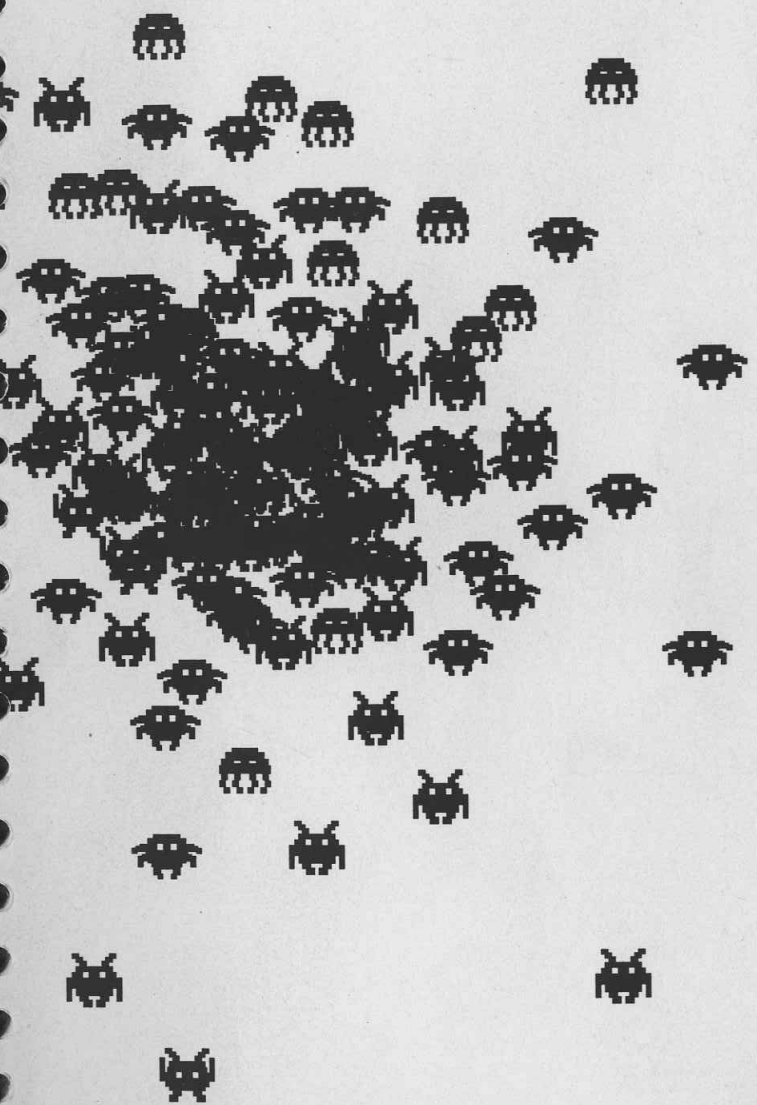
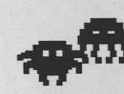
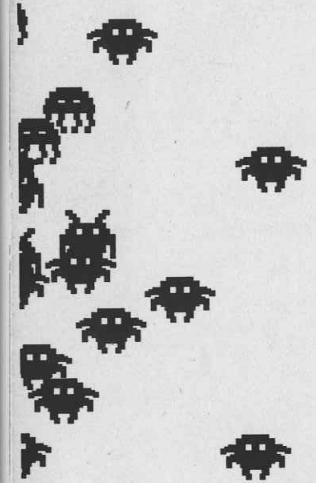


ART SERVERS UNLIMITED /
CONFERENCE / MEETING / PARTY. LONDON / 2ND TO 4TH OF JULY 1998.
EDITED BY MANU LUKSCH & ARMIN MEDOSCH.



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 BACKSPACE [HTTP://WWW.BACKSPACE.ORG]
 C3 [HTTP://WWW.C3.HU]
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 SCCA NET [HTTP://WWW.SCCA.NET]
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 TO PUBLIC NETBASE [HTTP://WWW.TO.OR.AT]
 THE STEFAN BATORY FOUNDATION [HTTP://WWW.BATORY.ORG.PL]
 YOURSERVER [HTTP://WWW.YOURSERVER.CO.UK]

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ART SERVERS UNLIMITED MEETING/CONFERENCE/NET.RADIO PARTY LONDON, BACKSPACE/ICA, 2-4 JULY 98

APROPOS ART SERVERS UNLIMITED /
BY MANU LUKSCH & ARMIN MEDOSCH

Asked by the Austrian Cultural Institute, London, to design a programme on net.culture as part of the Festival of Central European Culture, we suggested to the ACI and those who were to be the participants, to meet in London for three days. This would provide a forum in which to analyze models, compare histories and agendas, exchanging experience of what we named loosely 'art servers unlimited': a range of initiatives to support the blend of creative/experimental/noncommercial/sociocultural/artistic/critical (delete where applicable) use of the net which included providing internet access, bursaries and spaces for working, meeting or presentation.

"The real goal (...) of this carefully designed situation is to prepare and maintain a human network - through forgetting conventional media efficiency and replacing it with a sort of unmediated human attention."
Janos Sugár

The event took the form of an intensive working meeting. With the support of several organisations (named below) and due to the self initiative of many participants, the group increased to about fifty participants from 9 European countries. ASU was a meeting open to all who were willing to contribute to the subjects of discussion. Bringing together a significant number of projects and people and revealing the broadness of scope, interest, strategies in this new and rapidly changing field was a goal in its own right. Although the ASU meeting does not claim to have represented the "whole" of European organisations active in this field, nor to present a set of pre-packaged answers, it seems to have "asked the right question", as *mute* magazine put it.

ASU threw some light on the thriving but also troubled existence of cultural activities on the net. Since the conference involved a bottom-up approach with no preformulated agendas, we have to look at the different questions that were asked, and the range of needs and expectations for art servers. By formulating some of the questions which addressed us all, we discovered common ground, while revealing a range of answers representing the diversity of practice in this area. We have chosen to produce a transcript of the whole conference and make it available in paper form, on the web, and in a condensed 30 min. video version, and hope this will encourage further interest, and the development of this common ground.

However, beyond the recognition of plurality amongst art servers, there a few key issues of the discussions, which we want to highlight as possible starting points for future meetings:

ANALYSIS

An analysis of the organisations (which does not currently exist) would provide more transparency of the resources and encourage collaborations: Most individuals involved in the organizations tend to know each other on a personal basis as well as through the excessive use of mailing lists and many of the participants know about different facilities across Europe, but gathering more information and making it public, was considered to be a useful ende-

your (although possibly bureaucratic and probably never current in detail). All involved agreed that more documentation work should be done, to provide deeper insight into the working and funding models of different institutions

INSTITUTIONS

The role of institutions and festivals was assessed, with consideration to the potential of free associations and ad hoc groups that can form via the internet. On one hand, the slow process of institutionalisation of such recently established "art servers" or the establishment of such facilities within existing institutions still leaves a lot of work to be done. On the other hand, the self dynamic aspect of institutions, which continue to exist when the "founding parents" leave, implies dangers. (R. Smite: "We cannot rely on art institutions, because their agenda is their own survival and image", Sh. Ramsey: "I don't see a role of publicly funded institutions within this area, or at least it seems to me that a number of institutions are there for political reasons")

ORGANISATION

"Small is beautiful" and a D.I.Y spirit ("Grow Your Own", D. Molnar) were strongly present, so that the well known polarisation between "state funding" and "free market success" was enriched by discussions about inventiveness and self organisation. ("bedroom artists" or "backyard activists", H. Bunting) Communication and technical structures to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, skills, bandwidth, hardware or other resources were discussed. The usefulness of a kind of clearing house institution was discussed, which could support and/or mediate funding submissions and co-ordinate international/EU lobbying efforts for a more alternative form of media culture. This could be linked with a collaborative foundation, the "Interfund", proposed by E-Lab, Riga. Different ways of facilitating a more sophisticated type of "web ring", databases with web-interfaces for instance, were also discussed, which would make the connections between servers and sites visible. However, all involved reinforced the inherent dangers in creating further centralised systems, and expressed the desire to remain as an interconnected group of collaborative entities.

BEYOND INTERNET:

All participants agreed that the phase of the internet hype was over and that in the harsh wind blowing now, there is the responsibility to look beyond the communication media issue toward "more immediate real world" - issues. The panel on this subject presented a variety of examples where creative use of technology could for example help to cut costs in building networks, and even help to circumvent unnecessary regulations and the remnants of state monopolism in privatized telecommunications. From biotechnology to private radio communication networks, to ADSL modem technologies a range of new ways of dealing with issues through an alternative technologists approach were also discussed.

"The responses to the challenge of the new communicational tools mirrors the societies from a very special view, invisibly, until now." (J.Sugár)

THE SCHEDULE

PART 1, CLOSED WORKING MEETING

On Wednesday, 1st of July, and Thursday, 2nd of July, those who had already arrived met at backspace for informal conversations in small groups about ongoing projects, controversial aspects of upcoming festivals, local

developments, and so on. The ASU dinner on Thursday evening gave opportunity to all participants to continue the conversations.

On Friday, 3rd of July, all participants met at Blows Yard, where possibilities of collaboration were discussed. The meeting lasted for the whole day and was followed by a party set up by backspace.

PART 2. PUBLIC DAY

Saturday, 4th of July, presented the ongoing discourse to a broader audience in the form of a conference held at the ICA.

That evening, the net.radio party UNLIMITED was staged at the New-MediaCentre and ICA Bar. Multiple live streams of audio signals between several cities showed examples of netcasting specialized content. In the NMC, the audio streams of the participating radios were mixed live with the DJs and studio guests, then broadcasted online and into the party venue.

(P. Schultz on post-theory practice, "at the moment you hear very sceptical comments of the theorists and optimistic comments from the practitioners, (...) a while ago it was more the other way around.")

ART SERVERS UNLIMITED, 4 JULY 1998 /

OPENING STATEMENTS BY SHOLTO RAMSEY/NMC ICA, JOACHIM ÖPPINGER/ACI,
MANU LUKSCH & ARMIN MEDOSCH/ASU INITIATORS.

SHOLTO RAMSEY: My name is Sholto, I'm head of the New Media Programme at the ICA. I apologize for not being with you at the other meetings, but I was called in for jury service. I am very grateful to the organizers and to all of you for coming. It's great to see so many of you of the artistic European network suddenly all on one place. I suggest when people will talk today about whether we need art institutions, or similar things, I think this here is the living proof, that they are occasionally useful. I don't want to give a big introduction, as we have an enormous amount of speakers. Let me just introduce Mr. Joachim Öppinger, who is the head of the New Media and Film Programme of the 'Festival of Central European Culture'.

JOACHIM ÖPPINGER / AUSTRIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE: Welcome to Art Servers Unlimited, which is an event part of the Festival of Central European Culture. As Sholto said, I'm head of the New Media and Film Programme. The New Media part is actually happening now, as ASU is the New Media Programme. When we initiated the Festival, we were aware that we should include an 'internet and art'- programme, because we had the impression, that in Central Europe internet is an important medium of expression, and that the artists in Central Europe are very much on the forefront in this area. So when we finally met Manu Luksch and Armin Medosch, we had found somebody who could put this idea into reality, and and that time they thought of having presentations of 3 cities and their ongoing projects - Vienna, Budapest and Ljubljana. But, being Manu Luksch and Armin Medosch, they of course developed it into a much bigger thing, and this is this conference today. So we are very grateful to them, that they organized such a wonderful international conference.

This would not have been possible with the support of a couple of people, and I would like to mention a few here: the Arts Council of England, the Slovenian and Hungarian Embassy, the Austrian Chancellery, KulturKontakt in Austria, Soros Riga and Soros Budapest, but of course also Backspace, which supported the preparation and the meetings of the last few days, which was really a big help. And of course big thanks to Manu Luksch and Armin Medosch, who practically spent their whole spring doing mainly this. I wish you a nice conference, and pass over to Manu Luksch and Armin Medosch.

ARMIN MEDOSCH: Most things were already said, how ASU originated - it's a kind of ad hoc event, and in this ad hoc style, making a big conference without being part of a particular institution - Manu and I did it as private persons - I think this is very fitting with the spirit of the times, in two senses. In one sense, we have to do with a new medium, which is relatively young, which is changing very much, so we have to readjust very fast all the time our positions. In another sense, we as private persons have to do such conferences obviously, because the institutions, which are supposed to do them, are not able to do them. (-)

MANU LUKSCH: In this sense we also want to thank all those participants, who

came on their own costs -

ARMIN MEDOSCH: - it is important to point out, that people who heard about ASU and were interested, just decided to come and organized their own travel funding, or paid it out of their pocket money. Also I want to emphasize Backspace as a supporter of this event. The ASU meeting had started a few days ago already, this conference is just the last part of it. We had continuous meetings in smaller groups, and yesterday we all met in a closed-workshop-atmosphere.

Not everything is looking so rosy for 'art servers' these times. Some of the early projects represented here started in 1994, 1995, sometimes quite quickly and big scale, and now we face the first close downs of some art servers, like adaweb, a famous project in New York, or Internationale Stadt in Berlin, which is another prominent example of an art server, that had stopped its activities recently. So ASU - especially the 'unlimited'-aspect - is also a gesture towards the future, and we want to look at the near and middle future of not only art on the internet, but also of the development of the whole medium in relationship to culture & society.

MANU LUKSCH: This is a good moment I guess to start with the project presentations and discussions -

ARMIN MEDOSCH: - Janos Sugar from the Media Research Foundation in Budapest gives the keynote speech.

CONFERCING AS MEDIUM /

NOTES FOR THE KEYNOTE LECTURE EDITED AND DELIVERED BY JANOS SUGÁR
AT THE ART SERVERS UNLIMITED CONFERENCE, ICA, LONDON, 4 JULY 1998

1 Media art doesn't mean a particular art form, but an enhanced consciousness about the medium we are using, which can be or should be recycled into other more conventional areas - and traditional modes of expression, the wrongly called old media, can be seen as medium. Here we find the significance of media art, that which channels the total medialization of the (social) existence, in the form of an enhanced media consciousness, into the arts.

2 If we take the moral of media art seriously we are also able to consider the situation in which we are actually here as a medium, albeit rather unusual: the activists, those people who are masters of efficient and mediated communication, are here in the flesh, to communicate in a direct, non mediated form - the good old-fashioned face to face. The _medium conferencing_ is a specially, designed live event in the name of meta-efficiency (efficiency is the true drug of the global information society). People are forced to be physically here, and being here is the most complete form of concentration, as our entire body (parties, dinners, etc.), takes part in this dramatized and expanded form of concentration. The real goal (beyond the ASU pretext) of this carefully designed situation is to prepare and maintain a human network - through forgetting conventional new media efficiency and replacing it with a sort of _unmediated_ human attention. Attention is the hard currency of cyberspace (Mandel-Van der Leun: Rules of the Net). The activists of mediated communication and information exchange enjoying the luxury of same time, same space being.

3 People here have known each other for years, cooperated through a spectrum of projects, but basically come from two distinct backgrounds: the West European democracies and the East European post-socialist societies in transition. It is a substantial difference: in the western democracies there is a long tradition of using culture as a subtle form of repression and vice versa: art has a deep experience of being subversive, politically charged, or socially motivated. In the post-socialist region, the only tradition is the 40 years (or even longer) of aborted ambitions and, in reaction to the repression, an increased responsibility of the intelligentsia. A strange oxymoron appears where there are no democratic institutions: the self sacrificing intelligentsia, the conscience of society. In such a historic situation even art became heavily context-bound, and the moral aspect establishes itself as a basic criteria of quality. We need bureaucrats. So, we are using two rather different rhetorics in our everyday work in order to get attention - practically translated into financial support. The possibility of unlimited communication evoked radically differing reactions of the various societies. The responses to the challenge of the new communicational tools mirrors the societies from a very special view, invisibly, until now. Complex situation. Complexity originally means the coexistence of unbearable contradictions (says Attila Kotányi, ex-situationist, philosopher, Sabbath researcher: time must have a stop, stepping out for one day from the flooding complexity); contradictions, like the coexistence of extreme wealth and extreme poverty. Marxism made a political montage (in the cinematic sense) presenting the

contradictions, in order to make them visible (said Miklós Erdély, artist, filmmaker). Following this idea: unlimited communication is a montage as well: presenting complexity in a simple and practical way.

4. Why Art? Art is cheap. Technology needs instant and powerful demonstrations and promotions to provoke demand among buyers. Using artists is the cheapest and most efficient crash test for the sw/hw manufacturers. Avant-garde art has the experience exploring the extreme possibilities of a medium and in the age of reference-less, past-less so called new media, the avant-garde attitude can help to discover the directions of social uses and development. A radical test of the boundaries of expression. The only chance is if the user takes the radical avant-garde position.

5. It is impossible to define a common or general program of art servers. It would be a complete misunderstanding of the present situation to expect a step by step program for future actions, or a manifesto, because every single organization or initiative represented here is a fine tuned response to an actual local situation. The significance of this event is the introduction of a new term: ASU. ASU is a kind of a global social sculpture (to borrow a term from Joseph Beuys), a political art form.

PANEL 1: INSTITUTIONS WORKING THE NET: COMMISSIONING WORKS/CURATED SPACES. /

CHAIR: JOSEPHINE BERRY (DEPUTY EDITOR OF MUTE, CO-EDITOR OF CRASH MEDIA)
SPEAKERS: BALAZS BEÖTHY, DAVID SINDEN, SHOLTO RAMSEY, JON HARRISON.

JOSIE BERRY: Let's just people talk a bit about their own institutional art servers, but perhaps I could start off by putting questions to people as they are explaining their activities - how they see the role of the institutional art server as different to the independent art server, if they perceive any major difference in terms of responsibility and the kind of works they are presenting. Let's start with you, Balazs?

BALAZS BEÖTHY: I think that most institutions want to provide quality content as well as access. Access is very important especially in Hungary right now, as most of the population does not have access, just mostly through universities, which affects just a very small part of society. So we emphasize on that: not only the art circle but also like NGOs, have access to the internet for free. This is one part, the other part is content. What I mean by content is that we have a specific interest on net.art projects. I see net.art as an artform, just as painters use canvas and color pigments, net.art is using the browsers and monitors as tools for their art. In this sense it's not really different from traditional artforms. [Institutions are good to promote and even legalize these pieces as artworks.]

DAVID SINDEN: Following up from before - I think one of the key issues is that there is diversity within art servers, and Janos started to draw a list, like giving a spectrum of modes of production. And one issue is there is that there isn't a limited context for production. So one of the roles of institutions within this area is to create spaces for production and to make relationships with other institutions, which create other possibilities in terms of production - because there are kind of works, which can only be produced within an institutional context, because they require the marriage or relationship of resources and ideas, which spring out of that network. There are distinctions maybe in terms of the work, but I don't think there are fixed boundaries. What you see is a sort of panorama through the range of art servers and I think that this diversity is a very important functional aspect, in terms of the development of the content and of the meaning of work, and critically how it reaches a wider audience.

JOSIE BERRY: Could you give us an example of a work that you have put on Channel, that could not have made an appearance on an independent art server, be it through funding or through some general support given by the institution?

DAVID SINDEN: One of the projects I was going to talk about was the 'Inhabiting Metropolis' series, these are commissions. It was very much dependent on creating a series of relationships with organisations as well as with individual artists to create the range of projects. Some of these projects required the commitment, the resources and energy of a wide range of people in order to make them happen within a broader curatorial framework. I will pick out some individual projects to outline this more clearly during my presentation.

JOSIE BERRY: Jon, please -

JON HARRISON: What we approach by using a server for art, and what we offer as an organization, is a tool like any other, a means of communication, like any other. Beingsituated in Sheffield, we have such a broad range of audience on different levels - we tend to find that we dont only work with people who are literate on the internet. So because of the audience we want to try to engage, that means that we havent really commissioned a work which requires a high level of knowledge about how the internet works. However these types of work do come in to our programme. We are now reaching a level [of literacy] where we can start to support internet work as well. What I also need to say is, that we actually don't run our own server, because it is just not practical to do so at the moment. But during the last days here I'm beginning to see the possibilities to use the energy which is here through this kind of network [of similar organisations].

SHOLTO RAMSEY: I feel extremely sense of disquiet in terms of what the role of a publicly funded art organization is. That's probably one of the reasons, why I'm leaving the ICA next month. It is interesting, what David was saying, but I don't find it that persuasive, I really don't see a role of publicly funded institutions within this aerea, or at least it seems to me that a number of institutions are there for political reasons. I don't think that the most interesting work is going to emerge from publicly funded institutions in this country. I couldn't speak about Europe or particular Central Europe, where it seems to me they had a much more transformative effect. than within the UK, where internet access is affordable, where lot of people use access at colleges. I'm not sure for example that the ICA brings that much to the feast.

JOSIE BERRY: When you talk about political reasons of institutions for getting involved with art servers - could you elaborate this a little bit?

