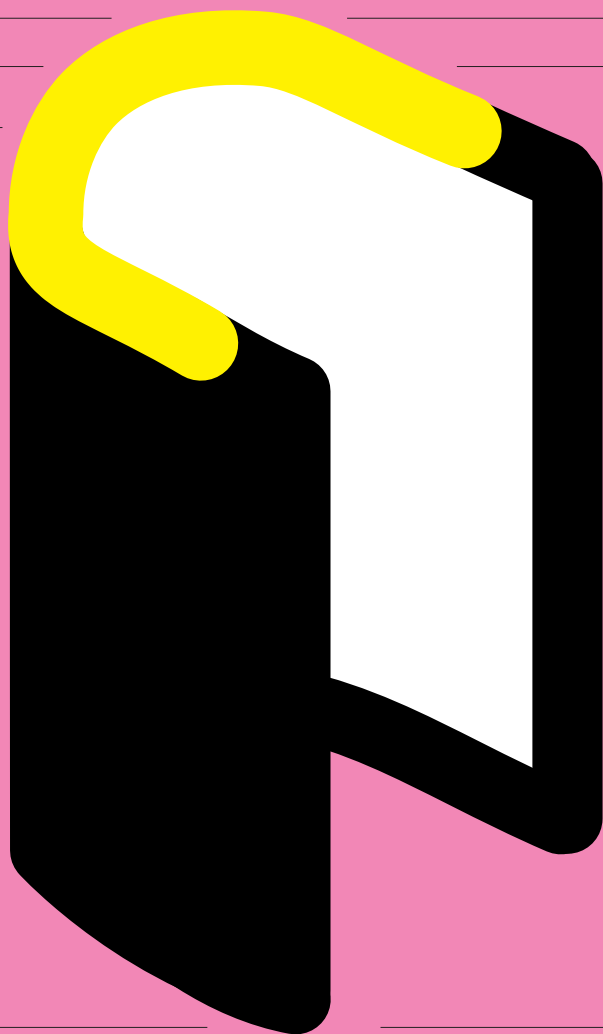edited by: Alessandro Ludovico, Nat Muller

The Mag.net reader 2

Between Paper and Pixel

The Mag.net reader

between paper and pixel

edited by
Alessandro Ludovico,
Nat Muller

debalie

Contents.

Introduction.

By way of Introduction:
Some Notes on Text Tactility

Nat Muller

Put all the images in language in a place of
safety and make use of them, for they are in the
desert, and it's in the desert we must go
and look for them.

Jean Genet (manuscript note at the top of the final proofs of Prisoner of Love)

It is eerie how relevant the words of Jean Genet, written over 2 decades ago, still resonate today. Though referring to the impossibility - or even the failure - of language to capture human struggle and tragedy and safeguard that experience; Genet was touching explicitly on the ephemeral qualities of language (or text), if you will. Due to rapid technological developments, the advent of the Internet, and by corollary the change in the nature of publishing, the "places of safety" for language Genet held so dear, have definitely moved home several times. For in 2007, what is a place of safety for words and text? Some might argue – conform with neo-con ideology – that whatever is controlled and contained, labelled and categorised, copyrighted, locked up and licensed to death, is safe. Others will argue the opposite: that the only safeguarding for the fruits of intellectual labour is their free circulation, and that culture should be "open". Many of us though, seem ourselves to be a bit lost in Genet's desert, negotiating the best strategy between production and consumption; between ownership and sharing; between how and what to read and how and what to write; between hard copy and soft pixel.

It is quite cruel that in the 21st Century, despite (or perhaps precisely because of) our fluid post-post-modern identities, most of life is still

determined – for those privileged enough – by an either/or question: coffee OR tea; boy OR girl; paper OR pixel. Indeed, there seem to be few mechanisms that would allow us to embrace both to an equal extent. It is as if a slight tendency towards the one, would already prove a disloyalty towards the other. This logic is in effect faulty: for it would be unfair to compare pixel and paper as opposites, or as one being a weak copy or wannabe of the other; or for that matter, one being monumental and the other mutable. Though often dressed up to be similar - as Alessandro Ludovico reminds us in his piece of the paperless office - or to convey the same information, pixel and paper have inherently different properties and sensibilities, and this is also how we should approach them. Yes…this seems to be easier said than done.

When Alessandro Ludovico and myself organised a session in De Balie in Amsterdam on January 19th 2007, called "Offline – Online Publishing: The Love for Print in an Age of Electronic Media", we wanted specifically to address how the distinct qualities of print – especially in relation to independent magazines - could survive due to the potentials of networked media and technology. We did not want to perform a requiem for the loss of print, but rather insist on how a love for speed and electrons in many ways contributes to the survival of hard copy. And I guess we also wanted to talk about our love for the tactility of the printed word: from the smell of ink to the feel of the page. Nevertheless, there seems to be a sense of loss, which shimmers through our words and sentiments, even in the essays compiled here. It is as if we desperately would like to bring our beloved print publications to that "safe place" where they will eternally continue to be meaningful to us in that very same and particular way we have grown accustomed to them. Surprising perhaps, since almost all contributors have been actively involved in working within digital culture for years. Yet as Sandra Fauconnier points out in her text "Networked Readership", our reading habits are changing, for not only are they influenced by the networked nature of abundant online content, but they are also bound to techno-social processes. As readers we position ourselves and navigate these contexts on a continuous basis.

Offline – Online Publishing: The Love for Print in an Age of Electronic Media, De Balie, Amsterdam

Somehow the tactility of (naughtily) reading the final pages of a novel before starting it properly as a way of instant gratification, or reading the bibliography of an academic work first in order to situate the author before purchasing the actual book, feels more transgressive than scrolling down the webpage to see the final footnotes, or doing quick searches on an online text. We never think twice when we copy/paste an online text (or parts of it) into different documents we are working with. But we've probably all have been disturbed by (or have perhaps been guilty of) receiving or returning a book where we have marked a particular striking passage, disturbing the tranquility of the page with our biros, or where we have earmarked a page, or worse, ripped something out, maiming the body of the book. The text tactility of the printed page has a particular weight to it, which online publications do not have, because we are literally dealing with "a body of work". And that body has a scent, a volume, and is designed in a particular way, which conditions us to read it in a particular way. There is something comforting in that. There is also something comforting in the fact that books have proved a long shelf life, in comparison with digital carriers. In times of "unstable media" we sometimes long for things to remain through time, and not be continuously refreshed and updated. Jouke Kleerebezem reminds us in "Ubibook" that he will be left with "some of the book's information to age with [him], and keep those precious objects at hand, in a sense also 'against time'".

However, let me depart for an instant from what is starting to sound like an exercise in nostalgia. For the book or print is far from dead…it is just morphing into something different. Indeed, the use value of print is changing: from being the primary locus of knowledge and reference, print finds itself manifested in objects of luxury, in objects we covet to own, and yes…consume. In addition, reading from paper is also increasingly becoming a moment where contemplation is called for, as Arie Altena suggests in "Pixel and Ink". The latter is in effect also becoming a luxury commodity as we lead ever-more demanding lifestyles. What we love about certain books and magazines – apart from their content – is their "objectness", and how we can invest these objects with personal value, as they collect dust on our shelves and stand there as testimony to a par-

ticular moment in our lives. What we like about print, is that we can pass stuff on from friends to friends, and this act of gift economy feels more committing than merely forwarding something though email. It is difficult to cherish something that is immaterial, as we like to be able to touch and feel and keep things we hold dear.

So we have found a place of "text tactile" safety for the words in-between the covers of this reader. And we have also found a temporary place online for those who prefer to read on-screen: http://magnet-ecp.org
But I do urge you to flip through the book, thumb its pages, bend its flexible back, pass it on to your friends, or shelve it in your library amongst the other copies, while I echo Andreas Broeckmann's words in his introductory essay for the first Mag.net Reader; Experiences in Electronic Cultural Publishing: "We'll see you in print!"

The Persistence of Paper

Alessandro Ludovico

Paper publishing will never be the same again. It is deeply affected by a dual contradictory need. On the one hand, real-time updating is pervading the printed page space with various technologies. On the other hand, the need for something reliable and independent from the lack of TCP/IP waves or electricity is increasingly precious for a generation that is stuck for the most part of the day to their unstable laptops. Various disembodiments of paper are practiced on the net and in connected devices, but the immobility (i.e. the reassuring stability) of the printed page is on the other end growing and finding new customized ways of production and consumption. Cellulose and electricity are not married yet, but their vital relationship can still be taken as an opportunity for a new independent pervasive publishing wave.

The persistence of paper, how pixel want to be stable.
Since the end of nineties, we hear ad nauseam that there is a technology that pretends, sooner or later, to substitute paper. It's the so-called 'electronic paper', 'e-paper,' or 'electronic ink': a special kind of display made not by pixels and light, but by electrically charged micro-balls (a kind of pixels if you want) that can turn black or white. This kind of hardware is still an alien object. Usually it's a paperback sized display with a stylus to interact and display texts uploaded in various ways (via wireless networks, ethernet cable, smart media). I've had the chance, by accident, to personally check the iLiad, one of the few devices of this kind already for sale. After playing a little bit with the interface, the turning bar that 'turns' the page, and the display, my feeling was as if I was in front of a book-sized screen palmtop… much worse than a laptop, and worse than a printed book or magazine. Even if it'll be much better when the technology will evolve, presently it seems just another 'wannabe' paper in electronic guise, than the future of paper itself. Some qualities are – admittedly – its stability and, that it's document-devoted. The specific
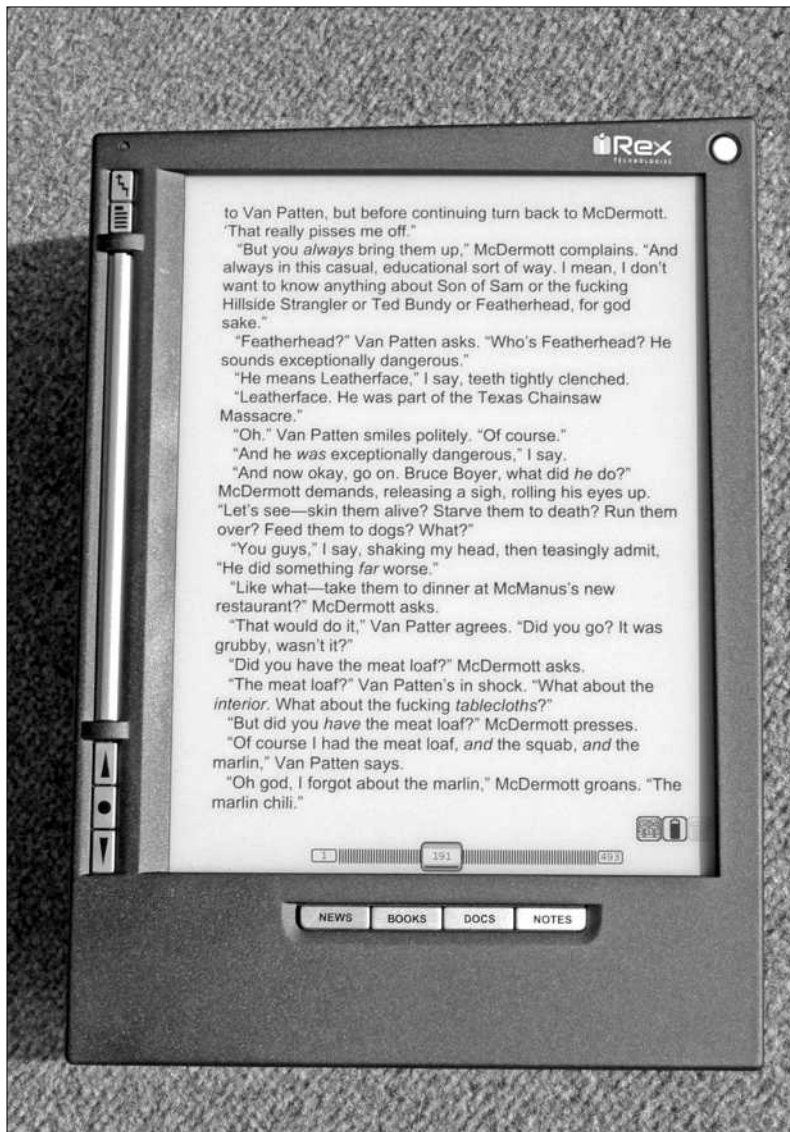
model referred to runs on Linux, and seems to be the most stable of them all. However, I'd still rather prefer to spend 600 euro in a book-store than on this gizmo.

Electronic paper is connected to issues of space. One of its few challenging promises is to reduce the space on your bookshelf. But, what's the price of this 'promise'? To me it's similar to the never realized 'paper-less' office, advertised from the eighties by the personal computer industry. Something magic that simply won't happen safely. It is a promise of virtualization, and the disembodiment of a heavy physicality, which you would like to see reduced, so you can have more content. There's a thrill to own more and more content: digitally it is so easy to copy, share or simply store. This is one of the arguments behind the Amazon Noir project I've developed in collaboration with Ubermorgen and Paolo Cirio. Paolo Cirio coded software that stressed to the extreme the 'search inside the book' Amazon.com feature. His software enabled us to obtain all the text through thousands of queries, and then subsequently reconstructed the whole searched book. This is an almost automatic reconstruction of all the book fragments that can be searched with the Amazon tool. It's the 'imagined book' made real, so that the virtual bulimic appetite for texts becomes satisfied in the end. Yet, no digital hardware or culture will save us from the weight of real books and things…the 'reality showdown'. Again, paper is more persistent.

The web space of magazines, turning pages with the mouse.
From the very beginning paper publishing has been wondering about its relationship with the web. As a cover of Factsheet Five of 1995 proves, independent publishers might have been concerned with the latter before the industry. The 'yellow pages' of zines dedicated an issue to the web and its consequences for the zine world. The cover title was "Paper or Plastic?", and this comic perfectly synthesizes the death anxiety of the traditional zine world vis-à-vis a bold younger 'silicon' bully. Today there's no doubt that the electronic space par excellence is the web, and the whole publishing industry seems to still be wondering how to exploit this medium for their old business. Websites were created with some (or more) content taken from printed editions, and various online shops

to Van Patten, but before continuing turn back to McDermott.
'That really pisses me off."

"But you *always* bring them up," McDermott complains. "And always in this casual, educational sort of way. I mean, I don't want to know anything about Son of Sam or the fucking Hillside Strangler or Ted Bundy or Featherhead, for god sake."

"Featherhead?" Van Patten asks. "Who's Featherhead? He sounds exceptionally dangerous."

"He means Leatherface," I say, teeth tightly clenched.

"Leatherface. He was part of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre."

"Oh." Van Patten smiles politely. "Of course."

"And he *was* exceptionally dangerous," I say.

"And now okay, go on. Bruce Boyer, what did *he* do?" McDermott demands, releasing a sigh, rolling his eyes up. "Let's see—skin them alive? Starve them to death? Run them over? Feed them to dogs? What?"

"You guys," I say, shaking my head, then teasingly admit, "He did something *far* worse."

"Like what—take them to dinner at McManus's new restaurant?" McDermott asks.

"That would do it," Van Patter agrees. "Did you go? It was grubby, wasn't it?"

"Did you have the meat loaf?" McDermott asks.

"The meat loaf?" Van Patten's in shock. "What about the *interior*. What about the fucking *tablecloths*?"

"But did you *have* the meat loaf?" McDermott presses.

"Of course I had the meat loaf, *and* the squab, *and* the marlin," Van Patten says.

"Oh god, I forgot about the marlin," McDermott groans. "The marlin chili."

ILiad ebook reader

were established in order to improve sales. The latest strategy is a controversial one: giving away pdf files of glossy entertainment magazines, if you register on specialized websites. So you can find yourself not paying money, but personal data for the latest Business Week, Macworld, or Playboy issue. After registering, the download of about 50MB starts, and then you can flip or turn the pages with mouse clicks. The industry is thus dramatically improving 'distribution,' and 'readership' (two of the golden keywords of commercial publishing), apparently not affecting the magazine sales. This strategy seems to be borrowed from the p2p scheme. The better the distribution (even if for free) the better the sales. This could be an efficient response to what is called 'Digital Shoplifting' of copyrighted images; a practice that used to be quite popular in Japan. The latter was a social phenomenon involving mostly young women taking pictures of the latest fashion trends in glossies, by using their mobile phones in bookstores. Afterwards the women in question would share the pictures taken with friends. The Japanese Magazine Publishers Association says the practice is "information theft", yet bookshop owners said their staff could not tell the difference between customers taking pictures, and those simply chatting on their phones.

Giving away content is a publishing habit that has been anticipated by a sort of underground design phenomenon. A substantial number of free electronic magazines (downloadable or viewable in a web page) have been produced in this field. These so-called pdf-zines (Magnify for example) show off creativity, affinity among different design groups, aesthetic experiments, content simply not worth for commercial magazines, or too controversial for them. It's very important to note that they were not interactive at all, not exploiting any characteristic of the electronic medium apart from the potential infinite duplication and distribution possibilities. Sure enough they applied to these pdf files the same graphic and production standards from the paper medium. A sort of never born paper product, thrown off to the always free and crowded web channels.

Print-on-demand, the photocopy machine of the new millennium (coming soon).

