ELECTRONIC LITERATURE PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTION IN EUROPE

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INTRODUCTION

This preliminary survey of European electronic literature publishing and distribution was initially conducted by two scholars over the course of three months in 2010 and 2011, and later supplemented by bits and pieces until October 2012. The original project proposal is included at the end of this chapter. Given the vastness of the scope of the research and the variety of European languages that are not at our command, reservations concerning the width, depth, and representativeness apply, but only to a certain degree. There are essential similarities in the cultural and commercial status of electronic literature in the thirty European countries[1] this survey managed to cover. Therefore, while it is possible we may have missed some major players in the field, it is unlikely that their forms of networked publishing practices would constitute a major counter-example to our findings.

If this were a theoretical paper, we could spend several pages trying to define the basic terms used in the survey such as electronic literature, publication, distribution, and Europe. However, we adopted a more pragmatic approach.

Geographically, we did what we could in the given time. The three main borderline areas were Russia, the Ukraine, and some newly independent countries in the Balkans. Although we know that electronic literature exists in Russia (not to mention the fact that the first hypertext fiction published in Estonia was written in Russian), we couldn't establish reliable contacts within Russia and the Ukraine. Moreover, our contacts in the Balkans came up empty-handed when

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1 The division of labor was as follows: the Nordic (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) and the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, and Swiss e-literature written in German were Eskelinen's responsibility; France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg), Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Bulgaria, and Greece were di Rosario's responsibility.

asked about possible occurrences of electronic literature in Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Albania.

After the first month of research, it became evident that one crucial part of the original plan should be modified. Specifically, the exclusion of authors' self-publications would have led to two counterproductive results. First, several European countries would not be present in this survey at all, and, second, despite reviews and portals and occasional commercial publications, authors' self-publications dominate the scene of electronic literature in Europe. It also became clear that there are many different types and methods of *self-publication* so the category of self-publication is necessarily imprecise. Pragmatically, the ban was lifted, especially in regard to countries and regions where portals, reviews, and collections do not exist.

As a practical matter, we used the ELO's working definition of electronic literature, while remaining aware of its many problems. Therefore, in this survey, electronic literature refers to "works with important literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or networked computer." To us this definition is helpful mostly because of what it excludes: both digitized print literature and print-like digital literature.[2]

Finally, there was a question of genres in electronic literature. For theoretical and practical (i.e. time- and resource-based) reasons we chose to exclude interactive fiction and MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons) from this survey, although (practical as we were) when we happened to come across information about the former, it was included in the report. After the emergence of ludology and computer game studies in the 2000s, both MUDs and interactive fiction could be researched both as games (and certainly as precursors of MMOGs [Massively Multiplayer Online Games], online virtual worlds, and adventure games) and as electronic literature, which slightly undermines the idea of treating them as mere or pure e-lit genres.

Having said this, it is also clear that the publication model of interactive fiction closely resembles the publication model of the kind of e-lit we chose to focus on: there is a small but active and internationally networked community accumulating and taking care of resources, and making old and new works avail-

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2 More precisely, using terms from Espen Aarseth's cybertext theory, we excluded from this survey any digital literature sharing the most common and typical media position, that of books: static, determinate, intransient, random access, impersonal perspective, no links, and interpretative user function (1997, 62–65).

able for free from The Interactive Fiction Database and several other sites. Some Infocom-era classics form the one major exception to this general rule. These communities (in Europe strong IF communities exist in Germany, Spain, France, Italy, and presumably the UK as well) set up regular competitions (centered, for example, around themes or time-based constraints) and try to attract new audiences. The international community also has a MUD environment that is not used primarily as a MUD but as an environment for real-time communication (Montfort 2010).

As the focus of this survey was on publishing and distribution, we excluded MUDs as well. To treat these programmable textual environments that are based on and used for real-time communication and collective improvisation as publications would have been a questionable move, pushing the conceptual envelope of publishing and distribution too far. In the case of MUDs, none of the traditional roles (publishers, editors, authors, and readers for starters) are applicable. Second, although MUDs in some cases serve as publishing environments, these *publications* are (for the most part) games and quests. Finally, the three-month time frame of this project would clearly have been insufficient to conduct a survey on European MUDs or even to separate them from the rest of the MUDs (the Mud Connector lists 1,154, and FindMud lists 624). Still, as communities, MUDs could in many ways serve as models for the best publishing and distribution practices of electronic literature (once we get that far in our research). Coincidentally, a publication in progress for the Cybertext Database titled "MUDs Revisited" (edited by Cynthia Haynes and Jan-Rune Holmevik) will most likely shed some light on this topic as well.

FINDINGS BY REGION AND COUNTRY (AN OVERVIEW)

NORWAY

Each Nordic country except Iceland and Sweden has a major portal publishing electronic literature. These portals are also, to some degree, networked with each other and with the all-Nordic portal Elinor,[3] which is far from being comprehensive when compared to local, national, and transnational portals.[4] According to Hans Rustad's presentation at a seminar in Bergen in September 2010, at its

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3 <www.elinor.nu>.

4 In October 2012, Elinor ceased to exist anymore, but its contents will soon be found in the ELMCIP Knowledge Base.

high point (i.e. when the percentage of dead links was close to zero, rather than approximately 50%, as it was in January 2011), Elinor contained sixty-four works of electronic literature, of which nineteen were Danish, twelve Norwegian, six Swedish, and twenty-seven Finnish. These figures are somewhat surprising, but they partly explain why the two major Nordic portals exist in Denmark and Finland. Strictly speaking, Elinor is the only portal in the Nordic countries that exclusively focuses on electronic literature; as we shall see, the scope of the two other major portals is different.

In the same presentation, Rustad estimated that all in all approximately one-hundred works of electronic literature have been written and published in Scandinavia. Rustad is not familiar with the Finnish scene, and seems to exclude MUDs and interactive fiction as well as early text generators from consideration, but his estimate could be correct in its own context.

Generally speaking, it is typical of the Nordic scene that many if not most authors of the most prominent works of electronic literature are also (locally) well-known authors of print literature. This means, first of all, that their works of electronic literature are situated within an oeuvre that is already recognized and positively evaluated as literature. In Norway, such crossover figures and their works include (according to Rustad):

- Tor Åge Bringvaerd's *Faen* (*Damn* 1998/1971)
- Marte Aas' *Hva sier trærne?* (*What do the trees say?* 2005–2006), a multimedia work that includes poems written by Marte Huke, who has published four well-received poetry books
- Monika Aasprong's *Soldatmarkedet* (*Soldiers' Market* 2003–2005), an author who is also an artist publishing traditional poetry and conceptual work in print
- Anne Bang Steinsvik's *I mellom tiden* (*In between time* 2002) with the poems written by Gøril Gabrielsen, a mainsteam author of two or three novels
- Morten Skogly, several of whose works are available through Elinor
- Ottar Ormstad, who has presented his digital and digitalized concrete poetry at several festivals and conferences during the last few years

In 2005, the NRK (Norwegian Public Broadcasting Company) and PNEK (Production Network for Electronic Art) collaborated on a project called *Digitale Fortellinger* (*Digital Narratives*). This competition was designed to reward the most interesting works with a prize of 10,000 Norwegian kroner and an online publication. The project gave birth to fifteen works of electronic literature, but the authors did not continue their careers in electronic literature. All the works that received awards are still available on PNEK's website.[5]

In addition to these works, Bjørn Magnhildøen's *Plaintext Performance* (2006) was published in the second volume of the Electronic Literature Collection in 2011. Collaborative projects of locative literature exist on the fringes of electronic literature, and one such work, *Flaneur–let the city speak*,[6] was presented at the Electronic Literature Communities seminar in Bergen in September 2010 alongside another Norwegian e-lit work, Beathe C. Rønning's *Langweekend*.[7]

DENMARK

In Denmark, the most important portal is Afsnit P, which defines its focus as follows: "Afsnit P is a Danish virtual exhibition space for visual poetry and intermedia art."[8] It was established in 1998 by Katrin Wagner and Christian Yde Frostholm as a logical continuation of the book shop and art gallery of the same name. Afsnit P includes a gallery section presenting twenty-eight entries not only from Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway, but also from the UK and France. These were added to the database between 1999 and 2008 and approximately one half of the entries are related to e-lit and its predecessors (especially visual and concrete poetry). All in all, Afsnit P is a transnational portal covering mainly the Nordic countries (except Iceland), and, in that orientation, it is somewhat similar to the Finnish portal Nokturno, although the latter focuses solely on literature and not on visual arts. Given the limited number of e-lit works included in the gallery, it is clear that Afsnit P presents only a small fraction of the electronic literature produced in Denmark and other Nordic countries.

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5 <http://www.pnek.org/DigiFor/DIG2_Trearne.html>.

6 Managed by Anders Sundnes Lovlie; see <http://tekstopia.uio.no/flanor/en/>.

7 <http://ulyd.bek.no/beathe/>.

8 <http://www.afsnitp.dk>.

In Denmark, probably the most well-known crossover authors are Morten Søndergaard (a poet who in 2000 remediated his poem "Kompas" into "Landskaber omkring digtet kompas"), Peter Adolphsen, and Christian Yde Frostholm. Moving back in time, Danish electronic literature claims to have its roots in the 1960s text generators of Klaus Høeck and Hans Jørgen Nielsen, although our sources could verify neither the availability of the generators nor their existence.

In the early 2000s, Danish Radio (DR) provided support for Sonja W. Thomsen's project *ingen else på vejen den dag (No moose on the road that day 2001)* and also had visual poetry as a theme on their website for some time. Thomsen's *ingen else* and her other interactive story projects (such as *love is in the air* and *Skakbraet*) are currently available online.[9]

SWEDEN

Karl-Erik Tallmo published Sweden's first hypertext fiction *Iaktagarens' förmåga att ingripa* (*Participant's capability to interfere*) in 1992. It was preceded by his two other works of electronic literature, text generators *Hamnen* (*The Bay* 1988) and *Skriv rätt* (*Write correctly* 1990). Of these, only *Iaktagaren's förmåga* is still available (as files, obtainable from the author). The work includes features that were not typical of its genre and time of publication, such as semi-random associative links and text generation, but it was not well-received in the press; quotes on Tallmo's site from several reviews in major Swedish newspapers show the high degree of ignorance and unprofessionalism involved in the negative evaluations of the work. Tallmo still maintains his web presence (with links summarizing his activities from the late 1960s to the present day), but no new works of electronic literature have been listed since 1992.

Another important figure in Swedish electronic literature is Johannes Heldén, a visual artist and an author of the bilingual (Swedish/English) *Primärdirektivet*/*The Prime Directive* (2006) available at Afsnit P's gallery. Like Tallmo, Heldén is a well-known literary figure outside the e-lit scene, with books published by the respected Swedish publishing house Bonniers, which also published his interactive work *Väljarna* (*The Electrorate* 2008) at its poetry-related website. Heldén's latest digital/interactive publication *Entropi* (2010) is both a book and a

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9 <http://www.enbyirusland.com/stories.html>.

digital text (on CD-ROM). Heldén, therefore, confirms the crossover hypothesis because he calls the three works mentioned above his digital/interactive books.

The internationally well-known tradition of Swedish concrete poetry is also alive and continues in digital interpretations and remediations at Afsnit P.[10] Swedish interactive fiction activity is centered, or at least used to center, around the Lysator site.[11]

Possible publishing venues for Swedish electronic literature include OEI,[12] a journal for innovative prose and poetry (digital literature and theory was the theme in issue 22/23 in 2005), and Mejan Labs.[13] According to Maria Engberg, Mejan Labs functions as an extension of the Royal University College of Fine Arts and aims to establish a platform that combines an innovative exhibition program with education, research, and experimentation. Occasionally, they include multimedia/digital/performance art that includes literature or literary aspects.

FINLAND

In Finland, the main publication forum for electronic poetry is the portal Nokturno (edited by Marko Niemi),[14] which has been in operation since 2005. At the present time, it seems to be the liveliest of the Nordic portals as well, usually updated several times a month. As of October 2012, Nokturno includes some 230 entries (some of these contain more than one work), but, of these, only one fifth were what we call electronic literature. The main focus of Nokturno is experimental poetry, be it concrete, visual, video, sound, kinetic, generative, or interactive.

Nokturno has two additional characteristics that are of interest to this survey. First, its scope is not limited to Finland, the Nordic countries, or even Europe. It includes works from thirty one countries in twelve languages, although the scope is considerably narrower when it comes to electronic literature (eleven countries and seven languages as of January 2011). The primary focus of Nokturno's international networking is the English-speaking world: USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. Secondly, Nokturno includes several e-literary

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10 <http://www.afsnitp.dk/galleri/konkretpoesi/>.

11 <http://www.lysator.liu.se/sak/>.