SHOLTO RAMSEY: For example, anybody who has been to meetings that have involved the British Film Institute and the Arts Council of England, would have seen the sense in which both of the institutions are desperately needing to rethink themselves, and this might have applied to the ICA last year. The BFI will be dismembered in a month or so, and the ACE looks like if it will be dismembered next year, and both of them are trying to use New Media or Digital Media as a way of reinventing or rethinking their validity, so that they are seen as relevant today. I suppose that my feeling is - I don't think they are, and I think that their effect on Digital Media is likely to be more constraining than offering more opportunities.

JOSIE BERRY: I think we can make a distinction here between institutions, who are reinventing themselves, adopting a kind of New Media, Digital Media stategy, and those such as Lovebytes or C3 who are actually coming into being right at that moment. So they don't have that much history or need to be transformed through this. Would you agree on this?

JON HARRISON: This is part of the reason why we exist. We wanted to create something [different] in Sheffield, which was not part of the gallery system, and we didn't want to have a gallery space. We were looking for what would be the ideal way of communicating with people in the real world. So the internet was providing a route for this in a sense, but now it is inspiring a lot of work we do, it is kind of generating the environment itself. We are not tied down in any way, and I think the way the organisation works owes a lot to the way the internet works in the amount of freedom we have.

JOSIE BERRY: Let's turn to C3 a bit. How would you response to Sholto's problems with the constraining effects of institutions? C3 is a lot different from the ICA, also it's history, how it came into being. Do you see a political damage that is in some way constraining in commissioning art work?

BALÁZS BEŐTHY: I don't think it is very much a political issue. What usually happens is that the art infrastructure is not very well prepared to present media art. So there is a need to present such projects, although it is a question, if you really want to show it in that way: In my opinion - I'm not so sure that those projects are meant to be displayed in gallery space, they should rather just be online. As Janos said before, art is something not mediated. That means you need the physical presence, which is that you are sitting in front of the terminal and interact with the internet piece. So you have this personal access, which is not that easy to reproduce in a gallery space or art institution. This is one aspect.

The other aspect is, that media artists sometimes can't produce something without very sophisticated machines. We do work with a variety of mediums, not only web-based works - although that is my main interest - but also we have SGI machines to make 3D animations or real time movements possible. I think you really need this kind of institutions or festivals or events whatever to display such work at all. In the USA I can see that this kind of work rely very much on the academic network. It is much different in Europe, here the support is coming from media centers and festivals. On the other hand we would like to have artists who are working on this on a professional level, so that they don't need to make their living from something else. There is a problem still in commissioning such artwork, I just know the San Francisco Museum and the Cartier Foundation in Paris who have already commissioned web work, which is in my opinion not different from commissioning a painting or sculpture or whatever, but the infrastructure still does not know how do deal with it. So they don't know how to prize, how to keep, how to maintain, how to archive a web art piece. Maybe you have to buy and archive the hardware and software on which the piece is running in order to be able, let's say in 10 years to show it, when the hard- and software environment will have probably completely changed.

(TAPE BREAK)

JOSIE BERRY: Sholto, do you understand the NMC more in terms of an archive than an exhibition space, in that works can be left up there for long time, there are not the human contacts like social events like 'the' opening, or the rituals that go together with the physica space of an institution. I just wonder if the archive is a better model for looking at the institutional art servers side?

SHOLTO RAMSEY: The idea of an archive doesn't fit to the ICA, partly because the archive we had was mainly a paper archive, from 1940-around 1980, which was sold to the Tate gallery. When the Tate gallery bought that archive, they deliberately didn't buy anything of the audio-visual material, because they thought, it is not so important. And in fact, the paperwork was not very interesting, while the audiovisual material was unique. So we have still got that and it outnumbers about a 1000 recordings of performances, and about 2000 recordings of people speaking here at the ICA. A lot of people feel that one of the most vibrant areas of the ICA are the discussions held here, and that these discussions should be accessible. Also the fact that we are here now, is very important and should help to do that.

JOSIE BERRY: But in terms of the new work that is going to be commissioned, and the fact that it can remain there, that it doesn't need to go away, I mean does this start to erode the distinctions between archive, and rotating exhibitions?

SHOLTO RAMSEY: Yes, it makes us a sort of museum, which we weren't. But it also means - the ICA always had difficulties working with artists in any other relationship than exhibiting or performing their work or commissioning work, because there is no other space in which artists could work, there is nothing like an ICA barn or studios in the Eastend, where people could be given money and work in. And my feeling is that the computer-space allows to have different types of relationships with artists, particular ones which are much longer relationships. Institutions tend to think in time zones, our time zone is one month, because of our bulletin. You always have to worry about what you will put into the bulletin, and who will come into the ICA. The idea that you might start a relationship that is as long as 3 years, he starts a project and it continues to develop and goes on, is transforming for the ICA. And I find it difficult to actually do it.

JOSIE BERRY: Is the problem that the resources aren't that great that you could build that relationship with a wide range of artists, that you have to kind of select how many to work with in total, but it's actually highly selective - or is that not a problem?

SHOLTO RAMSEY: I am not sure if I understand the question.

JOSIE BERRY: I can imagine that there are not that much space, so many resources, so you have to be highly selective in bringing artists into the ICA.

SHOLTO RAMSEY: You are right that the physical space is very limited. There isn't hidden anywhere a whole set of empty spaces, where people could go and use, but in that sense, when the NMC was configured last year - I have to admit a lot of it felt very redundant right away. There is a limit of how many SUN working stations you need, really. Having an incredibly fast network, that runs between cinema, theatre, all the public spaces and a very fast connection to the internet, having various things like that in place is very essential to what an institution does. In order to show film, we build a cinema, which is a certain type of installation for film, and we install and focus a 35mm projectors. To have a superfast network and things like that allow us to do things with artists, that we couldn't do before. The ICA committed itself towards digital media in terms of the conferences it held, certainly the early ones and the work, which Lisa Haskel did. They were very important for lots of people, everybody came to it and it was a real meeting place.

But it was also apparent to me, who has been here for 5 years, that whenever we tried to work with artists, who were using digital equipment usually, for budget reasons that was the work which fell out, because like all institutions we don't raise the budget usually which we would finally need. So we were always saying, ok, where can we save money. Often by cutting out the only digital work, you could save a huge amount of money than if you cut out a painting for example. That was also, because we could not support the work, there was no expertise in the house to say - we can do this and this and this, all we need to get is that... we were scared, that we would fail with it, so it was always the digital work, that would fall out. So I think that lots of artists working in this country with digital media felt betrayed by the ICA,

because it seemed that the ICA promised to provide them with support, but it was never really delivered.

JOSIE BERRY: Is this overcompensation going on now?

SHOLTO RAMSEY: Well, we have now the digital media thing and I have two pages in the bulletin to fill, which is weird, because I can't fill one page with what is on the website, because that is not what's interesting for the institution. In fact the audiences for the NMC are the lowest in the building, because they don't want to count those on the website, which would turn it around and make it the highest in the building. So people visiting the website are not visiting the institution in the sense in which it gets measured.

This year a lots of artists came to us, and for many of them it has not worked out. But it didn't work out, because we couldn't do it, but it didn't work out because of the money or because it didn't fit in or various other things, but the ability to do it, is has become possible. That's the task of the institutions, to make things possible, to present it as good as possible, in the sense we would present paintings probably on a freshly painted, white wall and to try to light them correctly. That's what we should try for the digital media, to try to present them in the best light.

JOSIE BERRY: I think we are running out of time, so I open this up for the audience for questions.

PETER GOMEZ/AUDIENCE: I think there are lots of subjects around the circumstances in which the NMC was put in terms of the relationship with the sponsor SUN concerning the physical events, which have disrupted expanding the - (interrupts) Well, art institutions posing as independent art servers I think is quite interesting. People looking from outside, looking from other countries at it, not knowing which kind of physical institutions they are, whether they operate physical space, issues around whether art institutions are relying on ticket sales, and the economics keeping an art institution open, that people are bound to by operating an independent server or server space that operates in a completely different way. I think this an interesting area, and there are two organisations on the panel, which I know quite well. One [ICA] needs ticket sales and people coming inside its building to justify its very existence, and one [Channel] that doesn't have buildings.

JON HARRISON: Something which might be of interest is, that LoveBytes' core funding is not 'traditional' arts funding. We receive money from the European Regional Development Fund, and we have used our website stats to meet some of the 'outputs' [the targets we agree with ERDF] for the numbers of people who benefit from the events that we run. So there are possibilities to get around that, I don't think that anybody has thought of how many website visitors equal the physical visitor yet.

DAVID SINDEN: I think there is a danger in the conversation that we are defining all institutions by one institution, in sort of creating this seamless concept of an institution. If we look in reality it doesn't happen like that. I mean there is a distinction between funding institutions and producer institutions, between gallery spaces, production spaces or agencies. So you cannot say 'institution' is one category, so you can't say there is an immediate problematic, as I don't think this is the case. So starting from the root, that the institution, however it is defined, it is almost obligating (?) the responsibility for cultural production. If you simply say you can only

operate on a noninstitutional level, it leaves awful lot alone, and there will be lots of work which will not be seen. It is not an either/ nor situation.

JOSIE BERRY: Can I ask about 'being seen'? It is a very elitist audience, that this work is produced for. So if we talk about the allocation of funds - a relatively large amount of money is put into work which is just seen by a relatively small amount of people. So do you come across problems in raising funding due to this, or is access, creating access a sort of strategy, access as well as content; do this things go together?

DAVID SINDEN: There is an element. One of the difficulties is, you know, trying to make generalizations on individual instances. There are politics of funding, but then all funds have different criterias anyway, as Jon was pointing out for instance. I feel that in terms of the work that Channel does for example, it can operate in a number of different contextes, because of the way Channel operates in itself.

In one sense each individual audiance can always be defined as elitist, but if you start building together a complex of audiences, is that elitist? I think, that is not necessarily by definition elitist. I am not used to run a gallery space, so I do miss comparisational background very much, and one thing driving me at the wall, was that funders usually, or others defing the space say the audience is elitist. Whenever we did a market research, we found that it had a broadly based audience, which had quite a broad social spread. So, who is elitist?

JOSIE BERRY: Do you have numbers on this?

DAVID SINDEN: Yes - but what I wanted to say is that some of the Channel projects not only manifest themselves in an online environment, they manifest themselves in a physical space as well. Like Susan Collins' 'In conversation' piece, is as much a public art project as it is an online project. So you actually talk about different audiences coming from different perspectives to the same piece of work. And there have been differences in how audiences have reacted according to any context in which work has been presented, but are talking about street form presentations, you are talking about potentially advanced audience.

JOSIE BERRY: So quite a significant part of finding the audience for the web is what you do in real space?

DAVID SINDEN: It is one mode of operation. And I think this is an area, where institutions have an important role - it is about looking at these areas, which are not limited onlinecommunities, but to look at the way of an interrelationships between online communitiesand other communities. And in the case of Channel, this is working with other institutions, tolook to make interrelationships with other institutions.

ARMIN MEDOSCH/AUDIENCE: I would like to turn back to what Peter said. As David said corectly, you can't throw all institutions into the same pot, but if you look at the websites of some servers, which are not institutionalized, or maybe slowly become institutions now, they have a huge amount of content there. But looking at Channels' site for example - I don't know how much it 'costed' so far - there is actually not so much on it, you cannot compare it with servers like backspace or to or ljudmila. There I see I misproportion of allocation of funds and output.

DAVID SINDEN: My feeling is that the nature of some of this projects is different, so some of them are more expensive.

ARMIN MEDOSCH: But is it enough just to say, they are different? Difference as such is one of the keyissues of the conference. We can say ok, it's all very complex, we have a diversity of projects, good. But what can we say apart from this? I see diversity or complexity more like Janos put it in his speech: he defined it as the condition of unbearable contradictions.

SHOLTO RAMSEY: I personally feel uncomfortable with the role of a gatekeeper, as the head of NMC within this particular context is set. Therefore I am a gatekeeper. The organisation requires that there is one, which I think is very sad. What Armin said is interesting, it's true that lots of the best sites have nothing to do with that they have been curated into something quite small but very fine, it's that a tremendous lots of things are happening there and it's the sense of a welcome to lots of people. It seems to me to embrace a wide range of pactises and of approaches - that's something which is incredibly exciting, I mean -

JOSIE BERRY: May I interrupt you. Another aspect of independent art servers is that idea that people are in a community, they are coming together because they want to be associated with a server, making their choice on their own, while in a sort of ICA specific structure it is about a top-down hierarchical selection of who is allowed to join the community, loosing a lot of that bottom-up 'loosy' energy and selfselection.

SHOLTO RAMSEY: The ICA was originally founded by its members, and they used to have until relatively recently every month a members' meeting, where the ICA staff sat here and the members of the ICA could come and ask them questions, on the basis that it was the space of the ICA members and therefore they had the right to such sort of meetings. The result of funding was to push that away, now the main member using the analogy would be the Arts Council of England.

The opportunity of this technology or that type of media it seems to me is the opportunity to the return of that type of organisation, in which it is founded by a number of people for a specific purpose, in which it is a meet- ing place for things to happen, and in which it tries to achieve something where the goals are set by people on a rather personal basis rather than goals set within a funding structure, and things might look different, because I feel that the instututions are remaking it within the shapes and structures and visions of the art institutions of the past, while the ones which are independent are trying to escape from that and they are going of in totally different directions. I don't think that they have already gone as far as they are able to go, and I'm not sure if we are able to follow with the speed or grace that they are.

TILMAN BAUMGÄRTEL/AUDIENCE: I have a question to the representatives of C3 and Channel, who have commissioned net.art so far. I would like to know on which basis you are paying the artists, does it depend on the hours they spend on their projects or on the amount of megabytes they use or ...

BALÁZS BEÖTHY: We don't commission in this sense, but we try to raise scholarships for the artists we invite to work there and usually that covers their projects. Periods vary from 2 weeks to 3 months or so, the average is about one and a half month.

DAVID SINDEN: At Channel, to my knowledge, the commissions have been fixed sums. I say this because I just started working with ARTEC, although I have been involved with Channel with my previous organisation.

TILMAN BAUMGÄRTEL: So what are these fixed sums?

DAVID SINDEN: It really depends on the project.

JON HARRISON: We commissioned one of the Channel [Metropolis] works called Paradise from Forced Entertainment Theatre Company and this was about £4000 for the creation of the work, this included £700 for lovebytes to manage the project along with an artists fee for Forced Entertainment - I think it that was set at £1000- and the rest of the money was given to their programmers in the States.

TILMAN BAUMGÄRTEL: Does this mean that the work is then property of yours?

JON HARRISON: The copyright is hold by the artist.

JOSIE BERRY: So how long do they stay on the site?

JON HARRISON: At the moment it is on our site, but if we ever cease to exist, it would go back to the artist site.

VUC COSIC/AUDIENCE: We were talking about that these institutions have been existing before, they are now moving into the field of art on the net, and institutions get created right now, I'm working in one. I was wondering, what is the position of the artist and how you talk to people, before commissioning work. The gatekeeper thing is very interesting. Like in the other art curatorship protocol, there is first the art practise and then comes the curator, it has never been the other way around. So I am wondering what kind of education did you people personally go through, what kind of intuition are you trying to develop in your system or however you call it, on your hardware or whatever. There is a history of art being created outside the gallery system on purpose, and even we from the net.art circles, we call ourselves the emigrants from the art system, and now we talk to you guys, and there is a conflict almost ...

JOSIE BERRY: But you work in an institution yourself?

VUC COSIC/AUDIENCE: Exactly, so I can see the problem within my case, but I ask this question to you?

JON HARRISON: We started as media art practitioners, there are two people involved in LoveBytes, and we came together through our art practise. But we had to kind of give up [our own work], because we spent so much time getting the project going. In the beginning we weren't happy with the institutions that [were set up to] support our art work, so we thought we'd invent our own. You know, this started with designing our own logo, and then we tried to manifest ourselves in a way that was representative in the same way as the institutions available at that time. By doing so I guess we now get invited on to panels of institutions, which is quite strange.

JOSIE BERRY: May I put the question forward to Balazs?

BALÁZS BEÖTHY: I have an artist background, and I work as an artist, and beside of it I am considering my curatorial activities as art works. In one hand I feel responsible to work on the context as well. [In the other hand I

think curating a group show is similar to the activity of a dj, who puts songs together. Just like stitching pearls onto a necklace.]

DAVID SINDEN: Detto, I started off as an artist. I was running an gallery space, which has been an interesting experience, as it was an independent space, but also publicly funded. My particular perspective has always been, that it is possible to create institutional spaces, but which exist between smaller selfgenerative initiatives and art institutions.

PETER GOMEZ/AUDIENCE: I want to say, when the ICA webpage started, ironically it started without funding, it was opposed by the internal organisation of the ICA, which payed absolutely no attention to it. Sholto initiated it very much in the spirit of what is now deemed an independent art server, and that's how it existed, upstairs in a little room, and nobody within the building took notice. So this was without money, and it operated in a very similar way independent servers operate now.

JAMES WALLBANK/AUDIENCE: As you are a panel with representatives of art institutions, there is some money to get hardware and computers. I want to ask you all, when they are going out of date, what will you do with it, and how you are going to judge, when it stops being useful as a creative tool - particularly the SUN systems?

SHOLTO RAMSEY: In a funny way, it's not the SUN systems, which are the problem, they are away too powerful for what we need them now, and they still will be for a while. It will be long time before the ICA finds that a machine with 6 processers is in some way redundant or not up for the task.

We are quite lucky, because we are sponsored by a computer manufacturer, who has signed a three years contract with us, which involves that a certain amount of money has to be spent on upgrading, and, more important, on servicing, which are the two things, which really count. It is usually a big problem, we just started replacing a lightening board at the theatre, which was declared dangerous and outdated 5 years ago, then it was said it had to be replaced within a month. Art organistaions have a whole lot of hardware, which sits as assets on their books, which I'm sure they will do, but then it's worth nothing, it's no draw.

BALÁZS BEÖTHY: Actually we have a problem with SGI in terms of the future, since what happens is that SGI is one of 4 sponsors, but the reduction they give, doesn't allow us to invest that much as it would need to run this big machines. They have been useful for some projects, but at the moment I think we don't have a project on. Maybe in the future we will have a project again. But it's always on, you know, it is very dangerous to swith off an Onyx. (grins)

SHOLTO RAMSEY: I want to bring up what to me is an important point. Obviously at the moment the ICA as institution is in a sense blessed with various things. We are blessed with more equipement than we need. If one of the things, which might come out today, is the question how these things might be shared out - we are lucky to have a phenomenal amount of processing power in this building, which is also critically supported by a 24 hours technician contract. Whenever we need something, they promised us to deliver a part within 2 hours, which I'm sure is rare for most institutions or independent art servers.

And I think one of the things we need to think about is, how can the ICA make available some of that to people, or other institutions, not in a way that

we are taking over, but in a way that they have access to something we have access to. The fact that we don't have access to a certain type of artistic spaces, is a problem we have. But we have other things, theatre space or this and that, what makes me feel we should think about how can things be shared out, how can projects, that go to one place, also go to other places at the same time? If the result of a production is the need of a theatre space, which has also access to fast networks, then clearly the ICA is a good place to do it. But we need to figure out a way, that people don't have the feeling they are giving away their best projects to the ICA, but that it is actually part of a network. The benefit to one of the network is the benefit to all.

JOSIE BERRY: I think, this is a good note to break on, so that we can go on to the next panel. Maybe we pick this point up later, as it will be important to your precessor.

SHOLTO RAMSEY: In fact I spoke to some of them interested, and it was a point that was common to a lot of them. It was not the idea of 'Oh, great, I'm gonna have control of this' but the idea of how can we make a network which is not like a conceptual construction, but actual a real thing based on real interdependencies.

PANEL 2: NETCASTING: RADIO AND TV ON THE NET. /

CHAIR: PIT SCHULTZ (NETTIME/MIKRO.LOUNGE), SPEAKERS: DANIEL MOLNAR, BORUT SAVSKI, GIO D'ANGELO, RASA SMITE, WILLIAM ROWE.

PIT SCHULTZ (TRYING TO GET THE COMPUTER ONLINE): I need another minute to sort out the problem with the computer, so that we can use it for demonstrations. This shows, that money should rather be invested into people and skills that into hardware ...

PIT SCHULTZ: Let's start to talk about radio on the net. The question is, if the notion of radio is the right one for the praxis of what is called net.radio. We have a range of participants here, who have a different approaches to practically define, what net.radio is. To start with, we just had a meeting in Berlin under the name 'net.radio days 98', and one of the interesting outcomes was the plurality of the definition of net.radio, so I think this is symptomatic to all kind of definitions such as 'art servers' or 'institution'.

