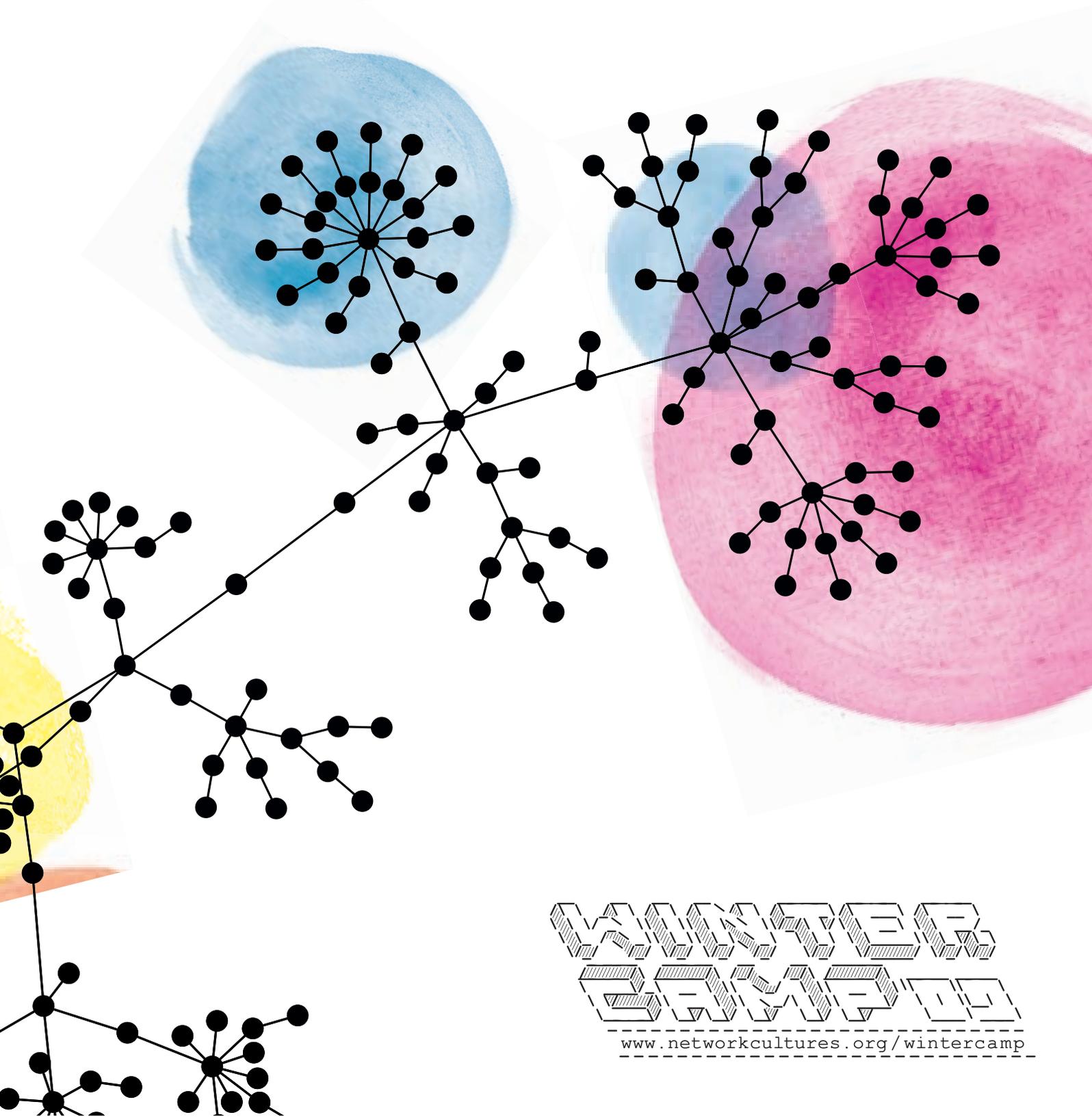


FROM WEAK TIES TO ORGANIZED NETWORKS

*Ideas, Reports,
Critiques*



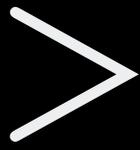
WINTER
CAMP

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FOREWORD

by Geert Lovink

In March 2009 the Institute of Network Cultures brought 12 networks for a week to Amsterdam. Aim of Winter Camp was to connect the virtual with the real in order to find out how distributed social networks can better collaborate.

The more people start working together online, the more urgent the question of sustainable network models is going to become. Do we not just click here and there to gather 'friends' or do we get organized and utilize all these tools to provoke real change? How do networks deal with difference, decision making and economic issues? Together with the 28 interviews that the so-called meta-group conducted, and that are now available at Vimeo thanks to Gerbrand Oudenaarden, this report provides the interested audience with a comprehensive overview of the general issues of Winter Camp, written by members of the meta-group, and the reports of the 12 reports, written by network members, mixed with blog entries were written by bloggers. Enjoy!

Amsterdam, June 29, 2009

WINTER CAMP 09: FROM WEAK TIES TO ORGANIZED NETWORKS

Ideas, Reports, Critiques

*by Gabriella Coleman, Geert Lovink,
Ned Rossiter and Soenke Zehle*

Winter Camp 09 Visions

Wherever we look, there is a Will to Network. In most areas of the (post-)industrial world, networks are becoming a ubiquitous feature - of life, work and play. If they can - and are allowed to - teenagers spend hours texting, blogging, dating, chatting, twittering and social networking. In fact, the network addiction transcends age and cultural barriers, with business men and women hooked to their CrackBerries (Presidents too!) and older folks texting away on buses. Garbage men in the Chinese city of Ningbo check out commodity prices of waste copper from their mobiles each morning. Activists organize transnational campaigns online. Web 2.0 companies profit from the free labor and attention provided by the networks of users.

If we take these network technologies seriously, we have to ask ourselves: what's next? What happens after the initial excitement, after we have linked up, found old classmates, become 'friends' and have even met up? Will networking produce a dispersed, weak level of sociality or will the ties become more substantial? What long term cultural transformations

might emerge from networked interactions? Will we constantly move from one platform to the next initiative, following the global swarm? Do we really wish to carry our social network with us, wherever we go? How do we cope with the hype surrounding the 'social web'? Do the constant requests to be linked turn into a plague? Do these sites function more like a modern version of the White Pages rather than a 'revolutionary' platform that fosters new forms of cooperation? Will we return to our busy everyday life after the hype recedes or strive for a deep commitment to the Techno-Social? As artists, researchers, activists, educators, and cultural workers are drawn into the network paradigm, it is urgent to collectively analyze what happens when networks become driving forces. How can networks maintain their critical edge while aiming for professional status? Does anyone want to get paid for their 'free labor'?

These and other questions inspired the organization of Winter Camp 09, which took place between the 3rd and 7th of March 2009, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Hosted and organized by the Institute of Network Cultures, the meeting brought together twelve networks that worked on their own projects during the day (although some continued deep into the night) and collectively engaged in analyzing questions regarding the past, present and future of organizing networks during plenary sessions in the evening.

In their early stages, most networks are loose and unstructured, but over time, as they settle and grow, new challenges always emerge. Perhaps the most pressing question is whether informal networks should transform into a so-called 'organized network'. Organizing a network does not necessarily mean the end of spontaneity and the rise of rigid rules and hierarchies. An organized network can provide an environment for sustainable knowledge sharing, production, and perhaps most importantly, reproduction. As we all know, face to face meetings are crucial for a network to maintain momentum, revitalize energy, consolidate old friendships and discover new ones, recast ideas, and plan further activities.

There is no single organizational or political model for (online) networks to become sustainable. Winter Camp was an opportunity for members of a range of networks and (potential)

networks to gather in person to conspire, discuss and make the necessary steps forward to pose questions of sustainability, informality and growth. And even though Winter Camp did not have an (academic) educational or training component, there is a lot to be learned from the interactions, discussions and debates occurring during the event, which inspired these reflections.

The primary focus of Winter Camp 09 was not on established organizations, such as universities and newspapers, but on the sustenance of emerging networks. Crucial to the concept of the Winter Camp was the intention of 'antagonistic encounters', not simply for the sake of critique but to generate knowledge that can aid a group's survival and dynamism. It was not an in-crowd event. The hosts were not previously acquainted with half of the networks and participants. Existing and emerging networks need to be challenged and interrupted by their own members and by contributions from outsiders. Self-referential ghettoization is a danger to the vitality and political potential of organized networks.

The political importance and urgency of organized networks is clear in that we aim for the invention of new institutional forms immanent to the logic of networks. Sustainability is key, and should not be quarantined within ecological, bio-evolutionary, economic and developmental discourses. It was intended for Winter Camp to be an exploration of how to do that, of what such institutions might look like, of what they might do, of how they might operate in different geopolitical contexts, of how they are financed, relate to other institutions and each other. This is the scalar dimension of organizing networks: How can we scale and keep-up, not become insulated and not only invent and innovate but, in the end, use the network form in the implementation of changes we envision on a society-wide level? Conceived primarily as a catalyst, the event aimed to produce an overview of network strategies that hold a combinatory potential for trans-network collaborations.

At the same time, and particularly with the advent of the neoliberal state over the past decades, space has been created for new institutional players. Witness the renewed role of religious organizations in the management and provision of social services, or the continued rise of NGOs and community

organizations. Civil society has not so much 'withered', as Michael Hardt once put it, but rather has proliferated due, in part, to a logic of outsourcing that has spread from the economy proper across the social spheres.

Where then, does all of this leave the culture of networks? This is in many aspects one of the guiding questions that has shaped the organization of Winter Camp 09. It seems both sensible and strategic that organizing networks is a process of instituting new social-technical relations, that have unique and special capacities to do things in the world - to engender change and ultimately to transform subjectivities. How might networks take advantage of this new institutional condition - retaining their strengths, which include the culture of free distribution and sharing - while securing or, more likely, inventing the possibility of real sustainability in social and economic life?

Logistics, Format, Early Assumptions

By organizing Winter Camp, the Institute of Network Cultures intended to create a space for rethinking the role of institutions in networks and for networks to work on their own self-directed projects. Winter Camp 09 provided resources - space, food, a place to sleep, travel, lots of strangers to talk to and recruit into your network - to support encounters within and across networks. The hosts thought this kind of interdisciplinary exchange is still rare but worth the effort, even if cross-network interactions are demanding and may, if only at first sight, seem to divert precious time and energy from the core agenda of each network.

The 150 participants within the twelve networks included programmers, activists, academics, writers, designers, cultural workers and artists. A few of the twelve participating networks emerged from the context of the Institute of Network Cultures, such as the MyCreativity/ Creative Labour network. Others were already established (Dyne.org, Upgrade!) or on the verge of becoming a network (Bricolabs). The networks attending ranged from the highly informal (Gotol0) to the more formal (blender.org, FreeDimensional) with participants mainly from Western Europe, North America and a smattering of participants from other parts of the world (e.g. Mexico, El Salvador, Cameroon, India) and a small core from New Zealand and

Australia. With a few exceptions (notably within the FLOSS manuals network), the groups were not all that intergenerational in so far as participants were fairly young (20 to 35 years old). The gender balance was mostly evenly distributed across the networks. Though the majority was male in some networks, one was entirely composed of women (Genderchangers).

The Winter Camp format was a mix of largely improvised, conference-like presentations and working sessions, with an emphasis on getting things done. The intention was to find a balance between the intensive sessions of groups, plenary sessions and mid-size meetings while leaving ample opportunity for informal interaction. Winter Camp featured parallel workshops. Once a day the people in these workshops convened for (public) lectures and debates. The outcomes varied from code and interfaces to research proposals. Plenary sessions were held during this working conference in order for the participants to discuss and contextualize the limits and possibilities of the attending networks. The program ended with a public session on Saturday afternoon in which the networks presented the results of their working groups.

The Winter Camp Meta-Group was responsible for the programming and production details of the event. This group of researchers reported and reflected on the network dynamics that unfolded during the event. The research of the Meta-Group revolved around the two objectives of Winter Camp: to give existing (online) networks the possibility to unite and work on their own issues, and to collectively develop sustainable network models. The group facilitated the plenary debates and theorized - collectively in the context of Winter Camp, individually as an ongoing concern - the pitfalls and possibilities of the 'networked condition'. Members of the Meta-Group were tasked with holding on to the floating ideas and reflecting on the insights, challenges and debates that emerged at Winter Camp.

The Winter Camp Meta-Group also conducted interviews - all now online - with almost thirty members of all networks, focusing on issues such as conditions of emergence, tension between informality and formality, financial and material resources, and business and political relationships to other networks and groups. The interviews were produced for educational and archival purposes. They provide a historical resource for the

Winter Camp networks as well as for anyone who wishes to think comparatively and analytically about these networks.

Before the start of the event, the Meta-Group compiled a list of questions and framing issues that helped guide in-depth interviews, plenary sessions and informal observations. Rephrased here, the list has become a mix of presumptions, questions, reflections and outcomes.

>> Scaling up or down

To stay active and vibrant, should a network scale up? What does growth mean to the core of dedicated contributors? Sometimes, for no obvious reason, networks remain too small. Research has shown that a network with 50-150 active members can go on for many years. So, is expansion always the answer to a stagnated network? What procedures and policies should groups institute, if at all, to integrate new participants? What role do conferences and face to face gatherings play in allowing networks to scale? Sometimes networks just need time, often years, to find their productive synergy. However, the massive involvement in Web 2.0 platforms and social networks indicates that the critical mass is reached much sooner now than five or ten years ago. Internet culture is now mainstream culture. Social mobilization is carried out so much easier these days. Networks can be fooled by the erratic ruptures of today's online engagement. Are large networked conversations, with sometimes over five hundred participants, doomed to fall apart? Would 'small is beautiful' be the correct response to the Facebook masses?

>> Dealing with conflict

Networks can get caught up in recurring instances of social conflict between participants (e.g. flamewars, territoriality), which can lead to the collapse of the larger network. How do we overcome such obstacles? Is it enough to let some time pass? Is it a good idea to bring in new people, hoping they will overrule the ongoing differences? What role might codes of conduct or other procedures play in mitigating these types of interpersonal conflicts? In the era of 'trust' conditioned by information overload it has become extremely easy to unsubscribe, filter out people you do not like, ignore e-mails and leave networks. What is the

consequence of this for the potential of online environments to not only resolve but also raise and work through conflicts? Moreover, there is enormous research to be done on the geo-cultural variations of how conflict manifests itself in networks. Sure, networks are often international, but with this comes vast cultural differences in how to negotiate in the event of conflict. Indeed, a topology of conflict prevails across the culture of networks. In other words, conflict is often mutable in form and affect. People have different ideas about what it is and when it has happened. So how is a network going to deal with this on its own terms, let alone when it enters in relation with other organizational forms?

>> Collaborations

How do organizations form alliances and collaborations with other like-minded groups? What coalitions are possible? How to relate to the brick and mortar institutions? Is membership an option? How does this relate back to the question of finance and legal structures, but also to the modes of relation that define the network? Collaboration has become one of those terms ubiquitous to the age of networks and, it must be said, the ideology of neoliberalism. Across the spectrum of institutional forms, budgets are cut and organizations find themselves forced to pool resources, engage in 'knowledge-transfer', multiply the outputs or productivity of labor force through syndication (in the worst cases) and grapple with the reality of international cultural and communicational flows. It is no wonder that for many, collaboration is a dirty word. There is no doubt that it takes time and energy and is prone to failure. So why would networks bother to go anywhere near this sort of engagement with the unexpected? Well, for a start, collaboration has been a default condition of networks ever since they emerged within online settings. While the horizontality and distributive structure of networks tends to invoke excessive celebration and to lead to frequent analytical error, however, it can be said that it has facilitated modes of relation that engender collaboration. What, after all, is a network without a relation? As we see it, the power of collaboration lies in the capacity to renew networks and feeds into processes of scalar transformation. At the level of organizing networks as emergent institutional forms,

the practice of collaboration forces networks to address related questions of governance and the constitution of protocols, whether formal, informal or both.

>> Financial matters and legal structures

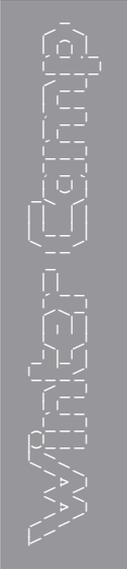
Suppose you hope your network will survive more than a few years. It is fun and you all develop the right vibe. There are tons of plans. Would writing a grant proposal be the way to go? Most networks do not have a legal structure. However, you need to become a legal body in order to enter the money economy or funding systems. Online networks also have to deal with money, even if it is just site hosting and the cost of a domain name. It is a farce to believe everything can and will be free of charge. What then, are the most suitable legal forms for distributed collaboration? What if you do not want to have a board, or a director? Or on the contrary, what if you are tired of the 'terror of the casual'? Is the legal road a way out, or the perfect recipe for disaster? Can we escape such predicaments? Would it be possible to operate as a parasite institute? Piggyback on an existing NGO? Or even snatch a (dead) legal body? Perhaps there are unexpected opportunities in the society of fakes.

>> The politics of culture

What role might culture - interpreted loosely - play in the constitution of networks? Free and open source software emerges from and helps consolidate geek culture, whose history precedes this mode of production and which may account for the strength of these particular networks. Are similar dynamics at play with other networks, or is this not the case? Moreover, there is a political side to these networks, which ranges from anarchist/left to liberal/reformist. How do these political philosophies shape the constitution of these networks? What sort of political and institutional prehistory might register the continuum of political culture in networks?

>> Ownership and copyright

While there are current alternatives to copyright (such as copyleft licenses and those of Creative Commons), what are the limits, pitfalls, and problems in implementing these or any other legal solution for creative and knowledge



production? The core lies at the level of the individual participant, and the ownership over his or her ideas.

If the network accepts the idiom of intellectual property, what are the models that allow personal attribution as well as award recognition for the group effort? Is it is a major issue for the network to have legal discourses pressed upon their mode of production? How might the genre of creation (e.g. software versus photography) change the efficacy of current alternatives?

>> Software and the technology fix

What tools are suitable for collaboration? What are the limits of current communication protocols (i.e. e-mail, mailing lists, web pages, social networking sites)? What new tools are being created to address the needs? How can we keep the network together without getting caught up in difficult or differentiated channels of communication? How does a network of non-experts learn a new language of programming? Is this an opportunity to expand the network, invite the experts in, or is this an occasion of getting to work and acquire new skills? Perhaps both are necessary. Either way, it seems the software question has to be addressed for those networks wishing to enter the world of open source cultural production and political invention.

>> Dissemination

What type of publications and series can be developed? Without too much trouble, networks jump into the grey zone between print and online publications - what are the opportunities here? The question of labor, again, has to be central in any strategy of dissemination. Who will do the work? For a publication you need designers, writers, coders, editors, copy-editors, readers, and so on. Many publications in the field of network cultures are available free of charge, and regarding sustainability and finance issues, this becomes a problem that somehow has to be addressed. Piggybacking off other institutional forms - whether they be universities or cultural organizations - is a common practice that helps relieve some of the problems around resources and expenditure. The process of dissemination, like that of open source programmers, is something done outside office hours. But this does not really help advance the development of networks. Sooner or later this position

is going to wear thin. One of the main reasons to keep up the practice of dissemination is that it often serves as a binding force for networks and their participants. A collective memory is important to all institutional forms and social pleasures.

>> **Definitions and typologies**

Winter Camp's overall aim has been to strengthen the network(ed) form of organization. It might also be important in this context to go back to basics and to ask how an (organized) network defines itself. What could a network institution look like? What are its dynamics and how might it become a source of power vis-à-vis the production of new standards and social relations? What forms of reflexivity and translation are part of these modes of relation? How does the network learn to institute sharing, democratize its own production of expertise, establish collaborative forms of decision-making and address the question of borders?

Ongoing Observations, Random Ruminations

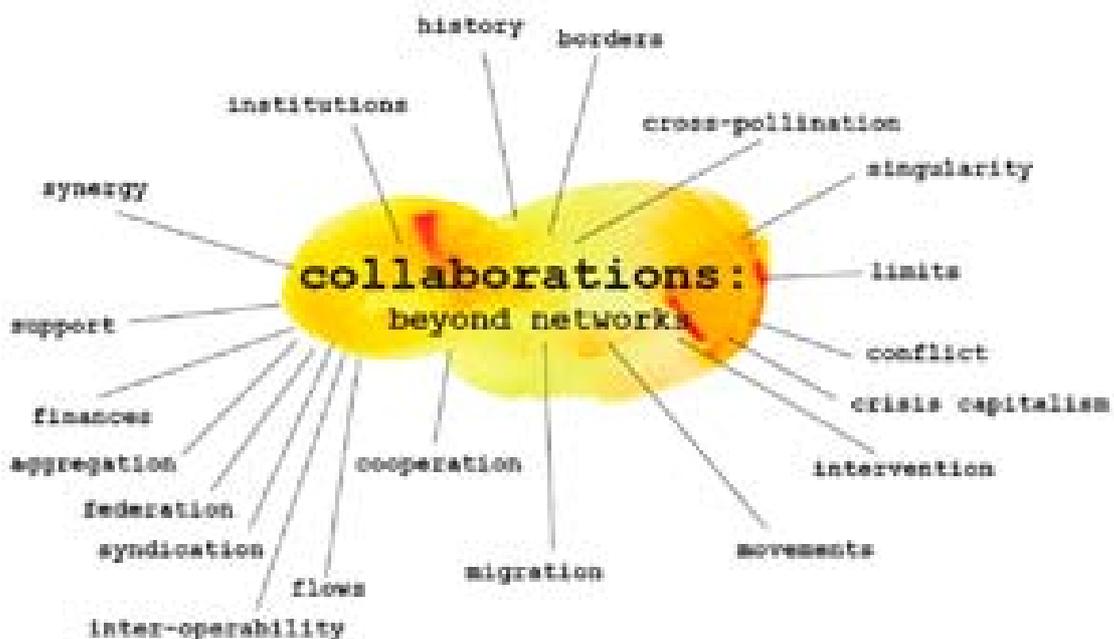
We opened Winter Camp with a plenary session in which participants of each network introduced themselves. One hundred and fifty people presenting themselves: it was clearly program overload - and very diverse. But it also gave people a sense of how difficult it may be for networks not only to scale up but to create meaningful communication channels across networks. And while the question of translation of network-specific jargon was raised more than once both as a practical concern and a possible model for collaboration, the English language continues to be the *lingua franca*.

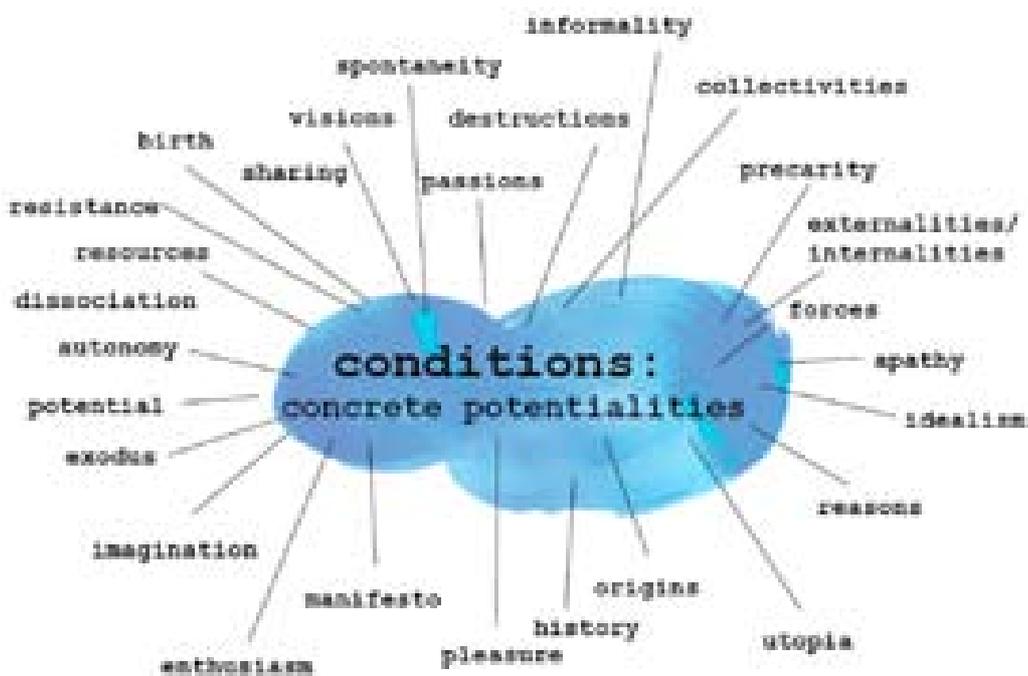
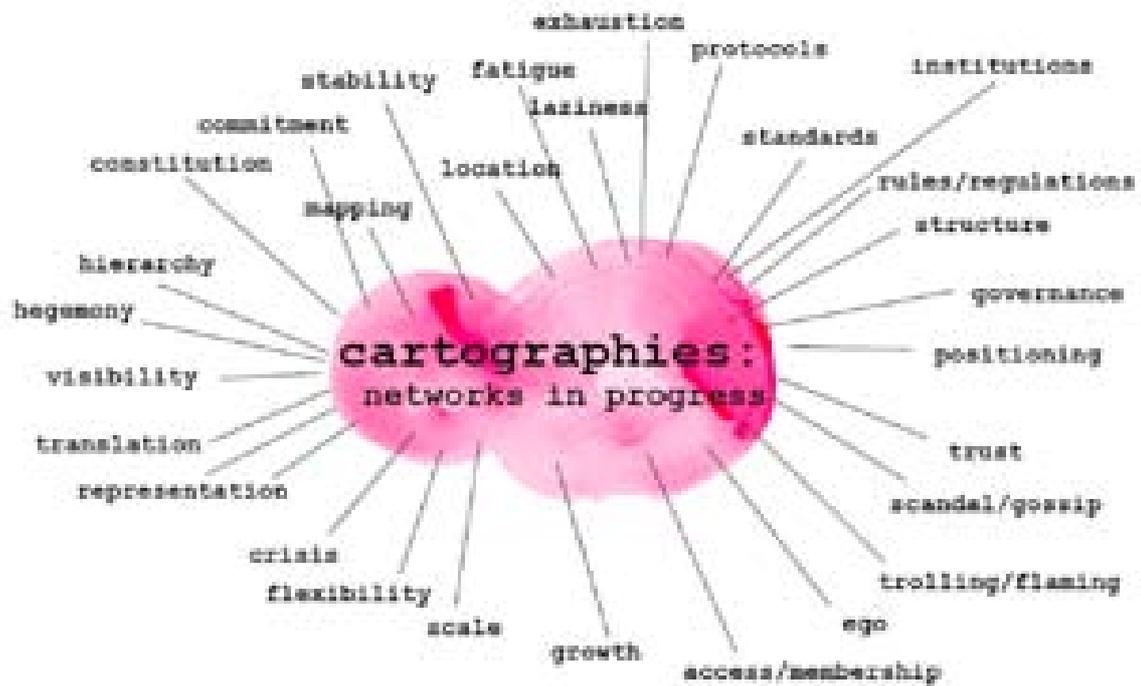
The venue for this opening night, a 70s-style movie theatre, shaped the plenary session naturally, for better and worse. It was a reminder of how networking, even if done online, is a spatial practice and requires the creation of spaces (tools, user interfaces, services) that are supportive of the networked condition, and of new forms of collaboration.

Indeed, sometimes it is merely the architecture that encourages us to maintain traditional forms of sociality and debate. Clearly meeting face to face is a key condition for networks to thrive, and one of the reasons for hosting this kind of

event. However, an important consideration are the costs to accommodate such meetings. Urban space is a commodity of which the value is rising as the information economy shifts to creativity as the next big thing. Gentrification accompanies the transformation of creativity from an experimental practice into the economic paradigm of policy frameworks. There is a number of concrete implications here: It is now more expensive than ever to rent spaces to gather, to talk, to organize. It is a curious detail that most of the Winter Camp budget was spent on rent. The event was organized in the first week of March because this proved to be the cheapest week of the year for plane tickets, hotel rooms and conference accommodation in Amsterdam.

The plenary sessions were our main feedback channel during this event. Instead of thematic emphasis, we drew on the concepts, terms and idioms of the texts submitted by each network - these are some of the terms groups use to describe their work, to situate themselves in the world of networks. We grouped the terms around three main phases each network goes through - the conditions of its emergence, the trials and challenges of being (and staying) active, and possible futures that may (or may not) call for collaborations beyond network boundaries.





'If I can't dance to it, it's not my revolution'.

The Winter Camp mix - artists, activists, academics, programmers - is one that has a certain history in local net cultural events (at least since the Next Five Minutes conference series, held in Amsterdam in September 2003). There are clearly points of overlap and synergy between the political activists and the coders, or the artists and academics. And yet, the points of contact are certainly partial and often contentious as well. Different networks organize around different political cultures - anarchist, liberal humanist, hybrids and so on. Moreover, affective logics have a strong shaping power in the sociality of networks, and more broadly, groups. As people from various backgrounds and professions are placed in one (composite) space, distinctions between art and activism, academics and the work of software development appear to become more entrenched. Borders are not completely permeable, and the very possibility of translation between and among the many idioms - jargons - particular to each effort seem to constitute yet another limit to the very idea of a network of networks.