12 <http://www.oei.nu>.

13 <http://www.mejanlabs.se/index2_en.asp>.

14 <http://www.nokturno.org>.

works both in their original versions and in Finnish translation. These features are comparatively unusual within the European e-literature scene: usually the geographical scope of portals are limited to one, two, or three countries; they contain literature written in only one or two natural languages; and, except in Poland and Spain, portals do not publish translations.

Beyond Nokturno and its exclusive focus on poetry, Finnish electronic literature consists of authors' self-publications of hypertext fiction. These can be classified in two different groups: pedagogical and educational ones written in Hypercard and later in HTML from the early 1990s to the early 2000s; and the ones written by professional authors (Markku Eskelinen, Riikka Pelo) from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. Most of these works are also available through Elinor. Also found in Finland are locally well-known print authors who have been active in the realm of electronic literature. Among them are Arto Kytöhonka (d. 1992), Leevi Lehto (famous for his Google Poem Generator), Cia Rinne (a Finnish-Swedish author who usually writes her electronic literature in English), Marko Niemi (who recently expanded his repertoire from electronic to print poetry), and Markku Eskelinen.

Journals, competitions, and collections of electronic literature do not exist in Finland, and it is likely that the next small wave of electronic literature in Finland (as well as in other Nordic countries) will be or already is taking place in social media. Marko Niemi's *Stud Poetry* (2006), originally written in English, is included in the first volume of The *Electronic Literature Collection* (2006).

In 2004, Elina Saloranta, according to her own description "a visual artist interested in words," wrote and directed a trilingual cine-roman on video based on Marguerite Duras' texts. Entitled *Le lit des amants* (*The Lover's Bed/Rakastavaisten vuode*), it is a combination of DVD and book, published by Taide (the most prestigious publisher of books on visual arts in Finland). The work was exhibited in several art galleries both in Finland and internationally.

ICELAND

Nokturno also includes *Goggi*, a Google poem from Iceland, written by Jón Örn Loðmfjörð, both in English and in a Finnish translation. Beyond that, our sources remained mute, although it is likely that self-published electronic literature exists in Iceland as well.

THE BALTIC REGION (ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA)

In the Baltic region, the liveliest scene is in Estonia, although the overall picture is similar in all three countries: individual authors with their websites and blogs can be found, but there are not many of these, and only a few authors are still active.

The first hypertext novel in Estonia, *Roman*, was self-published by Roman Leibov from 1995 to 1997. Because *Roman* is written in Russian, Hasso Krull's hypertext poem *Trepp* (*The Stairs* 1996; its Finnish translation is available at Nokturno) is the first one of its kind written in Estonian. Other Estonian hypertextual works from the 1990s include:

- Nelli Rothvee's *Net Poetry* (1997), which forms a trilogy with her *altavista words* and *chat poetry* (also from 1997), but only the first and third part of the trilogy are still accessible on the Internet
- Tambett Tamm's *The Weather Station Never Lies* (1999)
- Lemmit Kaplinski and Jaak Tomberg's *Prepare* (1999)

Paul-Eerik Rummo, a well-known Estonian poet and politician, is the most important crossover figure in Estonian electronic literature. His only e-lit work is called *The Basho's Expansion* (2000). It is also worth noting that the electronic literary scene in Estonia is trilingual, as the works of Tamm and Rothvee are written in English.

The situation in Latvia and Lithuania was much harder to research, although the logic there is pretty much the same as in Estonia. The few publications of electronic literature extant in Latvia and Lithuania are authors' self-publications. Nokturno includes two visual poems from Latvia, Jelana Glazova's *Re-start* and *Meaning*.

ELECTRONIC LITERATURE WRITTEN IN GERMAN (GERMANY, AUSTRIA, AND SWITZERLAND)[15]

Germany, Austria, and the German-speaking Switzerland constitute one of the three centers of e-lit in Europe. Here we have: the first pioneers of the whole field, such as Theo Lutz and Max Bense, starting their e-literary careers in the

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15 For a better-informed and truly magisterial perspective on German electronic literature and electronic literature publishing, see Beat Suter 2012.

late 1950s; close encounters between electronic literature and the Ars Electronica festival resulting in the first German hypertext fiction in 1989 and the series of p0es1s exhibitions and conferences from the early 1990s; substantial literary output in several, if not all, electronic literature genres; short-lived attempts at commercial publications (Editions Cyberfiction); well-organized and extensive portals (such as netzliterarur.de and cyberfiction.ch); and several short-lived literary prizes dedicated to electronic literature.

Interestingly, the German speaking region of Europe seems to be more open to the two other European e-lit centers—France and the UK—than they are towards the German region or each other. Its networked orientation is towards Anglo-American e-lit and e-lit theory, but until lately this has been a one-sided effort, as the scene in the UK has favored its transatlantic contacts while also establishing some connections with the French e-lit scene. The French scene has opened up to the US scene, and the effects of this international networking are still visible in the publications of *alire* and the presentations at the six E-Poetry conferences.

ELECTRONIC LITERATURE COMPETITIONS AND PRIZES

In a recent paper on the post-processing of electronic literature in Germany, Patricia Tomaszek (2011) analyzed the function and the consequences of electronic or net literature competitions in Germany. The most important of these was the Pegasus prize (1996–1998), sponsored by Die Zeit and IBM, and while subsequently there have been several short-lived prizes and competitions, the Pegasus prize sealed the fate of German net literature for a long period of time. As Tomaszek summarizes:

> At an early stage in the 90s, German net literature became a subject of a controversial debate between artists, theorists, and literary critics. A strong community evolved in which net literature was embedded in an infrastructure that made net literature publicly visible. Everything started with a call for a competition whose jury hardly defined what it was looking for; consequently, a critical study on terminologies and definitions unfolded. [...] The advents of the German Pegasus-Award that launched in 1996 were of crucial importance for the community and its emerging field. [...] Today, new competitions in Germany commence occasionally but hardly receive an echo in the public. Slowly, German net literature becomes invisible. (Tomaszek 2011, 1)

As examples, some of the more recent competitions that have taken place in Germany are: Ettlinger Internet-Literaturwettbewerb (Internet-Literature com-

petition of the city of Ettlingen, established in 1999 by Oliver Gassner; discontinued); Net Literature Prize, initiated by arte-them and sponsored by Siemens in 2000;[16] Literatur.digital, initiated by the German paperback publisher Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag (DTV) and T-Online, running from 2001 to 2003; and The Literature House Stuttgart's first Bachelors' Prize for Net Literature,[17] announced in 2005.

In addition to these competitions, Marianne von Willemer Women's Prize for Digital Arts[18] has been awarded biannually since 2000 (and annually since 2004) in Linz, Austria. It is organized by the Office of Women's Affairs of the City of Linz in cooperation with the Ars Electronica Center and supported by the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation. The goal of the prize is to "encourage and acknowledge women net artists" (writing in German and living in Austria). In the early 2000s, several works of electronic literature were either awarded this prize or honorably mentioned.

ART VENUES

In 1992, André Vallias and Friedrich W. Block curated the first international exhibition of digital poetry, "p0es1s," in Annaberg-Buchholz.[19] For some time this looked like a one-time event, but in the 2000s five subsequent p0es1s exhibitions and symposia were organized in Kassel (2000), Erfurt (2001), Berlin (2004 and 2009), and Rio de Janeiro (2007). The bilingual p0es1s website[20] contains information from all six symposiums and exhibitions, including downloadable conference catalogs and links to artworks and presentations.

The introduction to the Kassel p0es1s symposium explains:

> p0es1s is a platform to explore the characteristics and possibilities of digital texts. p0es1s links two independent projects: the symposia on "the poetics of digital texts" and the exhibition of international digital poetry.

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16 More info at <http://archives.arte.tv/them@dtext/wettbewerb/lit_wett_lit_wett_fs.html>.

17 <http://www.junggesellenpreis.de/index_engl.html>.

18 < http://www.linz.at/frauen/43733.asp>.

19 <http://www.p0es1s.net/p0es1e.htm>.

20 <http://www.p0es1s.net/>.

The two p0es1s events in Berlin were presented by literaturWERKstatt Berlin in cooperation with the Brueckner Kuehner Foundation, and the earlier event was supported by Kunstbibliotek der Staatlichen Museen in Berlin (Art Library of the Berlin State Museums) and funded by Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany).

As an international event, p0es1s is by no means limited to German digital poetry. As an example of its scope, the theme of the p0es1s 2009 was sprachspielen (language games), and the featured artists were Johannes Auer, René Bauer, Simon Biggs, Friedrich Block, Anton Bruhin, Florian Cramer, Klaus Peter Dencker, Stefan Freier, Heinz Gappmayr, Eugen Gomringer, Daniel Howe, Steffi Jüngling, Eduardo Kac, Aya Natalia Karpinska, Stephan Krass, Franz Mon, Yoko Ono, Christine Clara Oppel, Oskar Pastior, Jörg Piringer, Julius Popp, Wolfram Spyra, Christian Steinbacher, Beat Suter, Timm Ulrichs, versfabrik, Peter Vogel, and Uli Winters.

Among other events within the museum circuit was the web-project "Liter@tur," initiated by the Museum für Literatur am Oberrhein (Museum of Literature in Oberrhein) in 2000.[21]

The Literaturhaus Stuttgart (House of Literature Stuttgart) has provided a venue to perform, present, and talk about electronic literature (along with non-digital literary practices) on three separate occasions in 2005, 2008, and 2009.[22] Similarly, the literaturWERKstatt Berlin offered a venue for electronic literature during its "poesiefestival" (poetry festival) in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

PORTALS AND PUBLISHERS

There are occasional publications on CD, such as the adaptation of Andreas Okopenko's novel *Lexikonroman—einer sentimentalen Reise zum Exporteutreffen in Druden* (Verlag Mediendesign OEG 1998) and *Hyperfiction, ein hyperliterarisches Lesebuch*, edited by Beat Suter and Michael Böhler (book and CD, strömfeld verlag, Basel, 1999), a combination of eleven theoretical essays and twenty-four hyperfiction works. Other than this, the only publisher operating in the commercial market is update Verlag and its publication series Editions Cyberfiction (the publications can still be purchased from the company's online bookshop).

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21 More info and many broken links can be found at <http://www.netlit.de/start/>.

22 See <http://www.literatur-und-strom.de/3/>.

Four e-lit works on CD were published in the series between 2000 and 2004: *Hilfe* by Susanne Berkenheger (the winner of the Ettlinger prize in 1999); *Kill the Poem* by Johannes Auer and Reinhard Döhl; *tExtra.Tour* by Oliver Gassner; and *spätwinterhitze* by Frank Klötgen. Editions Cyberfiction was based in Zürich, Switzerland and managed by Beat Suter, who has been active in writing, researching, promoting, and archiving electronic literature. Suter's portal[23] is the most important e-lit portal in Switzerland, but its scope is wider and covers electronic literature written in German.

In Germany, the most important and impressive net literature portal is neztliteratur.net,[24] edited by Johannes Auer, Christine Heibach, and Beat Suter. It is a well-organized archive of German net literature and its predecessors from the very beginning in the late 1950s (Theo Lutz, Max Bense, and the Stuttgarter Gruppe). It also contains a collection of important theoretical papers on digital literature written by mainly German scholars and a fairly large section on net art. It also links itself to other portals, projects, exhibitions, and blogs, among them a huge online database on electronic literature maintained by the Université de Québec in Montreal.[25] Netzliteratur.net is a horn of plenty of German networked and programmable literature, and it is beyond the expertise and resources of the authors of this survey to speculate on what—if anything—of importance the portal potentially excludes, ignores, or misrepresents.

Netzliteratur contains a section titled "projects," collecting of the most important works of net literature and hyperfiction written in German. The authors featured in it are Johannes Auer, Susanne Berkenheger, Florian Cramer, Reinhard Döhl, Sylvia Egger, and Martina Kieninger. The project section is also interesting in terms of publishing as it confirms the significant role of local and national radio broadcasting companies as vehicles for promoting, publishing, distributing, and funding electronic literature.

German electronic literature collections do not exist (with the exception of *Hyperfiction, ein hyperliterarisch lesebuch*, mentioned above), but six German works are included in ELO's two collections. The first volume included Reiner Strasser's two collaborations with Alan Sondheim (*Tao* 2004 and *Dawn* 2005)

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23 <http://www.cyberfiction.ch/>.

24 <http://www.netzliteratur.net>.

25 <http://nt2.uqam.ca/search/nt2_repertoire>.

and one with M. D. Coverley (*ii–in the white darkness* 2004). Christoph Benda's *Senghor on the rocks* (2008), Susanne Berkenheger's *The Bubble Bath* (2005), and Jörg Piringer's *soundpoems* (2002) were published in the second volume.