I think we are in a time, where the technology follows the practise, so the practice is faster than the terms, or the bottom goes faster than the top. While Rasa Smite is installing the new RealAudio, we may go through different definitions like net.radio, net.audio, net.sound. Daniel Molnar from ParaRadio in Budapest, you started with the Pepsi Island Project?

DANIEL MOLNAR: I have been active with radio since long time, at the technical side and the content side. In 1996 we made a temporary radio station in Hungary called Island Radio 96, that was the official radio station of Pepsi Island, the biggest youth event in Europe. This radio station was a classical FM radio station in technical sense, but we just had started to experiment with the possibilities of interaction on the internet with that radio, and after the 3rd Metaforum conference, we just came up with the idea, together with Suzy Meszoly from C3 and a friend of mine, who studied and lectured at one of the Hungarian Universities at the communication departement.

PIT SCHULTZ: Can you shortly explain, what Pepsi Island is?

DANIEL MOLNAR: It's just the biggest youth event and festival in Central Europe. It involves about 200.000 people each year.

PIT SCHULTZ: And why is it called Pepsi Island?

DANIEL MOLNAR: Because it has to survive somehow. The basic concept was to make a radio in a classical sense in this new medium, and we just realized that this classical concept is very good to make a community. If we put some sound files up on a webpage, it would become an archive, but with this weekly practicing radio programme, we just grow up to a community, and this is the biggest base of our successful direction.

PIT SCHULTZ: Are you also doing IRC sessions during the transmissions?

DANIEL MOLNAR: Yes, we chat as well, or sometimes we experiment with some new possibilities of interaction, or sometimes we do live cams, sometimes we do a real-link exchange with other stations, but I think it is a very

important thing to mention, that I was there as a cofounder, but we should separate the starting project and the maintaining project, because it involves a different knowledge. If you start a project and you manage to maintain it, and to keep it work, of course you need to revisit sometimes your project ideas. I think also on an art server level we should apply this, to keep going, means to keep going thinking.

PIT SCHULTZ: Not to territorialize too early, but keep the flow going, I agree. How much hardware do you have, and how much do you need and use at the end, how much space do you use?

DANIEL MOLNAR: This is interesting, because C3 funded mainly the beginning, like they provided a relatively small amount of money, which was enough for us, something like a million Forints, which is 3000£. With 3000£ we bought a very simple radio station with everything, so we can use FM - if we had a FM transmitter, and the whole studio is in a 12 squaremeter big room, it is small but efficient. The aim was to provide the facility to be able to produce programmes. C3 provides one status for this radio project, Jinx, who coordinates the staff, all the other participants are working for free.

PIT SCHULTZ: Can you shortly explain the project 'Grow your own net.radio station'?

DANIEL MOLNAR: Those people who are involved in, not only maintaining but also think of the ongoing radio have this concept, that if we look around what the prices and possibilities are for example with the new RealSystem G2, which is free at the basic level, we just realized if you have a simple modem connection and someone who allows you to use his Real Audio server, you can broadcast from at home in very good quality. You just have your CD ROM player in your machine, a simple sound card -the cheapest one, and use some sources you have around, and use a microphone you can buy for 10£ or so, you can make your own radio broadcast from at home, from your bedroom, and this kind of very new concept of cascade radio, which we just started -

PIT SCHULTZ: - How do you support it, I mean is there a documentation on a webpage, how you do this, what you need to buy, or how to you provide the information about 'Grow your own' ?

DANIEL MOLNAR: We are just preparing a resource list, or the so-called Content Creation Guide to various content possibilities, and we hope that the first pieces will be available in september on Ljudmila, we just start this 'Grow your own' concept, concentrating on sound systems and RealAudio and RealVideo systems.

PIT SCHULTZ: You did the project Roma Dub, which is a good example for a practical collaboration with another group, from London I think, so let's show it.

(WHILE DEMO:)

PIT SCHULTZ: What was this project?

DANIEL MOLNAR: First of all, it was a very big experiment going as far as nobody in Hungary has done before. Some gipsy youngsters who are involved in doing folk music got used to use digital techniques. We held several meetings and session with some Asian Dub Foundation members.

PIT SCHULTZ: So it's about intercultural sound mixes?

DANIEL MOLNAR: I wouldn't mention the intercultural aspect first, but it was some kind of collusion between different contemporary popular art, if I can call it art, like the very traditional folk music, these youngsters experience music television (MTV) every day, they have a very big cultural gap between their own traditional sounds of culture and this one which has been transmitted to them with a mass medium. During some of these pieces they just learned how to use the technology, how to use Cubase, they learn how to sample, just reconstructing their very intuitive way of making music, opposed to the very practical and technical, can I say anglosaxon popmusic. The results were a kind of interference between the two things.

PIT SCHULTZ: Was that a DIY approach?

DANIEL MOLNAR: Yes, we were doing this project with very low profile system, we used a sampler that costs 200£ and we used a keyboard that costs 300£ and all these instruments are affordable to all of them, we wanted to teach them the basic concept, and not show them how to get rich with Popmusic, but the glimpse of how does this industry work, how to start with and then just do what you want we should listen instead of talking about it.

PIT SCHULTZ: Are you trying to avoid to theorize it too much?

DANIEL MOLNAR: Yes, sure.

PIT SCHULTZ: Borut Savski, from Radio Student and from ministry:of:experiment. What's that?

BORUT SAVSKI: This is a small group, actually now we are two or three people. It has a special place, which was won after half a year of battle inbetween the institution, and now we have one Pentium computer, one mixing desk, one Mac, and it was helped a lot by Soros Foundation of course, and we try to be connected as much as possible to the regular programme of that station. We are based in Ljubljana, but we try to make the input to this local radio station more vast. It would be good, if there could be more participants, a kind of open channel on the local basis, and also on the international basis it can function like this.

PIT SCHULTZ: You are collaborating with other groups internationally.

BORUT SAVSKI: We try to find some kind of cooperation with all the people who have similar interest. Through the Xchange network and through other ways we manage to find some very specialized groups, which are conforming to our vision.

PIT SCHULTZ: You were starting with the XLR project shortly before Xchange, I think?

BORUT SAVSKI: Yes, this was summer last year, we had just got internet connection at radio student. Marko Kosnik invited one artist from Berlin [Ulf Freyhoff], who had lots of experience with art on the net, to come for a workshop, and it came out that it was a very effective project.

PIT SCHULTZ: In term of skills, what is your background, and what is Markos' background?

BORUT SAVSKI: Markos' background is he is an artist, but he has big interest in media and had regular transmissions on the Radio Student.

PIT SCHULTZ: I understood, that a Mac and Midi are his instrument.

BORUT SAVSKI: Yes, the computer seems to be his instrument.

PIT SCHULTZ: And he also works with algorithmic music?

BORUT SAVSKI: Well, we should get him here...

PIT SCHULTZ: OK, anyway. Just as example that you don't start from scratch, you come from somewhere and you are entering the net.radio field with some skills, which you are now applying at this new media. OK, so we spoke about Marko, who was also in the Laibach group in the 80ies, and you come from a real traditional radio background?

BORUT SAVSKI: No, you cannot call it really 'traditional'. It was an alternative radio like all of all these alternative radios of the 80ies or 70ies in Europe. Not a pirate radio but an institution. It was soon occupied by local alternatives. (grins)

PIT SCHULTZ: Was it part of the movement of the late 80ies in Slovenia?

BORUT SAVSKI: It was established in 69.

PIT SCHULTZ: Oh, so it was an original part from the free radio movement of the late 60ies?

BORUT SAVSKI: There are different interpretations about it. I believe its conception was dictated by politics.

PIT SCHULTZ: What kind of transformation can you report from the classical radio to using net.radio?

(TAPE INTERRUPTED)

BORUT SAVSKI:... personal context, two- or three way communication, what ever makes the difference to the classical media, but it can also be used as additional channel for the traditional radio.

PIT SCHULTZ: How do you see the question of access and bandwidth? Which audience are you reaching? Or is it more like that you are reaching other producers, so that you are building up a network of producers? What I experienced with 'Loops' is that it was like jamming sessions through the net, more than like radio in the traditional sense.

BORUT SAVSKI: Exactly, I tried a couple of times to transmit something and announce it, but there was never any response. You don't get the audience really and can just do it at home, but that's not what I want to do. I want to have one or more points of entering the process and of collective activity - synchronizing more people around the same channel, or lately I have been thinking of how could it be possible to do it on more channels, that it would be still satisfying to the classical radio mind.

PIT SCHULTZ: You are also part of the Xchange list, Rasa Smite will explain later

what Xchange is. I don't know how it came up, but there was some debate around the net.radio days about defining what net.radio is and so on, and there was this question about content in opposition to form or structure. If I remember right, you made some interesting points there. Is the content, therefore what goes through the channel, the architecture of the network, or the channel itself?

BORUT SAVSKI: First you have to know what are the technical possibilities of a medium, then you begin to try to fill it with something, as this is the real reason why we work with it, and so far the aesthetics was the easy thing to do, a kind of aesthetic transmission of some form, but putting some kind of problems or social content to it, - I don't know if this is necessary, because the 'social' content is already the form of it, of getting as much as inputs as possible. Maybe also the software, which we are using here is not appropriate for this kind of e.g. exchanging ideas through sound. You can exchange ideas through text, and this is also a parallel channel to sound.

PIT SCHULTZ: Are you using IRC as extended form?

BORUT SAVSKI: Yes, of course. This was proposed by Ulf Freyhoff and proved excellent.

PIT SCHULTZ: IRC is also realtime, but textbased exchange.

BORUT SAVSKI: Yes, there is also a funny thing going on, often the IRC has more action and content than the sound channel, but this is not bad, because we are not producing classical radio.

PIT SCHULTZ: Would you sign McLuhans' 'The medium is the message'?

BORUT SAVSKI: Rather, that the medium is the message... :-)

PIT SCHULTZ: OK; last question. There was a big debate mainly with people from Vienna, Kunstradio, about the notion of live transmission, which is very important for radio, like live talk shows, the realtime element of transmission. On the other hand there are many archive projects going on in the audio scene, or 'audio-on-demand' as a keyword. Do you see a changement in live transmissions, when they are applied to the internet?

BORUT SAVSKI: I think that internet is a more universal medium than classical radio, which has to be sequential. But it is just another face of live transmission.

PIT SCHULTZ: How do you provide this moment of presence of live transmissions?

BORUT SAVSKI: It's happening between this bunch of people, who are at that moment synchronized - it is not about the public anymore. But when I translate it back to the radio, I usually act again as a mediator, which I don't like, but I have not found a solution yet.

PIT SCHULTZ: So on the radio, it's the telephone then...OK.

You are Gio D'Angelo from backspace radio, based in the middle of London, the cultural capital of pop music (-). Where are the interferences

between you and, in the same house there is Ninja Tunes, and last year you had a DJ deck -

GIO D'ANGELO: - yes we still have it, at the moment some kids are using it -
PIT SCHULTZ: - so how do the different spaces interfere with each other. There is backspaces' social space, the real space of the Labels, the urban space of London, the sound space, the internet as a digital space?

GIO D'ANGELO: What is going on in backspace, there is the radio, which's only a stream really. There is a website, which doesn't work yet, and for the moment isn't meant to. For backspace, there is a computer, sound system, amplifier, microphones, right next to the door on the street, in an area, well, inside backspace, where everyday lots of people are sending a lot of information, as email, text, or also producing webpages, but mainly there is a lot of data coming, produced and sent out of backspace by email, or using chat or exchanging software, and also we are playing music every day, since the technical possibilities are there. Also there is a lot of experimenting done with small scale video conferencing. You could have one-to-one videoconferencing, or one-to-eight, depending on the software, with RealAudio, this opens up to one-to-sixty people, so this is widening. There is constant input of music. People from down the road or up the street coming in with CDs and cassettes, or little new Rap rhymes, or just words, poems. So what we have at the moment is a more or less constant 24-hours-stream, which is mostly empty, it's a silent stream. But I think it is important to leave the stream open, also if it is not so much used at the moment, there is an open channel there.

PIT SCHULTZ: I heard you are planning an archive since a while. If you make plans, you have to analyze first, what is already existing in the field of net.radio. Interestingly you have several projects in London, which are transmitting RealAudio on bigger scale, they have also their own archives. Where do you see the difference between Interface-pirateradio, Gaiaradio, there are all these transmissions from clubs and so on, and the backspace radio project, which will come up?

GIO D'ANGELO: Actually lots of things running in London are becoming quite extensive, where lots of clubs are being covered and transmitting nearly every day now, as more and more streaming operators, I guess, are placing themselves in a club, usually with the computer next to the bar and the minijack coming out of the soundsystem. They involve chat and lots of it is, well, music, as it's in a club. They are also now setting up for events, and talks - so if in the past, somebody would come and set up a taperecorder, now somebody would set up a computer, which sends out a stream to the interested parties, usually it is announced in an email, just before the event is starting, and someone would pick it up. It is quite unusual, that somebody gets an announcement before and thinks, oh, next week there will be a live transmission' ...

PIT SCHULTZ: How recognised is net.radio in London, do people listen to it, or why are clubs starting to transmit from the DJ desk to the internet?

GIO D'ANGELO: I'm not sure, if there are so many people in London listening to it. I do sometimes at backspace, and if I think it sounds allright, I might actually go down there. But I think it's mainly people from outside, who are listening in, so they hear the DJs, who play in London, or before they get a CD, so they mainly participate.

PIT SCHULTZ: Do you have any numbers saying how many people are logging in?

GIO D'ANGELO: Depending on events - bandwidth, and server capacity. Thousands is the limit on some of the larger operations. The software which is available for free can carry and deliver 60 streams, but that's one of the reasons why we are hooking up and doing the audio network: to pass that software limitation. I think for an event, which is just advertised by email and on mailing lists, you might have about 60 to 100 people immediately just pressing click as the email comes into their mailbox. On more established things like Interface pirate net.radio it goes into thousands, because they have set up a radio structure, every two hours there is something going on, so you expect something there.

PIT SCHULTZ: How do you see on long term the commercial aspect of it?

GIO D'ANGELO: There is already a commercial aspect and I know, that all the radio stations - local, commercial or outside of London, in other UK cities - want a system, what they are looking for is mainly a netbroadcast system, which holds advertisement and features on DJs. That, I think, is what they are looking for, I don't think they are too interested in the archiving, because that gives them other problems.

PIT SCHULTZ: Do you know how these projects are funded, for example how is Interface funding their bandwidth?

GIO D'ANGELO: Right from when they started off, RealAudio Europe or so offered them about 5000 streams for free. They set up their own ISDN, their own studio, and then many people decided coming to them, because they are probably been interested in what has been played.

PIT SCHULTZ: Interesting, so backspace is not publicly funded?

GIO D'ANGELO: No, it is not. Members are funding the place, and their projects, whatever everybody does, might get funded, therefore backspace radio got some money by the Arts Council to develop for programming, equipment or other things we had to pay for or which didn't go ahead.

PIT SCHULTZ: So at backspace it is not a dogma, to reject public funding?

GIO D'ANGELO: For backspace itself and James Stevens it is a dogma. But the backspace members can do what they want, whatever, so if people do projects and members apply individually for their projects, parts of it will go to backspace and contribute towards it.

PIT SCHULTZ: Unfortunately we are mostly men sitting here, but Rachel Baker, who is not in the room at the moment, is working with you. Can you say something about the Jingle Project she is doing?

GIO D'ANGELO: For the Millenium Jingles project she sent out well, there was a competition I think for jingle productions for the millenium and the second coming of Christ. It was a straight network use, linked to sound, and bringing in decision making, and productional mode production and so on, it is quite interesting, it was also live streamed, so it was a live event. I think there are some URLs with jingles.

PIT SCHULTZ: Of course there exist much more net.radio projects, for example

there is 'public netbase', who does very often streaming in the studio they have there. I think, you are connecting the sythisizers, which are standing there to the live stream?

KONRAD BECKER: Yes, that's true. It is ideal, the musicians do it all by themselves.

PIT SCHULTZ: So I hope this shows already that the sort of DIY approach creates a lot of variety on a micro level of different practices, and there is no way to unify under one major note, how to do net.radio, which is the quality of it. On the other hand we have the huge variety, a kind of atomisation, nearly everybody of us runs around with many different invisible labels on the jacket, everybody is working on several projects at the same time, so we have this atomization of many little projects, which are often fragmented into a multiplicity of practices. So my question on the other hand, what has been done against the entropic effect of diversity. I mean everybody is like a multiplicity of small careers, and edits them, and controls them, where does it lead, this multiplicity of labels and minimicro projects, what is the current, where does it lead, and what are other ways of unification under a common ground aspect.

And I think that's in a way, what Xchange was doing, they are providing a context, where this kind of common ground is maybe not discussed, but just provided by the simple software of a mailing list. This is interesting to me, because since years we have this nettime mailing list, which has now 800 subscribers, it's a high number of people. How many subscribers are there on Xchange?

RASA SMITE: 130 at the moment.

PIT SCHULTZ: How would you describe it. Many describe Xchange as a community. Do you see Xchange as a community?

RASA SMITE: Maybe yes, but maybe I would rather like to call it a network. Because if we are trying to provide, as you said, this context for the content we don't make a project. Xchange is not really like a project, it is just a space to co-ordinate, to meet, maybe to develop this community for alternative internet broadcasters. That's why half a year ago we set up a mailing list and there is also an online archive for mailing lists, all people who are interested can subscribe but also just send information about live stream of other events that are interesting for others.

PIT SCHULTZ: You are based in Riga. How do you see the effect of this position on the geographical map to the practice of net radio.

RASA SMITE: We also run this space called e-lab, which is an independent art organisation and we have this project, internet radio Ozone.

We have established net.radio a year ago. Then we saw on the net there are different activities similar, maybe small, maybe bigger, but somehow for many people there was an idea that there should be some space where to concentrate all those activities, also to make these informations more accessible. Net.radio is so specific, that there are such different ways of broadcasting, very few are broadcasting 24 hours. There are also regular broadcastings like Ozone, broadcasting every Tuesday night, or ParaRadio every Wednesday night. But ministry:of:x-periments are not doing regular broadcastings, and a few just have ideas for a nice event that you would like to broadcast. But how will you announce it, how will you find your audience?

But back to the situation how to connect it with the local. It's very hard to organise things in Latvia, I guess like in many countries, everything is so local, the arts scene is local. If you start to do something a bit more on the international level and apply to local foundations you are immediately out. We didn't get any support this year, because people cannot understand the context we are working within.

PIT SCHULTZ: You are also inviting a lot of local DJs and musicians to transmit in Ozone events?

RASA SMITE: Yes, with Ozone events there are always so many alternative musicians and DJs.

PIT SCHULTZ: Are you dependent on funding? The e-lab needs some money to run, to pay the rent, to pay people, doesn't it?

RASA SMITE: Yes. We can pay the rent ourselves somehow because it is really low, but we cannot live without internet connection and this is pretty high expenses. This is a specific situation, and maybe a bit boring, because it is different in England, but we still have to pay for incoming traffic, we have to pay for import which is coming from abroad. Inside Latvia this information flow is for free. We can send, but we cannot import.

PIT SCHULTZ: How can you explain that? You are travelling a lot, you were in Luxembourg, you were in Stockholm, Berlin, every month in another city. But in Riga they don't give you support, especially the Soros Foundation, which is international.

RASA SMITE: Actually I was just travelling a lot in the last two months, but half a year we didn't go anywhere. All winter we were working very hard. We always had a very good relationship with Soros Foundation, and I was a bit surprised that they didn't support us, because whenever there is some meeting about the internet all officials of the ministries and from Soros Foundation, they usually invite somebody from e-lab as experts. The thing is, we are dependent on grants, and then you can never be sure that you can get them. Maybe you just don't fit into this years priority.

PIT SCHULTZ: You told me something about the idea of an Interfund, which reminded me of something which was discussed after the p2p Conference in Amsterdam. The demand for a fund which is not funding too much, but small amounts to a lot of little projects in a non bureaucratic-form. I think the problem of the European funding is that like Kaleidoscope they only fund big projects, and you have to go through the whole process. Small projects don't have the capacity to fill out all the forms, and if they get the money, it is too much. So how would you describe such an Interfund?

RASA SMITE: Such an Interfund would be good because it should be a long term project, but it could be a flexible structure. It could often also be moral support or bureaucratic support, you often need some support letters only. But we need access to funds, at least some secure feeling, that we can apply if we really need it. Not always just running, 'when is this last deadline' and getting absolutely sick. During the last two years I am only writing projects, trying to fit them into these contexts, and I am really just thinking about deadlines.

PIT SCHULTZ: There was a notion of sharing resources. So maybe the bureaucracies should share their knowledge of dealing with other

bureaucracies and let in small projects. What do you think you can do better on the micro-level as a small media project than on a macro-level of bigger institutions, what are you doing better?

