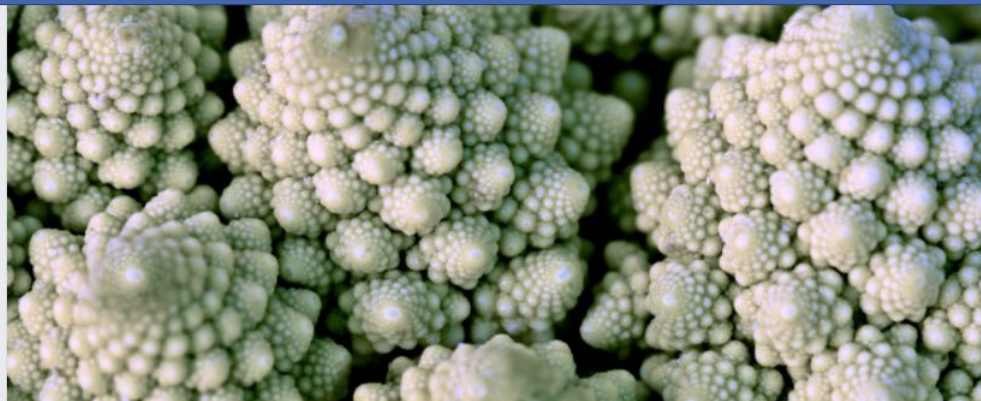
Karpaty Magiczne / ... 9

Marek Styczyński: E... 9

Biotop Lechnica 9

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See more



Joined

Notifications

Share

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About This Group

- Private
Only members can see who's in the group and what they post
- Visible
Anyone can find this group.
- General

Members - 170



Annette is a member.

Admins



HISTORY

Group created on May 12, 2020

See More

POPULAR TOPICS IN POSTS

- Daily Prompts (41)
- FAQ (4)
- granularity/global...
- Related CFPs (1)

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Ewelina Twardoch

Invite

Anna Sofia Karbin

Invite

Are.na / S4AD Digital Diary (+4) / Digital Diary

Info

This channel is a collection of digital diary entries chronicling [virtual] life in quarantine, submitted through an open call.

56 Followers

Collaborators

Thomas Martinez, Charles Broskoski, willa köerner, and Leo Shaw

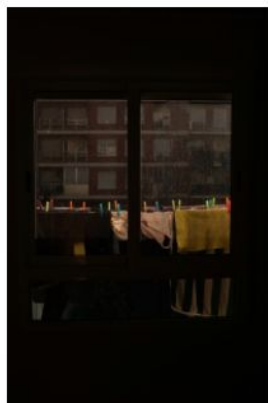
This channel appears in

The Everything Channel (Workspace), curations of the deep web, the library, 000, GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, museums), The Unseen Transformation, Concept → The Great

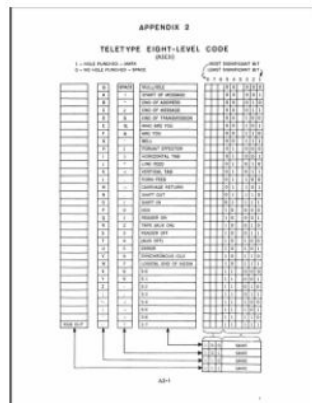
🔍 Filter Digital Diary (190 blocks)



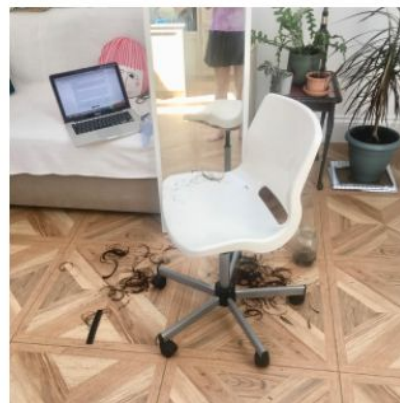
7/6/2020



7/5/2020



7/3/2020



6/13/2020



thezoomzoomroom_

Follow



37 posts 238 followers 290 following

THE ZOOM ZOOM ROOM

A VARIETY SHOW/OPEN MIC NIGHT ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

