REMEDIATING THE SOCIAL

ELECTRONIC LITERATURE AS A MODEL OF

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN PRACTICE

Ed: SIMON BIGGS

eLMcip
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Developing a Network-Based Creative Community: Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice (ELMCIP) is a three-year (June 2010-June 2013) collaborative research project funded by HERA, the Humanities in the European Research Area framework, sponsored by EU FP7 and the national research councils of the countries participating in the framework. The project has involved researchers from seven institutions in six European nations, who together have produced seven events including seminars, workshops and the Remediating the Social conference and exhibition, documented by this volume.

The ELMCIP project has responded specifically to the ‘Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation’ theme, of the original call, in producing research that examines how ‘the processes and conditions of human creativity will add new understandings of the value systems of the humanities and the practices and conditions of the creative, performing and visual arts, and a much better understanding of how these values and processes might contribute to cultural, social and economic innovation.’ Aspects of the call for projects addressed by ELMCIP have included research into the relation between technological innovation and artistic creativity, examining models of practice for developing and supporting creativity, considering the relationship between artists and writers who produce creative work and the communities that study them, and in particular how creative communities are functioning differently in a globally networked, technologically mediated environment than previously.

As a starting point, we asserted that creativity is not best understood as a manifestation of genius or inspiration within any particular individual, but instead as the collective, performative practices of communities. Considering the work of anthropologist James Leach, we understand creativity as an activity of exchange that enables people and communities. In studying and working to further develop the international community of electronic literature, we have thus focused less on particular individual artists and individual works, and more on the conditions and environment in which creativity takes place.

ELMCIP has studied the electronic literature community as exemplary of contemporary network-based creative practices, but we have not feigned disinterested objectivity in the endeavor. Although the work has included an ethnographic study of three different networked creative communities, conducted by Penny Travlou, for the most part our work has been focused on developing and expanding upon the efforts of an existing creative community, developing research infrastructure as well as opportunities for scholars, creative writers, and artists to gather and exchange ideas and publish new work that has advanced the field, especially as it has manifested itself within the European research area.

Each partner has taken responsibility for specific aspects of ELMCIP. At the University of Bergen, we organised and hosted a seminar in 2010 which addressed the topic of creative communities in electronic literature, examining different models of how communities have formed around regional or linguistic affiliations, formal and informal organisations, genres, and technological platforms. This work is resulting in two special issues of the open-access online journal Dichtung Digital. The other main contribution of the Bergen team has been the development of the Electronic Literature Knowledge Base (http://elmcip.net/knowledgebase), an online database that documents works of electronic literature, critical writing, authors, organisations, publishers, events, teaching resources, and databases and archives of work in the field. The Knowledge Base not only expands access to these resources but also automatically creates cross-references between them, so that we, for example, record not only the abstract of a piece of critical writing, but also its references to given creative works. These cross-references enable better understanding of the connections between different objects and actors at play in the field.

Blekinge Institute of Technology organised a workshop on Electronic Literature Pedagogy which brought together a number of educators teaching electronic literature in different international university contexts including literature, design, and creative writing programs to exchange ideas on best practices and curricular models. Blekinge is also the editorial...
leader of the ELMCIP anthology, a collection of European works of electronic literature in multiple languages and exemplary of diverse practices. This anthology also includes pedagogical materials. The University of Jyväskylä produced a seminar on Electronic Literature Publishing and produced a report on different publishing venues for electronic literature in Europe. The University of Ljubljana arranged a seminar focused on the connections between electronic literature and new media art in a more general sense, apt given the fact that work in this field is as likely to be exhibited in a gallery context as it is to be published by any conventional means. A symposium at University of Amsterdam focused on Digital Poetics, wherein scholars considered the relationship between traditional literary research methodologies and the strange artifacts and practices of digital writing. At University College Falmouth, a workshop focused on Electronic Literature as Performance, informing development of some works in the Remediating the Social programme of artist commissions. A special issue of the journal Performance Research will follow that gathering. At the University of Edinburgh, an ethnographic study of several e-lit projects has been produced, as well as the conference and exhibition Remediating the Social.

Although this conference is the last event of the ELMCIP project, the funded work will continue through June 2013. A second book, including the ethnographic study, the report on European publication venues, reflective reports from each of the PIs of the project on their specific research theme, and recommendations for policy makers emerging from our research will follow next year. The online database will also continue to be maintained and developed well beyond the duration of the project. Most importantly, ELMCIP has itself resulted in a creative research community that has greatly expanded the field within in its own right. The ELMCIP project will continue into the future. All of the activity produced by ELMCIP has resulted in an energising momentum in the field of electronic literature. Two of the major international conferences in the field, the Electronic Literature Organization conference and the E-Poetry Festival are for example already planning European iterations in the near future. It is a great time for Electronic Literature in Europe.

THE SOCIAL

The proposition of Remediating the Social is whether creativity might be considered a property emergent from a multi-modal social apparatus rather than, as is more commonly assumed, an attribute of individual or collective human agency. This proposition has been formulated within the context of an expanded apprehension of individual and collective ontology that considers selfhood, at least in part, as a socially contingent construct and, in this sense, both fascinatingly and idiosyncratically, a creation of the social space from which it emerges and is sustained within. In this context creativity is apprehended as a reflexive property of the inter-agency of social interactions, rather than as an activity concerned with the origination of novel things or a capability invested in an individual or group of individuals.

Remediating the Social seeks to explore this proposition through considering instances of practice that employ digital and networked systems, in their structure and function, and evidence these emergent characteristics in the processes involved in their making. Our focus is social media – not social media in the sense of media that are primarily concerned with enabling social interactions (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, although these might be within the remit of this engagement) but media that are part of the apparatus we can identify as the social in action. The most fundamental and fundamental medium that exhibits this property is language itself – and thus it is probably no accident that many of the artists encountered in this context often work with language and literary form. Another medium, which we will argue shares these properties in critically important ways, is the computer.

The artists and authors involved in Remediating the Social work with digital and networked systems. One way or another, they work with computers. Their practice engages people, individually and collectively, as meditated by (sometimes generated or emergent from within) machines. Such practice demands we ask, where is agency? This question is key to the work of many of these artists. Indeed, one would suspect that many of the artists and authors, whose work is documented and discussed here, choose to work with computers and networks because the issue of agency is key to their inquiry – they seek to question the inter-agency of author, reader and medium, often by problematising our apprehension of where the work originates. They ask us to consider how agency might be identified within constantly changing patterns of socially contingent inter-agency.

In this context we should remind ourselves of Terry Winograd’s observation that ‘the computer is a physical embodiment of the symbolic calculations envisaged by Hobbes and Leibniz. As such, it is really not a thinking machine, but a language machine’ (Winograd 1991). Winograd’s central argument is that the digital is of itself symbolic and thus language per se. He proposes that the computer is an evolution of writing and literacy, where language can be autonomically and thus agency can be considered abstracted from the human and perceived as emergent from diverse origins. The computer can also be regarded as a central element of our contemporary social apparatus. Therefore, we can propose that just as the computer is more than a machine we can use to ‘do’ or ‘make’ language, so social media can be about more than the media we use to be social. If we accept that the social is linguistic, as will be proposed below, then we can also accept that computers are social, in the sense that Winograd argues they are linguistic.

Here we encounter an ontological problem related to issues concerning technology, revelation and agency, as addressed by, amongst others, Marshall McLuhan (sometimes unfairly, to have misconstrued Heidegger’s foundational work on agency and revelation in The Question Concerning Technology (Heidegger 1977)) and Robert K. Logan. Logan’s work on the origin of language and culture as co-emergent phenomena with, or of, the (social) evolution of mind is relevant here. Syntactized verbal language extended the effectiveness of the human brain and created the mind. Language is a tool and all tools, according to McLuhan (1964), are extensions of the body that allow us to use our bodies more efficiently. I believe, that language is a tool which extended the brain and made it more effective thus creating the human mind which I have termed the extended mind. I have expressed this idea in terms of the equation: mind = brain + language (Logan 2005).
It is the extension of man in speech that enables the intellect to detach itself from the vastly wider reality. Without language, Bergson suggests, human intelligence would have remained totally involved in the objects of its attention. Language does for intelligence what the wheel does for the feet and the body. It enables them to move from thing to thing with the greatest ease and speed and ever less involvement. Language extends and amplifies man but it also divides his faculties. His collective consciousness or intuitive awareness is diminished by this technical extension of consciousness that is speech (McLuhan 1964).

Putting aside the rather reductive logic of McLuhan and Logan, if we can apprehend the mind as emergent from the social agency of language then our ontology, individually and collectively, can subsequently be interpreted as a function of whatever our (social) inter-agency is at any given time. As such, we are never fixed as individual beings but and collectively, can subsequently be interpreted as a function of whatever our (social) inter-agency is at any given time. As such, we are never fixed as individual beings but and collectively, can subsequently be interpreted as a function of whatever our (social) inter-agency is at any given time. As such, we are never fixed as individual beings but and collectively, can subsequently be interpreted as a function of whatever our (social) inter-agency is at any given time. As such, we are never fixed as individual beings but and collectively, can subsequently be interpreted as a function of whatever our (social) inter-agency is at any given time. As such, we are never fixed as individual beings but and collectively, can subsequently be interpreted as a function of whatever our (social) inter-agency is at any given time. As such, we are never fixed as individual beings but and collectively, can subsequently be interpreted as a function of whatever our (social) inter-agency is at any given time. As such, we are never fix...
there are more of us participating in each instance of making/using than we might assume and where that ‘us’ is composed of, amongst others, non-human agents. In this respect a key interest of creative engagement with digital technology is the manner in which such relations can be rendered explicit.

June 2012, Edinburgh

Bibliography:

PROGRAMMING FOR FUN, TOGETHER

Nick Montfort

Ever since computers have been programmed, people have programmed them together. From almost the first days of programming, people have also programmed them unofficially, for fun, to create literary and artistic works, games, and technically impressive feats that suggest new directions for computing.

In September 2010, at the first ELMCIP seminar in Bergen, I discussed the interactive fiction community, which includes programmer/authors as well as those focused mainly on programming; avid reviewers and critics; people who run contests, in-person events, and online community resources; players; and enthusiasts of other sorts. In this discussion that I have developed for the final ELMCIP conference in Edinburgh, my topic is in many ways broader, although in one respect it is more limited. Broader, because I am not restricting myself to the discussion of interactive fiction or even electronic literature—I am considering creative computing generally. Narrower, because I focus on one type of community participant and one way of engaging with creative computing—a programmer.

I will present relevant scans, photos, and video to illustrate how programmers have worked together in the area of creative computing. I will also try to make my fourth point (below) by offering concrete examples of how anyone who is conversant with computers can begin programming. In this article, I provide a brief discussion of three types of creative programming practices.

Four Main Points

I have four main points to make about programming:

- Programming is a social as well as a cultural activity.
- Programming is a deep engagement with computation that can connect the power of the computer to creative purposes in ways that other practices cannot.
- Programming communities are related to computational platforms, longstanding art and media practices, and communities of practice beyond programming itself.
- Programming is not an activity restricted to professionals with years of training; some essentials of this activity can be undertaken (and have been undertaken) by ordinary computer users after a few hours.

These points are interrelated, so I will argue for them by looking at the specific ways that programming has been done at different points in the past. Not exactly a cohesive history, not an archaeology, not a fully traced genealogy. I offer instead simply a few glimpses of how programmers have worked over the years in different contexts. To be clear, I am really considering not how they have worked, but how they have played. That is, I am considering how programmers have engaged in creative computing.

Human Moments in Programming

There are many examples of social programming from the earliest days of general-purpose electronic computing, when women worked as ‘coders’ (as they were initially called), programming the ENIAC. Whether it is the development of a new Data General computer (Kodder 1981) or the early work to define and enable the Internet (Hafner & Lyon 1996), work with computation is clearly not isolated from society, and programming, however wizardly it may seem, is not an abstract and hermetic activity. As many writers have explained, social programming is not restricted to creative, unofficial uses of the computer. Teams work together on scientific projects, military applications, and business systems. It is the creative and unofficial type of computing, however, that seems to connect to the development of electronic literature most directly.

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'Recreational Computing' and Early Games Programming at MIT

In 1958 an experimental computer with some of its memory was removed effectively (donated more precisely, loaned) to the Research Laboratory of Electronics at MIT. This was the Transistorized Experimental Computer Zero, called TX-0 (and pronounced ticks-oh). Many of the students who descended on it to become the first hackers knew each other from their work in another technical community, the Tech Model Railroad Club or TMRC (tee-merk), which had an elaborate model railroad layout that used an extensive system of relays.

The TX-0 was one of the first systems where programmers could interactively write programs for fun, engaging in 'recreational computing.' Game and proto-game programs were developed including a tic-tac-toe game and 'Mouse in the Maze.' The latter game-like program let the user employ the light pen to place the mouse and the cheese that was its goal; there was also a mode in which the mouse consumed not cheese but marlines, becoming less and less able to navigate the maze as it did so.

In 1961, MIT's Electrical Engineering Department received a new and more powerful computer, the first minicomputer, from Digital Equipment Corporation. This PDP-1 became the new focus of hacker attention. Pattern-generating programs and 'Expensive Typewriter,' possibly the first word processor, were developed on it. The most famous 'programme' written by hackers on the PDP-1 was surely Spacewar (Graetz 1981). It was first imagined by Steve 'Slug' Russell, Martin 'Shag' Graetz, and Wayne Witanen, who all lived on Hingham Street in Cambridge, MA, in a residence that came to be known as The Hingham Institute Space Warfare Study Group. The game was augmented by Dan Edwards and Peter Samson and achieved wide fame thanks to a write-up in rolling Stone (Brand 1972).

More than a decade later, the play in the system at MIT was still allowing programmers to code for fun (Monfort 2003). Some of the results in the 1970s could be copied and shared. Programmers worked with such names as Greg Thompson, Dave Lebling, and others developed into a sophisticated multiplayer game in 1974, Maze, the progenitor of Maze War and the first first-person shooter, ran on the Imaic PDS-1. This platform was used mainly a terminal in the Dynamic Modelling Group. Lebling and others developed a complex interactive fiction Zork starting in 1977. Those that developed Zork and went on to found the successful game company Infocom had a few things in common besides the general affiliation with MIT. One was the Dynamic Modelling Group, but another was the Lecture Student Committee, an organisation at MIT that arranged screenings of films.

Programming on Home Computers

The ability to program a computer, to use its general power in customised ways, was a core selling point for many home computers of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Home computers were often positioned against videogame systems in advertisements. Implicitly, this comparison reminded the prospective buyer that a computer could be used to play video games; explicitly, it pointed out that computers could be used with business and educational software – and that they could be programmed to do much more. This point was driven home in the many Commodore TV ads that compared the VIC-20 to game systems – including one in which William Shatner says ‘unlike games, it has a real point was driven home in the many Commodore TV ads that compared the VIC-20 to videogame systems in advertisements. Programmability was a core selling point for many home computers of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

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Apple II the first evening, entering your own instructions and watching them work, even if you’ve had no previous computer experience. It was very easy for home computer users to type in or modify a BASIC program, and the fact that the manufacturers encouraged such behaviour in mass media advertising primed users to partake of programming once they’d purchased a machine.

It isn’t necessary to head to YouTube to find evidence that ordinary users were supposed to start programming in BASIC in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The standard user manuals that came with such computers included sections on BASIC or instructions on how to program in BASIC throughout. Programmers had opportunities to collaborate when they gathered in schools, during the meetings of user groups, and in retail stores (which often allowed children to spend time there programming computers).

The Demoscene

The constellation of creative practice known as the demoscene (Tassajinji 2004, Carlson 2009) is concentrated in Northern Europe. People in the demoscene (scene) create various computational visual and musical works, almost always non-interactive. The ‘demo’ or shorter ‘intro’ is the prototypical production, and is a small file that executes to produce a music video, rendered in real time. Sceners gather to program together and show their work in parties, sometimes immense underground parties, sometimes released as part of a Summer Assembly, for instance. Sceners gather to program together and show their work in parties, sometimes immense underground parties, sometimes released as part of a Summer Assembly, for instance, sometimes as part of a demowave. The demoscene began in the confluence of a computer game industry and the impulse to remove legal restrictions on copying with technical ones. Certain microcomputer disk drives working in certain modes could be used to read data slightly better than they can write data. Producers of video games exploited this, joining with early videogame publishers to implement so-called ‘copy protection’ for games delivered on floppy disk. Then, so that games could be copied and shared, programmers worked to alter what was on these disks and remove the copy protection – to crack the games.

This activity of cracking software led those who were removing copy protection to enhance the software they were dealing with in certain ways. It was possible to tidy programs up and compress them a bit for easier copying (This tradition is alive and well in many circles, including even electronic literature. At a reading at the Modern Language Association, Jim Andrews told the story of how, when one of his works was being translated into Finnish, Marko Niemi returned not only the translation but also a version of his program that was bug-fixed and tidied up.) If there was a little space on the disc, either to begin with or as a result of this compression, it was possible to add a sort of splash screen that credited those who did the cracking and that pilfered the crackers’ enemies. Of course, those who cracked and distributed software took the opportunity to do this, and the ‘intro’ was born – the first production. With it, although crackers of software may not have known at the time, was born the demoscene.

This sort of crack screen or ‘intro’ to the game had to fit in a small amount of space; it was initially sometimes a static image, sometimes slightly animated. The intros and longer demos that are shown nowadays, like the graphics and chip-tunes that are also featured at demo parties, are there for their own sake, not introducing games or demonstrating anything except aesthetic computation. Initially, they demonstrated one trick or a series of tricks tied together by very little – perhaps music, perhaps a certain graphical style. Now, in our current era, when design is highly valued, demos tend to offer unity rather than units and often treat a theme, portray subjects, evoke a situation or narrative. They remain closely tied to platforms, either as Amiga Commodore 64 or Amiga or current computers running recent versions of Windows.

The demoscene has its own values; demos can be dark and industrial but tend to project a mythic, utopian world with cities that rock out in unison. Demos are shown at parties to those in the know, where they are voted on by the attendees, who are essentially all programmers. They have their own traditions and obligatory segments, including shout-outs to other demo groups. They are programmed in groups and sometimes worked on at parties in larger collaborative settings. While demos are not truly mainstream in any way – not managing to be pure computer science productions, not accepted as art, not reaching the status of an Internet meme – they are one of the richest non-mainstream uses of the computer.
Remediating the Social

Revisiting those Four Points

Now, I will consider the four main points that I made about programming once again in light of these three glimpses.

Programming is a social as well as a cultural activity.

This seems worth reiterating, but it also seems by far the least controversial of these points. Are there any human activities that are not social, that do not occur within society and culture, relating to each in some way? What I mean to assert here is simply that the social and cultural dimensions of programming are significant. This would almost certainly be granted from the outset, but the glimpses of different programming practices in different contexts, and engaging with different dimensions of culture, and with different communities, should provide a clear warrant to this claim.

Programming is a deep engagement with computation that can connect the power of the computer to creative purposes in ways that other practices cannot.

There is a fantasy, sometimes voiced, that the full power of the computer can be harnessed without programming, without a programmer. If one’s goal is to develop a standard sort of computer production (a slide-based presentation, a spreadsheet, a text, a LittleBigPlanet level, or so on) then one of course does not need to program. Greetings cards, however, are no substitute for the ability to write and express one’s self, no matter how well-designed they are. To make full use of the general-purpose computer, there is no substitute for a general-purpose programming language of some sort. To make full use of such a language, knowledge of programming is essential. The accomplishments of recreational programmers, of home computer programmers, and of demosceners could not have been made with point-and-click interfaces.

Programming communities are related to computational platforms, longstanding art and media practices, and communities of practice beyond programming.

The glimpses shown have revealed connections between programming and communities of many other sorts, from model railroad hobbyists to film enthusiasts. Communities of programmers have also been closely associated with particular home computer platforms (during the era of home computer programming) and various other platforms from those up through contemporary platforms (as seen in the demoscene). Clearly, programming is not a pure activity that people rally around for its own sake, without any concern for their other engagements with media or for the computer platforms that they know and use.

Programming is not an activity restricted to professionals with years of training; some essentials of this activity can be undertaken by computer users after a few hours.

This idea, which may have been initiated with the populist Dartmouth BASIC, was a commonplace by the early 1980s, when home computers were pitched to the public as machines that were programmable by anyone. While purpose-built software has exploded since then and standardised systems (such as those for ‘office’ productivity) have become rich with features, popular programming has not kept pace. Nevertheless, systems such as Processing and to some extent HTML with JavaScript allow people to see the first three paragraphs of ‘Programming on Home Computers’ are from Montfort et al. 2012 (with my collaborators’ permission).
Remember your old diary, how you tried to catch up Sunday afternoons to explain what you had experienced that week? Remember how you copied from the letters that held the feelings and thoughts events had triggered? How you copied the other way round – those old days when the events in your life summed up to a story of your life, when everything happened for a reason and became a lesson. Almost like the ‘diaries’ of historians, who don’t accept chance but see deeper meaning in everything. Destiny, above all; the labour of reason, as Hegel famously put it. Not many historians still see history this way; combining events into grand narratives. In postmodern times writing is different. And the personal diary? It is back, people say. Back on Facebook and called Timeline – which sounds like a new word for a chronicle. And indeed, it works like those earlier forms of historiography, that shy away from narrating. Let’s start with the past, before we explore Timeline, and compare it to other phenomena in current culture, discussing its meaning as a symbolic form of our time. Those who wish to discuss data in digital networks only from a political perspective of captivation may skip the following text and jump to the last section of this essay.

Order of Time

At the beginning there was the number. This is how the history of historiography could be described, if, instead of Herodot, one thinks of the Annalists of the Middle Ages. The annals listed events according to the year they happened, without explanation. Thus, the Annales Sangallenses Maiorae, dicti Hepidanni of the Monunias Germaniae Historica presents the following entry for the year 709: ‘Hard winter. Duke Gottfried died.’ The entry for 710 reads: ‘Hard winter and deficient in crops. 720 notes: ‘Charles fought against the Saxons.’ (White 1987: 8.) There are no explanations or speculations about the cause for deficient crops or the war with the Saxons. The import of natural and social events consist in nothing other than their having been recorded.’ (Ibid. 7)

The most remarkable element, however, is the listing of years in the left-hand column without any entry in the right-hand column: 726, 727, 728, 729, 730. In fact, the Annales of Saint Gall end recording the circle of years: 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072. Why such pedantic recording if there is nothing to report? Because, the hero of this kind of historiography is time itself.

The US-american historian Hayden White, who presents the example at hand, puts it this way: ‘the list of dates can be seen as the signified of which the events given in the right-hand column are the signifiers’ (Ibid. 8). The reported events, such as famine and war, only signify the really important event: the fullness of time, i.e., ‘the fullness of the “years of the Lord.”’ (Ibid. 11). No matter whether there are events to report each year, it is important to report the event of each year. Because this is the actual narrative the historian had to witness, a story with a clear beginning and an unforeseeable, but inevitable end: the year of Incarnation and the Last Judgement. The hero of this story was not a person or a country but God. It is different with another form of historiography, the chronicle. Though time is addressed in the term already, similar to the annals, and serves as the organising principle of the report, the central subject is not God but a person, a city, a region. Similar to the annals, the chronicle lacks closure, ‘that summing up of the “meaning” of the chain of events with which it deals that we normally expect from the well-made story.’ (Ibid. 16). Chronicles lack a conclusion since they report in ‘real time’. Conclusion can rather be found in ‘proper history’, the third form of historiography. While discussions which has a proper narrative: a finalised correlation of events. The principle of correlation translates the law of conservation of energy into history and assumes that every event follows from something and leads to something. The aspect of closure is based on the retrospective node of this kind of historiography. ‘Proper history’ relates to the chronicle like autobiography to a diary: it reports from the end, which also means to give meaning from the end.

These three forms of historiography do not progress from each other. If one thinks of Herodot and Homer, it is clear: at the beginning of the history of historiography was a word and the story. However, it was in the second part of the 18th century, when history established itself as an academic discipline, that historians demanded a principal shift in historiography: from the accumulation of insulated events towards a system of interrelated events. The mere collection of events, proclaims Wilhelm von Humboldt in the early 19th century, would mean to stay with an outer, literal, and apparent truth and to miss the actual, inner truth found in causal correlation (Humboldt 1905: 36).

The central issue in historiography is where narration starts. Shall the author, the historian, insert insulated events into a meaningful story or shall the reader do so? Related questions include, how detailed can a description be without applying narrative elements and how undetailed must it be in order not undermine the narrative at hand? The opponents of a mere accumulation of historical data without a correlating story, the German Johann Christoph Gatterer, declares, already in 1767 in his programmatic text ‘Vom historischen Plan und der darauf sich gründenden Zusammenstellung der Erzählungen’ (roughly translated: On the plan of history and the composition of narratives), that events that do not belong to the narrative system are now, so to speak, no longer events to the historian (Koselleck 1975: 663).

The neglect of details in favour of an inner truth and the preference of this truth to a mere literal truth can be seen again in the debate on photography and is an important factor in the comparison of the old diary to the new, Facebook. Lets throw the annalist’s quill into the sky and see how things develop a thousand years later. Of course, the computer plays a central role and writes, in both ways, history. Interestingly, the datum, so important to the annalist, is central again, as well as the given. The chronicle is not alive, Timeline and is not written by an outside observer but by the observed herself: and the events reported are not wars, plagues, or coronation; it is ordinary life, with all its battles, diseases and parties.

Timeline

When, in September 2011, Facebook introduced its new Timeline feature, it promised, this would change your life. Sure, this is a running gag at every Facebook developer’s conference. However, this time it was true, at least in terms of how people remember their life.

Of course, Facebook had been a live ticker of one’s digital life for a long time. It not only presented your status entries and friends’ comments and all the photographs and videos you uploaded. It also recorded what you visited and liked in other parts of the Internet. However, back then, the records disappeared into the abyss of your website. Now they can be easily accessed via the time-menu at the right-hand side, representing years, months and days. This is not an insignificant difference and, if there were no search functions, online, it could be as great as the difference between the scroll and the code. With this new navigation tool you can easily look things up: graduation day, holiday pictures, comments before and after a wedding, comments on divorce etc.

Timeline has been called the diary of the 21st century. This sounds appropriate and everybody knows it is a metaphor, for a website is not a book and a book can’t contain videos. However, the metaphor is still wrong. Timeline is not a diary but, metaphorically, a photo album; a photo album whose pictures one may have created oneself but not personally put into the album. This is not a small difference and, to remind you, by picture I mean not only images but also text. What does that mean?

Timeline is not a diary in that it doesn’t describe – or record – experiences at the end of the day, week or month. Rather experience inscribes itself in real time into Timeline. If you share a YouTube-video with a Facebook-Friend the link is sent to the friend and the sharing is reported at Timeline. You don’t write: today I shared that-and-video with that-and reason with so-and-so. Facebook itself reports the action: such-and-such shared that-and with so-and-so, as well as the time and link. Since the system automatically reports the given action to Timeline, one should say: it is the action that reports itself. That means: Reality is represented as a kind of technical ‘naturalism’.
Text as Photograph

To provide historical and poetic context: in the middle of the 19th century German critics accused realism in writing of daguerreotypist resemblance and as idolism of pure materiality. This accusation was overhasty, since German realism literature in 19th century was also called poetic realism, as it defended the matter of poetry. The accusation was more appropriate with respect to Naturalism, the writing movement of the 1880's and 1890's. Naturalism aimed at a writing based on a quasi-scientific foundation, conceptualising the author as an experimenter who connects certain characters under certain circumstances and analyses and records the results as detailed and objective—to wit as little poetic embellishment or expectation induced by the author as possible (Bölsche). Hence, writing became recording and resembled photography, as well as such a different media might.

Naturalism was the target of the criticisms that had been previously addressed to photography. It was accused of a cold mechanical recording without emotion. For many, Baudrillard's agenda of presenting the truth in a factual way only represented the loss of a deeper insight and objectivity. Thus, Adorno questioned the aesthetic creativity of mimetic naturalism and notes—Artistic products that are nothing but regurgitations of what is happening socially, flattering themselves that this kind of metabolism with second nature passes for a genuine process of copying such products, are smitten with silence. (Adorno 1984: 327).

Albert Camus even considered the style of naturalism in literature as the expression of nihilism, precisely for its apotheosis of a reality that does not impose any transformation or correction on reality. The artist claims, notes Camus of the poetic principle of naturalism, to give the world unity by withdrawing from it all privileged perspectives, including the perspective of the artist herself. In this sense, Camus holds, the artist

renounces the first requirement of artistic creation: whatever may be the chosen point of view of an artist, one principle remains common to all creation: stylisation, which supposes the simultaneous existence of reality and of the mind that gives reality it form. Through style, the creative effort reconstructs the world, and always with the same slight distortion that is the mark of both art and protest (Camus 1956: 268, 271).

It should not come as a surprise that in practice naturalism was not as objective and factual as intended in theory. In addition, it is well established that photography is less a display of reality than of a certain relationship to reality, expressed by the theme and moment chosen, the perspective and focus applied and the camera and footage used. However, it is also a matter of fact that a painter must decide how to represent an object that may only exist before her inner eye, while a photographer has the object present itself on the film, which is why photography pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot calls this technology the ‘pencil of nature’ and why this technology has the name photography—writing with light. This is also why Charles Sanders Peirce, in his concept of the sign, eventually classified photography as indexical, marking a physical connection between the signified and the signifier. The photograph is as much the direct result of the photographed as smog of fire.

This physical correlation between the signifier and the signified is also true for Timeline. The recorded data of shared links, visited videos and music listened to on the Internet are indexical for they directly result from the action they represent, with such stubborn pedantry that even changes to the menu-language in the account settings is documented on Timeline. From a media ontological perspective Timeline can be considered textual photography (Textphotografie), appropriating the sense of the term for linguistic photography (Sprachphotografie), coined by German art critic and media theorist Boris Groyo, to describe the fact that the computer does not store the meaning of the signified, but the single signifier. The main unit of the text is no longer the sentence but the word. Groys pronounces and he continues: like in photography the central element is no longer the visual expression (‘maklerische Ausdruck’) but the object (Groys 1996: 385). One can even go further, suggesting the single letter is the actual object of linguistic photography, because not a single one is lost when Timeline stores who shared what with whom and when with what comment.