RASA SMITE: We have this real connection with people, we are talking to them every day, they are coming to our place. Also the e-lab has this really small room, but this is the only space in Riga for people, not only artists, were they can work for free on the internet. All young artists can make their projects only in the e-Lab.

PIT SCHULTZ: So it is this informal quality of a social context, a local context, a contact to the producers.

RASA SMITE: Yes.

PIT SCHULTZ: Can you just shortly talk about the cost effectiveness of your projects. How much money have you got for this project Xchange, talk numbers here. Like there are around hundred projects in the field of net.radio, so you are organising the international organisation or movement or whatever of experimental net.radio stations, how much money have you got for it?

RASA SMITE: At the moment we have still have support for internet connection and we always have support for developing infrastructure, but we never can get any money for developing projects, to keep going and start initiatives. And I don't even talk about the salary. We have the space, but we don't have any real money.

PIT SCHULTZ: I think it is scandalous to see, that a group that does work which is really important for the definition of a new medium gets no support. It's not describable as economical, because they get almost no money which is ten times more important for net.radio than for example this meeting here.

How to deal with these inequalities? They do continuous work and get no support, and if you do a symposium you get support. The institutional systems work very slowly, you have to do a symposium, you have to follow the institutional rules and if you work on the network, the institutional system does not have any description in their logic what a web site means, it needs something like a catalogue. But a mailing list, the organisation of a community, has no description in the institutional thinking of art institutions. So that is maybe one problem that there is not already a grid or a kind of system, which is describing the work that Riga is doing and that's because there is no money for it. They are just falling between the patterns of the funding systems. And the other problem is as you said that you cannot fund yourself. The subscriber system of Backspace would not work for you?

RASA SMITE: Never. The self-funding systems just will not work. We are trying. We have seven members who have keys and free access and they are paying three pounds per month. Sometimes it takes two months to get those three pounds, because they just really don't have any money. And they don't work for money, because they are mostly artists and musicians.

PIT SCHULTZ: So if there is an outcome of this conference, than maybe something could go in describing the need for such an Interfund and the inequality and difference of cost effectiveness between bigger and smaller institutions. We don't have to go into the details here, I think that is obvious.

We now have a guest from London, ProteinTV. Could you just introduce yourself?

WILL ROWE: I am Will Rowe from ProteinTV, which is a relatively new organisation. We are actually based here in the ICA as a physical location. We're focusing more on the TV end of things than on the audio. There's a lot of things already being done for the audio, and we've decided to take that a step further and prepare for the future, when the bandwidth is going to be available for video streaming via the internet or via digital satellite or via cable. And as a result, we have set up independently ProteinTV to provide distribution channels for artists and anybody with film and video content, who have got it there but have not got the access to actually get it out and be seen by people. We are not actually launched so to speak. The web sites is up there with a Beta we produced for the onedotzero- Festival to be used. We are going out by the end of July as a fully functional channel and as a result we are fully open for submissions and material to come in.

PIT SCHULTZ: What standard are you using for transmitting?

WILL ROWE: We are relying on RealVideo. They are one of our sponsors, and they'd be very accommodating for our demands, purely of the nature of our project, and it's a UK base. Because the majority of the video streaming projects are coming from the US and no one is really doing anything here in the UK, saying providing that content. There's a lot of big corporate commercial sites doing distance learning and just general promotion of their own material, no one has really taken the independent view to say we are here to help you and Real Networks has appreciated that. Also Real Networks are providing the new technologies, something called G2, which is taking video streaming to the next level. The basic overview of it, is that you only need to encode any video material once. Once it goes out, then the end user will determine what video stream you have and will compress and stream it accordingly. This is a major step forward, because previously you had to encode each different modem type.

Streaming technology is evolving very quickly, and you will be soon be seeing full frame, fullscreen video. At the moment people say you can't watch it, but in fact you can, the ProteinTV video streams I have watched it at home on a 28.8 modem and you can get 10 frames per second - very watchable.

PIT SCHULTZ: How do you handle copyright? It seems you have a database and people can submit their content.

WILL ROWE: It's not pirate TV in any form. All our programmes have been either been produced ourselves or we have got clearance from the copyright holder. All the material that comes in is on the understanding that they know its going to be there, and we are providing publicity and promotion for the artists. Depending on who they are and their scale it will depend how far that stretches. But there is a general understanding that the more you give the more you get.

PIT SCHULTZ: Are you using to advertise?

WILL ROWE: We are very much aware of the commercial aspect of ProteinTV and with the new G2 technology, will allow us to implement TV style commercials within the video stream. These will be clickable, so you can

click on the window playing the ad and will be taken through to the company's web site.

But saying that, we are very aware of the compromise between art led organisations and big corporations for their financial impact on the channel. So we've been very careful about the people we have invited to get involved. The ICA have provided a platform to go from as have RealNetwork's with technical support and sponsorship.

PIT SCHULTZ: So you are clearly dividing the non-profit sector from the commercial sector?

WILL ROWE: Yes, but we are still providing commercial advertising space to the big corporates on the understanding that we remain in control. It is something they appreciate, because we are saying we have that commercial angle, but we are independent and we stand by our own laws.

PIT SCHULTZ: And what would happen if someone gave you the continental Quicktime format?

WILL ROWE: We would encode it into RealVideo.

PIT SCHULTZ: My understanding is that you are only using the internet to broadcast video. You are not going to make use of the specific qualities of the internet, like being in a hypertext system or?

WILL ROWE: The main function is kind of a TV-centric model that we are going to stream video one-way only. [There are capabilities of streaming data and hypertext, but it is quite basic in the technology and we are not involved in that.]

PIT SCHULTZ: In relation to the other projects: we have got a lot of audio and one video, we have got a lot of projects who are trying to find network solution to actually open up more channels to the same content. Then we have got ProteinTV, which looks quite interesting. But then there is the idea of the UK's first independent TV Channel which is your advertisement, whereas a lot of the projects are concerned about keeping things unspectacular and to an extent to create a certain freedom around creative development within streaming video. Firstly, is this the UK's first channel, and secondly, is that important to you and why?

WILL ROWE: From what I have seen, ProteinTV is the UK's first, because no one in the UK is actually trying to programme TV content for the internet. People are programming TV style programmes, but they are one off events, they are just there for one or two days. But we are actually going out to say that we are a 24 hour, 7 days a week channel.

PIT SCHULTZ: But there is an emerging of web TV and the BBC trying to move quickly into UK based web TV, it seems you really have to hurry up.

WILL ROWE: We are not the BBC [and have no were near the same resources as them. The beauty of the ProteinTV is in it's independence, the BBC and other traditional broadcasters will be repackaging all its existing content for the web, where as all of ProteinTV's content is new, and not limited to the restraints of large organisations. We have programme partnerships with numerous film and video groups and festivals from the around the world with material that you would never see on your local TV station - this is

where ProteinTV can compete.]

PIT SCHULTZ: Why is it that you want to go for this 'The UK's first'?

WILL ROWE: That is were we come back to the compromise of getting larger, and more commercial people involved, because they respond to things like that. If we were not interested in that, we would very much have an underground feel. But the whole design and the way we've gone, is that the first impression is quite polished and professional. But behind that facade is a grassroots organisation, that we put up to do what we want to do. This is were we come back to [what I was saying earlier about] the compromises of getting larger, more commercial people involved, because they respond to straplines like that. If we were not interested [in commercial realities], we would very much have an underground feel. The whole look and feel of ProteinTV is quite polished and professional, but behind that facade is a grassroots organisation, that we put up to do what we want to do [and which is committed to providing new and exclusive TV programming.]

PIT SCHULTZ: The question is why is 'The First' the quality item you give yourself rather than ...

WILL ROWE: It's just a tag, something to say.

PIT SCHULTZ: Yeah, put could you not find a real quality to the programme and then try to brand your own programming according to that quality rather than the mere fact that it might be the first, which I'm sure you are not a 100% sure about.

WILL ROWE: Well, I'm sure about it, but it's the fact that we are new and no one knows about us. And if you want to make an impact, and if you want to get people interested in it, you have to have a hook. And we have created something professional and put that tag on it because that is what we are thinking of us as our hook to get people interested in it. [At the end of the day it doesn't really matter what hype you can create around an on-going project, it is the quality of product you can delivery that will set you apart from the rest.]

PIT SCHULTZ: I would really recommend going to the Xchange homepage. It is a very good example, how art servers can organize themselves and it's all self-organising, it's not centralised. The big fear of centralisation is not yet exploding there. And it's a content, which is not text based, which is very useful for a communication which is all determined by the use of English as an exchange code - and not everyone is very good at using this code.

GIO D'ANGELO: Also the sound data should be paralleled with the data in connecting these servers.

PIT SCHULTZ: We can hear the stuff tonight, there is the net.radio night ⁴ UNLIMITED following. I think the net.radio night is also very significant for a kind of post-theory practice. The practical phase of net culture has just started, and at the moment you hear very sceptical comments from the theorists and very optimistic comments from the practitioners. That's very interesting, because a while ago it was more the other way around, the theorists were very euphoric and the practitioners did not really know what to do.

ARMIN MEDOSCH/AUDIENCE: The theorists were very euphoric before the internet

took off in 1992/93 about cyberspace, which was very popular then.

PIT SCHULTZ: So now maybe we will see an explosion of practice and a decline of theory, which for me is very interesting to see and the only question is, how this will get organised, if commodification takes over, or if the large organisations take over, or if the network culture will be able to provide modes of organisation for themselves, which are sustainable against all kinds of not wanted transformations.

PANEL 3: GROW YOUR OWN: START AND SUSTAIN AN ARTSERVER /

CHAIR: RICHARD BARBROOK (HYPERMEDIA RESEARCH CENTRE OF WESTMINSTER UNIVERSITY, CYBER.SALON), SPEAKERS: VUK COSIC, KONRAD BECKER, SANDRA FAUCONNIER, FREDERIC MADRE, KLAAS GLENEWINKEL.

ARMIN MEDOSCH: The moderator of this panel is Richard Barbrook, teaching at Westminster University in London at the Hypermedia Research Centre. Together with Andi Cameron, he wrote the text 'The Californian Ideology' a few years ago, which was one of these milestone texts which provoked a lot of reactions, objections but also agreement. He is going to moderate a very difficult panel, because we thought we'd bring together people who are just about to start their projects and people who have been running servers already for a couple of years and have made projects with hundreds of participants.

RICHARD BARBROOK: Welcome to the afternoon session. What we are going to do this afternoon is basically talking around the idea of 'do-it-yourself-culture', particularly obviously around the idea of setting up servers, which allow people to make and produce their own cultural and artistic works and distribute them over the net. There has been a lot of hype obviously over the last few years, particularly in 1995 by what we call the 'California Ideology', about the commercial values of the internet. We should not forget, that in fact the core thing, that has made the net expand over the last few years, so that it has become increasingly a mass phenomenon, is not the commercial production of entertainment or information, nor even the use of the net by state institutions, including things like my university, but in fact it is the gift economy. That is the people making information and circulating it among themselves for nothing. And it is this gift economy, which is right at the centre of what we see as the useful thing about the internet, what makes it qualitatively different.

In radio and television, community radio and community television was always marginal to the mainstream. What is interesting about the internet is that right at its very centre is in fact this alternative, DIY-culture. Hopefully the participants in this panel will be able to illuminate, why this is still a vibrant force in the net, that despite the huge wave of commercial money being thrown at the net, they are still playing a cutting edge role in the development of cybertculture.

What we are going to do is go around the panel about their own particular project and to focus the discussion we decided that there are three key questions that have to be talked about if you are going to set up a DIY- project.

They are: Why are you alternative, what makes you different from institutions? From either art institutions like the ICA, universities, or even commercial cultural institutions. The second question we decided to talk about is their curation policy. If they are coming out of an artistic tradition what we have to think about is: Why do people get on their server? What is the purpose in putting certain groups on and what does this say about the artistic cultural policy of their particular art server? And lastly, concentrating basically on people existing in the gift economy, unlike predecessors in the 60s and 70s we don't think that the gift economy can exist separate from the rest of the world. It is not a radical break from existing capitalism, it is

part of a mixed economy. So the last and maybe key question is the economic base: Where does the cash actually come from? We might circulate gifts, but we do need money as well.

VUK COSIC: I come from a very peculiar place, the Ljubljana Digital Media Lab. We were founded four years ago as a group of people that came across another individual who was employed with the Soros Foundation. He said: Ok guys, you can go on having your discussions, we could provide some cash for you, if you want to play with any technology. To cut it short, it turned into a digital media lab.

We have a serious working space, quite a lot of machinery and a budget we don't have to worry too much about. We don't have to worry about income, we have enough money to do projects.

In terms of contents what we do is more or less arts and culture related, and the other field we call 'other than that', which is a way to describe the other part of the world. We deal a lot with non-governmental organisations, we have inherited a lot from the Soros Foundations business and let's say cultural philosophy, which means that we serve everybody that comes through our door.

In terms of defining the difference between us and the mainstream corpus, what's maybe interesting about us, is that it still is a group of people like me. We came across a budget, and we are actually abusing it. We are behaving as if we were Backspace or any other group of interesting creative people, only we have got this money on our hands and we are really abusing it. So we host things that are some sort of cultural scandals in our country, we host marginal groups. There are about 130 projects on our server, there is no use really listing them here. And in this way we are a player in the scene by being big, but at the same time, we are not part of the mainstream, even though we are bigger than any other publisher in the country, any other TV station, book publisher or anything. We just have more projects daily than they can think of. We are trying to use this position and sort of tamper with the economic basis of the whole area.

Back in 1995, we opened some cybercafés, I think they were the first in Eastern Europe, but they were free. We have a budget so we don't have to get the money back. There is not a single commercial cybercafé in Slovenia right now, which is not bad, because everybody is used to getting this stuff for free. As an internet access provider, which we are as well, we are giving this away for free. This has created the rather interesting situation in our country, that everybody wants it for free everywhere, even the commercial providers are having trouble, because we exist. We love creating trouble of this sort.

Another area where we are active are these video facilities, we somehow inherited a whole TV station, we have cameras and editing facilities. You can come and say: 'I have a subject, I want to make a video, let's talk about it'. Usually, what happens, is that you get the machines and go make your own video.

At the same time we are active internationally, mailing lists and all that. To come back to Richard's questions about the gift economy, the network of trust: Yes, it works fine, but we have a couple of hundred thousand a year. So we do RealVideo, we do RealAudio, we do all this stuff, we have open access on all imaginable levels, but we are covered. I don't know, what will

happen eventually when Soros Foundation will leave Slovenia which might happen next year. But so far so good. If anybody has problems with finding server space for projects, we have about 26 gigabytes empty still, so just come over, and since it is international, we can just provide space.

Q./AUDIENCE: I am just interested on the impact you might have on the local scene there.

VUK COSIC: So far we have kept a low profile, because we are practically a monopoly. Not because we are so big and powerful, but because nobody wants to deal with what we do, it's not interesting. The internet people, various types of organisations, they just don't want to deal with culture, because there is no money in it. So we have got 95% of all there is to see of arts and culture in Slovenia. In terms of curatorship it is interesting that everybody wants to be on our server simply because we have everybody you ever heard from Slovenia, they are on our server, so everybody wants to be in that company.

The flyer I brought is the first ever PR gesture from our server, and it happened just four days ago for this occasion. So it is hard for me to say, what will happen now that we are actually bound to come in the open. But every week, there is something being promoted publicly or seriously debated that is hosted on our machines and that is kind of important, a lot can happen.

KONRAD BECKER: Four years ago, we managed to get a little office space in the new Museumsquartier in Vienna. We could share a public space there, basically just starting with a couple of terminals for some kind of public access and small dial-up service for people who wanted to work with the net. Obviously at that time, it was next to impossible to get online, except you were at some special part of the university, or in some high tech company. Right now, we manage to expand a bit and we got our own space and we have more terminals.

Our policy had to change a little bit. First Public Netbase was a chance for subscribers to get a bit of information on the whole medium, the only opportunity to get your hands on it. Today that has obviously changed. To get access through Public Netbase would mean that you would actually want to actively participate in the net, participate in shaping the electronic space. So if you have a project running, or if you have a research proposal, then you would get a real cheap access, it's about 2 pounds a month for the overall complete service with more or less unlimited web space. Actually that is the fee for students, it's a bit more for the rest of us.

Since then, we really were trying to fulfill different functions, in many ways also as a monopoly, because nobody else would want to deal with that. The whole spectrum is really time consuming. It starts with giving introductory courses to the internet for the last three years, every week you could come there to find out how to get online or build a web site. On top of that we were trying to focus the political and cultural interrelations of the whole technology. So we would invite people to actually do presentations on the subject and it is quite a long list by now. Obviously we are not so much interested in the classical approach of artifact and art, but we do support institutions which work in the classical ways. In a way it is part of our funding structure, that we provide access for some of the art institutions in the Museumsquartier.

Yes, we do have to get funding and we try to get it from wherever we can, it's quite a hassle. We have to try and get money from different state bodies,

municipal bodies or companies. For a while we had to keep the project alive by doing jobs, things like the Sigmund Freud Museum, that is online now, helped us survive for quite a while.

I don't know if we are alternative. Maybe we are a bit different. A lot of people put a lot of effort into a project like that, it's up to 16 people right now, so the non-profit aspect is quite to the point in the practical everyday work we have to do. Recently, we did a major mainstream project on Robotics, which closed last week. We are still exhausted, because we also tried a little to work in the field of influencing policy makers regarding public access and the importance of a public sphere in the electronic domain, and obviously we are also interested in the extensions of the net in the real world, the Robotics theme in connection with the aspect of the workplace and new technology. We are definitely not trying to focus only on the internet, but on technology as such with all its interrelations.

Sandra Fauconnier: I represent the project Dbonanzah. Maybe you have checked it on the internet, the URL doesn't work yet, so I am a real example of 'grow your own server'-thing, we don't exist yet as such. We have been thinking of doing this for a year now. I am one of three persons, I am related to the University in Gent, the Teacher Training Department, therefore education related, and two of them (Guy van Belle, Patrice Riemens) are artists themselves, involved in an electronic arts group.

Right now we are at the point that we want to develop some kind of network of net criticism in Belgium, because there is no such thing yet. We want to provide server space for artists eventually, if there is interest. What would make us alternative is basically I think that we are a parasite of the university structures. We work at this university, but as a group, and Dbonanzah is not recognized and we will not be. It is university policy right now, they are not interested in art or culture, so we just use the server space in our workplace and work on our project after hours. We also do internet workshops for teachers within the structures that we have. What we do is, for example, bring in students from arts education who don't have the opportunity to learn html themselves. It is a hybrid situation, we partly try to find an independent place, we partly are parasites of the technology of the university.

As for curating policy: I can't say much about it yet. We have a group of friends and everyone contributes. It is not about commissioning things, everyone just does his own thing and is able to put his own files on our server, but we don't pay for that. We really don't have any state funding yet. We do the things ourselves and we are paid by our jobs.

FREDERIC MADRE: We are a highly disorganised group, four people from different locations in France, and actually we never meet. We have an internal mailing lists to try to decide what to do next. We wanted to build something that was impossible to do otherwise. It was impossible for us to get into the art business otherwise, impossible to publish our novels or to get our photographs into galleries, impossible to do anything [visible]. But the internet is so easy to use, in a minute you can have a web site of your own, you just go in and you do stuff [and it's available to all].

Regarding the content: basically what we did was to go to one of those free 10 Mo sites and we just began to do things there, mostly writing and photographs. At some point it was becoming limited to be hosted by this generic hosting site and we became Plaine-Peau.com. I have to explain why we chose a .com. It is because we wanted to make money out of it, but actually we don't. But it is also, because in France it is impossible to get a .fr

domain, because this is registered and you have to be a company to get one, and Plaine-Peau is not a company and not going to be one. We decided to host our site on a commercial hosting site in the USA. It was cheap, we only pay \$20 a month to get hosted. The constraints are limited space [and traffic], but we can have an unlimited number of mailing lists. For us mailing lists are maybe the most important thing on the internet. The web is just a surface and you just consume things. Mailing lists is were it is all happening, [where you meet friends and enemies], by constantly telling people what you do. That's how I met most of the people here and why I am here at all.

We are alternative because we don't ask questions and we take no prisoners. If you want to do something with us, just propose it. Most likely you will not propose anything that would not be suitable for us, because you will only propose to us, if you have actually seen what we do, got a flavour of what we do and will want to participate to that and other people will see it and not be interested [or just put off]. People can come and go freely, [we are always having terrible arguments on our mailinglists]. So we are happy to just have people like Vuk, who came out of nowhere, and just from friendships online.

This how we do things now. But what we will do next is to establish some kind of a structure. If we want to go any further and get some recognition for what we do, we have to establish some kind of body that people can relate to. For example in France there are [currently] a few projects commissioned by the prime minister and one of them is 'Internet and Francophonie'. At first when we started in this, we wanted to do just French pages, which was a very good idea [to be more exact: a natural but foolish idea...]. But at the time nobody was looking at what we were doing, because the French seemed not to be involved in the same mailing lists as we are and all our friends were English speaking. So we had to decide to do it half in English, half in French and maybe translate it. That was some compromise we had to do. [We have a piece in italian and would like to get German contributions.]