BE THERE AND BE IN A SQUARE

FRIDAYS 7:30-9:00PM-ISH

COOL NEW FREE DOORS @7:00PM EST FREE NEW COOL

zoom.us/j/6700993428



TZZR VIII



TZZR VII



TZZR VI



TZZR V



TZZR IV



TZZR III

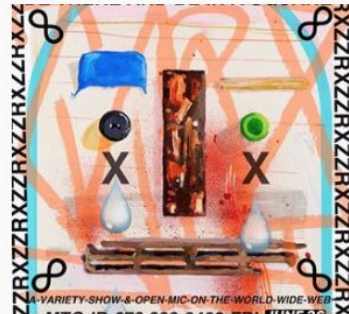


TZZR 2

POSTS

IGTV

TAGGED



BROOKLYN

Friday 6/5

Protest
Sunset Park (entrance on 44th St & 6th Ave)
@ 5 PM
472 86th St (outside Century 21)
@ 5:30 PM
Fl. Greene Park @ 1 PM (Black Tie Walk)

Khutbah & Prayer & Protest
Barclays Ctr @ 1:15 PM

Vigil
Grand Army Plaza @ 2 PM
McCarren Park @ 7 PM



A group where we all pretend to be ants in an ant colony

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Description

In this group we are ants. We worship The Queen and do ant stuff. Welcome to the colony

Private
Only members can see who's in the group and what they post

Visible
Anyone can find this group.

General

Members · 1,920,569



Anne, Mark and 14 other friends are members.

Admins and Moderators



Lydia, Kyle and 22 other members are admins. Ellie, Scott and 49 other members are moderators.

HISTORY

Group created on June 27, 2019

Name last changed on June 27, 2019

See More

POPULAR TOPICS IN POSTS

CHARITY MERCH ...

"GQA" ART CONT...

PublANTcity (9)

ANTUCATION (7)

Posting Temporari...

APR 2020 QUEEN ...

RULES (1)

ANT COUNT (1)

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+ Enter name or email address...

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Ewelina Twardoch

Invite

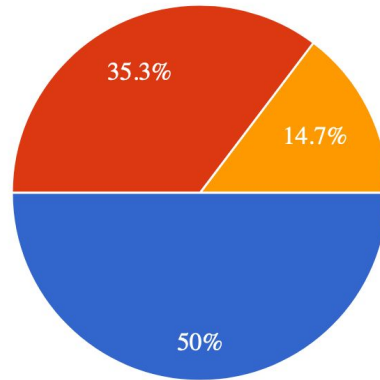


Lisa Swanstrom

Invite

Have you documented your everyday experiences of life during the pandemic in some kind of sustained way?

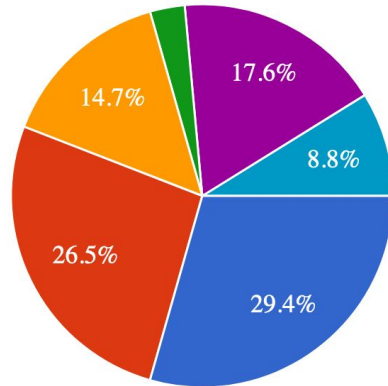
34 responses



- Yes
- No
- I wanted to, but it got too difficult

How regular was your documenting practice?

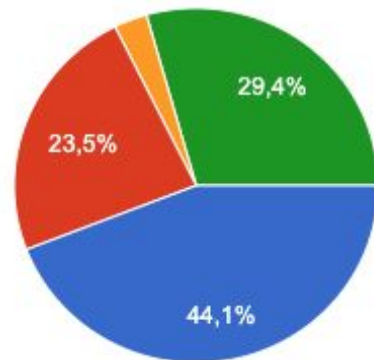
34 responses



- I didn't document
- Everyday
- Every 2-3 days
- Once a week
- From time to time, but repeatedly
- I wanted to and started something, but didn't continue

In what form did you document your experience of the pandemics?

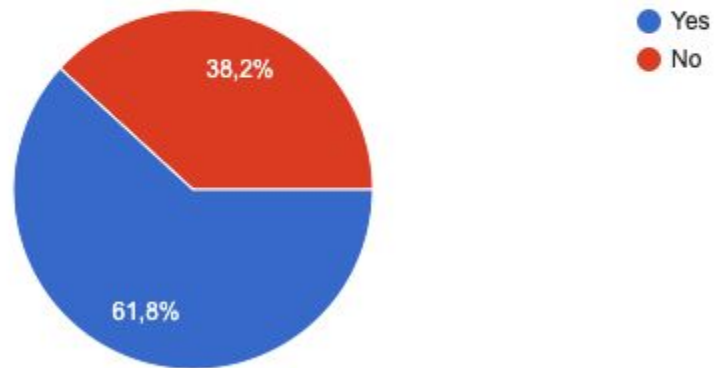
34 odpowiedzi



- Mostly textual form (a diary, social media updates, regular notes etc.)
- Mostly visual form (filming, photographing, animation, drawing etc.)
- Mostly sonic (field recording, writing songs, composing music etc.)
- Other