It is the same ‘magical eccentricity of the detail’ Jean Baudrillard attributed to photography, arguing the details block out the ‘view of the whole’, the ‘approach to things’ (Baudrillard 2000: 130). This is also true for one’s texts, status updates and comments on Facebook. These texts are also documented, word by word, letter by letter. There is no retroactive entry into the diary giving the gist of what you had said, because now the diary is the

same place where you recorded it. The diary is itself what it should report. It is the life. If, with respect to sharing and commenting outside Facebook, we said before the event reports itself to the diary, we can now upgrade: the event is the report

This shift from a deliberate report to an automatic record has inevitable consequences for how we remember the past. If everything is recorded in a literal way, letter by letter, detail by detail, there is no way to see past events in various shades. That means there is no strategic remembering or forgetting from the perspective – and personal narrative – of the presence.

Siegfried Kracauer, in his essay on photography 1927, considers this constellation as loss of meaning. For Kracauer, photography captures the given as a spatial continuum, while the memory image preserves it insular as it means. For Kracauer, therefore, the memory image is a person’s actual history. Baudrillard radicalises the announcement, stating that ‘with photography the object can prevail with its “discontinuity and immediacy” against the will of the photographic subject’. Through the the diary mutates into a photo album the reported is no longer treated with respect to a certain personal narrative but documented in a factual, naturalistic, photographic manner. Interpretation gives way to raw data, the historiographic concept returns from story to insulated events, from proper history to annals.

However, Timeline provides a rich for narrative compositions. It does so with respect to holiday posts and reports that compose images and facts in a way meaningful to the author. In addition, Timeline also encourages the creation of a Life Event section providing five divisions of life events: Work & Education, Family & Relationships, Home & Living, Health & Wellness and Travel & Experiences. Each division contains sub-divisions. In the case of Home & Living: Moved, Bought a Home, Home Improvement, New Roommate, New Vehicle and Other Life Events. The division Health & Wellness offers, among others: Overcome an Illness, New Eating Habits, Weight Loss and Broken Bone. Each subdivision contains the prompts for Who, When, Where, Who and Why and asks for the appropriate specifics: which bone was broken, amount of weight lost, name, type, brand, and gender of the pet. Of course, one can upload images and: there is a field to complete a narrative.

With respect to cultural studies and narratology, such lists and sub-lists of events are quite interesting. They remind us of Vladimir Propp’s Morphology of the Folk tale, breaking fairy tales into a range of narrative elements that more or less structure every fairy tale. More obvious, than in the case of Propp, the list in Timeline reveals its arbitrariness. Why is there no Weight Gain section? Why does the Weight Loss section ask with but not for whom? Why is there ‘Quit a Habit’ but no started?

There is no doubt why Facebook offers entries for diseases, house sales, and new hobbies and we already knew that the entry about my pet has consequences for what advertisements I see on the right-hand side of my Timeline. However, more important to the discussion here is that, distinct to Propp, the various events are not considered sequential but insular. In Propp’s morphology the action of a villain is followed by a call for help: the arrival of the hero is followed by combat, victory, return and wedding. In Timeline’s morphology of life events there is no option to link between the various episodes. The events are not connected in a narrative but stored as they are in Facebook’s database.

This raises the question how close Timeline’s Life Events feature actually gets to the traditional diary or how close Facebook wants to get to it all at. The empirical finding that this function for composing narratives is hardly used does not endorse the idea this would be a medium where the old technology of writing a diary survives. That the story is optional does not support the assumption Facebook is really interested in our stories. Rather, one suspects the invitation to accomplish the life event entries with Facebook is supposed to detract from the fact of additional data collecting. The return to the formal list system of narrative units does not happen on the ground of recounting but counting.

Database

The point of Timeline is not that it is a diary open to the public but that it primarily contains elements that happened in public exactly the way they were reported. Rather than a description or conclusion of events, as in the traditional diary, Timeline is an automated recording in real time. There is no difference between the ‘I’ that experienced and the ‘I’
that reports. In this manner, Timeline endorses Facebook's moral imperative of authen-
tically and radical transparency. Nobody shall be able to hide, not even in telling her life.

This situation has narratological consequences in three ways. First, the 'writing' of the
'diary' is outsourced to the computer by the algorithm used by Facebook and its partners
in order to store the data on Timeline. Second, accounting returns to its etymological
meaning as summing up, and third data is democratizing, which means that even things eliminating
origin when it still meant counting. The fact that datasets are not meaningful, with respect to
a narrative, guarantees their completeness, since they can't contradict or disturb any
narrative. Third, the meaningful reading of the data is outsourced to the reader. This
can, with Camus, be called nihilistic; or, within the perspective of Web 2.0 participation
culture, democratic. The events are not stored in a meaningful story by the diarist who
on Timeline does not write the diary but lives it. The meaningful story has to be composed by
the audience or the 'diarist', once she turns into a reader of her own Timeline. Does she
do that? Do the others do that? Does Timeline change the way we tell stories about
ourselves? Does it respond to a change already happening? Our exploration must become
both more concrete and general.

Let's turn to a peculiar example that has already absorbed much attention of journalists,
academics, and curators, Nicholas Felton’s Annual Reports. Since 2005 Felton collects,
with statistical accuracy, the ‘mundane moments of his life’, as Nick Bilton puts it aptly.
For example, how often he used the subway, taxi, bus, airplane, a ferry or a chariot. How
often he visited a museum, attended a birthday party, how many hours he was in the gym,
how many books he read and how many book pages, and how many beers he drank and
from which countries. Which books he reads we don’t know. Nor what affect they had on
him. Such information is something for old school diarists – if they still exist. Felton is a
computer scientist, he is interested in numerical narratives, as the title of one of his talks
suggests (Felton).

The twofold appreciation of the mundane in Felton’s reports reminds us of modern
methods of historiography focusing on the everyday life of ordinary people. Felton too
democratizes data and their producer. However, his info-graphics only may display the
information of the designer to information. In an article about Felton and other ‘info-
chroniclers’ a young man ‘who tracks everything from his mercury levels to his vitamin D
consumption’ confesses such love stating: ‘There’s so much info that it’d be a shame not
to track it.’ (Brophy-Warren). Nevertheless, this strange love has a deeper agenda; the self-tracking aims at the better
self-understanding provided by technical equipment such as a counters, stopwatches,
pedometers, or GPS systems. And, indeed, what does one learn about oneself after a trip
to the Himalayas if one doesn’t know how many miles one has covered and how many
cups of tea consumed? To be fair, the Quantified Self-community – gathering in about
40 groups worldwide – conducts tracking in a much more meaningful way. The number of
cups of tea may not say much about who you are but the number of tweets you send
and retweets you get does. The activists of selfknowledge through numbers – as the
slogan at quantifiedself.com reads – have reasonable points in arguing that statistical
self-tracking replaces diffuse self perception through precise and incorruptible numbers
because those numbers are correct, even if they have been manipulated.

Self-tracking seems to be the solution to the old problem of self-knowledge, if gained on
a narrative basis, for example in the case of the old diary – that it is not discovered but
configured. With numbers it is pure reality that speaking numbers can use more chartheads to
raise your annual report’s chartlead score. But then one really has been in more chartheads.
Of course, even numbers must be interpreted, which is when they become subject to nar-
rative. Nonetheless, as the term numerical narratives – which should more aptly read as
statistical narratives since 2005 – implies, the recount is bound to the numbers among which
countless comparisons and assessments might be conducted. Numerical narrative is narration
out of the spirit of the database.

Looking from a more general perspective at the phenomenon described – Felton’s
Annual Reports, the Quantified Self-movement, and Timeline – we may turn to a thesis
Liev Manovich offered more than 10 years ago. In his book The Language of New Media
Manovich speaks of a natural evenness between database and narrative. ‘Regarding the
same territory of human culture, each claims an exclusive right to make meaning out
of the world.’ (Manovich 2001: 225). While the way a narrative makes meaning out of the
world is to ‘create a cause-and-effect trajectory of seemingly unordered items (events)’,
the database ‘represents the world as a list of items, and it refuses to order this list’ (ibid.).

With reference to Erwin Panofsky’s analysis of linear perspective as a ‘symbolic form’,
Manovich calls databases ‘a new symbolic form of a computer age’ . . . a new way to
structure our experience of ourselves and of the world.

The central role of the database reminds us of those early days of historiography when
history was treated not as a story but as a list of names and dates. ‘Database’ also provides
sections as the old, now replaced symbolic form – only under-
lines Manovich’s notion that new media ‘does not radically break with the past’ but ‘distrib-
utes weight differently between the categories that hold culture together, foregrounding
what was in the background, and vice versa.’ (Manovich 2001: 229). Besides, not only is
the Life Event-section secondary to Timeline, the narrative element in these sections is
even secondary to their database aspect.

Object-Oriented Philosophy

Manovich’s notion on the shift between database and narrative needs to be developed,
especially with respect to the keywords and names he drops. The starting point can once
more be historiography, as what appears to be a methodological question in the history
of science is actually a socio-psychological one. The assumption is: humans need stories, they
must give things a narrative home to feel themselves at home. This is true from both
phylogenetic and ontogenetic perspectives.

Some representatives of narrative psychology speak of a natural ‘readiness or predis-
position to organize experience into a narrative form:’ (Bruner 1990: 45). This readiness
answers the need to see one’s own life as a line of coherent and meaningful events
(Randell, Polsgrove). This coherence creates meaning in the form of knowledge, not
narrative. Thus, the meaning is infected by theory. Postmodern theorists have questioned the possibility of
knowledge independent of an individual or collective framework determined by
methodologies and social factors. There is no access to the world outside a specific vocabulary, value
system or disposition. An inevitable target of this scepticism was the illusion of a truthful
reconstruction of history. Thus Hayden White rejected the idea that ‘a fact is one thing
and its interpretation another’ and pointed out what Gatterer had confessed already in
1967: ‘The fact is preserved in the fact itself and that is a presupposition of the
interpretation to which it is meant to contribute.’ (White 1975: 55). Ever since then there
have been attempts to establish theories offering direct access to
facts independent of interpretation. In historiography this raised the term of the ‘individual
thing’, the fact before its use within any narrative (Ankersmit 1983: 172). In philosophy
we are witnessing, in the context of Speculative Realism or Object-Oriented Philosophy
and Ontology respectively (Me bullaux, Bryant, Graham, Bigl) the attempt to
gain access to the thing in itself, independent of ‘correlationism’ as Quentin Me bullaux calls
the philosophical tradition that insists, since Kant, that objects only exist in relation to
human perception.

Against this background the symbolic form of the database may be considered the tech-
cnological solution to a philosophical problem. The common denominator, overcoming
the paradigm of narrative. This paradigm is central to the logic of postmodern thinking,
itaively considered the foundation of all interpretation and claims to truth. Now, there
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The replacement of narrative by database as the new central form of human culture and the role Timeline plays in this process certainly need further discussion. Given the limited space here I have to elaborate in these questions elsewhere. However, I will at least outline the further elements of the discussion.

Against the supposed achievement of the quantified self and object-oriented philosophy we need to take into account the importance of narrating as an intellectual practice demanding and performing analytical, synthetic, and linguistic skills. Where is the place to exercise the cognitive skills and psychological competence connected with narrating in contemporary culture? How does Timeline’s abandonment of such practice in writing relate to the loss of deep reading resulting from the shift from deep to hyper attention? Does Bernard Stiegler’s understanding of this shift as a psychogenetic mutation understanding emancipation and enlightenment apply to Timeline?

Such a perspective, following the old arguments of critical theory on cultural industry, should be confronted with Lyotard’s aesthetics of the sublime, turning the crisis of narration into the mystery of being by liberating the event – or data respectively – from the chain of narration. In this concept meaning and narration is replaced by intensity and the absence of deep thinking appears as the depth of the present moment. To what extent do we have to read the rise of hyper attention and the psycho-technology of Facebook as the logical response to the end of narratives in both phylegentic and ontogenetic perspectives? Is the hyper-active, unfocussed fury on Timeline the pop-cultural version of Lyotard’s high-culture sublime?

It is obvious that the theoretical discussion of the issue eventually needs to be related to empirical studies investigating the role of the diary, before Timeline and since weblogs. How popular are online journals today? What other forms of autobiographical narration can be found in contemporary communication: in letters or emails, conversations among friends, psychotherapeutic sessions? How do Timeline or Facebook, and other social networks in general, affect the culture of narrative diaries? How present are narrative elements in Timeline and other social networks? Above all: To what extent is the database as a new ‘symbolic form of modulating personal experiences making the narrative modulate more and modulate more?'

On the grounds of these considerations and concerns, and regarding the challenges to future electronic writing not in the remote domain of the avant-garde niche but in the most popular district of new media, we should also examine the prospect of counter culture. How can the mode of narration be entered into the presumed realm of database? How do we have to read the rise of hyper attention and the psycho-technology of Facebook as the logical response to the end of narratives in both phylegentic and ontogenetic perspectives? Is the hyper-active, unfocussed fury on Timeline the pop-cultural version of Lyotard’s high-culture sublime?

Finally, it should be clear that what is discussed in this essay goes beyond the obvious, that Facebook’s desire for data illustrates the visualisation of ‘big data’ by ‘big software’ as John Cayley puts it (in a personal conversation) and the ‘infrastructural imperialism’ Siva Vaidyanathan discusses with respect to Google (Vaidyanathan). It is evident that the critique of the economic and political implications of such data and visualisation is crucial, even though the aim of this essay was to address the additional reasons for and the obvious ramifications of the shift from the narrated to the quantified self is undoubted. Nonetheless, the obviousness of the shift from narrative to database also indicates the obviousness of the other dimensions. Its terms are: capita, vectoralisation, infrastructural imperialism, programming industry. The end of the diary as we know it is not just a philosophical and psychological issue but also an economic and political one. The latter we knew before the former should be considered as well.

Data is the resource for the digital value creation and fuel for the economy. Today, data is what electricity has been for the industrial age. Business developers, marketing experts and agency managers are faced with the challenge to create new applications out of the ever-growing data stream with added value for the consumer. In our data-driven economy, the consumer is in the focus point of consideration. Because his behaviour determines who wins, what lasts and what will be sold. Data is the crucial driver to develop relevant products and services for the consumer.2

The fact that Felton’s lecture Numerical Narratives was listed as a possible keynote for this conference says a lot about the obvious. And we know that the ‘new applications out of the ever-growing data stream’ not only intend adding ‘value for the consumer’ but also, and first of all, for the companies. The shift from narrative to database announced by Manovich as a new symbolic form of our culture is symbolic also for the ongoing shift from culture to economy. The new way to structure our experience of ourselves and of the world. (Manovich 2001: 225) may be driven, as claimed by Manovich and elaborated in this essay, by the death of God and the end of grand narratives (Ibid. 219). Nonetheless, the obviousness of the shift from narrative to database also indicates the obviousness of the other dimensions. Its terms are: capita, vectoralisation, infrastructural imperialism, programming industry. The end of the diary as we know it is not just a philosophical and psychological issue but also an economic and political one. The latter we knew before the former should be considered as well.

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Disclaimer

is the effort to let events and data speak for themselves, before any individual would ‘force’ data into a narrative. The representatives of object-oriented philosophy consciously conceal their opposition to the anthropocentricism of philosophy and social and cultural studies. Is Timely the technical response to this philosophical challenge? As a technology designed to store and store data produced by humans independent of a human perspective it appears as a promises new positivism.

In the information society, where profit results from faster access to and better analysis of information, everybody experimenting with information or data is a future- proved candidate. Hence, NEXT Conference, that informs the business world about how the consumer making the modula- tion more and modulate more?'

2

3 http://vote.nextconf.eu/details/numerical-narratives

4 http://vote.nextconf.eu/next11/means-data-love

5 http://vote.nextconf.eu/next11/about/summary

6


http://vote.nextconf.eu/next11/about/summary

2


Social science in general and anthropology in particular has long attended to core concerns with the structure and form of societies, and with the constant interplay of individual and collective elements. These concerns are obvious: how we understand the emergent and form of human worlds necessitates an approach to creative agency alongside the conditions under which that agency is exercised. As Mary Leach famously wrote in 1852: ‘Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please’. But recent scholarship in the field of anthropology has taken theorising beyond the familiar implexes of structure and agency through an emphasis on practice (e.g. Bourdieu 1977) and on to the embodied and improvisational nature of knowledge and social action (e.g. Ingold 2000, Hallam & Ingold 2007). Creativity is central here. But creativity conceived not as individual genius (an approach that generates questions about how the individual and the collective collide; one clearly linked to other assumptions Westerners make about the boundedness of individual minds, and the proprietary nature of culture), but as creativity as an emergent (and necessary) aspect of social relations.

As anthropological study is based in a deep engagement with the potentials and differences between human ‘life-worlds’ (e.g. Descola 1994, 2005; Viviers de Castro 2009, 2010), much of the best anthropological work has taken as its inspiration (and guiding methodology) ideas and concepts generated in the ethnographic encounter with other people through land form the basis for kinship and identity. It is relations with the land and documenting alternatives is more than apparent in this regard. Indeed, it is the reciprocal effects of making things on persons, and of those processes on the organisation of knowledge, and how forms of ownership come to structure, and be structured by, the generation, and to the reciprocal constitution of persons, places, landscapes, things, meaning, and knowledge, we require a conceptual language with which to approach these things as we come into being: an understanding of sociality as inherently creative, and the relations in which things are constituted and in which they necessarily have their effects.

In my own work, the topic of creativity as a social relation converges a range of apparently diverse phenomena and events from the formation of landscapes, artworks, art and knowledge and sociology (e.g. Bourdieu 1977, Castells 1996, Brown 2003). This is made possible by the transformation of heritage, and the multimedia presentation of art and performance (e.g. Morphy et al. 2003, Stokols 1988, 2005 etc.). So alongside the recent turn in theorisation, a long standing tradition of questioning assumptions that lie behind our theories is adding to the need to re-think creativity as more than the work of exceptional individuals and society, creative genius and slavish replicators.

Rather than describing static systems and their properties, the understanding of social relations as creative asks us to make links between the emergence of social forms of particular kinds, and of the objects and things that facilitate social interaction. In attending to the generation, and to the reciprocal constitution of persons, places, landscapes, things, meaning, and knowledge, we require a conceptual language with which to approach these things as we come into being: an understanding of sociality as inherently creative, and the attention to the relations in which things are constituted and in which they necessarily have their effects.

To fill in a little of this approach to creativity and emergent forms, think for a moment about land—the very particular way it has its reality and presence in the lives of people living on the Rai Coast of Papua New Guinea (e.g. Leach 2003, 2006). Land is understood there as the significant source of creativity, and of ‘knowledge’. Connections to other people through land form the basis for kinship and identity. It is relations with the land as a series of animate places and beings that generate the ritual knowledge necessary.
The whole area of knowledge production and its relation to assumptions about creativity in knowledge economies then needs opening up to further scrutiny. For many people assume they know what is meant by ‘knowledge production’, and huge effort is devoted to securing the correct conditions for this form of (economic) productivity. But the way creativity and knowledge are conceptualised under such regimes is narrow and problematic. It tends to exclude many kinds of knowing, and undervalue the importance of exactly the kinds of emergent and relational, process-based, forms that anthropologists see at play around us. As new communities enter the field of knowledge production, we urgently need to understand the kind of knowledge they offer. I take an example close to the anthropological heart.

Always a contested and fraught area, Indigenous Knowledge (IK), or Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) has never been more relevant and yet more vexing than now (Descosta 2008). From the potential contributions to sustainable livelihoods, appropriate and medical and technological development, knowledge of and for biodiversity, and the possibilities for sustainable resource management systems, ‘indigenous knowledge’ systems are under scrutiny. Yet the status of indigenous knowledge is complexly entwined with social and cultural modes of creation and transmission, with the politics and history of colonial and settler societies, with epistemological questions as to veracity, applicability and relevance, and with ontological issues about status and effect. Far from being a hindrance these entanglements provide an opportunity to rethink knowledge and creativity more widely. Science and technology studies have, after all, been demonstrating similar challenges in scientific knowledge for some time (Law & Mol 2002; Kronin 1999).

Indigenous knowledge holders are increasingly demanding recognition for their practices without that recognition undermining the position of their knowledge as socially embedded processes. Intellectual Property has proved an inadequate route to solve these issues (see Brown 2003, Outdul and Posey 1996, Hirsch and Strathern 2004). Moreover, the problem will not go away. For at least the last twenty years, scholars in anthropology and philosophy, and the history and philosophy of science, in ecology, resource management, botany etc. have struggled to understand the epistemological basis of indigenous knowledge (Viveiros de Castro 2010).

There is a fascinating conjunction here, and the possibility for the mutual illumination of two comparable (not isomorphic) spheres of social action. Contemporary artists are also currently making claims to the status of knowledge producers, as their creative processes generate spatial, structural, emotional, physical, linguistic (etc.) forms of knowing. Their knowing, not only is the ‘knowledge’ of contemporary dance, (for example) unfolded in the temporal unfolding of relationships. Describing these processes provides comparable, alternative historically located, inflections on contemporary knowledge and social form.

A cross-cultural confusion about what to do with indigenous knowledge and creativity lies in conventional approaches to the production of agricultural staples or the production of complex and valuable indigenous art works in life-cycle events, the entanglement of indigenous knowledge is often embedded in, as if it were in fact an aspect of, relations to cultural practices that seem to rely on superstition and ritual, to the embedded making of art. It tends to exclude many kinds of knowing, and undervalue the importance of exactly the kind of knowledge that is at play here.

Fascinatingly, not only is the ‘knowledge’ of contemporary dance, (for example) unfolded in the temporal unfolding of relationships. Describing these processes provides comparable, alternative historically located, inflections on contemporary knowledge and social form.


(2000) ‘ELMCIP as these make material contributions to this effort through the focus on the way social, as a creative force, is mediated and remediated in various ways.

July 2012, Banchory, Scotland
**Fast video compression**

We decided to use FCPX video compression for quickly transposing the video’s hefty video content. This is a new tool that produces drag and drop functionality for converting video clips in a matter of opens, saves, and renders.

No single video format is completely cross browser compatible and big for FCPX, including “Full HD” on any number of arbitrary formats, and this can result in very slow load and render times. We are excited to try and cover all formats.

http://www.activityvideoconverter.com/

**Collaborative Working On-Screen**

March 2012 saw Andy and Kate meeting up in person to work together on the project. During a productive session, they viewed the first three minutes of chapter one several times, and discussed changes to the video and sound effects. Andy gave Kate a tour of the backbone of the project, and they looked at the complex layers of source codes behind the chapter. Together in front of the computer monitor, they re-order and enacted the video, as well as discussing how to create the final version of the chapter.

**Video feeding into the script**

We have decided to drop visual styles from the video into the script to trigger key feast narratives. As the project evolves, these will hopefully be connected into “artistic” instantiations (how each scene in the video works). The script also contains technical notes about the delivery of the work on various platforms (trash into: Dropbox, Twitter, Medium). H’m not sure what condition right now, but it is rewarding and excited to work on.
An owl and a girl most studious in a green boat; a seaworthy boat, certainly, though too equipped to suit the two of them. They took a barrel of food and a instrument of dubious accuracy. They sought to gain more knowledge of thule.

According to my sources, the girl informed the owl, it’s number, its direction of here.
Her relative had been among the most revered of alchemists on this topic. But the owl said, anaphora. How soon he drifted off topic!

According to my instrument, we’re nearing the edge of edge, the girl said.
By this time, all the owl’s diversions had run out.
Don’t fret, said the girl most studiously.
The records she kept constitute the entirety of the knowledge we have left of this legendary voyage toward thule.
‘Everyone carries a shadow… and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.’

The Operature

I repeated the experiment with the arc.

the gift of the sick
synthetic enhancements for being observed

or, his body split sagittally along

1/2 (800mm)

7" (178mm)

36" (914mm)

ors, thick pneumatic curtains, brass nano-finures

I was not as pleased with the results as he was. Some people are just too easy to please.

the public's process and engen

the coarse surface of a rugged block ev

e composite crafted as a new way to see

The Dissection Table (1)

Scale 1" = 12" (approx. 1mm = 90mm)

TABLE #1

TABLE #2

TABLE #3

TABLE #4

TABLE #5

TABLE #6

Another blurry drop of water in the AP.

There they fell and with them all that they could have or could not have.
heaven

kill
RHIZOMIC ETHNOGRAPHIES

RHEZOMES, LINES AND NOMADS: DOING FIELDWORK WITH CREATIVE NETWORKED COMMUNITIES

Penny Travlou

What a grand day – great people visiting (over 350 of them), excellent work to show & brilliant space – very proud of the larger community we are part of -) (Marc Garrett, February 26 2012, Facebook)

This short narrative of my ethnographic journey begins from its end: the day that I formally announced its completion, after twelve months of a nomadic peregrination at different localities across Europe and the trans-global spatialities of the Internet. That was the day of the opening of the new gallery space of Furtherfield, at Finsbury Park, London. Furtherfield has been my first ethnographic case study for this project or, to frame it better, my very first encounter with the subject of my ethnography: processes of social formation. This study, part of the HERA-funded project Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice (ELMCI), asks how creative communities form within transnational and translational contexts and a globalised and distributed communications environment.

A text of interwoven lines

My intention here is to unravel the story of my ethnography and to (begin to) give shape to the volume of field-notes created during fieldwork. As the word ‘text’ (from the Latin texere: ‘to weave’) implies, the making of the story – any story – is a ‘weaving’ process. I am not referring to the grammatology and materiality of the document, its letters, sentences and paragraphs put together, but to the multiple stories, voices and geographies that are woven together in the knots of the text-as-cloth (c.f. Ingold 2010).

It is on purpose, therefore, that, in its attempt to retrace the lines of my fieldwork and their interconnections, this text eschews a linear structure. It is a patchwork, where fragments of field notes, notes where people and projects meet, are stitched together to create a cloth, that in turn attempts to recreate a journey.

Quilts, bodies and the making of community

As I am writing this an exhibition I happened to visit, a couple of years ago in Atlanta, comes to mind; of quilts from the Mississippi Delta in the US, stitched together, cloth-by-cloth, by African-American women in the Depression Era. Each tiny piece of cloth was stitched at a specific place on the quilt to form a pattern; each pattern was about a story; each story was told by one of the women; and all the women together made a community. What kind of methodological framework could best accommodate these insights on creativity as an emergent property of assemblages? How should I go about my fieldwork in a way that accorded with the dynamic and constantly shifting patterns of interconnection between the communities I was about to ‘study’?

Rhizomic Ethnographies: following lines – inhabiting places

American anthropologist Donna Davis (2007) claims that, if scientific research is largely about testing hypotheses and predictability, ethnographic fieldwork is about happenance and chance, no matter how sophisticated the research design. She concludes that ‘[M]uch that emerges as desirable or worthwhile in fieldwork is unsought, unanticipated or not predicted.’ (Davis 2007: 3). Since the field is not lab (ibid. 3), therefore, I had to recognise that serendipity is crucial in this kind of study.
This insight was of particular relevance for me, as I was very interested in transnational and transcultural research. Following Amrit’s (2000) argument about the shift of anthropo-
tology towards the investigation of multi-sited communities, I re-
ised that ethnography could go to such communities. For instance, what if ethnography could use to approach communities such as those assembling on the internet? Since online communities are not defined by physical boundaries, they cannot be studied in the same way as communities being asaspial. This inference is supported by the claim – often made by ethno-
ographers – of a meshwork of interwoven lines of growth and movement.
In my words, what I argue is that the community is a result of boundary construction through iden-
tity and shared systems of meaning (Cohen, qtd. in Guimarães 2005: 146). This argument places a great deal of emphasis on the
spatiality of community and, thus, to ethnography’s role as a methodology not only on the physical road
and for mapping territoriality and the physical pre-

Roots and Lines

My methodological framework, therefore, mutated along with the study, from its original formulation as an online, multi-sited ethnography to a journey along lines, “along which things […] come into being” (Ingold 2008 online). The first line for me to pursue may have been determined by the original study design, but the rest of the lines that digital and (face-to-face) lines have evolved was accompanied by chance. I followed them as they came along, at each of their intersections, and the lines leading to those intersections (a small part of an extensive and highly ramified, rhizomic (root-
like) network of people, concepts and machines.

My journey in this rhizomic network was guided by chance: at no stage of the journey did I know in advance who my other case study would be; the second (Art as Open Source) and the third (Make-Shift) case study were lines that emerged – out of Furtherfield – the first case study. Their very interconnectedness
enabled me to see them not as separate case studies but as interconnected branches of the same entity, growing, and expan-
ing. The project and the community both became so much more than their sum. Instead of being a root with no clear beginning and end; what Deluze and Guattari describe as being always in the middle, between

This rhizomic topology resists chronology and organisation. Instead, it affords a nomadic pattern of propagation, where cul-
tural differences are constantly being engendered and changed. This is a challenging space, a challenging

Taking Marcus’ methodological framework a step further, I added a rhizomic topology, following the word about their project REFF (Roma Europa Fake Factory), of Furtherfield’s second case study: Salvatore, Oriana and persico from Art is Source Open Space. Salvatore, Oriana and Persico were resident artists at
Furtherfield Community. On some occasions, Helen’s nomadic trial met with those of Salvatore’s and Oriana’s in physical space, at geographical locations (e.g. conferences, festivals etc.), other times they were all meeting online on NetBehaviour, an online mailing list for net-
worked artists and cultural producers. This way of thinking emerged, that linked all the case studies together. By that stage, the term ‘case studies’ had become redundant; these were really interconnected lines within a greater ‘meshwork’, a Rhizome.

Follow the Rhizome

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along paths: lines connecting place A and place B. Most intrigu-
ingly, when a path or ‘line’ is traced ‘way-
farer’ is constant on the move [...] he is the movement’ (2011: 149, 150).
Ingold’s insights have helped me to appreciate this state of way-
farer’s dynamic, constantly expanding com-
munity: Make-Shift was becoming, online fieldwork was, there-
fore, indispensable.
For AOS, on the other hand, forming a community with people-
they involved in their projects, although appreciated, was not
prioritised as one of their objectives. When I asked them how they
felt about the Facebook group that was created by the
participants of READ/WRITE REALITY, an intensive workshop
on Ubiquitous Publishing organised in Cava de’ Tirreni, Orana
Perciò replied that:

The community of Cava de’ Tirreni is a good example of tem-
porary community [...] Well I don’t have any problem with this,
but focusing on an issue that concerns me this shared
welcome time very precisely, we didn’t force people. For example,
they did autonomously this group on Facebook, but we didn’t ask
them to do this because our goals were and is still always to give them tools.
In this time, we were sharing a big experience, we really wanted it. We were there for five
days. We chose to live together 24 hours. In that time, it was a meeting, a happening, from
my point of view it was my time. And we did all together, we did everything
together with them. So I have no problem. It was very clear,
what I mean in that moment we were assembling and no problem in
not assembling.