For a brief moment, the diversity of Winter Camp 09 participants seemed to be reduced to primarily one distinction: you are a techie or not, with the implications that people who work on seemingly non-technological issues of social justice, human rights, and other forms of more directly political engagement are somehow closer to a real and authentic world of emergencies than those who sit in front of the blue screen and churn out code. Time and again we have seen that programmers, designers, activists and theorists need each other. Take one of them out of the equation and you will immediately notice the missing element - yet the need for such multidiscipline has to be affirmed time and again as it can never be taken for granted.

We were surprised at the strong - and almost group-like - desire in and across some of the networks for a common, universal vocabulary, a desire reminiscent of liberal fantasies of universal communication and subjectivity. This came through in the numerous calls for 'jargon-free' talk. But if such commonality merely means a world of perpetual self-affirmation where everything is a predictable, reiteration of the same (we think of dull jobs, canned sitcoms, and consumer products), dynamic networks certainly beg to differ. So we wondered: How do they

deal with difference, both internal and external? If it is not quips against 'high academic theory' (whatever that means, since you would be hard-pressed to find much high theory in universities these days) that is supposedly 'disengaged' from 'doing things', then there's the charge against the impenetrability of geek-speak. But what is this will-to-total knowledge all about? Who wants to know everything? Let's remember, less can also be more. These issues concerning difference and unity provide an important reminder of the fallacy behind the possibility of a grand 'we-are-in-this-together' situation. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case, and serves as an important reminder of why the questions of borders, differences and translation continue to matter.

Yet, such distinctions behold their own dangers and limits - fragmentation is probably the single most evident shortcoming in the contemporary landscape of networked politics. Politics, even radical politics, are well and alive online but their topography is one of pods, ponds and silos. While there is a certain degree of strength in autonomous nodes and decentralized networks, there are serious limits to this current geo-spatial arrangement. Without contact zones, without some degree of collaboration, without federation, groups are left to compete for attention, for members, and for resources. Certain political efforts require numbers and thus require groups to conjoin forces, at least momentarily. The 21st century has born a vibrant sphere of organized networks and as these mature and travel forward, it is imperative to alter the topography to allow loose federations and stable contact zones to grow and take root.

However, we can still remain skeptical regarding the desire for a return to a seemingly simple language of self-evidence or universality. The challenge is to create spaces for cross-border pollination and labor without the illusion that they will be total and frictionless. They require sustained work and energy, perhaps even more than the creation of any single network.

The Limits of Collaborative Reflection

Let's discuss the plenary session in which we convened after the first day of work. At first resisted by a number of participants who wanted more time to work, the idea of one event that

everyone checks into did take on a life of its own, as questions and comments and counter-comments both illustrate the tremendous diversity of efforts, including commonalities, as much as tensions and mutual misunderstandings.

Terminology is something that quickly emerged as important to understanding the social metabolism of these groups. Some groups do not refer to themselves as networks, others describe their collaborative efforts with terms drawn from a broad, overwhelming array of conceptual and political practices: *community, autonomous collective, network*. These idioms - languages, vocabularies, ways of speaking and doing - by which to reflect on network activity vary widely, including friendship and the desire to create spaces of comfort to act and learn in common as well as the attempt to elaborate translation as a new mode of relation.

Interviews with participants were held through the entire event and yielded some surprises. Perhaps one of the most contentious but also not so surprising issues was representation: who gets to be spokesperson for the group? Some groups welcomed the opportunity to broadcast their agenda through the video interview and blogging, which can contribute another resource to sustain and perhaps stabilize their efforts. Others were uncomfortable to speak on behalf of others at all, suggesting that the very idea of representation may in fact weaken the very effort to relate and sustain their common effort.

At the same time, the permanent state of emergency around is creating an urgency that almost threatens to overburden us, making us impatient with discussions that do not seem to relate to the world of social change directly yet are necessary to identify and chart future paths of collaboration. There is so much to do, to be engaged in, we can only pick and choose and then hope that others will join. And while all of the networks at Winter Camp have social and political agendas, it seemed that a disproportionate number of them were 'technological' networks dedicated to the creation of new infrastructures.

Another way to look at this, however, is to recognize that many networks have adopted and appropriated technological tools and idioms because they are useful in describing and

sustaining what they do. In other words, there are affinities between a sociological network and technological network. But the relationship is not deterministic. The techie/non-techie divide is not only misleading, it also threatens to obscure the extent to which many of these efforts have already developed, subverted, and recreated mainstream technological idioms that have little to do with social justice, and put the question of justice back into them. This is the task at hand of many free software projects, for example, they reject the neutrality of proprietary solutions and make visible the extent to which intellectual property frames the kinds of politics we can engage in.

Unsurprisingly, one of the various linguistic or terminological debates was around the term 'network'. Ton Roosendaal of Blender memorably proclaimed 'So what is a network!?' Others referred to the term community, suggesting it connected much more closely with the people they work with. Others insisted that their network was too large, too decentralized, too far flung to use the term community. There can be no consensus over what terms mean or do not mean, but it did become clear that 'community' corresponded to an issue of scale. In a community, you know folks personally, but at Winter Camp, many participants met for the first time, They suggested the networks had 'abstracted' into the online, virtual realm, and quite likely done so in the first instance.

There was no debate concerning the constrictive nature of 'community' as a term that corresponds with the reproduction of repressive traditions. Perhaps this is just a (critical) European response to community as distinct from other regions in the world that do not associate 'community' with this type of baggage. Perhaps it also has something to do with the relatively new entry of the term 'network' into our social-technological vocabularies. Community is a (Christian) term that has circulated within society for considerably longer, and thus holds a familiarity that the term network perhaps still does not. This could be one explanation for the layperson, who is not especially invested in the formation of techno-socialities, but it does not make so much sense for participants of Winter Camp 09 who, generally speaking, have a pretty strong familiarity with the 'update and upgrade' world of high-tech.



Future Questions

Whether we like it or not, institutions are part of our daily life - a fact that 'nomadic' thinkers who celebrate 'difference', 'multitude' and 'globalization' often tend to ignore. It is necessary but not enough to dream up new concepts. The trick is to translate them, together, into new institutional forms. Networks become part of the problem if we do not present them as forms of organization and if we let them become seamless with capitalist imperatives. Just as economic globalization has massively transformed the world on a seemingly ongoing basis, so too have institutions as we usually understand them - those whose foundations are built from concrete and steel, bricks and mortar - been subject to considerable change in the age of electronic networks. While many primary institutions of social and political life (the state, firms, unions, universities) have struggled to adapt to changing circumstances, they have nonetheless made recognizable and frequently substantial changes. Indeed, many have reinvented themselves as 'networked organizations'. While it could be said that many of those established institutions are in a crisis - in terms of legitimacy, sustainability and ontology - it would be a mistake to suggest their hegemony and power has in any way diminished. Network surveillance through data-mining and user-profiling is only becoming more sophisticated as a bio-political technology of control. That dominant institutions have increasingly become networked does not mean they operate in a more soft, benign manner; to provide effective alternatives to such entities, we still need to create counter-sites of power. And yet we must not be complacent about existing alternative networks and simply celebrate the mere existence of the latter.

As sociality - the ways we communicate, relate, work - is becoming more technological, it is now more important than ever to address the uneasiness network technologies appear to trigger. Does this become a question of reclaiming 'the social' that is always already technological? Can the technological somehow be withdrawn, detached or kept at some kind of manageable (and knowable) distance? Probably not. So it would seem crucial to find ways of knowing the technological in order to negotiate the social.

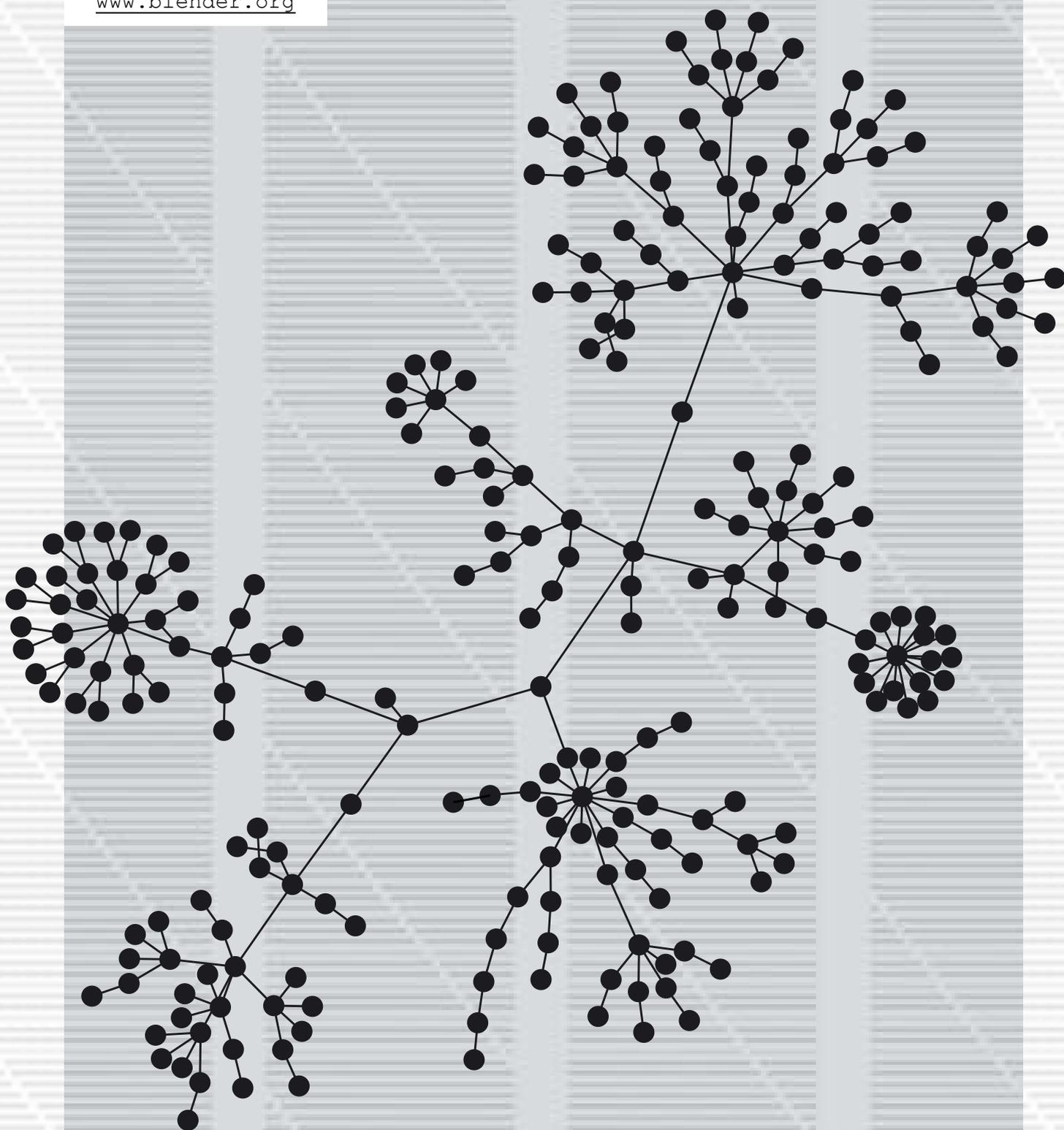
Organized networks move between informality and structure, and it is this unexplored terrain that Winter Camp sought to investigate. It could have been a totally 'structure'- free event, but for us that would defeat a central purpose of this meeting, namely the cross-pollination of ideas and practices across the various networks, most of whom do not know each other, and with whom the organizers are also not acquainted.

The study of network cultures is the core concern of the Amsterdam-based Institute of Network Cultures, the initiator and organizer of Winter Camp 09. It is in this light that we aimed to gather both practical and conceptual knowledge from networks themselves, document these ideas and make them accessible to an ever-growing range of groups and individuals that have started to work under the 'network condition'.

Networking academies, camps, or schools of various kinds have always existed, but it seems to us that in the post-Seattle moment, their role and integration with a broader agenda of social transformation has to be redefined. This is even more urgent as Web 2.0 social media, produced by well-funded Silicon Valley start-ups, colonize the everyday technological landscape and define the ideological/ political maps used to comprehend the significance of these technologies. Along with a great curiosity about how networks currently function, one of our key motivations in putting this event together has been to reflect further on the possible and current relationships between (a few) institutions and networks. Winter Camp was too short, too small to yield results that can simply be generalized across the terrains of net.culture, but it confirmed the need to couple face-to-face meetings with a research agenda that both takes key signals from what's happening at the grassroots and prompts critical reflection on issues across network boundaries.

Blender 2.78

www.blender.org



NETWORK REPORT

The Blender Foundation is an independent organization acting as a non-profit public benefit corporation, with the following goals:

- >> to establish services for active users and developers of Blender,
- >> to maintain and improve the current Blender product via a public accessible source code system under the GNU GPL license,
- >> to establish funding or revenue mechanisms that serve the foundation's goals and cover the foundation's expenses,
- >> to give the worldwide Internet community access to 3D technology in general, with Blender as a core;
- >> to facilitate the open source Blender projects.

Blender is an open source software package for 3D modeling, animation, rendering, post-production, and gaming. Initially developed by Ton Roosendaal's company NaN in the Netherlands, its popularity, and capabilities, have grown over the years. There is a large and active user base with ongoing development by dedicated hackers, making Blender a powerful and viable 3D software solution.

Blender is migrating to a major new release (2.5) with a completely revised architecture for events and handling tools. The impact of this work on especially the user interface, and how to structure and design the various editors in Blender, is difficult to oversee. Getting a core team of developers and artists together for the Winter Camp session would aid that task enormously.

Initial topics for Winter Camp sessions were:

- >> 2.5 architecture review
- >> Paradigms for constructing UIs
- >> UI Design proposal reviews
- >> Python API redesign for both standard UIs and extensions
- >> Next-gen animation tools
- >> Related tasks for open movie "Durian"
- >> Roadmap/scheduling and tasks

Blender's final presentation at Winter Camp on Saturday the 7th of March started with the announcement of the soon to be interface. In fact, the Winter Camp event came at just the right time for them to work on the 2.5 release. By improving the interface Blender aims to be ready to attract the best designers, pushing the product to the next level.

Referring back to the Winter Camp networks theme, Ton Roosendaal has come up with four key focus points to build up a good community. The first is to understand and facilitate people's shared self-interest - people want to get something out of the program or they will leave. The second point is to not take yourself too serious while at the same time also allowing to set ambitious goals. In Blender's case this means saying to Hollywood "up yours" and produce high quality animations without the dominating Hollywood business model. Point three is to get your feet wet, to stop the navel-gazing, to jump out of the ivory tower, go where the things actually happen without thinking too much at an abstract level about who you are and how to do things differently. And the last point: do not listen to people that talk, look at what they do.

...so get to work!

MARIJN DE VRIES HOOGERWERFF,

BLOGGING ON FRIDAY THE 6TH OF MARCH, NOTICES:

When you enter the domain of the Blender network, the first thing that strikes you, especially when compared to many other networks present at Winter Camp, is their level of professionalism. Their meeting consists of elements such as targets, planning and design and development problems/ solutions. It's clear they have a common goal, a product, intersecting at a common believe in the strength of the open source method.

Blender is one of those networks that do not reflect much on their own network topology on a conscious level. For them the questions raised at Winter Camp are for a great deal obsolete or too theoretic. Ton Roosendaal, believes (although delivered in a humorous way) that once you start reflecting on what you are, what it means to be a network, it's the end of the road, it's gone. However, going into the discussion of what kind of

network Blender is brings to the surface some main topics of Winter Camp: What are the dependencies and constraints of a distributed network diagram in relation to being able to professionalize? What could be a possible business model for new networks of production?

Blender is an international group with members from all over the world working together on the free open source 3D content creation suite. They work on products online and have offline conferences where they join up to have more hands-on sessions. Although the group is managed by Ton Roosendaal, and the foundation does seem to have some authority concerning planning, at the same time the way they work is very distributed. The members work autonomously to tackle their own part of the puzzle, sometimes to improve or customize their own in-house release of Blender and sometimes to work on shared projects such as an animated movies series.

Roosendaal's way of managing the team is based on finding a balance between setting specific targets in the near future and having long term goals, grouped together in projects in which it is fun to find solutions to complex problems. An example of this is the animated movie *Big Buck Bunny*, in which the characters had to be hairy furry animals. Making those hairs be able to move as envisioned also means solving complex development problems. The upcoming project will be more of an action movie with Asian style fighting and other nice heavy action stuff, undoubtedly posing more interesting development challenges.

Hearing that some of the members also have a daytime job, gave the impression that they might be working for free. This is however not the case, there are several models working simultaneously so their work is rewarded properly. One member for instance is working for a company that uses Blender software. At the same time he is a developer for Blender, which actually allows him to work partially on the Blender project within paid working hours of his company. Another one of the members is a graduating student, being financed by the university to work on Blender.

Overall I believe that they have found a nice balance between using a more hierarchical structure to drive the projects and retaining the distributed structure so that people can work in a manner they feel comfortable with. In the end, I believe that its good to think critically and theoretically about new networks, but it starts with having a good platform and a motivated community.



ON THE 8TH OF MARCH,

MARIJN DE VRIES HOOGERWERFF CONTINUES TO BLOG ABOUT BLENDER:

Is too much self-reflection and network theory bad for the network? Blender is the leading open-source 3D graphics application that can be used for free, and by anyone to create 'Hollywood-style' art and video animations. While there are over 50,000 people participating in the online community, the 'active' development team is composed of about 50-60 people.

The group focused very granularly on topics such as the MVC model for Blender, and how they should handle default keymapping in the case of users that have international keyboards. And while these discussions seem to be relevant for future releases of Blender, the group admitted to me that the topics covered at this workshop are of much more interest to the developers and not for the end-user.

I had a chance on Day 3 to follow up with Blender members Campbell Barton and Brecht Van Lommel regarding Blender and their thoughts on Winter Camp. When I asked them about Blender's competition they responded very slowly as if it wasn't something that they'd thought much about. "We're not really competing with anyone", said Lommel. The guys agreed

that Blender's success had grown large enough to keep the project moving along - as well as keeping them employed - so they don't have to worry whether 'Hollywood' is paying attention or not.

"An amateur could see something like *Lord of the Rings* and say, 'hey, I need to go out and get the same expensive software if I want to be serious about 3D design', but the truth is they probably won't use all of the complex functions", a Blender team member explained. Therefore, Blender's target audience consists of individual artists and small teams. Also, it is especially useful for high schools and colleges that want to offer 3D modeling courses, without the costly overhead to afford a high-end software package.

After sitting in on meetings with five of the networks here at Winter Camp the difference between the technical groups like Blender and the more theoretical groups was striking. Blender, for instance, has a concrete goal that is almost tangible and therefore within the group there has been little to no discussion about the group's identity or 'hierarchy'. Barton talked about his experience at the plenary session, "Maybe I don't understand the abstract talks we're having at these meetings or if it doesn't so much apply to Blender. We've been working well together for a few years now, and I'm not sure how useful it is for us to think...ok well each of us are nodes, and so-and-so here is our network diagram." In the case of Blender, an abstract discussion about Blender's own network structure may be more beneficial to the other networks here at Winter Camp hoping to learn about how a successful network operates. As one of my colleagues here commented, "It seems like the groups that are confused about their goals and identity are having the most trouble collaborating this week, while groups like Blender and GOTO10 are too busy to worry about it".

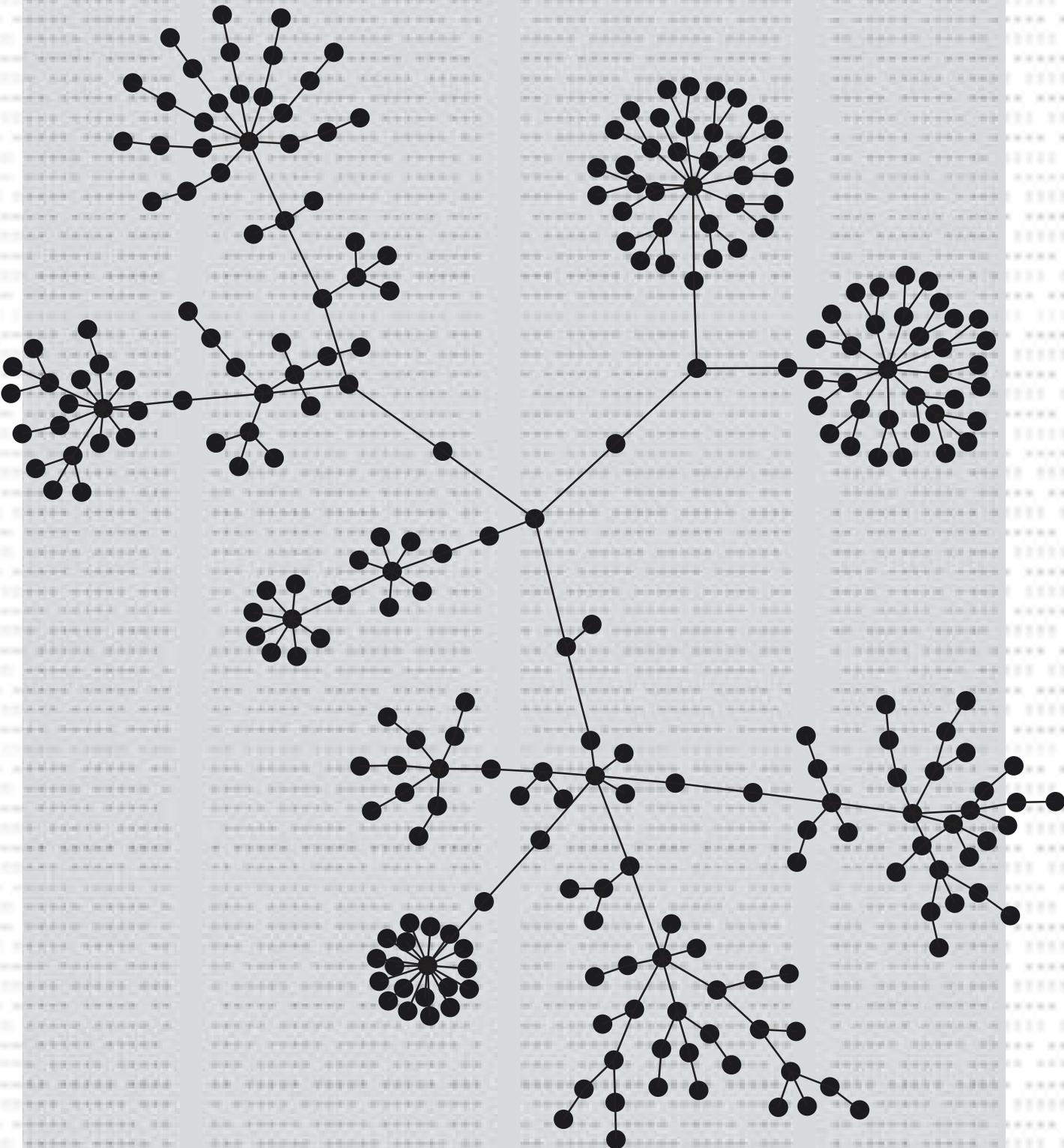
VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH BLENDER

Interview with Nathan Letwory by Geert Lovink,
<http://vimeo.com/3814877>

Interview with Ton Roosendaal by Sabine Niederer,
<http://vimeo.com/3836064>

Bricolabs

www.bricolabs.net



NETWORK REPORT

During Winter Camp, organized by the Institute of Network Cultures, Ned Rossiter's and Geert Lovink's network theory about the value of face to face dialogue in 'organized networks' was put to the test. Collaboration within and between these networks exists largely on a virtual basis. Is this the new way of conferencing? It has become apparent that a conference setup in which an audience listens to lectures by experts has become challenging. Winter Camp united twelve networks, both internally and externally. The Institute of Network Cultures hosted this 'unconference', had bloggers documenting the events in real-time, conducted in-depth interviews with members of the networks and merged the entire process into a form of research.

Ever since the militant concept of the network - a distributed type of risk spreading (i.e. each computer in the network is the transmitter as well as the receiver) - was researched and developed by academics, a natural consequence has been the emergence of collaborations between universities and institutes. They were capable of maintaining and running the resource consuming VAX machines. They had time to learn programming languages. Very soon, the notions of 'collaboration' and 'knowledge' (data and information) became indissolubly connected to institutes. They had the money and resources to travel, to organize and attend conferences, time to publish journal articles and they had decided that the core of what they would consider to be of quality would lie in peer-review, in other words, they would be quality.

In Ned Rossiter's preparation and opening speech for Winter Camp a certain urgency could be discerned. Now institutes (e.g. schools, states, banks and universities) are under pressure and need to reinvent themselves, it is, according to Rossiter, essential that networks are not apprehensive of 'institutionalizing' themselves.

Winter Camp had established one more network: the meta group. This meta group consisted of, amongst others, Geert Lovink, Soenke Zehle, Annette Wolfsberger, Sabine Niederer and Ned

Rossiter. From the perspective of their theoretic framework concerning organized networks, they wanted to examine the level on which someone can 'be against' being independent from someone or something else. After all, if a network would only be established to specifically act against certain practices, a law or a state and that practice, law or state would cease to exist, the network would lose its meaning.

The networks attending Winter Camp each have their own way of questioning the traditional methods of collecting data, spreading information and the definition of certain practices as gathering or creating knowledge. However, they do not just oppose the paradigm, but formulate positive questions, link their daily work to urgent, realistic problems (e.g. climate change, crises, closed systems and censorship), pass judgments on quality and make demands.

The Internet is a catalyst for organized complex process such as management, policy, education and health care, as well as for informal social patterns, such as raising a child, studying, grocery shopping and enjoying the company of friends and family after work. Not until something goes wrong, these social, daily events will be experienced as complex processes.

Since the 1950s, the computer and the Internet have encouraged the cohesion between several different domains and ideas, often in principle just by visualizing data. New connections emerged and consequently, collaborations originated. This acceleration is perceived on two levels: an explosion of content¹, and the ever more rapid succession of popular formats this content is presented in (e.g. YouTube, Facebook, mailing lists, social networks). This will result in people realizing that the decisions by organized institutes to perceive data as data (as opposed to noise or static) and the processes that cause some formats such as the essay, thesis or PhD research to be considered of more value than others, are not based on arguments purely concerning content, but that these institutes

1 "It is expected that in 2012 the amount of data worldwide will be doubling every eleven hours", IBM's Bruno van den Bergh states in Belgian newspaper De Morgen on March 12, 2009.

also have a fear of losing privileges, money and power; thus accordingly judge data.

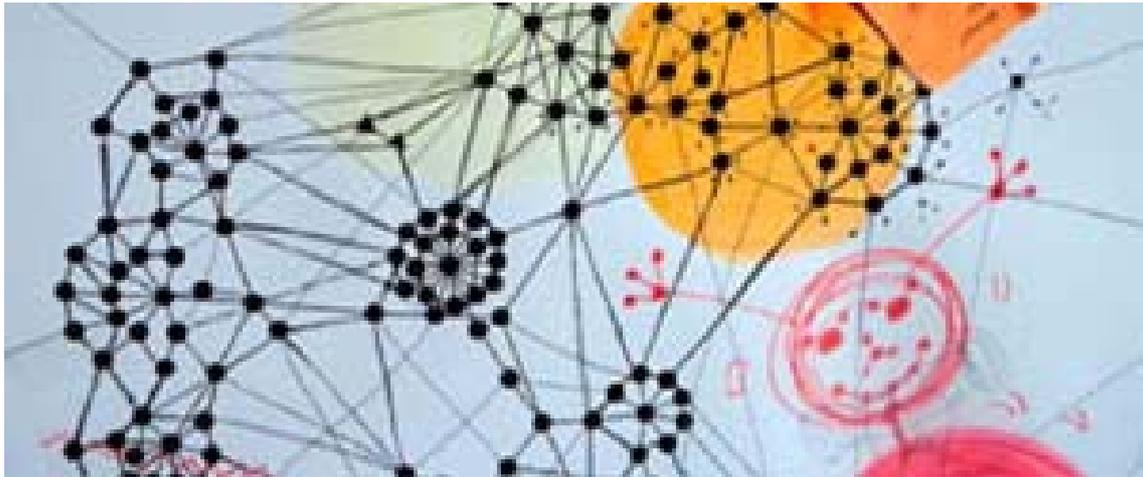
Focusing on one network: Bricolabs

Bricolabs is a network consisting of autonomous thinkers, organizers, hackers and ethnographers who also take part in other organizations, networks and festivals. Aymeric Mansoux of GOTO10 and Jaromil of dyne.org - two networks present at Winter Camp - are also involved in Bricolabs. It is a young network, founded in 2006, with currently 140 members on the mailing list (bricolist on dyne.org). Nobody seems to really know what Bricolabs is. Asking what Bricolabs is therefore seems to be asking the wrong question. Bricolabs will not be defined, however, it can be described:

"Bricolabs describes itself on its website as a distributed network for global and local development of generic infrastructures incrementally developed by communities. A global platform to investigate the new loop of open content, software and hardware for community applications, bringing people together with new technologies and distributed connectivity, unlike the dominant focus of IT industry on security, surveillance and monopoly of information and infrastructures".

www.bricolabs.net

Bricolabs does not realize how one can progress within the network towards a new institution when institutions themselves are part of the problem (think of the financial crisis, climate change, loss of meaning). The process of institutionalizing, appointing leaders, adjusting and renewing formal rules and regulations, presume that continuity and sustainability are crucial qualities. However, what if continuity and sustainability have lost their value in a network in which the members can no longer envision what and who will be important tomorrow, who is hip and who is not, and who their true friends are?