POLAND

Poland definitely has the most active and versatile tradition in Eastern European electronic literature. This became clear in Mariusz Pisarski's exemplary answer to our questions. According to Pisarski, there are three main portals of electronic literature in Poland.

The first, Techsty–literature and new media (Techsty–literatura i nowe media),[26] includes an "electronic literature overview: news, forum and over 300 interconnected pages of hypertext history and theory compendium, repository of links to authors, institutions and works of digital literature." The portal promotes young and not-yet-established authors by helping them produce, publish, and host their first digital works (such as works by Marek Oktawian Bulanowski, Nescitus, and Witold Mazur).

The second portal is Korporacja Ha!art.[27] According to Pisarski, this portal has a strong emphasis on innovative trends in literary culture, among them electronic literature. It features weekly pieces on new media art and a monthly poetry competition with a separate category for "multimedia poetry." Serial web literary comic art is also regularly featured. Ha!art is the first Polish publisher of hypertext literature—including the hypertext *Koniec swiata według Emeryka* by Radosław Nowakowski (2004) and a forthcoming translation of *afternoon, a story* by Michael Joyce (2011).

The third portal Perfokarta[28] is described by Pisarski as follows:

> A website of Perfokarta, group of poets, musicians and performers involved in experiments with generative possibilities of digital text, music, graphics and installations. The effects of the experiments are promoted under a term "cyberpoetry." The website is an online publishing platform for Perfokarta group. Generative, digital objects and manifests of "cyberpoetry," as well as videos from live performances of the members of the group can be accessed online there.

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26 <http://techsty.art.pl>.

27 <http://ha.art.pl>.

28 <http://perfokarta.net>.

One e-lit journal also exists in Poland, *Techsty* magazine,[29] a periodical part of "Techsty–literature and new media portal." It publishes electronic literature works by Polish authors as well as translated fictions (works by Mark Amerika, Judy Malloy, Stuart Moulthrop, and Stefan Maskiewicz). Pisarski explains that it is the following:

> the only Polish journal concentrated exclusively on hypertext theory, cybertext perspective, and ludological approach to digital arts and literature. Apart from presenting articles by its authors (Emilia Branny, Dorota Sikora, Andrzej Pająk), Techsty magazine features translations of seminal works of e-literature theory. It also features an e-PhD series of online, hypertext versions of PhD dissertations on cybertext literature (introduced by Sebastian Strzelecki's *Interface Effects*). Six issues have been published in the series since 2003.

E-lit collections do not exist in Poland, but there is at least one e-lit competition, Intertetowy Turniej Jednego Wiersza (One Poem Internet Competition),[30] a monthly competition held by Korporacja Ha!art literary portal. As of 2010, eight works of new media poetry have received awards (by Katarzyna Giełżyńska, Paulina Danecka, Kamil Zając, Katarzyna Janota, Aneta Kamińska, Miroslaw Marcol, Jonas Gruska, and Katarzyna Gielzynska).

Finally, electronic literature is also alive and well in the Polish art world. Pisarski gives three main examples by Paweł Kozioł, Józef Żuk Piwkowski, and Tomasz Wilmański. He describes them as follows:

> *Bluzgator Bis* by Paweł Kozioł, a text generator based on the web distributed Bluzgator application, popular among teenagers, which functions as a generator of random swear words. Kozioł uses the mechanism of the prototype but changes its content. The database of words, phrases, and sentences in *Bis* version comes from *Textylia bis*—an anthology of young literature, from the Polish weekly "Polityka" and from the "Ha!art" magazine. Users of *Bluzgator Bis* can choose the recipient of the text (woman, man, or group of people), its style (proper, full sentences or Internet slang), the size of the output (from one to 200 sentences), and its visual appearance. *Bluzgator Bis* is available as an executive file (.exe) from "Techsty" magazine.[31]

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29 <http://techsty.art.pl/magazyn.htm>.

30 < http://www.ha.art.pl/prezentacje/29-projekty/834>.

31 < http://www.techsty.art.pl/magazyn3/Bluzgator%20Bis.zip>.

Pisarski describes the second example as follows:

> *The Book Of All Words* by Józef Żuk Piwkowski (first version 1975, on Mera 300 office computer, in collaboration with Mieczysław Gryglik). Piwkowski's work is an algorithm that generates (and prints) pages of an infinite book. The inexhaustible book is a collection of all possible combinations of twenty-six letters of Latin alphabet. User can only see the on-demand page that is a result of her/his own word query. *The Book of All Words* has been presented in galleries (Art & Communication 1987). Piwkowski's work has also its online version.[32]

As a final example, Pisarski described:

> *Meditation no 4*, by Tomasz Wilmański, an animated alphabet poem in Adobe Flash, shown as a one-off installation in a gallery space where it was projected on a screen (AT Gallery, Poznań 2004). As a tribute to Kenneth Williams and his series of concrete poems, *Meditation no 4* relied not only on its visual but also aural aspect. The sound, embedded in a Flash file, played a crucial role.[33]

HUNGARY, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA, AND ROMANIA

The first Hungarian hypertext novel, *GOLEM*, written by Peter Farkas, dates from the late 1990s (1997–2005 according to its website) and is still available online.[34] There is also an early dictionary-novel written by many Hungarian intellectuals, but it was abandoned a long time ago. It is a part of the site of the biggest Hungarian online dictionary project.[35]

In addition to these two works, the Magyar Nemzet Online, an electronic edition of one of the leading newspapers in Hungary, recently sponsored a collaborative novel project. Finally, there is a site for fostering collaborative novel writing and publishing the results in a mysterious business system.[36] In addition to Hungarian works published in Hungary or Germany (as was the case with *GOLEM*), the Nokturno portal presents three flash poems written by Már-

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32 <http://2b.art.pl/ksw/ksw.php?>.

33 Online version (without sound) is available at <http://www.techsty.art.pl/magazyn/magazyn5/start.html>.

34 at <http://www.interment.de/golem/>.

35 <http://www.sztaki.hu/providers/nightwatch/interakt/szotarnaplo/>.

36 <http://regenytar.hu/index.php>.

ton Koppány and Juha-Pekka Kervinen (a Finnish e-poetry author), and Tom Konyves' classic videopoem *Sympathies of War* (1978) with its postscript, *Mummypoem*. Tibor Papp (working in France and the French language since 1961) is originally from Hungary and according to Philippe Bootz (2010) he is the only digital poet in Hungary.

In Slovakia, Zuzana Husarova has collaborated with another artist to create and publish an e-lit piece called *Pulz* (2009)[37] that she describes as "poetry combined with generated music and also open for reader's creativity." It is in Slovak but will be translated into English in the future. Another work by Husárová and Lubomir Panak, *4079*, was recently published in the ELO directory.[38]

In addition to a generated text in Morse called *Vetrni hodiny* (*Wind Clock*), there are at least two hypertext fictions written by a Czech author, Marketa Bankova. One of them, *New York City Map* (2000),[39] is written in English and the other, *Mesto*, also exists in English translation (*The City*).[40]

Our four contacts in the Czech Republic and Slovakia could not come up with any other Czech examples of electronic literature. Given the Czech traditions in experimental literature in the twentieth century this non-existence is probably a testament to the material, temporal, and linguistic limitations of this survey; i.e. such literature most probably does exist, but we just do not know where to find it.

In Romania, the non-existence of electronic literature seems to be a well verified fact.

SLOVENIA

In the timeline for Slovenian literature provided by Jaka Zeleznikar (2011), the first wave of electronic literature that emerged in Slovenian consisted of text adventures written for the ZX Spectrum 48K computer. These included the following five works:[41]

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37 <http://projekty.delezu.net/electronicka-literatura/pulz/>.

38 <http://directory.eliterature.org/node/1305>.

39 <http://www.nycmap.com/index.html>.

40 <http://www.city.je/>.

41 The URLs contain detailed information as well as versions of the games that can be run in an appropriate emulator.

- Žiga Turk, Matevž Kmet: *Kontrabant* and *Kontrabant 2* (*Smuggler* 1984)[42]
- Žiga Turk, Matevž Kmet, Barbara Železnik, Igor Bizjak, Samo Fosnarič: *Eurorun* (1985)[43]
- Aleš Jaklič, Matej Gašperič, Aleš B. Ivanko: *Smrkci* (*Smurfs* 1985)[44]
- Žiga Turk, Barbara Železnik, Igor Bizjak: *Bajke* (*Tales*, 1986), based on the book by Janez Trdina (1830–1905) entitled *Bajke in povesti o Gorjancih* (*Tales from the Gorjanci Hills*, first published in 1882).[45]

In the same paper, Zeleznikar (2011, 10–11) also discussed works by five Slovenian artists and authors that combine electronic literature and net art.

The first was Marko Košnik, *Brzinski spomeniki* (1994, live radio broadcast on Radio Študent, thirty three minutes).[46]

> The essay that was read and improvised live (with collaborators) includes elaborate prior text manipulation using printing, fax, and OCR software that distorted the text through a repetitive process. The live manipulation included the manipulation of the author's reading overlaid by a loop of analogue tapes by Borut Savski and the re-mix by Miran Kajin. The manipulated source essay and audio archive of the broadcast is available.

Zeleznikar then described work by Marko Košnik:

> *operabilVienna* (2005, multimedia performance)[47] and *the missing engine of laputa* (2006, performance lecture).[48] A video archive of the performance with the text, reading, kinetic text projection, and video manipulation (in English).

The third work Zeleznikar described was by Vuk Cosic:

> The majority of his work is influenced by medieval textual visuals of the

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42 <http://www.worldofspectrum.org/infoseekid.cgi?id=0006546> and <http://www.worldofspectrum.org/infoseekid.cgi?id=0021603>.

43 <http://www.worldofspectrum.org/infoseekid.cgi?id=0021828>.

44 < http://www.worldofspectrum.org/infoseekid.cgi?id=0006987>.

45 <http://www.worldofspectrum.org/infoseekid.cgi?id=0005987>.

46 <http://web.mac.com/marchegon/radioArchive/brzinskiSpomeniki.html>.

47 <http://web.mac.com/marchegon/movies/operabilVienna.html>.

48 <http://web.mac.com/marchegon/movies/laputaEngine.html>.

Arabic, Jewish, and western tradition, literary avant-gardes, and related traditions. His entire ASCII art corpus (1998–99, continued to present, but less intensively) might be considered as electronic literature.[49] His work *Nacija-kultura* (*nation-culture* 2000) is also notable. This project (in a brief outline) consisted of a projection of real time search queries from the main Slovene search engine (at the time) formed in the shape of a sonnet with rich and multilayered references to the Slovene national poet and icon France Prešern and related questions of national identity seen through the crash of a myth of the nation (represented by Prešern) and the nations on-line search reality.

The fourth work described by Zelenikar was Teo Spiller:

In SP_/_M s.o.n.n.e.t (2004)[50] the author combines texts from spam e-mail messages into personalized sonnet-like poems. In 2010, he developed a new approach with the News Sonnet that combines different news sources producing unexpected semantic/news collocations.

Finally, Zeleznikar described work by Igor Štromajer:

In accordance with his constant exploration of intimacy and emotions *gsm.art* (1999)[51] explores the SMS/online communication with a distinct combination of visual and text elements in relation to technologically mediated communication. In *wap.sonnet–microbe.4/wap art* (2000),[52] he uses code work type of poetry intended for mobile phones (wap).

In describing his own work, Železnikar wrote:

The author's electronic literature (1997–present)[53] is predominantly focused on computational/e-poetry through which he explores a wide variety of approaches from interactive, participatory, generative, and kinetic to program based poetic web interventions. His preferred media are web pages and Firefox add-ons. Recently he has focused on exploring the expressive possibilities of Twitter (and its API).[54]

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49 <http://www.ljudmila.org/~vuk/>.

50 <http://www.s-p-i-l-l-e-r.com/spamsonnets/>, in 2008/09 extended with the VRML and slideshow components in Spam Sonnets 2

51 <http://www.intima.org/gsm>.

52 <http://www.intima.org/sonnet.html>.

53 <http://www.jaka.org/projects.php?tag=e_poetry>.

54 With works such as <http://twitter.com/jakaorg/status/1411842446>, <http://twitter.com/jakaorg/status/1695974796>, and <http://www.jaka.org/2009/sara/> (all 2009).

CROATIA AND SERBIA

In Croatia, Bulaja naklada, a publisher of electronic books in education and culture, published their most important project, *Croatian Tales of Long Ago I–II* in 2002 and 2006 (both volumes were edited by Helana Bulaja). It was an international and collaborative project of eight teams of animators, illustrators, musicians, and programmers, based on a classic Croatian fairy tale written in 1916 by Ivana Brlic Mažuranic. According to the publisher, the project was "a new step towards exploring the relation between digital media and traditional, classic literature."[55] The two volumes were published on CD-ROMs containing twelve animated interactive stories, cartoons, and games.[56] These works are also on sale at The Hypertextual Exchange accompanied by two reviews of them.