[...] don’t want to build something which is out of my power... my
energy, my goal, something bigger than me you know (she laughs). Not a problem at all. The real point was
that we wanted to give them a tool, our goal is that they use
it, that they are answering the community on base time, a
specific time, a specific goal.

What was interesting to observe during the fieldwork, both online
and offline, was that AOS were simultaneously members of vari-
ous communities, virtual and actual. They were moving along numerous lines, meeting, collabora-
ting, sharing knowledge and tools and, at the same time, making
connections between disparate communities. Salvatore’s and
Orana’s activity, thus, was instrumental to the emergence
of new communities (and networks) even when their intention was not the
formation of those communities.
Furtherfield was the nodal place, where all lines of this journey meet,
assemble, perhaps, in due course even disassemble. In Furtherfield
Gallery where I met Salvatore and Orana from AOS – an event that signaled the beginning of my nomadic
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of new communities (and networks) even when their intention was not the
formation of those communities.
Futherfield was the nodal place, where all lines of this journey meet,
assemble, perhaps, in due course even disassemble. In Furtherfield
Gallery where I met Salvatore and Orana from AOS – an event that signaled the beginning of my nomadic
journey.
Postscript
The text finishes with an introduction, I would like to introduce the
three main lines (knots) of my fieldwork. For this matter, I would like to follow the case studies introduce themselves.
Furtherfield
The collaborative work of artists, programmers, writers, acti-
vists, musicians and thinkers who explore beyond traditional
remits; dedicated to the creation, promotion, and ctiticism of
adventurous digital/networked media art work for public viewing,
experience and interaction, Furtherfield operates in a range of
digital and terrestrial media contexts, Furtherfield
develops global, contributory projects that facilitate art
simultaneously on the Internet, the streets and public venues.
www.furtherfield.org

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Art is Open Source (AOS)
Art is Open Source, an informal network promoting artistic, crea-
tive and critical practices in different parts of the world.
www.artopensource.net
Make-Shift
Make-Shift is an unique and intimate networked performance that
speaks about the fragile connectivity of human and ecological
relationships. Make-Shift is an ecologically aware house party
with a difference. As well as experiencing the intimacy, visce-
rously and shared experience of a live performance event; loca-
tions and online audiences participate in a call-and-response about
people, landscape and culture to discuss the theme of dispon-
bility in its broadest sense, www.make-shift.net

The acceleration of technological development in contempo-
rary Australia has fostered a new set of ways in which daily life
behaviours and relationships are modified via our interactions with
digital technologies. This paper seeks to explore the complex
plexities of contemporary information and communication sys-
theses and to describe the possibilities for alternative forms of
creative, networked and collective practice. At the same time we
examine the way in which a technological infrastructure has
the potential to disrupt our conventional ways of defining and
understanding the world. This paper seeks to explore the pos-
sibilities for alternative forms of ecological art practice.

DIWO: DO IT WITH OTHERS – NO ECOLOGY WITHOUT SOCIOLOGY
Ruth Catlow & Mark Garrett

Many contemporary artists who take the networks of the digital
information age as their medium, work directly with the hard-
ware, algorithms and databases of digital networks themselves
and for their own purposes. Inspired by networked practices,
metaphors and processes, they also craft new forms of interven-
tion, collaboration, participation and interaction (between human
and other living beings, systems and machines) in the develop-
ment of the meaning and aesthetics of their work. This
networks offers a unique arena for the visual arts, politics and
art history, the authors are both ar-
nal artists in the larger conversation.

By sharing their processes and tools with artists, and audi-
ences between them and with the networks in which culture is
created.

This essay draws on programmes initiated by Furtherfield,
an online community, co-founded by the authors in 1997. Furtherfield
also runs a public gallery and social space in the
heart of Finsbury Park, London North. The authors are both ar-
nal artists and curators who have worked with others since the mid-90s as
the opening up for a platform to create, distribution, remix,
critique and resistance.

Here we outline two Furtherfield programmes in order to
reflect on the way in which collaborative networked practices
are especially suited to engage these questions. Firstly the DIWO
(Do It With Others) work (since 2007) and the EM Art and co-
curation projects that explored how de-centralised, co-creation
practices in digital networks could (at once) facilitate artistic
collaboration and the development of digital artworks.

Secondly the Media Arts Ecology Programmes (since 2009) which,
in the context of economic and environmental col-
apse, sets out to contribute to the construction of alternative
infrastructures and visions of prosperity. We aim to show how
the collaborative networked public and political cultures of Furtherfield
and DIWO and undermined the development of a series of projects
network and the ways in which this vision of what an
ecological art might take in the network age.

In common with other network-aware artists the authors
are both originators and participants in experimental platforms
and infrastructures through processes of collaboration, partici- pation and co-creation. Together we work in networks which culture we work between individual, coordinated, collaborative and collective practices of expression, transmission and recep- tion. These activities raise critical questions about how people can best organise themselves now and in the future in the context of contemporary economic and environmental crisis.

Though this essay draws primarily on artistic and curatorial prac- tices it also makes connections with the histories and theories that have informed its development: attending to the nature of co- evolving, interdependent entities (human and non-human) and conditions, for the healthy evolution and survival of our species (Bateson 1972). Furtherfield’s collaborative (and dissolving) social ecologies that disarm systems of domination (Boochkin 1991, 2004) and seeking new forms of prosperity, building social and community capital and resilience as an alternative to unsustainable economic growth (Bauwens 2005, Jackson 2009).

Contemporary critical practices in art, technology and social change

Furtherfield’s mission is to explore, through creative and criti- cal engagement, a world of ideas and technologies where people are inspired and enabled to become active co-creators of their cultures and societies. We aim to co-create critical art contexts which connect with contemporary audiences providing innova- tive, engaging and inclusive digital and physical spaces for appreciating and participating in practices in art, technology and social change.

The following artworks, researched, commissioned and exhi- bited by Furtherfield this year, offer a range of practices exem- plary of the expansive possibilities of online art. The work advertised by DOCOSE is a participatory project in which users download and deploy crowd-sourced workers in the production of staged, one-person-acts of resistance in the form of revised digital text. The email project was liberally interspersed with off-line provocations and digital interventions which connect with the many art worlds that diverge from the market of commodified objects - a networked art practice, drawing on everyday experience of many connected, open and distributed creative and social media.

DWO as an emancipatory collaborative art project

The term ‘DWO (Do It With Others)’ was first defined in 2006 by John Furtherfield’s collaborative and dissolving Social Media Art Lexicon (since 2004). It extended the DIY (Do It Yourself) ethos of early (self-proclaimed) ‘net artists’, who taught themselves to navigate the web and develop tactics that were involved in its developing cultures.

The word ‘art’ can conjure up a vision of objects in an art gal- lery, showroom or museum, that can be perceived as reinforcing the values and machinations of the victors of history as leisure objects for elite entertainment, distinction and/or decoration – or the narcissistic expression of an isolated self of history. DWO was principally a collaborative approach in which art was participatory work, challenging and exploiting the advantages of living in the Internet age that connected with the many art worlds that diverge from the market of commodified objects - a networked art practice, drawing on everyday experience of many connected, open and distributed creative and social media.

DWO formed as an Email Art project with an open-call to the email list Netbehaviour, on the 1st of February 2007. In an art world largely dominated by elite, closed networks and gateke- pers, DWO deployed the metaphor of email to open up opportu- nities to bypass custodial restrictions for an imaginative exchange on their own terms.

Peers connect, communicate and collaborate, creating experimen- tation with the metaphors, tools, cultures and pro- cesses of setting up a Facebook page in order to encourage people to participate in the project and post to the list. DWO is a diverse group of people; artists, musicians, and others who are in a conversation with each other, expounding and reso- nating with their subjects. Their ends and means are well aligned.10

Why Media Ecologies now?

Through the Internet we all now have access to data about his- toric and contemporary carbon emissions. We also visualisa- tion of data that provide concise and accessible graphical arguments for thinking, feeling and acting in a coordinated way at this important moment.11

Data shows an exponential rise in global carbon emissions since the 1850s, starting with the 1750s; by 2004, emissions have dropped as a percentage of global emissions by region (CIA 2010). At the same time the quantity of carbon dioxide emitted by the UK has more than doubled, starting in the industrial revolution to annual rates now higher than 500 million tonnes (Marland, Boden & Andres 2008). This data shows how suc- cessful the UK was, during the industrial revolution, at spreading the production methods that would turn out to promote a model of strong economic growth and fossil fuel use. Such production infrastructures of capitalism are now collapsing in tandem with the environment (Jackson 2009).

At the same time networked technologies and behaviours are proliferating. Social and eco- nomic transactions take up increased speed but our existing economic and social models are unsustainable and the conse- quences of continuing along the current path appear catastrophic. The human species must find a way to reflect on how the technologies we invent and distribute will form our future world.

Michel Bauwens, of the Foundation for Peer to Peer Alternatives, works with a network of theorists, activists, scientists and phi- losophers to develop tools to move beyond the pure logic of economic growth.12 He observes that by trans- forming a system into something new, the first step is to break the use of immaterial goods, such as software, with strategies for developing sharing in other productive modes, the community interac- tion between the two is a different one. The emphasis is on putting peer production at the core of societal fabric. The fab- rication of the art market as a social species changes the nature of-economic models and tools that connect with one another in a coordinated way, facilitated by small groups of people.

The programme has included exhibitions such as Feral Trade Café by Kate Rich and If Not You Not Me by Annie Abramms, an art world intervention by the authors We Won’t Fly For Art and Ecotopia- the art of survival, developed in partnership with Access Space in Sheffield. It has supported research projects such as Telematic Dining by Pollie Barden and the ongoing sponsored project Moving Forest London 2012 by Varley Jamieson and Paulia Crutchlow. These projects and prac- tices have a number of things in common:

• They work with the metaphors, tools, cultures and pro- cesses of networked culture in the context of environmental collapse;
• They are led by artistic sensibilities (incorporating but not governed by utilitarian or theoretical concerns);
• They generate unruly and provocative relationships between symbolic meanings and material effects;
• They are metaboliques – their content and their structures are in a conversation with each other, expanding and reso- nating with their subjects. Their ends and means are well aligned.10 (Bateson 1972, Catlow 2012).
Since 2003 participants in the project (usually travelling artists, collectors, curators and crowds) have been moving around the world with them on trips they are taking anyway and delivering them to deposits (friends’and colleagues’ flats or work places) or public spaces. In some cases in Europe and North America, Rich has crafted a database through which couriers can log their journeys, tracking the details of sources, shipping and handling for all groceries in the network with a micro -attention usually paid to ingredient listings. (Catlow 2009). This database is at the heart of the artwork, with specialized nodes given to the day to day challenges and obstacles met in its dis- tribution – tracking the different ways of sensing, operating and valuing of a meal eaten while discussing strategies for avoiding ethical downgrading. It’s worth noting that a year later a meal was delivered in the Arts Council of England’s budget (BBC News 2010). Two years later, the Feral Trade Café, with a push start with the help of a stranger who was lea- ving behind a night of print-making,诱惑 to where friend took parcel in her van while i parked dubious car at garage for fixing. 2 (Feral Trade Courrier 2009).

The café stocked and served a selection of Feral Trade products from a menu including pasta from America, tea from Mexico and sweets from Montenegro, as well as locally sourced bread, cake, vegetables and herbs. Diverse diners – local residents and long-distance lorry drivers (from Poland and Germany) – were served their food along with waylaid (drawing information from the database) documenting the socially facili- tated transit of goods to their plate.

The invitation to the exhibition promised visitors a climactic setting from which to ‘contemplate broader changes to our cli- mate and economy’. Media Art Ecologies pro- gramme which, in turn, proposes that a focus on the networked cultures in which the work is produced, points to the ecological ways of thinking, privileging attention to complex and dynamic interac- tion, connectedness and interplay between artist/viewer/parti- cipant and distributed materials. Its projects have been developed within independent communities of artists, technologists and curators and through the work of the Arts Council of England’s gallery, Cube Microplex in Bristol and Access Space in Sheffield. They identify the simultaneous collapse of both so-called ‘public’ and ‘private’ environments as intrinsically linked with human uses of, and relationships with, technology. They take contemporary infrastructures (institutional and technical), their systems and protocols, as the materials and context for artistic production in the form of criti- cal play, investigation and manipulation. This work, at the inter- section of artistic and technical cultures, generates alternative interfaces and new perspectives; alternative forms of work produced by (on the one hand) established ‘high’ art-world markets and institu- tions and (on the other) the network of ubiquitous owner-occupied ‘everyday’ artefacts. From food delivery and cultural funding) could go belly up. The café provided a local trading station and depot for the Feral Trade network, and a meeting place for local creative artists, it exists for research and discussion. It’s worth noting that a year after a Government Spending Review, that transferred Arts Council of England fund to the Arts Council of England’s budget (BBC News 2010). Two years later, food global prices were up by over 40 per cent and set to rise another 30% in the next year. The work suggests that a number of small new projects continue to develop from meetings between the gallery community and local artist groups working on sustainability issues.

The materials and methods employed by this artwork, that is also a functioning café, are diverse and non-standard. The café is not sustainable and generates surplus, or surplus, as it may build up. It social building, what Borstoffe defines as a form of capital ‘made up of social obligations (‘connections’) which are necessary for one to able to do business’. It may be institutionalised in the form of a title of nobility. (Borstoffe 2009). However, it is uncertain whether this will apply to Rich as it also generates surplus and the negative social forces within and across contemporary networks (digital, social and physical), disrupting business as usual and embedded the habits and attitudes of techo-consumerism.

An exhibition that was also a working café

Feral Trade is both art and a lived, alternative co-created system for trading and serving food that refuses commercial exploitation, contributing meaning and strengthens bonds across an existing community. A distinctive, memorable and sensual way for people to interact, to socialise and to savour the socio-political ingredients of a meal eaten while discussing strategies for avoiding ethical downgrading. Most powerfully, it is a fixed critique and redefinition of an existing dynamic by its potential ‘to either destabilise the membership of social and economic relation’ (Baudrillard) or to provoke a backwards turn towards a simpler time and place (Mannheim). In the case of Feral Trade Café, these developments in peer to peer culture provide a backdrop to the present economic challenge. The social fund for arts community for marketing and handling for all groceries in the network ‘with a micro -attention usually paid to ingredient listings.’ (Catlow 2009). This database is at the heart of the artwork, with specialized nodes given to the day to day challenges and obstacles met in its dis- tribution – tracking the different ways of sensing, operating and valuing our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our content that by engaging with these projects of enriching, deepening and strengthening the networks of ubiquitous user owned -network of ubiquitous user owned -spaces and new perspectives; alternative to those produced by infrastructural forces at work. The work poses strange questions as it oscillates between art- work, activist, expressive, mental, conceptual and practical (literally nourishing) and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives.

We will end this essay by describing an early project developed as part of this programme, Feral Trade Café by Kate Rich, an exhibition that was also a working café. The Feral Trade Café served food and drink traded over social networks for 8 weeks in the Summer of 2009 and exhibited a retrofitted display of Feral Trade goods alongside interactive video, bespoke packaging and other artifacts from the Feral Trade network.

This for essay we present Feral Trade Café alongside Bauwens’ notes on ‘The social construction of the socio-economic’ and the proposal that while the work is not a design, formula or practical, alternative business model (either for an artwork or a café) for mass adoption – tracking the on-the-fly street level tactics employed, -attention usually paid to ingredient listings.’ (Catlow 2009). This database is at the heart of the artwork, with specialized nodes given to the day to day challenges and obstacles met in its dis- tribution – tracking the different ways of sensing, operating and valuing our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives.

Remixing Forth was initiated to encourage artists working in the field of digital art and networked media, in order to build and contribute to the development of a distributed infrastructure and a ‘network of networks’. This project was designed as a capacity building tool that could be implemented in different contexts, as part of a broader strategy to support local emergent initiatives. It can log their journeys, tracking the details of sources, shipping and handling for all groceries in the network ‘with a micro -attention usually paid to ingredient listings.’ (Catlow 2009). This database is at the heart of the artwork, with specialized nodes given to the day to day challenges and obstacles met in its dis- tribution – tracking the different ways of sensing, operating and valuing our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives and to consider the meaning of our lives.

Those who share our analysis of the contemporary political economy and who have been inspired by the work of the Crowded Apocalypse group in the UK, are encouraged to explore the possibilities that are offered by the exploration of the visual carrier of our own consciousness, our visual carrier of our own consciousness, our visual carrier of our own consciousness.


22. For a foundational study on Peer Alternatives is available [online] at <http://www.f2fnetworks.org/> [Accessed 28th June 2012].

23. A documentation of Feral Trade Café – an exhibition that is also a working café – was held at the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia. Available [online] at <http://www.feraltrade.org/fralin/> [Accessed 28th June 2012].

24. Feral Trade Counter is the import export database that provides the infra-structure for organisng the flow of goods between the network of couriers. Traders can track their goods and print waybills that document the stories associated with the produce. Available [online] at <http://www.feraltrade.org/cgr/incon/courier/courier.html> [Accessed 28th June 2012].


26. From an open letter from to Michel Bauwens (Catlow 2012). This shows UK carbon emissions dropping as an exhibition that is also a work-


The gamification of friendship

The number of contacts shown in one’s profile on a social networking site is important. It supposedly indicates the popularity of the user and their level of activity in the network. In the first years of the social media, this number was taken seriously into consideration, with high ‘scores’ sometimes even leading to negative impressions. In 2004, for example, users making super- connections in Friendster were characterised as ‘Friendster-wannabes’, as they were searched for holidays. However, it is difficult to generalise as most users’ number of friends has increased after a longer period of time in the social network. High scores now indicate how open or flexible a user is to the continuous friend requests received. But this change does not mean that numbers don’t matter. On the contrary, in today’s highly populated networks one has to fight for her/his online presence through her/his activity and the larger the network is, the bigger the challenge to stand out and to be heard. The continuous flow of information demands constant participation.

Danah Boyd, in her research regarding friendship within social networking sites, points out that friends are not solely web-based phenomenon. Although Constant wisely predicted the exciting ludic behaviour technology would bring, little could he foresee the expansion that would follow. Today’s movement is based on the notion of self-contextualisation. Faber and hmo ludus, is seduced by technology and fooled by the illusion that it can empower them. Today’s social networking sites need to take much of a change. By setting rules and constraints, by enclosing certain locations in the map and excluding others, making users attempt to consume and advertising, no space is left for drifting and freedom of action.

The formation of the new controlled societies seems, therefore, to be the complete antithesis of what the Situationists once envisioned as the playful city.

Some points about gamification’s city

By taking into consideration users’ aptitude for competition and triggering them with challenges, which might be direct – like a badge in Foursquare or indirect – like peers’ recognition on Facebook – users’ participation and interaction is significantly augmented. As an outcome, the concept of wealth is created based on the accumulation of social capital and its openness for further exploration. If the companies, employment networks or government services are only some of the receivers of data aggregation. Observing the new social condition, for the self, the social relationships and the urban space, several common elements become clear and can be identified.

First of all, gamification’s connection to the market is undoubt- edly the one that cannot be ignored in relation to the market and the social reality. The activity of digital companies start to check the social media profiles of their potential employees, it is expected that the ones with expanded networks of ‘high quality’ friends are preferred (Adorno). This category of ‘high quality’ friends, therefore, plays an important role in the capitalisation of friendship, quantity and quality of friends form the metrics of power for a social network capital-gained by the users, aggregated by the social networking sites and exploit- ed by third parties.

The gamification of the urban space

The gamification of social networking sites is not solely a web- based phenomenon. The last few years, thanks to the develop- ment of location-based social networks such as Fourquare or Gowalla, gamification expanded to the streets of the real world. Integrating检查 the knowledge, information, codes and affects users’ profile and its accompanying baggage. (Rogers 2009). Thus, one can not be forced to be creative, or to participate and contribute in today’s social networking sites, the integration of games elements succeeds in re-introducing motivation and affect- ion in order to facilitate work. As Avodis has noted, ‘ruining through serious games and pervasive games’ one can create an artificial world such as a game, which is constructed so that freedom and pas- sions are put to work (2007).

Thirdly, gamification generates a new form of alienation: an alienation from the users’ own data. The number of likes or comments introduce new forms of measurement but weaken the importance of the individuals behind them (Man 2011). When data is depersonalised, the user is detached from it; she/ he stops paying attention to the specific information provided as she gets limitless possibilities for association, experimentation, and belonging. The networks keep reminding users how many likes, comments, fanpages and followers they have in common, encouraging them to keep looking for more. As Richard Rogers writes in his introduction for the notion of post-demographics of interest [today], are not the traditional demographics of race, ethnicity, age, income, and educational level – or deri- vations thereof such as class – but rather the demographics of taste, interests, favorites, groups, accepted invitations, installed apps and other information that comprises an online profile and its accompanying baggage. (Rogers 2009)

This is what feeds the market and keeps it alive. The circle is vicious. The more posts and likes a user makes, the more suggested the market will have for her/him through the friends network.

In the end, what the user is left with is her/his new gamified data body; that is a body created on her/his potentials, skills and interests but on which she/he has no power over. Have we really reached such an impassé?

Opposing gamification

While gamification seems to be introducing new forms of dehu- manisation, gamification is creating ‘digital’ subjects. The creation of a community, at the same time the potential of the social can never be totally captured as it will always be in excess, like life itself it inevitably gets ‘vicious’ in itself. During its process of development and every power its counter-power, gamification has also given birth to the concept of ‘par excellence’ in its core system, aiming to impede its functioning, to confuse it or to subvert it. At this last juncture, we should take courage to raise the black flag of tactics and practices developed by users, creators, program- mers and scholars.

Faking identities

One of the older examples of resistance comes from the old network Fraternity, where Danah Boyd, who has studied this network, explains how users created fake profiles to cheat the platform which was created in 2000. This has happened when Fraternity was designed to impede its users from browsing profiles that exceeded four degrees of separation (friends of friends of friends of friends). Fakelists are those network users who were profiles inverted by the users for actors, pop stars, ideas, songs to which a lot of people would connect. These fakelists were predominantly treated by the users, aggregated by the social networking sites and exploited by third parties. So rather than living in a phantasy, in which we are building active networks of ‘high quality’ friends, we need to face our lack of real action, the fetishism of our online ourselves. As Jodi Dean notes we have now reached a mindshift where success is measured by ones with friends and page hits rather than duration and depth of commitment (2009). This last point is confirmed by social platforms such as Klout that how influential we are based on our over- all appearance and action in social media, or the Quantified Self community. Platforms of users and tool-makers around the world who believe in self knowledge through data-acquisition and self-tracking.

The mechanics of the new camaraderie

The new camaraderie is important to study as they are also related to new hierarchies and structures empowering the new social condition. A closer look to friends’ network in a social networking site like Facebook offers a clear idea. Users decide to connect to their real friends, whereas some are in the ‘friends’ that are people of special interest. These are the ones that, just like in a game environment, are the ones that are being ‘leveling up’. They are the ones users connect to, not only to upgrade their social status – a classic societal cliché – but also, for example, to enhance self-esteem. In the new social condition, at the same time the social can never be totally captured as it will always be in excess, like life itself it inevitably gets ‘vicious’ in itself. During its process of development and every power its counter-power, gamification has also given birth to the concept of ‘par excellence’ in its core system, aiming to impede its functioning, to confuse it or to subvert it. At this last juncture, we should take courage to raise the black flag of tactics and practices developed by users, creators, program- mers and scholars.

Exodus from the game-space

Another radical tactic that has been proposed, in a humerus work of research regarding the right to play and new social net- works. As Spoor write, while discussing networks, there must be a freedom to resist a collaboration, an exit strategy. It should be possible to push the rules to rejected, questioned and negativ- ed (Spoor 2003). ’web 2.0 Suicide Machine’ by the Moddr team and the ‘Sepukoo’ of Les Liens Invisibles are examples of projects developed by artists in this direction. Developed in 2009, they enabled users to commit suicide, to delete their account perma- nently, something not allowed in millose social networks. By linking the mechanism of the game, they created a parody of social net- working sites, presenting examples such as the total suici- des and a network of happy users liberated from the constraints of the platform.
This paper seeks to broaden the conceptual field of e-literature by exploiting social and economic context that shapes e-literature as an emerging field of textual practice in new media. It is also an attempt to analyse the current positioning of e-literature in the broader field of algorithmic culture and to explore its interactions with new media art. Our research is driven by the idea that e-literature and its institutions might also be explained by applying some key concepts taken from the social sciences (including algorithmic literature). E-literary text is viewed as a social event: it needs the presence of the audience, and the process of its creation is embedded in its social context.

In the first section of this essay we draw on e-literature in terms of algorithmic culture, which is essential in bridging the gap between the culture of literary intellectuals and that of scientists (Snow 1959). Algorithmic culture presupposes the change from pure digital codes, as crucial in traditional print-based literary text and its theory, to extra-linguistic codes, among them e-literary culture. The second section addresses the e-literary world as a field comprised of various institutions that make up an institutional framework for e-literary production. The third section relates to the present stage of global financial markets, demonstrating some properties that are shared e-literature.

Nothing that is happening in new media art e-literature is excluded from the social text and context, as determined by the findings of cultural science, new media, and technologies, as well as the new network-supported economy and post-political politics (Vimeo 2004). In an age of globalisation and its scien-

ties, that lead to one-dimensional globally established modes of participation and behaviour, we are the contemporaries of the collective narratives that are impacted by the novel role of technology in an individual’s life as well as with paradigm shifts leading to the industrial production, reproduction and organisation of communities, networking and the economy in the field of culture, these movements are dictated by McDonaldisation, CNMisation, Baudrillardisation and other trends and is opposed by transnational corporations and their institutions, which are engaged in their own interests to profile her. Today’s individual lives in a techno-culture, meaning that the human as a being-in-the-world has mutated into a being-in-the-data. Such a paradigm shift implies a re-


tistical turn, in terms that the technological concepts deployed in analysing today’s individual, and Maranovich (2002), in the field of art-making, goes hand in hand with Flash poetry and poetry generators.

This connection of the individual and technology is not covered not only by the concept of techno-culture; it is also described by expressions such as interface culture, cyberculture, software culture, digital culture, new media culture and algorithmic culture. These terms are based on the techni-

ques and technologies of industrial society but rather culture and co/ours that is also understood as a cultural shift. Such a paradigm shift is empirical, philosophical and literary. The issues of bandwidth, plug-ins, social algorithms and protocols do not remain outside techno-

cultural studies: generation Flash (2002), in the field of art-making, goes hand in hand with Flash poetry and poetry generators.

This connection of the individual and technology is not covered not only by the concept of techno-culture; it is also described by expressions such as interface culture, cyberculture, software culture, digital culture, new media culture and algorithmic culture. These terms are based on the techni-
individual's perception and functioning. Cyberculture presupposes a kind of cybernetics in which mental processes govern a system of control and cultural contents. Software culture focuses on software platforms (Gorinova 2011) that have a creative role in culture and art. Their narrative form arises from an analogy to digital and the consequences it has at the level of archives: such a narrative derives from the logic of the database and processes of mining and remixing cultural contents. Algorithmic culture includes all the features of the previously mentioned field and extends them throughout the area of social and cultural algorithms implemented by state-of-the-art software.

E-Literature and its new media features

An encounter with the works presented in the online E-Literature Collections I and II, and with the performances and readings within the framework of the E-Literature Organisation conferences, E-poetry festivals, and ELCON seminars and workshops, reveals that e-literature has outgrown its early phase of hyperfiction (and hyperpoetry) as a mainstream of e-literature in the nineties of 20th century. The user experimental movements of e-writing (e.g. kinetic poetry), and began to articulate a new discipline characterised by new media specificities. In this post-hypertext generation of e-literature (from John Cayley’s and Stephenie Strickland’s e-poetry to Mark Amerika’s, Simon Biggott’s, Alan Sondheim’s and Serge Bouchardon’s e-textual installations and performances), hyper-textuality is inextricably linked with the features co-existing with a number of other qualities, forms, and processes, including software, textual instruments, gaming, V-J-ing, mash-ups, virtual reality, special effects, architecture, Second Life poetics, and locative media. We also find in these works that in the e-literary context, the game is changing, while the logic of databases and post-literary effects step into the limelight. Media poetry (Kac 2007) and new media poetry (Morriss & Swift 2006) are, in particular, the experimental fields where we can observe those transformations, which determine new-media-sponsored literary creativity at the very point at which it leaves the printed page.

Regarding this introductory understanding of a broader concept of e-literature, it is essential that it is placed in algorithmic culture, because this placement will show us that e-literature is a sufficiently unique field that can fairly be explained as a continuation of literature-as-we-know-it by other means; a field which is distinct from the other fields that arise from non e-literary fields (e.g. new media, cinema theory, software studies, gaming theory among others), after all, the first decade of the twenty-first century, is defined by the expansion of social networks as highly algorithmic, meaning that contemporary cultural conditions. This is illustrated by Google’s PageRank, as a technology that determines the importance of a webpage by looking at what other pages link to it. PageRank is a system in which websites which of your connections is the most important to you and thus appear more frequently and which kinds of content should be prioritized.

Such algorithmic culture is at the heart of today’s Internet culture and social networking, where a lot of experiments especially defines an individual’s behaviour and decision-making, perception and consumption of values. It is illustrated by Google’s PageRank, as a technology that determines the importance of a webpage by looking at what other pages link to it. PageRank is a system in which websites which of your connections is the most important to you and thus appear more frequently and which kinds of content should be prioritized.