"As a starting point, the Bricoleurs had transformed the network image of Winter Camp into a mesh-network which they perceived more representative of their way of working. Like some other networks, Bricolabs found it problematic to define one network contact - or as Winter Camp described it, a coordinator - as for Bricolabs it equaled to defining a leader and in their opinion, representation of networks should be approached differently". (Annette Wolfsberger)

Gathering for Winter Camp turned out to be important for the Bricolabs network. Members of Bricolabs do not introduce themselves as being so and do not identify with the network. There is no formal foundation or organization. Winter Camp therefore was an excellent opportunity for the members to gather for five days and discuss what action would be needed to make the network stronger. But even that was a question. Is it really necessary to promote or build up Bricolabs? Would it not be better to just focus on projects? Is there something like a 'bricomethod'?

The most important task that could be worked on and for which meeting face to face was crucial, was to instigate the validation or labeling the network. In the current transition period of the creative industries, many Bricolabs-members are invited by universities and research institutes to join national and European research programs. Academics value Bricolabs-members because they have 'users', create real projects in real environments and collectively develop open source applications using internally designed tools for working collaboratively.



Video Interviews with Bricolabs

Interview with Vicky Sinclair by Gabriella Coleman,
<http://vimeo.com/3864637>

Interview with Venzha Christ by Annette Wolfsberger,
<http://vimeo.com/4166163>

Skype conversation with Patrick Humphreys,
<http://vimeo.com/3486127>

Blogposts

<http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/09/overview-final-presentations-reports/>

<http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/04/bricolabs-autonomous-world-domination/>

Pictures

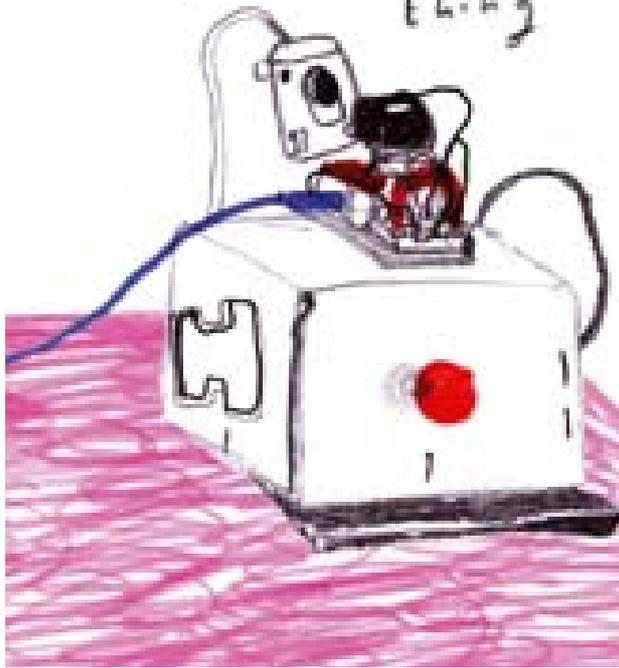
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/61046124@N00/sets/72157614907410857/>

Report and Recommendations on New Media Arts Policy and Practice

IFACCA, 12 March 2009. The Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) today published the Report and Policy Recommendations developed from the Mini Summit on New Media Arts Policy and Practice held in Singapore on 24-26 July 2008, and committed to follow up action during 2009

<http://www.ifacca.org/announcements/2009/03/12/report-and-recommendations-new-media-arts-policy-a/>

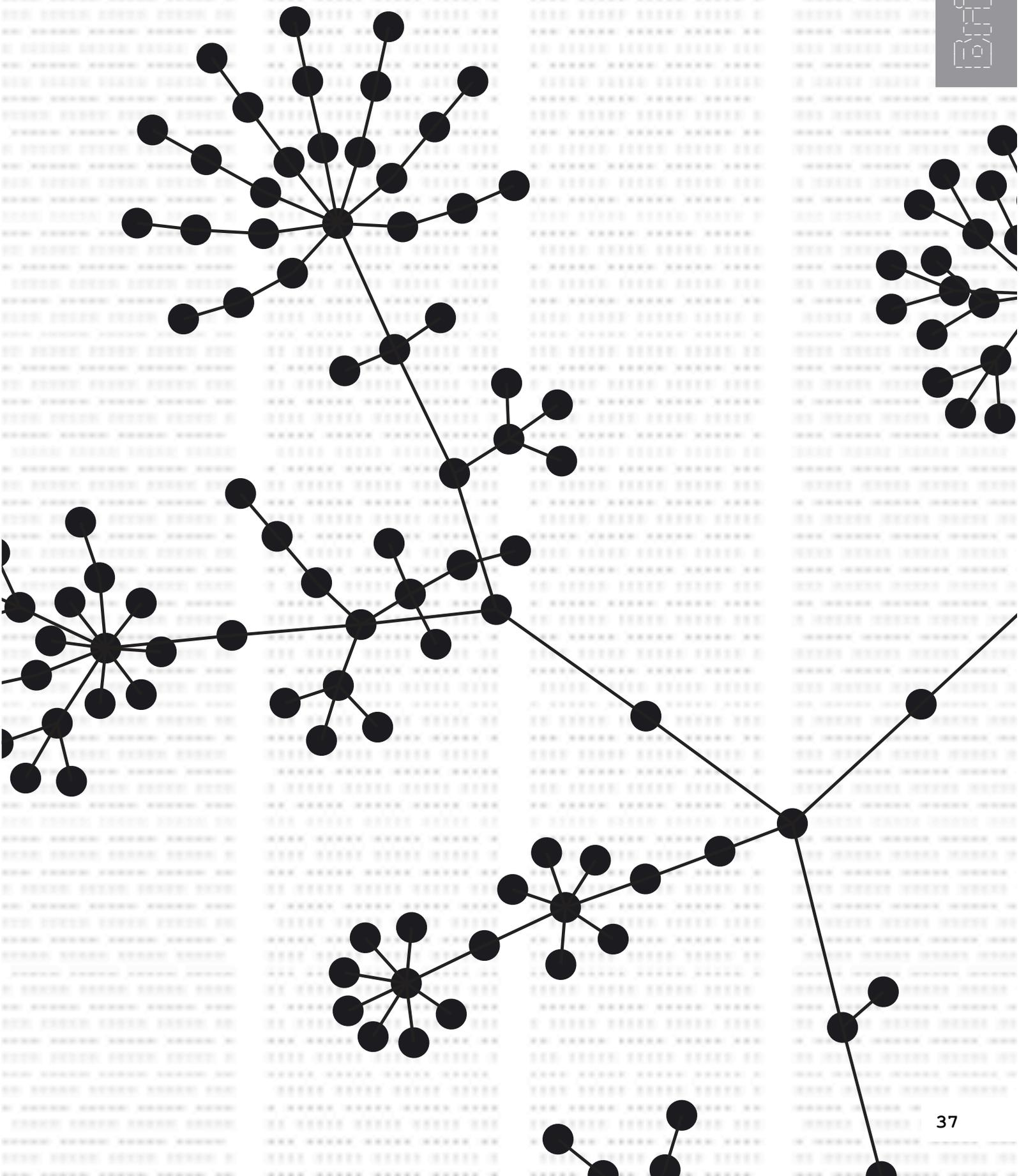
It's a Very
unsexy
thing



You don't
see
nothing.

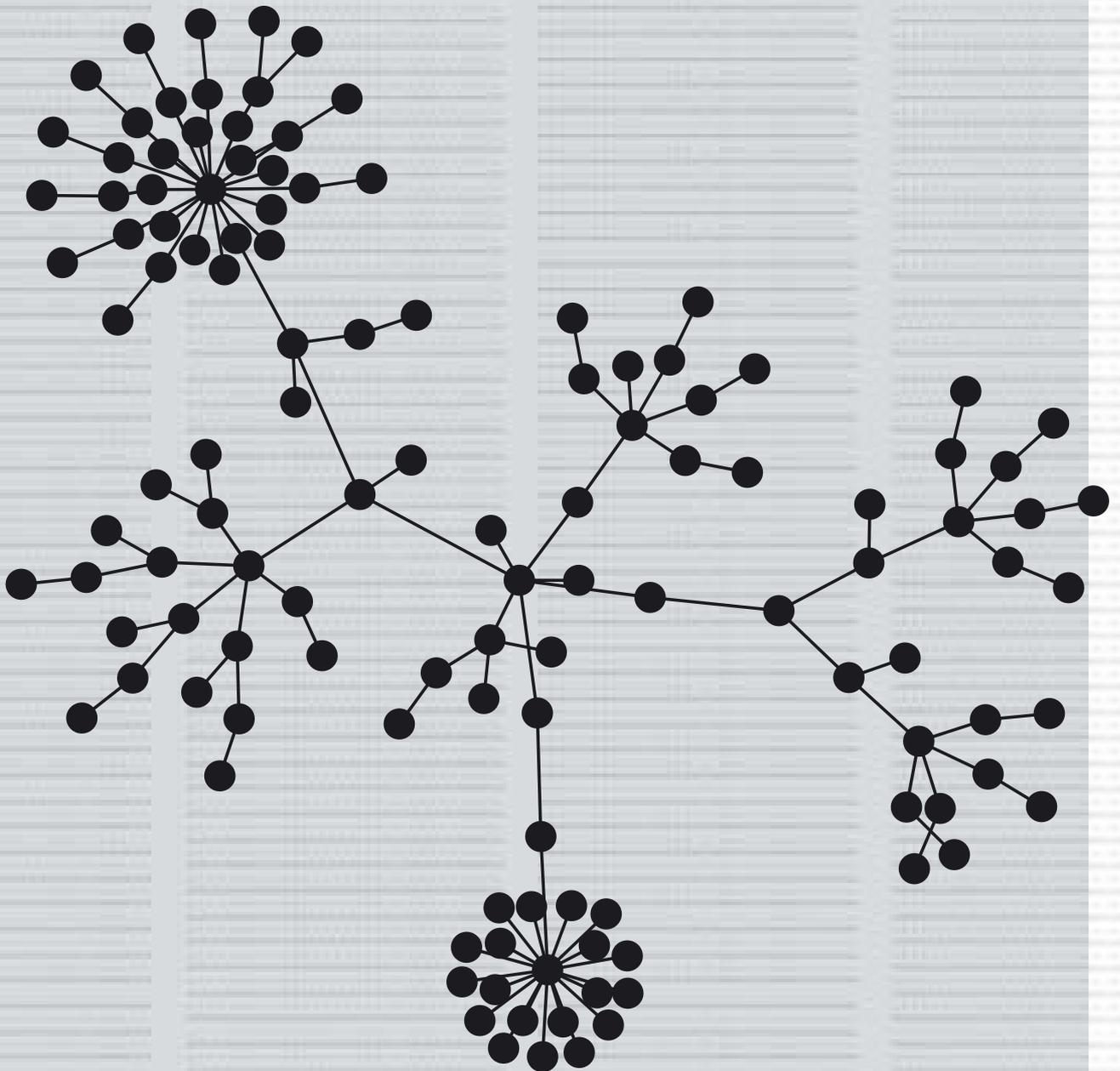
It goes like
'flip', 'flip'





Creative

LABOUR



NETWORK REPORT

**LAURA VAN DER VLIES WROTE ON THURSDAY THE 5TH OF MARCH
ABOUT THE CREATIVE LABOUR GROUP:**

At the second 'official' day of Winter Camp I joined the morning session of Creative Labour. Creative Labour is part of the Euromayday-network, a network that is mobilized around the first of May, as a day to reclaim rights for the new generations growing up under a new, flexible labor regime.

In the middle of a big room is a table with eighteen people seated around it. They are from different backgrounds. On one side of the table I hear Spanish, and on the other side German is the most spoken language. The discussions are held in English, more or less. Right after entering the room, a series of presentations starts. The group consists of different 'project groups' that present the work they are doing. No time to grab a cookie, abundant on the table, next to several flyers and laptops.

The first presentation is by Joan from the Universidad Nomada. This is a social movement about action and Creative Labour. Joan talks about different seminars they have already organized, or are organizing in the coming months. The movement focuses on militant research. The main goal of this is not to create an object of study, but to situate knowledge. There is a transformation going on in the world. During the 50s and 60s it was quite clear how labor was organized. People were working in a factory and it was possible to do militant research in that factory. It was easy to ask the workers which conditions of exploitation they suffered. Any kind of claim was used to extract information and to organize the workers.

But these days, the way of production has changed. Production is happening all over the city, so militant research is everywhere, but at the same time nowhere. It is also often not accepted to ask people about the conditions they work in. For Universidad Nomada, the starting point of research is now social centers, or at least organized places, to do the militant research. It is important to start from an organized or collective 'thing' or centre, because precarious work is

important. It is not about economic claims, but about culture. It is easier to find views against precarity in an organized context than in a work sector.

One of the things Universidad Nomada is working on is helping people that have problems with housing, labor and undocumented migrants. People can get free consultancy at their organization. After this a cartography is shown, which the Creative labor group made yesterday. It depicts different important subjects, and places.



The next thing Universidad Nomada is going to organize is a set of conferences about the crisis. This will allow them to put out messages that will circulate on a higher level. They have several institutions that would like to join, like the Social Centre in Madrid. There will be a new form of cooperation between social institutions that will bring about new ways of empowering. The crisis-context allows to also combine the social map of things.

A squatted building that now serves as a meeting point called the Casa Invisible is located in Malaga. It is a self-organized product of common. One of the main advantages is that you can go there to meet people. It has a free Internet connection, which is uncommon in that region. The idea of squatting a building was born during a film festival. 'Regular' people have their place to go and as a counteraction they squatted the building.

To continue the work they are doing, it is needed to learn more about institution models. This lead them to organize

another seminar next May about institutional models of different cultural institutions in Europe. An example of such a model is for instance the cultural governance model. There will also be workshops about how to start militant research. They are starting a process of reflection on what militant research is because there is need to decolonize knowledge.

After this Toret decided to give a short presentation on Casa Invisible as well. This part was a bit harder to follow because Toret only speaks Spanish. There is a translator in the room but that still isn't enough for me to get the whole idea of what he is saying. What I find interesting is that all the people in the room seem very passionate about their subject. As a person standing on the outside of all of this, it is hard to follow.

According to Toret, Casa Invisible gives attention to people that are normally invisible, like squatters, workers and artists. The project is about using creativity and talents of all these figures and mix it to create a new space, a common space in the city. They are also planning a 2.0 version of Casa Invisible, to allow everyone that is working on the project an income. They are working on getting together a body of rules and protocols to allow that the public is settled or consolidated into one body.

After these presentations the setting was changed to get ready for the next presentation by Arndt Neumann, Christoph Breitsprecher and Lena Oswald from Germany. They did a project which is called Mir Reich's Nicht [enough is not enough]. This is a research by Euromayday, conducted at the Berlinale and Documenta in Berlin, Germany¹. The presentation was clear, divided into several questions that were addressed:

>> Why did we start the campaign?

They started the campaign to get to know more about precarious conditions at the events. They started the project in 2007. The goal is to go beyond symbolic forms of politics, although in a German context.

¹ See <http://mirrechts-nicht.org>.

In 2005 people did not talk much about precarity, but this changed quickly. In 2007 everything was already different and even mainstream papers and tv-stations were talking about precarity. But the problem with that is that these contexts mostly present a problematic image. There are two points that are talked about often. First, about people who are permanently unemployed and second, about young academics who are starting internships that are not paid and who don't have enough money to support themselves properly. These are two elements of a social trend, but the discussion should not just evolve around these subjects. That is why 'Mir reicht's nicht' decided to intervene in this discourse and make the conflict clear and react to this conflict collectively.

>> Why did we use research as a tool?

They were not ready to make big claims about precarity. They needed to do research first to get to know more about the situation of precarity at that time. There are things happening but those are not clear yet. The starting point is that we change the way we live and work, and the politics that we work with. There is a crisis in political activism. One of the main causes is that political activism needs a lot of time and, time is limited. In the past, people were living on welfare, so there was time and money for activism. But this welfare does not cover enough anymore.

They used research as a tool to find new forms to organize. They started with interviews. Just spread out the interview under 'precare' people and start talking about subjects that are normally not talked about. They did not do the research in an academic way but made tools to create new social relationships and to reveal collective conflicts.

>> Why did we choose Berlinale and Documenta?

Events like these provide places for interns. At the same time, this is also interesting for cultural knowledge production. And third, of course, it is nice to make use of the public attention.

>> How did we act in the Berlinale and Documenta?

Our main goal was to look at the working conditions. They started interviewing people they already knew and through these people they got to know other employees. They asked them about work conflicts, desires and what kind of campaign they would design if they would have the chance. All together, they collected interviews with forty different people. After collecting those, they were not sure what to do with the information. Originally they wanted to organize public meetings in which they would form a manifesto. Eventually they decided that they would take interesting quotes from the interviews and to sort them according to topic. The most interesting categories were: promise, burn-out, money, life, time, conflict and strategies. They invited the workers that were interviewed to discuss.

In 2008 they entered a second step in the campaign. They started interviewing at the Berlinale but from another approach. They made a wheel of fortune with questions on it. You'd have to spin the wheel and you could either win a prize or you needed to answer a question. The main event at the Berlinale was the 'Gala of Precarious Perspective'. During the screening they rolled a banner over the screen saying: 'It is not enough to be a supporting actor of my life'. They also handed out fortune cookies with quotes from the interviews.

>> What were the results of the research?

There were six main results, such as: conflict promise and economic force. The pressure on people working at the Berlinale and Documenta was immense, so they couldn't do a good job. Also, there is also a strict division of labor. They have to perform unqualified work. Moreover, there is fragmentation in the conditions they work in. There are different kind of tasks for interns have to perform, and the ambivalence of networks as there are a lot of different networks.

>> What worked out, what not?

Eventually, doing the interviews turned out to be a good way of researching. This, for three reasons. Firstly,

discussions take time. Because both the events were just temporary, this would not be the way to do the research. Secondly, changing forms of politics takes time. Employees had to work during the meetings, and this was a problem. Finally, it was a problem that the 'action' came from outside, and was not connected to a union. For the workers, they were just political activists and were not really eager to collaborate.

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LAURA VAN DER VLIES CONTINUES ON FRIDAY THE 6TH OF MARCH:

Some of the main groups involved in the early beginnings of Euromayday, such as the Intermittents in Paris, the Chainworkers in Milano and Yomango in Barcelona, have in the past years been organizing around issues of Creative Labour. The Intermittents staging an impressive nation wide campaign around the rights of cultural workers, Chainworkers with their project Serpica Naro dramatically intervening in the Milano Fashion Week, and Yomango and their related projects working on issues of property. Now that the urgency of the 1st of May street mobilizations has become less pronounced, different networks have deepened their commitment to local intervention, addressing broad issues around contemporary forms of labor. Creative Labour is one of the core issues that groups are working on.



In the near future, the aim of the Creative Labour network is to give more centrality to the question of labor conditions and contestation in the discussion around creativity and the knowledge economy, building on different local experiences that have so far had little international coordination offline.

Next to that, of course, the network will to continue to be active on a broad array of activities, that have come to define a European creative undercurrent in socio-economic political thought and activism, and a source of radical innovation.

Creative Labour concentrates on the creative sector. Its members are social activists who are committed and (sometimes too) passionate. It wants to offer an alternative to the labor movement where new issues, e.g. precarity, can be discussed. Creative Labour members learned a lot during Winter Camp and the event had a huge impetus for them to keep working. Its members hardly ever have the possibility to work focused without working on concrete campaigns.

The Creative Labour members are working in diverse socio-cultural settings and countries, campaigners learn from each other and continue to share expertise. Creative Labour used Winter Camp to do some extensive mapping and increase their understanding on who their natural allies could be, analyze their own position and discuss previous interventions. Their actions are as diverse as campaigns during fashion weeks and producing internship survival guides for the creative sector.

Creative Labour also spent time discussing institutions and counter-institutions, and managed a design trade union representative, but unfortunately did not manage to meet with their neighbor, the MyCreativity network, amongst whom are policy makers.

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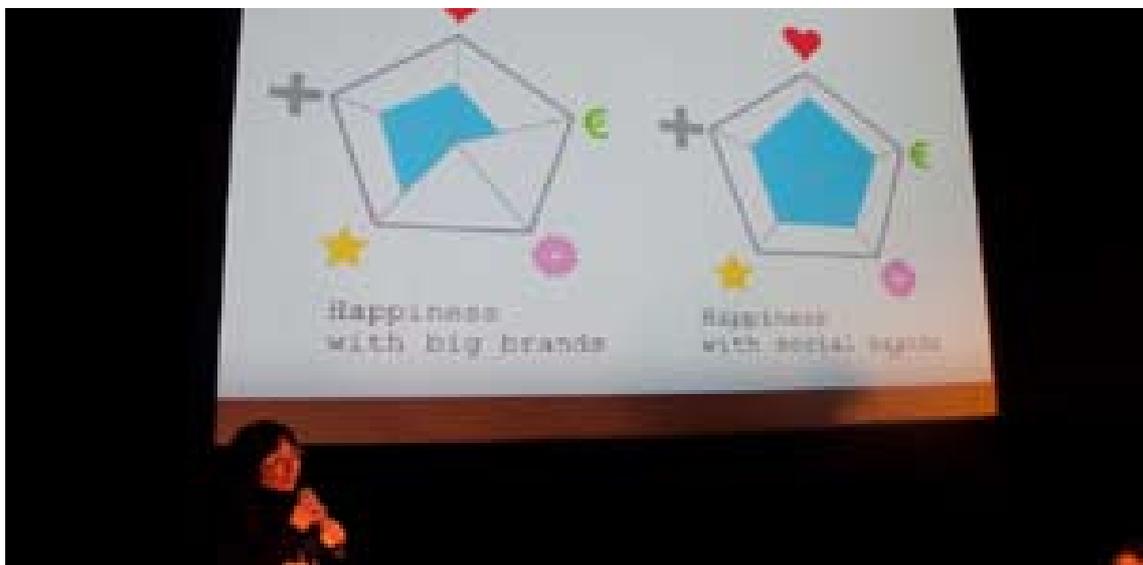
As Zoe Romano explained, being an activist and creative worker has blurry boundaries.

To better understand the identity of an activist/ creative worker, she has expanded the so-called *Love-Growth-Cash Triangle* which measures how much one is learning, how much love is inputted and how much money one makes by doing a job. The results are far from rosy, the resulting reality scenarios differ from 'entry level job'; 'shit work, but it pays the bills' and 'just a hobby'.

However, factors that count in a creative worker's life are personal fulfillment, learning new things, money and social valorization. The triangle therefore needs to be extended to a square including the factor recognition, and the expectation of happiness. The two resulting realities then end up being working pro bono or doing temp work in a big brand; and one discovers that there is a rather big difference between the expectation of happiness and the real level of happiness.

Apart from these factors, also the social/ environmental impact of the work (extending from me, myself and I, to the impact of one's work, to the whole society) needs to be taken into account. Therefore the square needs to be extended to a *Pentagram of Creative Work*, including ethical value.

The resulting scenarios would be happiness with big brands or happiness with social brands. There is a need for two complementary paths: What would be needed are institutions gathering resources to pay people to do good things and to build spaces for increasing social valorization.



But what is next? Key questions evolve around:

- >> What are the current & desired conditions of creative workers?
- >> What is creative work?
- >> How do we mobilize around creative work without replicating the ideas of genius hyper-individualism and the creative class?

- >> What are the side economies of creative work - processes of self- organisation, what do people do when they get fired?
- >> How is the industry organized?²

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"Let's break down the wall so MyCreativity can join this session", Ned Rossiter commented at 4.45 pm during an intensive debate between Creative Labour and Edu-factory.

This cross-meeting was mainly intended to share knowledge between those networks. Edu-Factory has a solid fundament for their network and they are at a different level of progress than MyCreativity is now. So the main goal for MyCreativity was to hear the processes and experiences that Edu-factory went through. What they were also trying to do is to find similarities or common views to collaborate in some way. Yes, this is why Winter Camp was organized.

Both networks are really looking into the future; they are trying to develop a roadmap for their next steps. Creative Labour is doing militant research, organizing brainstorm sessions for campaigns and finding a strategic way to organize their network efficiently. There is a humungous production of knowledge and it mainly made possible by new digital methods. Therefore Creative Labour thinks that there needs to be for example meta-media, meta-unions, meta-institutions and meta-networks set up. Creative Labour is searching for a manner to be creative and critical at the same time.

For Edu-factory, Winter Camp gave them the opportunity to have their first transnational meeting. In which way can they step beyond the classical way of thinking? They want to develop a transnational platform to connect with networks. What they are struggling now is the translation. Ned Rossiter: "How can you translate the context or territory in for example Taiwan to another European country? Try to produce a catalogue of strategies".

² Creative Labour is interested in finding new members and increasing their knowledge and expertise, see <http://n-1.cc>.

According to Edu-factory, there is a strong movement which is emerging very fast, the new global institution forms. These forms make shifts to the movement of bodies and the movement of knowledge. It is then not a body of knowledge but the knowledgeable bodies that we have to liberate. For Edu-factory the term network may not fit anymore. They rather call themselves a machine, a machine with character or an abstract machine. A machine that is connecting one struggle to another. These two networks were definitely exchanging their knowledge and observations, which was very inspiring to watch.