Zinio, one of the free donwload entertainment magazine online services (upon registration)
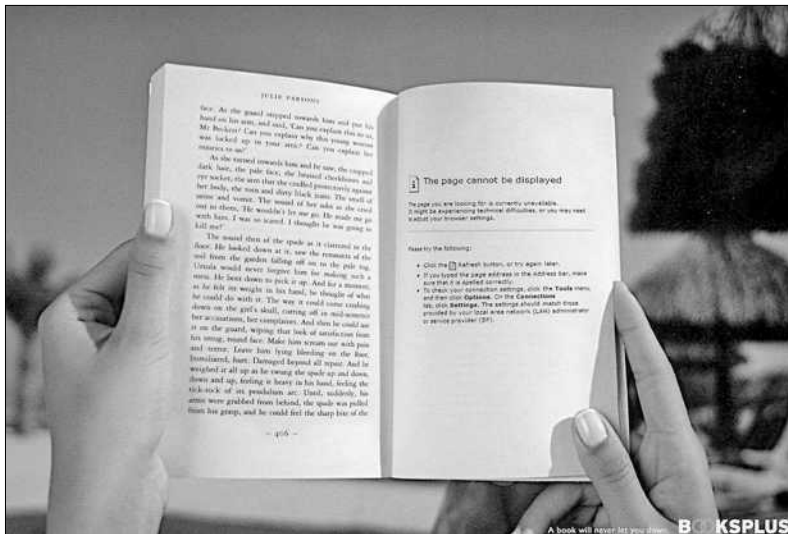
Booksplus advertising

The need for physical print could be said to be 'instinctive'. The capacity of paper to trigger our inner reading instinct, is at the core of a 2006 computer art installation. I'm talking about the 'Pamphlet' by Helmut Smits. It consists of a laptop, software, and a printer placed on the edge of a window. People can type a message on the laptop. By pressing 'send' a pamphlet is printed and dropped from the 10th floor by the printer. The paper falling down and the resulting 'pamphlet' on the street symbolize the relatively short distance from personal production to the public enjoyment of a printed product. In addition it shows how the traditional product parameters have been disrupted.

The fascination of take-away paper is the same lying at the base of newspapers, that are starting to expand their role and nature with downloadable and printable last minute editions. These are highly customized by one key factor: the updating time. They are meant to be read offline, so enjoyed with a relative calm, but with the most stretched and feverish time of production. This is part of a broader need: to put the virtually and real-time produced online content 'out of the screen', or place it into reality in some form, in order to affect real life or be enjoyed in it.

This is the field where another technology comes in. Print-on-demand is very simple: you produce a pdf file of a magazine or a book. A print-on-demand online service charges you a fee (there are cheap and expensive ones) for adapting the files to the production chain of a high resolution digital copier. You specify your desired number of copies (which can vary from a few to only one). Usually the manufacturer even takes care to sell the publications online.
This practice drastically reduces the costs of print and distribution, allowing the author to focus on production. This is potentially a big opportunity for independent publishing, since it avoids the usual initial costs of printing (which amount to the highest costs in the print production trajectory) and then gives every publisher the opportunity to sell their products through the web without learning how to program a website and how to configure online payments.

Pamphlet by Helmut Smits

Personally, I'm partially using P-o-D to save on the costs for Neural magazine, and to produce art books for Amazon Noir. Eventually P-o-D will be what the photocopy machines represented in the eighties and nineties: a cheap opportunity to print and distribute content in a stable, easy, and physically enjoyable format. Which is what paper still is.

Notes

iRex, ILiad
http://www.irextechnologies.com/products/iliad

Amazon Noir
http://www.amazon-noir.com

Quentin Sommerville, Japan's 'digital shoplifting' plague,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3031716.stm

**To Scroll or Turn a Page:
Of Difference in Reading.**

Networked Readership

Sandra "Fokky" Fauconnier

Not so long ago, typical reading patterns were, mostly, predictable and easy to describe. You found reading materials in bookshops and newspaper kiosks, in libraries, in your mailbox, in living rooms of friends and family – most of them paper-based; you processed these materials, often in larger chunks, while sitting on a couch, on a chair, in public transport, or lying in bed. If you'd discuss your reading with others, you'd do that in person – at your workplace, in a bar, in your living room with a beer on the couch. If you happened to be involved in writing and/or publishing yourself, such authorial activities were quite distinct from the act of rea-

ding itself; you wrote and edited your materials with the aid of separate devices (pen, paper, typewriter, word processor) and the process of getting something published was pretty distinct from the process related to the consumption of reading materials.

At this moment, reading still involves the same practices – very similar activities (of acquiring reading materials, consuming, discussing, publishing and re-using them) still take place. But for many internet-literate people, typical reading patterns have shifted. Networked media provide us with a wildly diverse and abundant landscape of reading materials,

ready at our fingertips. What are the consequences of networked publishing for the receiving end – for the act of reading online text, of choosing and acquiring written documents, and especially of the social aspects of readership in relation to networked publishing? And how do publishing initiatives – especially periodicals – respond to this?

Mediated reading.

Slowly but steadily, we grow into the habit of reading from devices – mostly computer screens, in an increasingly mobile manner. This doesn't mean that we read less, or that we read less from paper – on the con-

trary, even; many people probably read more than ever before. It is quite striking how our reading habits and methods are influenced by the networked nature of online content. Hypertext encourages chaotic, eclectic and meandering behaviour. Serendipity – finding something that you never looked for in the first place – becomes commonplace. Paradoxically, we also tend to avoid confrontation with whatever is too different and controversial to our beliefs, and we find comforting refuge in the niches and mini-networks of people who share our ideologies and interests. And, if we really want to, it is very easy to indulge ourselves in information bulimia and continuous voracious reading, or rather content consumption (email! mailing lists! RSS feeds! news aggregation!).

Social and networked reading.

We don't read in a social void, even if we are not outspoken about our reading habits and preferences. Others read the same, or similar, things. Reading is embedded in, and often crucial to our daily activities, from the mundane to the academic; it is connected to our work, our extracurricular activities, our weak and strong ties with others. This embeddedness is, mainly, an invisible and nontransparent phenomenon; it is very difficult to track and trace and is very privacy-sensitive. Your daily reading materials – your newspaper, emails and other correspondence,

medicine and cereal boxes, grocery labels, notes, SMS messages…, reveal your personality, habits and interests.

There is, nevertheless, a quite attractive side to making some of these connections more transparent. Since the act of reading is so strongly tied to social processes, rendering these processes visible may be beneficial to the reader, in terms of establishing reputation or forging a larger social network. Let me give a few examples – all of them related to onli-

Buy | Sell | Alchemy | Forums

ne periodicals, more specifically a few rather small-scale magazines with a specific type of Web presence.

Interestingly, the popularity of networked media goes hand in hand with a renaissance in do-it-yourself practices. Many people are integrating handwork in their daily activities (such as technical tinkering and crafts). This is seen as a critical response to the anonymity and political dubiousness of abundant mass-produced consumer goods, and as a reaction to the fact that our daily activities are, increasingly, embedded in computerized processes. In many cases, DIY'ers and crafters attempt to supplement their daily incomes by selling their products; handwork sales are growing into an increasingly important micro-economy, with the aid of networked tools and as a typical example of a response to economic precarity.

Do-it-yourself cultures rely heavily on continuous learning, experimentation and exchange; at this point, networked media play a very important role. Through forums, blogs, free magazines, photo sharing services

article | discussion | edit this page | history

and a plethora of web-based social networking applications, DIY'ers share information about their work processes, about the projects they work on, and teach and learn from each other. Traditionally, periodicals (DIY and crafts magazines) have always played an important role here; most handwork-related paper-based periodicals still thrive. But now, the parallel, very active and freely accessible network of practitioners and their online platforms supplements this publishing model. O'Reilly[1], a publisher of (mainly) books on computer technology, has started expe-

rimenting with publishing models for magazines that establish a more direct, and transparent, connection to the active online DIY scene. Make[2] and Craft[3] are two relatively recent periodicals, published by O'Reilly, that maintain a strong symbiotic relationship with the DIY and craft scenes that they cater to; both magazines are actively present in social networking services like Flickr, Instructables[4] (for sharing instructions, patterns and recipes) and Etsy[5] (a platform for selling DIY goods and crafts), find inspiration for new issues there and offer a platform for the most prolific and interesting crafters and DIY'ers. This symbiotic relation has parasitical characteristics and is, obviously, an attempt to establish a viable new business model within a changing publishing landscape. Upon closer inspection, the proprietary nature of O'Reilly's publishing model is in contradiction with many of the more open practices that flourish on the network, ranging from open source development

Keywords music fire gun diy art food fun Recipe make iPod knex paper

to the culture of sharing free instructions and patterns; it remains to be seen whether the publisher will be able to maintain a trustful relationship with the readers' network from which its revenue is so strongly dependent.

The Mag.net magazines[6] find themselves in a situation that is interesting to compare with the previous example. Several member magazines are (partly) publicly funded; subsidies remain an (albeit flaky) important source of income that supports free, libre and even public domain cultural production in an important way. Mute Magazine[7], one of the Mag.net members, is a periodical about media culture and politics. Its reader base, similarly to O'Reilly's publications, mainly consists of well-informed practitioners who are often quite active online themselves. Mute operates in a complex landscape of complementary online platforms – mailing lists, personal websites, institutions – and lives in a less transparent, but equally symbiotic relationship with these networks. The magazine, which used to be mainly paper-based until a few years ago, has changed its online strategy considerably, turning its website into a flexible resource that allows for personal selections and reader input, and that offers a print on demand service for printing magazines or readers' own collections of articles.

In both cases, the distinction between readers, practitioners and contributors to the periodical is unclear. Both O'Reilly's and Mag.nets periodicals are trying to develop a model for being present within a network of practitioners, being flexible, and establishing a close and visible relationship with their readers. For small-scale periodicals, readership probably largely coincides with some level of participation, at some point in the publishing process of the publication itself. For those who rely on public funding, a higher level of experimentation becomes possible.

Mute Magazine also opens its website to contributions from its readers – in the form of comments and specific sections where readers can submit their own materials. The reader can select own compilations of articles, which can be printed via a publish-on-demand model.
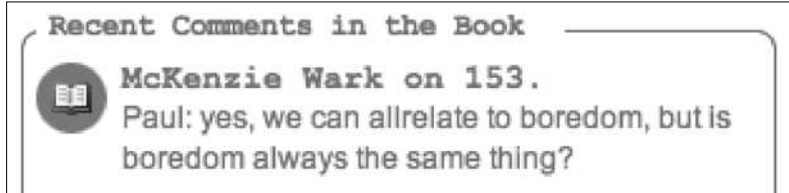
Productive reading.
Readers who become editors or co-authors: this is an early utopian promise of networked media. Extreme experiments in this area – such as Wikipedia, the collaborative encyclopedia – demonstrate that, in reality, intricate models are needed to guarantee the success of such projects;

open authorship platforms are characterized by problems related to quality control (and a fundamental debate about what constitutes quality), disputes about guidance and direction, vandalism, spam and trolling. Serious and large-scale experiments in collaborative authorship, therefore, tend to become, paradoxically, very bureaucratic and overstructured[8]. Small-scale, controlled experiments in very narrow subject areas and in nonfiction writing seem to become most successful – such as McKenzie Wark's recent book G4M3R TH30RY, which was edited with the aid of hundreds of readers' remarks and feedback, via a web platform supported by the Institute for the Future of the Book[9].

These experiments are only a few examples of responses to the net-worked nature of online readership. Most projects in this field are still in their infancy; perhaps, over the course of years and decades, typical formats and strategies will emerge and become widely used. To what

```
┌─ Recent Comments in the Book ──────────
│  ┌──┐  McKenzie Wark on 153.
│  │📖│  Paul: yes, we can allrelate to boredom, but is
│  └──┘  boredom always the same thing?
└────────────────────────────────────────
```

extent our reading behaviour will change, remains the question; it is important to keep in mind that power structures that underlie publishing efforts are, essentially, very strong and may stay unchanged. The need for economic sustainability is usually a very limiting factor to openness and transparency; small-scale independent initiatives and networks will probably continue to play a limited but important role in proposing models that respect all aspects and perspectives in networked, social readership.

Notes

[1] http://www.oreilly.com

[2] http://www.makezine.com

[3] http://www.craftzine.com

[4] http://www.instructables.com

[5] http://www.etsy.com

[6] http://magnet-ecp.org

[7] http://www.metamute.org

[8] Nicholas Carr (http://www.roughtype.com) is a well-known (and right-wing) blogger and commentator who meticulously analyzes and criticizes the – inherently very traditionalistic – bureaucratic tendencies that underlie many projects based on user-generated content; he is very skeptic about their future, contrary to the beliefs of open content proponents such as Yochai Benkler, who maintains an optimistic (and, according to many, utopian) viewpoint about the future influence of free practices and open networks. http://www.benkler.org/wealth_of_networks/index.php/Main_Page).

[9] http://www.futureofthebook.org/gamertheory/
http://www.futureofthebook.org/

The Mag.net Reader 2

Pixel and Ink

Arie Altena

In the twentieth century the French philosopher Blanchot could write: "Culture is linked to the book. The book as repository and receptable of knowledge is identified with knowledge." I do understand these sentences of Blanchot, but only because I know about the historical situation in which he was writing. During the twentieth century print culture was dominant, and metaphors derived from book culture and print culture were used to make sense of how we deal with knowledge, stories, information, and writing. When thinking from the present conditions, Blanchot's statement is simply strange. It's as if one hears someone speak from a far removed past, when everything was totally different and different metaphors were used to make sense of what's going on in the world.

Of course in the statement of Blanchot, 'book' is not simply a printed book, a stack of printed papers with a cover: the codex as it exists since the early Middle Ages. 'Book' is itself a metaphor. Blanchot writes: "The book is not only the book that sits in libraries (...) The book is the Book. (...) [T]he book constitutes the condition for every possibility of reading and writing." [1] But even that notion of 'Book' is linked to a certain way of dissemination of knowledge: namely by way of paper that carries writing.

How do we obtain our information? How do we process knowledge? When we read, what do we read from? When we write, what technology do we use? My reading and writing environment is definitively my laptop, only occasionally I take notes in a little notebook [2]. There are fewer and fewer instances in which I use print, or even prefer print over digital means. One of these instances is reading novels. But even the latter is tied up with digital information, – not only in how that information came to me (the books I read aren't set in lead), also in reading behavior.

At the present moment I am reading Against the Day (2006), the 1085 pages long novel of Thomas Pynchon. Just like many many other readers of that novel I check the pynchon-wiki quite a lot, and google my way around to learn about the historical and scientific sources that Pynchon

draws upon. When I find something useful I might put it on the pynchon-wiki. When I come across a particular passage in the novel that I would like to remember, I copy it, and publish it on my blog. How clumsy print technology is: I have to type all the words again. I am used to copy-pasting, adding comments to existing text, making it circulate and play a role in communications and day-by-day thinking. I know that a digital text of Against the Day exists. I paid for the book, why can't I have access to the digital text? I am a bit annoyed about not having the digital text. The book itself, by the way, is heavier and and more voluminous than my laptop; I don't carry it around everywhere.

Yet there is no doubt that I love books. My annoyance is just another sign of the fact that we do not live in a print society anymore. Print is not the default choice for the distribution and circulation of knowledge, it constitutes a special case. How we deal with information, what we do with it, how we act upon it, how we pass it on, how and when we react, how we read, how we get informed, how we process and share knowledge, is decided by the technologies of online publishing. 'We' westerners with our computers, mobile phones and adsl connections are living in a world in which online information has taken priority over offline information. We might still have books, printed magazines and printed newspapers, but they are a sign of the presence of our past. When we write, we use laptops, a keyboard (mostly) and wordprocessing software. Paper isn't connected so nicely to the networked digital infrastructure where knowledge and news circulates, where most of the debates, discussion and conversations are going on. We have various reading and writing machines that are directly or indirectly linked to that network. Laptops mostly, and home-computers, but also various PDA's, smartphones, iPods, or, the most recent addition, electronic ink-tablets. These reading and writing machines might not be perfect, they might even be clumsy and ugly, but a lot of printed books and magazines are pretty clumsy too.

This situation begs the question: Why do we print? Or, probably the better question, when do we print, when do we prefer hardcopy? We should simply try to answer that question in the full knowledge that the transition from a print culture to a digital culture, is a complex process where technological, cultural, economic and political actors all play a role. [3]

First of all, we prefer printed books sometimes because we love the feel of paper, the smell of ink, the physical quality of a book, the high reso-

lution images. Or because we feel that the the meaning of printed words is dependent on the physical manifestation on paper, in a bound book – and would be different when read from a screen. Such books exist, they constitute a specialized, quite marginal niche of its own, where one finds artist books. (Actually the current interest of artists for making books and printed magazines might exactly derive from the fact that print is becoming marginal and constitutes a special choice). Books are a luxury. Reading from paper is at the moment also preferred in situations where contemplation is called for. Since our reading machines are often also writing machines and other texts or communication options are just a keyboard stroke away, they emphasize processing information – acting on it – over concentration on the text itself. A printed book on the other hand presents itself (physically) as a closed system, it is finished, has a beginning and end, and the links do not work. It is easier – at least for someone who grew up in a book culture and who loves to read – to concentrate reading a book, than to read from a computerscreen. Offline the desire to follow the links, look at other stuff, quickly check e-mail is less present. Yet I am inclined to believe that this also depends on one's own attitude towards reading from a screen.

We cannot rule out the role of nostalgia here: whomever grew up loving books, will want to hold on to that experience. Neither can we erase the financial question. Books and magazines are objects to be sold, though this becomes more and more difficult. There exists an economy around it that isn't going to disappear overnight. Moreover a book published with a 'real' publisher gives the writer or editor a certain status. The question is, how long will this still be the case?