One site[57] promotes digitized works of Croatian authors, but the only work of electronic literature is Krešimir Pintaric's *Commedia*, an electronic poetry book.[58] Art Gallery Miroslav Kraljevic,[59] although "dedicated to research, exhibition, documentation, and dissemination of information about contemporary visual art practice and its extended field," has exhibited several projects that combine visual arts and literature such as Kata Mijatovic's *Mreža snova* (*The Dream Net*) and Andreja Kuluncic's *Closed Reality: Embryo* and *On State of the Nation*. All these projects are available in English.

Libra Libera, "literary magazine for literature and Other"[60] (offline in October 2012) launched several projects of interactive writing in 2000 and 2001 while presenting theoretically the concept of hypertext. Some of the resulting works were *Mixal, Wender, and I*, the first hypertextual collaborative writing produced by five young Croatian authors; *Introduction to positive geography* in which a hypertextual map of Southeastern Europe is connected with travel literature; *OHTXT*, a tool for producing hypertextual works; and *Hypertext for mass*, a project relating to the 150 years of history of the *Communist Manifesto*. Unfortunately, these projects are no longer accessible online; only one screen of the first work

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55 <http://www.bulaja.com/onama_eng.htm>

56 For more information, see < http://www.bulaja.com/price/price_eng.htm>.

57 <http://www.elektronickeknjige.com/dpkm/>.

58 <http://www.kresimirpintaric.com/commedia/home_flash/commedia_flash.php>.

59 <http://www.g-mk.hr/>.

60 <http://www.libralibera.hr>.

is online.[61] The same site also contains Katarina Vukovic's *Panorama of Croatian hypertextual literary works* (2000) and an overview of Croatian media art (in English).[62]

The only piece of electronic literature written in Serbian we could find was a website of possibly dubious literary value called Bundolo.[63] At the other end of the scale, Milorad Pavić's short hypertext *Damascene*, a tale for computers and compasses translated from the Serbian by Sheila Sofrenovic, is available online.[64] A CD-rom version of the *Dictionary of the Khazars* has been illustrated with Katarina Janjic's hyper-paintings.

BULGARIA

According to Daniele Giampà, Bulgaria does not appear to have developed works of digital literature. However, since 2009, a digital art festival has been organized each year in Sofia: the Digital Art Festival.[65] The third edition will be held in September 2011. The festival has a website where works and performances presented during the festival are archived. The festival focuses on digital art (primarily films, including a section devoted to film, and acoustic music). In past editions, works that can be considered digital literature (because of the predominant use of words) have been shown, such as *Algorithmic Search for Love* (2010), an interactive installation by Julian Palacz, and *…hihi…* (2010) by Evgenia Sarbeva. This work is described as follows:

> a conversation with a machine—a computer. The vocabulary of the computer is limited to all those parasite sentences, expressions, words which we use so often because of the non-stop text communication between people nowadays. The aim of the project is not to judge, but to make us think how often we use words and symbols mechanically without really meaning them or charge them with real emotions.

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61 <http://www.culturenet.hr/default.aspx?id=23036>.

62 <http://www.culturenet.hr/default.aspx?id=23304>.

63 <http://www.bundolo.org/templates/home.php>.

64 <http://www.ezone.org/damaskin/>.

65 <http://2010.da-fest.bg/en/site/workshops/category-go/3>.

GREECE

Electronic literature does not appear to be well known in Greece. However, there has been growing interest in the interaction of literature and cyberspace. In 2004, the publishing house Metaichmio published a short story collection touching fleetingly on the influence of digital technologies on literature.

There are Greek writers who have published novels with an accompanying website and supplementary material online. According to Theodoros Chiotis, it is quite interesting to note that despite the lack of a significant number of electronic literature texts in Greek, there is a growing number of critical texts on the subject by Greek scholars.

ITALY

Although Italy has a long tradition of experimentation in literature, digital literature has not found its place yet in the country. For instance, the artist Gianni Toti coined the word "poetronica" in order to highlight both components of that new fusion of the arts: the poetic element and the electronic aspect, and Nanni Balestrini created one of the first generative poems *Tape Mark* (1961).

One of the most significant ongoing events in experimenting with art and informatics in the recent past has been the TEAnO (Telematica, Elettronica, Analisi nell'Opificio). TEAnO is the computerized part of the OpLePo (OPificio di LEtteratura POtenziale)[66] which was created in 1990 as an Italian version of the more famous OuLiPo. TEAnO was founded in 1991, a year after the OpLePo. It is thought as an Italian version of the French ALAMO group. TEAnO is interested in the relationship between what they call "artistic goods" and the computer. According to TEAnO's members, "TEAnO has been involved [sic] in the generation of 'artistic goods' in aesthetic domains such as literature, music, theatre, and painting." In 1998, the Opificio di Elaborazione Potenziare (OPELPO) was created. However, neither TEAnO nor OPELPO are devoted to electronic literature. Their experimentations included literature and computer, but also music and computer, food and computer, and so on.

During the 90s, Italy started to be interested in hypertext. The first Italian hypertext was written by Lorenzo Miglioli in 1993. *Ra-Dio* was presented at

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66 <http://oplepo.it/>.

a conference in Reggio Emilia organized by Gruppo 63 (an Italian avant-garde movement that had as members several famous authors such as Nanni Balestrini, Edoardo Sanguinetti, and Umberto Eco). *Ra-Dio* was published by Elettro Libri along with the translation of Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story*. Unfortunately, the Elettro Libri Press no longer exists, so it is almost impossible to find these publications anymore.

Other hypertexts were produced online in the 90s, such as *Red Brick*, a hypertext on and about the city of Bologna. *Nella rete del giovane Holden* (*On Young Holden's Net* 1996) was a writing project of the Municipality of Modena and the art review "Kult Underground" that also involved high school students. The result was a patchwork of poems, short fictions, and essays that was published on the "Kult Underground" website (now accessible via Internet archive).[67] Other similar projects involving schools were organized particularly in the North of Italy (like *Grafoman* 1997, still accessible online[68]), but the majority of them are not online anymore.

The group of young writers Ipertesto Poetico Quadridimensionale published *Machina Amniotica* (*Amniotic Machine*) online, openly allowing the readers to manipulate the hyper-poem.

However, besides these experiments, Italy has not appeared to be so interested in electronic literature. This could be explained by the long tradition of a high literature that both schools and universities have emphasized coupled with the sense that electronic literature is not high literature.

Very recently, "Quintadicopertina" (2010), a new publishing house only for digital formats, has published three new hypertexts in its series "polistorie" (multiple/many stories): Fabrizio Verrandi's *Chi ha ucciso David Crane?* (*Who killed David Crane?*), Antonio Koch's *Verrà H.P. e avrà i tuoi occhi* (*H.P. will come and have your eyes*), and Enrico Colombini's *Locusta Temporis* (*The Age of Locust*).

Normally in Italy, dissemination and publication of electronic literature depend on its authors and their personal websites. However, in recent years there has been a wider interest in the subject.

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67 <http://replay.waybackmachine.org/20051104204103/ http://www.kultunderground.org/holden/>.

68 <http://kidslink.bo.cnr.it/irrsaeer/calamo/io1.html>.

"Trovarsi in rete" ("let's meet on the web")[69] was the first community website devoted to electronic literature in Italy. "Trovarsi in rete" originated in a workshop focusing on writing and new media that also involved high schools.

The project "scrittura mutante" ("mutant writing") started in 2000 at the Library of Settimo Torinese (Torino), and it was presented at "Il salone internazionale del libro di Torino" in the same year. Besides the Italian digital works archived on the website, there is another section called "mappa" ("map") where one can find many links to other e-lit works. This section is divided according to different *forms* of electronic literature: "New Media Poetry," "Hypertexts," "Interactive Fiction," "Generative Writing," and "Collaborative Writing." In the same archive, however, there is also a link to "e-books."[70]

The website also had a forum, which was particularly active from 2002 until 2006. One needed to be registered to be able to access the forum. The project used to be linked to an online review site called "Meccano" with critical articles focusing on writing and new media.[71] After 2007, the activities of the workshop and of the website stopped, but almost all the links of the archive still work.

The Officina di Letteratura Elettronica (OLE; Workshop of Electronic Literature)[72] is a project still under construction. In any case, it is the first Italian website devoted to electronic literature. However, the sections devoted to Italian experimental poetry and videopoetry are more accurate than the section concerning electronic literature. This section, actually, is quite small, but it provides several links to Italian artists' webpages, and there is a section focusing on electronic literature around the world.

PRIZES AND EXHIBITIONS

Among the activities of "trovarsi in rete," the most interesting was the organization of six editions (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2007) of a prize called "scrittura mutante" ("mutant writing"). It was devoted to electronic literature, blog writing, and email fiction written in Italian. The website is still accessible, and its archive preserves all the works that were submitted to the award since 2003.

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69 <http://www.trovarsinrete.org/>.

70 <http://www.trovarsinrete.org/archivio.htm>.

71 <http://www.meccano.to>. The link unfortunately does not work anymore.

72 <http://www.elettroletteratura.org/>.

In 2011 (January 21 to February 20), the first Italian exhibition fully devoted to electronic literature was organized at the Palazzo delle Arti di Napoli–PAN. Some twenty works were hosted by as many authors coming from Europe, the Americas, and Australia.

SPAIN

Electronic literature publication in Spain normally concerns publication of works written in Spanish without distinction between Spain and Spanish-speaking areas. What appears to be interesting is that all the websites and projects devoted to electronic literature belong to academic institutions.

Hipertulia[73] was one of the first websites devoted to hyperfiction in Spain. It was a project of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, directed by Susana Pajares Tosca and Joaquín Mª Aguirre. It started in 1997 as a forum and as an archive for critical and theoretical essays on hypertexts. There is a page in English that describes the project:

> *Hipertulia* is a forum whose aim is to introduce hypertext and hyperfiction to the Spanish-speaking public. Most of the literature about hypertext is in English, so we want to help make hypertext better known by translating and commenting on some "classic" papers as well as publishing new ones.

However, in the section "Creación" two hypertexts were published: *Desde Aquí* (*From Here*) by Mónica Montes and *Pentagonal* by Carlos Labbé. The website stopped being active in 2002. In 2008, it reopened for a while, but today it appears to function only as an archive.

Also, the University of Navarra opened a website devoted to hyperfiction with links to reviews studying the subject. There is also a short list of links to access works of or about digital literature. The list links to authors such as Jim Rosenberg, Stuart Moulthrop, and Katherine Hayles.[74] The website is still accessible, but it has not been updated for several years. However, one of its sections is the "Spanish Hyperfiction Directory",[75] which contains twenty-six works by twenty-six authors all originally written in Spanish. (The majority of the links still work.)

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73 <http://www.ucm.es/info/especulo/hipertul/indexeng.htm>.

74 <http://www.unav.es/digilab/ric/textos/ficcion.html>.

75 <http://www.unav.es/digilab/hyperfiction/>.

The research group Hermeneia, created by Laura Borràs, is housed at the University of Barcelona. Hermeneia's website is a rich source for everyone who is interested in electronic literature: it hosts an anthology of more than 150 works of electronic literature (in different languages) and 350 critical/theoretical articles on electronic literature.[76] The website is accessible in four languages (Catalan, Spanish, English, and French); however, the Catalan and Spanish versions are more often updated.

In 2010 as a pedagogical activity of the Màster en Literatura en l'Era digital (University of Barcelona) directed by Laura Borràs, two works of digital literature were translated into Catalan by masters students and then published on the Hermeneia website: Rui Torres' *Amor de Clarice* and Deena Larsen's *I'm simply saying*.

Besides the academic institution, the Badosa.com publishing house (a famous online publishing house offering works in Catalan, Spanish, English, and French) published three hypertexts. The first, Edith Checa's *Como el cielo los ojos* (*Like the sky the eyes*) was published in 1998.[77] More recently Badosa.com also published *Pinzas de metal* (*Metal Clamps*)[78] by Alma Pérez in 2003 and *Algoritmo* (*Algorithm*)[79] by Venezuelan writer Pablo Brito Altamira in 2005.

Palabras digitales (*Digital words*)[80] is a webpage devoted to electronic literature. The editor says that *Palabras digitales* is a project interested in the relationship between literary texts and digital worlds. The project was launched in Barcelona in 2010.

There are eight sections, seven of which publish electronic literature works. The majority of the texts are written in Catalan or Spanish, but some texts are in English and French. The last section advertises events concerning electronic literature (this section is not frequently updated). There is the possibility to comment on the published works, but this requires registration, and there are not that many comments.