Video Interviews with Creative Labour

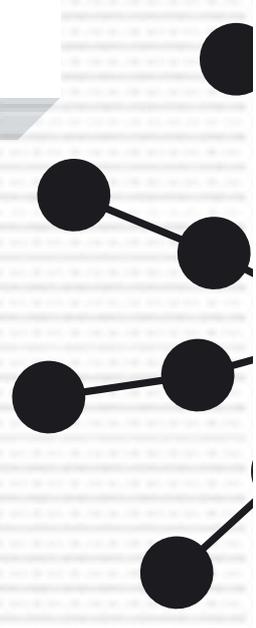
Interview with Valeria Graziano by Soenke Zehle,
<http://vimeo.com/3831826>

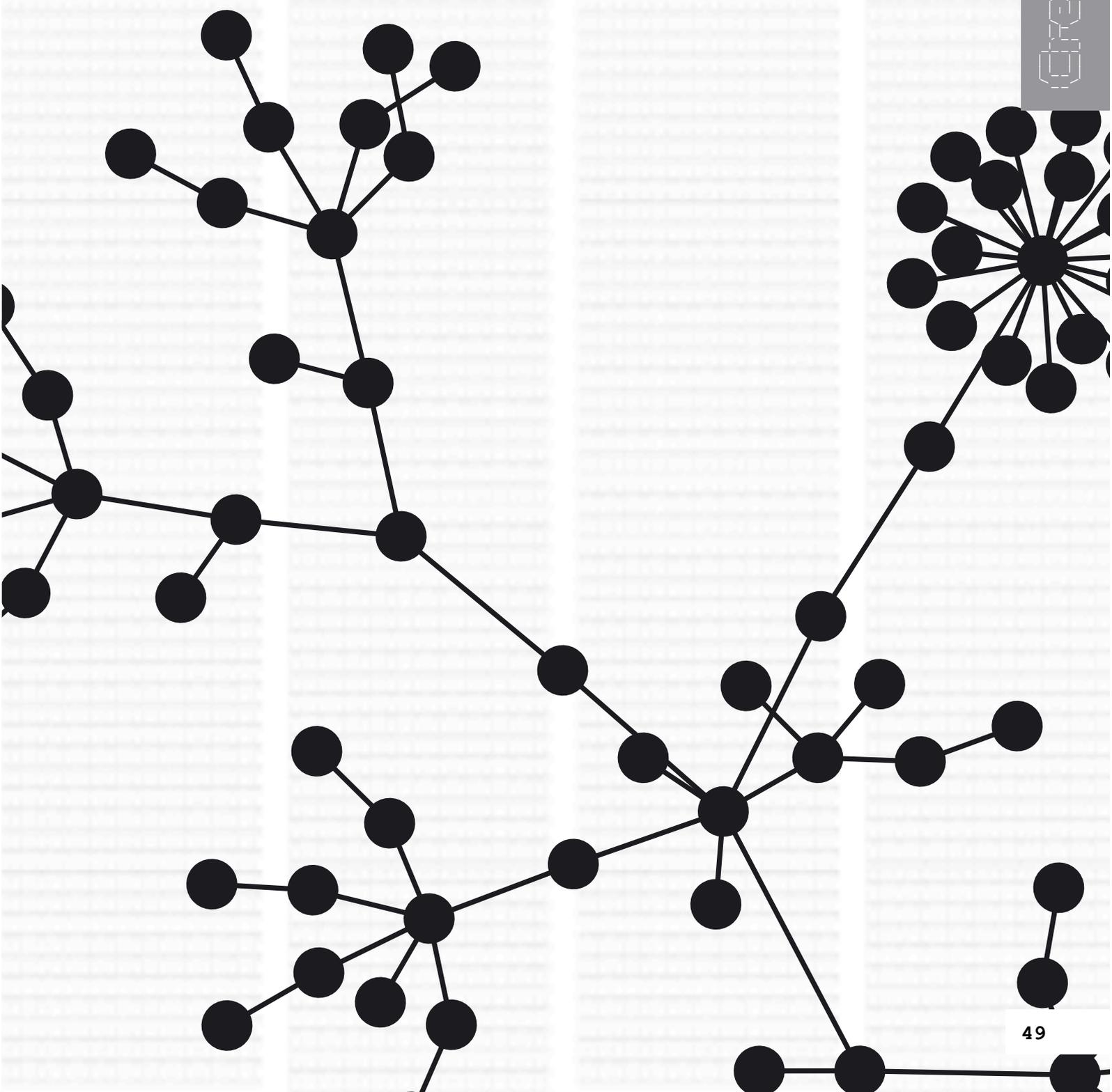
Interview with Zoe Romano by Ned Rossiter,
<http://vimeo.com/4163121>

Interview with Merijn Oudenampsen by Annette Wolfsberger,
<http://vimeo.com/4076099>

Flickr pictures Winter Camp:

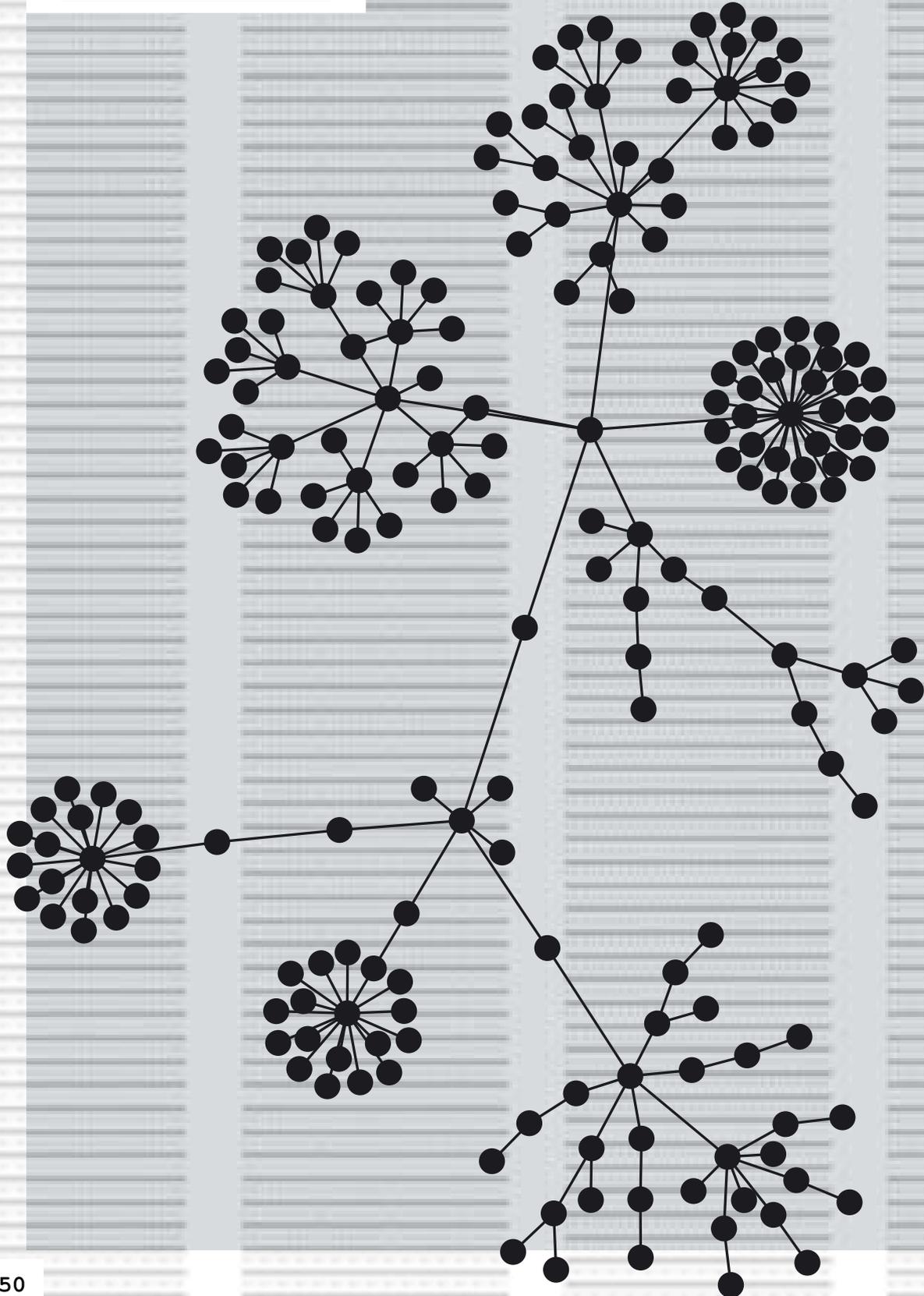
<http://www.flickr.com/groups/wintercamp/>





DYNE.ORG

<http://www.dyne.org>



NETWORK REPORT

Dyne.org appeared online in 2000 when the Hascii Camsoftware was published: an invention widely appreciated for its artistic value and for making possible the broadcast of live video using old hardware on a slow network connection.

Inspired by a mix of software and poetry, a growing network of developers released software to the public developed to insure freedom of expression, configuring dyne.org as a free software atelier, a portal to *Digital Creation and Media Art*.

Ranging from radio makers, humanitarian organizations and video artists to medical researchers, media activists and educators, a large amount of people have employed and redistributed dyne.org software worldwide, free of charge, echoing to the freedom spirit of this autonomous initiative.

Dyne.org activities do not rely on merchandising, public funding, organizing committees or a board of direction: several young hackers pioneered the constitution of a wide horizontal network, passionately following grass-root participation patterns.

Openness, knowledge sharing and freedom of creation have been the philosophical principles guiding the evolution of this network, hosting creations that have been conceptualised not for a profit, but for their role within society.



Mission Statement

Dyne.org aims:

- >> to promote the idea and practice of open source knowledge sharing within civil society,
- >> to foster research, development, production and distribution of FOSS (Free and Open Source Software) solutions,
- >> to open the participation to on-line and on-site communities, leveraging the democratic and horizontal access to technology, lowering the economical requisites to its accessibility,
- >> to foster employment of FOSS in artistic creation: exploring new forms of expression and interaction, disseminating new languages that can be freely adopted and re-elaborated by everyone, insuring the long term conservation of digital artworks;
- >> to support FOSS development, also when non-profitable: being software a socially relevant media it should not be invented and maintained only on the basis of its merchantability.

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ON MARCH 4TH, MARIJN DE VRIES HOOGERWERFF BLOGS:

On the first morning of Winter Camp, the dyne.org network had a programming briefing to get started on building an application for video streaming. Denis 'Jaromil' Rojo, who is the appointed coordinator for the network during Winter Camp, functions as the hub within this network. He structures the briefing and appoints the best man for tasks such as main architecture, facilitating programmers, testing for security and creating documentation for non-tech savvy users.



It is interesting to see they really make an effort to address all layers of the project and Jaromil is actively pushing dyne.org members to extend their network to include members of the Bricolabs and FLOSS Manuals during Wintercamp. This open attitude lies at the core of the type of network dyne.org seemingly is; created out of different networks, still part of other networks and ready to extend into others. It's a classic example of an online hacker community and the related mentality: temporary groups coming together for a specific task or goal.

Andy Nicholson, a free software hacker and new media activist who is also part of the EngageMedia collective, explains that members of dyne.org have met each other in different places, being part of different networks, and eventually joined up together in dyne.org. He explains that new membership, at least in his case, was based on invitation. The network is primarily Europe based, so although the European part is meeting offline more regularly, Andy is primarily contributing online.

The young and displaced brotherhood of hackers, alchemists, radio amateurs, mathematicians and nomads, has set itself the tasks to ensure that their open source applications can run on light platforms such as the first generation EEPs, which sell well under 200 Euros. This type of laptop is booming in the developing world where large groups of the population are now able to own a laptop.

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BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH DENIS JAROMIL ROJO ON THE 8TH OF MARCH, ROSA MENKMAN WRITES:

Dyne.org: Opening Eyes and Earlids

Dyne.org presents itself as a decentralized, open, nomadic and displaced network, that exists through and in cooperation with multiple networks. Dyne.org mainly operates like a fluid grass root power, through institutions. This means that the network will and can never be institutionalized (because this would mean settling down). Jaromil, who founded dyne.org in 2000, acknowledged however, that it is impossible to refuse

institutionalization completely, most importantly because this would lead to the exclusion of certain resources. Dyne.org has chosen to become a foundation, which has given the network a solid base for activities and the possibility to work together with other foundations and institutions like Montevideo (who now offers server space). In fact, having a foothold as a foundation and working together with other art institutes also gave Jaromil the status of migrant instead of deserter.

The main purpose of Dyne.org is providing people, activists and artists alike, with free software (as in freedom of speech). They hope to share knowledge in any context, whether with state owned companies as well as NGOs, or with local indigenous people. Although having a disposition with institutions seems disruptive for a network like Dyne.org, this is not the case. Instead, over time it has proven to be very effective to weave through big, corporate and state owned networks. An example of the impact to act like such a virally weaved network can be found in the case of netstrike.it, when the people were asked to petition their opinion online. Because members of the dyne.org network worked in state owned telecommunication corporations, they were informed of the government ordering this particular company for releasing the IP addresses of people giving their opinion. This is how the network could prove that the 42 people that were arrested with charges of conspiracy and "subversive association", were actually arrested for voicing their opinion on the internet.

Dyne.org aims to develop software that can run on old (or less advanced) hardware, to oppose the consumer approach. A lot of the members of dyne.org have their roots in the demo scene (a subculture focused on maximizing hardware with software). This has proved to be very useful in a society in which we have moved towards small power devices and 'mini' graphics, like mobile phone applications. Today we have to invest in really expensive processors. But not only buying these expensive machines means supporting this consumer society; the fact that while we are using our new and expensive machines, half of our CPU is pirated by blinking advertisements displayed on websites is both unfair and inefficient.

Another negative example of the globalized 'fail' economy can be found within the videogame console industry, which right now is the biggest device industry. A problem with these technologies is that they are not open to learn, change, sell and resell. We cannot use them to re-appropriate content and more importantly, to create local economies. In comparison to televisions, whose technologies are fairly documented, open and standardized, game consoles are black boxes. We cannot open and repair them - it is illegal.

We need to realize that when we purchase an object, there should be no strings attached. For the purposes of a self organized, local economy, it should be illegal to close devices like it is done right now. We need to start being able to mod consoles with the help of mod chips and legalize modding shops in which we can buy and resell our home-made mod consoles. There is also an architectural issue to this point because right now, every city is starting to look the same. Our cities are hijacked by the same advertisements and big commercial billboards and store windows. If people could legally create mod consoles, they would be able to start their own shops and create their own, local pirate economies. Also, there would be a change in the look of the town that is starting to obey a preset template architecture.

During Winter Camp, it was the first time that all the programmers of Dyne.org were involved and got to meet each other (except for kysucix). It is striking to see how so many different people at the same time share a common goal; a grass root hacker community providing access to technology, education and freedom. The background of the members is very diverse; they range from radio makers to humanitarian organizations, medical researchers and musicians. Their main goal in participating in Winter Camp is to connect all developers involved in free online streaming technology FreeJ, which is based on a new free codec ("Ogg, Theora"). FreeJ is a vision mixer, an instrument for realtime video manipulation used in the fields of dance theater, VJ-ing, medical visualizations and TV. It lets you interact with multiple layers of video, filtered by effect chains and then mixed together. The resulting video mix can be shown on multiple and remote screens,



encoded into a movie and streamed live to the internet, all using free software and codecs. The project is sponsored by the Digitale Pioniers Foundation.

The final result of this development will be made available in official GNU/Linux distributions like Debian and Ubuntu: as packages are made available by default for those systems, it will be much easier to deploy FreeJ as a server-side engine to mix, encode and stream audio-visual content.

One of the members working on FreeJ is Asbesto from Sicily. Asbesto is in charge of Freaknet (the hacklab of Dyne.org) where he runs the museum of working computers (obsolete computer systems that have been restored into beautiful working order). I really enjoyed meeting him because over the last years I have come across more initiatives like this, notably the MO5 (Paris), the Cyberpipe (Ljubljana) and I think the work they do to restore and document these old machines is often very underappreciated.

Also working on the FreeJ project is the Mexican sound/ visual artist Vlux. His roots are a basic ingredient to everything he works for, which comes down to creating audio as well as video and the distribution of knowledge about media that facilitate the freedom of speech. During Winter Camp I found Vlux often busy with his microphone, because the many sounds of Amsterdam (the first 'world' he was "going to try to figure out") were new to him. The sounds he recorded were beautiful and made me aware of my earlids (that filter out the sounds that I think are normal). After this discovery, Vlux told me about his reasons for being part of Dyne.org. He, alongside 800,000 other Oaxacans took active part in the rebellions against the exclusion of the indigenous population by the Mexican state Government (the most recent rebellions took place in 2006 and resulted in the death of 26 activists). By pirating state radio and television and starting new radio stations, the Oaxacans learned 'to speak' - how to have a voice. Vladimir describes that now the Oaxacans have learned to speak, they need to learn how technology works from its source, so they can maintain having a voice. He is trying to create, translate and distribute this knowledge to make this possible in the future.



Overall he works to generate and distribute new (old) sounds into the world.



In the final plenary session the network showed a visualization (made by Crash) from the edits of FreeJ software files from the starting point of the project (November 2001) until now. This video very clearly demonstrates the workflow on a central project and the major players taking part in the creation of this big project. But you can also recognize a demo scene attitude, which is often very competitive. Demo sceners or not, they are definitely a very social network of people. No Estamos Solos!

Video Interviews with dyne.org

Interview with Jaromil by Soenke Zehle,

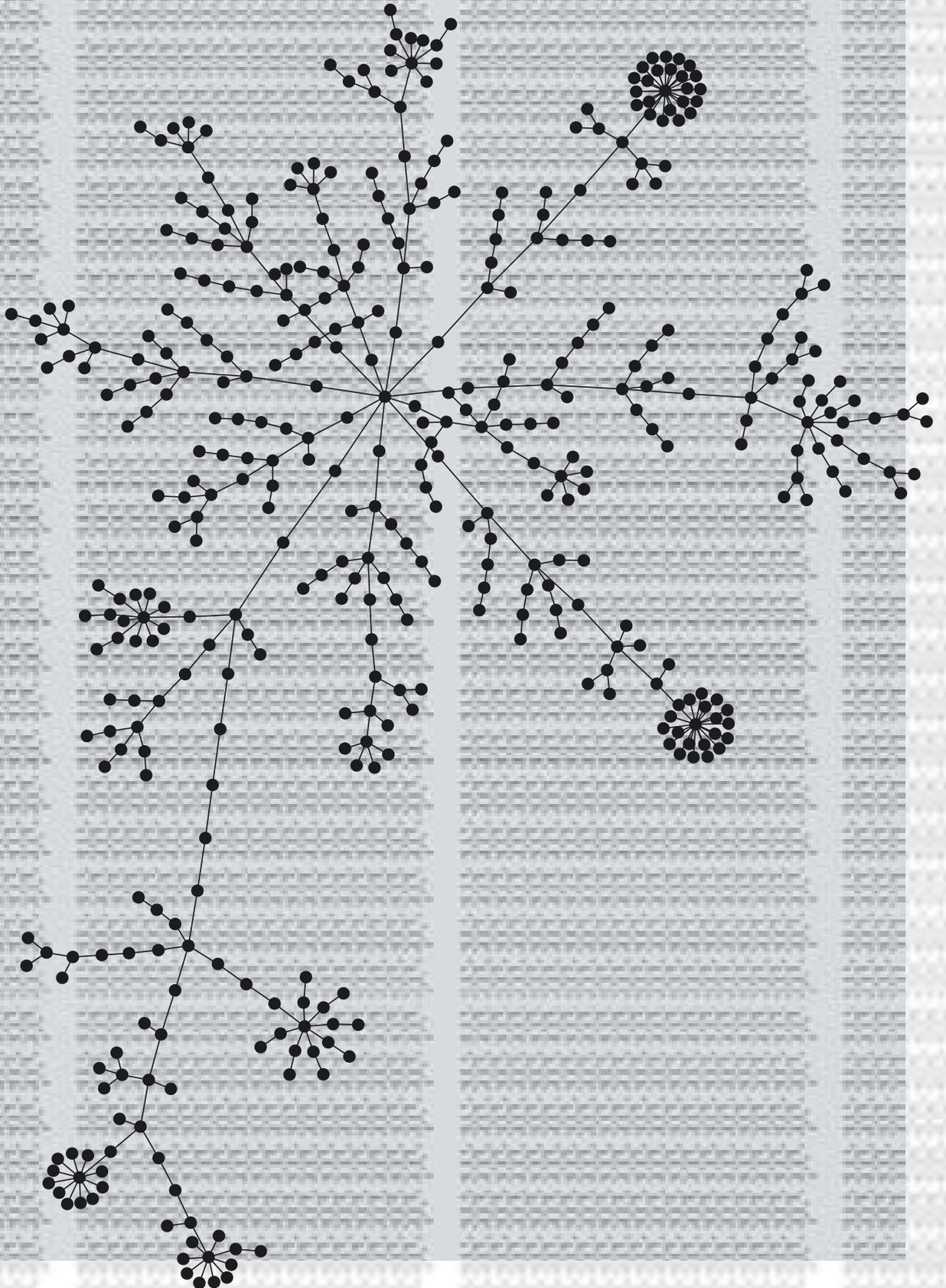
<http://vimeo.com/4165209>

Interview with Tatiana de la O by Soenke Zehle,

<http://vimeo.com/4089494>

Edu-factory

<http://www.edu-factory.org>



NETWORK REPORT

A few years ago in their manifesto, the edu-factory collective underlined the productive and conflictive dimension of the contemporary university: "As was the factory, so now is the university. Where once the factory was a paradigmatic site of struggle between workers and capitalists, so now the university is a key space of conflict, where the ownership of knowledge, the reproduction of the labor force and the creation of social and cultural stratifications are all at stake".

But in fact, the university does not at all function like a factory, and we are not nostalgic about the struggles of the past. This statement was rather the indication of a political problem. If we begin with the incommensurable spatiotemporal differences between the actual functions of the university and those of the factory, what are the political stakes of their comparison? In other words: How can the problem of organization be rethought in the aftermath of the demise of its traditional forms such as the union and the political party?

Today, the economic crisis has opened new spaces to rethink the function of the university and the production of knowledge itself on a global scale. In other words, we have the chance to rethink the rise of the global university, as well as its crisis. Within edu-factory, we refer to this as *the double crisis*. On the one hand it is an acceleration of the crisis specific to the university that marks its end, the inevitable result of its eroded epistemological status; on the other hand it is also the crisis of postfordist conditions of labor and value, many of which circulate through the university.

The edu-factory project took form in early 2007 to discuss these central transformations of the university, the production of knowledge and types of conflict. The first modality of the project was a transnational mailing-list¹ which brought together around five hundred participants largely consisting of militants, students and researchers. Rejecting the notion that networks necessarily institute horizontal and spontaneous relations, we proceeded with the view that networks must

¹ See edufactory@listcultures.org

be organized if they are to operate as political spaces. The model involved two temporally circumscribed and thematically identified rounds of discussion: the first on conflicts in the production of knowledge and the second on hierarchization of the market for education and the construction of autonomous institutions. After each round of discussion, the list closed to await a new opening in a successive cycle. In this way, edu-factory moved from an extensive to an intensive mode of organizing networks.

In the context of edu-factory, this movement from extensive to intensive involves a constant process of updates and innovations, via a tool-kit that is both experimental and conventional: the discussion list and the website; the publication and translation of edu-factory's first book, *The Global University*; the organization of and collaboration at meetings and public events all around the world; the plans for a web journal devoted to analyzing how the university 'works'—both the 'occupations' that it enforces and those that it incites, as well as the anomalies that take exception to its homogenizing translations; and the ideas for a new organization of knowledge production, entirely within the range of social cooperation and its collective control. This is what we call the construction of an *autonomous institution* or the invention of the *university of the common*. To work in this way to build up a network of struggles is to move from the logic of 'exchange' to the translation of struggles based on their irreducible singularity and heterogeneity.

The meeting of edu-factory at the Winter Camp marked a new phase in the project. It provided a space in which to share, translate and build up a common language about the analysis of transformations to the university and their different forms of regional and trans-regional declination. It also provided a chance to discuss criticisms of the modern epistemological status of the knowledge, the meaning of the contemporary crisis, and action on the borders of the university. Because of the possibilities afforded by the meeting at Winter Camp the time was used to establish concrete goals for the future development of the edu-factory project.

What was produced out of this was a 'road map' laying out plans for the edu-factory project one, two and five years into the future available on the edu-factory website. The composition of the project and its forms of governance needed to be clarified (the list, the editorial board, the collective, the emergent network of struggles). At the same time, starting with the question of gender balance, we developed an important discussion about the question of differences and their composition in the common, which is not the universal. This was necessary to deepen and define the already existing projects and spaces (the web-journal, the website, the list discussion), to plan new projects (meetings, the network of struggles), and to face central issues, such as the question of funds. At all times we confronted these matters not as technical but as political questions.

Much attention was given to the development of the web journal. A proposal for two sections was defined, one section on how the university works, the other on the processes of excess and defection. For each issue, it was decided that a group of editors would be nominated, consisting of people both internal and external to the editorial board. The question of peer review was discussed, based on the desire to open a battlefield on which to contest the mechanisms of measure and evaluation. The proposal was made to have a process of collective reading, using an appropriate software solution, e.g. a wiki. It was planned that the zero issue of the journal, to be published in September 2009, would concentrate on the question of the 'double crisis'. In order to attend to the political problematic associated with global English as the homolingual idiom of the corporate university, it was proposed that articles should be translated into multiple languages, chosen in a flexible way following the thematic of each issue and the various topics of the articles. A digest was also planned - using the contacts with the publishers of the 'Global University' - to collect two or three issues of the journal.

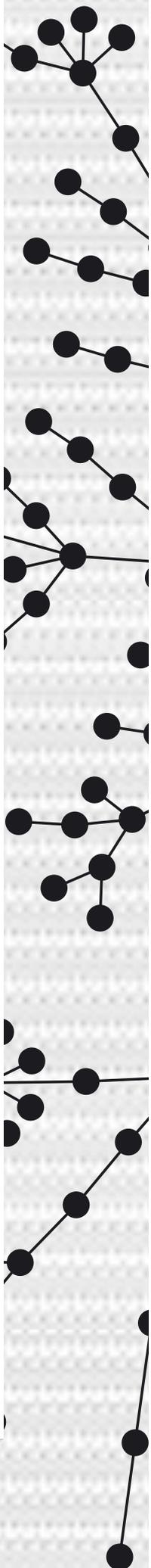
Winter Camp also saw the development of a calendar of meetings for 2009 in which edu-factory will participate, collaborate or directly organize to take place in Minnesota, Rome, Taipei, Salvador de Bahia and Calcutta. The aim of these meetings

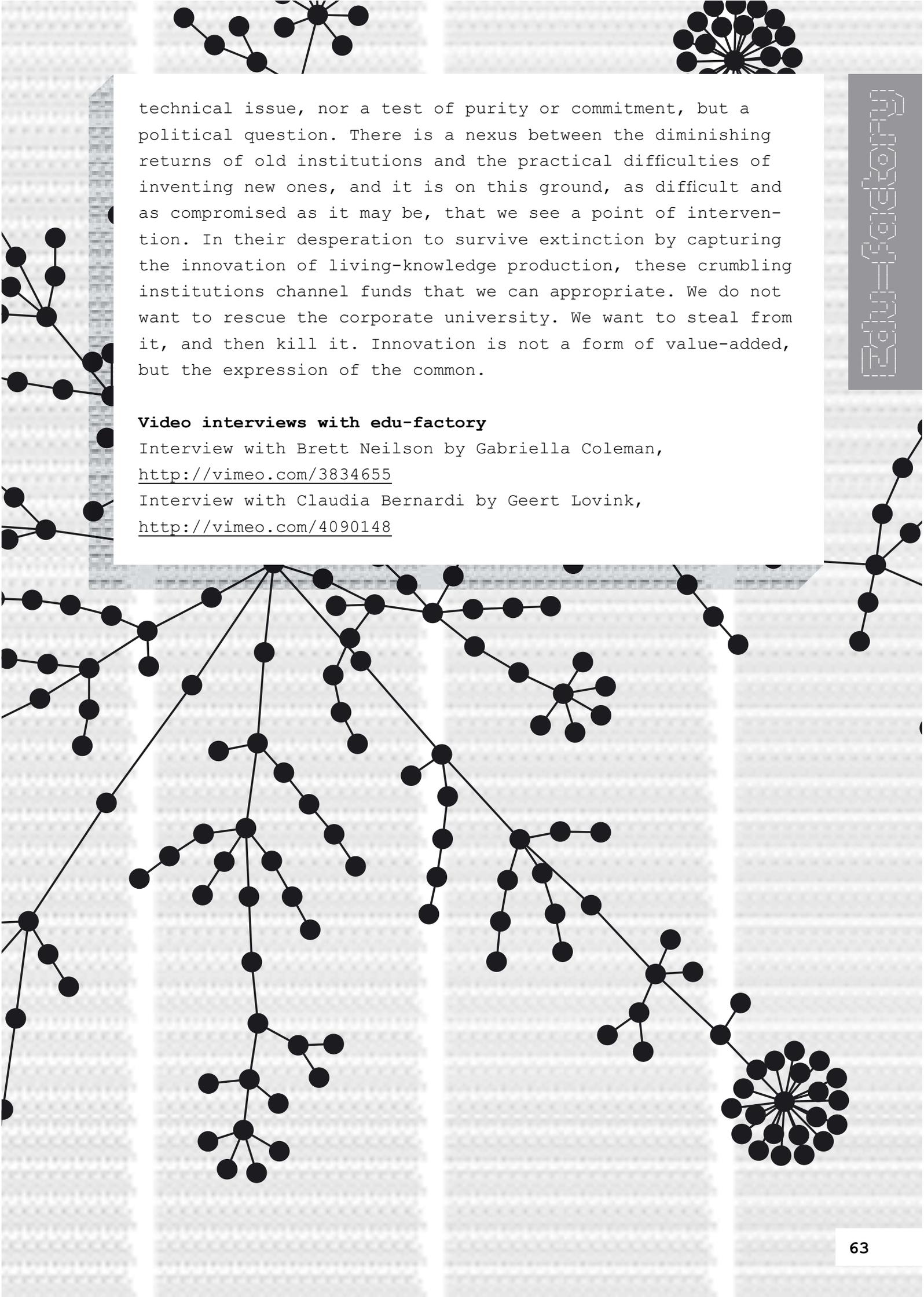
is to expand and consolidate the edu-factory project, and to change its composition on various levels. The beginnings of a "network of struggles" were additionally constructed. This is understood to function as a network of global contacts who can update the website rapidly, to extend and consolidate the contacts of the collectives, groups and political practices of resistance and self-education. This is a way of experimenting with the passage to an organized network.

During the meeting at Winter Camp a central issue was raised for the edu-factory project around the composition of networks. We said that edu-factory is an organized network, yet what does this mean? For several decades now, networks have become the preferred form of movements as well as governance. As such they represent the possibility of the production of the common as well as its capture and enclosure. In short, the network is a dominant form, and all sorts of power are already articulated through it. In the overall context of Winter Camp, we noted two opposing inclinations among networks: the one is towards community, i.e. a reactionary return to the identity of a mythological origin, while the other is towards constituent practices, i.e. the road toward the invention of new institutions.

From the edu-factory perspective, this tension was highly evident at Winter Camp. The opportunity to meet face to face provided the participating networks with the time and space to advance and reconceive their projects. At times, it also seemed to encourage group or communal behavior. Perhaps networks do not need to continue to operate as networks when some of their members come together in the same space. At the plenary sessions, some networks explicitly described themselves as communities. Interestingly enough, these were the same networks that insisted most aggressively on being addressed in plain English. By contrast, edu-factory conceives the network as a form capable of inventing new institutions in which knowledgeable bodies actively compose the political through translation.

In this decisive transition toward the invention of new institutions, we need money and funds. This is not merely a





technical issue, nor a test of purity or commitment, but a political question. There is a nexus between the diminishing returns of old institutions and the practical difficulties of inventing new ones, and it is on this ground, as difficult and as compromised as it may be, that we see a point of intervention. In their desperation to survive extinction by capturing the innovation of living-knowledge production, these crumbling institutions channel funds that we can appropriate. We do not want to rescue the corporate university. We want to steal from it, and then kill it. Innovation is not a form of value-added, but the expression of the common.