Much more interesting is the phenomenon of Print-on-Demand services that show that print is not dead yet (and that in the development of technologies different paths can be taken). One could've expected that small magazines would disappear as print magazines, arguing that they become too expensive in an online culture. Yet the technology of Print-on-Demand, coupled with online distribution, surprisingly presents possibilities for small print magazines to survive in a printed format. For Print on Demand it hardly matters if you print 3000 copies or 100, or, for that matter just one. Print-on-Demand conjures up an utopia where a copy is printed only when someone actually orders one, for instance through Amazon. (ISBN-numbers can be assigned automatically). Most importantly, it presents the dream of customized books and magazines: the user makes an online-collection of articles on the website of the maga-

Maurice Blanchot

zine; the collection is made into a pdf – using xml-to-pdf translation; the pdf is sent to the printer. A week later you have a book delivered to your door by the postman. In the current situation there are still a few bottlenecks, but the English magazine Mute is quite far with the development of a usable and also more or less financially sound distribution of customized printed magazines, collected from their online database of articles. Another example in this area is the service that makes POD-books from wikipedia content. Note that in this case all the articles are online available, free of charge. One could also print the pdf on one's own printer. But it might be easier (and even cheaper) to order a POD-copy.

This brings us back again to the question: when does one want to have, and pay for, a printed collection of texts one can read for free online.

Although our infrastructure of networked computers is very good in having information circulate, it is not good in having us actually remember the existence of a certain piece of information. All the different solutions that have been designed for having us remember that a text is present on the machine, that we still should read it, or that can make us remember a reading experience, come across as rather weak in comparison to the physicality of the book . Yes, we put the icon on the desktop that on clicking opens the pdf of a still to be read theory text. Yes, we make bookmarks, and collect links on del.icio.us. We might even put stickies (the real ones) with a url on the hardware. But nothing beats the existence of a stack of paper that is physically present next to our reading and writing machine, a book that is permanently visible on a bookshelf, or a magazine that we carry around in our bags. [4] The physical presence I see as the strongest point of print. (It's a weak point too, when it comes to storing or moving the stuff). Underlining text, writing in the margin, dog-earring pages, putting post-its over text are sometimes cited as making the book a better or more humanly manageable technology. But all those techniques for the future processing of information, of thinking with or against the text, of future remembering are done much better by networked digital means. How to make that post-it work? Do I have to type all those sentences again?

When I would like to carry a text with me for a longer time, I am much better off with a stack of paper. One is prepared to pay for that too. Sometimes one is prepared to pay a lot of money for it, sometimes only a small amount. It depends on the length of time, one wants to be reminded of the text. There are texts that we like to carry around with us our

whole lives, like Orthodox Christians do with the Bible, or, in my case Finnegans Wake. Other texts we only want to carry around for a certain time, maybe a few months, or weeks, because they are central to a topical debate, or to an issue one is interested in at a moment in time. These are the collections of articles and essays on a special subject that we call (special interest) magazines. There is a gap here for small print-on-demand magazines. For these magazines the editorial choice, the care taken in making a collection is crucial – this can be done by editors, by readers, and of course by software that connects and analyses the networked collective intelligence of online users.

But in all the instances the reader also wants an electronic copy. Certainly when one has paid for the information. Why should I, when I have paid for the stack of paper with the text of Against the Day, have to copy sentences by hand when I desire to quote Pynchon on my blog? Why shouldn't I get the possibility to read that very text on a laptop (or smartphone or iPod)? [5]

The Against the Day-example is just an anecdote. Yet I think that customers in the future will come to regard buying non-transferrable text printed on paper as a very strange option. (Just like buying a CD one cannot rip to play on an iPod). But when we like to carry a text with us for our whole life, or when we would even like it to live on after we die, we're much better off by printing it on good paper with good ink. Although we can store much more in much less space by digital means, bit-rot, digital decay and the problem of unreadable disks and tapes seems to do more harm to digital data than moisture and mice do to books. That's why I have started to buy books.

Notes

1. Maurice Blanchot, 'The Absence of the Book' in The Station Hill Blanchot Reader, Barrytown, Station Hill, 1999, p. 471 - 486, (p. 471).

2. It's years since I found a notebook with good paper. The much-praised and far too expensive Moleskine's have rotten paper if one uses a fountain-pen. Also in that 'aesthetic' sense notebooks haven't got much of an attraction.

3. Although in the experience of a lot of people, especially the younger generations, this transition has taken place, our society and economy is still in the middle of it – as the crisis of the printing industry and the strategic developments in the newspaper and content industry show).

4. The only thing that might beat it is programming a pdf to send us an e-mail, a text-message, or even call us once in while speaking the words: "hey, remember me, I want to be read".

5. Would a more or less free circulation of the complete text of Against the Day have had a negative effect on the sale of that novel? I suspect not. I'm not arguing that the text

I love going to the dentist, and here is why.
On the importance and distinct qualities of print in an age of digital media

Nathalie Fallaha

"A tooth for a comic strip" was my habitual incentive to accept surrendering to the metallic cold tools of the dentist, starting at the age of 6. My mother found this offer a good compromise to willingly have me go to the dental clinic, and I think I did too.

Tintin, Boule and Bill, Alix, Lucky Luke or Blueberry were my reward on a regular basis on the way out from the clinic. I loved so much the fact of having 'my' own comic books, as opposed to borrowing my brother's. He was contracted under the same conditions by my mother. I could not stand the idea of him deciding how much time I could spend reading and re-reading the same pages on and on, or restricting my reading to the living room only, not in bed, which was my favorite. Having those comics for myself meant a lot to me as a kid. As years passed, I acquired my personal gold mine of books. My library can be traced back to those childhood days. I cannot but have mixed feelings today about my habitual bi-annual visit to the dentist. The threat of pain is somehow alleviated by all the magazines I treated myself to, on the way out of the clinic.

Years later, I love being the first one to turn the pages of a book, get first hand the odor of ink on paper. Every morning at my parents', I used to try to be first waking up at home, to get the privilege of reading the newspaper before anyone is up; the paper is sometimes still warm, and the smells emanating from it are as refreshing as a jug of fresh coffee. I love reading the arts and culture section first, then move straight to the last page; only after finishing it do I go to the first page, but I barely have the luxury of reading the whole paper on a week day; those mornings are much shorter, and the time slot allocated to a favored activity tends to be parsimonious. My mother, on the other hand, heads straight away to the births and obituaries page, glad to establish her action plan of the day, based on how many visits she would pay on that day. My father, like a weather reporter, could predict sunny or stormy days by deciphering

the stock market pages; he then took very long pauses, calculating gains and losses again and again, while we were all waiting behind him to grab the precious paper.

This long-practiced family reading ritual eventually lead my mother to divide up the precious papers between us: each one getting his or her favored page, then she would reassemble it after we had all left to work or university. Since I left home, this is surely what I miss most, and the shiniest morning still feels nostalgic.

With the advent of the digital age, ink gave way to pixel to a large extent. Odorless, untouchable, remote, the pixel has however brought along with it a huge amount of free information, and has transformed the understanding of access to knowledge and information in many ways. I don't worry anymore to be the first waking up at home, I actually refrain from buying a printed issue of the newspaper; I read it online, even though I am not sure I enjoy that. Now, I don't choose anymore to read a specific paper: I have access to all the local and international newspapers through my computer anytime. Fighting over the pages seems like a distant memory now. The precious piece of paper has suddenly turned into programmed bits and pixels.

What matters is the information indeed. New media have allowed a democratization of publishing and the retrieval of anything from anywhere. This particular characteristic of the worldwide network cannot be ignored. However, I cannot imagine feeling emotional towards a screen or a printout of any article retrieved from the net. The pragmatic reproduced dimension of an A4 laser printer output is all but 'intended'. Can one compare a beautifully laid out, lavishly printed, masterfully bound publication to anonymous toner on photocopy paper? What matters is how graphic design and the expanding repertoire of finishing techniques, materials and processes (varnishes, foils, paper, die-cuts, embossing and de-bossing…) can contribute to engage, amuse and inform. A renewed pledge to the tactility of the printed medium is in need.

The book as a medium involves conceptualizing format and size, typeface, layout, paper type, and tactility, all of which are left rather arbitrarily aside in a digital publication. Take Irma Boom, a Dutch graphic designer, for instance. She "makes books that are nearly sculptural objects before

they are repositories of information" (The book as sculpture, review by Daniel Nadel, published in Eye magazine issue 49, Autumn 2003). Her idiosyncratic books are first and foremost an exploration of meaning through form. The latter is something I try to be true to in my own work, and stimulate my graphic design students in, at the Lebanese American University (LAU). How are content and container related? Don't they produce a unique tangibility? One important criterion the work is assessed upon is that of non-dissociation; to what extent can a reader perceive the inherence of the subject to the format, layout, typography, paper and binding.

"Sponge" and "Fragile", two end-of-year L.A.U. Graphic Design Department publications, designed respectively in 2004 and 2006, explore this line between content and its container quite explicitly by mobilising structural metaphors which "package" the pages found between the front and back cover.

"Sponge" establishes a relation between the idea of a sponge as "a porous fibrous skeleton… [which] often live in colonies" and the sheets of a showcase, which could have been for that matter loose, unbound, nonsensically presented. However, they are not. This catalogue's format and binding is indeed referring to the porous yet absorbing characteristic of a student's mind, especially during the years of schooling and college. The fibrous qualities are found in the red thread that binds all the folios together, just like blood flowing through the physiological body. As for the reference to colonies, one can read through the pages, and unfold the different categories of the artwork, a reflection of the courses offered by the program. The skeleton, on the other hand, is pointed at through the naked spine of the publication, which is left loose from the cover purposefully; another assertive statement about a clear understanding of the book as a medium. The other version of "Sponge" is left uncut inside the crop-marks, revealing rough edges that do not perfectly match on top of each other, as well as the color calibration and ink density printing marks on the sheet of paper. This special edition of the publication is yet another reference to the rawness of the work printed on these pages, unpolished yet, still uncut. It is not trying to conceal original flaws generated systematically by the printing technique, but it proudly keeps it all apparent. Rives, a timeless elegant paper with a refined 'felt' finish, was used as a substrate. The texture of it was specifically

chosen for its highly tactile feel: it acted as an invitation to lay hands on the "Sponge" repeatedly. The visual aesthetic elaborated for "Sponge" aims to be "self-reflexive in its attempt to depict, and at some level to iconify, the material conditions of print's communicative" dimension, as read in The Other End of Print: David Carson, Graphic Design, and the Aesthetics of Media by Matthew G. Kirschenbaum.

The book as a medium is often compared to the human body, both having a skeleton, meat and bones. "Fragile" epitomizes this metaphor in its format and package; borrowing from perishable food wrappings, such as a foam tray, a transparent film wrapped around the "meat". In this case a series of postcards reproducing each one of the students' graphic works. There are two levels of information embedded here: the first one, a pragmatic reading, is a showcase of the students' visual production. The second one, a metaphorical reading, hints to the fragility of this specific graduating class, which could not take full advantage of their academic year, due to internal political turmoil prevailing in the country that specific year.

Both case studies discussed above advocate recovering a leading role of the printed publication in a desensitized binary world. Apart from their utter tactility, they are both meant to be savored but also to be read, even though in a rather uncommon way. As repositories of a year of graphic production, they both engage and inform the reader, beyond the singular informational entity.

In this time and day of transient information technology, the overwhelming amount of data we come across make it mandatory for a difference to arise, through such stimulants. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a comic strip" is what brought me to where I stand today. I believe the digital realm will not replace the palpable anytime soon, it will only complete it. It is up to graphic designers to ensure the perdurability of the printed medium, by inventing new ways to engage the senses.
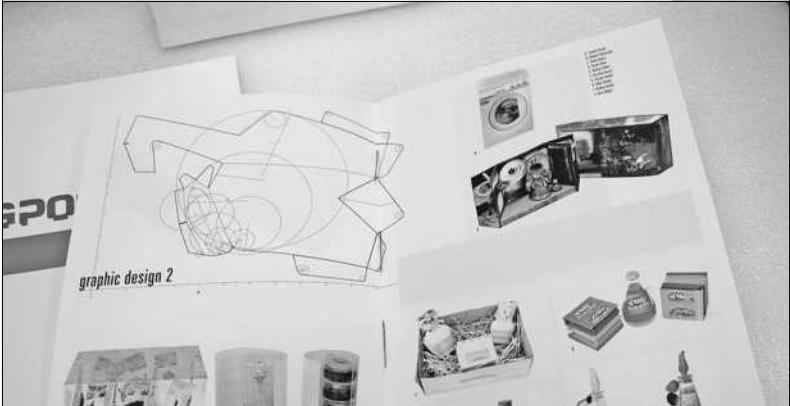
UbiBook

Jouke Kleerebezem

"The tragic beauty of Victor Hugo's Waterloo is that the readers feel that things happen independently of their wishes."

Umberto Eco, Vegetal and mineral memory: The future of books, lecture on 1 November 2003, at the occasion of the re-opening of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

For a long time, say 5 centuries, the industrialized book, a handheld piece of printed matter, consisting of bound sheets of paper, published in print runs, at a fixed format, organised in pages and chapters, has known no competition. We know what kind of an object is described here: a book which' use depends on nothing else but some light falling on its pages, a pair of reading glasses at most, to help focus it, and relatively dry, stable and level reading conditions. There's our book.

Indeed besides knowing what it is, we know where it is too: Since 500 years it is right at the heart of a tried and tested system of knowledge construction and dissemination. Since its invention this industrial book has become very strong and eminent. It spread all over our places of learning, repositories of knowledge, in the arts and humanities and politics. The book developed steadily to embody the ultimate ideals in wisdom, judicial systems, literature, and a variety of visual expressions. It can be copied, taken apart, re-assembled, and easily destroyed if necessary, without leaving a single trace, but a trail of smoke.

The book beheld everything you always wanted to know about everything and were glad to find in it, minutely described, or visionary evoked, possibly finely illustrated, sometimes richly adorned.

Until, ten odd years ago, some among us announced the end of that book.

Instead of laughing at them, again some of us — another party than those

first messengers — started immediately to protest that party's prediction, defending the book with all the wrong arguments: what other medium there was which we could 'use' in bed, in the bath, on the beach, in bright sunlight or at the light of a candle — other than the book? How much comfort was to be found in regular clear type on a clean, back and forth flippable surface! How enjoyable and illuminating were its illustrations, how easily could we carry or send it, how well did this object fit our hand and eye and curious mind... How invisible on the other hand could it be, modestly accommodating an un-hindered access to the content it carried! The book was here to stay, there was no competing it.

All this can not be contested, but those who announced its demise, were not talking about that dear solid thing of a book, the intimate consumer object with its formidable ease of use — they were not talking about what the book is, but about where it is. They see its place at the heart of our knowledge systems seriously challenged. They question its exclusivity as the focus of aesthetic pleasure. They do not announce the end of the book, but the end-of-the-book-as-we-know-it. To coincide with the end of knowledge-as-we-know-it. Could they be right?

So rather than about what a book is, or was, or will be — and why it is all important to challenge what exactly is a book, I want to look at where the book is, or was, or will be, and why 'where the book is' is so much part of its importance — both historically and for tomorrow. I might go as far as to claim that where a book is, is more important than what it is — more important certainly for the 'book of tomorrow' which is discussed here today. Where the book is, hence got me the title for today's talk.

UbiBook plays on UbiComp: which is the idea, or ideal, of 'ubiquitous computing'. While it places the computer embedded in the everyday, ubiquitous computing is considered as the opposite of 'virtual reality', which places the everyday inside the computer and presents it to us in a simulation. Among those book defenders which I told you about just now, are also some who claim that the book has always done both: it merges with the everyday while at the same time it presents us representations of it. The book also at this level would not be easily beaten, they say. I am sorry to say that this is not part of the discussion anymo-

re. There is no competition for what is the book, only for where it is.

Therefore, for a final good look at, for a last poetic description of, what is the book lover's object of desire we pay a nostalgic visit to where the book is: at some second hand book store, somewhere on this planet, brought to you by abebooks.com, where you know you'll find fine books all right.

Ulysses. JOYCE, James. **Price: US$ 1,500.00**

Book Description: New York: Random House, 1934. 768 pp. 8vo, publisher's wheat cloth in dust jacket. First American edition. Bookplate lightly tipped onto front free endpaper, otherwise near fine, in a nice jacket with a light crease to the spine, which is very slightly tanned, and a few short closed tears. A very attractive copy. Bookseller Inventory #10744

or, another copy of the same edition, somewhere in the world, tomorrow in your library, if you can afford it:

Price: US$ 4,500.00

Book Description: New York: Random House, 1934. First American edition. Fine, with tiny scuff-mark to bottom page edges in nearly or very nearly fine jacket, with two minute chips and a minute tear (all about one-eighth inch) to top edge front panel, two minute tears (same size as front panel) to rear panel, and some darkening to spine. The first-issue jacket has Reichl, the designer's name, on the front panel, according to my research (no known later printings, which are certainly less likely to be married to non-original dust jackets, with Reichl on the front panel, facsimile jackets that do have Reichl on the front panel, etc.). The jacket on this copy has the name.
According to Slocum and Cahoon (1953), this first American edition of Ulysses went through ten printings, the last in 1939, and the jacket priced at $3.50 without Reichl on the front panel is apparently from a later printing (there is no mention of the jacket point itself in Slocum and Cahoon, but this bibliography says next to nothing about the jacket, so that is not surprising). No book, dust jacket, or slipcase in my inventory is restored in any way. Provenance is available on request for any item. Bookseller Inventory #495

or, if you really care, one of the first edition of a 1000 numbered copies:

Price: US$ 75,000.00

Book Description: Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1922. Original blue printed wrappers. Expertly rebacked in matching paper, without blank endpapers. Fore-edge of front wrapper neatly restored, minimal touchups elsewhere. Minimal soiling to wrappers, slight age-toning to text, mentioned only for the sake of completeness. A very good copy. FIRST EDITION, one of only 1000 numbered copies, the most sought-after book of 20th-century literature. This is one of 750 copies printed on handmade paper; there were also 100 signed copies on Dutch handmade paper and 150 copies on VergÈ d'Arches (large paper). The complexities of this book have enthralled and infuriated readers from the day of publication to the present.