Also as we are people who come from a political background that is close to Marxism or Anarchism, we tend to be confrontational [as a way of achieving things quicker]. When we get to meet people, we maybe provoke things and we have been in some bad situations with people who would have helped us, but we would have had to compromise and we didn't do it [and currently don't care].

As far as our curating policies go, we have realised the obscene futility of what we are doing, which is that we are trying to spit in the face of the free market. But we want to continue writing and projecting images, and going further into hypermedia things [and experiments], and mixing things that should not have been mixed, ideas that should not be expressed or that are suppressed. That is what we want to continue to do, to smash the consensus.

As far as funding goes we are not a body and we have day work and we fund ourselves, but it is not a lot of money anyway, \$20 a month. I don't think we need much more money to do what we do because that is part of the constraints that make us what we are. We just use plain html and some pictures, we would like to do some audio [but must try to keep things simple]. But this is part of what we really want to do. We don't want people to download megabytes of shockwave and stuff, it's a waste of time for everybody. We want to master what we do, [we want to push to the limits of simplicity].

What we also try to do [often] is steal from other people. If we get on a site that we like, we look at the source and if there is something there that is interesting we just copy it and use it for another idea. Or maybe a set of colors that is pleasant, we get this particular set of color and use it somewhere else [to a very different effect]. Also we have sometimes picked some Java script from other artists [and from commercial sites, whatever,] and we will continue to do this.

KLAAS GLENEWINKEL: I am introducing a project which is called Kulturserver. It's a bit untypical for the internet, because it is not focusing on a global community, it is very much focusing on a local community in Lower Saxony in Germany. The region is not very populated, so there is no infrastructure, the distance between the cities is very long. If you want to see an event or meet other artists it can take hours. There is not a lot of exchange about what people are doing. It is also not very centralised, the region does not really have a centre and people just stick to what they are doing anyway. And people don't have a lot of technological skills, they don't necessarily know, how the internet works.

So what we wanted to do was to bring up the cultural scene in this countryside, to show them how it works, to display them and to give them a chance to communicate to other artists. We developed an internet project where these artists and people ... It's not only artists by the way, we see culture in a very wide way from architecture, fine arts and performance to institutions, clubs, maybe even shops, so every aspect of culture is included. We wanted to make it very easy and free for them to publish their information on the internet and put themselves in a theme oriented order, so they would not necessarily rely on the location where they are living.

Our company does not have much money, so we had to come up with an idea how to create content without a very big editorial office. So we developed this self-generating internet community, this forum, where culture related people and institutions have the possibility to publish through the software we have developed. This is an on-line editing software, so everybody can easily and immediately build their own homepages. You are online, you immediately get your address and you can put yourself in the category where you belong. You can meet other people through displaying your homepage, you have a guest book, there are many ways of communicating. This is obviously linked to a calendar, which is necessary if you talk about culture in a certain region. The calendar is also open, artists and institutions can put their events in the calendar. They have to register to do this, and then they can put in everything they are doing, from a party to bigger events like concerts or opera. It is open to everybody, not just to people who are interested in media art or the alternative scene. We also do TV and radio net broadcasts. We are collecting video streams from people who want to broadcast their event on the internet, they just send us their signal, and we broadcast it. We do the same with radio, bands can send us their tapes, we put them in a database and broadcast them and this is also connected to their homepage.

So it is a whole network of information. We display also the networks who exist in the cultural scene. So if an artist is not alone, if there is somebody working with him, and if there is a club who is showing this and so on, we collect these informations, connect them. and display the connections of the project.

About curation: there is no curation in this project, that's the whole idea.

everybody can publish. Of course, we might get the problem that there are left or right wing people, or people who are promoting their child porn festivals, but we did not have such bad experiences yet. I also think it is not bad if people put their homepages up, because then we can see what is going on. It's very open, everybody can publish even people who don't live in Lower Saxony, but of course the editorial focus is on this specific region. We got sponsored by the government to set Kulturserver up. Of course, in Germany, when you get sponsored by the government, you have to become financially independent after a while. So this is maybe working for one or two years. To become independent, we want to become very commercial instead of being uncommercial, and develop some kind of commerce system to give all the groups the possibility to distribute their cultural products. We want to establish some kind of a shopping system for artists or bands where they can sell their stuff, but we don't get any money of them. But if we are doing ticketing service for promoters, or if we sell records for mail orders, we would charge them. This could be one way of financing besides the usual sponsor system.

MICZ FLOR: I am from 'yourserver' near Manchester. I was invited to this conference as part of an original panel about setting up new servers, which doesn't mean that yourserver UK is not running. It is running as a virtual server, located somewhere in London, and the idea is to move it to Salford University. For me this is an important difference, because you can register domaine names and then you create an institution or a project, where you want to present that logo in the jungle of domaine names. You can't have all control anyhow, but if you want to have a certain control, you really need to have roots access to a lot of the functions running on the server.

The question was why yourserver is alternative? Because this is not up and running, I can't really give you examples, why this is alternative. So I just asked myself, what is alternative in the first place. I think that inbuilt in the idea of being alternative is of course the idea of the centre, the mainstream, of something which represents the kind of cultural heritage that can be marketed and sold. You then have to argue why you are deviating from that mainstream. To rephrase that question, currently the Arts Council is writing policies about cultural diversity as opposed to very 80s ideas of funding. The idea of diversity is very interesting, ideally this means, that you would not necessarily assume that there is a centre as such. So the question would not be 'why are you alternative', the question would either come down to 'do you have enough members to call yourself a big channel?', which certainly I cannot answer at this moment. And the other question is 'do you aesthetically deviate from what is assumed to be good taste to be called alternative?'. Again it is a problem to answer that, right now the web page is really ugly because it's just a temporary web page.

But what it comes down to is to really concentrate on the idea of yourserver. This for me is really the next step that followed a lot of ways that representation on the internet has been thought about. And as we talked about Kulturserver, and I think we would be very vital in the Northwest as a kind of database for projects, I think for too long the internet has been mainly thought about as an archive model for regions or communities. I think the potential lies mainly in the possibility to archive material and not falling in the trap of saying 'This is Manchester on-line'. If you include any city metaphor, you are actually including a lot of urban hierarchies and structures. Basically you are following a lot of architecturally and nationally determined power structures. So the role of yourserver is basically being a benevolent facilitator towards cultural projects of people, who themselves

don't have the knowledge or the capacity or don't get the funding together to get projects on-line themselves.

And that links to the idea of how is it being funded and the curatorial policy. The idea of redundant technology made me think about what I think is a good way of setting up a server, because originally they were all mainly rooted in the idea of the hacker. The idea of the hacker for me is linked to partly the idea of gift economy, but partly also to the idea of not wanting state funding. In terms of the cost you will face with setting up a server that doesn't run as a virtual server on another bigger server, you are actually facing administrative costs, upgrading costs and so on that make it quite unrealistic to start on a big independent scale. Independence for me is always a relative term, and the idea of redundant technology made me think that I would be interested in redundant resources.

If you look at University bodies or already publicly funded bodies there is a lot of equipment and a lot of people with skills who are keen to apply these skills in the real world. There are also a lot of administrators already operating on huge university networks, most of them are very skilled and most of them are quite interested in doing something which they don't see as a challenge technically, but possibly as enriching socially or just as an interest. So I am currently trying to identify redundant resources in already existing huge administrative bodies, which makes me quite unpopular in the kind of terminology of 'no state involvement in internet projects'.

Also I have to say that there will be arts funding, 4000 £ for a project to produce a series of works which will be sitting on yourserver. That money is needed to pay artists, which is a very vital part in the budget plan. Form then on I am looking forward to working collaboratively in terms of getting students and their energy, possibly for free, possibly even as a part of some course objective of computer studies or design or even literature, working with artist on projects in that environment. Secondly yourserver is very much the possibilities how disenfranchised communities in the Northwest, who otherwise don't have any access, can present themselves, their culture and their work in the media. I am not even saying that the people who might put their work on there have neighbours who might be able to see it, because being disenfranchised means that you don't have your computer next door, but it's still a motivation to at least know that something is maintained and looked after in a way.

RICHARD BARBROOK: Now that everybody has presented a summary of their projects it would be good to open the discussion. Just to come back to one of the main questions we have been focusing on, which is, in what ways can we say these are alternative or mainstream organisations. We have heard that actually their relationship is often very ambivalent and are often piggy-backing on this larger institutions.

We have also been talking about their curatorial policy and I think what is interesting is that no one seems to have a curatorial policy apart from the enforcement through friendship networks of particular social and cultural viewpoints. And lastly, we talked about money and how everybody is participating in the gift economy, but also looking for money elsewhere. It would be good to hear other people's comments and opinions.

DANIEL MOLNAR/AUDIENCE: Much of what you have talked about is about infrastructure, about providing access, web space. If I have my crisis and am a bit sick of titles and identities, so if I don't want my www.daniel.org

domaine, I can get a lot of things for free. I can get free e-mail addresses and web space, free operation systems, lots of things. I feel there is a need to collect this knowledge how to express yourself if you want to, and how to put it on the net or free. I don't want to say that your efforts are not needed, they are needed, but perhaps this kind of knowledge should be collected in one place? If you want to have your own server we should provide information, how you can buy a used computer for low prices, how you can start your own server, because this knowledge is necessary to do your thing, and you can buy it in very expensive books right now.

RICHARD BARBROOK: Are there any comments on the panel on the idea that you are just providing infrastructure and you can get that from everywhere for free, like hotmail and so on.

FREDERIC MADRE: No, not at all. We are not providing free space at all, we are presenting what we [-and nobody else-] do on the internet. I have seen numerous French sites, which are offering space for whatever and what they are offering is in fact a place on the internet for people who are not from the internet and who, for some reason, don't understand what is happening there. It is not by providing space, that you will learn and those people who fill that space will not learn anything. Our approach was to do things ourselves [for ourselves].

VUK COSIC: Partially it is a branding thing. People want to be with a server, because there is other good stuff there they want to be related to. It is sort of like publishing in a good magazine. People just want to go along, they don't want to have their own server name. Visibility.

DANIEL MOLNAR/AUDIENCE: One thing is visibility, but another thing is that I don't really need that kind of thing if I know what I want to do and I want to know how.

MICZ FLOR: Don't you think that the idea of the art server is very much about the culture, rather than the art object? I think, that is something which, at least for what I want to do, is very crucial, especially for very unspectacular, low key, community based work. I think that is why the Kulturserver unrightly said, that it is not typical for the internet, I think the opposite is true of the internet right now. There is a lot of interest in community driven work, and it is very important to realize that these smaller projects that amplify each other by sitting on one location, which might even be geographically mirroring to an extent. That actually creates a culture rather than a series of individual objects, that is were the potential lies. Also regarding funding, it is still easier to get funding, if you have your own domaine name, than saying 'I need money to survive and they give me space for free'. It is harder to get the project funded.

O./AUDIENCE: You are sitting there saying you are art servers, that is not enough. I want you to specify what that means and what it is about. Regarding this, I have questions about the aspects of community building or the network of trusts. Vuk, you were giving the reference regarding the question, what your server is providing, saying that this community network is giving a sort of net credibility, that as an art server as a paratext, where you find the links and the contextualisation of art works, and this is when you talk about funding and aspects of the transfer of the symbolic value and then the social capital directly into the economic capital. You said that there is the social, the community connection, you are giving the right links, which means you are giving the credibility. This seems to be an aspect of

the strategy of one strain of art servers. This is the same thing Klaas was saying on a completely different level, because he was giving the reference to the real community, but you also want to make this commercial value out of it by providing the links and the contextualisation of the artist or the art works.

So I wanted to know, - and Micz was saying this a bit now at the end -, if this community link structure, the paratext among the artists, is linked to the funding structure and to the justifications why art servers should exist? Beside the other idea that there can be art projects, - to which you also gave the reference, Micz, and where I don't agree completely - if it is really necessary to have a big infrastructure and much money, but that's another question.

RICHARD BARBROOK: So art servers are a conspiracy to construct cultural capital...

VUK COSIC: Actually I would like to pick up were Daniel started to criticise this whole operation. We came about when there was no free access, no free disc space, no free e-mail accounts, or mailing lists available online and we did it in 1995. Other than providing this stuff, we are now also giving an interesting context to everybody, as I already said it, the visibility and brand names, people want to be seen in such contexts. Of course, there are people who don't want anything to do with us, we are not going to cry our eyes out about that. The rules are simple, you do whatever you want as long as it is not commercial and don't ask for the impossible, and we'll do business. And the cultural capital and the other stuff that is coming out of it, well somehow our particular group does not exploit these assets very much.

KLAAS GLENEWINKEL: In this project, we are trying to focus on groups, that otherwise would not have any relationship to the internet, not even in the future. The market in Germany is somehow saturated, so the big boom of people entering the market regarding age and gender is not really changing, that's at least my experience.

(TAPE INTERRUPTED)

PIT SCHULTZ/AUDIENCE: Why don't you set up a server in East Germany, because Lower Saxony is in terms of media very well funded and over-represented. A lot of things are going on there already. How would an art server go on in a rural area in East Germany, where there is no cultural infrastructure anymore with the big problems with right wing groups and racism?

And this leads to the question of locality, if you localise your server it is good to know why, with which strategies and for what reason. What I mean is that there is a problem of territorialisation of data, everyone has their little data gardens, often it's just temporary blossoming and disappearing again. This whole fetishization of your own little virtual territory is often a little bit bourgeois.

On the other hand, there may be a need to territorialise servers when they have a clear connection to the local cultural expressions like the server in Riga, which brings in contents, which are not available in other ways. The question, how to territorialise data is always difficult and I sometimes ask myself, why the art servers don't get together, one big server with really high bandwidth and the whole question of technological facility is then

solved and you could then territorialise on the virtual level. If local identity is the question, the question is, if this has to be represented on your own server standing in your own little office. I think there is this fetishization of the physicality of data.

RICHARD BARBROOK: So instead of being cultural capitalists they are feudal potentates.

KLAAS GLENEWINKEL: We are doing a lot of fieldwork, calling people who are doing interesting stuff. It happens quite a bit, that we are talking to someone who lives completely remote, doing fine art exhibitions in the garden or so and sometimes, when we offer them their free web space, they say 'You are the third one today offering me some free web space'. There is a big content hunt going on in Germany right now, I really think in a year everyone who can fart can make a CD.

MICZ FLOR: I completely understand and expected that question. I can't generally answer it, but I can give an example, when locality in the European context would make sense. There is one project that is not on the net yet, but it will be, it's in Liverpool area, which is an opportunity in development area and gets a lot of European funding. There are the Liverpool Black Sisters, a local group of black women, who are very politically motivated and work on their culture. They are struggling with urban structures, but quite interestingly also with European structures. They would be in a situation where their place gets mapped out somewhere in the European parliament to get money. So the question for them is, European money is coming in, they experience where the money is going. They are using it on the back of the poor people who live there and somebody will build a facade of shopping arcades around the poor area, so nobody will see it anymore.

Out of that experience they started working on the Black Woman's Guide to Europe, which was basically a local project, but the experience of Europe is all happening within that little community. We started to think about ways of developing this project as a local activity and then by doing that it is very locally linked with their experience of politics in their front garden. But the actual power of having it locally bound is by linking it sideways and using information that comes from similar situations, as they happen all over the place to identify your own position within the bigger network, within the bigger reality, but also identify your very local position by learning from other ups and downs as things are going along.

Of course the idea of developing local networks is never supposed an isolated letter, photocopies are much more superior to internet, also because most of the people like the Liverpool Black Sisters have one computer for the whole community. The potential still lies in combining these things laterally, I think that is where local projects do make sense.

FREDERIC MADRE: We had to move our site somewhere, and we chose an American server, because it was the cheapest way to do it. We don't care, if the server is in America or anywhere else, it doesn't mean anything on the internet, if our domain name is "in" America. Sometimes, it was a difficult topic to discuss in our group to [go and] put it up in America, so [it remains] as a [private] joke [that] we put this old song ["existential"] by a punk band on our previous free homepage. We say that we spit in the face of the free market, but we also like to use it. So if it is the cheapest to go to the USA, we go there.

ARMIN MEDOSCH/AUDIENCE: I have a specific question to Vuk, what are you going to do if there is no more money from Soros coming in?

VUK COSIC: Right now, the money is there and we are doing our best to use it in a good way. Then we will see, right now we have started some PR. We know that we will get some money for next year, much less than this year, so we will be able to eat. But in this time we will have to become sort of independent, register independently. We have to fight to maintain the equipment. And we have to see, whether we want to do this when we grow up, how long do we want to stay in the business, and what is the future of the area?

ARMIN MEDOSCH: Is charging the hosted project on your server an option in the future?

VUK COSIC: No that's just petty money. Slovenia is a very small country, you can't live on the volume. You can't charge two pounds and expect to get rich.

Q. FROM AUDIENCE: What's this massive preoccupation with offering free services to everybody in the pursuit of independence, it's just not practical.

VUK COSIC: That's easy, that means nothing, I agree.

MICZ FLOR: I feel strongly, that the idea of a server space is to an extent a very public space and it is similar to charging people for walking on the street.

VUK COSIC: There is this whole idea of spreading the truth about creating independent networks of people, but it's hard to do that. It's impossible to impose this on people and say 'we give you free server space, e-mail accounts, mailing lists, whatever', but it will not automatically mean that people will be aware that they could benefit from a higher level of organisation, that they might be more mobile. There is no way to react to this, but there is this reality of big players and small players as well and we are part of this. Art Servers Unlimited and United is an option, but if there is no real awareness that it might be useful and for what it might be useful, then it won't happen.

RICHARD BARBROOK: Do you think everyone who puts out stuff on your server should contribute financially?

KONRAD BECKER: Actually I do think that public space should be free and the whole communication network systems where originally financed by tax money. And if in America, they finance the industrial military complex through that, it is kind of dubious how the public has to pay for all the expenses again when the profits come in. It's not for free anymore. That's a very strange balance, that's politically relevant in many ways, like the social dynamics and economics as such. Yes, I think it should be for free, unfortunately we can't afford to give it for free.

RICHARD BARBROOK: I think we should wrap up here. Thank the participants and thank you for coming along.

PANEL 4: EXPERIMENTAL TECHNOLOGY / BEYOND NET.ART /

SPEAKERS: JAMES STEVENS, OSKAR OBEREDER, MARKO PELJHAN, HEATH BUNTING, KASS SCHMITT, JAANIS GARANCS, JAMES WALLBANK.

ARMIN MEDOSCH: This panel is hosted by Mathew Fuller who is not only a very good writer but also a creative 'technologist' himself, he created the web stalker which is a new way of browsing in the internet.

MATTHEW FULLER: This panel is quite a collection of participants of the conference because we've got technicians, we've got artists administrators which is quite a bonus. We have been given the remit to talk about experimental technology and 'beyond net.art', both of which kind of ideas are pretty heavily loaded, both tied into ideas of history, into ways of producing net.art historically. Net.art always used the modernist trick to present itself as the next big thing so perhaps this panel will be able to present the next big thing after that.

And the idea of experimenting with technology is also very much to do with history as an upgrade path. Maybe we can also escape that little determinism written in the title as well. The problem faced by this panel in a sense is, working from a basis of the position of art servers, how would you create a dialogue between the language of art and the language of technique. In the history of modernist art technique has always been sublimated, has been pushed underneath, we don't talk about technique, we talk about concept and that has always very much split the technician from the artist.

One thing this panel could do is maybe develop some ideas of were those roles interweave and maybe try and talk about another kind of language that can quite honestly talk about aesthetics and also talk about technique quite openly. Basically what we are going to do is probably ignore what I just said and do three minutes short presentations and then go on to talk about what else is on your mind. There is quite a great range of people on this panel.

JAMES STEVENS: I am the founder of Backspace. Maybe the best is a brief outline how I see Backspace developing over the next sixth months. I have been working for six months to try and consolidate the technological ground we have gained so far and weave together all the offers and opportunities I see ahead into a platform for extending into new spaces and accommodate a broader range of disciplines and interests and technologies into these spaces as and when and where they seem most appropriately positioned.

To that end we will almost certainly be establishing two new servers, either in the UK or elsewhere in Europe and possibly, as a process of meeting and talking to all of the people here, maybe integrate some of the software developments that seem to be around into a collision of development of access and extension of space. The establishment of new places and platforms for new ideas to flourish, but with a pretext of self-sufficiency firmly in place there and to draw a subscription or contribution from those people participating.