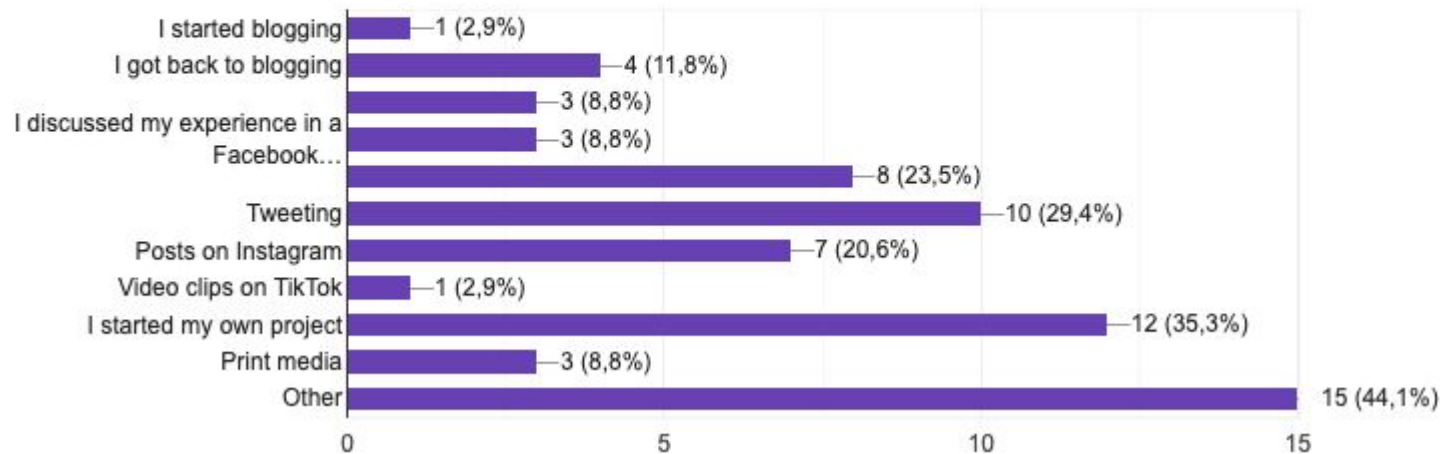
Did you share your insights from the pandemic?

34 odpowiedzi



How did you share your observations? (check all that apply)

34 odpowiedzi



Scott Rettberg: Writing practices and genres

Covid-19 has obviously had significant effects on the circumstances under which we create, though compared to some forms of cultural practice, the actual conditions of making were not as radically affected. Orchestra musicians or live theatre actors for example needed to “pivot” in much more radical ways in order to keep developing their work, while e-lit authors often create “at-home” or via distanced collaborations. But other circumstances within our lives shifted dramatically, as teachers had to quickly adapt to remote teaching, parents had to adapt to home-schooling, people needed to care for loved ones, etc. And all of us had to adapt to what can only be described as a shift in priorities.

Quarantine

Voice I

1.

What used to be inside is out
What used to be outside is in
Now we mistrust and we doubt
All that is outside our skin

2.

I miss touching hands
And seeing faces
I miss death metal bands
In crowded spaces

3.

I miss televised parades
I miss cocktail parties
I miss charades

4.

People in the white suits
Bring me wholesome meals
Wrapped in plastic
They keep their distance
They are kind to me

5.

There was a crack in the window
That's how the light got in

24.

Most aircraft have strong filter systems. With the exception of some smaller or much older aircraft, airplanes are equipped with True High-Efficiency Particle Filters (True HEPA) or High-Efficiency Particle Filters (HEPA). These filtration systems then filter and recirculate the air from the cabin and mix it with fresh air. The dirtier a HEPA filter gets, the more efficient it becomes, so it can easily handle the passenger load on a Boeing 747. Your risk of catching something airborne on a plane is lower than in many other confined spaces because of the filters and air exchange ratio. Even though it may not seem to be the case, especially since cabin pressure can make a simple instance of the sniffles feel like the full-blown flu, the air you're breathing is much fresher than in other spaces.

25.