When Jacques Benoist-Mechin asked to see the scheme of Ulysses in order to translate the final section accurately, Joyce replied: "If I gave it all up immediately, I'd lose my immortality. I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality." Bookseller Inventory #web2310

The idea of the book as ubiquitous, the ubibook, at first hand seems too obvious. Yet the book is not anymore as ubiquitous as the knowledge, the ideas and artistic expression which it is supposed to contain and transport. The book has spread all over since 500 years and still today tries to spread as fast as the wild fire of networked information: infinite in all directions. But the book cannot be everywhere at once. Not only its points of distribution multiply, but also the sources for its content. Markets, which as we know depend on maximum volume and maximum traffic are to feed the hungry. If all of us were to lock ourselves in with one book for the rest of our lives — a desire every book lover recognizes — this would destroy the book market. Even an urban planner I once knew, who limits himself to a four meter long standard bookshelf, at which he always adds new acquisitions on the left side, and gives away those books which as a result of his adding fall off on the right side of it, puts too much of a limit to his consumption. Books want to be produced and distributed in large amounts, in order to keep the important position which they have as the building blocks of our civilization's kno-

wledge, laws and entertainment.

Let me get back to Ubicomp for a moment. It is about hardware, hidden in the 'woodwork', away from its monolithic position on or under the desktop, to disappear in its architectural environment, taking with it its computation, the processing of data taken out of sight... Ubicomp is a concept from the Xerox PARC lab (Palo Alto Research Center) from the late 1980s, coined by researcher Mark Weiser. Xerox PARC is also the place where a couple of decades before the graphical interface — pixels on a screen, the desktop metaphor and the mouse were first experimented. Ubicomp is intended to make the information processing invisible, to lower our threshold for access. Bill Buxton, a colleague of Weiser, is famous for his mantra which repeats: "I want my desktop back". Like our urban planner who would like to have his bookshelf back, or others who might want back that room in the house, where their books are lining up, while they are allowed too little time with them. When Columbia University in the early 1990s was faced with a necessary expansion of their library, instead of investing in architecture it was decided to allocate the available funds to the computer infrastructure and media research.

The ideal of knowledge access to be immaterial and democratic — like to some designers the ideal book design is 'invisible', unsichtbar, and the book has an egalitarian distribution — is a dream in which all of us are to look through transparent media in order to access pure content. Our perception not to be hindered by technology, or by the design of a book or other container. Do we do not want to see the construction which supports an altogether not superior system of thought and politics and culture, which, to make things even worse, is not divided among us equally either? For those who are designers, authors or just plainly interested in how things are made, how they work and support whatever they do support, any visible construction is a learning opportunity. Their 'suspension of disbelief' is not furthered by making the construction disappear, rather partly visible, included in the content. The book is the message.

Knowledge, laws and the arts are ubiquitous. People who want to know about them are everywhere and no one is to deny them their right of access. Totalitarian systems who clamp to that kind of control seem to

"Beyond a legacy of old books and old buildings, still of some significance but destined to continual reduction and, moreover, increasingly highlighted and classified to suit the spectacle's requirements, there remains nothing, in culture or in nature, which has not been transformed and polluted, according to the means and interests of modern industry."

Guy Debord 'Comments on the Society of the Spectacle' 1988/1990

be slowly but steadily breaking down, while at the other hand at the same time the last self acclaimed super power and greatest supporter of 'volume-and-traffic-maximizing' market capitalism has great difficulty to keep the book burners off its streets. As much as the democratic ideal of egalitarian access to knowledge is supported, as much there is a fear for all intelligence to be shared and freely available to all, including a society's real or imaginary enemies.

The thing which today spreads really well and wild is of course data. We are all complicit, posting, publishing, uploading, downloading. We are authors to that data plenitude which' infrastructure, the Internet, is said to contain 'no there in there', no fixed place where knowledge resides. Not all data are information (yet) and not all information is knowledge (per se).

Distinctions of this kind, in an information age (neither a data age nor knowledge age), have to be scrutinized in publishing at large. Data do build information and information can im-/materialize as knowledge, if given the proper keys and support in its management and use, which is a design topic as much as an editorial one. Is an MP3 music track data, information of knowledge? Is the sharing of MP3 tracks a sharing of data, information or knowledge? Can the market for the sharing of musical tracks model the sharing of other information? It is a market which is fuelled by peer-to-peer recommendation.

Like amazon.com's book purchases are fuelled by recommendation. 'Other readers who bought this book have also bought this book'..., and: 'has this review been useful to you'? Recommendation and sharing 'content' (a container term if ever there was one) is a form of democratization, based on the reputation of its source. I got the best books as a present from those who know my interests best. Those who gave me such books I trust, it gave them a reputation for getting me precisely the kind of information that I am interested in, but did not know of yet.

Coming from a tradition of what Richard Lanham in his seminal book The Electronic Word; Democracy, Technology and the Arts simply calls "The Great Books", the canonical texts which support our civilization, descending to such simple peer-to-peer musical recommendation seams too much of an iconoclastic event. It illustrates however that 'where the book is' is challenged today, more than anything else.

Where, and when, and how we receive the book is totally different from

over the past 500 years, because the book is not anymore 'present' where a large part of our knowledge is, while a large part of the world's knowledge is not necessary 'present' in the book.

As a political aside which I won't go further into in this context, our particular book marked history is also the product of a very particularly selective editorial history — if you look into how power relations have worked our perspectives vis-à-vis large parts of the globe and different cultures, whose literacy we are only now seriously considering, after many great mistakes.

So UbiBook looks at book content, unleashed in the everyday. Book and knowledge mobility of course is of all ages. In A History of Reading — Alberto Manguel (in the chapter "The Shape of the Book") tells the story of book portability from Mesopotamiam clay tablets to the Penguin paperback, via (papyrus and) parchment scrolls and codexes — the latter introducing the known book shape, with margined pages and the beginning of book organisation, in chapters and volumes — all through printing, when books came in increasing print runs, therefore became available (and affordable) for personal use and therefore could be reduced in size and weight, which again afforded portability and emergence of a book market.

Books became truly mobile. They started to travel. They started to penetrate the everyday. The question 'where the book is' becomes interesting with its industrial production, at a time when also distance becomes bridged and places are linked, in an equally industrial speed and manner. In 1848 W.H. Smith and Sons open the first Railway bookstall at London's Euston Station. Publishers produced e.g. the Railway Library, Travelers Library or even the Run and Read Library series. The English publisher Allen Lane in 1935, on July 30 brought the first ten Penguin titles to the market, which expanded their distribution to include tea-shops, stationers and tobacconists and finally in an attempt to break even at 17.000 copies sold per title, at Woolworth department stores. The book has arrived where its readers are and go.

When and where the industrialized book sprung to its inventors' imagination, how it was produced and distributed has been a matter of the convergence of different technologies and their affordances. Paper, oil based inks, movable reusable type and later distribution, transport, again

later electricity and consumer culture... to reach critical mass in today's commodity based mass media market.

Public electricity, and public transport together at the end made for their finest invention, the reading light in the bus, train or airplane, the only condition to be met to enter a book at night.

Today, in the age of the electronic word, (public and private) electricity and (public and private) data transport make for altogether new kinds of figure-on-ground penetration, as SMS and photo/video messaging conquer the mobile screens that can be addressed right there in our pocket, where it lives next to that worn and torn paperback, for the mobile reader.

Umberto Eco in a recent appearance, distinguished two kinds of books: books to read and books to consult. As a consequence to this difference you will find different books in different places, on different shelves. The second, those 'books to consult', serve general knowledge. They are part of the democratic educational agenda.

They must be found in school and university libraries, public libraries, to serve educational equality: information and knowledge access to all. Serving the public information availability slogan of what is optimistically called the 'age of information': 'all information available to anyone, anywhere at any time'. Books to consult change with the subject matter which is browsed, containing information which is actually updated ever once in a while, when a new print of the respective volume is produced, or addenda are added to the original title.

 These addenda speed up in different fields of printed matter. Travel guides and maps, hasten to shape themselves after changing territories, as they are taken along by us, to be matched against these. These days we see (e.g. Michelin) maps being reprinted every year... France 2004, France 2005? What's the hurry? In a race to remain accurate in reference to the terrain they represent, they reach for near for 'real time' monitoring. Their multiple layers are devised into more and less stable 'formations'. The less speedy ones of geology, the more speedy ones of traffic infrastructure. Not only do maps speed up, also they diversify in relation to the speed of the traffic (or the traveler's interest) which they serve.

To have another look at a different and important reader's interest (vis-

Richard A. Lanham

The

Electronic

Word

Democracy,

•

Technology,

•

and the Arts

à-vis speed and change) we return to Eco. The tragic beauty of any book is that it contains a fixed universe, fixed by an author (c.s.) who decided on that universe's limits and conditions, and on how its narrative develops. Umberto Eco in his lecture distinguishes two types of books: books to read and books to consult. It is the first that at the end of his talk he ascribes tragic beauty. The latter are encyclopaedias, handbooks. They have an altogether different relation to the universes which are described in them.

So where is the book again? Where there is a reader, there's the book. Ubi Lector, Ibi Liber. Some books you don't want to see change under your hands. They provide you different from 'road map style' guidance. Different books have different liabilities, serve different time spans, have different sustainability, too. 'Books to read' (to stay with Eco's distinction), can be read for-ever, over and over by different generations of readers. They travel well in time. The language in which they have been written might 'map' a different time period, other monuments which are described in them might have been torn down (both architectural, as well as institutional, as well as vis-à-vis the human interests which supports the institutionalization of — also human — relationships), what remains is their 'tragic beauty'.

'Data, information, knowledge' are not always in a hurry.

For the book to settle in what is possibly a new role in information and knowledge building, one will have to study its relationship to other media which have been around for only a short while. They have by no means depleted their possibilities, we can easily grant them 5 centuries or a little less, to come to their fulfillment.

One last remark therefore will have to be about time and its passing. There is no such medium for posterity as mineral memory carbon or slicium... Parchment is very fine.

Acid free paper is excellent for its industrial use, acidulous paper doing a bit less in the light of eternity. What is worst for record keeping, as all industries repeat to us, is digital/optical media. The best preservation guideline still is to keep the hardware with the software, which is called the 'museum option' in conservation: my vintage Macs in the attic which might serve access to my floppy-based electronic edition of Lanham's book... In order to preserve all my other books, I am not forced to keep

the shelf, the library, the house.

I will be left with some of the book's information to age with me, and keep those precious objects at hand, in a sense also 'against time'. I will hand them down, when I myself one day 'fall of the shelf'. I know perfectly well where I want my book to be at that moment. In my library. Like Kees Fens, a well known Dutch essayist, once wrote: the sole purpose of those many unread books on the shelf is to be there with us and to be at hand whenever we need, or those who come after us will want to reach for them.

Keep those books at hand for tomorrow reference...

End

Paper in Pixel meets Pixel in Paper.

Game publications
A strong pillar of game industry?

Kristian Lukic

Digital games are quite old. The first commercially published game Magnavox Odyssey (1972) celebrates its 35th birthday. Thousands of games have been published, and they are becoming cultural, social and economical phenomena. Those associated with the game industry like to say that the current market value of the game industry is worth several tens of billions of US dollars. There is still a debate about who is bigger: Hollywood or the game industry?

Printed publications such as game magazines have had a prominent role in promoting this new industry, by acting as the first line reviewers (and promoters) of new products on the market and bringing the games to young consumers. The credit for the first magazine covering the video game industry - still in continuous publication - goes to the subscription-only trade periodical Play Meter magazine, which was first published in 1974, and covered the entire coin-operated entertainment industry.

The first consumer-oriented print magazine dedicated solely to video gaming was Computer and Video Games which premiered in the U.K. in November 1981, two weeks ahead of the U.S. launch of the one to oldest video gaming publication Electronic Games magazine. The oldest video game publication still in continuous circulation (as of 2005) is Computer Gaming World (CGW), which also debuted in 1981, but does not get credit for being the first all-round, as it began publication as a bi-weekly newsletter before becoming a proper magazine. While self-made print fanzines about games have been around since the advent of the first home consoles, it was the proliferation of the internet that gave independent writers a real voice in video game journalism. At first ignored by most major game publishers, it was not until the communities developed an influential and dedicated readership, and increasingly produced professional (or near-professional) writing that the sites gained the attention of larger game companies. (1)

There was not much critical examination of the games phenomenon until several years ago. Magazines covering games from cultural or anthropological perspectives were just not appearing. The main reason for the latter could be attributed to the fact that the primary target audience for games were children and youngsters. By corollary the first decades of game culture passed by, ignored by academics and critics.

The majority of game printed publications are industry game magazines that are a weekly or monthly repository for industry news, reviews of fresh games, opinions, interviews with game designers and CEOs of companies. Such Game magazines are, almost without any exception, a cog in the market machinery of big game publishers. Critical reflections
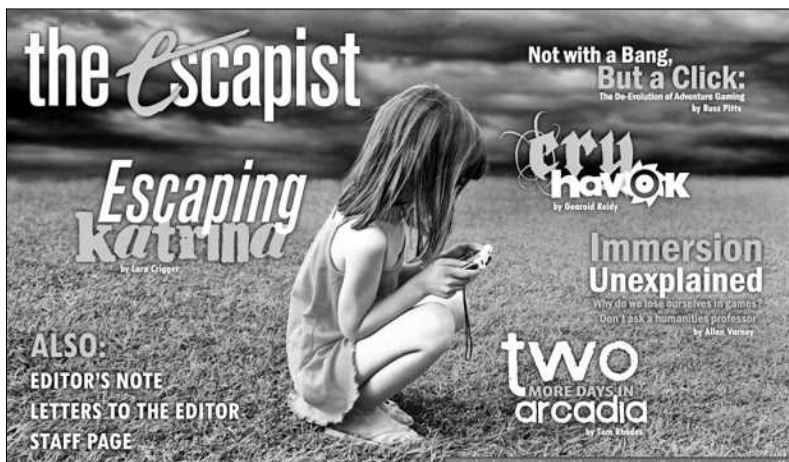
towards the game industry and game contents are barely present, and only serve as a customer's guide through the game market niche. As journalist Chris Buffa from GameDaily.biz pointed out in his article "Why Videogame Journalism Sucks" (2006.):

Videogame journalists have come under fire for misleading the public, taking bribes from publishers, and hiring uneducated morons as writers. Whether or not this is all true is pure speculation, the type of stuff that sours message boards populated by conspiracy theorists and immature fan boys, but the damage has been done.[....]Despite years of writing under our belts, none of us have been able to successfully break from the pack and establish a signature style. Actually, allow me to rephrase

that. Plenty of writers have attempted to sound different, but they end up failing miserably. I'm not saying that we shouldn't work with PR. They're a valuable source of information and they supply us with access to the games, but I also think that it's about time they work a bit harder for coverage. And the PR "game" needs to end—this atrocious and twisted mantra that dictates that a journalist should never deny PR coverage of a bad game because he or she never knows when that contact will represent a good one. Videogame journalism isn't a lost cause, but in order to start fresh, we [the writers] need to admit that most of us suck. (2)

In the long run it seems that the "classical" printed game magazines would get into trouble adapting to new network environments and online publications, which can react to new products on the market in an almost real time fashion. Printed magazines with their typical monthly release cycle cannot compete with the instant - and at times even 24h hour nature - of online publications. Websites such as Gamasutra for example, have a daily refresh of news and articles.

Digital games in biopolitics

Nick-Dyer Witheford and Greig de Peuter note in their text "Games of Empire: transversal media inquire (2005):

"Just as the 18th century novel was as a textual machine creating the bourgeois subjectivities requisite to an emergent mercantile society, and as television and film were vital to 20th century Fordism, so video and computer games are the media specifically exemplary of networked global capitalism. Digital games crystallize in a paradigmatic way the cultural, political, and economic forces of a global capitalist order based on the mobilization of biopower. (3)"

Dispersive, networked, with imbedded precarity, the game industry is a classic example of what Lazzarato calls "immaterial labour". For example, virtual worlds or massive multiplayer online worlds like Everquest, World of Warcraft and Second Life are the new factories in which workers, or players, work and play.

Although deeply based along decentralized networked trajectories, game industries are enclosed proprietary worlds. Each MMO operates as the factory where production is fully of bio origin, where there is an owner, management, marketing, and a department for maintaining the production facility/virtual world. The main income for shareholders of the MMO world is not the production of in-world products - which remain to be the property of workers/players - but rather the act of playing itself, which has become a commodity. What is at stake here, similar to other "community" websites like Myspace or You tube, is that the number of visitors, players, and inhabitants of these virtual worlds, is what counts. In other words, play itself becomes an economical activity, thus changing the notion of play as know it.