OSKAR OBEREDER: My name is Oskar Obereder and I'm the founder of Silverserver. Silverserver is no artserver, we are an access provider in

Vienna. Silverserver was founded in 1995 and from the beginning on we tried to connect people with cheap leased line access to our backbone. In 1996 we founded the Vienna Backbone Service. This is a decentral backbone service with about 20 access points. VBS caused the establishment from approximately 50 enterprises within the future area in telecommunications and internet. Only the price-performance combination made a business entrance and success for many users affordable.

In collaboration and strategic partnerships with a lot of local artists, labels, techno DJs, clubs [Farmers Manual, Dextro, Lia, Kes, Monoscope, Sofa Surfers, Rhiz, Mamax, Medhost...] schools, advertising enterprises we are running about 20 nodes all over Vienna. The prototype of a modern data service is up and running and growing rapidly.

The tools we are using is a kind of social and hightech engineering, we are using Linux as control mode system for the backbone, there are no strict business plans, and estimations go from 10.000 to 15.000 people who receive their internet access at least indirectly via the VBS, because there are also a lot of subproviders [as Public Netbase, The Thing,...] connected to the backbone. At the moment about 250 GB per month of data are exchanged from the VBS to the internet. We have different international bindings to Ebone, Nacamar, EUnet, we have an own satelite news feed, we have peering agreements with EUNET, SWISSCOM, NACAMAR, VIA.NET, GLOBAL ONE, NETWAY..

MATTHEW FULLER: Oskar, could you say more about what peering agreements are and how they relate to your other initiatives?

OSKAR OBEREDER: Peering agreement is very important for access providers, because you will get only peering agreements if you have a lot of content in your net. [Peering agreements are agreements between backbones to establish a direct connection between them in order to avoid slower and more expensive detours. The more peeringagreement a provider has, the better it works, and the better its reputation.]

At the moment there are 120 webservers running, that's why we have so many peering agreements. VBS was not planned, it simply occurred. (-)

MATTHEW FULLER: OK, thanks. James Wallbank of RTI, please -

JAMES WALLBANK: First I'd like to say: if any of you in the audience have any old computers, if there are old computers at the place you work, please get in touch with me, because we want them.

[We found ourselves in a position common to many artists -] we wanted to get involved with information technology but we didn't have any money. So we decided to develop an alternative strategy for getting cash to finance our interest in technology - that strategy was not to bother. We didn't really like the feel of a lot of technology-based art, which seems to have a lot to do with product demonstration. High-tech companies are happy to sponsor digital art - they have some fantastic deals where they let you use their computers for free. And this particular institution [The ICA] seems to have gone down that path.

Effectively what an artist is doing [by working in this way with brand new, cutting edge technology] is becoming a product demonstrator for a new, exceedingly expensive machine. And we didn't want that, our art to become part of this sort of marketing process].

So what we have done is to develop a communication strategy for getting our hands on whatever computers are available for free, as many of them as we possibly can, and then finding creative things to do with them. There are many unexplored possibilities for things to do with 386's and 486's [that cost little or nothing]. We've been doing installations and writing new programmes [and networking] and it's crucial to us that is a free process.

This has put us in quite an interesting position, because we have ended up with a warehouse that's about three-quarters full at the moment with computers. So we've created a real disposal problem there. But what we've done is turn that problem into a resource by talking to a local training provider that's running courses on information technology installation and maintenance. So our warehouse is serving as a training placement for their students, where they can learn about repairing machines. [And if they break a few while they're learning, it doesn't really matter.]

[One of these students' biggest problems on other work placements has been lack of broad-ranging, practical experiences. Many placement employers simply say, "Here is a copy of Office 98. Install it on these sixteen identical machines, and whatever you do, don't mess around with the hardware, you may break it.", which gives the students very limited exposure to a wide range of installation and maintenance issues.]

So we are now a training provider, and consequently we are getting technical support and help for free, which is kind of interesting.

Another interesting side effect of that activity is that we have provided a very quick and dirty connection between small scale businesses and the arts, and that is something which these businesses seem to be very enthusiastic about. Having us given their rubbishy old computers, then say what a fantastic idea it is and how much they support the arts. The side effects of that are very positive indeed.

Artistically we're very interested in network feedback, the way you can use the net to generate feedback loops. The most obvious example of this being a chain letter. It gets much more interesting, though, when these feedback loops have effects in the real world, not just on the net. And it's extremely interesting when those feedback loops result in the build-up of the quantity of technology which we've got our hands on now. Computers which when new, probably cost about half to three quarters of a million pounds... but now they're trash.

[And just one final word in this introduction] - if you, in the audience, don't have any redundant computers that you can give us now, then think, in a surprisingly short amount of time you will have. We can wait.

MARKO PELJHAN: I decided that I will present a new initiative, Insular Technology. It is basically a development of a secure short wave voice and data communication equipment for centres like Ijudmila, V2, Backspace or E-Lab. It's for these centres which work with new and old media and have a need for secure and unbreakable communication that does not use the internet. It's a hardware development project of 256 bit encryption, which is a very strong encryption and it will be a proprietary technology of PAKT Systems, which is a research unit of my group, and a company called SIFRA(?) in Slovenia, which already produces its own 128 bit encryption system. This will be a box with a terminal which will have the ability of sending text and voice. Each of the centres will have it's own call number

and the plain frequency range is 4MH, 8MH and 13 megahertz. The whole idea is to build a trust with a pool of money and distribute this product to all this centres. We would come and install the equipment and provide the manual. The initial idea for this project is of course that there might be a day when the internet will die. For example we have some colleagues in Albania who still don't have access to the internet and from then on I said, fuck it. If I can talk to Japanese people every night over the short wave, why shouldn't I talk to Tirana and talk securely, especially because the world today is very dangerous at the moment. So that's it, I am just starting to work on this project and the first prototypes will be out next year.

HEATH BUNTING: I'm here in the capacity as a senior editor of Biotech Hobbyist Magazine [<http://www.irational.org/biotech/>], which is a magazine dedicated to bringing hightech biotech to peoples bedrooms.

But firstly, I am going to talk of a sideline collaboration with RTMark.com [<http://www.rtmk.com>], a funding organisation for corporate sabotage and subversion. I am a fund manager and my fund specialises in direct actions against biotechnology, property and representation. We are currently setting up a funding mechanism, where people can pledge money to acts of subversion. Combined multiple micro pledges will have a capital political effect that is easily transportable to issues of conflict around the world. We will not have to actually collect the money people pledge, because the pledges have a value in themselves. If we run things well, we can just chuck our weight around.

KASS SCHMITT: I would like to read a chapter of John Chris Jones' "Technology Changes", [princelet editions, p.107-110], who I'm happy about is with us in the audience today. I picked it out by random before I came here but it seems to be relevant to what we are talking about here.

"13: FELLOWSHIP WITH MEN
above the creative heaven
below the clinging flame

I asked one of the Irish folk musicians who performed in Roaratorio (Paeder Mercier, drum, the one who appeared to be enjoying it the most) how he decided when to play and when to be silent. He said that each of them had been asked to play for twenty minutes out of the hour which the piece takes and to decide for themselves what to play and when. He said he had some kind of plan in mind before starting but that he would change it according to circumstances. If the piece he started to play seemed to interfere with what another was playing he might stop and continue later. But I understood the instructions were to not to play the same pieces or to try to harmonise or keep in time with each other. I am reminded now of when I first encountered modern music, at a lecture by Karlheinz Stockhausen, and how he explained how difficult it is for any of us, whether we are trained musicians or completely inexperienced, to improvise in concert. It is quite easy to get up to fortissimo but so difficult to ever get back to quiet music or silence. We have no experience of trying to listen to each other as we ourselves sing, speak, hum, whistle, play or whatever. All we have been taught or learnt to do is to follow instructions, scores, commands etc. We do not believe there IS any alternative to command-obey other than wild competitiveness. Our self-discipline, so-called, when deprived of external command, consists only of trying to shine as an individual. Or of not taking part at all because we 'are not good enough'. We are either conductors (and composers), soloists, obedient chorus-singers or orchestra-players, or else 'audi-

ence'. We have no expectation, let alone skill, in the practice of music free of external command and getting its discipline from the attentiveness of each to the whole of what is happening. I'm sure that the same is true of any other kind of activity outside music. No faith in each other, without the imposition of laws, regulations, penalties, and rewards. This, I'm sure, is our greatest barbarism, or lack of development. All we can envisage is externally applied government, or internally derived selfishness and destructiveness. "Listen-listen-listen" writes Jackson Mac Low repeatedly in his 'sermons' on how to perform his 'simultaneities' (chance composed words-compositions intended to be spoken-sung by many voices without indication by him of rhythm, pitch, duration, timbre, etc, except where he gives chance methods of finding these for oneself). This is the reason I've been so hesitant to try and get my plays performed. I know only too well that trained actors will have been taught, as gospel, as law, all sorts of intentions about 'self-expression' or 'making sense' of the text and I find it difficult to envisage being able to remove these without myself having to impose another external discipline. I gather that Stockhausen, Cage, and others who are attempting to realise performances that are not controlled, either by a leader or by competitiveness and the desire to interpret for the audience, but are the result of each one 'listening to what's happening' or 'letting it happen', are driven to seek players whom they really can trust to do this (often their close friends) or to impose, via chance processes or other strange devices, a form of non-discipline-from-with-out. I guess that, if there is to be a new kind of social government (no government at all, in the traditional sense) there will have first to be experiments of a similar kind so that we can acquaint ourselves with how to be, in large numbers, 'in love' rather than 'acute war'. Why not? It's no more unlikely than is being able to speak our mother tongues rather than officialese, academic jargon, 'correct english' or some other imposed way of communication. 'Drop it' seems to be the instruction we most need: the instruction to disobey, but with the attentiveness that the imposed conventions do not require. The attentiveness that is required when one realises that one is not following a convention but making one up as one goes along, that one is not accepting a given meaning, or interpretation, but is constructing meaning as one does it, whatever it is that one is doing. What seems to be so hard for us to learn is that, in order to find this order, we may as often be led, by what we attend to, to do nothing as to do, to contribute as much by listening as by adding to the din.

When Ed came over to make some films with me he asked that I get a camera of some kind for everyone who joined in. All of my family did, as did Chris Crickmay's, and some of our friends. Everyone had a video camera, a super8 camera, or at least an instamatic. Some brought audio cassette players which were left on the ground playing music which was picked up now and then if anyone passed by with a video recorder switched on. All he said, as instructions, was to ask me to go to choose a place to go and film in (we went to a chalk quarry I knew, an almost lunar landscape) and that everyone should react to whatever he or she saw or heard or otherwise noticed while filming or photographing what was there. Much of what was there was ourselves, each performing (in the language of the convention we had dropped) the roles of director, film-actor, camera-operator, and without realising it. All we knew was that we were enjoying a day out. Ed explained, when I asked him, what he meant by 'react to'. If, for instance, you see something or someone move, react to the movement with the camera in some way, preferably not directly copying it but perhaps by moving the viewfinder in some complementary direction, up-and-down if the motion is from side-to-side, say. When we got home and played the tapes and films simultaneously from as many projectors or video screens as we had cameras, we found we had

made a most lively and coherent composition. You'd see a person, with a camera, perhaps talking as he walked off one screen to be picked up on another as if the whole thing had been planned that way. And it was so funny! But it took being in the filming of it to enjoy it in our 'naïve' way. Friends who called to see what we were up to had some difficulty not knowing 'how to look at it' and straining to find 'meanings' which were not there. They killed our pleasure and failed to share it themselves. Perhaps there is no place for 'audience' in the order of things to come, the order of being present and alive to what is? As in folk music?"

JAANIS GARANCS: My name is Jaanis Garancs. I'm from Latvia, Riga, where I work with e-lab.

At the moment I study at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Stockholm. I work with computers - and as an artist - for two reasons: because it is a sort of selfhealing medium and because it is an efficient tool to fulfill the social responsibility which I feel inside me. By going through different waves of addiction to technology, I learned things which enable me to help e-lab with their server remotely. I had ambitions to learn a wide range of tools and technology for creating art, but I feel I am still at the beginning.

Now I would like to talk about the range of projects I am involved with together with some discussion. There was mentioned something like building an alternative interface, some underground or pirate structure, which could be very effective even on a global scale, also to make bridges between different kind of media of selfexpression as a contribution to society.

MATTHEW FULLER: Does anybody have any opinion on the differences between private networks and what Marko is suggesting and the relatively open system of IP?

JOHN CHRIS JONES/AUDIENCE: I was reminded when you talked about used computers on somebody who does this, Norman White. I don't know if you know him, he lives in Canada and does helpless robots. His robots are completely composed of used computers, even from the 70ies or 60ies. He does the programming himself. So the robots keep asking you to do something for them. E.g. they can't move themselves so the robot asks: To the right - stop stop - to the left - no stop - more right - and eventually the robot gets pretty angry. He takes this as a model for human relationship. And the people in the small town he lives in, know this, and whenever they have an old computer, they put it in front of his warehouse and he takes them in to use them, as you are doing. So I thought it might be interesting for you to know about it.

JAMES WALLBANK: Yeah, there are potentially whole loads of things which can be done with used computers that are being thrown away now. And that potential is going to grow every year as more and more potential computers are going to be thrown away. And there seems to be a stupid tendency of how people talk about digital art, net.art or generally arts involving computers, where people talk about the exciting nature of the high power of technology and so on - and very much avoiding talking about the content of the art, whether it's good or not. You can see whole articles by art critics in magazines talking about multiple megabytes of disk space and real time video streaming and whatever it might be. And as an artist I'm not interested in that stuff, I don't care.

HEATH BUNTING: You know, you shouldn't read these magazines...

RACHEL BAKER/AUDIENCE: I am trying to get a picture of what the general theme is here. Backspace represents the place for me where I can work as an artist, but is more a social space than a place to create art. Artists do use it but mainly as a social space which has also a server. James Wallbank - I wonder have some artists begun a project to make art, or is the art project itself collecting computers?

JAMES WALLBANK: The actual process that is brought about is part of the art. It's really important that we acknowledge that the processes that make technological art works possible. You can say that RTI and our activities are one big artwork, or you can look at our art products individually.

Most of the time [at RTI] is actually spent on developing strategies to get PCs, and going to donors and grabbing bits of kit. But is the fact that we spend a lot of time acquiring the tools to make artworks any different from the way that many other artists' groups work, where they are spending three days out of seven filling in forms for fund raising, approaching big information technology companies asking for finance or sponsorship [or pursuing other fund raising strategies] or what have you?

RTI's method for getting involved with IT is just an alternative strategy for getting the job done. It's a strategy that I advocate because in some sense it breaks the audit-trail of meaning. What I mean is this: If you make a high technology artwork that makes full use of the powers of a brand new computer, but not only that, you even need a brand new computer and a fantastic high speed internet connection in order to view that piece of art, then there is a very, very close feedback loop between your work and the product you are creating that work with.

[You're making something that directly promotes your sponsor's product, and even requires your audience to buy your sponsor's product in order to view your artwork properly.]

You become very much a product demonstrator. Your sponsor is doing a lot for you, giving you access to an expensive, high-tech computer, and you're doing a lot for your sponsor, and you can't get around the fact that your sponsor's role is affecting [unacceptably, in my opinion] the meaning of the work.

Meanwhile each sponsor that helps RTI is doing something very small for us, in fact lots of sponsors have actually said, "You are doing us a favour." - and we know we are doing them a favour - we are taking away their trash!

So once we've got the gear from them, we don't owe one big sponsor a huge debt. [To our donors the cash value of the sponsorship in kind that they're giving us is pretty close to zero - but we have put ourselves in a position where we can use equipment that other people see as junk.] What I call "the audit-trail of meaning" is severed by this process. [We don't owe one technology sponsor a gigantic debt of gratitude, so avoid becoming our sponsors' "pet artists", given access to giant techno-toys that we could never afford ourselves. Thus our art resists the tendency to become little more than a tool in the service of a sponsor's agenda.] And that's why I think it's interesting.

ROBERT ADRIAN X/AUDIANCE: Looking at that panel and looking at the people in this room it seems to me that there is one thing we all have in common, which is everybody is a collaborator. While last week I was here on a panel with other individual artists making their projects within a technical environment or a social programme, it seems that one characteristic of these

works is- the word we are looking for here is 'collageing'. Whether we are collaging systems or old computers, it's a process which has gone on since centuries away of recycling found material, it's not paper anymore like Schwitters had done, it's technologies which are collaged now and it builds the infrastructure for collaborations.

ARMIN MEDOSCH/AUDIENCE: This was an interesting remark. Maybe we can go a bit more into this direction, because we have already started to talk about infrastructures, which support this collaboration.

JANIS GARANCIS: I started as a painter, and at the beginning it was a big turn in my life, when I accepted I could work together with people and I wouldn't rather call it a collage, but the acceptance of that you are not alone and that there are things you can't do yourself. Another reference is, as being project employed in a big Swedish medialab and having access to fantastic technology I worked there on a pioneer level, that also gives a landscape of possibilities. I think nowadays, you just have to accept that people get much more connected and interdependent on each others activities. Maybe in the stoneage everybody could take care of himself, but now, if a car hits me on the street for example, I cannot survive if electricity is not given to the hospital.

Marko is building an alternative communication tool, which will be independent from governmental or commercial structures. Another project about internet domain names is name.space by Paul Gerrin. So they are at the moment about alternative technology, but in terms of mass of action, that could turn around for example the commercial definition of the present internet naming system.

Q./AUDIENCE: I like this point about collaborating. I just realized the whole structure of internet art is based on collaboration. You need to be specialized in one part of the multimedia, if you don't do low tech. So if you want to be good in Photoshop you have to use it ten hours per day, to be really good in it. And to programme an internet page you need to be a programmer, so it's absolutely necessary if you want to set up something special, and that's what most of us want to do, you need to be specialised and to work together. These low tech things- I might sound arrogant now, but these low tech things are very easy to set up, you can set up your home page in one minute, but if you want to do something that fits to the possibilities of the media, you need to be specialized and you need to be a group. And that's something, that changed art, too, you can't be a single artist anymore, also to be a group of artists is not possible, because you always need somebody, who is highly specialized. At least in the latest moment, when you want to bring all this things to the net, you need technicians, who have nothing to do with arts, but you have to involve them in your artwork, to make it possible. So I think it's something really interesting with internet art and multimedia art, that parts of the society, which weren't involved in the earlier years, have to be involved today, to make it possible at all.

PIT SCHULTZ /AUDIENCE:

(TAPE BREAK)

... if you want to make money as specialized Photoshop designer, ok, but I think, what we need more is more interdisciplinary discourse, more universal discourses and more mixing between the specialisations. But maybe I misunderstood you. Secondly, I have a question: How does biotechnology

work in the bedroom?

PETER GOMEZ: I have also a question to Heath. I bought some humus from Marks&Spencers about 4 weeks ago, and it was in my fridge, and I happened to look at the ingredients and it was made from genetically modified soja. Much to my alarm, there was no labeling on the product, but I'm very worrying about the rights of transgenic products and the facts of labeling foods. So I was going to write a letter to M&S about my displeasure about them sneaking in transgenic beans into my vegetarian products. I wonder now what I can pledge in terms Heath's fund of and what would happen if I did?

HEATH BUNTING: OK, I'm going to answer these three questions. My first comment is, that I think the internet has been a viable site of playful intervention and to artify has been a mistake; the world has changed and the function of art has changed in the last 3 to 5 years. Confining ourselves just to talk about art just doesn't get us anywhere, not anymore.

So Pit's question was - how do you do bedroom biotech. I have big faith in bedroom activists. Basically the most interesting music in the last 20 years has come out of people's bedrooms, and I would also say the most interesting communication projects did come out of people's bedrooms. So we try to precipitate hightech technologies into people's bedrooms, that empowers the underground - that's the strategy of Biotech Hobbyist Magazine. We are offering kits and projects for people that they can do in their homes, particularly in their bedrooms.

TO PETE: I think time of communication is over, because it's basically a form of representation, and now we are getting serious. This is about life, you know, big corporations like Monsanto [<http://www.monsanto.com>] have a stated aim to insert them irreversibly permanently into the food chain. So if you want to eat, you have to go through them. For us in the west it's no problem, we just buy the same old rice, which may give us cancer, but for those other people in the rest of the world it's a much bigger issue. For example, Basmati rice is now owned as a patent, so if you live in the southern hemisphere, you have to buy your seed from a corporation and sell it back to them once you have reproduced it - it is illegal to hold seed for the next years crop, thus forcing farmers into the corporate system of domination [<http://www.rafi.ca/>].