Video interviews with edu-factory

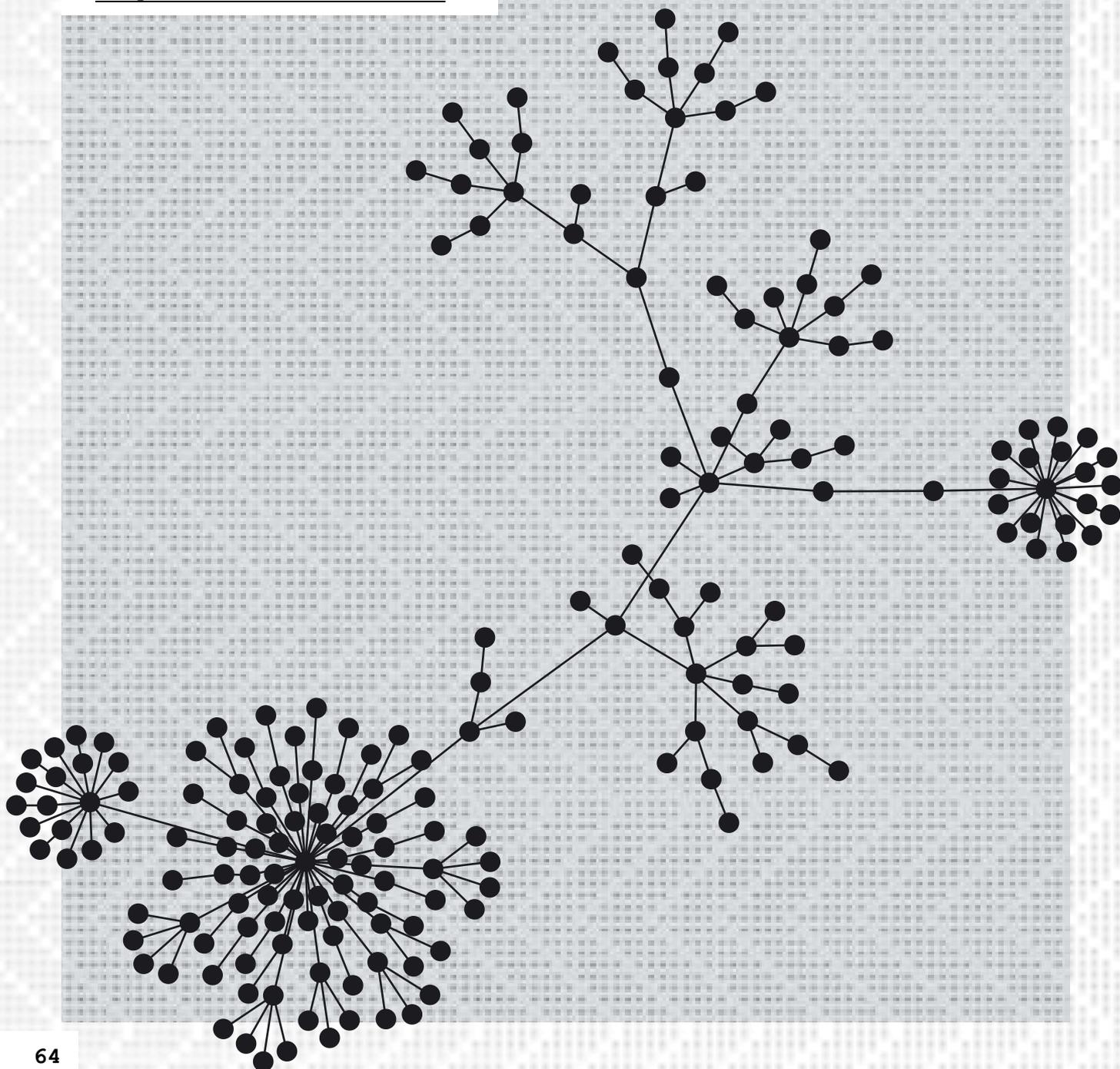
Interview with Brett Neilson by Gabriella Coleman,
<http://vimeo.com/3834655>

Interview with Claudia Bernardi by Geert Lovink,
<http://vimeo.com/4090148>

FLOSS

MANUALS

<http://en.flossmanuals.net>



NETWORK REPORT

FLOSS Manuals makes free software more accessible by providing clear documentation that accurately explains their purpose and use. Each manual explains what the software does and what it does not do, what the interface looks like, how to install it, how to set the most basic configuration necessary, and how to use its main functions. To ensure the information remains useful and up to date the manuals are regularly developed to add more advanced uses, and to document changes and new versions of the software.

The manuals on FLOSS Manuals are written by a community of people, who do a variety of things to keep the manuals as up to date and accurate as possible. Anyone can contribute to a manual - to fix a spelling mistake, to add a more detailed explanation, to write a new chapter, or to start a whole new manual. The way in which FLOSS Manuals are written mirrors the way in which FLOSS (Free Libre Open Source) software itself is written: by a community that contributes to and maintains the content.

We currently have over thirty-five manuals, a number that is growing on a monthly basis. We have also established significant working relationships with notable organizations such as One Laptop Per Child, The Sugar Foundation, the Free Software Foundation, Google, and O'Reilly Media. The strength of these relationships is attested by the presence of members from several of these organizations within this proposal. These relationships have seen amazing results, such as the FLOSS Manuals documentation of the One Laptop Per Child and Sugar Projects is being shipped on 100,000 laptops to children all over the world.

At present there are no paid employees for FLOSS Manuals and yet the number of contributors is growing quickly with one to two new subscriptions per day. Traffic is also increasing rapidly - in the last three months visitors have more than doubled from 18,000 to 37,000 unique visitors a month. PDFs of manuals were downloaded 9,960 times during November 2008: an increase from 1,500 times at the same time a year before.

Andy Oram: "We have language communities currently in Farsi, Dutch, and English¹ with French, Finnish, and Burmese communities on their way. Individual manuals are also translated into Russian, Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, Polish and Turkish".²

"We organize Book Sprints to rapidly develop manuals. These are five-day intensive work sessions with six to eight writers working together in real space. The most recent Book Sprint was held in Lake Tahoe, California. Another book sprint produced the two hundred-page manual *How to Bypass Internet Censorship* within in five days".

FLOSS Manuals is clearly fulfilling a need. However, we are at a critical point in our development. We require a clear strategy to build capacity in the organization. The capacity issues effect all facets of our future including the technical platform, future functionality, management of administrative needs, maintenance of material, translation management, fund raising, development of the community and the future strategies and partnerships of FLOSS Manuals.

With no employees on the payroll, FLOSS Manuals needs to strategize the current growth path and build strategies to manage this. Consequently, the invited list of participants has been carefully chosen to reflect a broad profile of our stakeholders to ensure the best planning group possible for the future of FLOSS Manuals.

During Winter Camp FLOSS Manuals set a goal to intend to use an 'unconference' methodology. Hence the process is described here and not the goals. The process itself will identify and address the goals within five critical areas:

- >> Capacity
- >> Platform
- >> Financial Sustainability
- >> Language Communities
- >> PR

1 For Farsi: <http://fa.flossmanuals.net>,
for Dutch: <http://nl.flossmanuals.net>, for English: <http://en.flossmanuals.net>.

2 See <http://translate.flossmanuals.net/write>.

These areas represent the main issues the network currently faces. The week began with introductions from each of those present, stating what they do in relationship to the network. We will then spend the remainder of the first day discussing the items within these categories that are considered strengths and weaknesses and identifying issues that need to be addressed.

The groups spent the day in short (one-hour) sessions, each one-hour period will address an issue identified on the first day. At the end of each of these sessions a member of each group reports back to the whole group what was discussed. Each group will then announce the next session's topic and reconfigure accordingly. At the end of each day there will a final meeting with all members, and the highest priority themes and strategies will be recorded.

The final session of the day will also time line the activities and nominate working groups to address the issues. These working groups communicate with the FLOSS Manuals community in real time using IRC (Internet Relay Chat) and e-mail. It is possible some of the working group members will come from members of the FLOSS Manuals community that are not present at Winter Camp.

The last day of the event focused on preparing a final time line with dedicated working groups, selected participants for each group and agreed deadlines.

The PR and Platform groups will also proceed to work on some of the actions during the event. We intend to have increased our profile during the event and written significant features into the FLOSS Manuals code base before the end of the week.

Ideas For Evening Programming

- >> **Wine tasting.** A member from each network has to bring two bottles of wine from their home country. They must make a small presentation to the entire group about the wine - where it comes from, what it tastes like, why they like it. The wine is then all put on a table and... Belgium beer tasting, only with wine.
- >> **Dutch Evening.** 'Thirty minutes over Wine' is a quick Dutch

Lesson. This should be done in small groups in a very relaxed informal way with a Dutch speaker assigned to five to six non-Dutch speakers. This is followed by thirty minutes, over wine, when the participants must mingle and can only speak to each other in Dutch (with assistance from the Dutch Speakers)

>> **Dutch Cheese Tasting.**

>> **Speed Geeking.** Anyone who feels like it gets five minutes to talk about their project, an idea of theirs, their favorite hobby - any topic they like. It has to be exactly five minutes, no more, no less.

>> **Network Trivia Quiz.** Each network comes up with ten trivia questions about the other networks participating. These questions are then given to a quiz master and each network must compete to get the most correct answers. It would be better if this quiz was held later in the week giving each group the chance to learn a little about the others. The winners get six large bottles of Duvel.

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**ON FRIDAY THE 6TH OF MARCH,
ROSA MENKMAN WRITES ABOUT FLOSS MANUALS:**

When I joined the FLOSS manuals workshop on Thursday morning, I wasn't sure what to expect. FLOSS manuals were a pretty obscure territory for me. I decided to settle in a corner and observe the members to gradually learn more about the network, their goals and strategies.

The workshop was managed by Adam Hyde. Adam is an artist, broadcaster and educator, who combines his understanding of radio art and broadcast technologies with software development and open source radio streaming. As a result of his involvement with FLOSS radio (Radioqualia) he encountered a basic lack of FLOSS Manuals on radio distribution technologies in specific and other software in general. This is the reason why Adam founded FLOSS Manuals in 2006.

The workshop revolved around the organization and more technical matters involving an upcoming Book Sprint, a concept I had never heard of before. A Book Sprint is a get-together of a

group of people that aim to rapidly develop a finished, comprehensive text, that can be distributed as a book or edited and downloaded online. In the month May 2009 alone, four Book Sprints (and subsequent publications) are planned on Linux, Pure Data, Firefox and Open Translation Tools. This practice has resulted in a rapid growth of publications by FLOSS Manuals.

One of the results of the past Book Sprints is a manual on *How To Bypass Internet Censorship*. This (partially technical) manual was written in five days and consists of two hundred pages describing the very basic steps to more complex actions an individual can take to avoid or circumvent Internet censorship implemented by for instance governments and schools. An example of a very direct tool that can be used to get around censorship is the use of translation websites like Babelfish for surfing otherwise (locally) blocked websites. *How To Bypass Internet Censorship* is available as download or as a print-on-demand.

This form of publication leaves space for remixing the book. Users can add and change content and choose to publish combination's of different chapters available on the website via the self-publish services from Lulu. Still, the physical publications create a different form of access and enables FLOSS Manuals to reinvest money back into the collective.

In 2007, the Digitale Pioniers awarded the FLOSS Manuals initiative with a grant to translate their work into Farsi (Persian) and other languages. Anybody can join FLOSS Manuals by registering online or by signing up to the mailing list. Over the past two years, two hundred people have registered of whom thirty are more or less actively involved with the work, and communicate mainly through IRC and a mailing list. Right now the network's main problem is its fast growth, the capacity of the servers and the correction process of new information.

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ROSA MENKMAN CONTINUES ON SUNDAY THE 8TH OF MARCH:

In the final plenary session, Adam gave us a short history of his collective and then went deeper into the outcomes of their week of labour, which they presented via a diagram. FLOSS Manuals outcomes' of the Winter Camp are both internal, located within the organizational structure of the network and external, located within the new FLOSS Friday - sessions. How these new organizational structures will turn out and when their new project will actually start, we will soon be able to read on their website. So it might be a good thing to keep an eye on the upcoming projects page.

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TUESDAY THE 3RD OF MARCH,

ANDY ORAM WRITES ON HIS O'REILLY BLOG:

Winter Camp: a network of networks tries to build better human networks. I'm starting a week of working in Amsterdam with 150 people from around the world to learn how groups can use available social and technical means to better achieve their goals. Hundreds of academic conferences are held on this topic every year, but the gathering I'm at is neither academic nor a conference. Even though it bears the evocative name Winter Camp, it's not an unconference either.

Instead, the organizers at the Institute of Network Cultures have deployed their funds to invite a dozen existing organizations with geographically dispersed members to come together and see what they can accomplish during intensive sessions. The hope is that these groups will make progress on their own goals. Furthermore, they will develop lessons along the way that we can all use to make our online communities more effective.

What sort of questions could we make progress on?

A few include:

- >> Can the fad for social networking develop into new institutions for working together?
- >> How can today's institutions make positive use of networks and even reinvent themselves as networks?

- >> Where is the most effective balance between spontaneity and structure in each network?
- >> How can online networks finance themselves with minimal legal and bureaucratic overhead? (A beginning answer lies in virtual companies.)
- >> What happens as networks scale up? Does the limit of effective human group size established by anthropological research (somewhere between 100 and 150 people) still apply?
- >> How can we maximize the benefits of face-to-face meetings to develop online networks?

By operating on two levels at once, the gathering implies dual deliverables (to borrow a popular term from business) that can create some tension. On the first level, people in each group (called a 'network' in this context) deepen relationships within their network and pursue their goals for three intensive days. This collaboration is very similar to the Book Sprints run by the network under whose aegis I came, FLOSS Manuals.

But on the higher level, as part of the overall group development, the organizers want to explore the lessons that these meetings and inter-network meetings have for the future of collaboration in general.

This leads to the question of how much each participant in the gathering should strive to understand the broad, abstract goals and bring a consciousness of the goals into the intra-network meetings. The alternative (if for rhetorical purposes we delineate the alternatives as two poles) is to let each network follow its own internal group dynamic and thus serve as a subject of anthropological study, leaving it to the organizers to analyze its behavior in a larger context.

I think the gathering will be more like the latter. Hardly any participant, I've found, understood the larger purpose when he or she arrived. I don't even know when the organizers articulated that purpose for us. In any case, most of us came because we were asked by the leader of our network ("Free trip to Amsterdam! Meet your team members!") and didn't even try to grasp the larger mission. Time pressures exacerbate that understanding gap.

I take the broader goals seriously. I spent as much time yesterday as I could in the lobby of our hostel to meet a few of the participants of Winter Camp. Using deeply learned cues to judge class and intellectual background, one can tell which of the hostel visitors are part of the gathering. (Often, recognition is even simpler: most are twenty years older than the other hostel visitors).

Naturally, every participant is fascinating in his or her own way. One is an educator in Australia who, until recently, put out a free newspaper as well. Another is a twenty-five-year-old video artist who now divides his time between advertising and performance art. He had no idea what the gathering was about and came to Amsterdam from New York because his boss asked him to fill in.

Other people spend their time bringing computers and Internet access to underdeveloped countries or studying online cultures; some seem to do nothing except develop manifestos about the need for new forms of social relationships. Some groups have strong cultures and successful outcomes to point to already, while others were formed recently and seem like they would hardly exist were it not for this gathering. All are welcome.

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ANDY ORAM BLOGS ON WEDNESDAY THE 4TH OF MARCH:

Work and play. I mentioned yesterday that I'm at a conference with dual goals: making progress on a particular project and sharing general lessons about how to build human networks. Yesterday I spent six hours on the first goal, which was aimed at one small piece of innovation (an IRC client for FLOSS Manuals).

The scene felt like a Hollywood scriptwriter's fantasy of life in Amsterdam. Eight of us went to a studio on the west side of the city, rented by an artist who produces designs for FLOSS Manuals. It had the requisite high ceilings, blank walls, obscure art journals and exhibition proceedings. (The movie-set ambiance was disrupted a bit by the presence of two books I

had edited, and *Beautiful Code*.) We gathered around laptops and wrestled with database schemas or CSS for hours.

Swimming in networks

Across the liberal disciplines, researchers are fascinated with how much of biology, nature, and society can be described in terms of networks. Networks are hard to control, impossible to predict, and fantastically productive. But as Winter Camp organizer Geert Lovink pointed out in a speech I read yesterday, *The Principle of Notworking* (sic), networks are more likely to slow down initiatives than to speed them up. Central authorities are much more efficient. They just don't achieve as good results.

One of Lovink's revelations was his interpretation of why the dot-com boom of the 1990s crashed. What he called *Commerce, Inc.*, was trying to coerce the Internet into a centralized distribution model. We all now understand the fundamental dynamic of the Internet as a network. This means it consists of autonomous people who come and go as they please and generate new forms of interaction as they go along.

I'd like to take this idea a step further and predict that the social-networking follow-up to *Commerce, Inc.* is likely to come to a bad end too. When there is no central control point, it's hard to extract a profit from activity. If there is no central locus for production, there's no ethical justification for extracting a profit.

Understanding network theory a bit better helped me answer the question I had when I arrived: why are there so many of them? It seemed like many of the groups of artistic and political activists at Winter Camp announce overlapping goals, and I wondered whether any networks should merge or outsource some of their goals to more specialized organizations. But one can't question why people come together, and why they choose one network over another.

Even though smaller networks must continually educate themselves and repeat all the mistakes that are familiar to other network organizers, they end up stronger and able to

build new networks. What we are doing at Winter Camp is the same process I'm going through in so many other organizations: lifting the perspectives of the participants to see beyond their own goals to the goals of their networks, and beyond the goals of their networks to the ambitious social goals we tend to share here.

One of the key aspects of networks we grapple with in the world of activists is how easily nodes (people) slip away. Just a few days ago I put up an analysis of citizen participation labeling this lack of commitment as a problem. But Lovink treats it as a strength (hence the pun 'Notworking'). Each network has to constantly justify its existence to its members. If it stagnates or develops oppressive forms of interaction, members will be quick to find a more congenial alternative.

The conference seems to be working, rather than notworking. Members of different networks mingle at seven in the morning when the breakfast room opens and at ten at night when the evening entertainment ends. Between sessions they gather outside for cigarettes and more conversation. (A lot more people, Americans as well as Europeans, are smoking here than at other conferences I attend. I figure it's because they're artists; they don't think logically.)



The impact of One Laptop Per Child and Sugar

One Laptop Per Child has been getting some bad press, not all of it from the usual authorities who fear its potential to raise a global generation of free-thinking, capable children. The organization has definitely run into problems with costs, income, and therefore funding, as well as carefully considered criticism from a lot of people in technical communities. But I think a lot of the controversy comes from the original vision splitting up and becoming more diffuse.

Instead of a simple, clear story -a single, unified system - the project has split the software component from the hardware component. This seems eminently sensible. The software component (Sugar) has broadened its base and been ported to many platforms, while the hardware component, under pressure from client governments, has been adapted to run Windows as well as Sugar.

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ON MONDAY THE 9TH OF MARCH ANDY ORAM HEADLINES: WINTER CAMP GATHERING SHOWS THE VALUE OF CHANNELS BETWEEN FREE SOFTWARE PROJECTS AND THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

Last week I was privileged (mining that term for its multiple connotations) to engage with 150 other people in a unique and moving set of experiences at an event called Winter Camp. My first impressions, based on just readings and a few early meetings, already demonstrated the engagement we all felt. My next report was generated in the heat of our work and reflected an almost fairy-tale atmosphere. A couple days after the end, I can cull some lessons for open source programmers and projects, as well as for people in other networks trying to make change.

The inquiry driving Winter Camp, sponsored and run by the Institute of Network Cultures, seemed austere and academic enough despite an explicitly political tinge involving the empowerment of people who are not currently represented in social decisions. We were here to explore how we could improve the effectiveness of far-flung groups (which we called 'networks').

It was the unique characteristics of the participants - unique in our diversity as well as in what we held in common - that led to the week's emotional intensity.

Be Your Constituents

But first some ideas for free software development. I came here not as an O'Reilly representative but as a volunteer with FLOSS Manuals, a nonprofit devoted to creating open books. For a free software development team, we're an unusual collection of people. Most are directly involved in the project are artists and many are educators. This might make us more sensitive to the reactions of the people for whom we're developing the project.

I hate using the term 'users' for these people. Not only does the word have ugly connotations; it draws a reprehensible border around the ways those people can interact and contribute, just as much as would the term 'consumers'. Pursuing the theme of artists doing software development, I have tried considering these people an 'audience' instead. But in a fascinating conversation I had this morning with researcher Ned Rossiter, one of the Winter Camp organizers, he criticized the metaphor of 'audience' as an undifferentiated and passive mass. He suggested the term 'constituents' instead. The search for the perfect term is ongoing.

Perhaps an artist's sensitivity explains why FLOSS Manuals has met the constituents' needs more effectively than the scads of other free documentation projects that have been tried over the years. Do we have some practices in common with other successful free software projects?

An old saw about free software, which has quite a bit of truth, is that programmers create excellent interfaces for tools aimed at programmers like themselves, but compare unfavorably to proprietary equivalents when the tools are for other constituents.

Some of the best free tools for artists and other creative people may have overcome this limitation. But it's a constant challenge for free software. We may still be operating in the

shadow of the early hacker ideal that was alive in the age before the PC, when hackers thought anyone who cared about information should become a master programmer himself.

The advent of universal computing drove hackers to modify their ideal, with its deceptively elitism, and to compete instead with proprietary companies to provide easy-to-use point-and-click tools. But this success has created an inherent gap between their view of the software and the constituents' view.

The constituency for a free software tool normally hovers faceless in the background. From the viewpoint of software developers, all too often, the constituents are represented by a bunch of whiny forum postings asking why the software doesn't work the way they expected.

For well-established projects, conferences can briefly bring together programmers and their constituents. But conferences are sporadic and expensive. Putting key representatives of the constituents on project boards also helps, but we all know from forays into politics that listening to a representative is far less effective than providing channels for direct input to all the people being represented.

One of the joys of Winter Camp, for me, was a chance to build alliances with our constituents' - with educators, artists, and political activists who use free software every day and want documentation - and to request their active help. Our challenge is to sustain the collaboration beyond this week.

Free software could benefit from more such intense inclusivity. Just as software engineering practice has moved beyond the isolated programmer model (where requirements are thrown over the wall into the developer's cubicle and his code is thrown over another wall to the testers), free software needs mass constituent participation.

When I started this blog, I titled this section "Know Your Constituents". After writing the first couple paragraphs, I changed the title to its current text. I think this totality of identification is crucial for software development.

For FLOSS Manuals in particular, certain goals of founder Adam Hyde helped us get where we are today:

- >> Making contribution easy while preserving an effective structure to documents,
- >> creating attractive output both online and in print;
- >> putting in extra effort to do things that are hard to do, such as providing translations into many languages.

We still need to do more in several areas, in my opinion:

- >> Figuring out how to make the project sustainable, which of course involves regular income,
- >> ensuring documentation's quality and accuracy;
- >> ensuring that contributors are recognized.

Even in our current early stage, FLOSS Manuals has progressed quickly. It has been chosen by friends of One Laptop Per Child and the Sugar project to do a series of manuals, and this has earned FLOSS Manuals attention from other free software constituents. We discovered so much interest at Winter Camp (where several members of other networks had written for our books) that we set up a special talk attended by over twenty people from other projects. Now we're intensifying our roll-out of new projects.

Unbalanced challenges

The feeling that we had more at stake in this gathering than academic inquiry came quickly, as we heard stories from political activists at Winter Camp. Some people here are in exile from their home countries. One participant, Issa Nyaphaga, was arrested and tortured in Cameroon for his political cartoons. He then spent twelve years going from one host country to another without a passport, leaving his family behind. He is now a successful artist and teacher in New York City.

We saw a bit of one participant's film about destructive ecological practices by oil companies in Nigeria. Other people deliberately set up home in underprivileged areas to help educate or organize the poor; others collect funds and provide houses for artists forced into exile.

The second day of the gathering brought an Amsterdam political organizer who asked us to join a protest in support of undocumented immigrants being held in a jail near the airport. I have a lot I could say about immigration politics in the US, but I feel unqualified as a guest to take a stand about immigration politics in the Netherlands. Still, one tiny incident I heard from a Winter Camp participant is relevant.

He had attended a demonstration at the airport and held up signs to show support for the jailed immigrants. The guards inside the jail closed the shutters so that the inmates couldn't see the demonstrators. That small act of severance is hard to appreciate unless one understands the isolation and helplessness that attends imprisonment. The guards could probably justify their action, perhaps by citing fears of inmate unrest. (But what is more likely to generate unrest: optimism or despair?) Whatever your stand on immigration, censorship needs to be protested whether it involves putting filters on Internet service providers or closing the shutters in a jail.

I have already mentioned that the political goals of the gathering's organizers played a subordinate role in the invitation, which stressed questions about forming and sustaining networks. It's remarkable, therefore, how much the final participants agreed with the organizers' political goals. It's even more remarkable when you look at how the invitations went out - a very decentralized process.

The organizers chose a dozen networks to invite, heavily relying so far as I can see on an old-boy network of their own. (I believe that every network had at least one leading resident in the Netherlands.) The leader of each network then chose members to represent the network at the gathering. Some were small enough to invite everybody, whereas others worked out the invitee list through various planning mechanisms. A lot depending on who happened to be free, who could put aside family responsibilities for a week, and so on.

But this ad hoc, almost arbitrary invitation mechanism led to an extremely cohesive network philosophically and politically. If anyone who considered himself a centrist or moderate happened by accident to find his way to Winter Camp, he must have spent his time cowering under the stairwell. I think the invitation process in itself is a fascinating experiment in establishing conformity.

Stress and Articulation

I myself come out of political movements whose slogan is "Organize the unorganized", but in the context of Winter Camp the slogan is less about unionizing impoverished day laborers and more about trying to negotiate the limits of discipline among people whose careers are devoted to fighting organizations.

Some participants were so wedded to 'horizontalism' and anti-elitism that they hate to use terms such as 'institution-building' (because to them, 'institution' means a large corporation or oppressive government). As sophisticated intellectuals, they should be able to redefine 'institutionalization' as the evolution of their favorite modes of interaction into stable formations.

Radical visions are fine to start with, but one can't posture as someone who has never compromised with the world as it is in order to survive - never turned in a school essay, never written a grant proposal, never presented a passport at border control. You need a strategy for moving from one institution to another, no matter how radical your critique - I have been convinced of this by seeing the consequences of failed states.

And of course these earnest networkers included people who tried to pull rank or who used their erudition to subtly devalue other people's contributions, human failings that have to be addressed by any quest for social improvement. The struggles of the networks to translate ideals into expression came out on the final day, as each network was given twenty minutes to present the results of their week's work.

FLOSS Manuals offered a pretty standard, frontal presentation - perhaps even a boring one, I admit. But we had accomplished a lot and wanted to boast about it:

- >> We've defined key functions - coding, web design, finance, public relations - and made a commitment to replace our reliance on a single individual with a team in each area.
- >> We made plans to contact like-minded organizations for guidance on how to cheaply and efficiently fix our key gaps in governance and finance.
- >> Two coders developed a database schema for our new back-end.
- >> Two designers scrutinized the current web site and made some changes to allow easier interaction and show the most important features.
- >> We started a manual on how to write a manual. This project particularly appeals to me. There are shelves' worth of textbooks and professional guides for technical writing, but none that we've found focuses on the needs experienced by today's online communities or takes into account the new technologies and social environments of online information production.

How did other networks use their twenty minutes? A few put together creative impressions of their experience, but usually failed to answer the question of what they had learned or accomplished. Some networks did not let their anti-hierarchism stand in the way of delivering twenty-minute lectures in opposition to hierarchy.

One network opened the floor and encouraged audience members to talk to each other. They wandered through the theater offering to talk and answer questions, but refused to allow microphones in order to combat centralism. Many people in the audience, of course, grabbed this moment to open their laptops. I'm happy to report that many of us tried to use the opportunity in the spirit in which it was offered. I flagged down a member of the network and asked what I felt was the key question in this context, whether you are schmoozing at a conference, going onto LinkedIn, or arriving in a new town: Who is worth talking to? We agreed on a fairly standard response: that the solution is to make connections, and that certain people are well-positioned or specially skilled to be connectors.

I don't want to leave the impression of a dour or cantankerous gathering - in fact I found the general tone to be the joy of discovering news and new connections. The week's events ended with a dance, music being furnished by the participants. This polyglot crew was slow to set sail on the embedded spaciality of the non-vocal, but once we got going we really rocked.



Further steps

All these people are doing wonderful things back home. Whenever I sat down with an artist, activist, or coder, I came away impressed. The problem is that when a network discusses what brought them together, the individual achievements get leached out and what's left is a bunch of abstractions that all sound the same. So I did not manage to answer, for myself, the question of how networking can add new strength to individual efforts.



The answer will have to come from post-gathering analysis by the network organizers. They're in a good position to find out something, I think. They dropped into our meetings regularly, although they didn't interrupt us and try to make us self-conscious about what we were doing. They carried out two dozen interviews on videotape and they've asked us for explicit feedback. I'll be interested to see the next turn in this spiral of practice and research.