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76 <http://www.hermeneia.net/cat/>.

77 <http://www.badosa.com/bin/obra.pl?id=n052>.

78 <http://www.badosa.com/bin/obra.pl?id=n175>.

79 <http://www.badosa.com/bin/obra.pl?id=n251>.

80 <http://www.palabrasdigitales.com>.

Epimone[81] is an open cyber-poetic anthology. *Epimone* is edited by Lluís Calvo and Pedro Valdeolmillos. The webpage is accessible in three languages (Spanish, Catalan, and English). There are thirty-three works in several languages (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Catalan). The non-Spanish authors include Jason Nelson, Komminos Zervos, and Deena Larsen.

The second volume of the *Electronic Literature Collection* published three works in Catalan: Ton Ferret's *The Fugue Book* (the winner of the Vicent Ferrer mention for the best work in Catalan at the Ciutat de Vinaròs Digital Literature Award 2008); Isaías Herrero's *La Casa Sota el Temps* (also awarded best Catalan work by the Ciutat de Vinaròs Digital Literature Awards in 2007); and Herrero's *Universo Molécula* (the winner of the Ciutat de Vinaròs Digital Literature Award 2007). The collection also included *Synonymovie* (2004), a work by Eugenio Tisselli, a Mexican-Italian author based in Barcelona.

PRIZES AND FESTIVALS

In 2005, the first international award fully devoted to electronic literature "Ciutat de Vinaròs" was organized. The goal of these prizes was to promote the creativity of literature through new forms of writing. The prizes would be awarded to the best works of electronic literature in the categories of Narrative and Poetry. There would also be a special "Vicent Ferrer Romero" mention for the best work of electronic literature that uses mainly Catalan. Entries in several languages were allowed: English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, or Catalan. There were yearly editions from 2005–2008. Since 2009, due to the economic crisis in Spain, the prizes were suspended, but, according to Laura Borràs, a new edition will most likely be organized.

From May 24–27, 2009, the biennial international festival of e-poetry took place in Barcelona. Many authors presented their works in different locations, among them two of the most important "galleries" of the city: the CCCB Centro de Cultura Contemporánea de Barcelona (Barcelona Contemporary Cultural Center) and CaixaForum (Social and Cultural Center).

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81 <http://www.epimone.net/>.

PORTUGAL

Portugal has an interesting tradition in experimenting with poetry. The Portuguese writer and poet Ernesto M. de Melo e Castro is considered the father of so-called videopoetry in which animation and temporality are brought to poetry.

Pedro Barbosa is considered the father of generative texts in Portugal and a pioneer in Europe. His well-known *Sintext* (an automatic generator realized in collaboration with Abílio Cavalheiro) and *Ofício sentimental* (a textual generator) were published in *alire* in 1994 (Édition Mots-Voir).

Barbosa published a new version of *Sintext* in 1997 in *alire/DOC(K)S n.10* (CD-ROM): *Sintext: neuf textes automatiques générés par ordinateur*.

The Edições UFP published in 2001 a CD-ROM titled *O Motor Textual,* an electronic book created by Pedro Barbosa in collaboration with José M. Torres.

Currently, research and publications concerning digital literature are mainly carried on at CECLICO (Centro de Estudos Culturais, da Linguagem e do Comportamente—Center for Cultural, Language, and Behavior Studies). This Research Center now integrates CETIC (Centro de Estudos sobre Texto Informático e Ciberliteratura—Center for Computer-Generated Texts and Cyberliterature Studies), at Universidade Fernando Pessoa in Oporto, directed by Rui Torres with the collaboration of Pedro Barbosa. The website[82]—which has also an English version—contains three sections devoted to electronic literature, titled "Ciberliteratura," "Poesia Animada," and "Hiperficção" (the English version has only two genres: "cyberliterature" and "hyperfiction"). This website hosts critical and theoretical essays and works of digital literature (particularly written in Portuguese).

This research group also publishes the journal *Cibertextualidades*.[83] Since May 2006, the journal has published five issues (the sixth is forthcoming in 2014). All issues are freely available online at the website above.

The second issue of *Cibertextualidades* (2007) was titled "Ciberdrama e Hipermédia" ("Cyberdrama and Hypermedia") and edited by Rui Torres and Luis Carlos Petry. It included the CD-ROM *Alletsator* by Pedro Barbosa and Luis Carlos Petry (with collaboration from Rui Torres). *Alletsator* was first automatically generated by Pedro Barbosa using the textual synthesizer *Sintext*. It was then performed as a theatrical work by *Esbofeteatro* and presented to the audience at

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82 <http://cetic.ufp.pt/>.

83 <http://cibertextualidades.ufp.edu.pt/>.

the Teatro Helena Sá e Costa in Porto during the city's 2001 role as the European Capital of Culture. According to Barbosa, "this work was conceived as a pioneering text of cyber-dramaturgy."[84] The CETIC/UFP Press also published three electronic literature works by Rui Torres: *Amor de Clarice: Poema Hipermédia*, a hypermedia poem on CD-ROM (2006); *Húmus Poema Contínuo* (2011); and *Poemas no meio do caminho* (2012).

Rui Torres' *Amor de Clarice* and *Poemas no meio do caminho* (2009) were published in the *Electronic Literature Collection* volume 2 in 2011. The latter also won the Digital Literature Award Prize Ciutat de Vinaròs in 2009.

FRANCE

France has a very long tradition of digital experimentation with literature. In 1964, Jean Baudot published *La machine à écrire* (*The typewriter*), an important example of France's "computer-assisted literature" ("littérature assistée par ordinateur"). He created a combinatorial program, then gathered the generated texts into the book published by Les Editions du Jour. At this stage, experiments still concerned printed or recited texts. It is also relevant to mention "Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle", or OuLiPo for short, a group founded in 1960 by François Le Lionnais and Raymond Queneau. It was an international group, even though it mainly consisted of French writers and mathematicians devoted to the discovery of various forms of constrained writing. OuLiPo itself was not so much concerned about the possibilities that computers offered to literary production, but, in 1981, OuLiPo members Paul Braffort and Jacques Roubaud created the ALAMO[85]—"Atelier de Littérature Assistée par la Mathématique et les Ordinateurs" (Workshop for Mathematics and Computer-Aided Literature). True to the OuLiPian spirit, the ALAMO was mainly interested in the computer as a tool that facilitates combinatorial work. It is worth mentioning that the ALAMO received strong support from the French government. During an international exhibit held in Paris at the Centre Georges Pompidou in 1985 titled "Les Immatériaux," the

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84 Barbosa, "From Textual Random Synthesis to Hypermedia - The Genesis of a Multimedia Electronic Work: ALLETSATOR/ROTASTELLA."

85 In 2008, there were seventeen members in the ALAMO group. Cf. Philippe Bootz, *From OULIPO to Transitoire Observable: evolution of the French digital poetry*, at: <http://elmcip. net/sites/default/files/attachments/criticalwriting/bootz_from_oulipo.pdf> (accessed, January 29 2011).

ALAMO group introduced its first computer-generated poems, which heralded the birth of a new form of visual poetry animated by this new medium.

The same year, the first issue of the *Art-Accès* review, the first art review on *Minitel*, was published. Eighty artists participated in this issue, spanning 1,500 *Minitel* pages. Text animation had a prominent place thanks to authors like Philippe Bootz, Frédéric Develay, Claude Faure, Guillaume Loizillon, and Tibor Papp. At the time, all of them were in the sphere of visual and sound poetry and were to play a key role in the evolution of French digital poetry.[86] In total, only three editions were published, sponsored by France Telecom (who was the proprietor of this telematic system and method of production). Issue number 0 was published for the exhibition "Les Immatériaux" (the last issue was published in 1986).

In 1994, Jean-Pierre Balpe founded a publishing house, ILIAS, which published a few automatic or combinatorial generative texts by Balpe on disks. They included *La Masque* and *Paysages sans ombres* (under the pseudonym Patrice Zana). There is no reliable record of the whole publication list.

While the first hypertextual narratives were born in the United States, starting with *afternoon, a story* (1987, Eastgate Systems) by Michael Joyce, it was in the mid-1990s that the first works of hypertextual fiction were published in French on CD-ROM. *Frontières Vomies* was published by the author Jean-Marie Pelloquin in 1995. In 1996, the hypertextual fiction *20% d'amour en plus* by François Coulon was published by François Kaona: Ici & Ailleurs, and, in 1997, Frank Dufour's *Sale Temps* (which is an interactive drama) was published by Microfolie's. François Coulon wrote another work, *Pause*, which was published in 2002 as a CD-ROM, again by Kaona Publisher in a collection titled "interactive fictions."[87]

Following this interest in the relationship between literature and computers, in 1996 the French publishing house Flammarion published *Opération Teddy Bear* (on CD-ROM) by Edouard Lussan.

In 1999, the famous French publisher Gallimard published a CD-ROM edited by Denize Antoine and Magné Bernard entitled *Machines à écrire*. The CD-ROM held a digitized version of *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* and *Un conte à votre façon* by Raymond Queneau and *243 cartes postales en couleurs véritables* by George Perec.

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86 Bouchardon, "Filiations and History of Digital Literature in France," 98–111

87 It should be noted that Interactive Fiction (IF) in Anglo-American world has a distinct meaning of "text adventure game."

Some more CD-ROM publications have taken place, such as Jacques Donguy's *Phares gamma*, published in 2002 by SON@RT 033, which is a self-generated work, infinite by nature, where words, images, and sounds are posted together. That year, Véronique Hubert's *Histoire de la Femme aux Grosses Mains* was also published by Éditions Incertain Sens (Université Rennes) in collaboration with FRAC Bretagne. An illustrated book of poetry is included as the last chapter of this CD-ROM.

There have also been online publications of individual, hypertextual, and other types of French electronic literature works, but there is no comprehensible list of these available. Serge Bouchardon, however, has compiled a selection of twenty works in his paper "Filiations and History of Digital Literature in France" (2011).

PORTALS AND REVIEWS

The oldest digital review in Europe is considered to be *alire.* The L.A.I.R.E. collective (*Lecture Art Innovation Recherche Écriture*)[88] was created in October 1988, and the collective started the *alire* review. The founding members were Philippe Bootz, Frédéric Develay, Jean-Marie Dutey, Claude Maillard, and Tibor Papp. The review has published thirteen issues (*alire13* was published in 2009, while *alire12* in 2004). The information for where to find copies of the review is on the website.

The very first issue (0.1) was created for the inauguration of the review in the Pompidou Centre in 1989. This edition is a mixed-media work that contains programmed poems on diskettes, printed works on paper, and a work of sound poetry on a video cassette. With this issue (March 1989), the specificity of the review became clearer: there were diskettes with a notebook which contained only theoretical thoughts (there were no more video cassettes or printed works). This was the first clear assertion in France that electronic literature existed and that its only medium was the computer. At the beginning, it published only animated poetry created by L.A.I.R.E.'s authors. Since 1992 (*alire6*), it has opened up to works of electronic literature of all genres created by French authors, and, since 1994 (*alire8*), it has started to published foreign authors.

The *alire* journal also collaborated with KAOS for issue 138 of the journal SVM (Science and Life Micro) in May 1996. This was a significant collaboration

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88 <http://motsvoir.free.fr/LAIRE.htm>.

in that SVM has a large distribution and visibility through newsstands. The journal has also been shown in several galleries and exhibitions in France and in other countries. For instance, the venue Lara Vincy in Paris organized in their multimedia gallery an exhibition called "le temps d'alire" (time of alire) from October to December 1995. It is also particularly representative of the different forms of digital poetry before the advent of the Web and was the only review devoted to digital poetry up until 1996. Its publications are irregular, but the totality of the work is still distributed, and the review continues to be published.

Another important review is the *DOC(K)S*,[89] even though it is not completely devoted to electronic literature. The *DOC(K)S* review was created in 1976 by Julien Blaine, and it has been directed by AKENATON (Philippe Castellin and Jean Torregrosa). Since 1990, it has been a reference in the field of sound and visual poetry. In 1997, it undertook a survey on the use of diverse media in poetry, starting with an issue about the CD-ROM (*alire10*/*DOC(K)S* 3.14/15/16), in association with the *alire* review. It continued with an issue dedicated to sound (*DOC(K)S* 3.17/18/19/20, 1998), another dedicated to the Web (*DOC(K)S* 3.21/22/23/24, 1999), and a final one dedicated to the DVD (*DOC(K)S* 3.34/35/36/37, 2004/2005). Some works were computerized to be presented on a digital medium. These publications also contained programmed works.