Print publications, such are for example the Game Studies edition of MIT Press brought critical and academic attention to gaming issues. Up to

that point, critical analysis of games has remained largely isolated and fragmented. The role of (peer-reviewed) print publications is important: it legitimises the position of game studies, and links it to other academic disciplines, such as sociology and cultural studies. What lacks are true critical approaches towards game cultures, its industry, contents, ideologies and the effect games have on young generations. For example, what is the role of digital games vis-a-vis historic revisionism? What is the role of the game industry in relation to the role of Nazism before and during WW2? There are numerous games with a WW2 topic, dis-

playing a neutral position towards the different sides in the war; the only thing that matters is the quality of the game which might bring us to the old dialogue between ludologists and narrators. Last but not least, what is the role of games in current war on terror?

Recently several books have been published dealing with the polemics of game culture. To mention just a few: Stephen Kline's, Nick Dyer-Witheford's and Greig de Peuter's Digital Play. The Interaction of Technology, Culture and Marketing, 2003; The Game Design Reader, A Rules of Play Anthology, Edited by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, 2005; GAM3R 7H30RY by McKenzie Wark, 2007; Unit Operations, An Approach to Videogame Criticism by Ian Bogost, 2006;, Edward Castronova's Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Game, 2005 and Julian Dibbel's Play Money: Or, How I Quit My Day Job and Made Millions Trading Virtual Loot. Some of these books are focused on the game industry, others on the rules of play inside games, others again on the economy of virtual worlds.

There are only few publications dealing with game counter-culture, like for example Nick-Dyer Witheford and Greg de Peuter, or McKenzie Wark on the potential subversive strategies of games. Still, after several decades there is little literature online – or in print – to be found on gaming counter-culture, despite its vivid presence. Now that the game industry has established itself as one of the main branches of the entertainment industry, together with the film and music industry, it is high time to look at alternative streams, hacker gamers, mods and activist games. Together with the excavation of these practices, there is a need for a strong critique, and an activist response to game culture, similar to what happened in the mid-nineties with net.art, net criticism and cyber-activism.

Notes

(1) Video game journalism
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_journalism

(2) Buffa,Chriss, Why Videogame Journalism Sucks, GameDaily.biz, 2006
http://biz.gamedaily.com/industry/feature/?id=13240

(3) Nick-Dyer Witheford and Greig de Peuter in their text Games of Empire: a transver-

sal media inquire, 2005
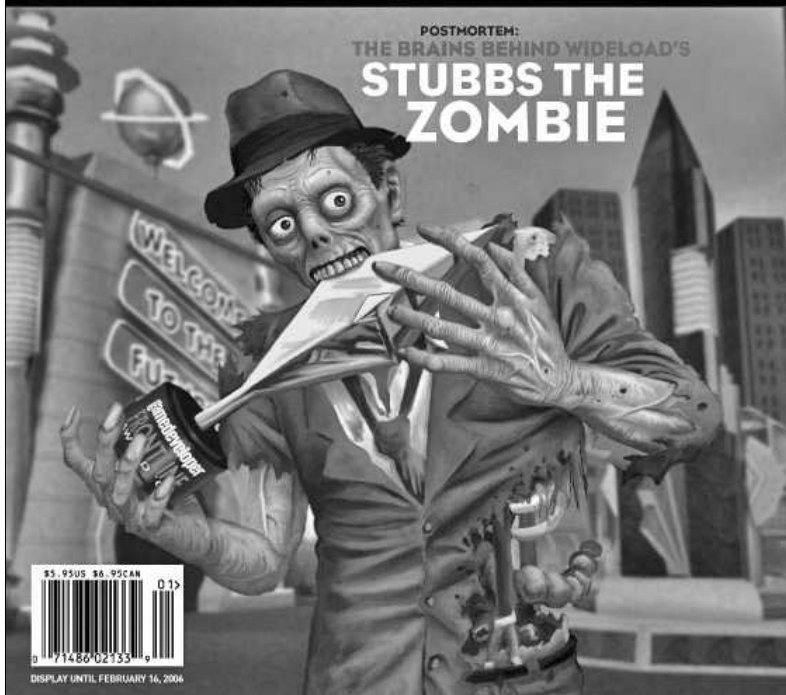
Thieves of the Invisible

by Alessandro Ludovico feat. Ubermorgen.com vs. Paolo Cirio

We have stolen the invisible.

Amazon, the motherly bookseller, always sensitive to her customer needs like an affectionate friend, was outraged in her own intimate affects. Her most precious resource, an infinitely beautiful body of culture, able to mesmerize your eyes for hours, was somehow deprived and exposed, after we had eluded her copyright protection. Amazon had been a witty advisor to millions of happy customers, and had spent the last decade researching how to improve her service. She had dedicated all her time and energy to building the best collection of purchasable culture possible. She never wasted her time investing in public mass advertising or in spamming the profiled potential new customer. All she counted on and needed to count on was the grand word of mouth that happy customers passed on one another. That was a killer application – together with the software platform that made books the center of an interrelated universe. She started then to hyper-contextualize every piece of her inventory, researching the overlaps of tastes her happy customers kind of anonymously displayed. Furthermore, she incited customers to compile lists, review, comment, discuss and tag all books. But all her love was finally expressed in allowing users to peek into the inner side of her treasures: the original texts. She worked hard from the beginning and even if many were skeptical at first, she succeeded in realizing a new model: 'the imagined book', more real than the one you would look at in a physical bookstore. Now the customers got more motivated than ever, seeing their objects of desire not only described by their own technicaldetails, but also by their many external references. At this very moment, Amazon placed a gamble with the future. She did something no other bookseller had ever done before: She disembodied a substantial part of her books, thus filling a huge database (the literary correspondent of the music 'celestial jukebox'). By doing so, customers were able to text-search whole books ('Search Inside the Book' option, they called it) and then see the search results displayed within the respective paragraphs of the book searched. This provoked a global joy and ecstatic use, but exposed the nudity of the book to too many eyes. We, the Amazon Noir gang, were simply astounded and started to endlessly play with this umpteenth content toy.
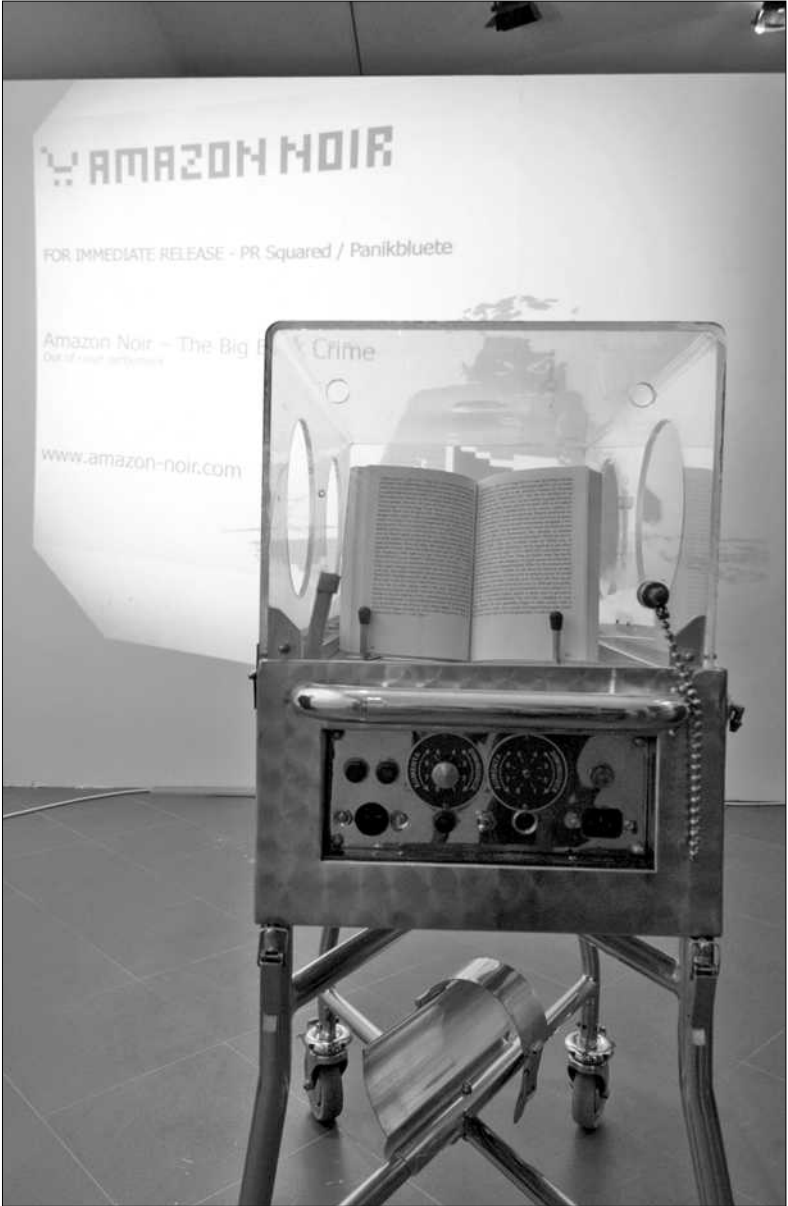
Amazon Noir installation at Share Festival, Turin 2007

So, we couldn't stop until we stole the invisible.

We couldn't resist her beauty. She was a beautiful rich body of culture, continuously unveiling her generous and attractive forms at request, but never saying: "Yes, you can take me away". This free cultural peep show started to drive us crazy. Many others were in the same condition, but reacted differently: crashed their computers and were never again online, or found another pay-per-view drug. Some of them described it "like being constantly titillated, regularly being asked for money in order to possess one of the too many physical bits". In fact adopted software doesn't give access to the whole content, but only to bits of it. Nevertheless, it is clear and understood to anybody that the whole content was 'there', behind a few mysterious clicks away. A cornucopia of texts, an astonishing amount of knowledge, a compelling body of culture, infinitely put on hold, for marketing reasons. So this virtual interface was a never-ending blinking to the disclosed magnificent beauty sold one bit a time.

Then we definitively stole the invisible.

We hacked the system, we built a malicious mechanism (Amazon Noir) able to stress the server software, getting back the entire books we wanted, at request. It was a question of creating a so-called 'foolingware'. We actually think that in the future we will be remembered as the predecessor of 'foolingware', and now we feel guilty about that. So we started to collect piece by piece the yearned body of culture with increasing excitement and without a pause. We wondered. What is the difference between digitally scanning the text of a book of yours, and obtaining it from Amazon Noir? There is no difference. It would be only discussed in terms of the amount of wasted time. We wanted to build our local Amazon, definitively avoiding the confusion of continuous purchasing stimuli. So we stole the loosing and amusing relation between thoughts. We stole the digital implementation of synapses connections between memory, built by an online giant to amuse and seduce, pushing the user to compulsively consume. We were thieves of memory (in a McLuhan sense), for the right to remember, to independently and freely construct our own physical memory. We thought we did not want to play forever under the peep-show unfavorable rules. But we failed. We failed and we were in the end corrupted, and we had to surrender to the copyright guardians. We failed breaking into the protectionist economy. We failed, because we wanted to share and give away.

[http://www.amazon-noir.com]

Amazon Noir website

Amazon Noir installation at Share Festival, Turin 2007

Documenta 12 Magazines

documenta 12 magazines is a collective worldwide editorial project linking over eighty print and on-line periodicals, as well as other media. In advance of the exhibition in Kassel, documenta 12 magazines has opened up a central site for reflection and visual contemplation. Since early 2006, influential journals in the realm of art, as well as specialist publications operating in discursive fields beyond the major art centres, have been publishing and discussing contributions—essays, interviews, photo reportages, features, interventions from artists and articles of fiction—in relation to documenta 12's three main themes: Is modernity our antiquity? What is bare life? What is to be done?

Is modernity our antiquity?

This is the first question. It is fairly obvious that modernity, or modernity's fate, exerts a profound influence on contemporary artists. Part of that attraction may stem from the fact that no one really knows if modernity is dead or alive. It seems to be in ruins after the totalitarian catastrophes of the 20th century (the very same catastrophes to which it somehow gave rise). It seems utterly compromised by the brutally partial application of its universal demands (liberté, égalité, fraternité) or by the simple fact that modernity and coloniality went, and probably still go, hand in hand. Still, people's imaginations are full of modernity's visions and forms (and I mean not only Bauhaus but also arch-modernist mindsets transformed into contemporary catchwords like "identity" or "culture"). In short, it seems that we are both outside and inside modernity, both repelled by its deadly violence and seduced by its most immodest aspiration or potential: that there might, after all, be a common planetary horizon for all the living and the dead.

What is bare life?

This second question underscores the sheer vulnerability and complete exposure of being. Bare life deals with that part of our existence from which no measure of security will ever protect us. But as in sexuality, absolute exposure is intricately connected with infinite pleasure. There

is an apocalyptic and obviously political dimension to bare life (brought out by torture and the concentration camp). There is, however, also a lyrical or even ecstatic dimension to it – a freedom for new and unexpected possibilities (in human relations as well as in our relationship to nature or, more generally, the world in which we live). Here and there, art dissolves the radical separation between painful subjection and joyous liberation. But what does that mean for its audiences?

The final question concerns education: **What is to be done?**
Artists educate themselves by working through form and subject matter; audiences educate themselves by experiencing things aesthetically. How to mediate the particular content or shape of those things without sacrificing their particularity is one of the great challenges of an exhibition like documenta. But there is more to it than that. The global complex of cultural translation that seems to be somehow embedded in art and its mediation sets the stage for a potentially all-inclusive public debate (Bildung, the German term for education, also means "generation" or "constitution," as when one speaks of generating or constituting a public sphere). Today, education seems to offer one viable alternative to the devil (didacticism, academia) and the deep blue sea (commodity fetishism).

Currently, documenta 12 magazines works together with more than 90 print and on-line periodicals, radio and other media throughout the world. These journals and magazines discuss the main themes and theoretical discourses behind documenta 12 with particular emphasis being placed on reflecting the interests and specific knowledge of the respective local contexts. As part of the project, an internet platform (i.e.: content management system) for participating magazines has been established to allow all participating magazines to access, share and republish texts, images, audio and video files made available by the participating magazines and editors.
In the last months documenta 12 magazines organized four transregional meetings in collaboration with the Goethe–Institutes in Hong Kong, New Delhi, São Paulo and Cairo. Collaborating publishers, critics, theorists and artists from our network have been invited to present and discuss their contributions to documenta's leitmotifs, to share curiosities, editorial practices and ideas in an informal workshop situation. As a conclusion of each meeting the results were discussed during a public talk.

List of participating journals and magazines

A Prior, Gent
www.aprior.org

Afterall, London/Los Angeles
www.afterall.org

AIDA, Tokyo

Amkenah, Alexandria

archplus, Berlin
www.archplus.net

Art China, Shanghai
www.duoyunxuan.com

ART iT, Tokyo
www.art-it.jp

Art World, Shanghai
www.yishushijie.com

art-ist, Istanbul

arte y crítica, Santiago de Chile
www.arteycritica.cl

Bidoun, New York
www.bidoun.com

Birikim, Istanbul
www.birikimdergisi.com/birikim/

Brumaria, Madrid/Barcelona
www.brumaria.net

Cabinet, New York
www.cabinetmagazine.org

Camera Austria International, Graz
www.camera-austria.at

Canal Contemporâneo,
Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo
www.canalcontemporaneo.art.br/blog/

Chimurenga, Cape Town
www.chimurenga.co.za

Chto Delat? /What is to be done?,
St. Petersburg
www.chtodelat.org

CLiCK (Surat YSC, KUNCI, LeBur, Clea),
Yogyakarta
www.kunci.or.id
www.cemetiartfoundation.org
http://clea.kunci.or.id

Concrete Reflection, Skopje

Criterios, La Habana
www.criterios.es

Critical Inquiry, Chicago
http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu

Ctrl+P, Manila
www.trauma-interrupted.org/ctrlp

Curare, Ciudad de México

De witte Raaf, Brussel /Bruxelles
www.dewitteraaf.be

diatxt, Kyoto
www.kac.or.jp

domus, Rozzano
www.domusweb.it

Dushu, Beijing

-empyre-, Sydney
www.subtle.net/empyre

Esfera Pública, Bogotá
www.esferapublica.org

Eurozine, Wien
www.eurozine.com

exindex, Budapest
www.exindex.hu

focas, Singapura

Frakcija, Zagreb
www.cdu.hr/frakcija/index.htm

Frontiers, Haikou
http://taya.chinajournal.net.cn

Glänta, Göteborg
www.glanta.org

Grey Room, New York
http://mitpress.mit.edu/grey

IDEA , Cluj
www.ideamagazine.ro

journal BOL, Seoul
insaartspace.or.kr/en/Journal/Journal.htm

Kakiseni.com, Petaling Jaya
www.kakiseni.com

kalam, Jakarta
www.utankayu.org/en

kunst.ee, Tallinn
www.kl.ee/kunstee

Le monde diplomatique, Berlin/Oslo
www.monde-diplomatique.de
www.diplo.no

LTTR, New York
www.lttr.org

malmoe, Wien
www.malmoe.org

Masharef, Haifa

Maska, Ljubljana
www.maska.si

Metronome, Paris
www.metronomepress.com

Metropolis M, Utrecht
www.metropolism.org

Moscow Art Magazine, Moskva
http://xz.gif.ru

Multitudes, Paris
http://multitudes.samizdat.net/

n.paradoxa, London
http://web.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa/#current

Naqd, Alger
www.revue-naqd.net

Natural Selection, Auckland
www.naturalselection.org.nz

Neural, Bari
www.neural.it

Øjeblikket, København
www.ojeblikket.net

Off the Edge, Petaling Jaya

Pages, Rotterdam/Tehran
www.pagesmagazine.net

Pananaw, Quezon City

Parachute, Montréal
www.parachute.ca

INTO -GAL, Melbourne

Performance Research,
Manchester /London
www.performance-research.net

Piktogram, Warszawa
www.piktogram.pl

Pulgar, Caracas

Punto de Vista, Buenos Aires
www.bazaramericano.com

Radical Philosophy, London
www.radicalphilosophy.com

Ramona, Buenos Aires
www.ramona.org.ar

trópico, São Paulo
http://p.php.uol.com.br/tropico

Remont Art Magazine, Beograd
www.remont.co.yu

Revista de Critica Cultural,
Santiago de Chile
www.criticacultural.org

Rizoma, São Paulo
www.rizoma.net

sab0t, Ciudad de México
possibleworlds.org

Sarai, Delhi
www.sarai.net

sentAp!, Ipoh, Perak

Shahrzad, Zürich

Site, Stockholm
www.sitemagazine.net

Siyahi, Istanbul

springerin, Wien
www.springerin.at

studio, Tel Aviv
www.studiomagazine.co.il

talawas, Hanoi
www.talawas.org

**Teorija koja Hoda – TkH
(Walking Theory) journal**, Beograd
www.tkh-generator.net

Thai Bookazine, (Budpage, Fah Diew Kahn,
Midnight University, Open, Prachatai,
Questionmark), Thailand
www.midnightuniv.org
www.prachatai.com
www.questionmag.net
www.budpage.com
www.onopen.com

Third Text, London
www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09528822.html

Urban China, Shanghai
www.urbanchina.com.cn

Vacarme, Paris
www.vacarme.eu.org

Valdez, Bogotá

Vector, Iasi
www.periferic.org/vector/vector.html

velocidadcrítica, Santa Caterina N.L.