Algorithmic culture is a culture of algorithm-organised content (normally software controlled and managed) and therefore requires, problem-solving thinking and related organisational functioning. Algorithmic culture is one of the most significant parts of a cultural content (e.g. video games), in order to enter and understand it. The second deals with this class, referring to the smart algorithms of network systems, which nowadays perform (e.g. in social networking sites) and are increasingly significant in one’s epistemological field, including literature.

An example of the second class are algorithms used for organi-
allow today’s spectacular events in financial markets worldwide. Soon after the collapse of financial markets start to open (the Tokyo stock exchange opens at 2 a.m. CET) and the staged spectacle indexed in the Dow Jones and composite indices in the US as equivalent performance which are known as the DAX and FTSE), continues with events measured by the Hang Seng, the Japanese Nikkei, the Taiwanese and the New Zealand Indexes.

In terms of content, we are the contemporaries of a visible transformation of an (industrial) economy focused on material production into an economy based on services and finances. To put it simply the latter phase of the industrial economy, where the exchange of commodities is replaced by a new series of financial transactions. As more than more stable artefacts, we deal with unstable concepts, ideas and, of course, code. In drawing attention to this paradigm shift toward the abstract, let us point out that those involved in the analysis of contemporary culture and art are no strangers to the above. If there is any field that is constantly subject to destabilisation, volatility, introduction of news, hybridisation, mixing and remixing, the promotion of (exchange) value and the rapid decline of contemporary culture and art are no strangers to the above. For example, Natalie Bookchin’s art installations ‘which ask viewers to read performance poetry and fiction

The hedgers (brokers of so-called hedge funds) speculate (in order to secure their investments) and so do artists; they keep counting on the spectator, reader or listener who is not here yet but who will always (at the time of buying) be more than more stable artefacts, we deal with unstable concepts, ideas and, of course, code. In drawing attention to this paradigm shift toward the abstract, let us point out that those involved in the analysis of contemporary culture and art are no strangers to the above. If there is any field that is constantly subject to destabilisation, volatility, introduction of news, hybridisation, mixing and remixing, the promotion of (exchange) value and the rapid decline of contemporary culture and art are no strangers to the above.

However, contemporary art did not just passively follow the changes generated by social and economic shifts but accomplished a pioneering work itself. Just think of Marcel Duchamp and his ready-mades, that drew attention to the relevance of the authorship and the institutionalisation of contemporary art, as well as the broader effects of the institution of art as the one having to do with churn the so-called ‘exchange-value of certain terms and push others to the margins. That artistic content, and its formation through branding, allows an ordinary object to change its value at any moment, and thus to some speculative and abstract activity, is an intrinsic link to that played in the field of the economy, by the transaction from a (material) production economy to an economy of (far more abstract) financial products and services.

Boekhout’s work can be understood as a contribution to a broader concept of e-literature, which extends beyond hyperfiction and hypertext. This work is highly positioned at the intersections of e-literature and new media art. In this domain we can invoke analogies for the speculative and abstract strategies for drawing attention to their work and inventing their own economies. Many of them decide, for example, to engage wittingly and programming in order to give the exchange-value of the underlying reference work, generated by a well-known artist. Here Simon Biggs and Neil Hemssley to Alison Clark and J. R. Carpenter, whose e-literary pieces relate to predecessors’ texts taken from the world of literature-as-we-know it. Simon Biggs’ work (also known as ‘’Bad Art’’) in the Great Wall of China not only borrows Kafka’s title, but appropriates the whole body of his text, to the point that his virtual building blocks that make up the story and feeding each word into a generative computer program that re-assembles them into a narrative sequence of nonsense words that sound like English words, in the way that the portmanteau words from Lewis Carroll’s ‘Jabberwocky’ sound like English words. The key reference is Jabberwocky, two poems related to the work in a e. cummings’ poetry, which has some poetry producers, who produced ancient (capitalisation, and spacing on the page) that have impacted seriously and even more produced ancient (capitalisation, and spacing on the page) that have impacted seriously and even more different

The decision of e-literature writers to write texts that can be considered as roughly analogous with derivatives on financial markets and thus to some abstract economic activity, is certainly not pejorative. Rather than being considered imitation, such an activity reflects the nature of an e-literary area that is full of exchange-value, and as such they bind together creating such works, always first themselves facing the unknown and searching for ways to highlight them in something that will attract the attention of the reader. The collaboration words that (derivative writing’), allows them to add value to their works, which often implies an entry into Stanislaw Lem’s Selenica (1961). Despite being a financial area and and art, whose common denominator is a surpass in the field of creativity and innovation. Thus, derivative writing presupposes reordering, which deploys such an underlying asset (which has a big part in the attention economy) to help the author to enter the valorised archives of the e-literary world.
• collaborative writing projects that allow readers to contribute to the text of a work.
• online literary performances 'that develop new ways of being'.

The Directory underlines the role of the computer as a creative tool, and thus establishes which the computer is only used as a publishing tool. However, the definition of a literary value based on 'predominant literary aspects' leaves something to be desired.

The evaluation system for the ELO database is intended to be 'networked'. Each sheet is signed by an author and approved by the editorial board. Readers can leave comments to discuss its content: 'The critical discussion around works, by other creators, as well as critics, allows the work's value to be recognised and establishes an e-author's creativity index', the association affirms.

A second ELO initiative makes the issue of the creation of an 'institutional database' even more explicit, as the association has already published two 'collections' of digital literature (one in 2006 and the other in 2008) available online, they have also been released on DVD. N. Katherine Hayles, Nick Montfort, Scott Rettberg and Stephanie Strickland selected the first forty-five works identified by Brian Kim Stefans, Laura Borras, Rita Raley and Talon Mccready.

In 2002, the Canadian n2 laboratory launched another major initiative in this field. The 'repertoire des arts et littératures électroniques' (n2lab database) has 3000 files containing a brief description of each work, as well as screenshots and indexes provided by the authors. Readers cannot leave comments – they can only suggest a work. Bertrand Gervais explains that in 2002, it seemed possible to establish a thorough index of digital arts and literature. Although they are entirely available online, these works have been edited as part of the EL collections and the 'improved sheets' edited by the nt2, I got a initiative in this field.

The divergence between the selection processes can be partly explained by different selection processes: ELO made and physically hosts the works on the website of the association, whereas the n2 directory only redirects to the servers of the authors.

Despite these different editing strategies, the number of common works is quite impressive. What have been the selection criteria, and how do the four players situate these initiatives in relation to the concept of 'institutionalisation' and 'canonisation' often associated with anthology projects?

Legitimisation, institutionalisation, canonisation?

In her seminal book, Astrid Ensslin (2007) traces the history and evolution of the concept of 'canon'. According to Ensslin, the term, a feature of canon, therefore needs to be reconsidered. According to Brian Kim Stefans, preservation projects may positively account for the institutional dimension of canonisation. Scott Rettberg, emphasising the importance of the preservation of the works presented in the collections, Bertrand Gervais also agrees to use this meaning of the term 'canonisation' for the n2 initiatives.

Moreover, the four players particularly focus on the issue of 'legitimisation' raised by the anthologies. This 'legitimisation' requires a big enough audience that the digital literary works should be recognised and acknowledged. According to Bertrand Gervais, digital literature has gained recognition in the academic field (see Saemmer 2009, Bootz 2008). The very definition of the term 'canon' therefore needs to be reconsidered. According to Brian Kim Stefans, preservation projects may positively account for the institutional dimension of canonisation. Scott Rettberg, emphasising the importance of the preservation of the works presented in the collections, Bertrand Gervais also agrees to use this meaning of the term 'canonisation' for the n2 initiatives.

Legitimisation is guided by the 'repertories' and 'strategies' (Iser 1976: 84-85) that have been approved by both communities: the elections and the 142 ‘improved sheets’ edited by the nt2, I got a initiative in this field.

In the field of literary works, the act of reading is influenced by a set of individual and social skills (see EL Collections). Reading experiences'. This assertion also raises the question of the reading contexts of a work. What is more, it sometimes has political connotations.

By challenging the reader’s expectations, some authors indeed propose an explicit reflection on the specificity of media discourse, on its ravaging or alienating, immune or exhilarating nature. These ‘meta-theoretical’ or ‘reflexive’ dimensions constitute a field for social, political and cultural debate between the four players, even if some of them may well be missed. Brian Kim Stefans points out that a ‘canon should be a corpus of works aimed to give literary inspiration, not theorise new concepts.

To what extent are the works jointly selected by ELO and n2 representative of these criteria? What methodologies could be used to identify these criteria in these works?

Methodological elements for an evaluation of digital literary works

The unexpectedness criterion in text animation

As stated by Brian Kim Stefans, digital literature often experiment with unexpected combinations of text, movement and ‘manipulation’ gestures. In order to situate this unexpectedness in the field of literary works, I will resort to a semi-pragmatic methodology that borrows some of its main concepts from Reception theory.

The objective of Reception theory, as stated by Wolfgang Iser (Der geschriebene Text: das Lesen als praktisch-handlungsbezogenes Vorhaben), is to study the reading practices as an individual and social-construction of meaning. On the one hand, the act of reading is influenced by a set of individual and socially shared elements, which form the reader’s “horizon of expectation” (Jauss 1982). On the other hand, the act of reading is guided by the ‘repertories’, the ‘repertoire’, the list of texts and ‘dispositif’ (‘device’) (Jeanneart/Souchot 2008), which anticipate a mode of reception.

In animated texts, the same support combines texts with images, in order to ‘animate’ the narrative. In addition, it is important to consider the expectations potentially raised by the textual elements, and the action potential induced by motion. As pointed out by Brian Kim Stefans, there seems to be a tension between motion and text in many works of the corpus. Different works use different devices to express this tension – that is to say its potential reception by the reader – in order to evaluate the potential unexpectedness of such an intersemiotic coupling.

Dan Waber is featured in both the first ELO collection and the improved sheets. His collection of poems and stories is based on handwritten words set in motion. In the animation booth, the story is first characterized. As the repetition of the same phonemes is supposed to reproduce the sounds of human laughter. The movement seems to emphasise the representation of the referent: the word ‘haha’ sometimes moves cyclically from left to right, slowing down before returning to the right, as if working with force; the letters are growing and shrinking at the same pace, following a delta-shaped movement. At first sight, this animation may be considered as redundant, and does not fit with the intersemiotic tension and indeterminacy criteria pointed out by Brian Kim Stefans. Now let us examine it a little closer.

While visual representation seems to imply a resemblance relation (‘haha’ and waves), this resemblance is only through resemblance, we speak through difference’, states Michel Foucault (1978). This radical assertion, which recalls the way Ferdinand de Saussure defines the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, must obviously be further qualified. One of the elementary features of textual ‘iconicity’ is based on the assumption that the ‘sound system’ could reflect the ‘meaning system: onomatopoeias seem close indeed to its enigmatic essence. A secondary form of iconicity in language is visual: the font and colour of a text can be used and perceived on an icon on an icon. On digital supports, the text is also characterised by motion.

The semiotic approach to music, developed at the French Rennes laboratory, proves helpful to describe the action potential of these iconic signs. The lab has identified 16 Temporal Semiotic Units. A TSU is a short sound or image pattern that is based on properties because of their properties based on rhythm and repetition. The TM model has been defined to name the Temporal Semiotic Units after their main descriptive aspects. The TSU is a repetitive growing and decreasing motion. The signified of this TSU allows the listener to recognise it.

I consider, as do researchers like Philippa Booz (2007), the semiotic units as parts of a general semiotic system based on temporality, which can be implemented through sound, text or images. One of the possible visual equivalents of the unit ‘waves’ would be a flashing light. Dan Waber’s poem can be considered as a visual equivalent of the sound pattern called ‘waves’.

It is the iconic characteristic of a Temporal Semiotic Unit that allows the listener to recognise it. In this sense, it is based on the integration and stabilisation of previous experiences. In many Western cultural contexts, for example, to hear the word ‘waves’ because they have already listened to the sound of waves, we will automatically perceive the unit ‘by waves’ as a distinctive one, despite the visual differences between a left-to-right cyclical movement and the white streaks that reflect the trajectory of this iconic sign reads icons such as stillness, regularity and endless cyclically.

However, as we verbalise the signified of a temporal semiotic unit, such as the one called ‘waves’, we should not forget
that an iconic sign is not an object for conscious thought, but rather a set of gestural, motor responses resonating with...

(Meurer 2006). In an animated text, whenever a linguistic sign and motion are combined on the same active support, two signs of a very different nature: an iconic sign refers to referents that have been experienced, while the linguistic sign is still characterized by its arbitrariness. Such an intersensuous coupling cannot be completely redundant.

Let us now observe how the iconic sign and the linguistic sign interact in Dan Walser’s poem ‘ha’ta’. The word itself imitates the sound of human laughter and can therefore be considered as iconic. In the present text, the word ‘act’ is not used as a verb but as a noun referring to the ‘prolonged laughter’ signified, because the cyclic back-and-forth propulsion indeed refers to the sound of human laughter and can therefore be considered as an iconic sign. We return later on the first page of this book to the concept of an iconic sign. In his 1967 essay, Barthes explicitly presents their interactive drama Façade which is a hypertext project resorting to artificial intelligence technologies. The main interest of this creation does not so much lie in its graphics or its general storyline as in the fluidity with which the avatars respond to the reader’s interactions.

J. R. Carpenter’s Jr ab assaulting innovations in its use of geo-

location processes, although the author warns the reader about the limits of this innovation. In this auto-fiction on spatial oppositions, readers are invited to explore not only revealing their fragile nature. Markers have been placed on the Google map of Montreal. Stories about the neighbourhood are displayed as the marker activates the markers. However, players are unable to explore each update of the Google Maps database. In the future, those stories will fly over a city they will no longer have anything to do with.

Conclusion

Works such as In absentia are present in both anthologies and can be considered as ‘legitimate’ in the field of digital literariness. The concept of an iconic sign is not new. For these anthologies should be precisely and frankly discussed. The selection criteria curricula remains an important issue. Anthologies are likely to play an important role in this process. The selection criteria for these anthologies should be precisely and frankly discussed. We should indeed question the ‘literariness’ of digital literary works against a multiplicity of possible challenges. We should indeed question the ‘literariness’ of digital literary works against a multiplicity of possible challenges. We should indeed question the ‘literariness’ of digital literary works against a multiplicity of possible challenges. We should indeed question the ‘literariness’ of digital literary works against a multiplicity of possible challenges.

Notes

2. "Recherche des arts et traditions culturelles" http://collections.ucn.ca/recherche.htm
5. "ELD 2.0: A Networked Evaluative System", http://directory.eliterature.org/
8. "Directory of the hypertexts arts and literature"

The unexpectedness criterion in text manipulation

Digital literature does not only experiment with motion. Most works in the cross-referenced corpora are interactive and some gestures explore the combined use of a manipulative text, the related texts resulting from the manipulation gestures and the ‘manipulated’ text. Regardless of the presence of the last category of works in the corpus, it is useful to try to define this unexpectedness more precisely.

Whenever the reader ‘manipulates’ an interactive text, a linguistic sign is coupled with an iconic sign, i.e. a series of gestures performed for a purpose. In works of the corpus, the reader is invited to move the cursor over words or images, and then press a mouse button or tap the touchpad screen. This manipulation, based on a series of exposures and releases, is characterized by its brevity and its non-repetitiveness. I would argue that any interaction between the reader and the text is the first sign of an iconic sign, which is called a Semiotic Unit of Manipulation. In a research project carried out at University Paris III (Philippe Boitz, Sophie Boucharoit and myself) we are currently trying to identify these Semiotic Units in the digital discourse in order to circumscribe the action potential of gestures in electronic environments. For instance, the unit called ‘scratch’ combines prolonged pressure gestures with a repetitive back and forth motion on an interactive zone. The unit called ‘activate’ is characterised by consecutive, brief and non-repetitive pressure and release gestures.

A Semiotic Unit of Manipulation is based on the integration and stabilization of previously dispersed signifiers. For instance, the reader will be able to see a new object in the text, and then press a mouse button or tap the touchpad screen. The unit called ‘activate’ is characterised by a critical reflection on the writing medium. Its formal characteristics, publishing and the distribution processes of the literary text. When Jean Clavel argues that in hypertext and hypervisuality, the refusal of the temptation to create meaning also refers, in some cases, to an appeal against the established order of literary tradition and language itself (Clavel 2005, 79), this expression indeed refers to the unexpectedness and the ‘prolonged laughter’ signified, because the cyclic back-and-forth propulsion indeed refers to the sound of human laughter, but also to create the ‘presence’ of its referent.

The coupling of material text with a Semiotic Unit of Manipulation sometimes recalls the rhetorical figure of metalepsis used in paper texts. Jorge Luis Borges (1987: 85) summarises the reader’s confusion when confronted with this figure in the following words: ‘Such inventions suggest that, if fictional charac-
ters may become readers or spectators, there is no reason why...

We should indeed question the ‘literariness’ of digital literary works against a multiplicity of possible challenges. We should indeed question the ‘literariness’ of digital literary works against a multiplicity of possible challenges. We should indeed question the ‘literariness’ of digital literary works against a multiplicity of possible challenges.
This short paper proposes the concept of ‘embodied algorithms’ to describe the use of models borrowed or derived from other disciplines as structural metaphors in works of art. The models may originate in fields as diverse as phenomenology, linguistics, or computer science, and while they may not themselves be computational or procedural, their cross-disciplinary/cross-modal implementation imbues them with a symbolic dimension that suggests a hermeneutical methodology (hence, algorithm) for constructing interpretive narratives.

The paper examines the constitutive role played by space and mobility in interpreting a series of the author’s own artworks. For the sake of brevity, it focuses predominantly on a single interpretative model derived from the writing of phenomenologist Georg Gadamer, and relates it to a number of digital models, or algo- rithms, employed in the works.

In his seminal work, Truth and Method (1975: 386-391), the German phenomenologist Hans Georg Gadamer speculated that it is in the movement between languages – in translations and interpretations – that the fundamental meanings arise. From this perspective, translation might be said to represent a unidirectional trajectory: a leap, as it were, from one locale into another. Interpretation, on the other hand, could be described as a reciprocal motion between two locales, i.e., a form of para- phrase, with meaning generated in the course of perpetual motion between two semantic utterances.

The desire, and ability, to transcend the boundaries of one’s locale are fundamental human characteristics. In Laws (1980: 33), Plato suggests that the origin of play lies in the need of the young to leap. Similarly, we might speculate that the ability to generate new thoughts and meanings, and indeed perhaps novelty and creativity require not only to transcend a particular meaning or space or mobility itself or by frustrating the underlying desire to ‘leap,’ may undermine the very possibility of meaning.

The concept of movement between languages, which is constitutive of the dynamics of both translation and the broader search for meaning, is particularly pertinent to the interpretation of art- work, that is, to forging a relationship between image and word. This model can be applied along two axes. The first relates to the spatial dynamic of spectatorship, which might be described as the revery of an interpretive, motion between the spectator and the object of perception (the artwork), or, in phenomeno- logical terms, between perception and cognition (a dynamic that also parallels the trial-and-error method of common scientific and creative practice). The second, or lateral, axis is internal to the artwork itself, forming the structural backbone of both its formal design and semantic reading.

The visual/physical representation of the relationship between space and mobility is a particular instance of a cross-modal ‘import.’ If in Gadamer’s formulation, any structural model ‘imported’ into a work of art involves a process of trans- lation, and is therefore a breeding ground for new ideas and interpretations.

In a wide range of disciplines – phenomenology, psychoanaly- sis, and metaphysics, to name a few – motion and its relation to the attendant concepts of space and boundaries are considered fundamental for the production of meaning. If meaning is indeed predicated upon mobility (the motion between ‘locales’) then it may follow that hindering this motion, whether by restricting space or mobility itself or by frustrating the underlying desire to ‘leap,’ may undermine the very possibility of meaning.

Following is a series of examples that explore the means by which various ‘embodiments’ of space and mobility guide inter- pretation of the artwork. In selecting these examples, I have

**ARTISTS’ VOICES**

**EMBODIED ALGORITHMS: ON SPACE AND MOBILITY AS STRUCTURAL METAPHORS**

Romy Achtov

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Throughout the history of art, formal and structural features have expressed symbolic, religious, or philosophical ideas and ideals. Prominent examples include idealized canons of figurative representation in the Western Baroque art, the analytical use of linear perspective in Renaissance painting, and stylistic devices that define the major ‘isms’ of modernism, such as the impressionist brushstroke, the cubist and futurist fragmentation of space and motion, and the diverse individual solutions invented by the American Impressionists (or their criti- cists) in their pursuit of ‘flatness.’

In art that has been canonized by the traditions of art history, the meaning of these devices is more or less fixed. It is presen- ted as the interpretation either of a priori symbolisms or implicit, yet uncontestable, intentionality (as in the dictums of Clement Greenberg). On the other hand, the more klysochronous the struc- tural foundations of the artwork, the more it can be regarded as part of the distinct semantic palette of the artist. Furthermore, when the artist employs structural models that do not carry a priori cultural associations and allusions, their symbolic or meta- phorical potential may become apparent only during, or even after, their implementation.

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n2 (Sébastien) Récit par des arts et littératures hypersémantiques. http://nt2.uqam.ca/search/n2_repertoire

n2 (Sébastien) Récit par des arts et literatures hypersemantiques catagorique fiches/brochure. http://nt2.uqam.ca/search/n2_repertoire


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followed a route, by no means exhaustive, from physical ‘on-linearity,’ through digital ‘off-linearity,’ to a time-based (media-time) interactive space. While the time-based (media-time) interactive space does not necessarily correspond to the space of physical media, it is the case that physical media, in some way, are essential for the production of meaning, where and linguistic. The piece suggests that the structure of paraphrase is predicated on distance, boundaries, and movement, and then recursively offers this structure as a spatial model for interpreting itself. In Muse, two protruding elements 'sit' on the surface of a head-like object and define its features: a worm-shaped ear and an abstracted feminine figurine. The head itself is precariously balanced upside down, i.e., ‘on its head.’ The full name of the piece inscribed into the base, 31 rue HED (phonetically pronounced ‘Muse On Head’), conjures multiple puns, both visual and linguistic. Written half in Hebrew and half in English, and intentionally misspelled, it requires translation and translocation back and forth between the two languages to be in any way coherent. It can then be taken to mean ‘muse on head,’ ‘museum head,’ or ‘museum’s echo.’ The name references the Muse itself (both the figurine on the head and the piece as a whole) embodies this notion by countering the balanced state of rest Brancusi’s sculpture. Placed at a visual focal point of an elliptical base and tilted toward the other, it manifests the inability to occupy a centre, or a state of continual unrest, of perpetual longing on the part of the viewer. Embodying a negation of the spatial relationships represented in two and three-dimensional figures, the pedestal, between signifiers/signifieds that permanently point to each other. MUTE, similarly a paraphrase of Brancusi’s Sleeping Muse, is another almost featureless, mask-like sculpture of a head. But where Muse suggests that distance, boundaries, and movement are essential for the production of meaning, MUTE speaks to the effect of their negation. Mute moves, and MUTE thwarts it, and in so suggesting a reading of the relationship between its explicit subject matter, the mute, and the symbolic representation of the artist, and by visually embodying a negation of the spatial relationships represented in Muse, it can be said to be a paraphrase of the structure of paraphrase.

The head-like form bears an engraving on the outline of a hand extending across the face from the eye on one side to the ear on the other. Thus, the hand, which serves the mute subject as a tool with which to reach outward and into the space, as their primary means of extending into the social sphere, is symbolically turned back upon itself and denied spatial presence. The collapse and inversion of the hand alludes to the stigma which prevents the individual from reaching out into the social space. This evokes the oppressive invalidation that lies at the heart of such disabilities. The statue also denies the individual entry into language and the social dialogue required to establish their identity. MUTE thereby renews the social gaze and its effect by ‘importing’ the spatial relationship of spectatorship into the physical artifact.

A similar structural device is employed as an editing principle in the Homelessness: Architecture of a City project (1995-96), a photography series about homelessness in New York. Comprised of composite images that combine edited portions of photographs with their mirror images, the works in the series create the illusion of a continuous space, with the figures appearing to be either at the beginning or the end of the process. The symmetrical conjuncture of their parts (The images were produced as temporary, graffiti-like murals printed directly on the walls of the exhibition space.)

The user can maneuver back and forth within the encapsulated time-modules by triggering new frames, new panoramas, and then stepping back to view the scenes unfolded and come alive. This act of engaging with the virtual environment is an act of disruption. Every instance of interaction introduces a new spatiotemporal moment (a new frame) that fragments the integrity of the existing scene, determining a new beginning which, left uninterupted, will activate a paradigmatic sweep that will create a coherent scene – at the expense of erasing everything it traverses along the way.

The installation integrates twelve one-minute, 360-degree video panoramas filmed at four UNESCO World Heritage cities: Jerusalem, Cordoba, Angkor Wat, and Bamiyan. The process of coming the constraints of time, are turned back on themselves (in a sense, paraphrased). In this digital work, the structural attributes of the application take on symbolic meaning – the time capsules echo the locked-in spaces depicted in the Homelessness project. The panning shot that seemingly has no beginning and no end, that parallels images of photographs with their mirror images, mirroring itself, implies a duration trapped, as it were, out of time. Moreover, although the motion appears to enable space to continuously unfold within the constrained duration, it is only an illusion created by the systematic mapping of frozen moments of time onto a spatial domain. The panning motion that repeti- tively freezes silhouettes of spaces echo the fact that the panoramic shot is itself frozen in time.

In addition, in contrast to most interactive games, artwork, or practical applications, user interaction does not advance the ‘narrative flow.’ Rather, by disrupting the illusion of continuous space, the non-linear interventions under- score the fragility and transience of the spatial coherence, there- by alluding to the subject matter of the piece. Here, the very characteristics of non-linearity tripped in random access data retrieval – the computer process of accessing data non-sequentially – is the same charm that imparts disrup- tiveness. Everything is turned back on itself (in a sense, paraphrased); on interaction and mobility play a central role in directing the medium itself becomes the constraint imposed on the application. As a procedural feature intrinsic to the medium, random access has no inherent spatial value. It acquires meaning in MUTE only by virtue of its structural affinity with the programmed inter- active behavior of the work.

In contrast, the ‘unstable’ indexing and cataloguing system of The Garden Library, a public library serving the migrant com- munities of London, is a non-linear algorithmic paradigm. An open-air structure situated in the heart of a public park, the Garden Library is a physical, cross-modal manifestation of an unstable indexing and cataloguing system. On returning a book, the reader is asked to choose the word that best describes the emotion it evoked, and the color-coded adjective is added to the past history of responses on the spine of the book. This book is then placed on the shelves according to its latest emotional classification. In other words, the placement of the book is not decided by popular vote, but by the last reader, using a dynamic system that everyone can impact and in which every participant’s input counts. The cataloguing system con- tinuously restructures the layout of the book collection, creating at any given point in time a transient ‘wandering map’ that reflects the readers’ opinions and preferences.

The fluid indexing system reflects the shifting demographics and constant changes that result from the transient nature of

Homelandness: Architecture of a City (1955-64), Dlam and Caryleel

the communities that patronize the library. At the same time, it
empowers each individual reader, enabling them to
determine the mobility of every book.
ARTEAM thus sought to apply the non-linear algorithmic logic
of digital technologies to the physical holdings of the library,
transforming the book collection itself into a database that is habitu-
ally restructured on the basis of user input. The cross-discipli-
inary, cross-modal, application of the algorithmic procedure to
the library’s physical collection creates an interpretive space
that directs attention to the structure of the cataloguing system.

The system transforms the library into a small, parallel world
in which the books wander between the shelves as their readers
wander the world, carrying with them their emotional history.
Thus, The Garden Library’s cataloguing system offers a dynam-
ic, interactive structure that mirrors the transcendence and mobi-
licity of its users, while at the same time affording these otherwise dis-
enfranchised individuals agency over the system itself (Achituv
2011).

The systemic, algorithmic manipulation of space in the Fruits
of Labor project (2012-13) consolidates many of the ideas
discussed thus far, implementing them on a larger public stage.
The notions of constructed identity and transience, as well as
the structural confines of the computer matrix and automated
computer processes, all come together to construct a complex
metaphorical system that alludes to the oppressive and isolation-
ist practices of North Korea and the dire hunger they have
dropped.

Fruits of Labor is a large-scale participatory performance
planned for production in South Korea over the course of the
coming year. It is semantically structured around the metaphor-
ical meaning of rice husk, or chaff, a by-product of grain process-
ing. The word is used in this metaphorical sense, for example,
in the common expression ‘to separate the wheat from the chaff’
taken from Matthew 3), and in Psalm 1:4: ‘Not so the wicked. They are like chaff which the wind blows away.’

The event will involve between two and three hundred ‘farmers’ – a broad range of volunteers, including a core group of North
Korean expats. Each participant will carry a distribution device
containing pouches filled with rice husk of various shades, intro-
duced from a mixture of rice husk and rice husk ash. A series of grids will be projected sequentially on the ground. Each cell
(or ‘pixel’), approximately 1.5cm square in size, will display the
index number of its required monochromatic shade. The partici-
ants will slow by numbers, ‘line by line, moving in parallel rows
across the grids and from one grid to the next, gradually crea-
ting a ‘print’ of Heaven Lake and Baekdu Mountain, the national
symbol of North Korea.

The scale of the project requires a systematic approach to produ-
cing the image that involves strictly regulating and choreogra-
phing motion through constructed space. The large number
of participants will be directed to move in unison, simulating
a series of out-sized printer heads or agricultural machines.

While the image emerges through methodical step-by-step
accruals of motion, the individuals within the system are deprived of agency: their mobility wholly dominated by the
orchestrated movement, the algorithm directing the process
of production. They see the field blindly, matching numbers to
hues of infertile seeds, with limited perspective of the whole as it slowly comes into being.

As spectators of their own actions, however, they move along
the axis of translation, from number to hue, from projection to
feather-light husk, possibly recognizing in the course of the
reduction a ‘print’ of Heaven Lake and Baekdu Mountain, the national
symbol of North Korea.

The word is used in this metaphorical sense, for example,
in the common expression ‘to separate the wheat from the chaff’
taken from Matthew 3), and in Psalm 1:4: ‘Not so the wicked. They are like chaff which the wind blows away.’