The *DOC(K)S* website hosts several works of electronic literature, particularly in French but not only; there are works, for instance, by Jim Andrews, Robert Kendall, Caterina Davinio, Komninos Zervos, and so on—in this sense, it is trans-linguistic.[90] There is an alphabetic archive of the authors, and a section is devoted to critical and theoretical essays. Research can also be done alphabetically in the section "réseaux" where it is possible to find the websites of the authors and other useful links to reviews, festivals, etc.[91]

The review *T.A.P.I.N.* (1997) that is mostly devoted to sound and visual poetry also has a website,[92] which does not specifically publicize electronic literature. However, some works of electronic literature have been hosted. The web review

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89 <http://www.sitec.fr/users/akenatondocks/>.

90 <http://www.sitec.fr/users/akenatondocks/DOCKS-datas_f/collect_f/generiqueanim.html>.

91 <http://www.sitec.fr/users/akenatondocks/DOCKS-datas_f/reseaux_f/reseaux.html>

92 <http://tapin.free.fr/>.

Panoplie[93] has been devoted to contemporary creation since 1999. This review is not specialized in electronic literature, but, in the 2000s, many works of electronic literature were published. Unfortunately, some of the links are broken.

The authors of *alire* were convinced that programming was at the center of electronic literature and that it was essential to specifically investigate the new programmed forms that could be produced. In 2003, following Alexandre Gherban's initiative, the *Transitoire Observable* collective was created.[94] It was based on the assertion that all the components of the *device* (screen, machine, and program) were interdependent in the work. The founding act is a manifesto that Alexandre Gherban, Philippe Bootz, and Tibor Papp co-signed in February 2003.

The collective openly opposed itself to videopoetry, which considers programming a mere tool used for the production of a fixed multimedia object.

The *Transitoire Observable* does not exist anymore. However, its archive is still accessible online with texts on critics, theory, and works can be read. The main page on the website reads:

> having considered that most of the original objectives have been reached, on a common agreement, *Transitoire Observable* ceased to exist on December 6th 2007. We leave here, for consultation purposes, the theoretical texts, which constitute the archives of *Transitoire Observable*.

However, Bootz (2010) stated:

> even if the collective officially dissolves, it did not in fact completely disappear. Patrick Burgaud, Philippe Castellin, and I continue to collaborate on common projects. It is thus possible that *Transitoire Observable* is reborn, because the concept remains relevant and current.

The main French website devoted to electronic literature is "e-critures.org."[95] It is described as a website focusing on "electronic literature, that is to say that kind of literature that could not exist without a computer." The website hosts electronic works and essays on both criticism and theory. Twenty-seven works are hosted on the website—one work for each author; however, some of the links do not work anymore. If one is a member of the group, he/she can submit a work. Also, to sub-

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93 <http://panoplie.emakimono.org/>.

94 <http://transitoireobs.free.fr/to/>.

95 <http://www.e-critures.org/>.

mit an article, one needs to be a member of the group. E-critures.org consists also of a mailing list. The list, created in November 1999, came first. It has at present around 160 members, and more than 5000 messages have been posted since its creation). According to Serge Bouchardon (2011), "the actors of the e-critures list are not only interested in the works, but also in the issue of the genres."

The first version of the website, created in January 2001, made it possible for the authors to present their works ("individual creations") but also to come together in a common space ("collective creations"). In order to enrich the contents of the exchanges with the visitors of the site, to create a community of digital literature creation, and to reference all the works of its members, a new version of the website was launched in November 2003, following Gérard Dalmon's initiative. The latest version dates back to January 2008.

ANTHOLOGIES

In October 2004, Philippe Bootz published a CD-ROM "*créations poétiques au XX° siècle visuelles, sonores, actions*" (*poetic creations in the twentieth century visual, sound, action*) where several examples of French digital poetry from different issues of the review *alire* are shown. The CD-ROM was published with the support of the CRDP (Centre Régional de Recherche Pédagogique—Regional Center of Pedagogical Research) in Grenoble. The CD was specifically created with an educational aim: it is a tool for teaching art, particularly in high schools (Bootz 2010).

Besides being published on the author's personal websites or in the reviews previously mentioned, some French works were published in both volumes of the *Electronic Literature Collection*: in the first volume, *The Set of U* (2004) by Philippe Bootz and Marcel Frémiot, *Jean-Pierre Balpe ou les Lettres Dérangées* (2005) by Patrick-Henri Burgaud (French artist based in Netherlands); and in the second, *Separation / Séparation* (2002) by Annie Abrahams (Dutch artist based in France) and *Toucher* (2009) by Serge Bouchardon, Kevin Carpentier, and Stéphanie Spenlé.

PRIZES AND FESTIVALS

In 2009, Jean-Pierre Balpe co-organized an award devoted to electronic poetry. The prize, called "prix poésie média," is one part of a biennial festival

devoted to contemporary poetry (la Biennale des Poètes de la Val-de-Marne). More than 150 works were sent, and due to this success a call for a second edition was opened in 2010. The website clearly states which works are considered media-poetry:

> Works considered "media poetry" are those that place contemporary technologies at the service of poetry, be it within the framework of a performance or in that of a recorded and projectable work. Among the many forms accepted are included videopoetry, digital poetry, multimedia poetry, sound poetry, interactive poetry, and poetic installations in physical space or on the Internet. Works that illustrate a poem will not be considered (these are works that use sound or images to represent or complement a poem, for example). There are no restrictions regarding the form or content of the media poems submitted.

The scope of the prize seems to be truly international in that entries came from several countries, and the first edition was won by American/Australian Jason Nelson's *Secret of an uncomfortable ocean*.

Also "La Société des gens de lettres de France" organized a prize in media-writing: "Grand Prix SGDL de l'œuvre Multimédia." The prize has not always been won by a work of electronic literature. In 1999, Antoine Denize's *Machines à écrire* won the prize. In 2001, Dominique Autié won with his work titled *De la page à l'écran: Réflexions et stratégies devant l'évolution de l'écrit sur les nouveaux supports de l'information* (Éditions Élæis, Montréal), a book focusing on the relationship between writing and new media. More recently, works on the web were awarded, such as Philippe Boinsard, a French author of digital literature, who won the first prize for his website[96] in 2007, and YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES,[97] who won the award in 2008.

In 2007, the biennial festival of electronic poetry, E-Poetry 2007, was organized in Paris at the University of Paris 8. During the event, several evenings were organized by the association MOTS-VOIR (publisher of *alire*) and also sponsored by DICREAM (Ministère de la culture et de la communication). Many artists presented their new works in key cultural venues of the city, such as Divan du Monde, Le Cube, and le Point Ephémère.

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96 <http://databaz.org/xtrm-art/>.

97 <http://www.yhchang.com>.

SWITZERLAND

In the Italian, Rhaeto-Romance, and French-speaking areas, there is an active research group connected to the University of Geneva. Infolipo (Informatique et Littérature Potentielle—Informatics and Potential Literature),[98] created in 1987 by Ambroise Barras and Pascal Delhom—following the ideas of Oulipo and ALAMO—is a research group devoted to digital art and literature. They have published several articles and volumes together as a group focusing on electronic literature. Infolipo's website also has a small but interesting archive of works, which perform experiments with literature and computers. It is titled "variations combinatoire"[99] and is where works by Perec, Queneau, and Butor are regenerated randomly by the machine.

However, the most interesting activity of the group is the offline dissemination of digital art and literature. In the last several years, Infolipo has co-organized national and international festivals devoted to digital art and/or literature such as *<home_page/>* (May 2004, *Garden Party 2004*, Geneva), *expoésie* (May 13–30, 2005, Lausanne), *Virage au Nord* (April 28, 2006, Stade de Genève), *mots images paysages* (March 1–April 13, 2008, Lancy), and *projectangos* (March 26, 2010, Geneva).

LUXEMBURG

It appears, according to our network of expert contacts, that there is no publication of electronic literature in Luxemburg.

BELGIUM

Belgium does not appear to have portals or anthologies devoted to electronic literature, except for a special issue of the Flemish journal *Dietsche Warande & Beaufort*.[100] However, a few examples of digital literature have been either published online or on CD-ROM.

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98 < http://www.infolipo.org>.

99 <http://www.infolipo.org/ambroise/varcom/index.html>.

100 *DWB*, August 1999, n. 4, with a CD-ROM) edited by Eric Vos and Jan Beaten.

Anne-Cécile Brandenbourge's *Apparitions inquiétantes* (1997–2000) is one of the first hypertexts written in French and published online.[101] In 1999, *Voyage avec l'ange*, an interactive fiction by Tamara Lai with music by Serge Winandy and Jean Furst, was published by Thalamus and Magic Media on CD-ROM. Another example of hypertext is G. Berche-Ngô's *Hypertexte*,[102] which is more recent, as it was published online in 2010.

NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands present a quite interesting peculiarity, in that it offers an example of a community constituted by an institution: digidicht.[103] The website was launched in 2008 as a virtual platform for Dutch poets, visual artists, and designers. The idea was that they could meet on the website and negotiate in order to create electronic literature. It was funded by the Dutch Literature Fund and the Visual Art, Designer, and Architecture Fund. Some of the works hosted on the website were created thanks to another literary project, "copoetry on the screen." Once a year, a call for works is launched and five works are funded and then shown in the international festival, Poetry International (and eventually published on digidicht website).

The website is now more an anthology of Dutch electronic literature, according to Yra van Dijk. Fifty-two works (written in Dutch) are hosted there: thirty-one by "copoetry on the screen," twenty by workshops, and just one by digidicht's web community. The works are divided according to different genres: hypertext fiction (two), interactive fiction (five), generative art (three), codework (two), and Flash poems (forty-two).

The second volume of the *Electronic Literature Collection* (2011) published a Dutch digital poem translated into English, *Ah* by K Michel and Dirk Vis.

UNITED KINGDOM

It appears that most authors of electronic literature work within a self-publishing model. Simon Biggs (2010) states that the following is probable:

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101 <http://www.anacoluthe.be/bulles/apparitions/jump.html>.

102 <http://www.hypertexte.be/>.

103 <http://www.digidicht.nl>.

> Many of these authors, if not most of them, have chosen to work with digital and networked media, at least in part, as they do not wish to have their work mediated through publishing industry or mainstream art world mechanisms.

There are many artists and authors active in electronic literature; however, if one wishes to access their work, it is generally necessary to visit their personal websites. Biggs (2010) explains, "This means that the responsibility for the maintenance and dissemination of such artworks remains with the authors themselves." This also means that gathering representative data of the UK situation is particularly difficult, and there may be significant gaps in our account.

One of the first publishers in the UK that started to present and promote artists working with Internet and new media was *Ellipsis*.[104] They produced a series of CD-ROMs of artists like Simon Biggs. Unfortunately, the website is now mostly empty, expect for *Softopia* and *The Internet and Everyone*, and seminal online activities in London from the early 90s coordinated by John Chris Jones. The *Ellipsis* was taken over by Chrysalis, and they disposed of most of the back catalog. *Film and Video Umbrella*[105] worked closely with *Ellipsis*, amongst other partners. They used to work with artists whose work crossed over into the area of digital language.

In 1998, the digital artist Stanza created the website *Soundtoys*.[106] Stanza described the website as "the Internet's [sic] leading space for the exhibition of exciting new works of audio-visual artists." There are several artists known for their work in digital literature hosted on it, such as Annie Abrahams, Heath Bunting, Tamara Lai, Peter McCarey, Jason Nelson, and Jörg Piringer. Interestingly, one section is called "for kids." Notably, *Soundtoys* hosted the works on its own server. The website was very active from 2002 to 2007, but submissions dwindled around 2008 with a final submission dated May 2009. There have been no evident new projects in development as of publication.

There is also a relatively new project called *Electric Bookshop*, which, despite its name, seems to be more a discussion forum than a bookshop: "the Electric Bookshop

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104 <http://www.ellipsis.com/>.

105 <http://www.fvu.co.uk/>.

106 <http://www.soundtoys.net/>.

wants to bring together people with a common interest in technology, literature, design, and publishing to meet and talk about the brave new world of books in the digital age."[107]

REVIEWS AND COLLECTIONS

In 1996, Sue Thomas created the project *trAce* and launched the website. In an interview still accessible online, she explains her project:

> *trAce* came out of my own interest, as a writer about technology, in the Internet and what it offers for writers. It began in 1995 as a small research project at the Nottingham Trent University. I was teaching writing at the time, and, along with an MA Writing student Simon Mills, started a project called *Cyberwriting* which aimed to collect and review websites for writers. In '96 we renamed it to *trAce* and launched the website. In 1997, we received a 3-year grant from the Arts Council of England to establish an online community for writers, and that is when we really started to expand. Our original intention was simply to find and pass on information, but we have evolved into something much more complex. I think of *trAce* now as rather like an art center—we still provide information, but we also provide training, studio space, exhibitions and all kinds of participatory creative activities.[108]

The website is still available but inactive since 2006; its archive contains ten years of "writing on, about, and via the Internet." In the section "frame," the six issues of the *frAme: Online Journal of Culture and Technology* are still available. Among other artists, there are works by Talan Memmott, Alan Sondheim, and Mez.