In 1844 the physician Neil Arnott (1788-1874) told the Royal Commission for Enquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts that “The immediate and chief cause of many of the diseases which impair the bodily and mental health of the people, and bring a considerable proportion prematurely to the grave is the *poison of atmospheric impurity* arising from the accumulation in and around their dwellings of the decomposing remnants of the substances used for food and from the impurities given out from their own bodies.”

26.

In 1918, Philadelphia held a parade for soldiers returning from the France, where soldiers crammed into crowded military camps had contracted the Spanish flu. It was the largest parade in the city's history. More than 12,500 Philadelphians died of the Spanish flu. A top government official described the flu as “ordinary influenza by any other name.” Newspapers that printed the truth about the spread of the virus were charged with sedition for “weakening morale.”

27.

Coffin makers couldn't keep up with demand, so mass graves were dug to bury the dead.





Writing practices and genres

In many ways it is still too early to make generalizations about how COVID is impacting or helping to form particular genres of e-lit. But I would note some threads of practice in the first tranche of works we are seeing coming out the pandemic.

1. Generative
2. Performance
3. Parody
4. Collective (or perhaps the isolated collective) Narrative / Play
5. Mourning



Feeling less alone? [Leave room](#)

Alex Saum, Room #3

Sonnet Corona

Nick Montfort March 27–28, 2020 Poems

Recall,
postpone,
free fall...
unknown.
We grope,
awash,
our hope
collage.
Now swerve
—to quell
what churns,
no bell—
just aches?
Outbreaks.


The Infinite Catalog of Crushed Dream

Mark Sample

The Infinite Catalog of Crushed Dreams

The pandemic hit and then...

1. Kinslee sat at home, writing a novel about foul hairsprays. As if anyone would ever care.
2. Kendrick in Chicago, Illinois, is only 10 years old. Kendrick misses their crush at school. Why are Mom and Dad so mad at each other all the time?
3. All the shops are closed in Thornton, Colorado. The streets are deserted. Coyotes paw across the empty parking lots.
4. A printing press operator in Lakewood, Colorado was let go. He sat at home, wracked with Zoom fatigue. The weather was fair with haze. But no one noticed.
5. Junior year means nothing when you can't leave the house. At least that's what Valerie thought. Is school ever going to start again?
6. Yesterday in Greenville, South Carolina, they postponed a fair. The organizers were disappointed. It was just one more thing gone wrong. Nobody could say if things would ever be



test it and then I said supposing you brought the light inside the body


0:14 / 10:11

TIKTOK

CC

Circumstances necessitate parody

Hamilton Mask-up Parody Medley



Florida is really scaring me

2:51 / 4:19

gastropoetics.menu


Input dictionary definition... (3) Scott Rettberg GASTROPOETICS: Quarant... QQ20-Nostradamus.shell (3) Facebook

QUARANTINE QUARTRAINS

The Plague Year Plague Zombie

1 can of discount lager
4 oz. tonic
a splash of kahlua

lick gently with your tongue and serve in a brandy snifter.
garnish with oysters and a haiku.



Magic Kingdom Post Mortem
or the Plague Year Plague Zombie.

You are screen sharing Stop Share

QUARANTINE QUARTRAINS

Transmittable Bramble Sequestration

to finish, a galette of marshmallow puree,
and lemon grilled raspberry to keep you calm;
coriander and whipped cream on the plate do sashay,
drizzled with savory lemon balm





Use Quick Switcher to get around Discord quickly. Just press:

CMD + K

poememes-for-the-quar...

uncontinuous-if-jam

NEWCOMERS

newcomer-intros

seeking-mentors

seeking-mentees

seeking-collaborations

OFF TOPIC CHANNELS

the-pub



the-wake-for-damon-lor...

the-pub-party-room



Rob Wittig Yesterday at 3:51 PM

[Whilst swiffering up the back booths finds piece of notebook paper, waves it] Wow, there must have been quite a crowd in here overnight. **Anybody know who wrote this?** [reads aloud] *If the Grim Reaper is the image of death in the Agricultural Age, what is the image of death in the Digital Age? The Implacable Power Strip? Some careful or careless finger that pushes the switch from 1 to 0? Or is some entity perhaps chasing a puppy (who doesn't want to take its worm medicine) and accidentally unplugs your Power Strip?* (edited)



Deena Yesterday at 3:52 PM

@mark marino (Dir. of Com.) I think, like the virtual banquet, we can keep the pub open for all hours, especially as we are round the world. Sneaks in and turns on the neon sign, thinking no one will know who did that.