Yishu, Vancouver
www.yishujournal.com

Zehar, Donostia/San Sebastián
www.zehar.net

Network documenta 12 magazines, Visualisation: Andreas Pawlik & Julian Roedelius / D+

To Edit or not to Edit.

On the Differences between Open Source and Open Culture

Felix Stalder

How would culture be created if artists were not locked into romantic notions of individual authorship and the associated drive to control the results of their labour was not enforced through ever expanding copyrights? What if cultural production was organized via principles of free access, collaborative creation and open adaptability of works? As such, the practices of a collective and transformative culture are not entirely new. They were characteristic for (oral) folk cultures prior to their transformation into mass culture by the respective industries during the twentieth century, and as counter-currents – the numerous avant-garde movements (dada, situationism, mail art, neoism, plagiarism, plunderphonics, etc.) which re-invented, radicalized and technologically up-graded various aspects of those. Yet, over the last decade, these issues – of open and collaborative practices – have taken on an entirely new sense of urgency. Generally, the ease with which digital information can be globally distributed and manipulated by a very large number of people makes free distribution and free adaptation technically possible and a matter of everyday practice. Everyone with a computer already uses, in one way or the other, the copy & paste function built into all editors. This is what computers are about: copying, manipulating and storing information. With access to the internet, people are able to sample a wide range of sources and make their own works available to potentially large audiences.

More specifically, the free, and open source software (FOSS) movement has shown that it is possible to create advanced informational goods based on just these principles. They are enshrined as four freedoms in the General Public License (GPL), the legal and normative basis of much of this movement. These are, it is worth repeating: freedom to use a work for any purpose, freedom to change it, freedom to distribute exact copies of it, and freedom to distribute transformed copies. These freedoms are made practicable through the obligation to provide the neces-

sary resources; for software, this is the human-readable source code (rather than just the machine-readable binaries, consisting of nothing that ones and zeros). After close to two decades of FOSS development it has become clear that it embodies a new mode of production, that is, a new type of social organization underpinning the creation of a class of goods. To stress that this mode of production does not need to be limited to FOSS, Yochai Benkler has called it 'commons-based peer production'[2] meaning that the resources for production e.g. the source code are not privately owned and traded in markets, but managed as a commons, open to all members of a community made up of volunteers (those who accept the conditions of the GPL).

It is perhaps not surprising that such a 'really existing utopia' has had a strong attraction for cultural producers whose lives are made difficult by having to conform either to the demands of the culture/creative industries, or the traditional art markets. Thus over the last couple of years, we have seen an explosion of self-declared 'openness' in virtually all fields of cultural production, trying, in one way or the other, to emulate the FOSS style of production, usually understood as egalitarian and collaborative production.

However, despite all the excitement, the results have been, well, rather meagre. There are plenty of collaborative platforms, waiting to be used. Those that are used often produce material so idiosyncratic that they are of relevance only to the communities creating them, barely reaching beyond self-contained islands, always at the brink of collapsing into de facto closed clubs of the like-minded. There is only one example that springs to mind of something that has reached the size and impact comparable to major FOSS projects: Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia.

The exceptional status of Wikipedia suggests that the FOSS model is not easily transferable to other domains of cultural production.[3] Rather, it seems to suggest that there are conditions which are specific to software development. For example, most software development is highly modular, meaning many people can work in parallel on self-contained aspects with little coordination between them. All that is necessary is to agree on certain standards (to make sure the various modules are compatible) and a loosely-defined direction for the development. This gives

the individual contributors a high degree of autonomy, without diluting the overall quality of the emergent result. This, of course, does not apply to literary texts, films, or music, where the demands for overall coherence are very different. It's not surprising, then, that we still have not seen, and I would suspect will never see, an open source novel.[4] Another important aspect in which software development differs from most cultural production is its economic structure. Around three quarters of professional programmers (meaning people who are paid to write code) work for companies that use software but do not sell it.[5] Commodity software (à la Microsoft) has always been only a small aspect of all software that is produced and the overall sector has always been oriented towards providing services. Hence, it's easy to imagine an industry providing an economic basis for long-term FOSS development. And such an industry is emerging rapidly. Of course, artists, for very good reasons, are reluctant to accept a service model forced upon them under the label creative industry,[6] leaving them dependent on either the traditional art market, or the limited commissions handed out by public and private foundations. There are numerous other aspects that differentiate the problem of software development from other domains of immaterial production. I've sketched them elsewhere.[7] In the context of self-directed cultural or artistic projects, one issue seems to pose particular difficulty for open projects: quality control.

What's Good, And Who Is Better?

 What makes a work of art a good work of art? How can we reliably judge the ability of one artist as comparable and superior over that of another? These are intractable questions that most people, even art critics, try to avoid, for very good reasons. Throughout the twentieth century, the definition of art as been expanded continuously to the degree that is has become self-referential (à la "art is what artists do", or "art is what is shown in art institutions"). As an effect of the ensuing uncertainty, aesthetic judgements are more than ever uncertain and therefore subjectivized, and the range of aesthetic preferences is extremely wide. The differences among genres, even if they can seem to be minuscule to outsiders, tend to be very significant for the ones who care. The result is that the number of people who share a sense of what makes a cultural product high-quality is usually very small. Except, of course, if the product is supported by massive marketing campaigns that artificially inflate this richness of opinion into mass markets. Thus cultural communities

WIKIPEDIA

English
The Free Encyclopedia
1 706 000+ articles

Deutsch
Die freie Enzyklopädie
562 000+ Artikel

Français
L'encyclopédie libre
466 000+ articles

Polski
Wolna encyklopedia
362 000+ haseł

日本語
フリー百科事典
346 000+ 記事

Nederlands
De vrije encyclopedie
284 000+ artikelen

Italiano
L'enciclopedia libera
278 000+ voci

Português
A enciclopédia livre
247 000+ artigos

Svenska
Den fria encyklopedin
218 000+ artiklar

Español
La enciclopedia libre
216 000+ artículos

search • suche • rechercher • szukaj • 検索 • zoeken • ricerca • busca • sök • buscar • поиск • 搜索 • haku • søk

[English] (>)

are either highly fragmented or commodified, making collaboration either exceedingly difficult or illegal.

In software, this is different. It is usually not so difficult to determine what is a good program and what is not, because there are widely accepted criteria which are objectively measurable. Does a program run without crashing? Does it do certain things that others don't? How fast is it? How much memory does it use? How many lines of code are necessary for a particular feature? But it's not just that technical questions are 'objective' and cultural ones are 'subjective'. In order to be able to seriously contribute to a FOSS project (and therefore earn status and influence within the community) one needs to acquire a very high degree of proficiency in programming, which can only be gained through a deep immersion in the culture of engineering, either through formal education, or informal learning. Either way, the result is the adoption of a vast, shared culture, which is global, to a significant degree. It is this shared culture of engineering which makes certain measurable aspects of a program the defining ones. Faster, for example, is always better. While there is a slow food movement, extolling the virtues of traditional cooking over fast food, there is no slow computing movement. Even

those subcultures which dedicate themselves to old platforms try to max them out (make them run as fast as possible).

This is not to say that there are no deep disagreements in the programming community that cannot be reconciled by references to objective measurements. There are plenty of them, usually concerning the virtues or vices of particular programming languages, or fundamental questions of software architecture (for example, within the FOSS world, the neverending debate over the monolithic Linux kernel versus the GNU microkernel). However, these differences in opinion are so fundamental that the communities which are built around them can still be large enough to find the critical mass of contributors for interesting projects.

However, the objectifying and solutions-oriented character of a widely shared engineering culture is not the only reason why the assessment of quality in software is not such a quarrelsome problem. At least as important is the fact that the tools/information necessary to assess quality are also widely available. Indeed, software is, at least in some aspects, a self-referential problem. It can be solved by reference to other software and determined within closed environments. A skilled programmer has all the tools to examine someone else's code on his/her computer. This is still not an easy task – bug fixing is difficult – but since every programmer has all the tools as his/her disposal, it can be made easier by increasing the number of programmers looking at problems. The more people search for the problem, the more likely someone will find it, because, theoretically, each of them could find it. This is what Eric Raymond means when he argues that "given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow". As a result, it is possible to gain a relatively unproblematic consensus about which code is of high quality, and which is not, and, by extension, to establish a hierarchy, or pecking order, among programmers.

This is not so terribly different from the peer-review in science. People look at each other's work and decide what is good and what is not. The difference lies in what it takes to become a peer. For FOSS, all you need to have are the necessary skills (hard to master, of course, but available to the dedicated) and a standard computer with an internet connection. Not much of a hurdle for those who care. Now, it's the quality of the code, assessable by everyone, that shows if you are a peer or not. In science what you often need is not just the necessary skills, but often a vast infrastructure (laboratories, machinery, access to archives and libra-

ries, assistants, funding, etc.) to make use of those skills. This expensive infrastructure is usually only accessible to employees of large institutions, and in order to get employed, you need the right credentials. Thus, in science, peers are established by a mixture of credentials and positions. Because without those, you cannot seriously assess the publications of other researchers, for example, by repeating their experiments.

If peer-review is so essential to establish quality control, and yet it's difficult to establish reliably who's a peer, the project runs into troubles. The current difficulties of Wikipedia are instructive in this case. Wikipedia is an attempt to create an online encyclopedia, written entirely by users, which can exceed the range and quality of the most reputable traditional reference works. In just five years, hundreds of thousands of articles in dozens of languages have been written, and in quite a few cases, these articles are of very high quality. In terms of modularity and economic structure, Wikipedia is very similar to software development. This is one of the reasons why the open source approach has worked so well. Another reason for its success is that the Wikipedia community has managed to create a widely shared understanding about what a good article should look like (it's called the 'neutral point of view', NPOV).[8] This gives a formal base-line (disputed perspectives on a subject should be presented side-by-side, rather than reconciled) in order to assess articles. However, these criteria are only formal. It says nothing about whether these perspectives are factually correct or in accord with relevant sources.

The basic mechanism of quality control in Wikipedia is the idea that as more people read a particular article mistakes will be found and corrected. So, over time, articles improve in quality, asymptotically reaching the state of the art. Given enough eyeballs, all errors are shallow. However, practice has shown this not to be the case necessarily. It holds more or less true for formal aspects, like spelling and grammar, which can be assessed simply by reading the article. However, in terms of the actual content, this model clearly shows its limits. Often, the actual facts are not easy to come by, and are not available online. Rather, in order to get the fact, you need access to specialized resources that few people have. If such facts are then included and contradict common knowledge, the chances are, that they get corrected as mistakes by people

who think they know something about the topic, but whose knowledge is actually shallow. This is less of a problem in very specialized and uncontroversial areas (such as the natural sciences)[9] that are primarily of interest to specialists but a serious problem in areas of more general knowledge. It shows that even for functional works, the addition of more people does not necessarily help to improve the quality – even if these people are well-intentioned – because most of them do not have the necessary information to assess the quality.

Wikipedia is caught in the problem that it does not want to restrict the rights of average users in favour of experts, but, rejecting formal credentials, it does not have a reliable way to assess expertise e.g. the number of entries, or other statistical measures, show devotion, but not expertise. But given the fact that one cannot simply 'run' an article to check if it contains a bug, it is impossible to validate the quality of the content of an article simply by reading it carefully. In order to do that, one needs access to the relevant aspects of the external reality and this access is often not available. But because there is no direct way to recognize expertise, Wikipedia is open to all, hoping for safety in numbers. Given the highly modular structure and the factual nature of the project, supported by the NPOV editorial guidelines, the project has thrived tremendously. Paradoxically, the limitation of its method begins only to show after it has become so successful that its claim to supersede other authoritative reference works has to be taken seriously.[10]

Cultural projects, then, face two problems. If they are of an 'expressive' type, then the communities that agree on quality standards are so small that collaboration tends to be more club-like than open source. Even if the works are functional, like Wikipedia, the challenge of determining who is an expert without relying on conventional credentials is significant. Currently, the problem is side-stepped by reverting to simplistic egalitarianism, or, as I would call it, undifferentiated openness. Everyone can have a say and the most tenacious survive.

Undifferentiated Openness
The openness in open source is often misunderstood as egalitarian collaboration. However, FOSS is primarily open in the sense that anyone can appropriate the results, and do with them whatever he or she wants (within the legal/normative framework set out by the license). This is

"*The most important book about technology today, with implications that go far beyond programming.*"
—*Guy Kawasaki*

Revised & Expanded

THE CATHEDRAL & THE BAZAAR

MUSINGS ON LINUX AND OPEN SOURCE BY AN ACCIDENTAL REVOLUTIONARY

ERIC S. RAYMOND

WITH A FOREWORD BY BOB YOUNG, CHAIRMAN & CEO OF RED HAT, INC.

what the commons, a shared resource, is about. Free appropriation. Not everyone can contribute. Everyone is free, indeed, to propose a contribution, but the people who run the project are equally free to reject the contribution outright. Open source projects, in their actual organization, are not egalitarian and not everyone is welcome. The core task of managing a commons is to ensure not just the production of resources, but also to prevent its degradation from the addition of low quality material.

Organizationally the key aspects of FOSS projects are that participation is voluntary and – what is often forgotten – that they are tightly structured. Intuitively, this might seem like a contradiction, but in practice it is not. Participation is voluntary in a double sense. On the one hand, people decide for themselves if they want to contribute. Tasks are never assigned, but people volunteer to take responsibility. On the other hand, if contributors are not happy with the project's development, they can take all the project's resources (mainly, the source code) and reorganize it differently. Nevertheless, all projects have a leader, or a small group of leaders, who determine the overall direction of the projects and which contributions from the community are included in the next version, and which are rejected. However, because of the doubly voluntary nature, the project leaders need to be very responsive to the community, otherwise the community can easily get rid of them (which is called 'forking the project'). The leader has no other claim for his (and it seems to be always a man) position than to be of service to the community. Open Source theorist Eric S. Raymond has called this a benevolent dictatorship.[11] More accurately, it is called the result of a voluntary hierarchy in which authority flows from responsibility (rather than from the power to coerce).[12]

Thus, the FOSS world is not a democracy, where everyone has a vote, but a meritocracy, where the proven experts – those who know better than others what they are doing and do it reliably and responsibly – run the show. The hierarchical nature of the organization directly mirrors this meritocracy. The very good programmers end up on top, the untalented ones either drop out voluntarily, or, if they get too distracting, are kicked out. Most often, this is not an acrimonious process, because in coding, it's relatively easy to recognize expertise, for the reasons mentioned earlier. No fancy degrees are necessary. You can literally be a teenager in a small town in Norway and be recognized as a very talen-

ted programmer.[13] Often it's a good strategy to let other people solve problems more quickly than one could oneself, since usually their definition of the problem and the solution is very similar to one's own. Thus, accepting the hierarchical nature of such projects is easy. It is usually very transparent and explicit. The project leader is not just a recognized crack, but also has to lead the project in a way that keeps everyone reasonably happy. The hierarchy, voluntary as it may be, creates numerous mechanisms of organizational closure, which allows a project to remain focused and limits the noise/signal ratio of communication to a productive level.

Without an easy way to recognize expertise, it is very hard to build such voluntary hierarchies based on a transparent meritocracy, or other filters that increase focus and manage the balance between welcoming people who can really contribute and keeping out those who do not. Wikipedia illustrates the difficulties of reaching a certain level of quality on the basis of undifferentiated openness.

'Expressive' cultural projects face even greater hurdles, because the assessment of quality is so personal that, on the level of production, collaboration rarely goes beyond a very small group, say a band, or a small collective of writers, such as Wu-Ming.