Video Interviews with FLOSS Manuals

Interview with Andy Oram by Gabriella Coleman,

<http://vimeo.com/3819143>

Interview with Adam Hyde by Soenke Zehle,

<http://vimeo.com/4078924>

Results

FLOSS Winter Camp diagram,

<http://www.slideshare.net/r00s/floss-diagram#>

Blogposts

>> <http://broadcast.oreilly.com/print/35551.html>

>> <http://broadcast.oreilly.com/2009/03/olpc-many-networks-at-winter-c.html>

>> <http://broadcast.oreilly.com/2009/03/winter-camp-gathering-shows-th.html>

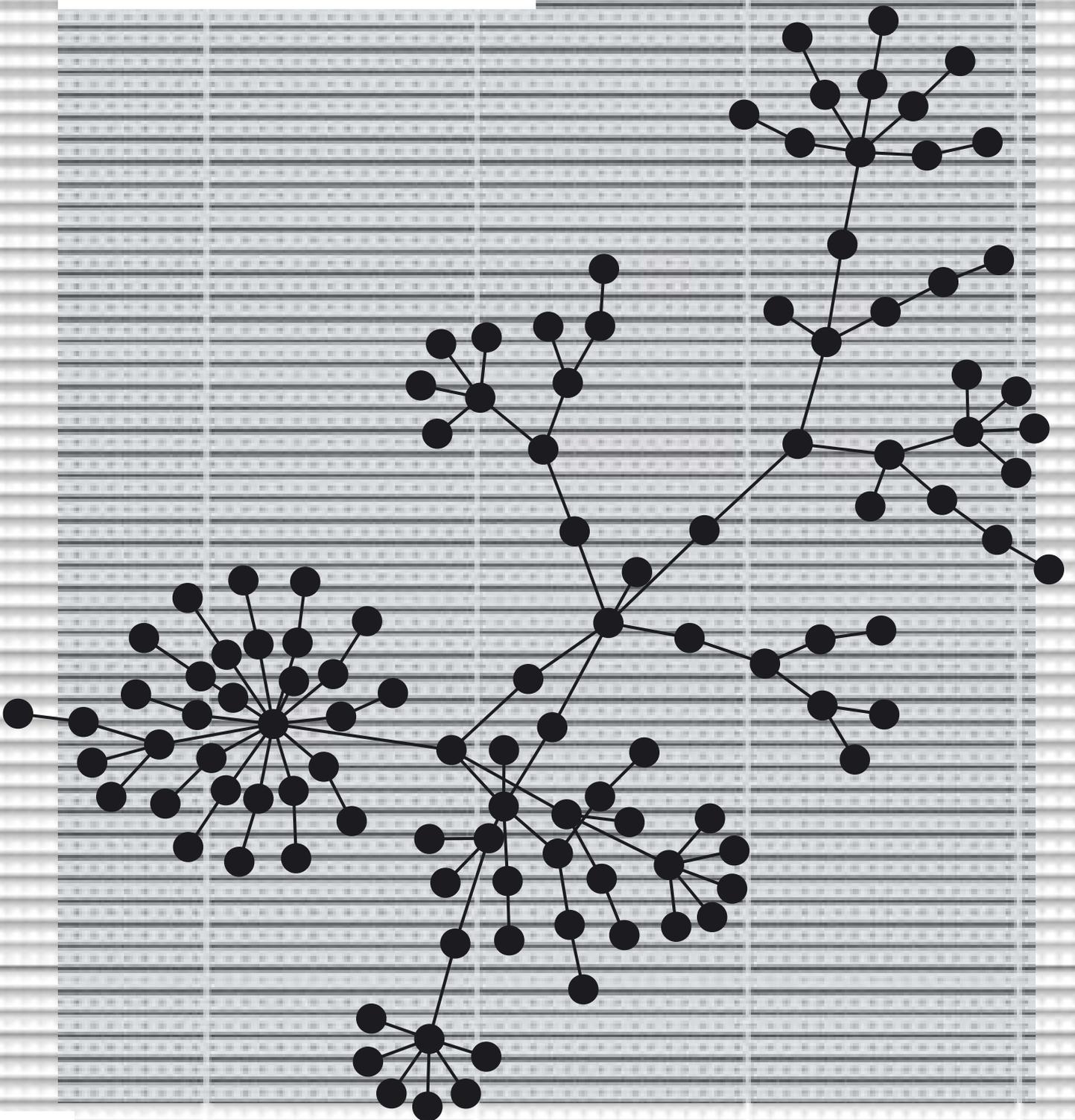
>> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/06/floss-manuals-2/>

>> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/08/floss-manuals-final-session/>

Free-

Dimensional

<http://www.freedimensional.org>



NETWORK REPORT

freeDimensional (fD) is a network of community art spaces, which as a whole acts as an incubator for practical, creative solutions to contemporary human rights issues. The freeDimensional network was born of a dilemma: the need for accommodation experienced by culture workers-in-distress. Therefore, fD developed a system to partner residential artist communities with human rights organizations in order to facilitate rapid response safe haven and related services. Since 2005, freeDimensional has recruited approximately fifty community art spaces on five continents into a horizontal network for this purpose. During this period, fD has supported over thirty journalists (print, publishing, cartoon/caricature), artists (novelists, poets, painters, filmmakers, musicians), and activists (advocating for prison reform, environment, transparency, LGBT rights, youth engagement, ethnic self-determination) from over twenty countries with this service.



As the freeDimensional network evolves, member centers have begun to share models for working with vulnerable groups in their communities. This period is a profound learning cycle for fD during which we have set up research desks (network-in-residence sites) in the offices of our Cairo and Sao Paulo partner centers, The Townhouse Gallery and Casa das Caldeiras.

We are attempting to better define our actions and services into the following continuum of support:

- >> fD provides resources and safe haven for oppressed activists and culture workers.
- >> fD provides technical assistance to community organizing by and on behalf of vulnerable groups within the same communities of fD member centers.
- >> fD engages the creative industries and mainstream media to illustrate critical, contemporary issues and thus influence policy-makers.

In light of the questions on openness, ownership, motivation and object/ goal posed on page 5 of the Winter Camp concept paper, fD has determined that well-defined financial and human resource strategies are necessary in order to perform the network's current functions. We are in a new period of transparency by which members are 'experiencing' the ownership that was 'theorized' in past phases of growth. We often question whether the nature of the work (safe haven) that we have become known for is too urgent to be left to a voluntary network. If not, then we must define how to compensate members at times when we do have funding. It occurs to us that it is often hard to define and uphold meritocracy in this sense. We have been told by partner centers that the network looks well-funded from their viewpoint (nice website and materials, travel) and this dis-incentivizes their voluntary support. Therefore, we are interrogating how to bring the administrators of member centers into full member status and ownership of the network.

It seems that we (like other horizontal networks) are ahead of the philanthropy curve. Many foundations we ask to support us, want to know where our 'office' is located. When we tell them that we have a mobile 'network-in-residence' concept, it is sometimes treated as a gimmick. There are miscommunications and conflicts that arise in the network and we need a protocol for addressing these without them being taken personally by members who are (in that period) giving more of their personal time. These issues usually pertain to territoriality, the acquisition and expense of social capital, and the reality of a multicultural approach.

Winter Camp 09 provided a much-needed opportunity for members of our network to meet in person and discuss key challenges. In addition to individuals who have been involved with the network since its inception, we invited an artist who recently became affiliated with the network and a nonprofit consultant who was able to provide expertise from the perspective of a relative outsider.

One of our network members with facilitation and theatre training helped us to run our sessions using 'open space technology', a powerful tool for decentralizing power by providing participants the opportunity to set their own agendas. The principles of this approach include:

- >> Whoever comes is meant to be there.
- >> Whenever it starts is the right time,
- >> When it is finished, stop working.
- >> If you're not learning something or making a contribution, move on to somewhere else.

Using these principles, we were able to have a series of key discussions simultaneously around topics including management structure, transparency, and how we tell our story. We also used open space meeting time to work on programs like our Emerging Art Space Initiative and to share skills and educate ourselves around topics like how to best use our new Ning website. Winter Camp also enabled us to have meaningful network-to-network meetings with Upgrade! and Res Artis. We enjoyed getting to know members of other networks throughout Winter Camp, exploring ideas for collaboration at every moment, whether it was a plenary session or a late night drink.

We organized a well-attended evening screening to share work by and about members of our network, and integrated art and performance into our final presentation in the hopes of engaging Winter Campers through creative expression.

Our major lessons learned were presented in a power-point presentation on the last day. They include:

- >> **Inclusivity.** Everyone is welcome to join the fD network! We help bridge the gap between the online world and 'brick and mortar' world.

- >> **Clear Communication.** We all use jargon specific to our niche fields. Let's nurture and use common language whenever possible.
- >> **We are All 'Tech' People.** fD embraces technology to bolster our network. The key is to use appropriate technology for our mission and members.
- >> **Surpluses are Assets.** fD works to find the surplus resources and redistribute them to culture workers and activists.
- >> **Sharing Power.** We are moving from centralized power to horizontal power sharing by using committees and consensus.
- >> **The Open Space Meeting Model is Awesome.** Anyone can suggest a meeting topic and then multiple discussions can happen simultaneously.
- >> **The Power of Physical Spaces.** Our network of media and arts spaces is an asset to all networks - let's share!
- >> **Solidarity, Community Network.** There are many terminologies to describe what we are. The key things are trust and accountability.

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ARI MOORE WRITES:

Here's a sampling of the coverage of freeDimensional's participation in Winter Camp 2009 in Amsterdam, March 2-8, 2009.

A contingent of fD folks went to Winter Camp 2009, a convergence of networks held by Institute of Network Cultures in Amsterdam, March 2-8, 2009. We had a great time, learned a lot from the other networks and met with local partners we usually only interact with online, and got a lot of administrative and organizational work done. A huge thanks to the Institute of Network Cultures and to our many friends and partners (old and new) in Amsterdam!

Winter Camp was a great chance for us to put freeDimensional's new website to work. We did a skill-share so that more of us will feel more comfortable using the site. The big takeaway was to experiment - click around and see what you can do. The Get Involved page is a good place to start if you're not sure what this new social network has to offer.

In advance of Winter Camp we set up a working group in which we discussed agenda ideas and planned the trip. Then as the conference began, we posted regular updates for those who couldn't make the trip in person but who wanted to follow our efforts online. We also kept track of coverage of the event on blogs, Flickr, and other sites.

As we continue to post photos and videos and report on the conference, we'll be providing information on a bunch of new happenings and projects that are in the works - and we'll keep the group updated so it will be useful to us for archival purposes. You can join the Winter Camp working group to see how we're using this website to get our work done - maybe you'll get some ideas for a project or organization of your own.

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**NIELS KERSSSENS WRITES ON
MONDAY THE 9TH OF MARCH:**

FreeDimensional went activist in their presentation form at this final day of Winter Camp. They resisted the standardized presentation format from speaker to public, and decentralized. While a looping slideshow presentation was shown on screen, several FreeDimensional partakers, with no mic in hand, scattered amongst the public to answer their questions, and listen to their suggestions, on a more intimate level, also urging the public to reflect on FreeDimensional amongst themselves. This of course didn't only resist the standard presentation form, but also the documentation of the things said, as no more than a collective buzzing of inaudible voices filled the cinema.



THOM STOKKEL WRITES ON SATURDAY THE 7TH OF MARCH:

After getting up really early I set out from Leiden and started my trip to the Studio K building in Amsterdam. I tried to fit in the best I could but didn't know anyone, had no clue where to go and was really confused about what to do. Everyone seemed really at ease while I felt more like a lost soul. Being at Winter Camp for only one day thus meant I required a mission. I needed a reason to be there, to find my way in this big pool full of ideas and people. Everything I knew until then is that it was an event about networks coming together, about organizing a network and about sharing knowledge. These might be nice expressions but it didn't mean anything to me. What does it mean to be a network? Why are people in a network? Those were things I wanted to know.

My day started at 9.30 am with wandering around the different networks looking for a nice workshop that would fit my interests and me. But finding a workshop was actually harder than it would seem. Being at Winter Camp on one of the last days meant that everybody was tired and needed their sleep. Many groups had worked through the entire night and didn't organize anything for the morning program. After visiting the fourth empty room I decided to wait a while and learn more about the networks in the meantime. The first thing I noticed from reading the booklet is that, even though all the networks are really different, they actually have a lot in common. At this moment it was a mere gut feeling, I had no evidence but I was desperate to find out why it felt like this.

At 10.45, people were finally awake and active. A penetrating smell of fresh made coffee and unwashed bodies contributed to the moldy ambience, it actually smelled like the last day of a music festival. Again I started looking for some action. Most groups were in a heavy discussion about organizing their network. I tried to join them but, even though 'open' is one of the buzzwords at Winter Camp, everybody seemed more occupied by their Macs and their network peers. When I walked into several rooms I felt unwanted, they looked at me like I didn't belong there (or was that just something I personally

experienced?) and I quickly walked away. The first step is the hardest, especially when you try to interfere with such closed networks.

One of the networks, however, made an entirely different impression on me. The people of Free Dimensional, a network that comes with creative solutions for contemporary human right issues, welcomed me the moment I arrived. The tight circle they were in immediately opened up and when introducing myself as one of the bloggers, I actually felt welcome for the first time that day. At the table was a really mixed group of people: artists, project managers, communication experts and the technological people. The discussion had just started and was mainly about one of the nodes in their network: Res Artis. Res Artis is an organization that supports the needs of residential art centers and programs internationally through dynamic exchange of information and face-to-face meetings. Even though Res Artis was the main subject, the problem that arose was about networks and especially about network language. What language does an artist have to speak to get noticed and does it matter if someone can't speak English at all? The most relieving answer might have been that art is a language on itself. Sadly everybody agreed that there are a lot of artists that will never be noticed as long as they stay within their own culture and use their own language. This answer might be a little bit disturbing but I was one step closer to my own goal. Every network has a language and everybody has to speak this language. For global networks, like the ones at Winter Camp, this means speaking English.

Okay, so every network uses the English language, that was not the big revelation I hoped for. So after the fD discussion I decided to step back for a while, clear my mind and come back later when they'd discuss their presentation plans for Saturday. Again I started wandering around and tried to learn more about the other networks, that was easier said than done. Speaking English is one thing, but understanding other people's ideas and motivations is another. I found it really hard to get into another subject all the time. In the short time I was with them, I grew attached to Free Dimensional but estranged from the other networks, maybe difficult to understand

however the truth. Thus, networks are definitely more than speaking the same language only.

At 2.30 pm I joined the discussion of fD again. But they weren't actually speaking about the presentation for Saturday as I expected. It was about the so-called problems between the different networks at Winter Camp. They felt like they were being talked into a conflict that didn't really exist. Yes, there might be a difference between Dyne and fD but only concerning content. They're both networks that are interested in relations, in bringing people together with the same ideas and believes. Every network is trying to make that happen, so a conflict is not the solution. Also, the clash between ideas creates new opportunities, so it's not something bad, but actually it's a problem solver. I was in fact amazed that, from my point of view, the different networks still seemed scattered. Even after being together for more than three days now they still struggled with moving out of their own safe havens. For me this was disturbing, I felt like that the different networks could learn so much from each other but that the imaginative conflict held them back. However, right after the discussion something weird happened and my mind was set on something completely different.

One of the members of fD suffered from food poisoning and I was the one assigned to take care of him and bring him to a medical doctor. Maybe it didn't have anything to do with networks, but I actually came to an insight. From this moment I think I got to know what a network really means. It's not about the language, about being open, about the content or about being different. Those are just side aspects which make an individual network stronger. No, it's about being there for each other, that's what all the networks have in common. They all help other people to become better at what they do and make a more beautiful world. Surprisingly, something stupid like going to a medical doctor actually made me think of the people behind networks everything became clear. The conflict is indeed non-existent. Every single network is there to help out others, no matter what ideas or motivations they have.

Back at Winter Camp, the end of my day there came near. After having a not so delicious meal (I hate pasta ;-)) I decided to join the Bricolabs viewing *Frekuencia Kolombiana*, a documentary about the Columbian hiphop scene. This then confirmed my final point. Not only the makers of the film wanted to be there for the oppressed population; to make people aware of their situation. Even the oppressed population in the movie takes care of each other. They're one big network, no, I mean, we are one big network. The documentary was a beautiful metaphor for the end of this day and I no longer felt like a lost soul, I was part of the network.

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CHRIS CASTIGLIONE WRITES ON SATURDAY THE 7TH OF MARCH:

freeDimensional had the chairs arranged in a circle and were already engaged in a passionate debate when I entered the room. The discussion was about the presentation they would give on Day 4 - the question: What is the best way to represent the group's identity in twenty-minutes?

At first FD began by posting orange sticky-notes to the board - each with a different theme for discussion. Twenty sticky-notes later they decided they would give a brief introduction and then split into separate discussion groups. Since FD is a multi-dimensional network, by breaking into smaller groups they could better target the parts of the Winter Camp audience that share an interest in collaborative writing, education, the use of video for storytelling and so on. In line with FD's general philosophy, they "hope to use the power of open-space as a meeting tool".

freeDimensional wants to make clear that they are an inclusive network - "everyone is invited: artists, writers, tech people...". On Day 4 they will ask the audience to engage and raise questions. I'm enthusiastic about this approach, for as long as the crowd is willing to interact it could be a nice dialogue. They affirmed that "any type of communication can be seen as jargon", so rather than hide behind network jargon they've decided they'll open up the discussion and 'include everyone'.

MAGGIE CHAU REPORTS ON FRIDAY MARCH 6:

As I went to the screenings of yesterday with great joy, today there is another one I am attending. With excitement I entered the (rather small) workshop place of freeDimensional. freeDimensional organised the screening themselves and all networks were welcome to join. The setting of tonight was more intimate and personal in comparison with yesterday. Around fifteen people were attending their screening and we kicked off with a short documentary interview of Issa Nyaphaga. Issa's story is all about his life as a political activist and his expressions in art; art is his creative therapy.

The second part of the screening is a short campaign created by a group of young Brazilians. The campaign is one of the projects of a cultural association Casa das Caldeiras based in São Paulo. The campaign starts with a statement in Portuguese; "rights for true people". Who are true people and who have the rights? By using avatars or so-called dolls they introduce project. The avatars are placed everywhere in São Paulo - in supermarkets, in someone's house, during classes and more. The group of young people use the avatars to stand up for their rights and they are screaming for attention.

The third and last part of the screening was an installation of a visit to New Delhi. The installation is meant to be shown at galleries and museums. The New Delhi installation was made by an animal activist Shira Golding. After all, although freeDimensional seem to be an over-idealistic network with great visions and goals to achieve, their screenings give an impression of real work. Work with concrete projects and missions accomplished. Of course, this objective impression is created by just a small account of their complete work, though their shared community value may be a strong or even their strongest force to produce sustainability for their network. Note by the filmmaker: The film *Sometimes It's Hard to Breathe* was actually shot all over India (not just New Delhi).¹

¹ Sometimes It's Hard to Breathe, <http://vimeo.com/2842843>

Video Interviews with freeDimensional:

Interview with Todd Lester by Soenke Zehle,
<http://vimeo.com/4162653>

Interview with Issa Nyaphaga by Soenke Zehle,
<http://vimeo.com/3833707>

Blogposts

- >> <http://freedimensional.ning.com/profiles/blogs/winter-camp-2009-coverage>
- >> <http://freedimensional.ning.com/profiles/blogs/winter-camp-2009-putting-our>
- >> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/09/final-day-presentation-freedimensional/>
- >> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/08/performance-by-issa-nyaphaga-from-freedimensional/>
- >> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/07/re-treiving-my-soul-at-wintercamp/>
- >> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/07/freedimensional-day-3-and-open-space/>
- >> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/06/screening-freedimensional/>

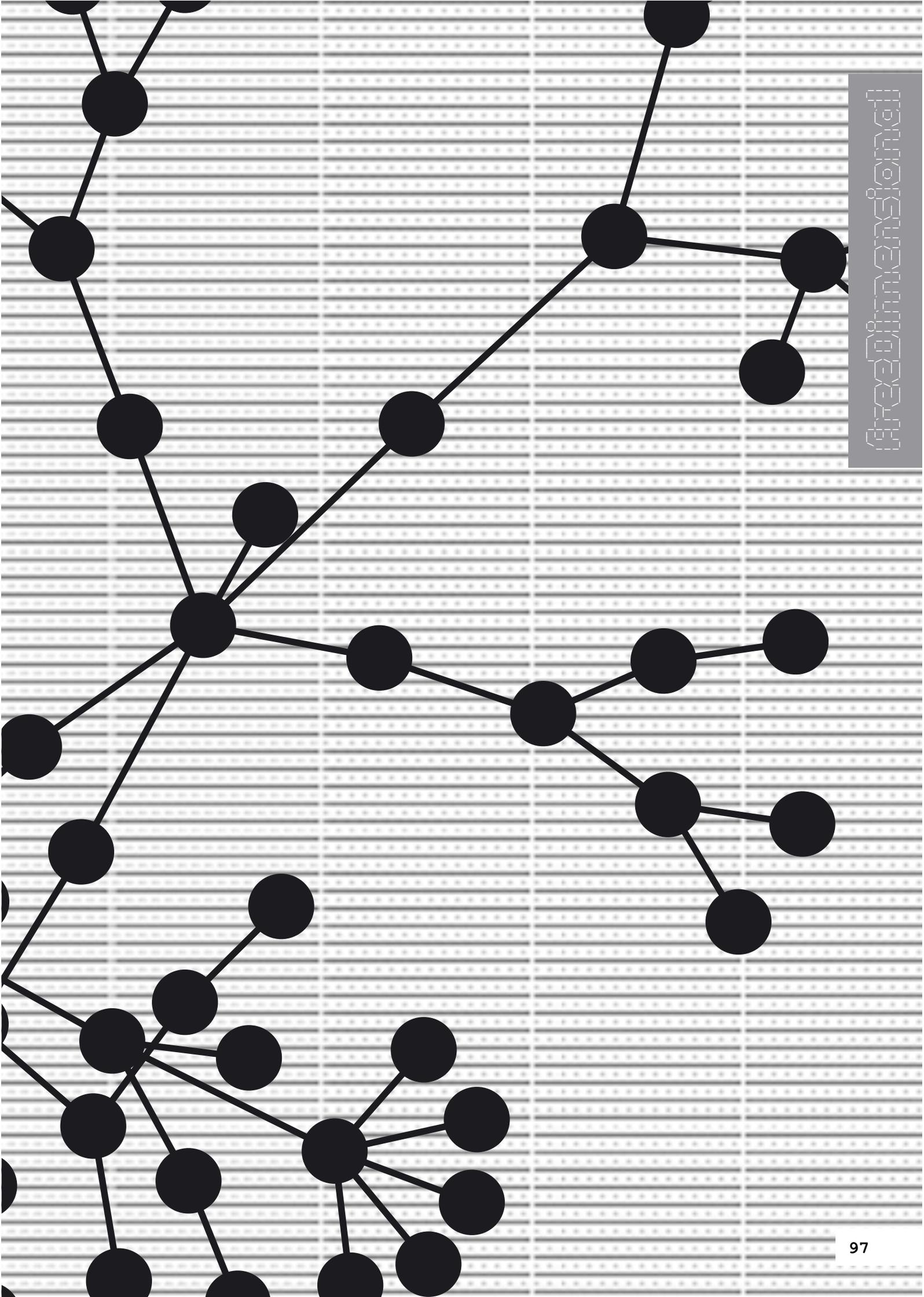


Presentation

<http://www.slideshare.net/networkcultures/fd-wintercamp-presentation>

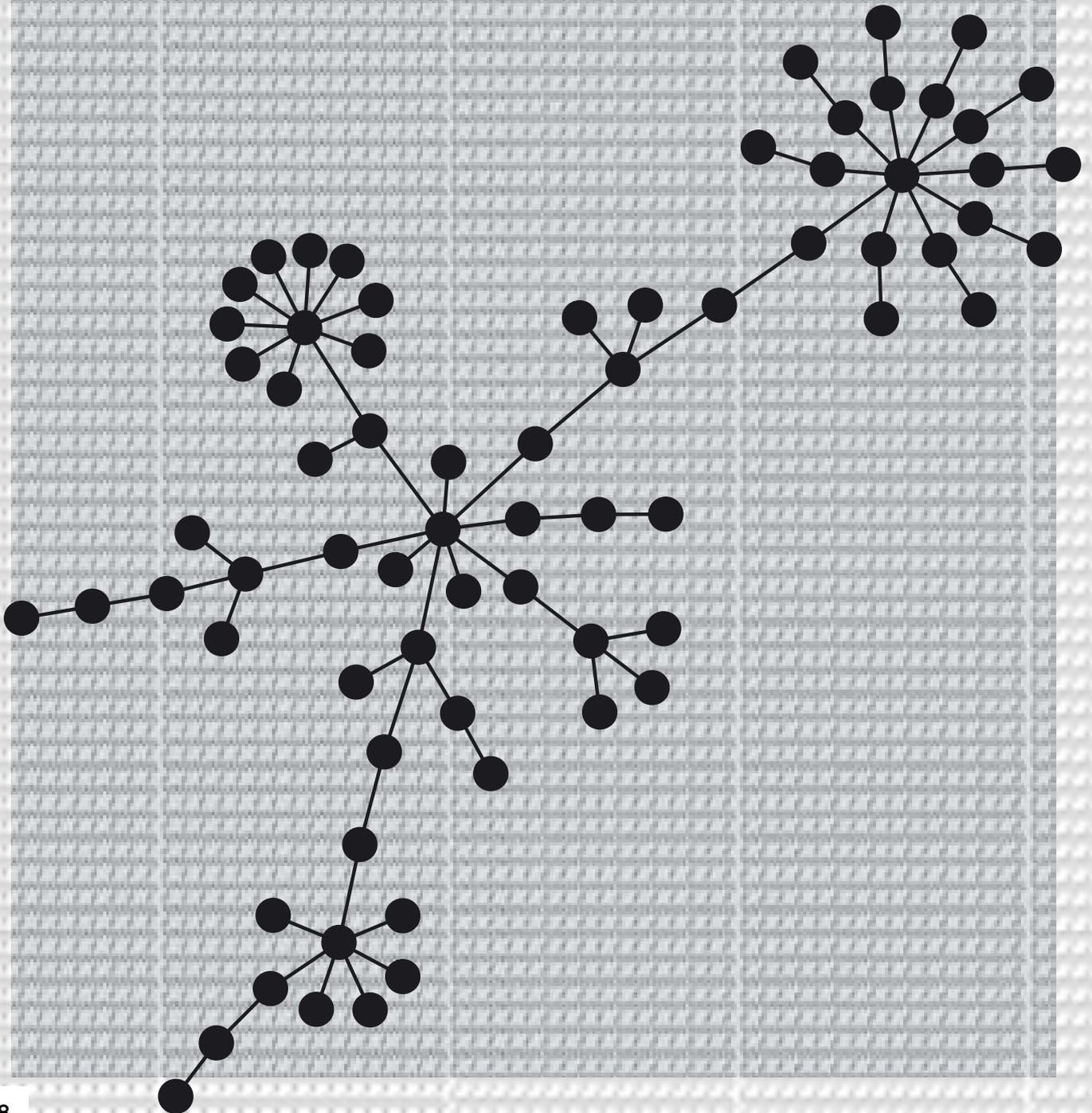
Photos

- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3358511316/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3358508288/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3357671771/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3357689497/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3357566301/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3358438480/>
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- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3358320944/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3359301935/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3358385422/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3359304679/>
- >> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/boojee/3358650230/>



Gender changers

<http://www.genderchangers.org/>



NETWORK REPORT

The Genderchangers is a group of tightly connected but loosely organized women. The original founders of the Genderchangers were all volunteers in the ASCII (Amsterdam Subversive Code for Information Interchange) hack lab. At the time, the ASCII served as a meeting space, a source of raw materials and a source of technical expertise and inspiration.



The main aim of the Genderchangers has always been to get more women interested in computing and information technology, with a particular focus on the principle universal interoperability of systems, for example free and open source software. By offering skill-sharing workshops in a women-only environment we hope to address real or perceived barriers to things labeled 'tech'.

One of the original activities of the Genderchangers was to hold a series of tech knowledge-building workshops. The very first workshop was a hands-on computer hardware course. The hardware course was followed by an introduction to installing and using GNU/Linux applications, which was followed by an HTML and CSS course. The series of workshops are repeated each year and have become known as the Genderchangers Academy (GCA).

The extremely enthusiastic response to the women-only format of these workshops led the Amsterdam Genderchangers to develop another idea, that of an international three- to four-day meeting or event. This is how the Eclectic Tech Carnival (/ETC) was born and has been organized annually since 2003. The /ETC has gone from Pula to Athens to Belgrade to Graz to Timisoara to Linz to Amsterdam. We expect that it will keep on happening.

The Genderchangers and Eclectic Tech Carnival are similar networks: they are both women-centered and aimed at tech

knowledge building. Differences between the Genderchangers and the Eclectic Tech Carnival is that the former aims to be local and constant while the latter is international and nomadic. From the beginning we were conscious of the positive benefits of in-real-life meetings. While a lot can be done online, face to face gatherings are more fun and more effective in the long run.

Workshops and discussions are organized in a collective and non-hierarchical manner when resources and energies allow for it. The activities depend on a couple of women coming up with an idea and finding the support to implement it. Doing it ourselves (DIY) and doing it collectively is a strong refrain throughout our network.

While autonomy and community are emancipating and empowering principles, they do not always work seamlessly together. Organizing collectively challenges understandings on to how to locate individual responsibility while trying to collaborate efficiently. A non-hierarchical consensus culture fosters bonding, good leadership and can take some of the weight off the time and energy needed to discuss ideas, plans and issues. Finding a system/ way /place where individual action does not hinder the group, and where the groups actions do not discourage individual action/ effort is a fine balance at times. Certainly, we have been successful in building our network, but we want to ensure its ongoing survival and growth.

The Genderchangers planned to discuss organizational issues and find solutions to strengthening our loosely organized networks with the goal during Winter Camp of ensuring a future for both projects (GCA and /ETC).

We agreed that the best strategy for cultivating a sustainable community is to clearly define who we are by creating a slogan and clarifying our purpose through writing a mission statement or manifesto. With this clarification we feel we will be better prepared to make the best use of our minimal resources, improve our communication and organizational systems, and keep attracting women to bring fresh energy and innovation to the group.