JOHN CHRIS JONES/AUDIENCE: I thought I make another point on James' issue. He said quite clearly, that he doesn't get his sponsorship from one place, but from many little places, so no one is in control. I have been very struck by asking myself, why, if I want to do something experimental, which means I don't know what the aim is myself, if I know it's not experimental, I can never ask for a grant - because the first line at every grant form, or application for money from a sponsor or whatever is: What is the aim, the purpose? Then you have to tell a lie about this, which are many people happy to do, but I don't find I am, or you accept this fixed aim, and then all you can do is to work towards this fixed aim with the money, which is what they wanted to do - it's the string attached to the money. I don't think that this kind of string, of fixing the goal in advance, which is the classical industrial procedure, to set the production line, because you know what the output is first, you can't set up a production line if you don't know the output. But to begin art, is completely the opposite. You mustn't know the output in order to do experimental work. And therefore you must get sponsorship from either yourself, or friends, or multiple sources or

something but somebody who can dominate your aim.

MATTHEW FULLER: So to keep this themes all together: we got this idea of collaboration and specialization. So maybe people could talk related to this about their specific projects.

JAMES WALLBANK: I would like to make one point about collaboration. I agree with Heath that I really believe in the bedroom researcher. All sorts of interesting projects have come out of individuals, not out of collaborative projects. RTI's activities are orientated around empowering the individual artist, trying to put an emphasis on the kind of machinery that any one individual should be able to get hold of for a very, very low cost.

So as you said that people can experiment, it's important to see that just because a thing's produced with limited technology, it shouldn't be seen as somehow second best, but is in some way newly valid, because of that.

But ironically [despite our efforts to discover a new way of working, orientated around the practice and resources of the individual digital researcher] what we've found is that actually the nature of the digital medium is such that you need collaboration, because you need high levels of expertise.

One brain is just not enough. Even if you are dealing with something like a 286 or a 386 you need a team of people with some quite specialised knowledge to be able to get the maximum value from it. In a way I can see that Heath's project and what it is doing - if you like, providing technical support for individuals - is the way we should go - the more we can do this the better. Certainly RTI aims to do that and clearly the operative word here is "empowerment".

(TAPE BREAK)

OSKAR OBEREDER: I see there is a kind of social but also high tech engineering, because the technicians work with really expensive and new technologies. On the other hand we are using cheap UNIX systems as Linux and also radio transceivers and stuff to keep the prices for the leased lines really low. You cannot plan a network. There are so many people around - it can just happen. When we started in 1994 I didn't intend to become an access provider - it just happened.

JAMES STEVENS: But you made the initiative? That is the seed at that level to make the projects happen, driven by individuals, in this netpace.

KASS SCHMITT: I think I can bring together a couple of things. The comment on specialists I have to say I disagree with. I think it's a myth. Software companies or pretty much every company tries to get us to think that we need a specialist to do something. I suppose if your aim is to get the maximum, a value out of your technologies, then you might need a specialist, but the question is-

O/AUDIENCE (INTERRUPTS KASS): Sorry, but it's not the point to get the maximum out of your technology. The point is to get the maximum out of my work. If you want to do something today with technology and computers and try to do something, you have the picture in your head and you need specialists to realize it, then the time doesn't matter. Also if you built a church in the medieval times, you needed specialists- we are not talking about this anymore, but to create such a special, complex thing like a church you

needed specialists. So we come back to medieval structures, because today you need specialists to create a complex thing. Today there are lots of webpages, which are really crap, so if you want to create something special, you need specialists.

JAMES STEVENS: There are also a lot of crap churches.

LUKA FRELJH/AUDIENCE: May I comment on crap: I think the most crap is actually done by high tech specialists.

JAMES STEVENS: To engage in it as an artist, you engage in the whole process. You cannot complain about it and the effect it has on you as an artist, because you are trying to deal with it. You are bringing it in as your kind of framework.

MARGARETE JAHRMANN/AUDIENCE: We have the panel of experimental technology here, so you as artists use the structures of the media technologies as your own tool. You are having a social concept (points at Stevens), and you a political one (points at Obereder), yours refers to sponsoring (points at Wallbank), but I would like to know from Marko for example a bit more detailed the principles of your encryption box and how independent it is from the existing technology infrastructures or protocol systems?

MARKO PELJHAN: The idea is, that you create your own encryption code, so it is completely independent. The box has a mechanical key. The approximate cost of one unit with antenna and transmitter will be around 5000 DM, which is not apocalyptic I think.

JAMES STEVENS: So you use it for radio. Will you infringe territorial airwave regulations by using it?

MARKO PELJHAN: Well yes, the frequencies are chosen to feed into maritime frequencies, so it will be just some digital data flowing through this airband. It's completely ok, it's not going to use airtraffic frequencies as this would be dangerous.

HEATH BUNTING: How do you know that you are not working for the Secret Services? (-)

MARKO PELJHAN: How do I know? I am sorry I cannot answer this question... (-)

FREDERIC MADRE/AUDIENCE: To me as something like a purpose to technology, I'm very angry when I see all those companies, that brand the world life. Like you mentioned Monsanto, companies in France change their name to Vivandi and they say like: We make things that change your life. They are trying to get the power out of the state and of course to make money, but by branding the world, like 'Freedom' has been confiscated as a name and 'Life' will be confiscated soon, too. That reminds me of an older word, which is 'progress'. I'm thinking of the Stalinistic word 'progress' and I would like to know how each of you has an idea what progress is and what you do to make your idea of progress happening.

MATTHEW FULLER: Ok, so what are the sort of dynamics of technological development or change that these kind of Art Servers can actually produce, rather than progress at universities for example? Are your projects producing different dynamics, which couldn't exist in other contexts? What

does the freedom or licence of art mean?

MARKO PELJHAN: The freedom of the arts is a sort of historical freedom, which I think comes from the notion of freedom which was developed in the times of the avant-gardes. But we know, how this freedom translated later into, you know, that most of these people died, in the 30ies in Russia or had to move and so on.

So I would to certain point agree with Heath, who always says that art is redundant. We come to a stage in society where the notion of art is so diversified, that I would say, yes - a lot of what is perceived of artistic activity are completely alienated from society. On the other hand the codes of society give art a certain amount of legitimacy to speak about things, which are otherwise restricted to larger systems of power. But as soon as you start walking on the edge of this larger systems of power, you start to have problems. That's automatic.

And one of the ideas for this example, Insular Technologies, this communication device, is to use the same sort of strategy the system of power uses, despite everything, and it is very difficult to locate this transmitter and even more difficult to disencrypt it. So this is a cat-and-mouse game, but the aim is very practical: the aim is to connect these people. You know, whoever is interested and whoever is included in this web of trust - it's a blind game in a way, but it is worth the risk, because of its methods it uses.

JAMES WALLBANK: I think there is a very simple, practical point we can make here, which is that these communication technologies are very powerful things. They can be used as tools of protest, tools of communication, tools of questioning... what have you... you know, whether or not this comes under the label of art, I don't really care. The issue is that there is an industrial and economic system which is not delivering what it could [and I suggest, should] deliver - it could deliver the £50 PC - but this isn't being delivered.

What's happening is that an average entrance level PC which enables you to access the internet still costs £1000. This means you have to be one of society's insiders, [well financed, employed, in a secure home, with good credit] before you can have access to this "dangerous" technology.

So if we can take practical steps as [unauthorised, ill financed, marginal] artists to arm ourselves with this technology, and give the possibility to other individuals who may be outside mainstream society, to take up these information weapons, then I think that the slide [facilitated by practical, real-world effects of information technology] towards centralisation and antidemocratic tendencies [including intrusive surveillance, automated censorship, increasingly powerful information tools for established power structures] are going to be in more and more trouble. That's it.

JOHN CHRIS JONES/AUDIENCE: This things about experiment and specialisation. I think it's easy to make a mistake here, a sort of logical mistake. I'm speaking English now, which it took me long time to learn. And some of us can speak programme languages. I remember the time, when proper programmers did it in ones and noughts, and you were not considered to be a proper person if you did it in any assembly language, like Algo (?) or so, but learning a computer language is not specializing, like learning to oilpaint or to draw is not specializing. It is only specializing, if you want to draw only one thing, if can draw anything with a pencil, or say anything in the computer language. And I think, it is not specializing, it is just learning

the language. If I may disagree with you...

ARMIN MEDOSCH: Any more remarks? - It looks like if we run out of energy. We overdraw an hour. I try to summ up a bit from the beginning. As I mentioned before, some of us met already wednesday and thursday. Yesterday we had another meeting, which went on during the whole afternoon. So ART SERVERS UNLIMITED conference, I think, is slightly different from most of the conferences which are probably held here in this house, at the ICA. Our main reason, why to do everything, was not only to have nice, interesting, inspiring talks, but actually kind of do something concrete to empower ourselves to go on to the next step. In this sense, one idea was the 'Inter-fund', brought up by e-lab, and I think e-lab is going to do that in one or another day. But I'd like to pick this up to question, should there be some sort of organisation between people involved in 'art servers'? My impression is that we still didn't leave the level of stating, ok, we are all so different, our projects are divers, that's it. Also we found out we all want to collaborate and we do it already, but we haven't concluded that much.

So one possibility is the creation of a backing and support organisation, maybe in form of a foundation, which would have the advantage, that there is already money, as foundations just give away the interest rate, so it doesn't need to acquire new money all the time. Even if it cannot give away much money, it could give organisational support, bureaucratic support, or it would be able to allocate funds.

Another possibility would be to create some technical structure. for example a server or database, where projects can subscribe themselves - a sort of Yahoo for 'art servers' only. It offers also some other collaborative functions. It could be the technical structure for a sort of web ring, where every project has a button, which brings the user to the next server on the webbing. Projects like this have been done already in the net.art circles, but we could do it on a bigger scale, in a less symbolic but more pragmatic and actual way.

A third topic could be the way of organising ourselves in the future, like thinking of another meeting. It's a bit like the European Union, a meeting, and another meeting (-;-). Part of the meeting is, that we find out we have to meet again, probably in a bigger circle, and will cost more money to airlines. So this was my summarization. Would anybody like to comment on this?

ROBERT ADRIAN X/AUDIENCE: It is actually just a question of what you Armin brought up yesterday, about the problems of getting money of the European Union. Is there anybody, who knows, where such sort of information could be brought in, where people could refer to some of the problems about the absolute opacity of the forms and of the procedures? If there is anybody, who knows, where one might find such information and assemble it as a webpage?

MATTHEW FULLER: One good thing to do is to approach one organisation with institution status, such as ARTEC in London, and either ask for successful applications or... just come...

(THE END)

PARTY UNLIMITED /

July 4, 2008 / 108

<http://www.partyunlimited.com>

July 4 / 20:00 / ICA

ART SERVERS UNLIMITED

<http://x-i.net/asu/live.ram>

Net.Radio Night Unlimited

ART SERVERS UNLIMITED

LIVE <http://x-i.net/asu/live.ram>
04.06.98 8.00pm - 1.00am GMT

ON-SITE SOUNDS MIX

B2MEN (Pararadio/Budapest)
presents:live mix and DJ-ing

- Power of a (Module) Playa
- Roma Dubb Archives <http://www.c3.hu/~b2men/rromadub/>
<http://www.c3.hu/~b2men/rromadub/sound.htm>
- Future Sound Of Budapest
- POP-Join The New Folkateers <http://www.c3.hu/~b2men/pop/pop.html>
- B2MEN's experimental soundserver <http://www.c3.hu/~b2men>
- East Edge <http://tyrell.neurospace.net>

Raitis Smits (Ozone/Riga)

- Compilation of Xchange-OPEN CHANNEL experiments & OZOne live sessions
<http://xchange.re-lab.net> <http://ozone.re-lab.net>

Deconstructing beck
(presented by Fokky/Belgium)

<http://www.deltritus.net/filegalart/beck>

OPEN-MIC

- stafete-microphone - topic:"net.radio" (moderated by Borut Savski and other 'net.radio people')
- discussions by ASU participants

LIVE ON-LINE STREAMS

8.00 - 8.30 pm

Pararadio (Budapest) <http://www.c3.hu/para>
(!) <http://www.c3.hu/para/live.ram>

8.30 - 9.00 pm

XLR (Moni, Reni, Mash, Jogi)

9.00 - 9.30 pm

SOUNDS IRRELEVANT (Virtual Revolution workshop at V2/Rotterdam)
<http://www.v2.nl/Projects/vr/>

10.00 - 10.30 pm

LJUDMILA (Ljubljana) <http://www.ljudmila.org>
(!) <http://www.ljudmila.org/july4.ram>

10.30 - 11.00 pm

MZX (Katarina, DJ Nova, Peter/Ljubljana) <http://www.radiostudent.si/mzx/>
(!) <http://www.radiostudent.si/mzx/private.ram>

11.00 - 11.30 pm

Mark Amerika (USA)

11.30 - 12.00 pm

FLEX (Vienna) Djs DSL, Demon Flowers <http://www.flex.at/>
(!) <http://www.silverserver.co.at/flex.ram>

12.00 - 12.30 pm

Radioqualia (Australia) <http://www.va.com.au/radioqualia>
(!) <http://www.va.com.au/radioqualia/radio.ram>

other sound sources

Radio LADA <http://www.giardini.sm/radio/asu.htm>
Radio OZOne <http://ozone.re-lab.net>
FARMERS MANUAL (Vienna) <http://live.vhs.at>



public conference and net.radio event
4/7/98 ICA The Mall

[http:// www.c3.hu](http://www.c3.hu) + www.ljudmila.org + www.mrf.hu + www.radiostudent.si/mzx + www.c3.hu/para + re-lab.net + www.lowtech.org + www.silverserver.co.at + www.t0.or.at + www.newmediacentre.com + www.yourserver.co.uk + www.backspace.org + www.irational.org + www.proteinTV.com + www.ellipsis.net + www.channel.org.uk + www.test.org.uk + www.lovebytes.org.uk + www.head-space.org + www.outcast.nl + www.dbonanzah.org + www.pleine-peau.com + www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk

A R T S E R V E R S
U N L I M I T E D



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ART SERVERS UNLIMITED is the first international conference bringing together practitioners focusing on art oriented internet servers. What can and needs to be done to develop, support and sustain independent, non-commercial, artistic and experimental projects on the Internet?

More than 40 participants from 7 European countries will present their projects and discuss the future outlook on Art Server activities.

EUROPEAN NET.RADIO NIGHT Tied into the Art Servers Unlimited conference a net.radio live event will be staged in the ICA bar. Multiple live streaming of audio signals from and to London - involving cities such as Budapest, Vienna, Berlin, Ljubljana, Riga, Rimini - will create a participatory trans-local audio environment and demonstrate the possibilities of interactive live broadcasting on the net.

ART SERVERS UNLIMITED conference and net.radio event
London, 4th of July 1998, Institute of Contemporary Arts

ICA New Media Centre and Brandon Room
11.30 a.m. - 6 p.m.: Conference
8 p.m. - 1 a.m.: Net.Radio Live Event

Tickets: £ 8 / £ 6 ICA members/concessions
Box Office 0171 930 3647

C3 Center + Ljubljana Digital Media Lab + Media Research Foundation + ministry of experiment + Pararadio + E-lab + Redundant Technology Initiative + Silverserver 10 Public Netbase + ICA New Media Centre + Yourserver + Backspace + Irational ProteinTV + Channel + Kirkless Media Centre + Lovebytes + Head-Space + Outcast.nl Dbonanzah + Pleine Peau + HyperMedia Research Centre

A R T S E R V E R S
U N L I M I T E D

4/7/98

ART SERVERS UNLIMITED is part of the Festival of Central European Culture. Sponsored by and in cooperation with: Austrian Cultural Institute, Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, Embassy of the Republic of Hungary, Arts Council of England, ICA New Media Centre, Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, Kulturkontakt.

Please check out the up to date info on:
<http://www.yourserver.co.uk/asu>

PRESS VOICES /

CRASH MEDIA / 5.98: ART SERVERS UNLIMITED

TELEPOLIS JOURNAL / 29.6.98: WILLKOMMEN IN DER WIRKLICHKEIT.

by Armin Medosch

NEED-TO-KNOW / 26.6.98: EVENT QUEUE: ART SERVERS UNLIMITED.

by Danny O'Brian

WIRED / 7.7.98: RADIOS' INDEPENDENCE DAY.

by Kathy Kennedy

CRASH MEDIA / 7.98: ART SERVERS UNLIMITED - ART FUNDING TOO LIMITED.

by Armendsen Walter

SPIEGEL ONLINE / 8.7.98: NETZKÜNSTLER LEBEN NICHT VOM BIT ALLEIN.

by Tilman Baumgärtel

MUTE 8.98: TO SERVE YOUR CULTURE: ART SERVERS UNLIMITED CONFERENCE.

by David Withaker

Art Servers Unlimited

Conference and net-radio event by and about independent art-on-the-internet initiatives

With the advent of the Internet as a public communication medium, artists were among the first to explore its characteristics and potentials. The Internet is a new, experimental and borderless for us and opens up special perspectives for servers hosting a variety of cultural and art projects. The goal is to look at different work...

It seems as if the idealistic notion of innovative art forms in digital media and networks is standing in opposition to the consumerist philosophy of gaining territory and branding of content provision. The following organisations from Central Europe and the UK will be present:

backspace, Redundant Technology Initiative, Revolving/yourserver] - [via: e-lab, xchange, ozone] All who are actively involved in running art servers - environments that support a blend of creative, experimental, artistic, non-commercial use of the internet - or who are thinking about launching a project of this kind are invited to participate.

London, 2nd to 4th of July 1998
CA New Media Centre & Backspace
Concept / Organisation / help to:
Marek Lukasz
mailto:mlukasz@plala.com.pl
Admin Medoach
mailto:admin@esgline.com.pl
http://www.yourserver.co.uk/en/

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Konferenz

Willkommen in der Wirklichkeit

29.06.98

Ein neuer Typ von Veranstaltung greift um sich

Art Servers Unlimited, Mikro_Lounge, Cybersalon, Face2Face

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Bis vor kurzem wurde das Internet als die Domäne der Ortlosigkeit - der Immaterialität - betrachtet und dafür gepriesen. Seit einiger Zeit jedoch ist verstärkt ein umgekehrter Trend zu beobachten. Leute, die intensiv in und mit dem Netz arbeiten, verspüren die Notwendigkeit, sich wieder an realen Orten zusammzusetzen, sich gegenseitig die Atemluft wegzuatmen und die Räume mit ihrem Stimmengewirr und Zigarettenqualm anzufüllen. Dieser Trend ist kein Anti-Trend im Sinne einer Abkehr vom Internet, trägt aber der alten Wahrheit Rechnung, daß der Mensch ein soziales Wesen ist und mit Seinesgleichen besonders gut kann, wenn die volle Bandbreite an Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten zur Verfügung steht.

Doch bei all dem sozialen Aktionsdrang geht es auch um etwas, das über die reine Zwischenmenschlichkeit hinausgeht, und dieses hat wiederum mit dem Netz der Netze zu tun. Die Rede ist hier nicht von den weltbewegenden Konferenzen und Meilensteine setzenden Festivals, und auch nicht von den diversen Multimediastammtischen, sondern von den etwas seltsamen Zwischenformen, die sich neuerdings etabliert haben.

Unter bewußter Auslassung von Vorformen und Urzeitpionieren sei hier ein kurzer Abriss davon gegeben, was sich gegenwärtig so anbahnt.

Mikro in Berlin

Berlin, jene Stadt, die lange Zeit geteilt war, und die nun, mit all den Problemen, die damit verbunden sind, plötzlich zur Hauptstadt eines wiedervereinigten Deutschlands werden soll, tat sich, obwohl es doch unbedingt Dienstleistungsmetropole werden will, bislang ausgesprochen schwer mit den Neuen Medien. Eine gewachsene Eigeninitiative wie die Internationale Stadt ist eingegangen, während andere, wie die Idee, im Prater eine Art Labor für Medienkunst einzurichten, erst gar nie auf die Beine gestellt wurden. Schluß damit, dachte sich eine Gruppe von ca. 12 Leuten (von denen einige den

regelmäßigen Lesern dieses Magazins keine Unbekannten sein dürften, wie z.B. Tilman Baumgärtel, Volker Grassmuck, Ulrich Gutnair, Andreas Broeckmann u.a.) und gründete den Verein Mikro e.V.. Dieser hat sich zum Ziel gesetzt, die verstreuten Keime einer Berliner Cyberszene zusammenzuführen. Als Medium dazu dient die "Mikro.Lounge", eine regelmäßig einmal im Monat stattfindende Veranstaltung, die jedesmal ein klar umrissenes Thema, eingeladene Gäste, moderierte Diskussion und Rahmenprogramm (Musik und Video) aufzuwarten hat. Bisheriger Höhepunkt waren die "Netzradiotage" (Telepolis [☐](#) berichtete).