The event will involve between two and three hundred ‘farmers’ – a broad range of volunteers, including a core group of North
Korean expats. Each participant will carry a distribution device
containing pouches filled with rice husk of various shades, intro-
duced from a mixture of rice husk and rice husk ash. A series of grids will be projected sequentially on the ground. Each cell
(or ‘pixel’), approximately 1.5cm square in size, will display the
index number of its required monochromatic shade. The partici-
ants will slow by numbers, ‘line by line, moving in parallel rows
across the grids and from one grid to the next, gradually crea-
ting a ‘print’ of Heaven Lake and Baekdu Mountain, the national
symbol of North Korea.

The scale of the project requires a systematic approach to produ-
cing the image that involves strictly regulating and choreogra-
phing motion through constructed space. The large number
of participants will be directed to move in unison, simulating
a series of out-sized printer heads or agricultural machines.

While the image emerges through methodical step-by-step
accruals of motion, the individuals within the system are deprived of agency: their mobility wholly dominated by the
orchestrated movement, the algorithm directing the process
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symbol of North Korea.
One of the clearest examples in defining American poem of 1950's, Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl'. This is a poem so specific and so historic that it seems to have been engraved in stone from the start, like the monolith in Kubrick's film, 2001: A Space Odyssey (in the opening of the film), by Guillelmo del Toro's El Espacio del Diablo, (which seems decisive). However, looking at the manuscript one reads that even on the first incanta-tory line of this poem, the author was of two minds. In the famous City Lights Books printing of the text, it appears:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical niggers (Ginsberg 1956).

However, looking at the manuscript version, Ginsberg begins with a slightly different formulation:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical n... (Ginsberg 1986).

One notes, of course, the repetition of the word ‘generation’. This is perhaps an oversight in typing. But it is one that alters the rhythm of the poem markedly. Examining the manuscript further, one sees that Ginsberg originally wrote: ‘starving mystical naked’. In the manuscript, ‘mythical’ is crossed out and replaced by ‘hysterical’. In other words, the poem might have been:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving mystical naked.

One could discuss at length the implications of both of these versions. However, for the moment, let’s leave it by saying that both of them are informative. Each version offers illumination, each leads down different corridors of tonality. Yet, they both stick.

Let’s also keep in mind some of the better known examples of authors’ ‘rewriting’ texts. There is Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s famous example of Poetry, where nearly all of the words in the poem are crossed out and revised to a new version (Moore 1981: 3, 265-267). There are the works of Jack Spicer, written in parallel streams, at the top and bottom of each page. There are the visions of Shakespeare, where the author actually worked on each line, but the variant of a text with no fixable chain of authorities. There are the canonical double narratives in the Ovid’s Testamentum Aureum (the three wife-sister narratives in Genesis) the phrasing trick of homoglyph attacks (deviations consisting of the use of confusing ‘look-alike’ URLs, e.g., ‘.xyap.com’ with an anticipated ‘real’ destination), and other related depictions. There is the blank poem, The Poem, that has Never Been Printed, written by Andrew Dornk in the E- Poetry 2012 Digital Poetry Intensive at Buffalo (Dornk 2012), where the poem simply appeared as a blank Word document and the audience had to suggest various strategies to ‘be-code’ it, and in the process, degrade its integrity as a poem through ‘read-able’ and ‘unreadable’ forms. There is also, of course, multiple examples in cinema and its foundational self-representation as one continuously changing image.

Variant Protocols

Simply put, as Jack Lynch describes them, variants are differences between copies of a text. In his essay for ‘Variant’, he notes:

Variants are differences between two copies of a text. They are manifestations of how no two copies are quite the same, whether through accident or intention: a scribe may misread the copy from which he works, or try to make a sense of passage by altering it. But although the number of variants is sharply reduced by printing, they’re still plentiful.

Such ‘fixing’, minimised by printing, is actually exploded by the speed and mutability of digital media, far exceeding the vari-ants resulting from manuscript production processes. Lynch continues:

Twentieth-century textual critics distinguish two broad class-es of variants, substantive and accidental. Substantive vari-ants are those that change the sense of the text: the substitu-tion of one word for another, for instance. Accidental variants are those that present the text as physically absent. The trace of an accidental variant can be mimicked by a pencilled note or lowercase letters, for instance: changes from Black to blac: or doubling and changing one letter. Of course, determining whether any particular variant is sub-stantive or accidental is often a judgment call (Lynch).

Such definitions of ‘substantive’ and ‘accidental’ raise crucial issues in digital texts. For the context of this discussion, suffice it to say that these two terms are not restricted to the manuscript stage on a continuum – across a dividing line with many shades of grey – rather than as distinct oppositions. For this investigation, one cannot overlook the concept of narrative.

Looking to cinema, one can find examples of how meaning might be made from interpreting variants. Of course, in this case, the word ‘narrative’ is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used. This is a word that cannot be objected to here, since it is used.
when one watches the line changing as the text is reloaded. Most importantly, the similar setting for each line provides consist-ency where narrative meaning does not.

Complex Possibilities

As can be seen, each small change introduces increasing levels of complexity. As degrees of variation, such variants can be understood. However, when one puts into play numerous chang- ing lines, even militarily, even the complexity of exponen-tial numbers of variants cannot be truly grasped. As Rosenzweig notes to Hamlet:

’tis too narrow for your mind.

And Hamlet replies:

O God, I could be bound in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams (Shakespeare 1514).

With digital technology, we can see the pattern that animates the possibilities, the ‘be or not to be’ parallel lines in simple JavaScript arrays. With an elementary algorithm, we can begin to embody (and I mean ‘em-body’) multiple textual states with deliberate writing practices embedded in (and embodied by) code. As for the bad dreams – JavaScript cannot be blamed for it.

One cautionary consideration is that I address here only the litera- ry qualities of digital texts. That is, my emphasis is on the litera- ry dynamics of writing (e.g. utterance and ideas as expressed by alphabetic or letter-based language expression). It is an exploration of the dynamics, through computer processes, of meaning as expressed through variability. Such emphasis is put forward in acknowledgement of the richness of variant pro- cesses in related and coterminous fields of artistic practice. Considerations of multiplicity, simultaneity, temporality, transmis-sion, and computer generation exist in many different practices – visual, sound, time-based video and the computer generated. All are recognised as sites of poiesis.

For me, forms of digital literary practice break grammar, spew it to embody (and I mean ‘em-body’) multiple textual states with possibilities, the ‘to be or not to be’ parallel lines in simple JavaScript arrays. With an elementary algorithm, we can begin to embody (and I mean ‘em-body’) multiple textual states with deliberate writing practices embedded in (and embodied by) code. As for the bad dreams – JavaScript cannot be blamed for it.

Further, they are ‘disturbing’ because the text itself is disturbed. It doesn’t still. It never goes to a final version. It is always changing its mind. Its mind is variable without cessation. This can produce enchantment, annoyance, interest, or indifference, but it doesn’t matter: within a fixed number of seconds to follow, it will change again.

In closing I will never forget my father’s sternest admonition, one that nearly derailed my life. One time, when I was an adolescent, during an argument about whether I could be a poet and still support any future family, he berated me for being a ‘dreamer’. He told me I could never have my cake and eat it too. Being immensely fond of food, I guess, I respect the memory of my father. And, considering he took a copy of my book with him when he became grave-

ly ill, I think he in the end respected me.

But I don’t think computer processes for the here and now. Thus, addressing you as a literal descendant of the Cero de la Silla, mythical mountains of self-encouragement, speaking across genera-tions, genetics, and idios, observe that in one small way – en un pequeño modo – I am at last beginning to know what it means to exceed one’s cake and eating it too. It certainly appears now that there is plenty of cake for all.

What Dragonfly Doesn’t Savoir Faire

Qu’a la luciole n’a savoir faire

Un peu joystick... temblando ahi que c’est que en -chino japonés... El, en calema de Nîmes, el Tunisian cwen - critif Tunziel de Cachippur slobber ghost on孤立 panels ...regionalismo glaziers, painters & other craftsmen! the moon air lune soon or Cignanourt eau d’Place des Villages - Parken Ecológico-Chiriquí-maison de Victor Hugo – Bosques de San Angel Sector Palmitas, Vizcaya in Burgundy seafront tourisquise de Centennuto-northw swoon c’est éclatant danse and tree forest * Là-bas är yrick... omen...oatmeal tweed-kobe Butterflies are presciently poetic ici — with 174-species Phospho-Isoporos sabe rebatar bom Flux or fluids stiff Shawnie-of-the-fate Gothic arch becomes Cerro-de-la-Silla ...nian basket arch Arthe...Sain-Hyacinthe, ...the Roman eros plays rose Rhône River, into Languedoc – all c’est-là-encoure the next Moyen Ages - Xime When the basilica was first 12, bokel Two tiny stams to stiation... hint of bump to cinnabar...cic - because of its beauty Odalykad, Oinaha, ondly mythical Loss Poets va: if you move your right hand one key lift becomes ‘loss’. Ellyson upon sand dunes it depends on La-Sultana-del-norte mizr iris flies is inside Isla Insel since last idiap: White whale bones ochtrn the Skeleton Coast Maraschino mazetl cerve honey mid rooftops

Footnotes

1. The Cerro de la Silla is a particularly distinctive, two-peaked mountain Laurinian Montejo, near San Antonio de los Banos, Mexico and the Texas border. It is seen from Monterrey, Mexico, along with San Antonio (now in Texas), served as one locus of a shifting item Sameness: the Opossum Front. Among Medico and in the Texas territory. The poem that concludes the essay is a crafted snapshot of a work in process that uses variant arrangements of text ‘filling’ in an iPad window (based on the PoEMM project by Jason Edward Lewis. http://www.poemm.net [Accessed 02 July 2012]).

2. Of Poetry? Jeffrey D. Parker; tracing emergence and variants as a project of poetic meaning, proposes a reading based on one that builds from Hugh Kenner. Kenner’s observation was that the last version of the poem is a footnote to an excerpt from itself (Summer 1967: 142-23), Parker argues that, ‘In the final form, “Poem” acts not only to brace these texts of the poem against the self of the poem, but to account for the articulation of the famous “place” for the genuine version in the poem’s presence in its own appendix’ as well (Parker 1990).

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In providing diverse ways of moving between the spatial organisation and temporal expression of clips, digital and interactive tools expand the editor’s reflexivity and choice-making (Coover 2012). Digital technologies enable the inclusion of materials recorded or organised through differing modes as well as the incorporation of other kinds of research materials, such as texts, maps and photographs. They can allow for continued updating and offer opportunities for algorithms to create versions generated by the computer or user inputs. Further, in locative media projects, visual ‘sliders’ may even be created by users physically walking among actual places, conjuring located materials en route. In some cases the editor is therefore also an theoretician, technician, writer, explorer and design-er, and this may result in projects that are equally experiential or instrumental. However, the iconic, indexical and symbolic ways that stories such as those of history, memory and desire become embedded or denied (see, for example, hrs, and this may result in projects that are equally experiential or instrumental. However, the iconic, indexical and symbolic ways that stories such as those of history, memory and desire become embedded or denied (see, for example, hrs, and this may result in projects that are equally experiential or instrumental. However, the iconic, indexical and symbolic ways that stories such as those of history, memory and desire become embedded or denied (see, for example, hrs, and this may result in projects that are equally experiential or instrumental. However, the iconic, indexical and symbolic ways that stories such as those of history, memory and desire become embedded or denied (see, for example, hrs, and this may result in projects that are equally experiential or instrumental. However, the iconic, indexical and symbolic ways that stories such as those of history, memory and desire become embedded or denied (see, for example, hrs, and this may result in projects that are equally experiential or instrumental. However, the iconic, indexical and symbolic ways that stories such as those of history, memory and desire become embedded or denied (see, for example, yrs).

The original recordings are integrated with dramatic imagery recorded with performers and processed for topical and formal qualities, and they are also combined with scientific materials including a chemical surface assessment. The project asks what happens when a river, which has been seen as a force washing pollutants away, instead is seen as bringing salt to the ocean, and the cinematic metaphor of montage — including dialectically-opposed elements that make up the panorama, such as images of individualized narrative, now co-exist.

The project explores industrial processes, and comparing it with alternative options. The researcher, following a researcher’s interpretive process, and contrasting modes of representation. A walker would find few, and discreet, signs of the land’s continuous and unimpeded spatial representation, while at the same time allowing for montage, collage, layering, composing, and other forms of media-mixing, as well as elements of performance; these bring together differing conditions of time in the common virtual world of the practice of West African art. Together, scans from many points of view that must take into account the continual evolution of cultural practices and their meanings. It allows researchers to interweave, organize and interpret materials, to reveal their processes, and to build arguments without excluding alternatives. It allows users to engage in this process along side the researcher, following a researcher’s interpretive process, and contrasting modes of representation. A walker would find few, and discreet, signs of the land’s continuous and unimpeded spatial representation, while at the same time allowing for montage, collage, layering, composing, and other forms of media-mixing, as well as elements of performance; these bring together differing conditions of time in the common virtual world of the practice of West African art. Together, scans from many points of view that must take into account the continual evolution of cultural practices and their meanings.

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R3/\V\O\RX

R3/\V\O\RX – A MICRO-COMMUNITY OF CREATIVE DISCOURSE. AN ARTISTS’ PRESENTATION OF REMIXWORX AS A CASE STUDY FOR REMEDIATING THE SOCIAL

Chris Joseph, Christine Wilks, Randy Adams

R3/\V\O\RX (remixworx), the blog, began in November 2006 as a collaborative space for remixing digital art, visual poetry, e-poetry, playable media, animation, photography, music and texts. Since then it has grown to include more than 500 individual works of media, many strewn about in comment areas. Where possible, each new piece is remixed, literally or conceptually, from others on the blog and linked to the appropriate page(s). New work is welcome too because R3/\V\O\RX needs to be fed. Source material is made available and all media is freely given to be remixed. Thus, the project has no single author.

In contrast to the macro-communities enabled by the major social media platforms, remixworx is a creative micro-community – a far-flung but tight-knit social group of recombinant artistic practice. It grew, in part, out of The trAce Online Writing Community when that community wound down and some trAce members still wanted to work together in the spirit of open source. The R3/\V\O\RX blog also grew from an engagement with the remix aesthetic, where individual works are not viewed as precious but open to interpretation. It is very much about dialogue and collaboration, but not in the conventional sense – the conversation is embedded in the creative media, in its poetics, and is also facilitated by the affordances of the WordPress blogging platform via pingbacks. Each remix piece is an utterance in a multimodal dialogue and the community is produced by this creative digital discourse.

R3/\V\O\RX members are a disparate group, our individual bodies of work are quite distinct from each other, and yet we collectively author a substantial, cohesive, artistic project. It is the process of unpacking and sifting through code, media assets and ideas, and then responding, that knits the community together. It is the push and pull of mutual surprise, delight, challenge and learning that inspires us. As well, there are several works of political and social commentary.

R3/\V\O\RX is a flexible community, an adaptable entity that can be shown in a variety of ways – as an online journal of digital art and writing, performed live at festivals and conferences, or even remixed live as part of VJ events. For Remediating the Social, our presentation, based around a specially curated index page of remixworx (http://runran.net/remixworx/), traces some threads through the community’s digital discourse.

The accompanying images are three more instances of remediated remixes of the online entity, this time for the printed page. Each one, created by a different member of the group – Chris Joseph (babel), Christine Wilks (crissxross) and Randy Adams (runran) – is a form of poetic infographic, charting certain trails through R3/\V\O\RX.

Credits: other artists who have made significant contributions to R3/\V\O\RX over the years are Peter Ciccariello, Erik H Rzepka, Malina L Stamatakis and Ted Warem. ‘Guest’ contributors include Carmen Adriana, Marco Giovenale, Alexander Jorgensen, Jukka-Pekka Kevninen, and Simon Mills. By virtue of being remixed, the site also incorporates the work of Lancillotto Bedini, mez breeze, Kenny Cole, Geoff Huth, Talan Memmott, Rainer Schaeffer, Alan Sondheim and others. Included also are memorials to past artists and writers, such as David Daniels, Aldous Huxley, Alison Knowles, Ada Lovelace, Octavio Paz, Ralph Rumney, Kurt Vonnegut, Emmett Williams and others.

www.runran.net/remixworx/
In the distance she heard some battle raging under an over eclipsing moon. A game probably but nothing could be taken at face value.

Blakes pupil of the Lake. Brimstone bleeding links.

The continuing adventures.

Moon mondrian.

Blood Stone-Face-Sea And The Moon

Weird sensations of everything coming apart. Our eyes were reduced to seeing in pixels. There were tinglings all over like being bombarded by molecules. We didn’t mind at first. The sensations were a kick. Then there started being a kind of tug, as if we were being pulled toward – what?

xy+:=/[[()]*/

by the ribs to a gallows

http://www.runran.net/remix_runran/?p=493

[... address unknown + notes from several meetings or things we might have said + when one hundred million million poems just isn’t enough [...]

http://www.runran.net/remix_runran/?p=105104

[... obi-spalt – a spirit of cow + for Kulti (1922–2007) + the painter has left the picture + the consuming godmen + [...]

http://www.runran.net/remix_runran?1114

[... remix work from xy+:=/[[()]*/ + Angelica from Clair de [...]

[... from Lumley attacks ‘obscure’ new poetry + comment 111418...]

Digimon visits a necropolis high above the Styly Hills. His fingers hover tempestuously over a stone book. Time stands still. He muses on written texts while Orpheus, his butterfly companion, balances patiently on his writing hand...
As best as we can, the poetry in this piece…? The reception was enthusiastic and the forum postings indi- cate several volunteers were sending pictures for the piece, but Andrews was already uneasy with that initial concept, as evi- denced by this posting the very next day.

Perhaps the A-shaped ship appeared to Jim Andrews’ Lettristic sensibilities as a kind of Lettristic ‘magical poetry,’ as he points out in his dissertation, Typing the Dancing Signifier: Jim Andrews’ (Vis) Poetics (2010).

To illustrate the value of this kind of research, I will provide a brief narrative of the development of Andrews’ videogame poem, leading up to the publication of version 1.0, using posts- ings by Andrews on Webartery and materials from the Arteroids Development Folder.¹

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Perhaps the A-shaped ship appeared to Jim Andrews’ Lettristic sensibilities as a kind of Lettristic ‘magical poetry,’ as he points out in his dissertation, Typing the Dancing Signifier: Jim Andrews’ (Vis) Poetics (2010).

The poetry in this piece…? The reception was enthusiastic and the forum postings indi- cate several volunteers were sending pictures for the piece, but Andrews was already uneasy with that initial concept, as evi- denced by this posting the very next day.

The poetry in this piece…? The reception was enthusiastic and the forum postings indi- cate several volunteers were sending pictures for the piece, but Andrews was already uneasy with that initial concept, as evi- denced by this posting the very next day.
The first version actually titled \textit{reader} and the poem/poet on either side of this relation but had 'toywar figure'). From the outset, Andrews places the player/

adversarial relationship between the 'id-entity' (the player's andrews calls the 'id-entity'), though it retains the ability to shoot in this version, the word 'poetry' has replaced the ship (or what

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Arteroids_1.0}
\caption{Arteroids 1.0}
\end{figure}

The following morning, July 12, 2001, Jim Andrews received notification that he had been awarded a $20,000 grant from the Canada Council's Electronic and Spoken Word program to develop Arteroids (Andrews 2001c). This allowed him to con-

inue working full time on this project all the way up to Arteroids 1.5, which he published in The Remed Project and submitted a copy to the Canada Council along with its documented source code (Fig. 6).

but there are four months on work on WebArteroids and con-

versations with the Webarty group before that led to the first officially published version of a software package that identifies some landmark versions in the development of the work.

• WebArteroids4 introduces blue texts that follow the player's 'id-entity.'

• WebArteroids5 gives the blue texts an independent text to dis-

play, as well as an explosion that is distinct from the text.

• WebArteroids6 opens with a text editor which allows rea-

cers to write or copy and paste green and blue texts for the

game.

• WebArteroids7 moves the text editor to Canto 2, reachable after reaching a score of 300 points.

• WebArteroids25 opens with a menu which allows users to choose between Cantos 1 and 2 and displays instructions for the user which are an original text for both the green and blue 'texteroids.'

Beyond this version, the differences become more subtle, as Andrews develops the code, materials and text for a smoother, more playable experience. After publishing version 1.01, still in many ways a work in progress, one can see

in any way a major change: \textit{Mary Had a Little Lamb} appears one word or phrase at a time and moves in a

random linear trajectory at variable speeds until exploded by being shot. There is an initial negative effect if the code is not

losing points in the overall score, so the player is indistructible, and the game's only level ends when the player has accumu-

lated 300 points. With this version, Andrews defines the basic structure of the game/poem and needed only to develop it along the lines of game design, mechanics, text, and sound.

As may be evident from this example, exploring the archives for an online group Andrews participated in yielded a record of his creative process, evidenced further by the unpublished ver-

ions in the Arteroids Development Folder. In this case, artful-

scholarship is updated through a diversification of sources to include online materials and the addition of editorial theory, media specific analysis and critical code studies. If I wanted to ex-

panded my research on Arteroids or any other of his works, I could explore different online sources, each of which has a specialized audience that promotes different discussions. In a recent conversation with Jim Andrews he provided detailed information about his work as a whole, leading to here is a complete listing of the ones relevant to researchers interested in exploring what Andrews has to say about his works:

• Hopper X: A Director developer community powered by Mailman (a mailing list open source software). Jim Andrews is currently hosting it on Vispo.com, after founder Darrell Plant decided to discontinue it, though it had to be renamed as Hopper.XX. The list has a large as a graphical membership and is archived automatically by Mailman.

• WebArtery: an ongoing electronic literature and net. art group powered by YahooGroups. Its ongoing and maintains updated archives. Jim Andrews was an active participant between 1998 to 2005. Membership and a Yahoo list is required to search and access the archives.

• empyre: is an online community of around 2000 artists, writers, theorists, curators and others, maintained by a team that invites guests to propose and moderate discus-

sions, retaining the thematic integrity of the list' (empyre). This US/Australian based global community maintains searchable open archives at: http://lists.cofa.unsw.edu.au/ pipermail/empyre/.

• Netarity: is a group blog launched by Andrews in 2010 in which he posts about his developing work, things he has read, and material he has discovered online, all of which are valuable records of his artistic development. The com-

ment thread with some of the other postings is also of interest because it is a space where the debate develops. It is powered by Wordpress and hosted on Vispo.com.

• Netpoetic: is a group blog launched by Davin Hedgman and Jason Nelson in 2009, which features writing by Jim Andrews and a community of active artists, writers, and cr.

It is powered by Wordpress and contains searchable archives.

• Facebook: On December 8, 2008, Andrews became active in his use of his Facebook account. His current (as of June 6, 2013) connection to 628 friends, many of whom are well published, well connected in the community, and he may include a certain level of usage in order to keep the account open. In order to access Webarty, you'll need to request joi-

ning the group from the moderator, who may or may not grant access. What will happen when a group becomes abandoned and there is no longer a moderator to provide access? Facebook also requires an account, plus becoming 'friends' with the person may impinge upon their privacy, or your own.

On the other hand, it is a great time to reach out to a writer by e-mail, social media, or blog and start a conversation. If they are open to it, this could be a powerful way to connect. And even if they aren't, they may or don't want to create one, the records of digital interactions is archived in his timeline. You need a Facebook account and E-mail: Jim Andrews uses desktop software to read and manage his e-mail. He has some old archives stored some-

where, but has been deleting e-mail for years because too many e-mails stored on the computer slows down e-mail software.

This last resource is among the most important ones, but also the most enduring. The most significant of the latter, many e-mails stored on the computer slows down e-mail software.

A positive development in this regard came in 2004 when Gmail changed the e-mail management paradigm by offering a large

amount of storage and promoting the practice to archive, not delete e-mail. With ever-increasing storage capacity per user and even if you're not online, the data stays. Unless you've changed the e-mail management paradigm by offering a large dataset. unless someone has been consistently archiving and keeping backup copies on more than one machine, they are likely to have lost valuable e-mail over the years.

Private-owned cloud-based services do raise some concerns. At what point will the users outpace the growth in digital infor-

mation offered by these services? Will the companies or the free e-mail services they offer last forever? What would happen if your account is shut down or you lose access? To what extent will people download extensive e-mail archives onto their own machines, if that service is even offered? How safe is the data in cloud storage? Will it be preserved for the long term?

Access issues also abound, particularly with resources that require membership and limit access in other ways. For example, open an account with Yahoo! in order for the user to accept or deny users access. And even if you lose access to the e-mail records in the future.

E-mail
The digital era of information prompts an array of new perspectives in epistemology. While the range of questions and approaches remains broad, as they do, from a rapid stream of constant technological developments in information processing, most issues commonly foreground a unique interdepen-dence between knowledge and its mediation that has been characteristic of western philosophy for the past five centuries. The essential role media formats play is not just in rendering our social environments, but helping us understand and verify them is generally accepted. In this paradigm, to interact socially and cognitively with the world refers less to our physical engagement and more to the methodologies and notational structures we employ to formulate it. Accordingly, the world itself as a separate substantial and observable environment, along with our own somatic presence in it, will often appear as little more than a kind of referential concept. Melville speaks to this very issue philosophically at the end of the 20th century, recognising distinct ontological paradigms in the then newly emerging VR technology: just how our understanding the term ‘reality’ can, observe others, and become less physically certain ‘as it stretches over many virtual worlds’ (Heim 1993: 83). His comments recall again digital culture’s especially complex relationship to the world. The capacity of computers to convey much of a context or situation. Yet, arranged anew, certain ‘as it stretches over many virtual worlds’ (Heim 1993: 83). The title of the work and an accompanying visualisation. Figure 2 shows both the image and constructed out of the standpoint: ‘The world is your oyster.’ Three words (‘world’, ‘your’ and ‘oyster’) have been isolated from the clause and respectively aligned both semantically and visually with the terms ‘window’, ‘bedroom’ and ‘dining’. The visual organisation of the terms represents a type of semantic structure or framework, situating, as it does, the various rooms and housing related objects in an array of different layouts for specific apartments or condominiums. We may choose one of a very considerable number of a concept or conceptual framework for the world around us as an immense clockwork mechanism (Hayles 2005: 4). For Hayles, an immense clockwork mechanism (Hayles 2005: 4). For Hayles, “story”, “glamour”, “food”, “intimacy” and “secrecy”. How functional the categories are with respect to each work’s interpretation, remains a topic we can only introduce briefly here. Under food, for example, the blue print entitled ‘sea waiting’ calls forth the design for a four-room apartment (Fig. 3), consisting of a library, foyer, living room and bedroom, the bedroom being the dominant space in both size and location. Both the title and foyer space evoke a certain suspense, where a theme of active expectation is duly conveyed through the repetition of the term ‘sea’. Yet this term exhibits shifting in anticipation above a ‘waiting room’ and in it a ‘waiting girl’, ‘waiting far’, pacing between the foyer and living rooms. Just below the room, in a fair sized closet space, references to ‘magick’ and ‘other dual’ dominate. Across the complex, the bedroom evokes pleasant images of desire and a sizeable window on the south end of the bedroom space offers a descriptive setting constructed via images of trees and ‘trees and working empires’. On their own, the images and references circulating through the rooms are not very evocative – phrases like ‘blue sea’ are too general to convey much of a context or situation. Yet, arranged anew, in terms of a specific apartment space, the different lexical elements suggest together the social experience of domestic living. In this context how is one to understand the act of ‘waiting’ or ‘waiting far’? Here, ‘foyer’ aligned as such, the words clearly recall a sense of space between a foyer and a living room. A highly original semantic alignment is in operation. All subsequent narratives or imagery with any attendant concepts are identifiable as attributes of specific spaces in our homes. The rooms, as they appear, may even be compared to genres, but not in the traditional sense of a literary device as a framework for understanding relations between audience, situations.

PLAYERS ONLY LOVE YOU WHEN THEY’RE PLAYING

ANDREW KLUBHAR & CHRIS FUNCHESS

The Apartment

Fig. 1. Screen capture of opening interface for The Apartment

Fig. 2. Screen capture of Apartment blueprint constructed from initial input sentences

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REMEDiating THE SOCIAL

REMEDiating THE SOCIAL

are out there to be found and explored, and may attune your perception to recognise important artists have made in creating their work.

Notes

1. This section is adapted from a portion of chapter 4 in my dissertation.

2. The head animation is more complex than a simple image, as described as follows by Andrews: I borrowed my friend’s digital camera and just held it at arm’s length and snatched away, looking into a mirror. De-leveled into black and white, I finally only used 3 tools: turn the image black, and turned the photos into grayscale. Also increased the contrast to get more shadow, and then cleaned it up using a burn tool, and made myself into a bit of a monstrosity than I am in some others.” (see Fig. 3) (2010). At 1080p.

3. I suggest visiting Webary (http://www.webiary.com/group/webiary) and searching the message archive with the following keywords: ‘aster- oids’, ‘webaryteroids’ and ‘asteroids’ to access the discussion of the work in progress.

4. The file ‘asteroids1.1 forgotten prince’ in the Asteroids Archive is a work-in-progress version. See the ‘_file type’ information for the latest version of the artwork (see ‘asteroids1.1 forgotten prince’). This version may be downloaded from the website: http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/melville/default.xqy. [accessed June 2006].

5. This section is adapted from a portion of chapter 4 in my dissertation.


11. This section is adapted from a portion of chapter 4 in my dissertation.


We have thus a community defined first and foremost by the activities of its members and their interaction as such. More specifically, the activities and interaction are governed by a set of rules which define the relationships that must be observed by all participants in the community. These rules are essentially social in nature and are based on the principles of mutual respect and cooperation. They are expressed in the form of norms and ideals that guide the behavior of the community members. Thus, the community is a social construct that is defined by the interactions and relationships that exist among its members.

The community is not static, but evolves over time as new members join and old members leave. The rules and norms that govern the community may also change, as the community adapts to new circumstances and challenges. This process of adaptation is facilitated by the social capital that is accumulated within the community, which provides a foundation for collective action and decision-making.

The community is an important source of social support and identity, and it plays a critical role in shaping the lives of its members. By providing a sense of belonging and belonging, the community helps to mitigate the negative effects of social isolation and inequality. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the community can also be a source of conflict and division, as different groups and individuals may have competing interests and values.