We succeeded in attaining most of our goals during the Winter Camp. We would have loved to have even more time together but it was a productive and happy five days together. Not only did we come up with a slogan and a manifesto¹ we also created t-shirts, buttons and a Buzzword Bingo card² especially for the Winter Camp.

Our final presentation reflected that we know stuff, are super cool and have attitude! The Genderchangers defines itself as a network for women, technology and information freedom.

As a result of Winter Camp 09, technical discussions and requirements for our websites are taking place on our wiki. During the Winter Camp we installed a test site for development purposes and in addition we set up project management software on our server to facilitate the process.

Our reflections on Winter Camp 09:

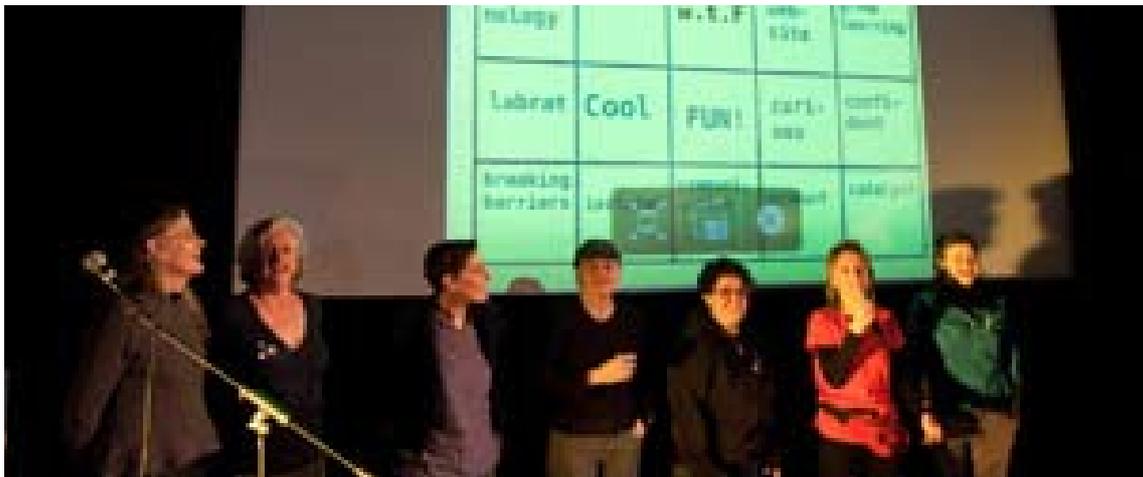
- >> Winter Camp 09 was a wonderful opportunity to meet and learn from each other and those from the other networks.
- >> Winter Camp 09 enabled the Genderchangers to work on things that had been on our to-do list for a long time.
- >> Winter Camp 09 was an opportunity to look at whether the direction the Genderchangers have taken is still viable. The meeting provided us with the space and time to reflect on possible future directions including talking about the possibility of Genderchangers dying out, morphing into something else or possibly just 'embracing the fork' between the Genderchangers and the /ETC.
- >> Winter Camp 09 was also a strange experience. Moving offline to face to face discussion is both fantastic and difficult. It was more efficient and allowed us to move through our ideas more thoroughly but it was also at times confronting and intense.
- >> Winter Camp 09 was a unique opportunity for us as it brought us together in a physical space to discuss and work on the network itself. This is unique for us because usually we come together for an event (usually the /ETC), where the event and its activities are the focus. At Winter

1 See <http://www.genderchangers.org> for the manifesto.

2 Bingo random card generator, <http://genderchangers.org/bb/>

Camp our network was the focus. While our events build and inspire membership in our network, the meeting allowed us to create the identity and infrastructure needed to support that growth.

- >> Winter Camp 09 included moments of observation: seeing and listening to how other networks interacted, cross-pollination and the opportunity to meet other network members made us realize that our struggles are shared.
- >> It was interesting to follow the tension between the techies and intellectuals around the use of jargon. Since online social networking is such a new phenomenon there is a deficiency of words to describe it. As a result people have borrowed technical networking terms for this purpose. It is understandable that those not familiar with these technical terms feel overwhelmed by them. However, that said, it was equally difficult for techies to follow the jargon in the discourse of the intellectuals at times!
- >> We were pleased to have been able to do the video interviews as a pair!



Video interviews with Genderchangers

Interview with Tali Smith by Gabriella Coleman,

<http://vimeo.com/4089791>

Interview with Donna Metzlar by Gabriella Coleman,

<http://vimeo.com/4090016>

Blogpost

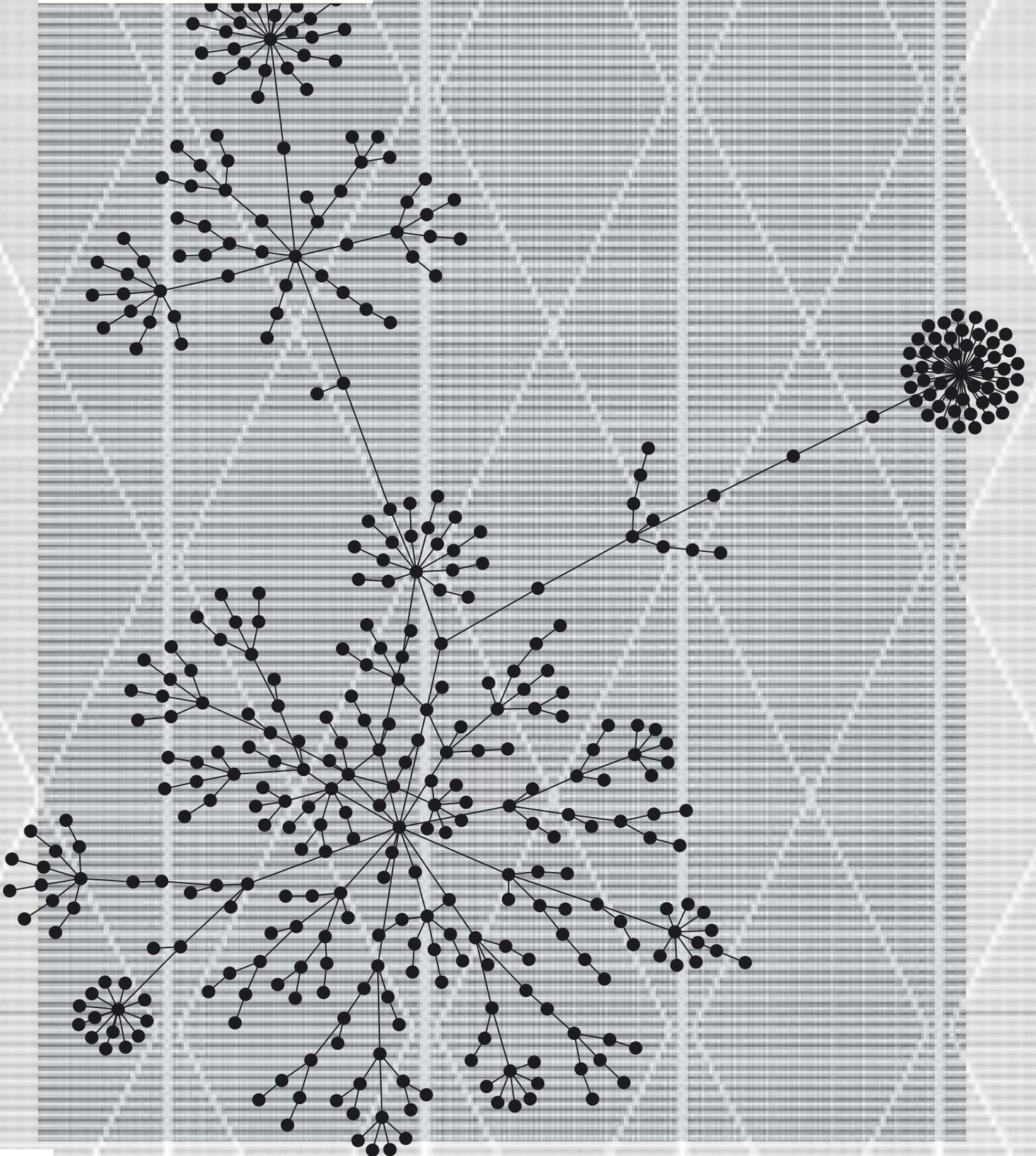
<http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/08/gender-changers-wtf/Buzzword>

Presentation

<http://www.vimeo.com/3527068>

GO TO 10

<http://www.goto10.org>



NETWORK REPORT

GOTO10 is an international collective of artists focused on new artistic practices integrating open networks and free culture in digital arts.

The group is distributed and self-organized. In GOTO10, circularity, heterarchy and lazy consensus are key in the development and sustainability of projects. The collective is a decentralized laboratory and creative sandbox in which numerous projects and experiments are explored. This form of research is led freely and spontaneously, while at the same time, symbiotic relationships are encouraged with other groups, organizations, institutions and networks around the world.

At the moment, GOTO10's most visible projects are:

- >> **pure:dyne.** A GNU/Linux operating system developed by artists for artists. The system is used in various (Media|Hack|Art|Education) Labs in Europe and the rest of the world. <http://puredyne.goto10.org>
- >> **make.art.** A yearly festival produced and supported by the collective members. The festival aims to be a platform for artists and practitioners to explore the relationship between FLOSS and Art. <http://makeart.goto10.org>
- >> **code.goto10.org.** A new, free (as in ad-free, free speech and free beer all together) hosting for artists looking for a place to develop their software projects. <http://code.goto10.org>
- >> **beerNET,** a cosy IRC network specially setup for artists looking for a non-restricted chat environment friendly to bots, scripts and clones. The network is also inhabited by other communities (openlab, GISS.tv, placard, servus, piksel...).
<irc://irc.goto10.org>, <irc://irc.leplacard.org>, <irc://irc.gosub10.org>, <irc://irc.r23.cc>, <irc://irc.piksel.no>,
<irc://irc.giss.tv>, <irc://irc.servus.at>
- >> **FLOSS+Art,** the first book edited by GOTO10 (Aymeric Mansoux and Marloes de Valk) and published by Openmute. The book is 320 pages on the artistic, economic, social and political links between FLOSS and art.

>> **Artist-led workshops.** A key part of GOTO10's practice, organizing and teaching on topics from physical computing to data bending in order to support wider FLOSS art practice.

All these projects are conducted and developed remotely. GOTO10 meets together only twice a year: during the make.art festival and a second time for exchange, housekeeping and sandbox cleaning.

GOTO10 has been actively engaging with the development and advocacy of FLOSS art since 2004. Throughout this time, it has acted as an open platform where many ideas were sprouted and exchanged. However, projects evolve with the current interests and configuration of the group's membership, and not all ideas have the chance to evolve equally.

As a result, we took the opportunity of coming together at Winter Camp to revisit some of these unfinished ideas, and develop them further. For example, we followed up on:

>> **art.deb**

This will be a experimental software art repository utilizing apt-get, the package management system of Debian. The objective of this project is twofold: the 'misuse' of the packaging system itself, as well as distributing and archiving software art effectively. This project will use pure:dyne (<http://puredyne.goto10.org>) as the working platform.

>> **people.makeart**

GOTO10 will develop a database to which FLOSS art projects can be submitted and archived. Through a web portal, people can easily search for projects (according to various categories) and retrieve their relevant details. While the project has been planned previously, we now need to focus on developing the necessary back-end to support its functionality.

>> **GOSUB10**

This is a net-label project, focusing on music created using 100% FLOSS tools. Like people.makeart, the basis of the

project has already been set up clearly in the past, we just need an opportunity to work on the practical elements.

>> **Documentation**

As always, there is more documentation that can be written. As a result, we also took the time and dedicated ourselves to writing documentation that might be useful to others. For instance, some GOTO10 software projects (such as Pdlua, pure:dyme) can still benefit from having a more complete documentation. We also have plans for a series of documentation based modular courses with subjects ranging from generic Linux skill to Pure Data. Some of this documentation will be articulated using a generic work-flow template that we have been wanting to develop for a while, more particularly in the scope of merging workshops content and artistic practice.

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Go Back to Start

This post is partially based on an interview between Gabriella Coleman and Aymeric Mansoux (GOTO10) that took place on the first day of Winter Camp 09.

Aymeric Mansoux is both artist and musician. His main interests revolve around online communities, software as a medium and the influence of FLOSS in the development and understanding of digital art. One of his main projects is Metabiosis (in collaboration with Marloes de Valk, who is also part of GOTO10). Metabiosis is an artistic experiment for those who are curious about so-called generative and self-organizing systems in the ever growing ecosystem of connected machines.

In 2003 the two friends Thomas Vriet and Aymeric Mansoux (both from Poitiers) decided to combine the best of Anatomic (by Sher Doruff and Guy van Belle) and the Futuroscope. The outcome was the GOTO10 collective, a group of international artists and programmers, dedicated to Free/Libre/Open Source Software (FLOSS) and the exploration of the blurry line between art and software programming: a platform for ideas.

GOTO10 was also created as a reaction to the art scene of that time, in which writing software was almost never considered to be an artistic practice. The collective has no physical location, except for the servers (which they call 'the playground') - the collective exists only within the decentralized network of machines, in mailing lists and IRC, wikis, the Ticket System and biannual organized meetings.

Entrance to the collective is only granted to friends of the group that have proven their abilities and insights in collaborative projects throughout the years. This creates a highly comrade-based dynamic within this group of predominantly black haired men and women. GOTO10s current amount of members is 11 (+ one secret member), but the number has fluctuated and is subject to debate. In the collective, there is no need for anybody to do anything, except for basic housekeeping, which means the maintenance of bits of software on the server, the documentation and archiving of projects and the maintenance of some paperwork such as CVs for applications. The handling of a project depends on the members that want to participate at any time. Stress is dealt with very effectively: when a key-participant is too busy, the project is put into hibernation. This is mainly done because the entertaining and friendship aspects of GOTO10 have proven themselves the most fruitful components for labor.

The survival of GOTO10 has not always been as natural, unforced and easygoing as it sounds. The collective has struggled through growing pains that were accompanied with their usual identity crisis: was the collective running to become a professional organization or should it stay GOTO10 ('the family')? The crisis lasted for two years and led to the unloading of some of its members before finally resulting in the decision to prioritize a friendship over institutional development. Even so, the collective is still figuring out their actual identity and formation. Because GOTO10 has decided never to turn into a proper institution/ foundation/ organization, the collective is always looking for collaborations on bigger projects. For example they once 'out-sourced' part of the make.art festival to Pikel, and often work together with curators and producers who help them on larger project manage-

ment. They are, as they say themselves, a "migrating laboratory" that "puts Trojan projects inside other projects".

At this point, GOTO10 lives on big and small funding; their servers are for instance donated by Waag Society, BEK and DEK Space, whereas the make.art festival was once funded by the French DICREAM fund and the latest pure:dyne by Arts Council England. GOTO10 also tries to redistribute resources to other collectives, like for instance free streaming services, code hosting, web hosting and IRC.

During Winter Camp, GOTO10 plans "to have several group hugs, to eat tons of stroopwafels, to gossip about every networks and drink beer". They will also try to resurrect their initial (and since then ever-hibernating) project GOSUB10, a FLOSS-based netlabel, and work on art.deb, a file package repository of FLOSS art.

GOTO10 is a very well networked collective, which has become apparent by the many connections the collective has with other participants in Winter Camp, such as:

- >> Collaboration with Ushi Reiter from Genderchanger for liwo-li09 in Linz. Ushi is also the creative director or servus. at and they are member of the beerNET IRC network.
- >> Collaboration with James Wall Bank from Bricolabs for workshops and code sprints at access-space. Also from Bricolabs, Matt Ratto, one of the founders, is using pure:dyne in his open-hardware lab at the University of Toronto, while some GOTO10 members are part of the committee of the Hacker Space Fest, an event organized by Phillipe Langlois, also Bricolabs.
- >> Collaboration with Rama from the dyne.org network for integrating streaming software in pure:dyne.

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ON THE 9TH OF MARCH, ANNETTE WOLFSBERGER BLOGS:

GOTO10 is a collective of international artists and programmers, dedicated to FLOSS and digital arts. GOTO10 aims to support and grow digital art projects and tools for artistic creation, located on the blurry line between software

programming and art. All of GOTO10's projects are based on 100% Free/ Libre Open Source Software.

GOTO10 describes itself as an invite-only network, so although what it produces is 100% open, its organizational structure is very closed. You could also describe it as a friendship collective: member's skills are secondary to friendship. GOTO10 knows a high level of trust, any of the currently eleven members can initiate 'anything' by lazy consensus. All communication and distributed working happens online via IRC, but face to face meetings are perceived as very important and take place at least twice a year during the make.art festival in France and for general housekeeping purposes.

GOTO10 is self-organized, and finances itself by project grants. Depending on the project, members take on different roles and levels of engagement. Although GOTO10 does not want to grow in (network) size, it is highly collaborative and tries to collaborate with other networks and organizations.

One of its largest and very collaborative projects is pure:dyne. To give some examples of collaborations between GOTO10 and other Winter Camp participants, Alejandro Doque is planning to create a Columbian version of pure:dyne in collaboration with an art magazin, Matt Ratto (Critical Making Lab of the University of Toronto) and James Wallbank (workshops at Access Space in Sheffield) use pure:dyne, and Ramiro Consentino is going to work in collaboration with GOTO10 on streaming software of pure:dyne.

Another GOTO10 working method is described as *sprint* - the initiation and intense non-stop working on ideas. During Winter Camp, GOTO10 did a sprint on GOSUB10, a project that had been in the pipeline for four years but which they never managed to pull off. GOSUB10 is a net label that celebrated its first release on 6 March 2009. It includes a streaming radio station and releases all source code of the individual tracks where possible, so that there is a possibility for users to remix source code. Another project that GOTO10 had planned to work on but still needs some more time to develop is a FLOSS repository for software art. The project is

currently still in its preparatory stage.

To conclude, GOTO10's outro highlighted some issues: Their artistic research/ flow is quite opposite to product design, and its processes are very often very unfinished. GOTO10 describes itself as a ground to sow seeds; as a collective at the crossroads of networks than a network itself, but whatever its typology it stresses that a network is not an end in itself but a playground.



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ROSA MENKMAN WRITES ON

SATURDAY THE 7TH OF MARCH:

Another release by GOTO10: pure:dyne, an operating system on a USB key. Available for only 8 Euros during Winter Camp, or bring your USB stick and they will help you DIY.

From the GOTO10 website: pure:dyne is happy to announce the release of this super-cute, super small 2gb liveUSB! Pre-loaded with the latest pure:dyne system (with 1.2gb space left over for storing your settings and files). A slick, slim, mini USB measuring just a few mm thick.

pure:dyne is an operating system developed to provide media artists with a complete set of tools for realtime audio and video processing. pure:dyne is a live distribution, you don't need to install anything. Simply boot your computer using the

live CD and you're ready to start using software such as Pure Data, Supercollider, Icecast, Csound, Fluxus, Processing, Arduino and much, much more.

pure:dyne will work on any PC laptop, desktop, and single-board computers, including the intel-based Mac, Asus's Eee PC, and any x86 netbooks.

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ROSA MENKMAN WRITES ON FRIDAY THE 6TH OF MARCH:

New Music Compilation, New Netlabel!

Various Artists - /Substrate/, GOSUB10-001.

Today (6/3) GOTO10 launches Substrate (an inaugural release) on their new netlabel GOSUB10. A 12-track compilation of music from across the electronic music genre, it features friends and family of the GOTO10 collective, illustrating the strong networks by which the label will grow and provide insight into future directions.

/Substrate/ features tracks by: Earweego, krgn, vacca, 0xA, Bazterrak, Frank Barknecht, Yee-King, Soudo, Julian Brook, Martin Howse, Rob Canning and Ultrageranium.

Dedicated to new electronic music and audio/ visuals, the GOSUB10 label will feature an eclectic group of musicians drawn together by their shared use of Free/Libre/Open Source Software (FLOSS). Freely distributed by stream, download and special DVD releases, and made available through an open license, GOSUB10 is run by the GOTO10 collective - an international group of artists, musicians and programmers, dedicated to FLOSS and digital arts. Brought to life in a intensive three day work sprint, the GOSUB10 netlabel is a natural extension of GOTO10's activities supporting and promoting digital art alongside FLOSS tools through workshops, festivals, exhibitions, writing, and more.

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The interaction between FLOSS philosophy and digital art should not be seen as yet another category of art, but as an added layer. It acts as another dimension on top of existing fields of digital art and enriches the way artists and collectives can work by adding another degree of freedom in the creative process. We think this openness will create more transparency and bring to light otherwise hidden properties of digital art practice in the world of connected artist communities and collectives. And although it is too early to speculate on the long-term influence FLOSS will have on digital art, we believe it will bring a better understanding of software as an artistic medium beyond the simplicity of neoclassical code aesthetics.

Artists and their audience can refuse the role of passive user and persevere as creators and collectors of great ideas. Artists can own their own 'tools', be free to use them whenever and however they want, can dissect, hack, embellish and share them, without breaking any laws. The creative process of an artist is no longer restricted by what software companies dictate, only by his or her own skills. Software, being more than a means by which ideas are expressed technically, functions as medium. Software is the artwork and its code is an integral part of it. Artists can give free access to this layer of the artwork. Free distribution of the work breaks the artist out of isolation and puts them in contact with an audience, a community.

Over the years it has become more and more clear that GOTO10 needs to focus its energy directly on projects that feed into bigger communities and projects. At first the tendency was to keep things small and therefore quite isolated. The pure:dyne GNU/Linux distribution for instance was compatible only with the dyne:bolic distribution. Later GOTO10 decided that a move to a Debian system was much more valuable, since this way our efforts would be accessible by a much larger audience and the efforts of the Debian community would be available to us. This has made pure:dyne of a better quality, and more accessible and versatile than ever.

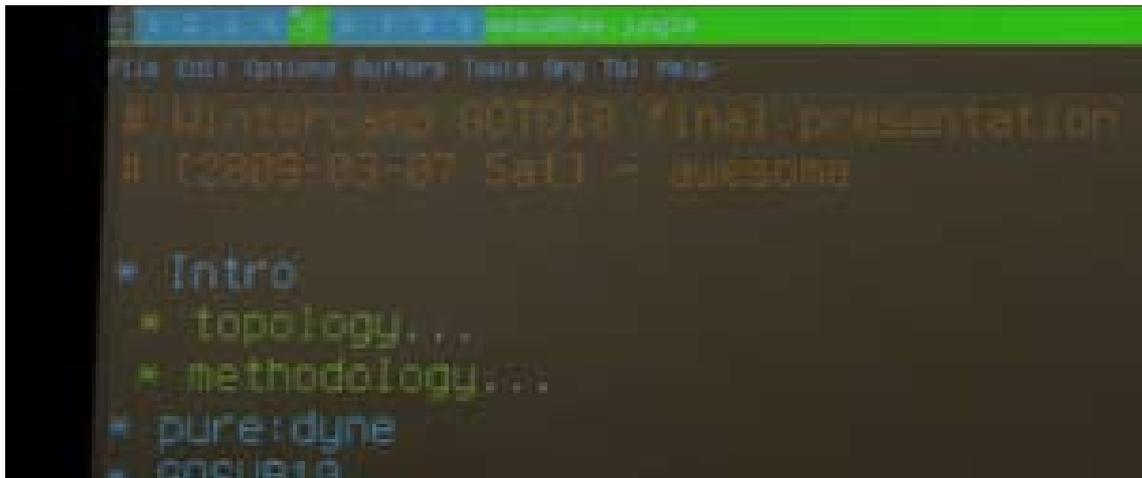
Another insight that reached us after a few years of hard work is that an organization that exists as a collective, without

director, manager, or any form of hierarchy needs to cherish its nature when working on bigger scale projects. The most conventional response to a growing organization is to introduce hierarchy and static structure, but this goes against the strength and spirit of our collective. GOTO10 is not structurally funded, we don't have a physical meeting place or office, we are spread over different countries and rarely meet face to face. What binds us as a collective is friendship and a shared passion for art and the free software ideology. This is where our motivation to work hard on our projects comes from. We can engage in bigger projects but we should never try to organize ourselves to be a more conventional organization.

Video interviews with GOTO10

Interview with Jan-Kees van Kampen by Annette Wolfsberger,
<http://vimeo.com/4277699>

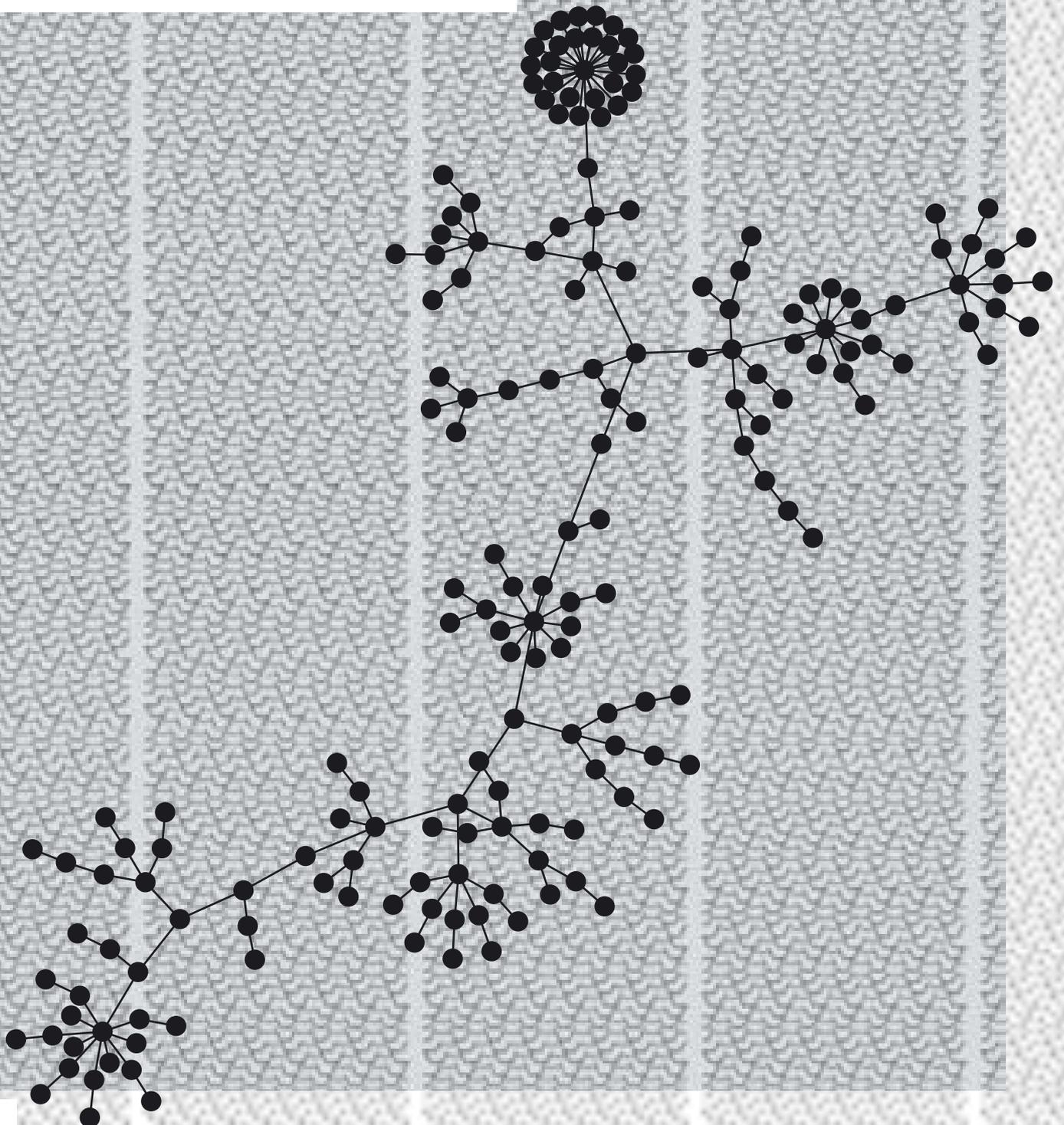
Interview with Aymeric Mansoux by Gabriella Coleman,
<http://vimeo.com/3816756>



MICRO

Volunteerism

<http://www.microvolunteerism.org>



NETWORK REPORT

The Microvolunteerism Project is a fresh and exiting new international network dedicated to creating both a technological and social framework for the crowdsourcing of volunteer work.

In terms of technology, we are creating an open-source software based platform that facilitates the distribution of project management work (at all levels) and that enables the creation of small well-defined bits of both technical and non-technical project work, that we call *Microprojects*. We then allow volunteers to create social profiles (skills, interests) and apply Semantic searching and recommendation algorithms to match bits of project work to individual volunteers. Our software platform also supports granular volunteer contribution tracking, and will have to deal with decentralization/ distribution and security/ privacy issues.

Socially-speaking, we are building a community of both not-for-profit projects and volunteers. The formation of such communities will allow us to create a 'skill sharing' system, which will allow both people and organizations with a diverse pallet of skills to mutually support each other in complimentary ways. The Microvolunteerism community is supported by our software project, but should ideally be able to thrive and interact independently of it.

The Microvolunteerism Project network, while recently formed, consists of combined clusters of people who have worked together for a longer period of time. Members of our network have been also active in one (or more) of these projects: Stakeholder Democracy Network (2004), RFID Guardian Project (2004) and Amsterdam Girl Geek Dinner (2008).

While many of us have met individually on separate occasions, and we communicate/ collaborate actively via e-mail and Skype, this has been the first time that our entire network would be physically present at the same location! That provided us with an exciting opportunity to put our heads together and get a lot of creative work done in a short period of time.