In the UK there are no anthologies or collections devoted to electronic literature, but some works *from* the UK were published in both volumes of the (US-based) *Electronic Literature Collection* such as John Cayley's *windsound* (1999), *wotclock* (2004, with photographs and additional production by Douglas Cap), and *Translation* (2004, with music by Giles Perring); Donna Leishman's *RedRidinghood* (2001) and *Deviant: The Possession of Christian Shaw* (2004); Maria Mencia's *Birds Singing Other Birds' Songs* (2001); Babel and Escha's *Urbanalities* (2005); Alison Clifford's *The Sweet Old Etcetera* (2006); and Christine Wilks' *Fit-*

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107 <http://electricbookshop.wordpress.com/about/>.

108 <http://www.3ammagazine.com/magazine/issue_3/articles/intertext_interview_sue_thomas_trace_website.html>.

ting the Pattern (2008) and *Tailspin* (2008). And several authors are hosted in the Electronic Literature Directory.

PRIZES AND FESTIVALS

In 1998/99 *trAce* co-launched a prize called "*trAce/Alt-X* International Hypertext Competition" (with Sue Thomas from *trAce* and Mark Amerika from *Alt-X*). The first edition was won *ex equo* by Jenny Weight's hyperpoem "Rice" and William Gillespie, Scott Rettberg, and Dirk Stratton's hyperfiction *The Unknown*. For the second edition, both the title of the competition and the form of the works were altered. The title changed to the *trAce/Alt-X Media Competition*. The second competition was won by Talan Memmott's *Lexia to Perplexia*.

In 1998, *trAce* ran the "*trAce* electropoetry competition" in conjunction with the "NOW Festival of Electronic Arts." The poems that got the three first positions are still available online.[109] 2004 saw the launch of the New Media Article Writing Competition. There were three categories and four prizes plus one honorable mention. Although all these prizes were discontinued, they demonstrate the interest in such objects and studies. For the second edition of the "*trAce/Alt-X* Media Competition," the website highlights that more than one hundred works were submitted. Today, neither of these prizes is running, and the *trAce* website serves mainly as an archive.

In 2010, a prize for new media writing was created by the Poole Literary Festival with the partnership of the Media School at Bournemouth University.[110] The website states the following:

> We are asking all entrants to create an engaging and interactive narrative, through the use of digital technologies. Typically, *new media writing* exploits the potential of the web, which offers readers/viewers a range of narrative activity beyond reading a piece of text online or watching a film. For example, a viewer might need to click the mouse on a word or image on screen to activate the next sequence of text, or to link them to the next chapter.

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109 <http://tracearchive.ntu.ac.uk/electropes/index2.htm>.

110 <http://www.poolelitfest.com/new-media-prize.php>.

The first edition of the prize went to Lorenza Samuels (from the University of Bournemouth) for *Evidence*[111] and Christine Wilks for *Underbelly*.[112]

The UK also hosted the most important event in electronic poetry in 2005 (September 28–October 1), as the international festival and conference E-Poetry took place in London. On that occasion, many artists presented their works such as John Cayley's *Transl(iter)ation*, Maria Mencía's *Cityscapes: Social Poetics/Public Textualities*, and Jerome Fletcher's *...Reusement–starting from scratch*.

PORTALS AND ARCHIVING INITIATIVES

Hyperliterature Exchange[113] is a UK-based online project managed by Edward Picot. *Exchange* was launched in summer 2003, and its purpose is to review and provide an online directory of hyperliterature for sale. Picot clearly says that the main function of the exchange is to promote the sale of hyperliterature (not to sell or publish the works by themselves), released by small independent publishers and writers' cooperatives or self-published. Examples include electronic literature, cyberliterature, hypertext, new media literature, nonlinear literature, digital poetry, and Flash poetry. The main page states that 132 titles are listed at the present, but it is impossible to say what "at the present" means because there is no year. The majority of the works are electronic literature; however, there is also some work in critical theory by some scholars interested in electronic literature. *Exchange* lists electronic literature from several countries, not only UK productions.

The UK offers a wide range of public initiatives to preserve digital art, and it appears to be rich in offline presentations in galleries and museums. Although these initiatives do not intend to preserve/present electronic literature specifically, due to its nature, an interesting amount of electronic literature works are preserved (Biggs 2010). The public initiatives involve both museums and academies.

Lux[114] is an institution whose specific focus is on video art and experimental film. None of *Lux*'s projects specifically address electronic literature, but a number of artists in their collections have been active in this area.

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111 <http://www.evidence-interactive.co.uk/index.html>.

112 <http://www.crissxross.net/elit/underbelly.html>.

113 <http://hyperex.co.uk/index.php>.

114 <http://www.lux.org.uk/>.

Since 1992, the *Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT)*[115] has been an instrumental UK organization in the commissioning and exhibition of new media art. Based in Liverpool and housing state of the art cinemas and galleries, *FACT* has mounted some of the seminal exhibitions of media arts held in the UK, including the Videopositive series of festivals. Biggs (2010) explains, "*FACT* has built up an extensive documentary resource of artists work with new media, including many authors of digital literature."[116]

Intute (2006) is an academic initiative. It has structured its database into sections for the Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Health Sciences. As far as Arts and Humanities is concerned, there is no section devoted to literature. However, there are sections for visual and performing arts, film, music, and cross-disciplinary arts that include "links to material of relevance to digital literature studies" (Biggs 2010). The database is fully searchable and contains records of the work of authors who have been active in electronic literature, many of them non-Europeans. Intute is not an archive but functions as a portal to existing online resources.

IRELAND

The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, more than the rest of the UK, seem to be interested in digital art rather than specifically in electronic literature. In 2009, Belfast (UK) hosted the fifteenth edition of the ISEA International (Inter-Society for the Electronic Arts), a non-profit organization fostering interdisciplinary academic discourse and exchange among culturally diverse organizations and individuals working with art, science, and technology. (In 1998, it was held in Liverpool and Manchester.) This electronic art festival is not devoted to electronic literature, but some works with predominant literary aspects were presented, and some of the major events were scheduled in Dublin.

The Electronic Literature Directory only hosts Michael J. Maguire, who appears to be the only author of electronic literature based in Ireland.

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115 <http://www.fact.co.uk/>.

116 Biggs, "Publish and Die. The Preservation of Digital Literature within the UK," 191–202.

FINDINGS BY CATEGORY

COMMERCIAL PUBLICATIONS[117]

The general rule in the field of e-lit is an author's non-commercial self-publication and its more elevated or glorified form: publications of a literary group (such as Perfokarta in Poland or Infolipo in Switzerland) that sooner or later may find their way into more inclusive portals and occasionally to online journals as well. The few exceptions are the short-lived Editions Cyberfiction series, published by update verlag in Germany/Switzerland between 2000 and 2004 (four volumes), the short-lived *Elettro Libri* in Italy, *ILIAS* in France in the mid-1990s, the still active *alire* series in France (1989–present, fourteen issues), published by the mots-voir association, and the newcomers in Italy (*Quintadicopertina*) and Poland (*Ha!art*). Multimedia literary works were and still are sometimes commercially published on CDs and DVDs, but, beyond these and the other fringes of the world of the visual arts, electronic literature is clearly a community and not a market-driven scene.

The Hypertextual Exchange, a British site, promotes and encourages "the sale of hyperliterature—electronic literature, cyberliterature, hypertext, new media literature, nonlinear literature, digital poetry, Flash poetry, etc." and has in its catalog digital fiction and poetry published by small publishers in France, Canada, Australia, and the US (including Eastgate) or by the authors themselves. As far as we can tell, this enterprise (run by Edward Picot) is unique in Europe.

REVIEWS AND JOURNALS

Outside France and its history of online and offline literary journals publishing electronic literature (ever since the *Minitel*/teletext era and *Art-Accès* in the mid-1980s), we did not come across a single review or journal that was designed solely for publishing electronic literature. It is much more typical that e-lit is published together with scholarly papers, net art, or digitized literature, especially with sound, visual, and concrete poetry.

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117 The word "commercial" with all its connotations may be misleading here. In this survey, it simply means publications that are not available free of charge.

In France, journals are closely tied to avant-garde groups and practices, which is exactly what could be expected given the history of French avant-garde movements in the last century. The main example is the L.A.I.R.E group and its review *alire*, although the latter has expanded far beyond its original aesthetics as well as becoming more international over the years. The importance of *alire*, the L.A.I.R.E, and *Transitoire Observable* both in French electronic literature and in establishing international networks for the theorists and practitioners of e-poetry has been without peer in Europe. The major online reviews in France that are relevant in the context of electronic literature, *DOC(K)S* (1976–present), *Tapin* (1997–present) and *Panoplie* (1999–present), are primarily focused on sound and visual poetry, but e-lit still has a notable presence in these publications.

Online journals publishing electronic literature also exist in Poland (*Techsty*; 2003–present; six issues) and Portugal (*Cibertextualidades*; 2006–present; four issues). The former is exceptional in its scope and its activities in translating electronic literature. In the late 1990s, there were also online journals in the UK (such as *Frame*), but by the 2000s they seem to have faded away.

PORTALS

Portals and websites constitute the main publishing channel and model for European e-literature. They publish and give access to new works, archive old ones, and are to some degree connected with each other as a rudimentary networked infrastructure, and they do all this for free. In some cases, the differences between a portal and a digital library or archive seem to blur as is the case with the encyclopedic German e-lit and net art (meta)portal Netzliteratur.net.

Outside Germany, major e-lit portals exist at least in Switzerland (cyberfiction.ch), Poland (*Techsty*, *Ha!art*, and *Perfokarta*), Finland (*Nokturno*), Denmark (*Afsnit P*), Norway (*Elinor*), Spain/Catalunia (*Hermeneia*), France (*DOC(K)S*, *e-critures*), and the United Kingdom (*Hyperliterature Exchange*, *Lux*, *FACT*, *Intute*). The three Scandinavian portals form a loose network although they are different in scope (*Elinor* and *Afsnit P* are regional and *Nokturno* is more international).

What Simon Biggs (2010) says about the situation in the UK could equally well be said about e-lit in Europe:

It remains the case that while there are many artists and authors active in electronic literature in the UK, if you wish to access their work then you generally have to visit their personal websites. This means that the responsibility for the maintenance and dissemination of such artworks remains with the authors themselves.

It is only logical then that the problem and the various initiatives for archiving electronic literature will remain on the agenda for a long time to come, and it is here that the social, cultural, financial, and practical role of networked national and international digital libraries could be crucial.

ONLINE ART SITES INCLUDING ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

These sites are hard to detect, because the metadata and conceptual framework surrounding works that belong both to e-lit and net (or multimedia) art are rudimentary at best and misleading at worst. In our data, there are several online sites dedicated to both visual arts and literature, but to explore the countless sites focusing on digital and net art hoping to find bits and pieces of misplaced electronic literature would be an exercise in futility.

Many portals and literary artists already situate themselves in the nexus of net art and literature, but usually the dividing lines between the two are clearly demarcated in the portals. The case may be slightly different with the Slovenian artists mentioned in this survey as their work could be easily classified either way. The overall pattern is similar to the situation Simon Biggs described above: in order to access these works or get basic information about them you have to access the artists' personal websites.

As might be expected, animated e-poetry and e-poetry performances have also found their way to social media. For example, Infolipo and p0es1s have successfully used YouTube in delivering certain types of e-poetry and e-poetry performances.

OFFLINE ART SITES INCLUDING ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

For obvious reasons, this is an even harder scene to explore and catalog. By necessity only a fraction of electronic literature is visually or multimedially oriented, and only a small fraction of this fraction attracts the attention of museums and art galleries. Text-based installations, textual sculptures, and visual and kinetic

poetry may and do often enter offline art venues that sometimes also commission them. The series of p0es1s exhibitions and symposia (1992–present) in Germany and Brazil (accompanied by its online archives) is the most successful long-term example in the data we managed to gather. Historically speaking, probably the most important single event was the "Les Immatériaux" exhibition in Paris in 1985. In Slovenia, electronic literature has close ties to net and new media art. The dynamics of this expanded field of electronic literature are thoroughly analyzed by Jaka Zeleznikar (2012).

Ars Electronica gave birth to the first German hypertext novel in 1989, but since then the paths of electronic literature and Ars Electronica have rarely crossed (at least according to the online archive of Ars Electronica). Seminars, festivals, exhibitions, conferences, and conference series devoted to electronic literature and/or digital arts, such as E-Poetry (biannually from 2001) and Digital Arts and Culture (1998–present), form major venues for showcasing and exhibiting electronic literature for one's peers if not also for a larger audience, and, in some cases, media art exhibitions and festivals also commission new works.