In conclusion, the community is a complex and dynamic social construct that is defined by the interactions and relationships that exist among its members. It is a source of social support and identity, and it plays a critical role in shaping the lives of its members. While it is important to recognize the positive contributions that the community can make, it is also important to be aware of the potential for conflict and division within the community. By working to build strong and inclusive communities, we can help to create a more just and equitable society.
are identified as social constructions – transcriptions, in other words, of active social engagement. The buildings created by each participant exists in relation to those who build around it.

It may be tempting to here, critically speaking, to compare a community derived from language, where books, as opposed to the more traditional inverse relationship, to Baudrillard’s notion of simulacra (1988), where representational forms have been socially and epistemologically stripped of any actual, concrete referent – where, in other words, the referent and reference have been effectively re-combined into one and the same entity. Yet, such a critique remains premised on the implied expectation that media representation should, by definition, be indexical in both its format and structure – mimesic, in the sense that whatever referent being conceptualised must have some prior actual existence. But this is not the case with these types of writing experiments: programmable works maintain that language functions as a conceptualising apparatus.

Regardless of what ideological concerns we may have with respect to the media’s increasingly prominent role in knowledge construction, we have before us, in the notational structures of Gómez, a kind of imprint of shared analysis – a discursive echo. If you will, of cognitive interaction, the resulting concepts and information rendered, of course, do not infer knowledge in an indexical sense – that is, in the sense that the narratives or texts are literally describing the world per se. The patterns and alignments presented demonstrate more the potential knowability of our social environment via our shared sense of order and legibility. The N-gram is best understood in this context as a distinct and important semantic protocol. It provides no direct relationship to the actual world but lays out before us an uniquely functional discursive materiality. While such discourses refer to nothing actual – that is, neither the phenomenal experience nor its source – we see objective evidence of active cognitive engagement.

Looking again to Keren and D’Rourkis’s aesthetic focus on letter combination frequency as a potential source of textual meaning – as a consistent, interpretable mark of discursive structure – we see the importance of information as both a cultural and social element. TRAVesty brings to poetics – and the literary arts, in general – attributes like pattern language, describing them accord-

ingly with an inherent cultural value. Despite its many inca
cisions, the consistent character of the input text seem to invoke a signature identity. Recall here, again, how Hartman attributed to such patterns a linguistic deduction of character
istics of ‘language of the origina’. A similar acknowledgement of information’s overall socio-cultural worth enfatizes both the application and usefulness of the words ‘martin’, ‘notional’, ‘positional’, ‘sentence’ and ‘three’. Clicking on the phone image button just to the right of ‘language’ costs a few points found in the original selection of sen-
tences, while at the same time re-arranging them to emphasise effects of repetition and rhythm. One cannot read the work produced with such focus on various persons or ‘participating viewers’ or perhaps the general theme of viewer participation.

The combination of different models used here offers us a dif
erent notational framework, perhaps not one as visually or ver-

tically systemic as The Apartment, but nevertheless just as socially and epistemologically poignant. In fact, a socio-cognitive event drawn or made apparent via ePoges in many ways con-

veys a much more actively engaged relationship to language than the dwelling spaces constructed through Walczak’s and Wattenberg’s project. being, as it were, less dependent upon pre-established lexicalological schema. This more varied interaction with source texts is certainly part of addols’s aesthetic as well as a political aim of the tool. No semantic or phonetic model can ever be considered definitive with respect to this particular practice, in which no context is stable. The lack of a consistent

One is easily impressed with the effect of enjambment on line length and the overall sound of the piece (Fig. 7). The bigram model words maintain a certain consistency between the two via the unique importance of word order. While such discourses

such as the one shown above, are provided with a capacity to process source texts in a comparable fashion by isolating and making manifest specific combinator patterns derived from the semantic and syntactic structure of different source texts. Acknowledging its ‘... com-

plete failure as a robust, elegant, and user-friendly application that can ever be considered definitive with respect to this particular practice, in which no context is stable. The lack of a consistent

Figure 5 shows some of the details of the above paragraph being broken down by the bigram into an order that is both alphabetical and according to the number of two-word phrases with which it is associated – which addols calls ‘counts’. Clearly, the word sampled above with the most numerous two-word phrases is not surprisingly the conjunction ‘and’; it has been placed in our source texts as an adjective, a noun, and a verb.

Various parameters were used for enjambment, the second of which was a ‘com-

pleteness’ where, for example, ‘the’ and ‘an’ were considered the best two-word phrases. Acknowledging its ‘... complete failure as a robust, elegant, and user-friendly application for unsupervised poetic generation;’ the author, nevertheless, considers its value to be practice-driven and therefore a ‘com-

mendatory Poetics’ shifts the construction process to the viewer’s or user’s individual engagement with the software. Patterns emerge, concepts materialise, but primarily as an effect of participatory engage-

ment. Thus we see community, as in The Apartment, a digi-

tally encoded, semantic environment, a theme that continues to be prominent in many works of programmable literature, espe-

cially those that explore analytical and notational structures of social interaction.

In addition, and even more significantly, the user is given the choice of submitting his or her own specific source text, which can accordingly be parsed and analysed using the word or type-based the ePoges program model, along with the program’s phonetic and rhyming tools. The result is a more dynamic structure, built from proba-

bility, but less predictably.

Even text taken from this very paper can supply (one hopes) a suitable source for this new model. Below a few sentences analysing the themes discussed previously with respect to Walczak’s and Wattenberg’s work are submitted into the new language model field: namely.

Such views constitute together an important theme in many works of programmable literature, especially those that explore analytical and notational applications of social inter-

action. Maren Walczak and Martin Wattenberg’s The Apartment (2001), different viewers communicate literally by constructing together two and three dimensional blueprints for a set of collectively imagined apartments. The layout and position of the various rooms of each separate apartment correspond to phrases, lines and sentence fragments inputted by the participating viewers.

Figure 7. Screen capture of the control panel in ePoges for selection of line numbers, enjambment features, accented vowels, etc.

semantic and notational system can be compared and, in some ways, contrasted not only with a work like The Apartment but also other generated text projects like Nick Montfort’s Taroko Grove (2009). Alternatively, ePoges Demonstrates a more active engage-

ment with its semantic tools. If there is a consistent cultural logic

Notes
1. Written in Python, the digital work offers a more regular semantic sche-

time a single model, ePoges shifts the construction process to the viewer’s or user’s individ-

eal pattern with its semantic tools. If there is a consistent cultural logic

References

Pressing.


ter, NH: Wesleyan UP.


Rendezvous: a collaboration between Art, Research and Communities
Cécile Chevalier

Abstract
Through the evolution of digital technology, social networks and Internet, cultural memory has been transformed, both in relation to how memories are represented, and how they may be engaged with or re-experienced. Exploring these transformations, this paper will introduce Rendezvous, a practice-based research project developed in collaboration with communities of individuals aged over 65 – communities for whom reminiscence has become central; here, achieved through art as a social practice in contributing to their quality of life. I will consider how digitally materialised micro-narratives in media art practice transition between one medium to another and localised within the field of cultural memory. This will question how the narrated self is materialised and mediated as a renewed experience in digital media art practice.

I will also ask how digital media art can be a transitional localization experience for collective remembering and, ultimately, how digital media art can intervene in the changing practice of memory. Digital interactive installations can offer possibilities for physical engagement that might be used by artists to create distinctive prosthetic environments for reminiscence, re-sensitising and stimulating experience in digital media art practice.

Rendezvous

Rendezvous’ concept is based on the deconstruction and reconstruction of life-narratives through art practice as an experience. Therefore collaborated with over 65 year old individuals, as cognitive and memory research suggest that older individuals return to formative memories more frequently. Rubin, Wettlér & Nääs LifeSpan Retrieval Curve (1980: 202-221) demonstrates that formative memories from between the ages of 10 to 30 are more often recalled when subjects reach their 50s and beyond. This study involved showing various images to participants who would, in return, recall their memories, placing them on a timeline once the exercise was completed. Although I have cited this study because of its focus on the age group I am working with, I am also aware that the memories recalled in these exercises may not be the only ones remembered, but are more likely to be the most fond or traumatic, since these memories help individuals construct their values, aspirations, and identities.

Acknowledgement
I would like to thank Dr Caroline Bassett, BME Elders, Andrew Duff, Fabrica (Brighton), Frances Hubbard, Remi Lord and WRVS for their generous support. The research is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the University of Sussex.

Fabrica & GOA
Rendezvous is a collaborative project with Black & Minority Ethnic Elders and WRVS (charities concerned with both social inclusion, and the wellbeing of elderly community members). It is also one of nine projects, commissioned by Fabrica for the ‘Growing an Older Audience’ programme (GOA) and funded by the Arts Council, South East. Fabrica is a contemporary visual arts charity, housed in a Grade 2 listed church in the centre of Brighton.

GOA’s aim is to increase the engagement of such communities with contemporary art and Fabrica as a social space, whilst creating a role and a voice for its participants. GOA is also offering various sustainable roles to outreach and bridge communities through dialogue and engagement with contemporary art. It is at the core of both programme and projects to offer its participants opportunities to enhance their quality of life through social engagement, intellectual stimulation and self-esteem. Most of the commissioned projects lie in the art sector, offering various forms of engagement and perception in current contemporary art work; from a multi-sensory perspective (Second Sight 2012), to a digitally mediated experience (Rendezvous 2012), and from a critical discussion (Conversation Piece 2012), to a cultural dialogue (Going to See Culture Together 2012). Central to these projects is the focus on community outreach from community halls, as well as via the Internet or the gallery space itself. Most GOA projects are brought together at Fabrica as a Special Day Event, bringing the general public, the participants and their communities together in the engagement, perception and experience of contemporary art practice.

My role in Rendezvous is foremost as a digital artist and project leader while being part of the GOA creative team.

Rendezvous’ concept is based on the deconstruction and reconstruction of life-narratives through art practice as an experience.

This process was key in three respects: the first to gather materials to create a collection of visual narratives; the second was a data analysis to understand where those narratives were placed, what kind of narratives were present, and finally, as to whether the ethical values of the project were met. The ‘ethnoscopy’ process could be seen as having little connection to creative practice, however on reflection, when one is making a film, the filmmaker has to look at the location, characters, props, and shoot more than is required; this stage is still part of the creative process, as it is the ‘ethnoscopy’ approach. One can observe and analyse society and culture, and begin to materialise its concept through a collection of micro-narratives that objects may hold. Micro-narratives are considered as day-to-day narratives, as an ensemble of beliefs, values and aspiration, forming the self. These narratives would most often be collected and become part of an historical or heritage narrative within cinema or literature, and therefore within cultural memory. Micro-narratives, in this case, are located as part of the process of creating digital art practice, digital relics and cultural memory.

The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage.

The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage is the first stage of the process. It involved a series of social activities organised. It was arranged to meet each group where they would regularly socialise in a local community hall (Fig. 2). Participants were asked to share fragments of their life stories through the use of personal objects, or relics that they would have tried to remember to bring to the meeting. These objects were forgotten, then participants were asked to think of an object at home and the personal narrative they attached to it.

Nicola Benge, the workshops coordinator, was familiar with all the groups through a previous, 3-year-funded WRVS and English Heritage project and consequently all participants were at ease with sharing their personal stories. Each group was asked to complete questionnaires so that it could reflect on the running of the activity and whether the participants enjoyed the social and cultural experience.

The social activity was about sharing a self, generational, trans-generational or locative narrative. While the workshop coordinator would facilitate the activity, the role, as a digital artist, was to photograph the experience, scan or photograph the objects and make audio recordings of the narratives. The data and materials were then categorised by theme of discussion (audio, Fig. 3) and by individual group (photograph) as well as by answers (questionnaires, Fig. 4).

Fig. 1. Rendezvous research project overview.

Fig. 2. Workshop participants from WRVS & BME Elders sharing personal narratives in local community halls.

Fig. 3. Key themes discussed by WRVS & BME Elders participants.

Fig. 4. Data collecting: feedback from WRVS & BME Elders participants.

The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage.

The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage.

The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage.

The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage.

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The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage.

The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage.

The ‘ethnoscopy’ stage.
The ‘material bioscopy’

During the ‘material bioscopy’ stage, I was required, as a digital artist, to start editing the data and materials. Bioscopy has been defined as a ‘medical examination of a body to determine the present state of health; an inspection of the life;’ (Webster’s New World College Dictionary 2010). In the context of Rendezvous, I have chosen this term ‘material bioscopy’ as the process of dissecting what material is ‘alive’ or ‘dead’. What materials have traces of the original narrative? I am not discussing the value of the digital relics, but its index (Pérez 1955) once digitalised. In this context the index refers to a past experience that the object holds, for example the representation of a torn or burnt photograph that Joachim Schmid (Fontcuberta 2007) so often uses in his work, not only bringing aesthetics but also a human interaction with the object and its narrative – the index.

After a number of experiments in image and film editing software, it became clear that most of the digitally scanned relics were ‘alive’ with narratives (Fig. 5). The portrait or group photographs failed to relate to the original told memory, but instead demonstrated the attachment and ownership that some individuals had with their personal object (Fig. 6). Although informative, it could not have worked as a shared authorship.

The ‘embodied experience’

The last stage is one of narration and experience. By now, I have edited the mediated and scanned relics as a collection of short experimental moving images, posted on Vimeo and network by QR (Quick Response Code) technology to a material object, located in the gallery space (Fig. 8).

In the 1970s Ernest Edmonds and Stroud Cornock defined a new ‘digital art system’ in response to computer-based-technology as the ‘matrix’. The artist, the ‘material bioscopy’ and the artefact are elements of the matrix, the dynamic, the exchange and interaction between these elements allows for meanings to be interpreted – the process becoming the medium itself (Muller & Edmonds 2006). Rendezvous includes an added element to its existing ‘matrix’, the digital relic, the digital relic, and my orchestrating of these elements; the element of participants sharing personal narratives and the element of location.

Rendezvous’ matrix is one that invites the audience to experience the art work by selecting and placing a QR tagged object (a magic lantern slide) over a camera in an under-ill stand (Fig. 9), allowing the slide to reveal a 2D representation of a relic initially shared by the members of both Wrvs and BMe Elders. Placing a single slide on the under-ill stand triggers an online image moving, which displays an abstract form of the original location.

Consequently creating a visual glitch that would also refer to time and the digital texture as well as the digital fragility itself.

Pushing through the corruption (i.e. errors, glitch) of the digital image, allows to reveal the materiality of the digital. José van Dijck discussed how ‘memory is not mediated by media, but image, allows to reveal the materiality of the digital. José van Dijck discussed how ‘memory is not mediated by media, but image, allows to reveal the materiality of the digital. José van Dijck discussed how ‘memory is not mediated by media, but the index refers to a past experience that the object holds, for example the representation of a torn or burnt photograph that Joachim Schmid (Fontcuberta 2007) so often uses in his work, not only bringing aesthetics but also a human interaction with the object and its narrative – the index.

To understand digital media as a creative medium, the artist must create a ‘bioscopy’ to discover where the resistance, parameters, and therefore life of the medium itself lies. In this process the original narrative and its authorship is transformed and re-implanted by both the digital artist and the technology itself. Consequently creating a platform for Rendezvous’ participants, audience and users to have a ‘live’ dialogue with the digital object, whilst shaping new perspectives through their simultaneous private and collective narratives.

Cultural memory

Cultural Memory is a field that invites multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary practice – from psychology to history, art and media, bringing various perceptions to how it may be defined, and how its process of mediation and the artefact or relic, allowing future generations to re-experience their cultural identity.

Alida Assmann took Halbwachs’ reflection on social memory in Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire further by formulating the concept of ‘cultural memory’ in four categories: individual memories (the narrated-self on the day-to-day), social histories (in cultural/societal group), political memories (the focus on the group identity and political voice) and cultural memories (the focus on the individual within a cultural group).

However it is clear that these systems of categorisation are dependent on one another. Cultural memory cannot be without communicative memory, nor can cultural memory be without individual and social memories, hence to reflect on the idea of cultural memory is to also reflect on the individual and the social experience.

For instance, within the context of Rendezvous, communicative memory, or individual and social memories, formed the foundation of the initial collective workshop activities where participants would share their individual narrative through a show-and-tell activity – each person would recall anecdotes, stories and collective memories (generational or locative). However, once the social activity ended, the visual and sound recordings collected and remembered, these micro-narrated selves would enter a stage of mediation and medialisation within creative art practice. These would then be experienced by the general public and the various where they would define the art works position within cultural memory, therefore allowing a new experiential dialogue between self and society, and therefore cultural identity.

Cultural memory, according to Alida Assmann (2006), is formed of mediated individual and social memories. This mediated memory takes the form of many different forms, such as museums, monuments and art galleries where collective engagement is made possible. In this context, how does digital media art practice relate to cultural memory?
Dislocation & Third Memory

Rendezvous invites the narrated self to be explored from different perspectives, experiences and interactions. Initially participants share their stories through interacting with a relic; then, through the digital art installation work as a whole, and finally via the Internet, as a home user. Online video delivery offers the possibility for the work to be re-experienced, however this can only be as a recall, not as a primary experience. Placing the interactive element within the limits of screen culture and familiarity (e.g. surfing the Internet), to transform the role of the active audience to a witness and user, limits the homes-users self-investment and therefore experience. The interactive digital work acts as a form of mirror, where one can identify with what he or she is seeing, therefore contributing to identity production and cultural identity construction through digital navigation.

I consider Rendezvous as a re-enactment, as a ‘third-memory’ or ‘post-memory’ depending on the ownership of the initial narrative, Pierre Huyghes produced Third Memory (2000), a re-enactment of an individual memory, experienced and re-experienced over time through mediation and cinema. ‘Third-memory’, in this case, refers to re-enacted memory based on the original experience and the experience of its screen re-enactment, while post-memory is the experience of ‘passed-on’ memory, only experienced through someone else’s recall and over time. Rendezvous invites its audience and users to leave with the conceptual artefact of a ‘third-memory’ or post-memory, ‘negotiating the relationship between self and society, between personal and cultural memory’ (Van Dijk 2007: 21).

Conclusion

Interactive digital art practice offers an engaging perspective upon cultural memory. Rendezvous’s art matrix, referred to earlier as a process and medium, allows cultural memory to focus on individuals forming a community, and on single relics for making a collection of digital indexes and human interventions. With Rendezvous, digital art practice remembers to question the materiality of its mediums: the digital process, the digital artefact, digital selves. It also questions the transformed engagement of remembering a past through individual and collective re-enactment, consequently creating a personal or collective experiential dialogue between self and society.

An objective of art practice is to question our being in the world, so when Alex Potts discussed Donald Judd’s work as an ‘art concerned with [...] being embedded in the network of relations between self and [physical] world and self and others’ (Plate & Smelik 2009: 43), he highlights how the selves (the participators, the digital artist and the art work) mediate with the world (e.g. the gallery space, the Internet) and with the other (the audience), to then reveal that ‘as such, his sense of place is also a sense of time and space’ (Ibid.).

Therefore to question location within digital art media practice is to question a continued progress of existence of the digital relic, of the many narratives that the digital artwork represents, but also to question a continued progress of survival and therefore loss and desire. Basset, also discussing interactive art and questions of memory, adds to Cavenero’s argument that ‘narrative belongs to lived human existence not to post-mortem fame’ (Cavenero 2000: 33) and adds ‘narratability is not only how history interpreted a life, it is an ongoing relation of the self to the world’ (Bassett 2007: 113). Thus, again allows us to consider how the past is an experience waiting to be re-experienced and re-shaped, making digital art practice the ideal, and even necessary, platform to live the experience of individual and collective remembering.

Rastadine (2000: 9) argues that in the contemporary remembrance boom, memory is aligned with issues of subjectivity and representation, privileging invention and fabrication over authenticity and lived experience (Plate & Smelik 2009: 16). Our aspirations (as a digital artist, audience or users) are not factual, they are what allow us to move towards the future. Rendezvous recalls narrated values and beliefs as a re-enactment of life, as a ‘third-memory’ or post-memory, hence ‘rendering it possible for later generations to reconstruct their cultural identity’ (Rogersmith 2007).

Bibliography:
sity Press.
Black and Minority Ethnic Elders is part of the BMECP, Black and Minority Ethnic Community Partnership, based in Brighton.
Mechanisms of Everyday Cognition (The West Virginia University Conferences on Life-Span Developmental Psychology: Psychol-


Secondary, the metaphor of the noosphere, the space for ideas, was also very influential in the course of the early development of Runet. Dan Dorfman states that an uncorrupted virtual reality has always been the dream of Russian literature. This utopian notion of the ideal virtual space is close to the conceptions of sorbon- nost (ecumemonium) of Vladimir Solovyev (1853-1900), who was dreaming of an un-encompasioned cyberspace, where the aegis of one church, was supposed to be evoked emancipation from a material world subject to the destructive effects of time and space. The cyberideal was to make the material world of Runet as a realisation of the world (biosphere) to an ideal, nonmaterial space (noosphere), at the beginning of the twentieth century (Schmidt 2001).

Vladimir Vernadsky’s and Vladimir Solovyev’s theories and orientation on the written word, in the forums and guestbooks of the free discussion spaces in the early Runet, gave rise to a number of highly literal virtual characters, or ‘virtori’ (Gorny 2007). Unlike the Western analogue of virtual personas, often subject to role-play, the properties of Russian virtuals can be best compared with literary characters. Virtual personas were the work of any virtual first-person internet surfer Miray Ivanovich Makrin (crea- ted by Roman Leibov). Since the Virtual Character was one of the Art-teneta nomination categories, Leonid Delitsin carefully collected all the posts of the virtual lover Lila Brik (an allusion to poet Vladimir Mayakovsky’s life-long femme fatale Lila Brik) in order to present her for the contest in this category (Gorny 2007). Virtori also played the role of a writer’s nickname, such as Mary Shelly by Alexey Andreev and Victor Stopyan, prominent authors of the Web, a novel describing early Runet and its inha- bitants, Algren the Cat, poet and essayist, Leonid Somotarov by Leonid Delitsin himself.

What is not Russian electronic literature?

It is not easy to find Russian electronic literature in the contem- porary Runet. As mentioned above, one of the first projects marking the begin- ning of Runet was Moshkov Library, where a collection of classi- cal and contemporary literature is available for free. Commercial digital publishing portals like Litres and Bookmate use the potential of modern cyberspace (Russian cyberspace 2012) are the two main sources where electronic literature (cybertext) in Russian, and critical writing about it, can be found.

The development of Russian Interactive Fiction (IF) was delayed by the linguistic differences of eastern Europe and Russia. In current sources, it is described as an international trend. In current sources, the IF community seems to be the most vibrant in Russian e-lit. It was in early 1998 when the first Russian Language menu-based interactive fiction platform ‘Aesthetics of the Web’ was created by Leonid Delitsin himself. The Title of the IF was ‘Aesthetics of the Web’, and was created to explore the creative potential of the computer as a medium.

The term ‘electronic literature’ itself wasn’t brought into play in Russian discourse to designate a digital born work of liter- ary art for reading on the computer screen until 2011, when it was symbolically first used by Mikhail Vizel in his review of N. K. Haye’s book: ‘the virtual space of the net’ (Hayes 2004). The term of the Literary. Enrichland Schmidt applies the term ‘digital literature’, opposed to ‘digitalized’ (Schmidt 2006), which treats the computer as a type of archive. ‘Neterture’ or ‘cyberture’ (Ribakov 2001) are used by the Net Literature portal community (Vizel 2011).

Leonid Tyrsapolsky and Vladimir Novikov, in Aesthetics of the Internet (Traslasov & Novikov, 2001), and Hanliene Schmidt in Cyberart (Schmidt 2006), stress the importance of the digital media, allowing it to realise literary tropes. The essen- tial criteria for a work to be considered a piece of a netature is normalised by Gennady Ribakov, in Net – or – natur (Ribakov 2001), as:

1. Creative nature
2. Use of ‘letters’ [буквы] as the key means of expression (as in Gerdava’s Drama in the Forest (Gerdava 2001)
3. Use of hypertexts
4. Dynamic nature
5. Use of multimedia
6. Number of authors
7. Transparency of the authors
8. Author reader interaction.

Cyberture, part of the Net Literature portal, embraces the selection of Teneta and continues to publish e-lit, although less vigorously. Since the Teneta archive is no longer available online, cyberart production continued at the selection of Russian e-lit from 1998 to the present. The genres represented include:

- poetry generator, Cyber Pushkin (2002) by Sergei Teterin and scholarly essay generator Robot Datuz (1997);

When did Russian electronic literature appear and what happened next?

The Teneta (Teneta 1994) literary contest marked the begin- ning of Russian literary art and its development. Besides generating new forms and translation, it included nominations in Hyperliterature, the creative arts, and games. Teneta positioned itself as a ‘pure internet contest’. The best works, published first on the Internet, were to be nominated. This was intended to guarantee the qua- lity of the material. Teneta was known for a wide span of work, as exemplified by the variety of communities the nominators, such as Artemiy Trotsky, Anton Nosik and Alexey Andreiev, belonged to.

In 1997 Teneta merged with Art-Peterburg and became Art-teneta. Viktor Vlasov also points out, in Literary contests in Russian Internet (Potrov 2002), Teneta had a flawed judging system. Since Teneta was known for a wide span of work, as exemplified by the variety of communities the nominators, such as Artemiy Trotsky, Anton Nosik and Alexey Andreiev, belonged to.

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Meanwhile, by 2004, the development of Russian media art led to mediatization and a number of festivals in Riga, Perm, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow and St-Petersburg have taken place over the last decades. Portals like Asia Nemtchinov’s blog Videopoezija (http://nemtch.blogs.ru) and Videopoezija.ru (Videopoezija 2012) have also been established. There have also appeared a number of creative groups, like the Laboratory of Poetic Actionism (Laboratory of Poetic Actionism 2012), Machine Librinite (Machine Librinite 2012), Zylystra and Pupstrip (Zylystra and Pupstrip 2012), amongst others.

Currently, two important e-lit communities can be located on the web: ‘netarture’ and IF. Since Teneta, the first Internet literature contest was closed, its inheret Net Literature has not been as dynamic, while IF, on the contrary, started gaining authority since the millennium.

References:


The notion of network thinking related and circular structures indicate a cultural form that is more associated with Eastern thinking and differs from the Western cultural forms of polarities. In view of the task to identify aesthetic means of intervention it is, therefore, worthwhile to look more carefully at the cultural components, within specific artistic proposals are made. It is not to say that the cultural form, as such, will be highlighted or even play an articulated role in the practices. Nevertheless, it will be an influential element that forms the surrounding and notelessness of intellectual and allocaional thinking and it cannot escape a specific context. Creative intervention cannot be intervenent in a neutral, abstract space. It needs to express relations, differences and tensions to an existing situation. Following, it may not come as a surprise when doubleNegatives Architecture, the collaborative artist-architectural group that spans Europe and Japan, is especially interested in rethinking questions of subject-positions; positions that connect to the centrality of a Western cultural form of polarities. From where do they operate and to whom do they speak in a global network? In light of these reflections, how can we argue aesthetically for interventions into complex and diverse media realities at all?

In providing an answer, cultural critic Homi K. Bhabha, when discussing questions about The Location of Culture (Bhabha 1994), has pointed out that critical engagement beyond dualities and polarities is of particular relevance and inhabits the in-between zones with dynamic interaction and opened-end processes. The artists’ intervention is seen as the instrument of the in-between zones with dynamic interaction and open-ended processes. Nevertheless, it will be an influential element that forms the surrounding and notelessness of intellectual and allocaional thinking and it cannot escape a specific context. Creative intervention cannot be intervenent in a neutral, abstract space. It needs to express relations, differences and tensions to an existing situation. Following, it may not come as a surprise when doubleNegatives Architecture, the collaborative artist-architectural group that spans Europe and Japan, is especially interested in rethinking questions of subject-positions; positions that connect to the centrality of a Western cultural form of polarities. From where do they operate and to whom do they speak in a global network? In light of these reflections, how can we argue aesthetically for interventions into complex and diverse media realities at all?

Further to the discussion of Japanese media arts, it may be worthwhile to remember that the idea of networking is rooted in Asian thinking that does not, in philosophical terms, rely on subject-object relations, dualisms and interrelationships that are of Western origin. A specific kind of temporal-spatial juxtaposition and connectedness unfold as a genuinely permeable quality in providing an answer, cultural critic homi K. Bhabha, when discussing questions about The Location of Culture (Bhabha 1994), has pointed out that critical engagement beyond dualities and polarities is of particular relevance and inhabits the in-between zones with dynamic interaction and opened-end processes. The artists’ intervention is seen as the instrument of the in-between zones with dynamic interaction and open-ended processes. Nevertheless, it will be an influential element that forms the surrounding and notelessness of intellectual and allocaional thinking and it cannot escape a specific context. Creative intervention cannot be intervenent in a neutral, abstract space. It needs to express relations, differences and tensions to an existing situation. Following, it may not come as a surprise when doubleNegatives Architecture, the collaborative artist-architectural group that spans Europe and Japan, is especially interested in rethinking questions of subject-positions; positions that connect to the centrality of a Western cultural form of polarities. From where do they operate and to whom do they speak in a global network? In light of these reflections, how can we argue aesthetically for interventions into complex and diverse media realities at all?

The concept of networking and connectedness in respect of cultural specificities (roots) and their transcultural qualities (routes). For one’s own space and also the anxiety of getting too close to other one’s own space and also the anxiety of getting too close to other. The group’s philosophy is to use data input from nature (such as wind, temperature, light and noise) and to employ military technologies to build living architectural environments with intelligent sensors. In Copra in Sigh(112), the concept is to decompose the parts of a living architectural environment, it is no more than an autonomous structure with a variant multiple and multiple viewpoints that are called ‘super-eyes’. The aesthetic experiment results from mixing existing devices and building one’s own structure. Superimposed architectural models are built from data measuring environment, such as wind, temperature, light and noise, and sound. The three dimensional structure that is generated is constantly changing, demonstrating how the flexible, constantly reconstructed model is constructed from the collected and connected data of multiple viewpoints, occupies and dominates the space of public and private. The space with the new structure interacts with the surrounding environment and also redesigns itself. It purposefully uses the technology of a mesh network and employs smart dust tools of another visionary technology, in the goal of establishing decentralised networks. What is demonstrated here are processes of building networks by restructuring connections from scratch, in all possible directions.