Open Culture Beyond Open Source
 This does not mean that FOSS cannot be taken as a model for open cultural production in other fields. However, what seems to be the really relevant part is not so much the collaborative production aspects, but the freedom of appropriation aspect and the new model of authorship, centering around community involvement rather than individual autonomy. The GPL, and other such licenses, like Creative Commons, are very good instruments to enshrine these basic freedoms. These will create the pool of material in which a new, digital, transformative culture can grow. And indeed we are seeing the emergence of such resource pools. One example is Flickr.com, a rapidly growing repository of images, tagged and searchable, contributed entirely by users. While this is not a commons in a legal sense (the images in Flickr.com remain in the ownership of the author), nor, really, in intention, the fact that the resource as a whole is searchable (through user-defined image tags) does create a de-facto commons. The collaboration here is very limited,

restricted to contributing individual works to a shared framework that makes it easily accessible to others. There is no common project, and collaboration between users is minimal, but it still can be understood as 'open culture' because it makes the resources of production, the images, widely available. The production of new cultural artefacts remains, as always, in the hands of individuals or small groups, but the material they work with is not only their own inner vision, honed as autonomous creators, but also other people's work, made available in resource pools.

At this point, this is entirely unspectacular. But by restricting openness to the creation of a pool of relatively basic resource material, rather than complex artistic productions, issues of quality control and the organization of collaboration, with all the necessary difficulties of coordination in the absence of clear markers of quality, are sidestepped. Nevertheless, over time, I think that such de-facto commons can contribute to a slow transformation of culture from a collection of discrete, stable and ownable objects, created by autonomous, possessive individuals, to ongoing adaptations, translations and retellings within relevant contexts. Perhaps out of this, a new sense of authorship will emerge, and new communities in which certain criteria of quality are widely accepted (akin to 'community standards'). Only once this happens, can, I think, really collaborative modes of artistic production be developed, similar to what we have seen in FOSS.

However, if this happens at all, it will be a very long-term process.

Notes

[1] Thanks to Armin Medosch for comments on a draft version.

[2] Yochai Benkler, 'Coase's Penguin, or, Linux and The Nature of the Firm', Yale Law Journal, No. 112, 2002, http://www.benkler.com [1].

[3] Unless technically restricted, informational goods are perfectly copyable and distributable for free. This makes them sufficiently distinct from material goods to constitute an ontologically different class of objects, even if the transfer between the two, say printing a digital text on paper, is often not difficult.

[4] Even for non-fiction books, this has not worked out so far, with the possible exception of educational text books, a genre characterized by the most unimaginative writing.

[5] http://opensource.org/advocacy/jobs.html [2]

[6] The classic study still is Angela McRobbie's British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?, Routledge, London, 1988.

[7] See my essay 'One Size Doesn't Fit All' in Open Cultures and the Nature of Networks, Futura publikacije, Novi Sad, 2005. http://felix.openflows.org/html/kuda_book.html [3] for an overview of these differences.

[8] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral_point_of_view [4]. This issue is independent of the problem of people deliberately inserting false information just for the fun of it (or for more strategic reasons).

[9] See Nature 438, 15 December 2005, pp 900-901, http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v438/n7070/full/438900a.html [5].

[10] Wikipedia co-founder Larry Sangers thinks that these limitations are so dramatic that he is preparing, with the help of $10 million funding, to start another free reference work, Digital Universe, but this time edited, or at least supervised, by experts. See http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/12/19/sanger_onlinepedia_with_experts/ [6]

[11] Eric S. Raymond, 'The Cathedral and the Bazaar' in First Monday Volume 3, No. 3, 1988. http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3_3/raymond/ [7] (all further quotes of Raymond are from the same article, unless otherwise noted).

[12] For the best analysis of the governance systems of FOSS projects, see Steven Weber, The Success of Open Source, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2004.

[13] Jon Johanson, who gained international fame as the person who wrote the code to crack the DRM system on DVDs, and many others subsequently, lived at the time in Harstad, Norway
Source URL: http://publication.nodel.org/On-the-Differences

Links:

[1] http://www.benkler.com
[2] http://opensource.org/advocacy/jobs.html
[3] http://felix.openflows.org/html/kuda_book.html
[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral_point_of_view
[5] http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v438/n7070/full/438900a.html
[6] http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/12/19/sanger_onlinepedia_with_experts/
[7] http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3_3/raymond/

From A Univocal To A Cacophonous Space

Miren Eraso and Carme Ortiz

Change in the Signals/Signs of Identity: Modernity Tinged with Post-Modernity. 1982 - 1994

Each time we decide to talk about a theme that interests us and fills us with passion, such as the publication of contemporary art magazines, the immediate events help visualise the small changes that take place around us, and aid in understanding the evolution of certain projects in a particular context. In this case, the approval of a law on the recovery of historic memory by the Spanish parliament. The latter is fair to some people, not enough to others, and unnecessary for some. This political gesture required rigorous, constant work by certain individuals[1] who questioned, in an analytical and contended way the fissures of the Spanish transition, which has been applauded and justified by a broad majority. We refer to a time that defines the passage of an agonic, autarchic system - the Franco dictatorship - to a democratic system, a constitutional monarchy, with rights and obligations, and above all with the recognition of individual freedom typical of a democracy. In this process of transformation, mass media played a significant role in terms of giving and creating a state of opinion. Within this context, specialist publications moved to an area with little visibility, with a certain univocal silence, these publications tried to create a new terrain for opinion making, the articulation of discourse, a mirage, which would nourish and fertilise the critical mass. We use the term mirage, because of the impossibility to reach a consensus by all the different political forces shaping the map of Spain. The transformation was developed in a climate of excessively close writing, linked to power. Although this situation changed, it did not do so ostensibly, and hence influenced all artistic critique at that particular time.

We should take into account the use of contemporary art as a projection of the image of modernity of the State[2], in order to understand the euphoria of most artistic projects of the 1980s. The first socialist govern-

ment starred and pushed the access of the country to a "modernity" tainted with "Europeaness", and adopted a mimetic rather than real sense of attitudes and viewpoints. Viewpoints which up till then had been marked by repressive, authoritarian ways, which had provoked cries of vindication and solidarity as a counter-reaction. One of the first significant events was the opening of ARCO, the first contemporary art fair in a country devoid of contemporary art infrastructure. It catered to a non-existent audience of potential collectors. Though its long-term objective was to spur the collecting of art in Spain, a goal which more than two decades later still has not been achieved[3], it lead by the end of the '80s to an emergence of infrastructure dedicated to contemporary art. This proliferation would continue throughout the following two decades, and instigate a flurry of publishing projects.

Art education – obviously less glamorous – remained a neglected field when it came to reform and modernisation of their ideological, curricular and organisational frameworks. This was the case for university research, as well as for the creation of Art Academies. They remained rather archaic, and not representative or competitive within the current geopolitical configuration.

Similarly, within Anglo-European culture the signs of crisis in the conception of modernity in the welfare society was beginning to show its cracks. One of the controversies that was to mark the 1980s arose from the well-known debate between philosophers in favour of facing the present in post-modern terms, and those who preferred do so in terms of modernity.[4] This was to be the decade that redesigned the geopolitical setting that had been crafted after the Second World War: the world was no longer divided into two blocks, and the sensibilities of Cold War with regard to organisation and security would change the coming decades. In Europe the crisis of humanism resulted in a growing "neocon" position.

Documenta 7 (Kassel 1982) was a significant regression to the extent that it – though unable to dismiss the socio-political changes - failed to take them into account. Documenta 7 illustrated the aspects that marked the artistic system of the entire decade, and part of the following one. On the one hand, the triumphant return of painting[5] and its aura and on the other hand, the reinvention of the Museum[6] as an aesthetic

sanctuary, which legitimised a new commercial system where the protagonist was contemporary art. However, it should be said that the impact of these new parameters was different depending on the context. In Europe contemporary art was positioned as a safe market commodity, an aspect that influenced the proliferation of private collecting in the Anglo-Saxon world, and central Europe. In France it had an impact on the public sphere, and served as a catalyst for existing publishing projects, as well as the creation of new ones. In the context of Spain, new infrastructure dedicated to art, more specifically contemporary art, was created.

All the above influenced the dissemination of contemporary art and specifically publishing projects which were plentiful. Many of these projects were short-lived, and aided in the creation of a space of cacophonic noise, rather than in forging a public opinion which would help strengthen the artistic and cultural scene.

Activism Versus Professionalisation

The greatest surge in publishing occurred during the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. Making culture political involved significant problems of consolidation within the institutions, due to the continuous changes in policy. This had its repercussions on magazines, in particular museum magazines, as Kim Bradley has analysed in a long article published in Art in America[7] in 1996.

One of the most important objectives throughout this period was to access modernity rapidly, and the necessity to internationalise a clear way of creating context out of a global, but possibly delocalised point of view. Within publishing this lead to initiatives establishing the need to internationalise the Spanish art scene, whilst introducing references to foreign artists or Spanish artists working abroad. This was the case for the publishing projects which we deem most emblematic of this stage, and which were the objective of study for the Desacuerdos project.[8]. The publishing projects were nourished more by activist, than by professional desire, which produced work that was, despite everything, unable to help create an artistic system and a real critical mass. Mar Villaespesa expressed it in the following way: "(...) What the art and cul-

Arco 82 catalogue cover (first edition)

ture publications in our country share is the precariousness which, although giving rise to interesting projects, does not enable them in most cases to endure (...)[9] .

Change of Paradigm. The Complexity of Culture: Globalisation/The Net/Post-Fordism: 1995-2006

By the mid 1990s most autonomous regions in Spain had their own contemporary art museums. Yet these were not endorsements with solid bases, but rather imports of models and modes, without a critical base, as Mar Villaepesa suggests in her article "Absolute majority syndrome"[10]. In the two decades of transition, the political landscape had been transformed. As in many European countries, power was alternated between the majority parties of Spain: the Socialist Party, and the more right wing Popular Party. This apparent political endorsement would be dimmed by the effects of globalisation of the economy in the 1980s, the first industrial crises, and the process of dismantling the industrial fabric. Then came the advent of the Internet, with its rhizomatic structure, that would help develop and put into practice the idea of immaterial labour, as theorised by Maurici Lazzarato and Toni Negri[11]. By the 1990s, we were already attending the coming of the second capitalist revolution, where the service sector would become the base of the western economy, and in which financial engineering imposed itself on the real economy.

If with the arrival of democracy to Spain the possibility of a new space for political and social freedom was created, then with the Internet, the means of communication promising freedom in virtual space had arrived.

Within the arts the possibilities of distribution opened by the Internet provoked an initial feeling of euphoria, and gave birth to developments such as net.art, artistic work designed for the net. The optimistic attitude in the alternative and activist communities added to the idea that the Internet could be the autonomous zone of freedom. Initially net.art had a great presence on the net, see for example Rhizome.org or arteleku.net. In these first moments of enthusiasm, Peter Weibel spoke of the need to analyse digital art. However, the initial successful expectations soon disappeared and net.art did not have the expected expansion. But these developments did highlight and stress the importance of "the network", and artists started to use Internet to set up communication net-

works and opinion platforms. The mid 1990s saw the birth of the most well-known mailing lists concerned with electronic art and culture: Nettime (1995) still functions today, as well as Rhizome (1996). In Spain there was Eco, dependent on the Aleph project (1997), active till 2002. As far as work designed for the net was concerned, The File Room (1994) by Antoni Muntadas was pioneering. He collected open files on censorship cases on the Internet. We should bear in mind that at the time this new media was not controlled by the state[12], or commercially, and represented freedom of expression. This project, in some ways heir to the political action characteristic of the 1970s, managed to succes-sfully bring together in an open-ended work, the three seminal issues: the transition from passive information consumers to active producers; the transfer of the public town square to the virtual public sphere; the transformation of individual authorship to collective authorship. In this sense, the alteration of the relationships between author, reader and text, previously analysed by Roland Barthes in La mort de l'auteur (1968) and by Michel Foucault in Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur? (1968), could be put into practice on internet with tools such as hypertext[13].

Groups like the Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), saw in the internet the possibility of working in a new public sphere. However, years later, the CAE itself reviewed the proposal it made in 1994 due to its lack of effec-tiveness[14]. Of the transformations we have described that have affected artistic and theoretic practices related to the internet, we could conclu-de by stating that speed is one of the intrinsic characteristics of this tech-nology. The change that the latter has imposed on (processual) time, have altered the dynamics of labour and production for good: from slow, stable and lasting to fast, unstable and ephemeral.

In publishing the creation of Wired magazine should be mentioned. Born in California in 1993 as the successor to an underground cyberpunk magazine, it lingered in the sphere of the libertarian attitude proposed by TAZ (Temporary Autonomous Zone), and dedicated its first issues to an analysis of the new information order. However, as a result of the increasing interdependence of economy and culture, Wired ended up becoming a commercial magazine. One of its first articles "Libraries Without Walls for Books Without Pages" by John Browning, asked what the difference would be between libraries, publishing companies and bookshops. His question sketched a scene of transformation affecting

publishing companies and libraries, while underlining the changes brought by the digitalisation of knowledge.

Although his analysis was right about the transformation regarding knowledge, this was not brought about by the digitalisation of the documents that were previously published on paper, nor by the success that he felt e-books would have, but rather by the revolution that information processing technologies would create: namely the "Google phenomenon". Once again, we were facing a technological development able to revolutionise the digital world, in this case the recovery of information. However, the economic flows of the post-fordist era are directly connected to technological development. Proof of this is that Google started to be quoted on the stock exchange August 19th 2004.

Publishing in the E-Culture Era

When we were writing this text, we received the news about the closure of Parachute magazine. In the words of its editor, the decision was conditioned by the lack of public economic aid necessary to maintain the publishing structure. Is this a symptom of the negative effects of policies based on the show culture: the abandoning of independent sectors of cultural production? Or is it another feature of the structural weakness of publishing magazines?

During 2001 and 2002 together with Mar Villaespesa, we worked on the Pensar la edición workshop, which culminated in the presentation of a preliminary publishing project. Among the many activities, studies, analyses and texts that we realised during that period, there was a forum of magazines coordinated by Zehar, published in its double issue 47/48[15]. One of the magazines invited to the "Forum of Magazines" was Parachute and its editor Chantal Pontbriand's[16] text was useful for thinking in which terms a publishing project could be defined[17].

In the summer of 2000, Kurt Hollander, the editor Poliester magazine published in Mexico, announced in issue 27 the reasons for its closure.

Poliester, unlike many of the artists it presented, never completely managed to make the leap to attain commercial success. The success of Poliester can be calibrated from its failures: it did not attract advertisers

A press cutting from 'El punto de las artes' # 61, February, 1988

or sponsors, it distanced itself from those who make and destroy the careers of people in the world of art, it was unable to become fashionable. By staying one point away from good taste, Poliester has been able to contribute with something fresh, something critical, to the appreciation of art. (...) As we are no longer interested in making art our career, and for some reason we are more interested in the real world than in the world of art in the hands of the experts, the "insiders" and the initiated. In part, because of this we have decided to close the business and devote more time to activities such as bringing up babies, making films, writing, designing...

Some months earlier Assemblage, A Critical Journal of Architecture and Design Culture, published by MIT, announced in issue 41, that it decided to end publication. In their last editorial editors Michel Hays and Alicia

Kennedy encouraged the readers and all their collaborators to reflect on the practice of publishing itself, and to situate it within current trends and prospects for the future. In order to know the reasons behind the termination of publication projects better, we need to analyse the social and cultural context in which the latter arise, as well as recognise the tasks of the actors managing, promoting and closing them. These editorial closures show two positions which, although they may initially seem antagonistic, may be nothing more than the result of a different intellectual positioning: one that is ironic and another that is more academic.

However, we ask ourselves once again: What has changed in the way of publishing? How is content produced and disseminated?

We will try to describe magazine publications in Spain during the period 1995 - 2006. In the beginning of the 1990s, the Spanish artistic scene still was out of step with regard to the international situation, although there was an atmosphere of collective encouragement. Yet, it did not manage to influence museum policy, to consolidate a market, collectors, or to set up training programmes that would directly have an impact on the artistic context[18]. Many of the magazines published by public or semi-public initiatives of the 1980s, had disappeared by the mid 1990s. An atypical example is the Magazine of the French Institute in Bilbao (1994-1999), published by Jêromè Delormas who was the director of the Institute. Atlàntica (1990 -) has been the only magazine published by a museum that has survived to date, Centro Atlántico de Arte Contemporáneo (CAAM), published the magazine Atlàntica right from its opening. It started with the idea of disseminating and promoting the centre's objectives and gradually evolved to include monographs and articles on artistic international collaborations; the internationalisation was highlighted when the magazine became bilingual (Spanish – English).

There are also two other projects linked to the territorial periphery. In Basque Country we find Zehar, supported by Gipuzkoa Regional Council. In Catalonia (1996) a publishing initiative arose supported by the Cultural Department of Lleida Town Council called Transversal with the desire to circulate in a transversal way through Catalan culture.

The magazines promoted by private initiative and funded by advertising and commercial distribution, have occupied a similar publishing space.

a still of "Devenir vídeo", a video-report about the Spanish art (audiovisual practice) from 1990 to 2005, by Gabriel Villota Toyos. In the image: Villlota Toyos interviewing Antoni

Take the magazine Lápiz for example. In 2004, the director of Lápiz brought out the magazine EXIT, which took an independent path[19], and devoted its pages to the analysis of photographic work of contemporary artists. At the turn of the century, following this same publishing line, linked to the exhibition offer of museums and galleries, various publishing projects saw the light of day, including Art i part (Madrid, 1996-), Arteyco (Pamplona, 1998-2002), A Mínima (Oviedo, 2003-) focusing on e-culture, or Arc (Madrid, 2001-) a magazine published by the Arco Fair. Other unique publications include Papers d'Art[20], published by the Fundació Espais, Centre d'Art Contemporani de Girona.