ELECTRONIC LITERATURE COLLECTIONS

Surprisingly, there are no European equivalents of ELO's two electronic literature collections published in the US, although both of these include several European works. However, the situation is about to change as there is an ELMCIP anthology in progress. *Hyperfiction, ein hyperliterarisches Lesebuch* (1999), with its twenty-four German hyperfictions (and eleven scholarly essays), is a snapshot and showcase for German hyperfiction in its peak period, and the collection of visual, concrete, and digital poetry Philippe Bootz edited to be used in high schools clearly had admirable pedagogical purposes. All in all, the lack of electronic literature collections is hard to explain given the long history and prehistory of electronic literature in Europe. On the other hand, and, as can be seen from Chris Funkhouser's *Prehistoric Digital Poetry* (2007), there is much archaeological work and guess work to be conducted and concluded before we can firmly establish even the basic facts of our electronic literature heritage.

COMPETITIONS

The annual Vinaros prize (2005–present) is clearly the most successful electronic literature competition in Europe; it is truly international in its scope although it also recognizes local talents (writing in Catalan). Despite its success, the competition's future is unclear at the moment, and it may well be discontinued. The new French biannual international competition, Poesiemedia (media poetry; 2009–present), is close to Vinaros in its scope, but it is too early to say what its future prospects will be. On the other hand, no competition is truly international, as the number of accepted natural languages is always limited: the Vinaros competition accepted contributions in Catalan, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish, and the Poesie-media prize in English and French.

Germany is definitely the country with the most attempts at establishing competitions and prizes for electronic literature. The problem seems to be that the scene and the cultural niche was determined for a relatively long time by the failures of the first attempt, the Pegasos Prize (1996–1998), which was also the first electronic literature competition in Europe. Moments when electronic literature is more or less suddenly brought to public attention and spotlighted for discussion can be decisive, especially if those impulses arise from outside the field itself and people with no expertise in electronic literature dominate the jury. It will be necessary to study the actual effects and functions of electronic literature prizes in Europe in comparative and contextual terms along the lines that Patricia Tomaszek (2011) recently suggested and situate the findings in a broader context even more recently provided by Beat Suter (2012).

In Italy, an annual prize called scrittura mutante ("mutant writing") ran from 2003 to 2007, focusing on electronic literature, blog writing, and email fiction. The only e-lit competition in Scandinavia was organized in 2005 in Norway. It managed to get some public attention and provide an incentive to writers to try producing electronic literature. However, after the competition, the published authors didn't continue their careers in electronic literature. This leaves us with Poland and Ha!art's monthly award for poetry, which seems to be a good concept as it only demands one poem from each participating author.

Finally, it is important to notice the cyclical or periodic nature of competitions. While they all seem to wither away sooner or later, other competitions will almost certainly replace them, at least in Germany.

EUROPE-WIDE PATTERNS

Based on our findings, it is clear that there are several different patterns in e-lit publishing and distribution in Europe. In a few countries, we couldn't find electronic literature at all (Romania, Greece, and Luxemburg). In Eastern Europe except Poland (Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia), in the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), and in the former Yugoslavia (Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia), as well as in Iceland and Ireland, authors' self-publications existed but national portals were not found. Surprisingly, the pattern was the same in Italy, although an extensive database on Italian experimental literature including electronic literature is well on its way. In the Nordic countries (except Sweden and Iceland), we find the combination of regional and international portals and authors' websites. As the scope of the regional Elinor portal covers Sweden, too, we can include it in the same pattern as its Nordic neighbors.

Almost self-evidently, the biggest European nations and languages (in population size and the amount of native speakers, respectively: English, French, German, Spanish, Polish, and Italian) dominate, although there are important differences within this group of six languages and language areas. The major portals and the most important reviews, the few commercial publications, publishers, and e-lit collections, and almost every competition takes place in these languages. The main positive anomalies outside this sphere are easy to list: Slovenia (close ties between electronic literature and new media art); Portugal (one major review); Norway (one competition and regional portal); and Finland (one major international portal and several translated works of electronic literature).

All in all, the summary of the e-lit scene in Europe looks somewhat like this:

- *Collections*. France (in 2004) and Germany/Switzerland (in 1999).
- *International/multilingual competitions*. France (2009; 2011), Spain (2005–2008; on hold).
- *National/monolingual competitions*. Germany (several from 1996; most of them discontinued); Austria; Poland (one, monthly; 2010– preset); Italy (one, 2003–2007; discontinued); Norway (one, 2005; discontinued).
- *Commercial publications/publishers*. France, Germany/Switzerland (1999–2004), Italy, Poland.

- *Offline reviews*. France (*alire*, 1989–present).
- *Online reviews*. France, Portugal, Poland.
- *Major international/multilingual portals*. Spain (Hermeneia), Finland (Nokturno).
- *Major regional/monolingual portals*. Germany (netzliteratur.net), Switzerland (cyberfiction.ch), Spain (The Spanish Hyperfiction Directory), Norway (Elinor), Denmark (Afsnit P).
- *Major national portals*. France, Spain, Poland, Italy (in progress).
- *Offline exhibition series*. p0es1s (Germany/Brazil; 1992–present).
- *Online art venues*. p0es1s.
- *Literary groups*. L.A.I.R.E (France), *Transitoire Observable* (France), ALAMO (France), Perfokarta (Poland), Infolipo (Switzerland).

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

There are five main characteristics of e-lit publishing and distribution in Europe. First, with very few exceptions, it does not constitute a commercial, but instead constitutes a community-centered activity. Second, most e-lit that satisfies the criteria used in this survey is freely accessible or downloadable on the Internet. Third, as electronic literature is often seen, it also situates itself in the continuum of twentieth century experimental and avant-garde literature, it is (and stays) culturally in the margins of more mainstream literary practices or even completely separated from them. Fourth, so far, the ongoing technological changes in the commercial publishing world—including, for example, the competition among publishers, teleoperators, bookstores, and hardware and software manufactures over the digital marketing and distribution channels of literature (e.g. portable reading devices such as Kindle and tablet computers such as iPad) do not seem to be closing the gap between electronic literature and mainstream literary practices. Fifth, institutionally various e-lit communities are supported by or intertwined with, if anything, either the academic (creative writing programs, scholar-authors, presentations at conferences, etc.) or the art world (museums and galleries that may or may not get public funding).

All five of these factors deserve a closer look, as each of them has ongoing consequences and constrains possible practices and networked structures in the field. The lack of commercial publications and publishers effectively decentralizes the scene and leaves e-lit authors with three basic types of publication pos-

sibilities: self-publication, publication in portals if such structures exist (in many ways and cases, this is just a form of networked self-publication), and publication in e-lit journals.

Two additional options are only available to some authors. Museums and galleries naturally prefer works that are as much literature as visual arts (text-based installations, textual sculptures, kinetic and holographic works, or digital multimedia). Publications in e-lit collections, such as the two existing ELO ones in the US, seem to be something that may happen in major European languages later in this decade. To a high degree, the publication opportunities and channels depend on the quantitative aspects of the local scenes. Quite simply, in countries with just a few practitioners there's no chance to go beyond portals and self-publications unless one is able and willing to start writing and publishing in some major European or global language (this is a trend clearly visible in e-poetry, for obvious reasons). Journals and competitions require a constant and sufficiently substantial e-lit production to support them, most probably in more than just one digital genre, but, even then, both competitions and journals tend to be relatively short-lived projects.

Very early in this survey, it became evident that electronic literature is not a market-driven literary phenomenon, but a community-driven scene with an accompanying set of aesthetic, social, and cultural values and practices. It is far from being an OuLiPo-inspired world literature as described by some commentators (Tabbi 2010), because there are several traditions from which it emerged, and these traditions in themselves go much further than the usual emphasis on twentieth century avant-garde movements (as its predecessors) acknowledges (Aarseth 1997; Bouchardon 2011).

On the other hand, if avant-garde is defined in terms of cultural opposition, then the combination of freely distributed electronic literature and technologically savvy, skill-based e-lit communities running on cooperation and peer recognition perfectly match the excessive demands of the definition. Although e-lit is isolated from most of the trends and concerns of mainstream publishing industries, it is close to and sometimes almost inseparable from other literary avant-gardes using the variety of non-digital media. In this respect, its cultural position could be described as a hyper-niche (a niche within a niche). Quite ironically, this exemption from media attention and monetary exchange and the strong emphasis on aesthetic and social motivation may go a

long way to guarantee the creativity of these communities, especially as literary canons, editorial constraints, stable publishing structures, production and distribution costs, and copyright laws do not play a decisive or inhibiting role in most e-lit activities.

Having said this, it is clear that e-readers and tablet computers with their more or less developed multimedia capabilities constitute the first fully functional and commercially viable digital delivery channel for literature. This may seem inconsequential and trivial from the perspective of electronic literature professionals, and in many ways that is an accurate estimation. Still, it is possible that these e-lit devices and gadgets will result in establishing an expanded field of mainstream publishing practices and institutions—to take just one crucial example: Apple's App Store is not controlled by giant print publishing conglomerates—a field that suddenly includes ergodic multimedia as well. In the worst case scenario, the new battle lines are drawn between two kinds of professionals, us and the multitude of print authors and publishing conglomerates with a somewhat limited understanding of multimedia literature and ergodic variation.

Finally, it is useful to bear in mind that nothing is set in stone. The cyclic nature of the electronic literature scene (or scenes) and its social and aesthetic dimensions is one of the key findings of this survey. Some genres of e-literature, especially hypertext fiction, interactive fiction, or MUDs, seem to have active lifespans uncannily similar to most avant-garde movements (discounting the two long lived or still living exceptions, surrealism and the OuLiPo). Hypertext fiction seems to be well past its prime; in most countries covered in this survey, it existed either as self-publications by authors available at their websites and blogs or as well-archived past scenes available at online databases that in some cases date back to the late 1990s (such as the one hundred or so German hypertext fictions from the 1990s and early 2000s listed at cyberfiction.ch). Needless to say, no European equivalent of Eastgate was located (despite the short-lived success of Editions Cyberfiction).

This leaves us with electronic poetry and its many forms, genres, practices, and venues. The production numbers of e-poetry are on a level that is capable of supporting and justifying the existence of several reviews, journals, and both national and international competitions. It has a long and diverse history that merits collecting, some of its intermedial forms can be circulated and presented in

non-literary contexts, and, last but not least, e-poetry in this century constitutes a truly international scene of writing. In fact, one may even ask if there is electronic literature outside e-poetry anymore. And if there is nothing outside e-poetry, that may be good news, too. After all, poetry is poetry is poetry, culturally and institutionally defendable, supportable, and expandable as literature or art or both.

Still, it is too early to tell. The scene is changing and the complex local and global traditions and networks of electronic literature need and require further research. One could do a lot worse than to investigate the:

- diachronic and synchronic aspects of electronic literature genres and genre formations;
- electronic literary groups and their self-understanding;
- archiving and translation practices;
- sources of funding;
- publishing policies;
- market and community-driven scenes;
- connections between e-lit and print lit communities;
- quantitative and qualitative effects of population sizes; and
- available and emerging infrastructures and technologies.

In addition, one could investigate broader contextual issues in order to get a fuller view.

THE ORIGINAL RESEARCH PLAN

RAINE KOSKIMAA

In this individual project, an investigation into organized European electronic literature publication and distribution will be undertaken. This means that self-publication by authors will be excluded. However, the investigation will cover all other forms of publication and distribution, including:

- electronic literature magazines and portals online;
- electronic literature competitions;
- collections;
- online art sites including literary digital works; and
- offline presentations in galleries, museums, etc.

The investigation will begin with a systematic survey of the European publication fora. The initial data will be collected using the expertise within the research project (covering six European countries) and existing resources, such as ELiNor—Electronic Literature in Nordic Countries Portal, Hermeneia Research Network of Electronic and Innovative Literature located at the University of Barcelona, the contributors' network of the *Cybertext Yearbook*, and the ELO Literary Advisory Board. Based on this survey, a representative sample of cases will be selected for more thorough investigation. Through interviews with responsible publishers and editors, the following issues will be clarified:

- The beginning and history of the activity;
- institutional background and financing scheme;
- main forms of activity;
- publication criteria;
- intended audience; and
- collaboration networks.

Alongside the interviews, content analysis will be conducted on selected issues of the publications. As a result, a useful report on European electronic literature publication will be produced. The report will detail the main actors in the field and give a comprehensive view of the state of the art. The main innovations behind the most successful cases will be identified and, on this basis, the best practices will be identified and proposed.

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