In Corporation, another mesh network will be realised in connection to a real-time environment, with behavior like an organic structure or nervous system. This model of networking realises possible forms of architectural technology that grow like an organism and poisons the network by collective intelligence. Different groups of dispersed networks the ‘super-eyes’ are self-generating, self-replicating, self-reinforcing, self-shaping in the way that networks multiply and fill the space, in the way that they exist in polar coordinates, not within Cartesian parameters. The multi-perspectival model departs from the linear perspective that is projected into most computer graphics systems. Instead of the linear perspective that is projected into most computer graphics systems. Instead, i refer to the background of a dominant centrality of vision and surveillance in which the object and the subject is always oriented towards the hegemon of the global economy. The virtual architecture project Corpus in Sigh(2004), similarly addresses the underlining smart technologies of military surveillance operations using network functioning.

The media artist, Seiko Mikami and the architect Sota Ichikawa, in their collaborative interactive-perceptual installation Gravioles (Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media 2004) similarly address the way medial and cultural crossings can be seen to travel and pervade each other. It seems appropriate to discuss this dimension of connectedness in respect of cultural specificities (roots) and their transcultural qualities (routes).

In the installation the group investigates the use of networks for surveillance and military purposes and, for example, uses smart dust technology and augmented reality, as introduced as ubiquitous devices in the two Gulf Wars. In this respect, we can appreciate the critical approach of artistic intervention that explores invasive and concern with the use of military computing operations. Similarly, I wish to stress an alternative aesthetic approach towards the built environment (architecture) and dominant visual regimes (presence of surveillance). In Space Corps in Sigh(2007), these parameters seem to be rather fluid and changeable, observation. This raises questions of power and control: what is potentially relevant for reassembling the parameters? Can it be anyone and does the system need us? Consequently, the work poses a critical question of to which extent a network architecture structures in a living environment where real space expands into mediascapes and changeability is formless, frameworkless and fluid.

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Another example, Seiko Mikami’s large-scale three part spatial installation Corpus in Sigh(2004), (Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media 2010), also exhibited at InterCommunicationCenter, Tokyo, (2004), addressed the concept of networking. The idea that network is a collection of spectral objects and their in partion of what sort of ‘inherent behaviour’ computer codes might have, particularly when their capacity to move and move takes on an organic character.

On the wall of the installation Space Mikein mountains ninety devi- ties that are connected through small LED projec- tors, cameras and sensors to detect the movement and sound of visitors when they approach the wall. The whole structure is targeting us, as if the technical apparatus and humans were different species existing into a dialogue with each other. As the lights and cameras follow the visitor’s movements, the devices are driven by audible motors, move their arms, ‘searching’ for individual visitors like buzzing swarms of mosquitoes. In the process, their light intensity varies in response to the activity of the user/visitor. Various real-time measurements are combined to detect the changes in the visitors’ body condition by light intensity, ultrasound sensors and body temperature by infrared sensors.
Of particular interest here is how the use of the sensors diverges from the norm, as Mikami’s device is employed to measure data distinct to what was anticipated with the original purpose of the parts. For example, the sound-sensor serves to estimate distance. Each of the combined sensors and the camera capture and measure independently, but they are networked together and attuned to each other as a form of ‘group behaviour’. The audience for this ‘industrial invention’ not only interacts but, because of the extremely miniaturised interfaces, can also experience the similarity between the behaviour (orientation in space, movement, response) of themselves and the machine. Because the devices are similar in size to toys, they appear harmless and attractive, not like control and surveillance apparatus.

The philosophy of the installation is testing our experience of the behaviour of machines, as they are driven by codes. We are also invited to think about the desire of the code to randomly grasp and process data from anywhere at any time and ‘produce’ endless chains of information input and output. The installation demonstrates its own structural components, such as repetition in the stream of data, and thereby makes us aware of our own desire to create and produce something and at the same time show our limits to influence and actually control the machine processes with which we interact. This interplay, in an in-between area, reaches like a circulation of perception. In it, participants experience the mechanism of permanent surveillance, as it is implemented in our technology and determines life in intensely structured cultures, like Japan. Here, any action is immediately the object of surveillance and triggers an endless, incessant search for input data.

As these examples demonstrate, when we wish to discuss artistic creative positions in computational development, it is important to mark the specific context of discourse and critique through the use of alternative models.

References:


3. Sharing: Arguably the most ubiquitous and tangible addition is the ability to connect and share via the ‘thinking out of place’ component of personal details, stimuli, and observations facilitated by commercial companies such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. The sharing content itself implies a more active, liberal, discursive culture.

4. Ease: where smart devices deliver pervasive computing to make managing responsibilities and relationships less difficult and time consuming.

5. Creativity: An active discursive culture suggests new thinking and innovation can take place – e.g. that technology enables the ‘opportunity of the crowd’ in crowd-sourcing, as a problem solving tool.

6. Freedom: an idea located within the original net community’s liberal ideology, where users can have of any question, urge or desire and act without restrictions.

All of the above positives can be reviewed from a counter negative position.

OUT OF PLACE: DIGITAL IN-GROUPING
Donna Leishman

Abstract

Since the maturation of the mobile network and a pervasive integration into social media, the concept of community has been irrevocably dissociated from traditional geographical interactions. Instead, inadequately structured, far-flung and predominately digital groupings is being investigated and discussed in academic, public and civic arenas. Both the positive (Fig. 1) and negative (Fig. 2) have been voiced: ‘We’re always on’, ‘always-connected’ status (Antonelli 2008) has created a desire and some would argue dependent psychological relationship with our technologies (Chap 2011). If we consider that these technologies have significantly changed our practical reality, a reality where human experience and technical artifact have, for many, become inseparable, and that we now live within a ‘world of habitually digital’ (Duchamp 2013) then traditional concepts of how community is enacted using (deleterious or not) technologies merit review. This paper will look specifically at the heavy-user Flash developer per/designer community and employ Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Turner & Tajfel 1979) as a means to interrogate how in-future technology has bypassed or developed established SIT concepts such as community, categorisation and identity.

Context

Predating more recent discussions around the negative or hidden effects of technology (Greenfield 2009) was an utopian discussion of ‘Early digital culture’ (1993-2001) was driven by native Net communities who relished the freedom to work and communicate in a non-hierarchical digital space, where online sharing and virtual relationships gave rise from offline notions of ownership, nationality and physical identity. This early period was part of the emergence of a larger ‘Big Bang’ event, who helped establish what has now been termed Web 1.0. Web 1.0 moved towards Web 2.0 (around 2004 onwards), which saw content providers and user groups evolve into more participatory ‘prosumer’ (McFetridge 2002), co-authorship and early crowd sourced enterprises (such as Wikipedia). Within Web 2.0 a confident commercial market and the expansion of the Social Network framed a decentralised culture. The current pervasive nature of mobile and networked technologies suggests we are entering a Web 3.0 and has enabled many to work and communicate with people in ‘different time zones, on different platforms’ (Nakagome 2012). The digital utopian ethos remains – indeed, ‘networking’ and ‘connectivity’ are often presented as irrefutable contemporary virtues, albeit these discourses are often disconnected and theoretical origins with an unbalanced commercial strategy.

Current key positives tend to be organised around the notions of:

1. Access: Rather than the notion that we have been given greater access to a better-delineated world, we are in an era where there is a lack of information quality. What we have now is the illusion of truth and a crisis of authentic and or verifiable knowledge; Wikipedia and Google do not offer users truth or fact.

2. Connectivity: that the cycle of connectivity – the expectation to ‘always be on’ – is creating anxiety and dependency in users (Turner, Serenko & Bodn 2011). Turkle’s (2011)
hypothesis is that technology has introduced mechanisms that can reduce social isolation, a connectivity that decreases our time for uninterrupted thought, and as such interfere with concepts of both community and identity. Weinstock (2010) suggested that constant connectivity results in lower work efficiency.

3. Sharing: Personal broadcasting has not improved the quality of discussion in society, rather it promotes the sharing of vacuous personal details and a covert form of labelling behavior among the mass-market (Martens 2011). The volume of upgradable sharing is contributing to a sense of a digital deluge and disorientation.

4. Ease: Smart devices make physically present the requirement of familiarity with those connecting to us, in which depth of reflection or communication is eroded.

5. Creativity: Counter to creating an active discursive culture, privacy, identity, copyright and memetic obsessions are abstract notions – e.g. that the ‘Internet has already integrated itself into the fabric of society’ and ‘activity beyond simulating communication, acting as a gigantic external hard drive for the brain’ (Pushkin 2011).

6. Freedom: with extended personal choice and pseudonymity it has also come the loosening of social responsibility, an acceptance of footlooseness, narcissism and a normalization of deconstructive bullying behaviours such as ‘trolling’.

Another major negative concept is the fear of ‘heavy-user’ groups who are hard to monitor in the current cacophony of interactions. That invisibility of connections is a problem. Any private content can be unintentionally archived as something unknown and be found to be fearful of; indeed we regularly hear popular press reports about users’ lives deeply involved with technology – these icons are perceived as more dangerous due to their technical prowess. Consider the BlackBerry facilitated English riots in the summer of 2011 and the British Prime Minister’s statement that these were evidence of a ‘slow motion moral collapse’ (Cameron 2010). A clear message to mass was that visibility and online and social networks were potentially at odds with each other. Parental anxiety around new communication strategies has lead to a proliferation of parental guides to new technologies (opposed to hi-band Bitmap) drawing and animation toolbox. As a secondary feature Flash contained its own simple programming language, ActionScript. Four years later, at the turn of the millennium and eroded, the Macromedia Flash Community (FC) provides an interesting case study to explore the formation of digital in/out-groups as this group has always been a temporary-user group that generated characteristics and was deeply engaged with technology, both as a communication method and an expression of identity. The FC straddled the deliberate (heavy use) and virtuous (indie, creative, connected) aspects of digital media.

In 1996, during the early formative years of the Internet, the computer software Macromedia Flash was introduced (Adobe took it over in 2005). As a multimedia technology it was initially developed to allow interactivity and animation to stream over limited 56k ‘dial-up’ Internet connections via its low band vector based (opposed to hi-band Bitmap) drawing and animation interface. Flash contained a secondary feature Flash contained its own simple programing language, ActionScript. Four years later, at the turn of the millennium and eroded, the Macromedia Flash Community (FC) had moved from a nascent group of individuals into a community who were routinely living and connecting with digital content over multiple time zones. Most members were absolutely working within the group but there is an ideal and a reality of maintaining a period colored by Techno-utopianism. An interesting founding feature of this community is that there were two distinct sub-groups within the broader in-group; the ‘makers’, and the ‘critic’/‘-boys’. Somewhat typical of a digital community even this distinction was given up entirely as the Flash-makers were made up of a broad, complex international group of artists, developers, poets, geeks, punks and freaks (Davis 2001) who were initially connected by the forum Dreamless.com (Fig. 3). A semi-secret community discussion board that was initially focused on or directly related to the Microsoft’s Flash software, quickly established itself as a place to debate, collaborate and creatively remix members work. If we extract the descriptors from Davis’s quote then we can see that sense of belonging and the aspiration to contribute. The community managers were the opposition. This initial definition of them and us was fluid and the line between the two (boundaries of member and non-member) but interestingly has a direct correlation to a physical social reality, where account managers and design agency clients could be very salient – representing a pre-existing offline stereotype.

The Flash Community

The Macromedia Flash Community (FC) provides an interesting case study to explore the formation of digital in/out-groups, as this group has always been a temporary-user group that generated characteristics and was deeply engaged with technology, both as a communication method and an expression of identity. The FC straddled the deliberate (heavy use) and virtuous (indie, creative, connected) aspects of digital media.

In 1996, during the early formative years of the Internet, the computer software Macromedia Flash was introduced (Adobe took it over in 2005). As a multimedia technology it was initially developed to allow interactivity and animation to stream over limited 56k ‘dial-up’ Internet connections via its low band vector based (opposed to hi-band Bitmap) drawing and animation interface. Flash contained a secondary feature Flash contained its own simple programing language, ActionScript. Four years later, at the turn of the millennium and eroded, the Macromedia Flash Community (FC) had moved from a nascent group of individuals into a community who were routinely living and connecting with digital content over multiple time zones. Most members were absolutely working within the group but there is an ideal and a reality of maintaining a period colored by Techno-utopianism. An interesting founding feature of this community is that there were two distinct sub-groups within the broader in-group; the ‘makers’, and the ‘critic’/‘-boys’. Somewhat typical of a digital community even this distinction was given up entirely as the Flash-makers were made up of a broad, complex international group of artists, developers, poets, geeks, punks and freaks (Davis 2001) who were initially connected by the forum Dreamless.com (Fig. 3). A semi-secret community discussion board that was initially focused on or directly related to the Microsoft’s Flash software, quickly established itself as a place to debate, collaborate and creatively remix members work. If we extract the descriptors from Davis’s quote then we can see that sense of belonging and the aspiration to contribute. The community managers were the opposition. This initial definition of them and us was fluid and the line between the two (boundaries of member and non-member) but interestingly has a direct correlation to a physical social reality, where account managers and design agency clients could be very salient – representing a pre-existing offline stereotype.

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ultimately resulted in an extended set of the configured output.

and broad cultural legitimation became problematic, alongside being too conformist and corporate. In addition some of the original makers, such as Robert Hodgin, ‘taking the 5x a day’ and were now exploring Processing (Java) and openFrameworks (C++) and as such had formed almost entirely from their own making with many forming their own digital media agencies. This gives rise to the challenge of hypnosis. That conforming to stereotypes was now permissible in either scenario a recent change in the FC identity. Further research undertakes a closer reading of makers’ emergent corporate polite could reveal if they assimilate or sustain the FC’s original anti-establishment ethos.

Summary of Observations – Conclusion

This diversification of context into more of an offline and less of a closed online communication, combined with a broadening of cultural reception and consumption of specialist technology interest (rather than the lack of a clear output), has ultimately broken down the self-enhancing ‘metrosexual’ from Flash as a tool, challenging this new FC intragroup status. Whilst the FC has a spilt ecology of fan-boys and makers, the maker group has been more instrumental in creating this change and challenges this distinctive group identity. 

for FC identity, it is breaking that the FC can be seen as the window park with continuously running his virtual-mirror on his phone.

in Social Development Theory (1978) argues that social inter-action precedes development and not the other way around. It is the result of social and product of socialisation and social behaviour. The more Knowledgeable for development in a contemporary context, becomes the computer or and digital relationships.

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the Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology


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1. Academic: Digital Transformations in Arts and Humanities is a key theme for the UK Arts & Humanities Research Council in 2011/12. Public: Rise in latest press and broadcaster interest; see The Anti-Social Network

2012/05-06 [accessed 7 July 2012].

3. an opensource software license permits the user to modify or copy the product of socialisation and social behaviour, action precedes development; consciousness and cognition are the end result.

4. 1956) and more recently Stiegler (2008).

5. The last case studies were chosen from people who are regularly pre-disposed to view groups as competitive teams (Kurg, D. et al., 1993).

6. Weblogs or ‘blogs’ is a phenomenon that appeared around 1999. This blogging explosion is often attributed to the ease of use and free authoring tools such as Blogger.com and Flosce and recent tools such as WordPress.com and tumblr.com. Blogs tend to be canonic portals for discussion in which an individual author can create and run for discussion and ‘comments’ can then in turn publish replies. The most simple blog is the equivalent of a message board where the information is not peer-reviewed and editorially controlled. The most recent variation is the microblog, or micro-blogging, such as Twitter, where posts are very short and thus a form of contribution to a collective conversation, personal notes and are frequently updated – often daily.

7. Ironically the idea of being ‘bored’ by working on Facebook means that people can be called between contexts.

5. Structure of status can be even more complex or nested within digital in-group spaces. For example the FC page, has both a constructive sub-group of expert makers and FC-boys whilst still having an explicit out-group.

How ideas of self are formed and the process is sustained remains key. Critical Psychology, as a potential perspective, acknowledges that social identities evolve almost entirely from the web as a tool. Challenging the fundamental premise of why individuals would gravitate toward the FC.

What is unclear is that this change has created a new out-group, which Trumps the original, or an extension of what constitutes the FC out-group. This is the separation between the initial maker group it is clear that the majority have retained their internal self-enhancing positive distinctiveness within the FCs in the FC out-group while retaining a strong in-group. The loss of boundaries of overlap and distance to – social identity remains.

as process can still be located – and makers, the maker group has been more instrumental in the internal self-enhancing positive distinctiveness within the FCs. The FCs designated out-group. Looking for any Web 2.0 era migration within the processing addition some of the original makers, such as robert hodgin, ultimately resulted in an extension of the FCs designated out-group. Of the makers’ offline interactions, challenging established expansion of the group and changes in the characteristics was solid in the early FC stages and was loosened with part of the endless reception and critique of the makers’ work/project/kaliber-10000 [accessed 7 July 2012].

8. dreamless.org intentionally used an understated Web presence and hid-...
Invisible Participation: Language and the Internet

Mimi Cabell, John Cayley, Daniel Howe, Jason Huff, Clement Valla

Language is the hidden scaffolding of networks, applications, and web sites. It is minified and monetized in ways that are often occluded from the everyday user's experience. From their point of view, the interaction is innocuous – language is used for labels and explanations. A few words are typed into an empty field and thousands of related results appear instantly. A simple search, an email to a friend, a unique phrase – all easily logged, monetized, and indexed. This is the world of invisible participation.

Our panel is interested in language on the Internet, how it is created, by whom, where it exists, and how it is used. Three examples: Google reads our emails, garners information from our personal messages and uses that profiling strategy to select “relevant” ads. It then displays those ads on the screen next to the very emails from which the information was initially taken. Facebook and other social media platforms use similar methods of securing and storing data — data that is paradoxically private and public, and all personal. Further, crowd-sourced encyclopedias like Wikipedia are shaping the way we read, learn, and think. Language is what links all of these sites together. All of the sites’ underlying organization and structures have been built to follow the logic we ourselves employ in using language. “Robots” read content, algorithms interpret it and databases memorize it. The impact of this process is no longer confined to the Internet, but has reached beyond it into our everyday lives.

There must have been a historical moment when Google realized that its famous search box was not a portal but a mouth, when it realized that the collection and analysis of all the search terms continually being supplied to Google by human writers was far more valuable than any indexes it had generated from what had already been inscribed on the surface of the network. By definition and protocol, the surface of the network is open to and, in principle, independently indexable by any terminal peer. Thus we still think of Google as a gift. A true search has been freely given. Any other terminal peer might have found a true search, but Google did so. The trick was simply to discover the one true search at the historical moment just before Moore’s law made it feasible for any terminal peer to do the same on any scale. The free service worked. It was and is used by all-but-every terminal on the network. Google as the zero-degree of the portal — transparent, self-effacing access to some other writing on the network that a human user wishes to read — was precisely that: nothing. For now we see that Google is entirely focused and founded on everything that we feed into its mouth, everything that is proper to us as desiring humans, or, more precisely, proper to the network-authorized agencies of human and posthuman desire. Google must find a way to keep an overwhelming and representative majority of such entities feeding it with data (capta) or, better yet — learning from Facebook, its complementary vectoralist peer — a way to take into itself (as Google+) every property and method of symbolic human self-representation on the network. As of the present day, a vast majority of human terminals on the network willingly and frequently write into one particular space, the maw of Google. At the very moment of doing so we more or less implicitly agree to terms that establish a hierarchical, non-mutual, non-reciprocal relationship and we allow the abduction of our terms of reference.

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American Psycho was created by sending the entirety of Bret Easton Ellis' violent, masochistic and gratuitous novel American Psycho through Gmail, one page at a time. Mimi Cabell and Jason Huff collected the ads that appeared next to each email and used them to annotate the original text, page by page. In printing it as a perfect bound book, they erased the body of Ellis' text and left only chapter titles and constellations of our added footnotes. What remains is American Psycho, told through its chapter titles and annotated relational Google ads.
Since the early 1980s, the interest of art museums, galleries and funders in art employing digital technology is understood to have received momentum in the early 1990s, in the context of so-called ‘software art’ and the promotion of digital poets. As a further round of interviews is planned for this year, this paper presents some preliminary conclusions as to what the challenge of the digital should mean for art and the digital arts. The same holds true for the art of programming: programmers are authors and composers of software. The advocates of ‘software art’ emphasise the primacy of the code as the main authorial medium and demand an unobstructed presence and role for it in the artwork.21

This emphasis on the ‘centrality of code’, results in the downplaying of the significance of the user interface (or screen display) which the code produces on a machine. As the same essay explains:

‘the principal ain’t media art has committed itself to be its own kind of interface design... instead... of the true nature of the system, hidden behind the façade.’

This is most clearly illustrated by ‘Code Poetry’ which involves using computer programming language as a literary medium: the poet designs his own language in the specific code language of software which is made visible to the reader.3

...the principal ain’t media art has committed itself to be its own kind of interface design... instead... of the true nature of the system, hidden behind the façade.

This is in contrast to the aesthetic that often underpins digital art installations displayed in contemporary art institutions, which downplays the significance of the programmer’s role.

By way of background, the interest of art museums, galleries and funders, in art employing digital technology is understood to have received momentum in the early 1990s, in the context of the origins of the internet era which renewed enthusiasm for software art and the computer programmer’s role in authorship (at least in the UK) for the ‘director’ of the art installation, as distinct from the authors of the individual elements (such as the computer program) that make up that installation. However, in drawing an analogy with film, the interviewees were not articulating a concept of authorship that goes against the grain of copyright thinking. Under various European Directives, member states are obliged to recognise the ‘principal director’ as at least one of the authors of the film work.22 This reflects the view that the director is, as the European Court of Justice has stated, ‘one of the “natural persons” who have contributed to the intellectual creation of the film’23 as distinct from the discrete copyright works which might emanate from the director’s efforts. It is therefore difficult to distinguish the contribution of the ‘director’ from the inextricable to the divergent.

Conclusions

To conclude, what are the consequences of this convergence between certain discourses of art and law?

On one level, the discussions of new media art cohere to copyright’s categories; they provide a way of thinking about the computer program which answers concerns about its status of authors in law (in sections 2 and 3). Federal courts have sought guidance on the meaning of this phrase. In ESA,24 the Court made clear that while the covered source code and object code, as the literary elements which are at the basis of computer programs,25 it would not include the graphic user interface which is displayed on computer screens when the program was run; the latter was merely a means of which users make use in order to use the program.26 Also not encompassed, according to the European Court of Justice in SAS,27 are a program’s ‘functionsality’ (or service which the user receives) or a programming language, at least in so far as protection for these aspects is sought ‘as such’.28

To a lawyer uncovering the varied artistic disciplines on authorship (sketched in Section 1), it is immediately striking that none are antithetical to copyright principles. On either the ‘new media art’ or the computer programming side, it is accepted that programming is an activity involving skill and creativity, including the inclusion of computer programs as copyright works involving an author’s ‘own intellectual creation’.29

The divergence between law and the ‘contemporary art’ model of authorship30 stems from a central assumption: authorship (at least in the UK) for the ‘director’ of the art installation, as distinct from the authors of the individual elements (such as the computer program) that make up that installation. However, in drawing an analogy with film, the interviewees were not articulating a concept of authorship that goes against the grain of copyright thinking. Under various European Directives, member states are obliged to recognise the ‘principal director’ as at least one of the authors of the film work. This reflects the view that the director is, as the European Court of Justice has stated, ‘one of the “natural persons” who have contributed to the intellectual creation of the film’ as distinct from the discrete copyright works which might emanate from the director’s efforts. It is therefore difficult to distinguish the contribution of the ‘director’ from the inextricable to the divergent.

Not only do the ‘art’ authorship concepts not appear to challenge copyright thinking, but in fact there appears to be much in common between the concept of authorship of a computer programmer in copyright law and new media art discourse. Both classify the computer programmer with an established category of literary author: the poet. Further, both see the programmer as the creator of a particular expression of code, downplaying the user interface or functionality produced when the program is run on a machine.

Indeed, in explaining why this is the case in copyright law, certain aspects of legal reasoning come remarkably close to the characterization of the programmer in the volume accompanying Ars Electronica’s CODE/textos. The essay of Programming one essay in the CODE volume argues that:

Programming can be compared to writing a novel: even though the language of the novel is defined (say French or German), the content of what is expressed is subject to the author’s imagination and creative expression. The same holds true for the art of programming: programmers each have a unique ‘language’ of expression and the result usually depends upon their skill and their experience... and the personal creativity of the programmer.31

In SA3, Advocate General Bot’s characterization is in similar terms, again drawing on a comparison with novel writing:

...creativity, skill and inventiveness manifest themselves in the way in which the program is drawn up, in its writing. The programmer uses formulae, algorithms which, as such, are excluded from copyright protection because they are the equivalent of the words by which the poet or the novelist creates his work of literature. However, the way in which all of these elements are arranged, like the style in which the computer program is written, will be likely to reflect the author’s original creative talent and therefore be eligible for protection.32

...
classification in law as a "literary work." For example, it has been said that "fundamental to copyrightability of literary work is the ability of the subject matter to afford other information or instruction or pleasure" to humans, and computer programs are more accurately seen as being concerned with "machines." A similar concern is expressed in a leading comment on European copyright law.

What is problematic about copyright protection of computer programs is that they are treated in their nature as not appeal to human senses but address data processing machines and may not be deemed literature and art in the broadest sense of the word.

As we have seen, the discourses of new media art conceive of the computer code as a metaphor (in a sense: the code is to have (as we saw above)) an 'un-obstructed presence and role... in the art work', it is to be in the foreground. In this way, creative practices such as 'Code Poetry' make visible to the human eye, aspects of the computer program which judges have previously thought of as invisible to the eye and unlike conventional literary works.

Indeed, in stressing the 'primacy of the code as the main creative achievement', problematic aspects of the analogising of computer program copyright as it applies to novels, fall away. In the UK, it has been long accepted that copyright protection extends to non-literary elements such as aspects of computer programs. As Pumfrey J said in 'navitaire v. Easyjet' has no theme, no'

the law protects the products of machines, rather than human

thought of as

16. art. 2(1) Berne convention for the Protection of literary and artistic works.


18. art 10(1) Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights 1994, to which all members of the World Trade Organisation are party.


20. article 11 (a) Directive 2001/29/EC.

21. art 2(2) ibid.


29. ricketson (1991-2) at 2. the title of this conference paper is intended to indicate sam ricketson's observation made at the early days of the changes of technology relating to the internal.

30. ibid. at 25.

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33. [2012] e.c.d.r. 1.

34. at para. AG71. see also the comments at para. AG71

35. 11 European Intellectual Property Review 485.

36. germany: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag trier.

37. see p.3 above.

38. Barron (2002) at 399:

39. [2004] eWhc 1725 (ch) at paragraph 125.


41. Barron (2002) at 399: the title of this conference paper is intended to indicate sam ricketson's observation made at the early days of the changes of technology relating to the internal.
some types of digital fiction, which exemplify a range of ways that the reader needs to piece together a narrative across some form of space, are those of distributed narratives. These are digital narratives which are divided into a number of components which are distributed across both space and time. The examples reported in this paper both provide new opportunities for schooling to offer children opportunities for critical understanding and participatory capacity development in this shift in the cultures of the new media age. A number of studies have recognised that schooling has some role in preparing young children (aged 10-12) and contemporaneously preparing them for their roles as both creators and consumers of digital narratives. They state that:

In this new reader, both production and consumption of texts is combined into one process that is self-contained. The new reader navigates through links to find threads of connected meaning where no author placed them. This new reader is reminiscent of the cybernetic approach of Bowlby, Koshner & Knobloch (2004, 2006, 2007). Both examples are discussed in light of demonstrating how a technology enhanced, new media infused, recontextualising world can prepare children for their roles as both creators and consumers in participatory interactive fiction narratives for the future.

The theoretical underpinning of this paper is drawn from theories of multimodality (Unsworth 2001, Quin 2004) have radically new or innovative but it is the reader’s role that is extended in some way in order to access it, drawing from Aarseth’s early work on ergodics, in which he proposed a difference between reading a string of present moments when the reader clicks on links... This situation reverses our usual sense that time is passing as we watch. Instead, time becomes subjective and always already exists in its entirety, and we create sequence and chronology by choosing which portions of the river to sample. (Hayles 2000 online).

The notion of reader interactivity and control is one that Thomas (2004, 2005a, 2005b) has emphasised as a critical affordance of digital texts. In thinking about the nature of interactivity, Thomas (2004, 2005a, 2005b) has described how digital narratives which are layered in dramatic different ways to traditional print based texts. He states that:

In the past decade there has been a significant uptake of new forms of storytelling in a multimedia digital communication culture (Alexander 2011, Page 2010, Wardrip-Fruin & Harrigan 2004, 2009, 2010). The examples reported in this paper both provide new opportunities for schooling to offer children opportunities for critical understanding and participatory capacity development in this shift in the cultures of the new media age. A number of studies have recognised that schooling has some role in preparing young children (aged 10-12) and contemporaneously preparing them for their roles as both creators and consumers of digital narratives. They state that:

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In the iFiction application, children are encouraged to layer scenes using text-based narrative, images, audio, and video. They are also encouraged to create their own stories using various formats: text, audio (music, dialogue, sound effects), photograph (of reality or of art they have created), video, virtual reality, or augmented reality content. They then tag these pieces of content with information to a GPS location. This creates a multi-layered complexity which we hoped would become engaged by the children as they engaged in the authoring process. The children were responsible for working together to co-create the text. Unlike ARGs, which have an air of artificiality, the content is primarily located in the physical space. Contrary to this, iFiction is primarily located in the physical space (and as such is a form of ‘real’ story using the affordances of ARG), and in this case, the physical space is primarily the school playground, which has been transformed into the setting for their fictional universes. However some content is posted online on a class blog, which allows readers to participate in writing as a co-commenter on the blog. Most of the collaboration however happens within the real space of the classroom and in the playground.

iFiction was designed to exemplify a range of features of digital fiction and ARGs appropriate for a year 6 teaching context. The project, as noted above, aimed specifically at the provision of a technology enhanced, new media infused, recontextualisation of English teaching, through offering students an innovative and radical new way of thinking about writing and reading.