1



Rob Wittig Yesterday at 3:53 PM

[Sees @Deena turning on the neon sign. Promises not to tell.]

[muses] Dang! This ELOatmeal really **is** good! With pitted sogdian dates! Mmmm. Getting my appetite warmed up for the Quarantine Quatrain feast.

Need to stoke up on some coffee and check out @Sarah Laiola (@DrSarathena192) 's Tweet Your Shared Adventure game. Looks great!



1



Nick Montfort Yesterday at 4:08 PM

Yes, and ... I see you have an ELOatmeal Stout to go with it, @Rob Wittig ... a bold breakfast!



Deena Yesterday at 4:09 PM

Hands round the Flannigans flakes she bought last year, and scrapes up the last of the Whiskey Barrel tea from Cork.



1

Netprov / collective play / co-presence



Death Fugue: Participatory Embodiment

4 years ago | More



xtine

PLUS

+ Follow

More from xtine

Autoplay next video



Death Fugue: Par.
xtine

Mourning



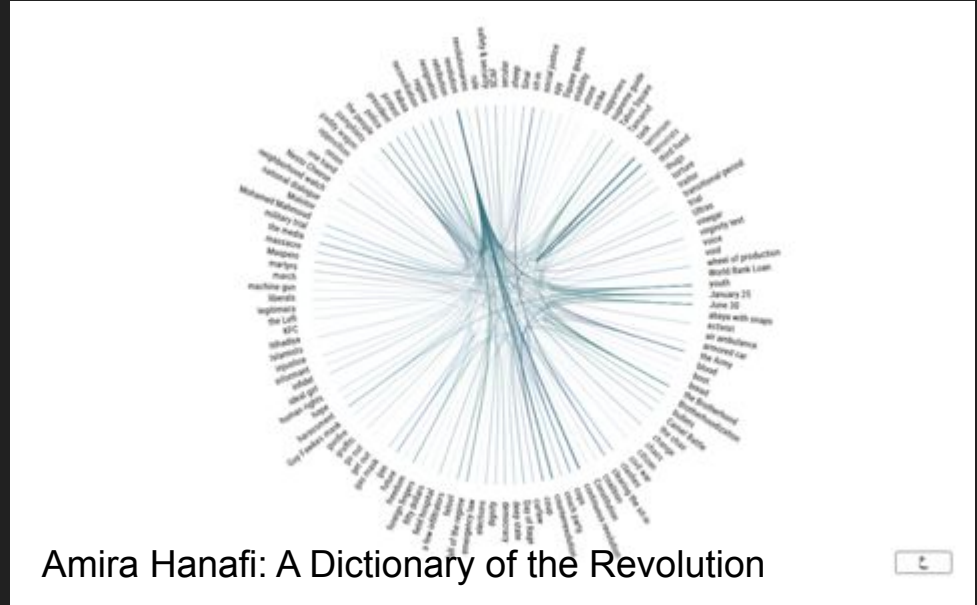
Aviasian, Morrissey, Jeffrey, The Tenders (ELO 2020 AR Performance)

Søren Pold: Covid19 Platform Culture

E-lit from hypertext utopia to failed twitter-revolutions

A Dictionary of the Revolution
as anti-twitter hypertext

- Multivocal, social, anonymous (vs individualized, profiled)
- Political writing reflecting on the conditions, power relations, media and language of the political revolutions



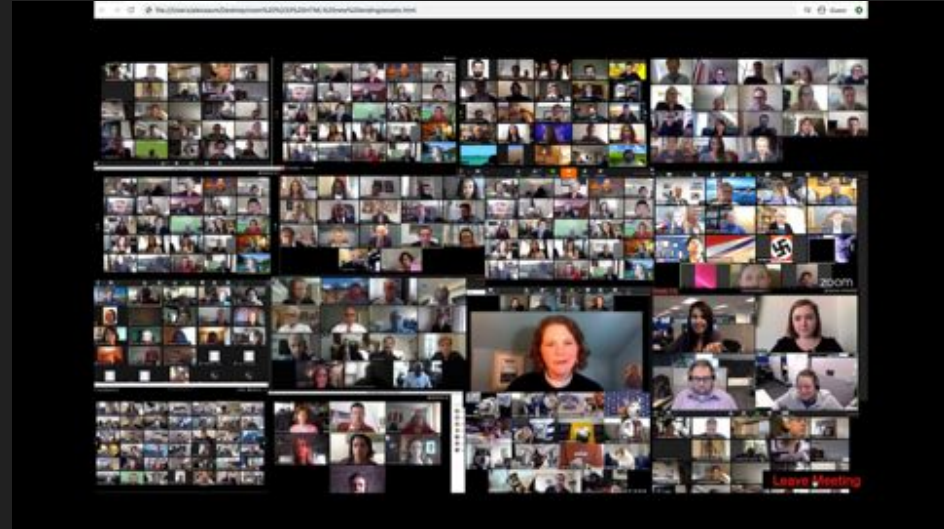
From “connecting people” to social distancing