Die nächste Mikro.Lounge (kaum zu glauben, es ist schon die fünfte), trägt den Titel "Geschlecht im Netz" und findet wie immer im WMF, Johannisstr. 20, Berlin-Mitte, statt und zwar genau am Mittwoch dem 1. Juli um 20:00 Uhr. Zum Gespräch eingeladen sind Evelyn Teutsch, Leipzig, Sabeth Buchmann und Katja Diefenbach, Berlin, Cornelia Sollfrank, Hamburg, Heidi Schelhowe, HU Berlin, Institut für Informatik, Diana McCarty, Budapest/Berlin. Die Moderation besorgen Ellen Nonnenmacher und Vali Djordjevic. Christine Kriegerowski (Video) und Claudia Reinhardt (Foto, Video) sorgen für die visuellen Aspekte, während DJ T-ina Platten auflegen wird. Weitere Informationen [☉](#) www.mikro.org.

Cybersalon in London

London, einst die Hauptstadt eines imposanten Weltreichs, inzwischen aber mehr wie Byzanz in der Schlußphase der Dekadenz (eine Art Stadtstaat ohne adäquates Hinterland oder industrielle Produktionsbasis), verfügt wahrscheinlich über die größte Konzentration an Webdesignern, Spieleprogrammierern, Lingo-Artisten und sonstigen Digital-Kreativ-Spezialisten jenseits von Silicon Alley in New York. Was kommt dabei raus, abgesehen von geschneigelten Web-Sites im Technoparty-Flugzettel-Look, dachten sich Repräsentanten der Zeitschriften [☉](#) Mute und Telepolis, sowie des [☉](#) Hypermedia Research Centre der Westminster University und riefen den Cyber.Salon ins Leben. Bei dieser Veranstaltung, die einmal im Monat an wechselnden Orten stattfindet, geht es vor allem darum, die Diskussion zu fördern. Eingeladene Vortragende (bisher u.a. Richard Barbrook, Armin Medosch, Caroline Basset, Peter Lunenfeld, Korinna Patselis) geben ein Thema vor, über das dann unter reger Beteiligung des Publikums - allesamt Werk-tätige der digitalen Zunft - diskutiert wird. Die ersten Meetings in Hinterzimmern von Pubs in Soho sollen von einer geradezu vorrevolutionären Intensität (inklusive der zum Schneiden dicken Luft) geprägt gewesen sein, während die Cybersalons im Untergeschoß des Internetcafes "Cyberia" bereits öffentlicheren, d.h. gesetzteren Charakters waren. Im kommenden Cybersalon Nr.8 am Mittwoch dem 29. Juli werden intellektuelle Urheberrechte das Thema sein, sprechen werden Vincent Porter und Mike Holderness. Interessierte können sich

[☉](#) hier für die Cybersalon-Announce Mailingliste subscribieren, über die die genauen Veranstaltungsdaten verschickt werden (die Liste dient nur der Ankündigung und nicht der Diskussion).

Art Servers Unlimited (ASU)

Hat die Kunst eine Heimat im Netz? Wer sind die wirklich kreativen Kräfte in den digitalen Umwelten? Solchen Fragen geht die Konferenz "Art Servers Unlimited" nach, die am Freitag dem 4.Juli im "Institute for Contemporary Arts" (ICA) stattfindet. Schon zuvor werden die über 40 Konferenzteilnehmer aus 8 europäischen Ländern in der Internetgalerie [☉](#) Backspace tagen, um dem Tagungsziel näherzukommen, eine kulturpolitische Erklärung zu verfassen. Wieder ein Manifest mehr, unter vielen, die ohnehin niemand liest, oder die zumindest niemanden zum Handeln bewegen? Wer weiß, denn "Unlimited" bringt eine recht explosive Mischung von Leuten zusammen, ob nun die net.art Aktivisten von [☉](#) Ljudmila, die Betreiber von [☉](#) t0, Wien, das Riga [☉](#) E-Lab, das [☉](#) C3-Center, Budapest, oder das [☉](#) Redundant Technology Institute.

Ebenfalls teilnehmen werden eine Reihe englischer Institutionen, die Auftragsarbeiten für Netzkunst vergeben. Die starke Präsenz von Teilnehmern aus einem als Mitteleuropa beschreibbaren Raum ist dem "Festival of Central European Culture" zu verdanken, das anlässlich der Übergabe der EU-Präsidentschaft von Großbritannien an Österreich zustande kam. ASU ist das erste derartige Event, das den kreativen Mißbrauch von Server-Soft- und -Hardware in den Mittelpunkt stellt, und natürlich auch den menschlichen Faktor. "Art" ist dabei weniger alleiniger Gesprächsstoff als vielmehr eine Art Zustandsbeschreibung des inneren Chaos der Beteiligten. Ansonsten geht es um geordnete Dinge wie High-Speed-Netzwerke mit billigen Leitungen, Funkmodems, Radio-Internetgateways, selbstprogrammierte Browser und dergleichen mehr. Weitere Informationen [☉](#) www.yourserver.co.uk/asu.

Face2Face im Forum Stadtpark

"Es mag verwunderlich erscheinen, dass wir an den Anfang der Diskussion über virtuelle Gemeinschaften ein Real Life Event stellen", schreiben Pop-Tarts in ihrem letzten Artikel. Neben ihrer Tätigkeit als Kolumnistin für Telepolis in Pop-Tarts, und neben den vielen anderen Dingen, die Networkerin Kathy Rae Huffman macht, hat sie vor ca. 2 Jahren zusammen mit der Künstlerin Eva Wohlgemut das Projekt "Faces" ins Leben gerufen. Zunächst ging es darum, für an Cyberthemen interessierte Frauen reale Treffen, z.B. bei einem Abendessen zu veranstalten. Als Koordinationsmittel für die internationalen Treffen stellte sich zunehmend die Mailinglist "Faces" als ausgesprochen praktisch heraus. Nun besteht das Anliegen, all

✕ Radio Independents' Day

by Kathy Kennedy

12:50pm 7 Jul 98 PDT

It's not every day that you can hear a mix of electronica and a rather thick Slovenian accent coyly exclaiming "Happy Fourth of July, to everyone celebrating independence!" The outburst was part of a live mix of streams from several of Europe's hippest Net DJs. Recorded music from Latvia's re-lab, Slovenia's radiostudent, Vienna's highly esteemed Kunstradio, and even Australia's radioqualia was channeled through ICA's NewMedia Centre in London as part of a gigantic net.radio party to top off a conference called Art Servers Unlimited.

The one-day summit was a forum for discussing the future of independent servers providing experimental and non-commercial art (both audio and visual), such as ProteinTV in London and Nirvanet in Paris. While the utopian ideal of a free Internet with egalitarian access is quickly eroding, these artists, academics, computer scientists (and occasional hackers) are still plotting strategy to keep the alternative scene online. They stream the wierdest mixes of sound, publish schematics to pirate radio transmitters, and writings of social activists.

According to Frederic Madre of France's Plaine-Peau, "We don't ask questions, and we take no prisoners."

Micz Flor, who hosts a purportedly free space called yourservers, supported by Salford University in the UK, feels that governments should be providing access to culture makers. "I believe there should be a responsibility [to provide access] — even though that fits me into the nasty anti-wired category of the Social Democrat," said Flor.

Most European independent art servers fear that government subsidization would compromise artistic freedom. Some, such as the Redundant Technology Initiative, have devised more innovative means of existing: RTI recycles used PCs into gargantuan installation works and also lobbies for computer and Internet access for independent artists.

"Art that's primarily concerned with shifting techno-product doesn't stimulate or interest me in the least," says founder James Wallbank. "Many artists are offered valuable sponsorship deals by technology companies (usually of the 'you can use our machinery for free' type) and the artworks produced from such arrangements cannot help but become product demonstrations."

The producers of rtmark.com paradoxically offer a mutual funding system for the subversive arts. It's being affectionately referred to as the

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Tina, Queen of Hype

Hit and Run



"bedroom fund" since many at the conference agree that the most interesting work is coming out of the bedrooms of teens these days.

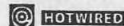
Radio (or audio netcasting) is gaining momentum as audio capabilities like Beatnik, Liquidaudio, and MP3 explode on the Net. Net radio is making it possible for artists to collaborate live all over the globe as happened on 4 July. Plans were floated at the conference to create a cultural-policy coalition and a technical infrastructure that would physically support streaming. Panel moderator and new media artist Pit Schultz summed it up as he joked in his closing remarks, comparing the conference to meetings of the EEC: "We will just have to move to hold yet another meeting."

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ISSUE 6.07



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Produktionskosten nicht deckten, und daher allenfalls "kulturelles Kapital" einbrachten. So arbeiten viele Netzkünstler im Nebenberuf als "Sysop" oder als Web-Designer für Multimedia-Agenturen.

Andere versuchen, finanzielle Förderung aus Kulturtöpfen zu bekommen. "Seit anderthalb Jahren schreibe ich eigentlich nur noch Anträge", sagt Rasa Smite vom "E-Lab" aus Riga. "Alle zwei Wochen muß ich wieder in letzter Minute Unterlagen und Formulare einreichen, und wenn wir Glück haben, bekommen wir dann manchmal ein bißchen Geld."

Zusammen mit Raitis Smits und Jaanis Garancs betreibt sie das Netzwerk X-Change, das internationale Netzzradio-Kollaborationen organisiert. Das Projekt ist zwar gerade von der Jury der diesjährigen ars electronica mit einem Preis ausgezeichnet worden. Doch wie sie in zwei Monaten die Miete für ihr winziges Studio in Riga bezahlen sollen, wissen die drei Netzwerker nicht.

Besser sieht es dagegen offenbar in England aus, wo Tony Blair am Tag vor der Art Servers Conference Kulturschaffende und Museumsleute zu einem Meinungsaustausch in Number 10 Downing Street empfing. Wo Kunst so eine hohe Bedeutung zu haben scheint, wird auch die Netzkultur bedacht: Channel hat vom British Arts Council Mittel bekommen, um Netzkunstwerke und begleitende Essays in Auftrag zu geben. Bis zu 4000 Pfund erhalten Künstler für eine Arbeit für Channel; die Site ist bisher freilich vor allem ein Stück Infrastruktur, und hat mehr Design als gute Netzkunst zu bieten.

Dem Budapest Medienlabor C3 ist es dagegen gelungen, eine kleine, aber ausgesprochen feine "Sammlung" von Arbeiten auf seinem Server zusammenzustellen, obwohl es den Künstlern meist nur ein Stipendium für einen kurzen Aufenthalt in Budapest und die Benutzung seines Equipments bieten können. So erfreulich solche Initiativen sind - sie macht Künstler so abhängig von Mäzenen wie die Künstler des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts, die von gut betuchten, kunstliebenden Adeligen oder von der Kirche finanziert wurden.

Es sind nicht nur leere Kassen, die - vor allem in den Ländern Ost-Europas - die Förderung von Netzkunstprojekten verhindern. Die meisten Kulturinstitutionen investieren lieber in traditionelle, zugänglichere Kunstformen als in die immaterielle und daher nicht besonders repräsentative Netzkunst. Nicht nur das mangelnde Verständnis der Traditionsinstitutionen des Kunstbetriebs für das junge Genre der Netzkunst verhindert die adäquate Finanzierung von Netzprojekten; die meisten Kulturbürokratien haben den Weg zur Förderung durch einen undurchsichtigen Paragraphen- und Papierdschunzel verbaut. Wer zum Beispiel von der Europäischen Union Mittel haben will, bezahlt am besten einen Berater, der für ihn die zehneitigen Bewerbungsformulare ausfüllt.

Nur wenige Netzwerker wollen ihre Zeit durch solche bürokratischen Prozeduren verschwenden - besonders, weil ihr Ausgang meist unsicher ist. Dabei würden bei vielen Netzprojekten schon geringe Summen genügen, um ihre Existenz zu sichern. Rasa Smite fordert darum die Einrichtung eines "Inter-Funds", der kurzfristig und

unbürokratisch kleine Stipendien an Künstler vergibt.

Im Gegensatz zu der traditionelleren Medienkunst, die meist mit teurem High-Tech-Equipment arbeitet, kann Netzkunst mit handelsüblichen PC produziert werden. James Wallbank von der Redundant Technology Initiative sammelt darum bei Unternehmen und Privatleuten Uralt-Computer, die er umsonst gestiftet bekommt: "Die sind meist noch dankbar, wenn wir ihnen ihren Müll raustragen", sagt Wallbank über die Rechner, die heute schon nach kurzer Zeit nicht mehr auf dem neuesten Stand der Technik sind. Inzwischen hat die Gruppe ein ganzes Lagerhaus voll mit Hardware, das sie für ihre Installationen benutzen können.

Andere Netzaktivisten wollen sich weder von der Gnade öffentlicher Institutionen noch von privaten Sponsoren abhängig machen: James Stevens vom Londoner Internet-Café "Backspace", auf deren Server einige der interessantesten Netzkunstarbeiten liegen, ist ein entschiedener Gegner jeder Art von Fremdfinanzierung: "Kulturelle Produzenten sollten autonom arbeiten können", argumentiert er, und fügt hinzu: "Und das geht auch!" "Backspace" finanziert sich seit zwei Jahren erfolgreich durch Mitgliedergebühren, die nicht nur die Miete des kleinen Raums im Londoner Stadtteil Southwark unweit vom William Shakespeare's Globe Theatre decken, sondern mit denen auch die technische Ausstattung bezahlt wurde. Viele "Backspace"-Mitarbeiter arbeiten ehrenamtlich im Café mit.

Wie man mit Kunst sogar Geld verdienen kann, zeigt Oskar Obereder von Wiener Silverserver. Dieser ist zwar selbst kein Kunstprojekt. Aber in den letzten drei Jahren hat Obereder ein eigenes Backbone-Netz in der österreichischen Hauptstadt aufgebaut, an dem inzwischen Tausende von Netznutzern hängen. Künstlern, Technoproduzenten, Grafikagenturen und anderen kulturellen Produzenten richtet Obereder gerne umsonst eigene Domains ein. Auch wenn er damit nicht sofort Geld verdient, lohnt sich diese Investition für ihn: Wegen der attraktiven Inhalte seines "Vienna Backbone Services" schließen andere Internet-Provider mit ihm bevorzugt "Peering Agreements" ab - und die sind mehr wert als Bargeld. Je mehr "Peerings", also direkte Verbindungen zu anderen Netzleitungen, Obereder hat, um so schneller sind die Internet-Verbindungen, die er als Provider seinen Kunden anbieten kann - ein rares Beispiel dafür, daß man im Internet mit Content tatsächlich Geld verdienen kann.

Freilich: Den meisten Netzkünstlern hilft das Modell wenig. In London besann man sich darum auf die alte Internet-Tugend der Selbstorganisation. Zunächst soll umgehend ein "Inter-Fund" gegründet werden, auch wenn zu Beginn nur eine minimale Summe zur Verfügung stehen wird. Zweitens wollen sich die Netzschaftenden wenigstens virtuell organisieren und einen "Webring" aufbauen, der die Sites ihrer Projekte miteinander verbindet. Zusammen sind wir stark - und die nächste Konferenz zu diesem nach wie vor brennenden Thema kommt bestimmt.

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TO SERVE YOUR CULTURE:



Art Servers Unlimited. Why ART servers? Because politics and society are too important to be left to politically-correct politicians and self-serving sociologists; and art is the most satisfying and singularly comprehensive way to address all the issues head-on. Why UNLIMITED? Because diversity in all things, especially culture in a corporate age, is essential, and unless someone fights to maintain it, it'll disappear into homogeneity as big business steam-rollers through the Web.

This conference comes at a seminal period in the Internet's evolution. The initial mavericks are having to close down as early support comes to an end and, as a second generation begins its adventures, there is hope that a new breed of enthusiastic and flexible backers will fund the next round of initiatives. Echoing the hard lessons learned from our own country's National Lottery, Rasa Smite, of Latvia's 020ne net radio, suggested a shift of emphasis from large-scale infrastructure projects to open-ended, day-to-day support for small-scale organisations, who are "that invisible part of the communication which often works most effectively," and make creative use of every last penny, instead of propping up bureaucratic overheads.*

Following the previous day's closed discussions, where the main issues were debated among the

participants themselves, the public presentations were divided into four panel sessions covering institutions, netcasting, 'growing your own' (server), and experimental technology. Debate roamed from the central question of public and/or commercial support to the role of various flavours of institution in the birth and sustenance of projects, to the use and abuse of technology in the name of art, activism, or simply 'because it's there' – not to mention a few pointed observations about those lucky enough to have

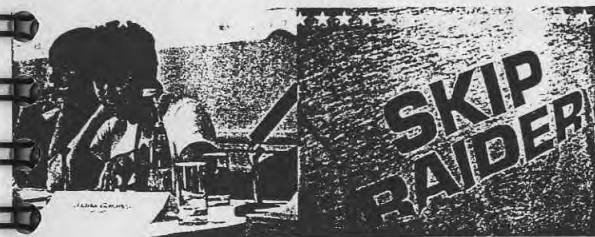
RASA SMITE DRILY OBSERVED THAT "WE CAN'T RELY ON ART INSTITUTIONS AS THEIR AGENDA IS THEIR OWN SURVIVAL AND IMAGE"

benevolent sponsors, such as Soros's Open Society Institute or the host institution itself. Unexpectedly, the stifling online curatorial policies of big institutions in general and the ICA's crippling slow site in particular were roundly condemned by its departing new media director, Sholto Ramsay. Rasa Smite drily observed that "we can't rely on art institutions as their agenda is their own survival and image".

As the hype that dogged the early years of the Net dies down, far from being an alienating technology, the Net now, more than ever, seems to be realising its disputed claims of strengthening communities and enabling those previously overlooked, due to geography, age or gender, to participate in a range of cultural activities. But whether it involves remote artists in the villages of Germany's Lower Saxony getting their first taste of web connectivity (Kunstserver), Slovenian DJs competing for the same audience as London's clubberati (ministryof.xperiment), or Sheffield's anarchic recyclers making art with redundant technology (Redundant Technology Initiative), much of it would never have happened without philanthropic support from private and public bodies. Now that some support is being withdrawn, or at least becoming harder to find, the question is whether such initiatives can survive. Or



ART SERVERS UNLIMITED AT THE ICA by DAVID WHITTAKER



CAN ARTISTS SURVIVE WITHOUT BECOMING SUBSIDISED GUINEA-PIGS FOR HI-TECH INDUSTRIALS? CAN THE INTERNET'S FOUNDING ETHOS REMAIN SAMIZDAT?

indeed if they should in their present form: eager to preserve the independent spirit of the Net, yet only too aware how much corporate sponsorship can ease the considerable costs of maintaining a web presence, participants' experience proved the dream of 'universal access' to be nothing if not expensive. The only single answer to emerge was that no single solution fits all sizes – the necessary co-existence of funding models, both commercial and otherwise, means few can afford to be precious about principles if they want to survive.

Along with those issues which have always dogged traditional art, such as accusations of only serving an elite audience, and doubts about whether 'important' work can ever be created through 'official' patronage, the primary problem for net producers collectively is that if it really is the best opportunity to realise Beuys's 'global social sculpture', who's going to finance it? Although Pit Schultz sarcastically contended that "the only way to assure our continued uncensored presence online is to buy the bandwidth and run our own nets", the economic pragmatism of other online producers (such as Frédéric Madre, who decided to place his [French] Pleine-Peau site on a cheaper U.S. server) sits uneasily with the surprisingly 'nationalistic' streak displayed by others in what is supposedly a global environment, and illustrates how new media still has to face some of old media's problems.

Can artists survive without becoming subsidised guinea-pigs for hi-tech industrialists? Can the Internet's founding ethos remain samizdat: rather than sales-oriented? The answer seemed to be a cautious and compromised 'yes', and organisers Manu Luksch and Armin Meoosch can claim a notable success in what all scientists know to be the most important area of research: not providing answers but asking the right questions.

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*This idea has crystallised into the 'Xchange Unlimited' fund. For more details go to: asul@sil.at

- backspace [www.backspace.org]
- C3 Center [www.c3.hu]
- ChannelArtec [www.channel.org.uk]
- Dbonanzah [www.dbonanzah.org]
- e-lab [re-lab.net]
- Ellipsis.Net [www.ellipsis.net]
- Head-Space [www.head-space.org]
- HyperMedia Research Centre [www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk]
- ICA New Media Centre [www.newmediacentre.com]
- irational.org [www.irational.org]
- Kirklees Media Centre [www.test.org.uk/]
- Kulturserver NRW [www.kulturserver.de]
- Ljubljana Digital Media Lab [www.ljudmila.org]
- Lovebytes [www.lovebytes.org.uk]
- Makrolab, Media Research Foundation [www.mrf.hu]
- ministryof.xperiment [www.radiostudent.si/m2x]
- Pararadio [www.c3.hu/para]
- Pleine Peau [www.pleine-peau.com]
- ProteinTV [www.proteinTV.com]
- Redundant Technology Initiative [www.lowtech.org]
- Silverserver [www.silverserver.co.at]
- 10 Public Netbase [www.t0.or.at]
- The Stejan Batory Foundation [www.batory.org.pl]
- xchange /ozone [re-lab.net]
- yourserver [www.yourserver.co.uk]

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