Independent publishers initiated the most original and critical proposals. They have all been intellectually sustained by independent groups. We have, for example, the feminist fanzine Erreakzioa/Reacció (Bilbao, 1995-), published in different formats; Brumaria (Madrid, 2003), a magazine linked to the "alter mundista" movement and Grr (Barcelona, 1999-2005) a magazine that conceptualises design. Acción paralela (Madrid, 1995-2000) was a magazine more academic in tone, and took as its model (even the design resembles it) the prestigious American magazine

October. It solved the "independent" character by having an editorial board. Related to Acció paral·lela is the Aleph mailing list (1997-2002), a pioneer at that time in Spain, but which was soon to become a commercial project[21].

Within the Spanish context, magazines are predominantly printed on paper, sometimes in combination with content on the net. However, paper has been and continues to be the main medium for magazines. In Europe we have seen some experiments combining paper and digital publication, as is the case for Mute Magazine (http://www.metamute.org/). Created in 1994, Mute dedicated its content to examining the relationship between art and new technologies.

We referred to the ease with which we have adapted to the speed imposed by the disseminating of information. However, these changes are not affecting the transformations in the areas of production and distribution in the same way. Although some libraries such as la Caixa's Media Library in Barcelona have understood that the information revolution is about setting up platforms bringing together production, dissemination and distribution of content, and the Arteleku Documentation Centre and Zehar are working to realise this, most publishers still understand the dissemination of content as unidirectional. Electronic texts pose questions about the roles of the text and the publisher: what about authorship? How should we consider a text that is in flux and changing? How do we establish copyright?

The technological development of internet has promoted a file culture. Once again, technology has made possible the materialisation of ideas and reflections analysed or previously dealt with by different authors. Remember El mal d'arxiu by Jacques Derrida and his idea that creation, participation and access to interpretation and constitution of the archive, made effective democracy possible. The idea of file makes us think about publishing as a great digital container and paper magazines as vehicles for the selective dissemination of information, as well as it enables us to understand the relationship between pixel and the paper as complementary and related elements. The internet has changed the way of understanding publishing. It no longer is just a place for looking up information, but for producing and disseminating it. The boom of blogs and wikis under the Creative Commons License corroborates this.

Cover of Erreakzioa/Reacción fanzine # 3, February 1996

Nevertheless, the relationship between paper and pixel is still fragile, and suffers from a series of difficulties endemic and typical to our current socio-cultural condition. There is a need to professionalise the actors within the art system, and to devise a methodology suited to the current moment. Here is the role of education and training. Universities still act too much as autonomous spaces, isolated, without participating in the urgency to construct a real system of work and action, which would include research and the production of critical discourse.

Despite the limitations of text, we have tried to offer a subjective, contrasted vision on the publication of periodical contemporary art magazines within Spain, by analysing its main contributions and main deficits. We would also like to underline the fact that during the writing of this text we have been encouraged by the conviction that a publishing project should be rooted in the productions, dynamics and relations of its local context, and should function as the latter's catalyst.

Notes

[1] A good example are the opinions given in the weekly publication "La transició a Catalunya i Espanya" [The transition to Catalonia and Spain] an activity organised by the Fundació Dr. Lluís Vila d'Abadal in January 1996, with the collaboration of the Department of Modern and Contemporary History of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, compiled in the publication of January 1997.
 Also, the analysis that Vicenç Navarro made of this period in the book Bienestar insuficiente, democracia incompleta. Sobre lo que no se habla en nuestro país, XXX Premio Anagrama de Ensayo. Colección Argumentos. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2002. It analyses the welfare state in our country, showing the insufficiencies and, more interestingly, analysing the causes. Among others, those of recent appearance.

[2] Kewin Power stated about that moment "that, in fact, art was used as a projection of the image of the state, an intervention that has a positive aspect, that of bringing Spanish art into the international context, but also a negative one, the lack of legitimacy of Spanish art, without a structured museological system, a solid critic and a system of professional galleries" a fragment published on the Desacuerdos web in the case study "Editar en un sistema de ecos positivos" [Publishing in a system of positive echoes], an opinion extracted from the interview given to Kewin Power by Miren Eraso and Carme Ortiz on July 12th 2004 in Madrid. Unpublished material.

[3] As Alberto López Cuenca says when talking about the subject ". A goal which, after more than two decades, has still not been obtained. In a paradoxical way, this failure was covered up by the mass media, the triumphalism of which, when describing the fair – in particular when praising the cultural task carried out- attracted thousands of nosy-parkers who

Zehar 58

came to "get themselves up to date" but who, apart from exceptions, did not acquire any works. Published in the case study d'estudi "Arco y la visión mediática del mercado del arte en la Espanya de los ochenta".[Arco and the media vision of the art market in the Spain of the eighties]. Desacuerdos 1, Barcelona: Macba, Sevilla: UNIA arte y pensamineto, San Sebastián: Arteleku, Diputació Foral de Guipuzcoa, 2004.

[4] During the autumn of 1979, the work of the philosopher Jean François Lyotard La condición postmoderna. Un informe sobre el saber appeared. This book has been associated with the controversy that was unleashed which had as its original protagonists the philosophers Lyotard and Habermas. This was when the philosopher Michel Foucault worked on the question of rethinking the Enlightenment during the final years of his life, between 1978 and 1983,the three main texts were compiled and recently republished in the book Sobre la Ilustración published by Tecnos as part of the "Clásicos del pensamiento" collection. From the conference that he read in the autumn of 1983 in the United States in Berkeley What is Enlightenment? we can read "the thread that can link us in this way with the Enlightenment is not the faithfulness to some elements of doctrine but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude, in other words, of a philosophical ethos that could be characterised as a permanent critic of our historic being" p. 86

[5] Rudi Fuchs, director of the Documenta, states it in the following way: "the salvation, the painting preserves the freedom of thought of which it is the triumphant expression. The painter is a guardian angel with a palette through which he blesses the world; maybe the painter is the loved one of the gods (…)". Quoted in Lupe Godoy Documenta de Kassel. Medio siglo de Arte Contemporáneo. Formes Plàstiques Collection. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 2002, p.143.

[6] Harald Kimpler raises it in these terms "the bourgeois museum ideology will be comfortably installed (...) the meaning and goal of artistic practice and of mediation will be, for Documenta 7, the museum". Harald Kimpler. Documenta. Mitos und Wirklichkeit. DuMont Buchverlag, Colonia 1997, p.351. Quoted in Lupe Godoy, Op. Cit.p.145

[7] BRADLEY, K. "The great socialist experiment" in the magazine Art in America # 2, New York, February 1996

[8] "PUBLISHING IN A SYSTEM OF POSITIVE ECHOES. The publication of contemporary artistic critic magazines in the 1980s in Spain, through the emblematic projects, Figura, Figura Internacional and Arena Internacional" published on the DESACUERDOS website in the Case Study 2004 section.

[9] Fragment from the interview given by Carme Ortiz to Mar Villaespesa, "Apuntes sobre dos proyectos editoriales: las revistas Figura y Arena Internacional". Published in the monograph "Pensar la edición" Op.Cit.p.49

[10] VILLAESPESA, M. "Absolute majority syndrome" in Arena # 0, Madrid 1989

[11] LAZZARATO, M. ad NEGRI, A. "Trabajo inmaterial y subjetividad" in Futur antérieur no. 7, durant l'estiu del 91. Also at http://www.nodo50.org/cdc/Trabajoinmaterialysubjetividad.htm

Papers d' art 82-83

[12] On February 8th 2002, the Spanish government approved the Law on Information Society Services (LSSI), which meant cutting back the freedom of internet users. One of the protest actions was the tomaTAZo, designed and distributed by CPSR-ÉS http://www.spain.cpsr.org/tomatazo

[13] The possibilities of hypertext as an electronic tool that enabled a new relationship between the author, the reader and the text, and a transformation in the relationships between the units or sets of information were analysed in 1991 by George P. Ladow. Hypertext, together with the web, was to take on a different meaning as all surfing would be hypertextual and would finish up imposing its primacy over hypertext software. ?Later on, the generalised introduction of sound and image into internet would make the character of this channel of audiovisual and textual production and dissemination more complex.

[14] Critical Art Ensemble en Ciberactibismo, sobre usos políticos y sociales de la red. Barcelona: Virus, 2006

[15] www.zehar.net

[16] PONTBRIAND, CH.''Parachute'' in Zehar, Arteleku Magazine, 47/48, San Sebastián : Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa, 2002

[17] "In a world in which so many disasters occur, and with such frequency, that affect the history and the memory of individuals and people, history and memory are becoming an obsession at a world level, a question that is being dealt with by fascinating authors and artists whose work plays with history and memory. Plays? Although this may sound scandalous, a playful attitude is necessary to act with one foot outside conventions, outside prewritten ideas and knowledge. A playful attitude, inventiveness, drawing up ideas and different points of view, are important paces to prevent us from becoming blocked by the weight of history or memory, at the same time that analytical forms are developed within the world of ideas and artistic practice which enable us to create spaces in the present that arise from our understanding of the past and project us towards the future. This is an idea close to the Theses on the Philosophy of History by Walter Benjamin, in which he says that history is the tiger's leap towards the future".

[18] With regard to the transformations of the culture of the time we are describing, please see the quoted work by Kim Bradley.

[19] In 2004, Rosa Oliverars, who was for years the director of Lápiz magazine, set up the publishing project EXIT, with the publication of EXIT and EXIT Express.
[20] The comparison of the careers of Papers d'Art and Zehar was made in the conference "From euphoria to enthusiasm. A decade of publication of art magazines", presented by Miren Eraso and Carme Ortiz, in León in 2001.

[21] For a critical view of Aleph and Acción paralela, please see CARRILLO, Desacuerdos 2 Barcelona: Macba, Sevilla : UNIA arte i pensamento, San Sebastià : Arteleku, Diputació Foral de Gipuzkoa, 2005

Contributors' Biographies

Contributors' Biographies

Arie Altena (NL)
Writes about art and new media. Currently he is editor/researcher for the V2_Archive in Rotterdam and theory tutor at the department of Interactive Media and Environments of the Frank Mohr Institute in Groningen. In 2006 he was researcher at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht. His blog-research In the Loop is part of the Ubiscribe-project for which he also co-edited the POD-book Pervasive Personal Participatory, Ubiscribe 0.9.0 (2006). In the past he was editor of Mediamatic Magazine and Metropolis M. He co-curated the festivals Sonic Acts X and XI, and co-edited the Sonic Acts publications Unsorted, Thoughts on the Information Arts (2004) and The Anthology of Computer Art (2006).
http://ariealt.net/blog
http://www.xs4all.nl/~ariealt

Miren Eraso (ES)
Is currently head of the Arteleku Publications and Documentation Centre in San Sebastián and the editor in chief of Zehar, a contemporary art magazine that she has been running since 1995. She has published articles in a large number of art catalogues, other written media, and specialist magazines such as: n.paradoxa, Papers d'Art, Third Text. She is founding member of mag.net, Magazine Network of Electronic Cultural Publishers

Sandra Fauconnier (BE/NL)
Is an art historian (MA, Ghent University, 1997) with a background in architecture and a solid interest in the social and political aspects of networked media technology. She has worked as a content and interface designer for Ghent University's teacher training department (1997-2000). At this moment, she is part-time media archivist at V2_, Institute for the Unstable Media in Rotterdam (NL), where she co-develops a metadata model for the description of electronic art and did research on the preservation of electronic art, on copyright issues, archival interoperability and Semantic Web technologies. She is also a researcher at the Jan van Eyck Academie Maastricht (NL), Design department, with a project about online participatory media. Additionally, she is a freelance tutor, researcher and advisor.

Nathalie Fallaha (LB)
Studied graphic design at the American University of Beirut; she got her bachelor of Graphic Design in 1997, then moved to Central Saint Martins in London UK to pursue a Masters in Communication Design. Since 2000, she has been teaching Graphic Design and Typography at the Lebanese American University, as well as running her graphic design studio vit-e. A lecturer, member of juries and

practicing graphic designer, she has participated in exhibitions in Lebanon, Britain, France and Holland. Her work reveals a deep interest in the relation between Latin and Arabic typography. She attends various graphic design and typography conferences around the world.

Jouke Kleerebezem (NL)

Is an artist whose work since the 'public offering' of the Internet/www in 1993 has been informed importantly by information media development and reflection. After 10 years of concentrated artistic and organizational Internet based practice (in individual projects and with Mediamatic; Doors of Perception), in 2004 he re-entered museum space at Museum De Paviljoens, Almere, with the 'Exquisite Enclave' installation, and printed work, and website at enclavexquise.com. 2001-2006 he held a position as Advising Researcher at the Jan van Eyck Academie Design Department, from which since 2003 he developed the 'Ubiscribe' pervasive publishing and participatory media research project. Jouke Kleerebezem lives in the isolation of the French countryside, working from Saint-Germain-des-Bois and occasionally Amsterdam. Portal to his activities since 1998 is 'Notes Quotes Provocations and Other Fair Use': nqpaofu.com.

Alessandro Ludovico (IT)

Is a media critic and editor in chief of Neural magazine from 1993, (Honorary Mention, Prix Ars Electronica 2004). He is the author of: 'Virtual Reality Handbook' (1992), 'Internet Underground.Guide' (1995), 'Suoni Futuri Digitali' (Future Digital Sounds, 2000) and co-edited 'Mag.Net Reader' (2006). He's one of the founding contributors of the Nettime community and one of the founders of the 'Mag.Net (Electronic Cultural Publishers organization. He is also an advisor for the Documenta 12's Magazine Project. He teaches 'Computer Art' and 'Interface Aesthetics' at the Academy of Art in Carrara. Since 2005 he collaborates with Ubermorgen and P.Cirio on projects such as 'Google Will Eat Itself' (Honorary Mention Prix Ars Electronica 2005, Rhizome Commission 2005, nomination Prix Transmediale 2006) and 'Amazon Noir' (1st prize Stuttgarter Filmwinter 2007, Honorary Mention Share Prize 2007) projects.
http://neural.it
http://magnet-ecp.org

Kristian Lukic (RS)

Is an artist, writer and a cultural worker. Since 2006 he works as a curator for digital art and culture in The Museum of Contemporary Arts of Vojvodina, Novi Sad. From 2001 to 2006 he ran the kuda.lounge program - the program of presentations and lectures in the Center for New Media_kuda.org. He is a founder of Eastwood - Real Time Strategy Group with whom he has exhibited since 2002. Since 2006 he is a cofounder and member of The Institute for Flexible Culture and Technology - Napon, A non-profit organization for research of con-

temporary culture of new technologies and new forms of social and cultural practice.
http://www.napon.org

Nat Muller (NL)
Is an independent curator and critic based in Rotterdam. Her main interests include: the intersections of aesthetics, technology and politics; (new) media and art in Middle East. She has published articles in off- and online media, and has given presentations on the subject of media technology and art (inter)nationally. Her latest projects in 2004 include The Trans_European Picnic – The Art and Media of Accession (Novi Sad), DEAF_04: Affective Turbulence: The Art of Open Systems (Rotterdam); INFRA_ctures (Rotterdam), Xeno_Sonic: a series of experimental sound performances from the Middle East (Amsterdam), co-curator of DEAF07: Interact or Die! (Rotterdam), and she has curated many video screening programs in a.o. Berlin, New York, Istanbul, Copenhagen, Oslo and Beirut. Together with Bart Rutten she has been appointed curator of Re:visie07, the exhibition accompanying the Dutch Film Festival. She is co-initiator of the Upgrade! Amsterdam, and has taught at the Willem de Kooning Academy (NL) and at the Lebanese American University in Beirut (LB).

Carme Ortiz (ES)
Lectures in art history at the Higher school of Art and Design of Olot. She is the editor of the magazine Papers d'Art, published by the Fundación Espais, Girona. She has worked as an art critic for several specialist publications— El Guia, Arte Omega, Marte, Zehar, Transversal, ARTI, etc.— and newspapers— El Punt and l'Avui. She has published a number of essays in artist catalogues and thesis expositions. Since 1984 she has worked as a curator, programming and designing exhibitions in private and institutional areas.

Felix Stalder (AT)
Is lecturer in media economy at the Academy of Art and Design, Zurich [1] and co-founder of Openflows, an open source development and research network. [2]. He is also one of the long-term moderators of nettime [3], an international mailing list for critical theories and practices of networked cultures. He is currently based in Vienna, where he co-organized several conferences and edited newspapers with Netbase, the Institute for New Cultural Technologies, t0.[4]. He has published and lectured extensively on a wide-range of issues relating loosely to the political economy of networked technology [5]. His recent books are "Open Cultures and the Nature of Networks (2005) and "Manuel Castells, Theory of the Network Society" (Polity Press, 2006).He lives together with Andrea Mayr, and Selma Viola.
http://felix.openflows.org

Acknowledgements

"We did not want to perform a requiem for the loss of print, but rather insist on how a love for speed and electrons in many ways contributes to the survival of hard copy. And I guess we also wanted to talk about our love for the tactility of the printed word: from the smell of ink to the feel of the page..."

Nat Muller, co-editor