Memes (remaking classical paintings of being alone)

Collaborative literature, e.g. netprovs like *Fantasy Spoils*

Room #3

- video poem on how we become ‘zombies’



Alex Saum: Room #3

The Discourse of Power

Sarah Cooper's Trump imitations

Mark Sample: *The Infinite Catalog of Crushed Dreams*

Tega Brain, Sam Lavigne & Johanna Hedvas: *Get Well Soon*

Jonas Eika: Cut-up poems on the Danish PM's press meetings

Jonas Eika: Cut-up poems on the Danish PM's press meetings

"Vi er et samfund
Vi skal hele tiden følge et ukendt
terræn
Foran smitten og før sygdommen
I alt 285 holder i fælleskab hånden
under spørgsmålet
De bliver ved med at stige
De holder afstand
Alle Folketingets partier står bag"

"We are a community
We must constantly follow an unknown
terrain
Before the infection and before the
disease
A total of 285 jointly hold hands during
the question
They keep rising
They keep their distance
All parliamentary parties are behind us
"

Homely rebellion

Finding new ways of being social from home

Home without xenophobia and exclusion

Safety without gates and guards

#BlackLivesMatters



The Marino Family: Coronation - a Webcomic

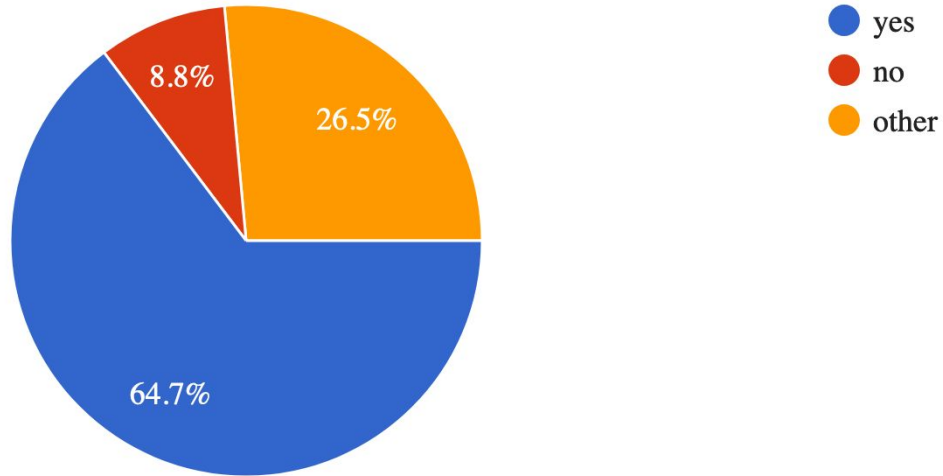
- Surveillance Capitalism and the interface industry at home?
- Zoom + Facebook + covid19 tracing apps criticism
- Unsustainability of streaming
- Social media's individualized sociality
- The loss of the material, embodied, haptic...
- New literary and narrative schemes? New narrators, ways of writing and reading?

Questions and discussion for the round table

- Attempts at understanding the situation
- What is happening? Where, who, how?
- Individual attempts: documenting, exploring
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- Critical e-lit reflections on platform culture and metainterfaces
- Are we living through a general change, a paradigm shift, in our relations to technology, media, sociality, society, humanity, the post-human, ecology?

Have you felt driven to deal with the pandemic in some sense in your work?

34 responses



Some observations from questionnaire and meeting

- Anxiety, loss of creativity and concentration
- Simplifying, limiting media + the limits of media
- Emotional labour in families and with students, community work
- Collaborative/social writing as a collective way of making sense
- Problems with site specific + locative work
- Confinement + control as themes now shines in a new light
- United by repression and isolation
- The importance of silence + being together
- Connecting the body vs. being tracked and infected by Covid apps
- The material reality + new ways of transcending it through networked experiences
- Covid crept into the work
- Black Lives Matter!

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