The trial of iFiction is taking place with a year 6 class in a primary school in Tasmania. The two teachers working with me trialled the app have considerable experience with multimodal authoring, however the children are quite new to it. In my visits I am focusing mainly on the authoring process with half of the class, whilst the teachers are working with the readers and the whole class teaching sessions were held over a week of visits. In terms of this reader/texter dialectic, I have drawn on some of the practices of alternate reality gaming.

A helpful definition of alternate reality gaming (ARG) is found in Alexander (2011), who explains:

An ARG is a combination of story and game. Its contents are distributed throughout the world, usually online, perhaps with physical locations as well. Users play the game by discovering bits of content, surrounding the story to which those items belong, while comparing notes with other players. Collaboratively, collectively, players hunt for new pieces of the story, solving puzzles to do so. The pieces are usually not formally identified as part of a game...

ARGs have traditionally been used as marketing tools. The first known ARG was designed in 2001 to create buzz for the movie A.I. As an emerging phenomenon they are only just beginning to be recognised for their potential within educational contexts.

In the iFiction research project, students in a year 6 class were divided into two groups – the authors and the readers. Authors worked with me to create one (or a part of one) episode each week. During the week, the teacher of the class would allow the readers to explore the episode, critique it, and respond to it with suggestions as what they hoped or expected might come next. The following week, these suggestions were either included in the episode, or deliberately twisted to surprise the reader in the next episode. In this way, the authors and readers worked together to co-create the text. Unlike ARGs, which have an air of mystery to them with readers never knowing who the authors are, in the classroom context the more actively and consciously participating in the text allowed for more flexible collaboration and critique of texts. It also allowed more explicit episodes of teaching about the relationships between the parts of a story, its genre, literary features and grammatical design. In the process of creating lexias in the video format for example, the teacher was able to discuss the use of camera angles and motion and teach the grammatical metalanguage associated with visual and film literacies to the whole class. Similarly, in the process of discussing how to immediately intrigue the reader with the story, the teacher was able to discuss the various ways good literature might begin.

As in an ARG, the content bits or ‘lexias’ of the children’s iFiction are created across space. An ARG is primarily online, with some content existing in the physical space. Contrary to this, iFiction is primarily located in the physical space and has been transformed into the setting for their fictional universes. However some content is posted online on a class blog, which allows readers to participate in writing as a co-commenter on the blog. Most of the collaboration however happens within the real space of the classroom and in the playground.

Discussion

There is no doubt that using the application as an authoring tool for stories during English and Literacy sessions was and is highly motivating for the students. Whilst I only ever planned to work with one small focus group, the enthusiasm of both teachers following their first workshop with the software, and the focus group following their introduction to iFiction has resulted in all children wanting to take part. Students valued the feedback and the opportunity to share their work with others. Early work with children has demonstrated that all were quickly able to navigate through the stories created by others. The use of the navigation system was important, as the children were able to move forward in the story using the app.

In the early stages of the project, the teaching focus was on the nature of the narrative and in particular the quest genre. Content ‘lexias’ combined print based media such as the drawings and the writing, with digital media such as video. As the children began developing their quests further this combination of print and digital media continued, though digital media was used increasingly as the quests progressed.

Students spent considerable time developing logical literary directions for transporting their characters in and out of ‘fantasy’ worlds. In terms of the technical process involved, it drew upon mixed media strategies such as overlaying virtual content onto the real world (see Fig. 4) and layering a real character into a virtual world (see Fig. 5).

Fig. 4. Reading using the navigation system.

Reading the text involves reading a navigation system, where the various multimodal ‘lexias’ are represented as dots plotted out across the compass, and students used this to navigate through real space. This is best presented in Fig. 6.

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Fig. 6. Reading the navigation system.

In the first visit, I introduced the nature of quests, and following this visit the teachers are teaching all children about the literary genre of quests, using the novel A Wrinkle in Time, as well as other novels, tv series and films familiar to the children. As they progressed through the project, the teachers are teaching all children about the literary genre of quests.

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Furthermore, to capture the sense of theatricality and performance involved in participating in new kinds of fiction, I drew heav-ily on drama teaching strategies. These strategies (such as drawing a ‘photograph’, writing in role, role-playing, standpoint-ing, flashbacks) provided children with a language of meaning and meaning-ful narrative authoring structure, one which gave them time to develop a strong context for the quest, time to develop rich and complex characters, time to create episodes of narrative action, poetic action, and reflective action (as described by Neelsand & Gooide 2005). This enabled the authoring process to be on the one hand controlled, purposeful and effective, yet on the other hand also highly engaging and exploratory. This created a pleasurable tension with the children as what felt like playing, performing and having a lot of fun with the iFiction application was clearly at the same time teaching them about English, about literature, and about literary and grammatical techniques to use to entertain, engage and emotionally affect their readers.

6 Conclusion

Inanimate Alice and iFiction both offer many opportunities for teachers to introduce the reading and authoring of digital fiction into their classrooms. In Australia, digital texts and multimodal authoring have been noted as significant new inclusions in the national English curriculum. As curricula change to embrace the opportunities offered by new media, teachers are searching for meaningful and relevant ways to incorporate and blend the new within existing classroom contexts. Both Inanimate Alice and iFiction reflect either born digital texts or remixed digital texts which draw from a long literary tradition, and both seem eminently suitable as ways to bridge the gap between what teachers are familiar with already, and the new, more radical kinds of texts that new digital media are creating. What I have been working on with both of these new forms of story-telling in the classroom is developing sound pedagogical resources for teach-ers to assist them as they embrace the new curriculum.

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Thomas, A. (2012) ‘Points of Difference: Humour, Pathos and irony in Children’s Multimodal texts’ i: djonov, E. & Zhao, S. (eds.) Game Studies – and re-thinking the impact of all of these on critique. The existance of all these options seem to require a kind of rea-ding that crosses and re-crosses reading, critique, transposition/translation, and writing. But a key point is that it is not just looking or watching.

I stress this because of the prominence of the following view: One feature of these [e-poetry] creations is that the texts that constitute it are initially perceived as images, animated metaphors or visual texts. The texts and documents become images, they no longer read, they are to be seen: their lin-guistic dimension has been subsumed under their iconic function.” (Citroni 2011).

The relation between word and image is clearly in play, but once the icon takes over, it ceases to be poetry in any meaningful sense. It can be poetic, but not poetry.

Examples: e-Readers

The first image below is a screenshot of an e-Reader in action – or, rather, of two in action at the same time. The blue and the yellow words are each produced by a different e-Reader.
When you, as the human reader, open the app you see the base text written in blue as you normally see a book or a page appear on paper. You click on a number (here, from 1-4), and an e-Reader begins. It can be paused by clicking on 5-8. Varying actions can be started or paused by clicking on any of these numerical keys at any time.

You see the base text fade in and out in patches, and words in blue and yellow appear while the base text does not move. It is, however, modified by the movements across and through it.

In this example, the base text on the right is a fairly free, verse poem as it might appear on paper. You click on a number (here, from 1-4), and an e-reader begins. It can be paused by clicking on 5-8. Varying actions can be started or paused by clicking on any of these numerical keys at any time. Without getting into too many of the details, to privilege the given text, and if not, how did it come about? They have in common is the idea of the emergence of a truth rate an e-Reader, started by you as the human reader, and running at the same time as the yellow one above.

The fact that reading has always been technologised is brought to the fore by stopping and starting these Readers, while at the same time you are made more aware that reading has always been a social act even when a passive approach is taken, it has to be chosen; you then have to make a choice between several ways of reading, one of which might be to un-focus your attention and allow meanings to emerge. In so doing, you alter the role of syntax. The question arises whether this is a new form of syntax. Where, as here, more than one language is involved, you also have to decide what kind of attention to give to translation.

The shot above captures the words, the sudden sun as they emerge from a single spot in the base text. The overlap this creates while in process disappears as the words move apart. The base text fades or darkens simultaneously. as you read, creates while in process disappears as the words move apart. The base text on the right is a fairly free, verse poem as it might appear on paper. You click on a number (here, from 1-4), and an e-reader begins. It can be paused by clicking on 5-8. Varying actions can be started or paused by clicking on any of these numerical keys at any time.

The screen shot below the green text is generated by a second e-Reader, started by you as the human reader, and running at the same time as the yellow one above.

These effects can be quite subtle, and they may not always be equal or noticeable, nor indeed might they always be as prominent as they are at this historical moment. I would speculate that such effects might become only about as noticeable as the difference between post- and pre- 20th-century prose. They don’t disappear, nor are their reconstruction of you as the reading Subject. However, they will signify the act of reading a book is understood, because its cessation as the only way of reading, which is already in process, will have moved further forward.

Digital Reading and the “inextrinsic”

Digital, or e-Reading, both brings sociality to the fore, and reconfigures how reading in general has been understood. It inaugurates an “e-linguistic” approach to dynamic reading-in-motion to interpret, which we have agreed to call “inextricant”. This work concerns inextricant reading by means of electronic Readers. It is “inextricant” because it embodies a contradiction, or tension (in-ex-), because it is about going deeper into poetic language than was possible before high-poetry (intrinsically) but also because it moves over associative, or metonymic, traces (extrinsic).

There is a simple example of a linguistic element related to the inextricant, which is feature of much e-poetry. Punning (or, technically, paronomasia). I would say that this is comparable to an inextricant figure because it works by taking the reader into a figure of language, the direction of which then goes outward – it moves in, then out. It is also useful as an example because it has a visual element that transposes to sound. Lastly, it’s right on the edge of consciousness, which is perhaps the most important.

Innovative language is necessarily oblique in terms of what is currently considered to be the dream work, is what enables perception of the unconscious or preconscious, or that which in reason or the symbolic is embedded. Electronic, inextricant Readers work on this threshold.

Something very similar can in practice occur in the practice of programming through “type punning”, though I have not gone into this as yet. As far as I understand it, type punning is where programming concepts are deliberately misused. Since this involves re-interpreting what a given expression represents in terms of another type or types, sometimes including, for example, text-images (which make no sense in programming terms), it is directly analogous to punning in natural language. It is similarly subversive of stable meaning, and it similarly courts the absurd.

It is also the point at which we can begin to glimpse the ways in which the reading Subject is shifted from the individual towards the social. Inextricant reading implies an intervention in the imaginary. This is because the same dual movement that happens in language happens in the reading Subject: she becomes aware of themselves reading, while simultaneously having to be responsive to a technologised reading that is both impersonal and still carrying an implicitly human Subject or Subjects. The e-Reader is therefore a hybrid Subjectivity that constitutes the human reader in new ways. These ways cannot be accounted for in the classical psychanalytic terms.

New Subject, Old Left

Subject-formation, since Freud, has been understood as a complex of structures involving metonymy, visuality and language. Without getting into too many of the details, to privilege the visual over the verbal in poetic invention is to vitiate the possible impact of poetry to political, which poetry is political because it is where poetry affects the Subject and its constitution in language.

This brings us again to what I stated previously – that inextricant reading implies an intervention in the construction of the Subject, or the relation of the Symbolic and the Imaginary. Let me very briefly indicate why. Poetry is ever present in the Mallarméan sense, which is close to, though not the same as, Badiou’s more recent, and to some extent possibly derivative, definition. What they have in common is the idea of the emergence of a truth that would otherwise not be discernible. For Mallarmé, this is an operation of poetic language alone. But Mallarmé, in my view, is no Platonic, nor is Badiou. This isn’t the place to argue it fully, but Badiou is the more Platonic, or at least inextricant, deployment of the Subject in language. The Subject is always in process, and the truth is more dynamic because it’s about relations. Mallarmé is also an atheist; Badiou’s philosophy runs far too close to theology for this sometimes terrifyingly unstable, but highly inventive, universe. Badiou’s philosophy has the great merit of being explicitly political. But it misses much that is in Mallarméan Sense (as does Rancière, but that is another story). The point, again, is how it constructs the imaginary.

The reason this matters here is precisely at the level of this dynamic Subject. The processes of inextricant reading and transposition both bring the Subject into an uneasy place where innovation and change become possible. Think of the Kristevaian eruption of the avant-garde into meaning, but transpose it into something more like the Delusion subject-in-process, and you come close. A big difference, however, is what I might call the structured dynamism of this process, and it is sexed-gendered, if you must.

(An aside – Many prominent male thinkers today are hampered by their lack of knowledge of recent philosophical writing by women. The reasons are many and varied, but the effect is similar and deeply unjust.)

E-poetry deploys motion. That is one good reason why it is especially interesting in the sense of language-in-process, or perhaps becoming-poetic, or again, becoming-truth. It is also why it is especially interesting in relation to translation. It is motion, a change in the temporal logic of language and an intervention into syntax, which in play with each other constitute the innovatory potential of e-poetry.

If the Subject is altered in this way, then so is collectivity. That is why these seeming-specialised matters have something to contribute to questions of the social. The same goes for what has hitherto been understood as the ‘esthetic’.

Both sociality and aesthetics have fairly recently – within the past 5 or 10 years, at most – come back into debates about modernism in a more social sense. Modernism in the thinking of the old Left, and vulnerable to the accusation that they simply reflect an uncialistic nostalgia for some of the old ‘certainties’.

Modernism was an idea built on revolutions. In remediating the social, we are not talking about revolutions, strictly speaking, though the effects may actually be more revolutionary. This is an evolutionary model rather than revolutionary – in other words, there are always continuities. But evolution is characterised by shifts and extinctions as it is by long and gradual change.

To these questions are added others, such as how does it work? Who programmed it? What is the logic – or what are the logics? How far are they technical logics deriving from programming languages and programs? Is there a random element, and, if so, how does it operate, and to what effect? Even by arising, this question alters your relation to the text.

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These continuities are suppressed in the general narrative of modernism and efficiency, by which I mean in this context, adherence to a certain tight and undifferentiated analytic. In aesthetics, it manifests in the dominance of individualism and abstraction, of difficulty and of a contemporaneity that only an elite can interpret.

In brief and provisional conclusion

It keeps coming back to the construction of the Subject as an individual, and often as the One-Who-Knows. Ideas of ebb and flow, of process and networks (rather than separateness), have been around for some time. But they have not fully replaced the outmoded individual Subject. This is partly because radical thought has been in the past so heavily invested in oppositional discourse that it finds it very hard to give up what it understands as revolutionary fervour.

This is inimical to connected sociability. The maturation of born digital thinkers should go a long way to ushering in the new evolutionary shifts that have been under way. I would argue, since about the mid-1800s. But it is only since the mid-1900s, and the spread of the digital, that it has had the media its logic necessitated—and made inevitable.

Notes

1. Gervais is right that they are often perceived in this way, but clearly I dissent from the view that the linguistic is subsumed to the iconic.

2. The poem is Le poème choral by Stéphane Mallarmé, published in 1884, written in the 1880s. As the author of Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard, widely cited as the seminal text of avant-garde poetry, Mallarmé’s work is especially relevant to e-poetry. See also Florence 2000.

3. We here refer to my primary collaborator, John Cayley, and myself. The e-Readers we are working with were devised and built by John Cayley, based on his collaborative Reader Project (hewitsonproject.org) with Daniel C. Howe. They can be programmed to perform different operations according to poetic or critical principles, which is where my primary interests lie.

4. I mention Badiou and Rancière because of their prominence in recent discussions related to this paper, and also to my work on sexed universals in contemporary art. (Florence 2004)

5. Elizabeth Grosz (eg 2008), Kelly Oliver (eg 2004), and many digital theorists, whose work should be more widely referenced, just for a start. I am not saying the work is not known. I am saying it has wider resonance.

References


Florence, P. (2000) Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard, widely cited as the seminal text of avant-garde poetry, Mallarmé’s work is especially relevant to e-poetry. See also Florence 2000.


These remediated social bodies are starting to rub off on me, and something, it’s hard to say exactly what, is leaving its faint imprint. Is making an appearance. An allegorical appearance. An apparition of an appearance. This is where you, Desire, come in. An email, a website, a text message, a tweet. Desire is the desire for an Other. I myself do not exist (cannot exist, and this the thing I like most about me). Desire: the asynchronous social medium that becomes transmission itself. Desire asks: ‘What does it feel like to submit?’ ‘To submit to the machine that triggers yet more desire?’ Why the desire to submit? So that one can then make an appearance. One submits, and waits, and then, by fluke of imagination, if intuition is optimally programmed into the environment, another ghost transmission arrives in response to the submission. It’s an acknowledgment of receipt followed a short time later by a message of acceptance. Your submission has been accepted. You, Desire, Have Been Accepted. I, meanwhile, am always (an)other.

Welcome to the Remediated Social Machine.

RE/MIX

PARALIPOMENA: (DRAFT OF NOTES STIPPED BARE, EVEN ... ) (PHONE VERSION 2.0)

Mark Amerika

What does it mean to program desire in a robotic world that strains to create?

These interstitial rubbings, these moments of textual foliage, why is it all stimulating me?

Writing is the flesh I just can’t keep my hands off of.

It’s driving me wild, again, always, and I really can’t stop myself.

I just want to touch it— to lick its outer edge and slowly, if it will let me, go in deep.

To take hold of the machine and make it come.

To turn it on (explicitly).

A profusion of uncensored scratch marks that tell the tale.

A pungent rain of text discharged from the invisible cloud.

An Unepurged and Voluminous Zip File Ready for Immediate Download.

But I’m not even here, so how can I dis-re-member this prodding packet of transmitting desires?

Was I here?

I haven’t even left and I already forgot how I was when I appeared.

It’s like that.

It’s like remediating the social – remediating the social medium

I, meanwhile, am always (an)other.

Welcome to the Remediated Social Machine.
ANNIE ABRAMS

Annie Abrams has a doctorate in biology from the University of Utrecht and a BA from the Academy of Fine Arts of Arnhem. In her work, using video, performance as well as the Internet, she questions the possibilities and the limits of communication and investigations using the new networked conditions. She is an internationally recognized pioneer of networked performance art. She has performed and shown work extensively in France, including at the Centre Pompidou Paris, the CRAC LR, in many international galleries including the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, Furtherfield gallery London and NIMk Amsterdam. Extensive biography and cv. http://bram.info/info/aa.htm

ROMY ACHTUV

Romy Achtuv is an experimental interdisciplinary artist whose work engages issues of representation, language, time, and memory. Underlying his practice is an ongoing interest in the language of visual representation and the dynamics of spectatorship and interactive and performance environments. He has published critical essays on networked performance and has won several awards. He lives and works in Israel, the US and in Seoul, South Korea, where he is currently a WCU Professor of New Media at Hanyang University.

MARK AMERIKA


PHILIPPE BOUPTIT

Philippe Boupit (born May 1, 1957) is a senior lecturer at University Paris. He is responsible for the Computing Writing group at the Laboratory Paragraphe and is co-publisher of the Computing Literature book series at the West Virginia University Press. He has been working with programming since 1990 when he was a founder member of the French group L.A.I.R.E (1988) and the International group Transact (1993). He is regular publisher of the reviewuire (since 1989). His works in digital poetry are published in: review blue/Orange, lexical digital, DocIn.fr online, and in anthologies. Digital Literature Colloquium, nb1, Media Poetry, ALW and have shown in numerous exhibitions around the world.

MEZ BREEZE

Mez does for code poetry as jodi and vuk Cosic have done for ascii Art: turning a great, naively executed concept into something brilliant, paving the ground for a whole generation of digital artists (Florian Cramer). The impact of her unique code works – constructed using a language ‘meangzalge’ – has been likened to that of Shakespeare, James Joyce, Emily Dickinson, and Larry Walt. Mez has exhibited extensively since the early 2000s. Java Museum Artist Of The Year, 2002 Newcombe New Media Poetry Prize and the Burton Wonderland Gallery Winner 2010 (judged by Tim Burton). Mez is currently living in Portland, Oregon.

Johannes Auer is a (net) artist and lives in Stuttgart, Germany. He is the author and creator of numerous projects in the fields of net literature and net art for which he has won several awards. He has participated in exhibitions and activities in various countries. He has published theoretical essays on net literature and net art and edits netliteratur.net. Auer also teaches at the Merz Akademie, Stuttgart. http://auer.netzliteratur.net

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J.R. Carpenter

J. R. Carpenter is a Canadian artist, writer, researcher, performer and maker of books, poetry, very short fiction, long fiction, non-fiction, and non-linear, hypermedia, and computer-generated narratives. A two-time winner of the CBC Quebec Short Story Competition, she was awarded an Exposition Alternative Press Award for her novel, Words the Dog Knows (Conundrum, 2008), and was included with a retrospective at the Electronic Literature Organization conference exhibition (Morgantown, WV, USA, June 2008). Her second book, GENERATION(S), is a collection of code narratives (Traumaweb, 2010). She lives in South Devon, England. http://kjuckysoap.com

RUTH CATLOW & MARC GARRATT

Ruth Catlow and Marc Garratt (UK) are artists, writers and curators. They are co-founders of Furtherfield, an online community for art, technology and social change since 1997; now also a public gallery in the heart of Finsbury Park, London. Their collaborative, interactive artworks and projects are exhibited and hosted in international venues and include Visitors/Studio (awarded the Grand Netart Prize in 2008), WeWordFlyourFool (2009) and Zero Dollar Counter (2010-ongoing). They are co-editors of Artists Re:Thinking Games (2010) and curators of Collaboration and Freedom – The World of Free and Open Source Art (2011), a collection for Arts Council England and PZF Foundation. http://furtherfield.org

JOHN CAYLEY

John Cayley writes digital media, particularly in the domain of poetry and poetics. Recent projects include the Readers Project, with Michael Howe, interop, with Giles Perring, interlop, and what we will. He is Professor of Literary Arts at Brown University. He is obsessed, agonistically, by Writing to be Found with/against linguistically implicated network services. http://programmatology.shadoof.net

SHU LEA CHEANG


CRIS CHEEK

Cris Cheek is a British poet, mixed-media practitioner and performance writer. Born in London, he lived and worked there until the early 1990s, critically embraced in that city. His explorations boundaries between poetry and graphic delivery. In Between 1984-98 with composer Sianed Jones, often in collaboration, with his partner Philipp J. Jones and in partnership with the Hunterian Art Gallery. In 1999 and 2007 he worked with artist Kirsten Lavers on diverse live writing projects under the ‘author function’ Things Not Worth Keeping (2000, Tokyo), Book (The Gig) in 2011, his most recent publication. He is Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Miami University in Ohio.

CÉCILE CHEVALIER

Cécile Chevalier is a PhD student in Creative & Critical Practice at the University of Sussex. Her research focuses on digital art, and, in particular, on the evolution of the hybrid, integrated, multi-platform and -based study in digital re-appropriation and bodily percepcion. Her work seeks to establish discourses that help us to recognize, as personal or collective collections become digital, while asking how digital technologies can be used to re-evaluate prior to her PhD study, Cécile completed a BA (Hons) in Crafts and Design and a Masters Degree in Fine Art at the University of Brighton, while exhibiting photographs, video-art and installation work.

ELENA COOPER

Elena Cooper is Orton Fellow in Intellectual Property Law at Trinity Hall, Cambridge and is currently a researcher at the Faculty of Law of the ‘Or authoritarian and Diginity’ project, funded by Humanities in the European Research Area. After working in print, she decided to focus on emerging forms of collecting and intellectual property, specifically on issues between art and law in the history of photographic copyright 1850-1911, under the supervision of Professor Lionel Bently. Her PhD thesis was awarded a Yorks Prize. She has been a Fellow at Trinity Hall since 2009.

RODERICK COOPER

Roderick Cooper authors interactive works such as Cultures in Wreath (2002, a mixed media installation) and The Long Legs (Eastgate) and Unknown Territories (unknownterritories.org) and works in print, such as the co-edited Switching Codes: Thinking Through Technology In The Humanities And Arts (Chicago) and essays in Ethnographies, Visual Studies, Visual Anthropology. He is a founding member From Verti To Virtual (Documentary Educational Resources), The Theory Of Time Here (Video Data Bank) and The Language Of Wine: an ethnography of wine, work and the aries (lan­guageofwine.com). Dr. Cooper is Associate Professor at Temple University, Philadelphia. http://roderickcooper.com

DAPHNE DRAGONA

Daphne Draugna is a curator and researcher based in Athens. She has worked with centres, museums and festivals in Greece and abroad on exhibitions, workshops and media art events. She has participated in lectures and presentations in various symposiums and has directed various projects that have been published in numerous books and magazines. She has worked extensively on game-based art, net-based art and on emerging forms of crea­ tion and the interactive to the computational. She is currently the Head of the Department of Communication and Mass Media at the University of Athens.

NATALIA FEDOROVA

Natalia Fedorova is a new media artist, writer, literary scholar and translator. She holds a PhD in literary theory from Herzen St. Petersburg University (St-Petersburg). She is author of publications on avant-garde poetry, spectral poetry, concrete poetry, hypertext, literary text generators and video poetry, as well as
a creator and curator of VIDEO.tst, video festival in St. Petersburg. Natalia is the director of hyper fiction piece 7, and the interactive novel Madame Ettarosa and a Butterfly, co-written with Sargej Klov, and a number of short prose fragments. In collaboration with Taras Mashtalir she founded Moctone Libere, a media poetry project (Snow Queen, In Your Voice, Machine Poet, 7-Figure Light-Duty Memory). Natalia has recently returned to Russia, after her one year post-doctorate term at MIT Tropes Tank, teaching experimental literature at St.-Petersburg and editing an e-bit and new media writing column in Tatlapatak magazine (NY).

PENNY FRENCH
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CRAIG FUNKHOUSE

LOSS PEQUEÑO GLAZER
Loss Pequeño Glazier is a poet, Professor of Media Study (SUNY Buffalo, New York), Director, Electronic Poetry Center and artistic director of the first and longest-running such series, The Electronic Poetry Festival. The on-going Electronic Poetry Center (epc.buffalo.edu) is the original and most extensive Web poetry center. The E-Poetry Center's digital work focuses on natural language processing, computer code as writing, literary translation, and language poetics. Glazier (epc.buffalo.edu/authors/glazier/) authored the Electronic Literature Poetics (Alabama 2002) and Anatam, Pumpkin Seed (Algorithm 2003, Small Press) /odd/odds: on vitreous culture and the digital domain, white faced drownders (1999, 2012), Io Sotto ai Sogni (2002).

ANDREW KLOCUBER
Andrew Klocubier is Assistant Professor of English at New Jersey Institute of Technology and a literary theorist specializing in digital research, semantic tagging, digital humanities, and Web 3.0. His research on experimental literary forms and genre is ongoing. With a major in English and BA in Media Arts and Technology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a PhD in English and Critical Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Dr. Klocubier has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, including in Digital Literature in Research and Teaching, a Handbook (co-edited, 2010) and Digital Art and Meaning: Reading Kinetic System (2010). His work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions and journals, with work at: the globe: FILE, ACM, LEA, ISEA, SIGGRAPH and other acronyms. There are awards (Paris Biennale Media Art Project, organizers Biennale für elektronische Kunst/Germany) (Australia Council Literature Board and the ELO), and other accolades (Nabby Award), but Jason is most proud of the millions of visitors his artwork/digital poetry portal attracts each year. See http://www.secrectotechnology.com

JASON NELSON
Born from the Oklahoma flatlands of farmers and thunderstorms, Jason builds digital poems, art games and curious digital crea­ tions (COE: 2010, 2011, 2012). He professes Net Art/Electronic Literature at Griffith University. Aside from coaxing his students into playing with their games, he is a regular collaborator on the Makezine community and journals, with work around the globe: FILE, ACE, LEA, ISEA, SIGGRAPH and other acronyms. There are awards (Paris Biennale Media Art Project, organizers Biennale für elektronische Kunst/Germany) (Australia Council Literature Board and the ELO), and other accolades (Nabby Award), but Jason is most proud of the millions of visitors his artwork/digital poetry portal attracts each year. See http://www.secrectotechnology.com

SCOTT RETTBERG
Scott Rettberg (b.1970) is Associate Professor of Digital Culture at the University of Bergen, Norway. Rettberg is project leader of ELMCIP (Electronic Literature as a Media of Creativity and Innovation in Practice), a HERA-funded collaborative research project that runs from June 2010-June 2013. Rettberg led the establishment of the collective of the same name, a non-profit network, in 2008, and the led the project through 2010. Prior to moving to Bergen in 2008, he worked in Australia and Israel, and is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Bergen. Rettberg is the author or co-author of novels and poetry collections as well as numerous digital and print publications. Rettberg is a NExT Fellow at the New Media Program at the University of Bergen, where he is also a NExT Fellow. Rettberg is the recipient of numerous grants and awards. Rettberg is a visiting scholar at the University of Bergen, Norway. Rettberg is project leader of ELMCIP (Electronic Literature as a Media of Creativity and Innovation in Practice), a HERA-funded collaborative research project that runs from June 2010-June 2013. Rettberg led the establishment of the collective of the same name, a non-profit network, in 2008, and the led the project through 2010. Prior to moving to Bergen in 2008, he worked in Australia and Israel, and is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Bergen. Rettberg is the author or co-author of novels and poetry collections as well as numerous digital and print publications. Rettberg is a NExT Fellow at the New Media Program at the University of Bergen, where he is also a NExT Fellow. Rettberg is the recipient of numerous grants and awards. Rettberg is a visiting scholar at the University of Bergen, Norway. Rettberg is project leader of ELMCIP (Electronic Literature as a Media of Creativity and Innovation in Practice), a HERA-funded collaborative research project that runs from June 2010-June 2013. Rettberg led the establishment of the collective of the same name, a non-profit network, in 2008, and the led the project through 2010. Prior to moving to Bergen in 2008, he worked in Australia and Israel, and is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Bergen. Rettberg is the author or co-author of novels and poetry collections as well as numerous digital and print publications. Rettberg is a NExT Fellow at the New Media Program at the University of Bergen, where he is also a NExT Fellow. Rettberg is the recipient of numerous grants and awards.
Dr Penny Travlou is a Lecturer in Cultural Geography & Theory at the Edinburgh School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture, University of Edinburgh. Her research is interdisciplinary, focusing on the politics of public space, inclusive outdoor environments, urban theory, visual & digital culture and ethnography. She is Co-Investigator on the EU-funded (HERA JRP) project, Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice (ELMCIP) where she is looking at how creative net-worked communities form within transnational and transcultural contexts in a globalised and distributed communications environment (www.elmcip.net). She is also Principal Investigator on the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project Creation and Publication of the Digital Manual. Authority, authorship and voice. http://sites.ace.ed.ac.uk/digital-manual/