Some points to discuss were:

Technical infrastructure

We would like to brainstorm about the following technical issues:

- >> Contribution tracking / volunteer ranking,
- >> Managing data flow between distributed MV instances,
- >> Designing a suitable security/privacy architecture,
- >> Semantic data filtering and searching,
- >> Architecting communications efficiency.

Social infrastructure

- >> How can we attract new volunteers? New pilot projects?
- >> How can the existing pilot projects best help each other?
- >> What skills are we still lacking in our network?
- >> How can we best keep volunteers motivated?
- >> What PR/marketing opportunities are available?
- >> Where can we find funding? (Grants, corporate sponsors, etc.)
- >> What are the next steps to take with our website?

Pilot projects

The Microvolunteerism Project network has connected these pilot projects together in a mutually-beneficial discussion of shared goals and needs. All of these projects have already benefitted from the mutual brainstorming and skill sharing, and we hoped to strengthen these bonds during the Winter Camp.

>> Groundwork/Visible Difference (Stakeholder Democracy Network)¹

The transition from military to civilian rule in Nigeria has coincided with a marked increase in tension and insecurity in the Niger Delta. The undermining of fundamental human rights has been both an outcome and a driving factor of violent instability in the region. Civil society in the Delta has been severely compromised and now lacks the capacity to adequately promote understanding and observance of fundamental rights. This project aims to develop an

¹ See <http://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org>.

educational, documentational and implementational framework designed to boost and sustain the capacities of civil society to advance and protect key civil, cultural, economic, environmental, political and social rights.

>> **RFID Guardian Project²**

The RFID Guardian Project is a collaborative project focused upon providing security and privacy in Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems. The goals of our project are to:

- > Investigate the security and privacy threats faced by RFID systems,
- > design and implement real solutions against these threats;
- > investigate the associated technological and legal issues.

The namesake of our project is the RFID Guardian: a mobile battery-powered device that offers personal RFID security and privacy management.

>> **Amsterdam Girl Geek Dinner³**

The Amsterdam Girl Geek Dinner ('GGD') is a social event that is intended to encourage women to explore science, technology, and other traditionally male-dominated areas. The idea behind the GGD is simple - we invite women who are kicking-ass in their respective fields and we ask them to give an informal talk, during which they can describe themselves and their work. This is followed by a Q&A session. During the talk, a buffet dinner and drinks will be served. After the talk, the bar will open, allowing ample time for socializing and networking. Men are welcome to attend the Girl Geek Dinner if a female counterpart invites them.

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Day one. Microvolunteerism Project is an initiative of volunteers which aims to facilitate effective distributed volunteer work, captured under the term *crowdsourcing*. According

² See <http://www.rfidguardian.org>.

³ See <http://www.girlgeekdinner.nl>.

to Wikipedia, crowdsourcing is the act of taking a task traditionally performed by an employee or contractor, and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people or community in the form of an open call.

Our group of volunteers all physically came together for the first time at Winter Camp, with a busy and well structured agenda of discussion. Several issues were prominent, such as: social infrastructure, models of organization and leadership, inter-organizational collaboration and technical infrastructure.

Since Microvolunteerism works with individuals in an extra-monetary economy, the issue of what resources and compensation Microvolunteerism can generate for volunteers has come up. A more important challenge than attracting volunteers for the network is maintaining their interest to participate in Micro-projects. The issue of maintaining volunteer involvement has been related to several other issues, ranging from defining a clear organizational identity to ways of motivating volunteers by making their benefits clear, finding a way to offer feedback for their interventions, or maintaining the possibility for volunteers to make suggestions at any level. The group also admitted social recognition to be a huge factor of reward worth taking into account.

The choice of projects is also considered to be an important issue motivated by recognition. One point of discussion here was to choose those projects that take place in a context which makes successful interventions possible. Although we currently support any type of projects, the possibility of creating a pattern in the choice of projects, finding a niche for projects has also been touched upon.

Another important issue on the agenda this afternoon at Winter Camp has been models of organization and leadership, in terms of opportunities and limits of each model. There has been an oscillation between a well defined and documented organizational identity, which would support advocacy goals of the network and would facilitate inter-organizational relations, and a lower profiling strategy, which would permit the network to maintain flexibility of choices.

In terms of governance, several options have been discussed: centralized, hierarchical, and ad-hoc leadership. The discussion focused around opportunities and challenges of each model. While individuals and organizations take more notice of a stable organization, and a stable organization can facilitate relations with governments because of its well-defined identity, we concluded by opting for a more flexible structure, which combines ad-hoc and centralized management, core and periphery, according to the context of the project. Regarding the issue of 'institutionalization' of networks, a stand taken by one of the members was that institutionalization is inevitable for any group which establishes goals and means to achieve them. In relation to leadership models, a particular concern was their effect on creativity, and how to maintain creativity in hierarchically managed projects.

Another important issue for discussion was collaboration with other non-governmental organizations. The group considers that there is a deficit of collaboration between NGOs and envisions networking with other organizations to be an important objective on their future agenda, by means of informal events to start with.

The technical infrastructure is one of Microvolunteerism's main points of discussion during Winter Camp. Our current platform is a semantic wiki, which we plan to replace in order to accommodate our evolving objectives, as, for example, to enable a type of sharing of volunteers between several projects by providing a resource, a tool for people who need volunteers. One of the options discussed for technical upgrade was a platform currently developed by Mediamatic: AnyMeta/Open-CI.

The most important project which we are currently involved in is the Visible Difference Video Project, a cross-cutting audiovisual component for a human rights platform. According to Michael, member of our group, the three phases of the project are:

>> **Infrastructure:** an sms/ gps-based environmental and human rights alert network and rapid response capability; video post/production facility; exhibition and discussion space.

- >> **Training:** providing people with the skills to use video as an instrument of record in human rights contexts (documenting violations) and as a medium reflection (raising critical awareness and understanding)
- >> **Production:** a series of short advocacy films and a feature documentary. A sensitive issue in this project, according to Michael, is reconciling the need to protect sources and work covertly with the desire to make an open collaborative space and a high visibility platform.

Overall, this afternoon session seemed a productive one for us. We started work at Winter Camp with great enthusiasm, also determined by the fact that this is the first time the entire network is physically present in the same location.

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Day two started with a brainstorm about what we want to present to the outside world. It should be a clearly defined, well-framed concept - "this is what MV is". The portal to all activities will be a website. Multiple instances of the project (i.e. multiple websites) should be created, equally well defined. The first instance should be for Visible Difference (maybe later a second instance can be created for GGD). We want to create a space where new people can join and have a space of their own, where existing and new projects have a space (e.g. for their internal documentation), where the input of the volunteers becomes visible. There should also be a mailing list. The spaces should be open, closed or a combination, depending upon the requirements of the projects. We want to have a mission statement defining what we're all about. We brainstormed using a brown paper session. Everybody wrote down their own ideas on a post-it and presented them to the group. The post-its were then grouped by topic and a final discussion followed.

All the keywords that have been written down:

- >> **Melanie:** Bazaar, Communities of volunteers, Skill sharing / extra-monetary economy, Suggested versus unstructured contributions accepted, Combining openness and collaboration with security and privacy requirements, Open source

SW, Distributed Project Management, Semantic representation of project work and volunteers, Matching volunteers with project work, Efficiency of project communications, Varying levels of commitment, Volunteer profiles, Not-for-profit, Total project visibility, Communities of projects, Inter-project communications, Social network, Volunteer work, Microprojects, Facilitating local actions, Web 2.0 / Social Media, Online portal, Slogan: "Many hands make light work", Recognition for contributions, Crowdsourcing volunteering work, Well specified project work, Global cooperation, Facilitating physical meet-ups.

- >> **Marjon:** Slogan should connect with the logo, Slogan for example "every bit helps", "Powered by Microvolunteerism" button to put on other sites, Alliteration in our slogan, Slogan two lines maximum, Possibility to show interest in tasks but not commit immediately, Tasks should have a priority, location, number of people needed, possibility to follow a task, Search function, Performance in poor network environments, Site should be lightweight, Accessible through mobile phones, RSS feed/ e-mail updates, No unnecessary clicks/ simplicity of website design, Calendar function, Multilingual, Overview of volunteer skills, past experience, and location, Private vs. public pages, Organizational/volunteer filters on Microproject list, Personal preferences (i.e. language).
- >> **Arjan:** Access (open versus closed), Moderation on a per-project level, Is MV a tool (freely deployable, open software) or a service (e.g. central platform)?, How important are the identities of the participating projects?, Start simple - less is more!, Does MV need to be institutionalized, or can we rely upon self organization of the project?
- >> **Michael:** Network solidarities, Expertise exchange, Transformative social technologies/ technologies political imagination, Skill donations/ skill shares, Creative collaboration, Communities of contested issues, Inappropriate technology, Mentoring.
- >> **Gaia:** Free (as in beer), Accessible (in any part of the world), Networking (computer and social), Sharing, Giving and receiving help, Exchanging, Technology and new forms of communication, Technology makes life and work easier/ better, helps people to get closer, and allows them to

communicate and share knowledge, Knowledge as change, helping each other, knowledge connects individual groups, work, and ideas, Space and time (there are no borders, free choice of when and where to participate), knowing without meeting, without being there, without studying, or paying.

>> **Rory:** Rewards, Experience, Contribute, Collective, Distribution, Task management, Donate / sacrifice / help, Slogan idea: Help!, Suitable skills, Connection, Self-assigned projects

>> **Marcus:** Start coming up with a concrete task list for Visible Difference, Use this to get a real task list ready for MV, Start defining skill sets for people.

This brainstorm session revealed how different groups had come together here today, each from a different angle. Interesting!



After the brainstorm we had a guest speaker, Daan van Geijswijk. Daan worked for Oxfam and SOS Kinderdorpen. They organize tribes of people behind their goals.

He advocated that if you give people space, they will take ownership. Volunteers are usually viewed as people who do tasks. However, we should view them as: eyes, brain, doors, hands. One person is valuable because they are good at networking (doors), another because they have certain professional skills (brain). These roles can switch constantly, per person and per Microproject. Trust is the base of working in

the 'web 2.0 style'. This contrasts with the way organizations are usually run. People should not be told what to do, they will find the work that needs to be done themselves and the motivation for doing it will come from themselves.

Daan stated that tribes won't form unless there's a clear goal. Meetings, courses and lectures are means to give back to the volunteers and to provide what our network wants. The network itself is already a reward, allowing participants to meet other people and train certain skills. The capacity and work of the network must be made visible. If the network actively changes the world in the way that the participants want to change it and if they recognize themselves in the results of the organization they will remain motivated.

A network must always keep questioning itself: Do we have an 'open channel'? Do we really listen to people when they are in our vicinity? Can we give them what they want? We need to encourage feedback. People that are relatively assertive will be attracted to this way of working.

Daan told us that in such groups there is often a suppression of power dynamics and that we should be prepared for that. In our situation, we are intervening in situations of asymmetrical power (i.e. human rights situations), we have to take that into account as well. How can we factor that in? We need to be clear in our expectations of what we want and don't want, otherwise this will lead to conflict. We need periodical physical social gatherings to remain connected. Because this group is so geographically spread out we also need to build a virtual overlay of the physical network. The group can organize itself through committees of members, but the committees that are the most effective usually have an internal paid coordinator or facilitator. It will work better when someone functions as the 'face' of the project.

It is important that we are able to simply state what our goal is. We should have openness and structure. People should be able to do what they want within clear limits. Also, we need a clear idea regarding what people can and cannot do. The network needs a consensus regarding the framework. Energy should be put on the do-ers, not on the stoppers. Negative people

should be told to contribute or leave. Leading by example is good to set the tone, but then again you also need to be aware of the fact that people in a network have a tendency to copy each other and that certain ideas may be blocked if the first initiative takes a certain direction. You need to ask yourself the question when presenting the group and the infrastructure to the outside world: Who will like this? What do we need? (Organic growth) Why are we trying to setup Microvolunteerism? What is the limitation of our leadership? And: Why am I here?

A lively discussion followed. We got a first experience with going around in circles. We got stuck not because of negativity (the thing that Daan warned us about), but because of a 'what if...' way of thinking. It was good to have this experience now, early on and physically being in the same room.

After Daan left, we got around to evaluating our brown paper session results. Tanja had meanwhile entered the session. Tanja felt that she was talking about different things than the others. Her vision was that a person would say, for example: "I'm willing to spend four hours a week on Microvolunteerism", so that person would divide, say, four 'game tokens' among the Microprojects needing help at that moment. Peoples' skill sets should also be taken into consideration. Tanja stated that we should build a prototype with paper to come to determine the properties of the new infrastructure. Where do we go from here? We need clear goals and a way to measure our progress. We all agree that the mediawiki is holding us back at the moment and that we need a more user-friendly website. A new static informational website (with mission statement) will be created for Microvolunteerism to start with. We need a public website for Visible Difference that is linked to Microvolunteerism. We are all going to use the mailing list that was set up.

On this day we held another brainstorm session, about the user interface of the new website. This resulted in:

Search Screen, List Screen and Detail Screen

(see pictures on the right)

to provide a context for our work. The dramatic movie shows that oil has brought the Niger Delta Zone a curse, instead of wealth. What is the role of networks in this tangle of creeks and oil pipes? Both social and technological networks can be used to inhabit institutions. The long-term aim of the project is to map and track environmental and human rights issues in the Niger Delta. And also to mobilize the people in the region to form communities and networks that can help with the mapping and tracking and use that data as a platform for campaigns.

Microvolunteerism has brought various networks together and in the constitutions they have mobilized other institutions. The relation between networks and institutions serves as an instrument to achieve their goals. It is important to get a sense of the nature of the role of institutions. In Nigeria for example there is a democratic framework. They want to inhabit the (existing) institutions and use networks to develop a platform that will allow people to recognize themselves in the institutions.

Microvolunteerism acknowledges that there are a lot of different people with a lot of different talents. During our sessions we had several visitors from different disciplines: hardware hackers, firmware/ software developers, web developers, new media people, advocates, documentary makers and artists. The power of Microvolunteerism lies in being able to bring these people together and have these people make their own specific contribution.

There are different components to approaching the Nigerian delta project and its problems. There is a need for understanding the hardware, how can we protect and secure the data, how can we use it to lobby/ to make change and to put pressure on the oil companies and governments? Finally, how can we create artistic expression to move other people to also care about this issue and help us?

Winter Camp has made a difference by bringing the network together, or rather it has brought the several networks together. Melanie Rieback expresses this by saying, "lovely, we are now a family!"



However, the problem with families is discipline. How to use a vehicle that relies on volunteers, coordinating microtasks and how to use a network to run a campaign? It is difficult and involves an architecture that coordinates the network. There need to be preparations in advance and a concrete vision of what the network has to do and this has to be instituted into the architecture of coordination. So far, the network has been building two things: A social network and a tech infrastructure to support this social network.

During our meetings we also had an expert on crowdsourcing volunteerwork join us. They raised questions such as: How can we build a tech infrastructure to support loose contributions when the organizers of the network never comprehended that could exist? There will be loose collaborations on projects. The coordinator is often the bottleneck, he or she does so much that there is an almost inevitable overload and nothing actually gets done. How do we crowdsource so these bottlenecks don't occur?

Video interviews with Microvolunteerism

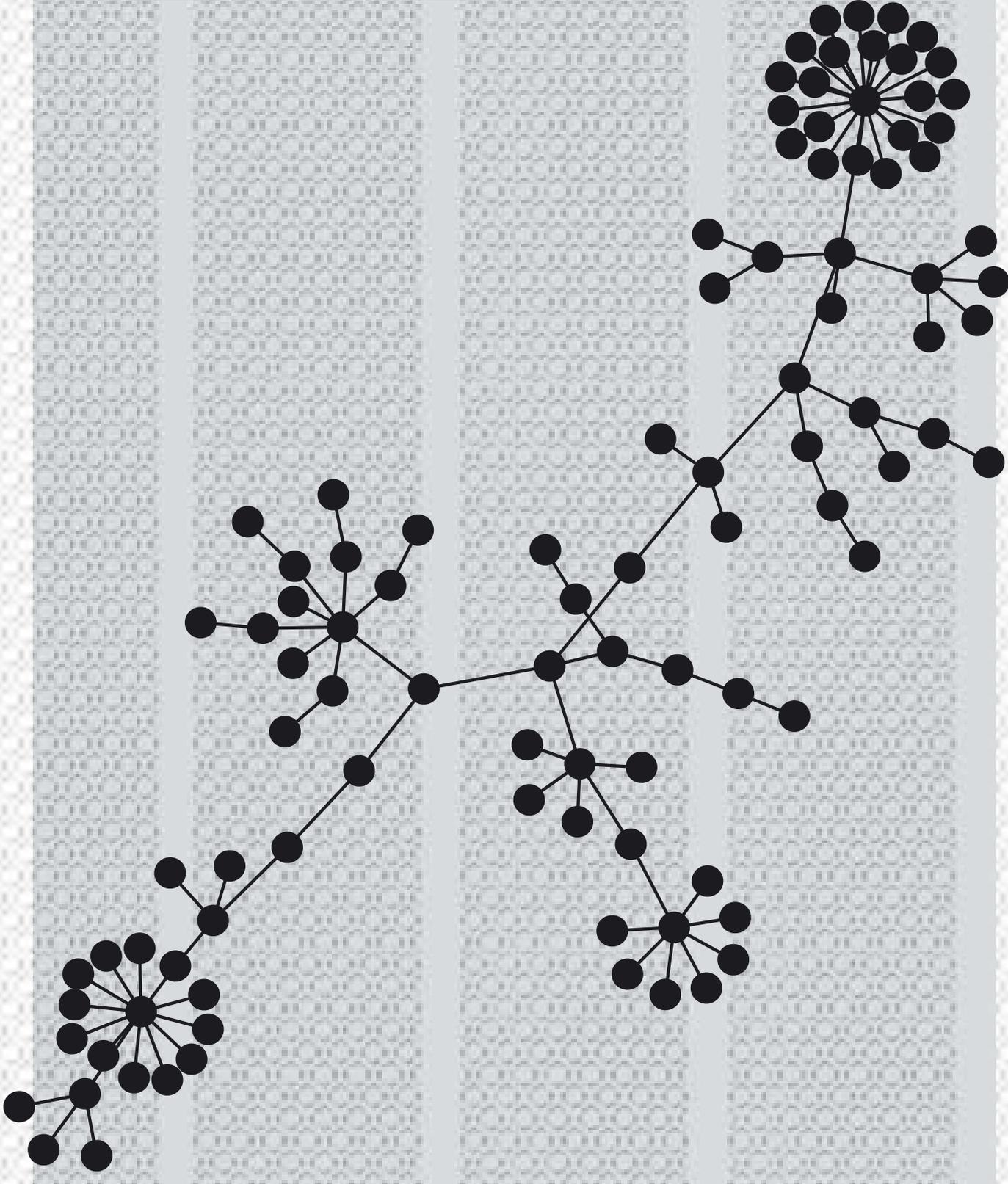
Interview with Gaia Sprocati by Soenke Zehle,
<http://vimeo.com/4091559>

Documentation

The original documentation that was created during Winter Camp can be found at <http://www.microvolunteerism.org/page/143/en> and <http://wiki.microvolunteerism.org/index.php/Wintercamp>

MYCRAEATIVITY

<http://www.networkcultures.org/mycreativity>



NETWORK REPORT

MyCreativity is a loose network of researchers, artists, activists and policy-makers that critically engage with the creative industries field. On November 16-18, 2006 the Institute of Network Cultures and the Centre for Media Research, University of Ulster organized MyCreativity, a convention on International Creative Industries research. MyCreativity was a two-day conference that brought the trends and tendencies around the Creative Industries into critical question. An mailing list¹ was set up before the event and has continued ever since. The conference sought to address the local, intraregional and transnational variations that constitute international creative industries as an uneven field of actors, interests and conditions. The conference explored a range of key topics that, in the majority of cases, remain invisible to both academic research and policy-making in the creative industries. The international conference was seen as preliminary to the network and mainly offered a space in which those critical of the creative industries rhetoric could come together and discuss, as well as a platform through which they could be heard.

Following this conference, actors involved in the MyCreativity network have started and/ or collaborated in a number of projects worldwide that continue this critical engagement with the creative industries. Present and future attention should focus on the development of organized networks able to intervene in ongoing debates and shape the creative industries in more sustainable ways.

The question of sustainable creative networks beyond mere critique of dominant neoliberal models of the creative industries was central during the MyCreativity sessions at Winter Camp. Critical engagement with the creative industries takes place in a wide variety of settings and it would be absurd to assume that MyCreativity is some overarching meta-network capable of representing all these activities. Nevertheless, Winter Camp 09 offered an opportunity for interested actors to come together and to address basic issues concerning the sustainable

¹ my-ci, <http://idash.org/mailman/listinfo/my-ci>.

organization of the creative industries that are also of relevance to those outside of the network.

The following issues were central in this respect:

>> Policy regulation

How can we develop more sustainable policy mechanisms beyond creativity as capital accumulation? What are possible strategies for shaping policy from below? How might transversality be pushed in concrete ways?

>> Multiplication and division of futures

Current debates on the creative industries highlight the role of creativity in ushering in a new economy, but what would happen if this one-dimensional future is rejected and we start imagining futures that are multiple? In what ways can we link the spatial and temporal specificity of futures with more radical politics of creatives?

>> Built environment and real-estate speculation

There is a pressing need to move beyond the urban tactics currently prevalent within many cultural scenes and to start thinking strategically about the role of the built environment in contributing to the sustainability of creative networks. How can we develop a decentralized architecture that better matches the interests and passions of creative networks than the overhyped and overfunded creative clusters and cultural districts?

>> Precarity and collaboration

Both collaboration and precarity are key terms in the description and analysis of creative networks, but how are they linked? What are the translations taking place between different kinds of precarious actors, both within and without the creative industries? What are the conditions of possibility for the various collaborative networks and how can we make visible this constitutive outside? How does the reflexive engagement with the heterogeneity of precarious subject positions enable mutual learning?

>> **Transnational research**

Although many projects and everyday resistances question the economic logic of the creative industries, it seems that much can be learned in developing transnational collaborations that comparatively highlight the similarities and variations between critical creative practices in different settings. What are the topics discussed or the formats adopted in these settings? Who are the main actors to involve, resist and recognize? What kinds of translational problems emerge in transnational collaborations?

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From the very beginning, the status of MyCreativity as a network was questioned and it soon became clear that the divergent interests of the participating actors were not easily subsumed under the category of the network. In that respect, the attempt by the Institute of Network Cultures to use Winter Camp to bring together networks with the goal of organizing these networks has its own dark sides. Above all, it suffers from a productivity bias in that the imperative to organize puts extreme pressure on groups to 'get things done'. While understandable from the perspective of funders and outcomes-driven agencies, more sensitivity is needed towards those interested in discussing the multiple dimensions of sustainable creativity as such. If the problematic is identified falsely or one-dimensionally, this will most likely also lead to flawed political and activist strategies.

Multiple issues were discussed during Winter Camp. Among other things, Antony Iles compared the London 2012 Olympic Games with the architect Cedric Price's Fun Palace in order to highlight the collapse of play and work. Merijn Oudenampsen explored the possibility of formulating a positive urban agenda by revisiting the utopian urbanism of the 1960s and 1970s, and combining those with the current agenda of the open-source movement. Michael LaFond described the challenges faced by the city of Berlin and emphasized the role (and possibilities and limits) of self-organized small projects in reshaping urban planning. Birgit Bertram talked about the art education network Secret Service in relation to payment and funding.

Daniela Swarowsky reflected on her experiences in coordinating a community art project in Rotterdam. Manuela Zechner conducted a Future Archive performance in which all participants were asked to project themselves into a desirable future, while looking back at the present. Renée Ridgway and Prayas Abhinav presented their platform for participatory development of artistic and curatorial projects: N.E.W.S. and policy discussions took place with policy researcher Martijn Arnoldus and Jouke Kromkamp of the municipality of Haarlem. Next to discussing specific presentations, more open discussions revolved around questions of organization and translation, institutionalization, ideas for working contracts and ethical guidelines, and the relation between collaboration and precarity.²

Bas van Heur presented the outcomes of the MyCreativity network on the final day of Winter Camp. A network that, as Bas immediately indicated isn't particularly organized, or strong in its node-to-node connections. Rather, the network consists of a group of individuals with a shared interest in the particularities of the creative industries, brought together, or assembled, especially for the Winter Camp event. These individuals operate from a multitude of different positions, which on the one hand is an advantage, since now finally not creative industries criticasters are included, potentially allowing a more dialogical approach. But on the other hand this is also a disadvantage, since it turned out to be enormously difficult to find common ground among the very diverse participants.

Considering that one of the outcomes of the MyCreativity discussions was the questioning of the very relevance of the notion of organized networks as such, it would be absurd to talk about clear-cut membership positions. Instead, MyCreativity acted as a relatively open and fluid space of interaction for the duration of one short week. In this period, various actors were present and eager to discuss. Some of the more active participants included Bas van Heur; Manuela Zechner, Michael LaFond, Branka Ćurĭiĭ, Maria Ptqk, Birgit Bertram, Daniela Swarowsky, Sebastian Olma, Renée Ridgway and Prayas Abhinav.

² Unedited notes on the MyCreativity-Wiki, <http://st.ation.in/wiki/projects:mycreativity>.

Video interviews with MyCreativity

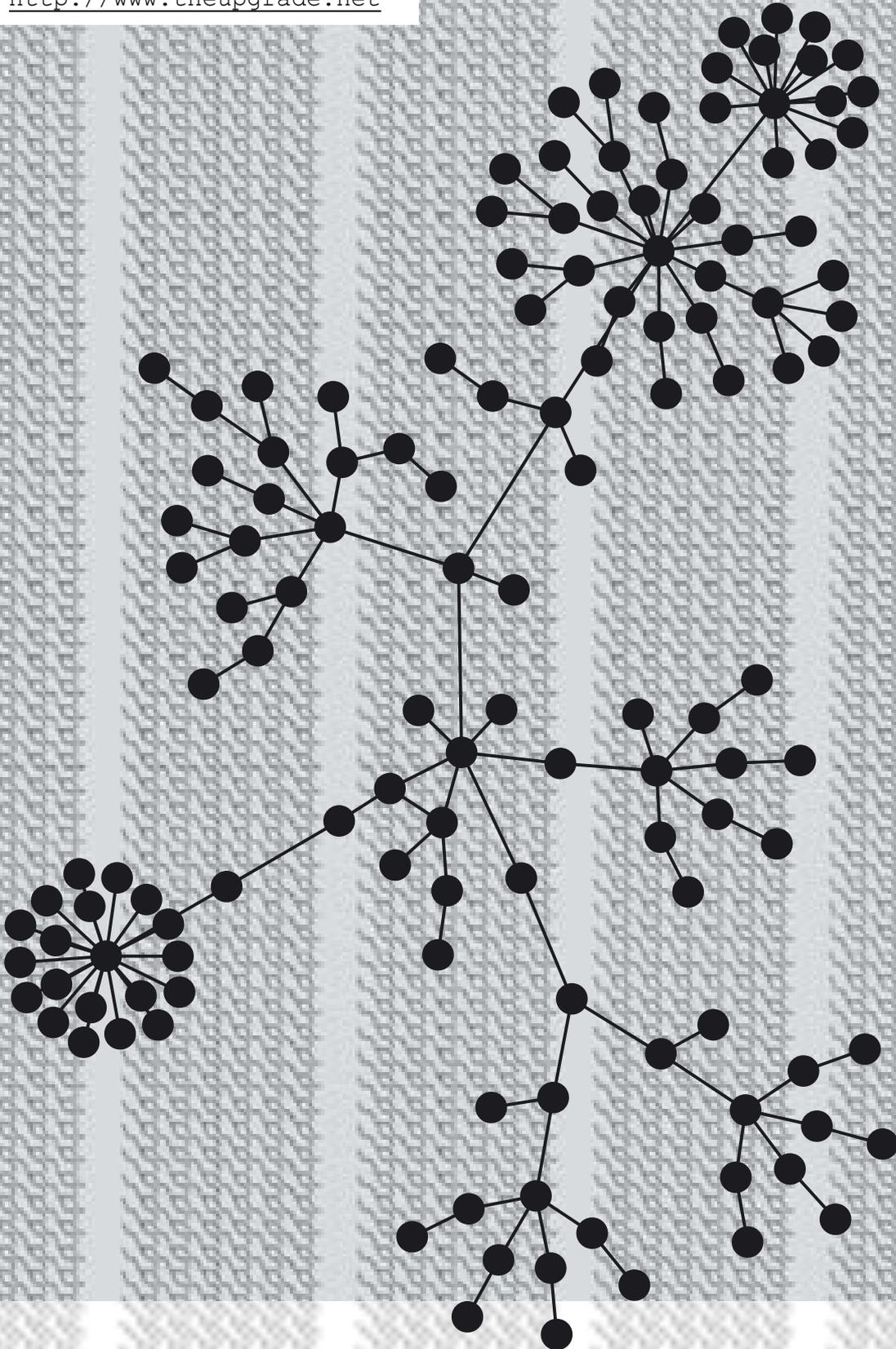
Interview with Prayas Abhinav by Soenke Zehle,
<http://vimeo.com/3865326>

Interview with Michael LaFond by Ned Rossiter,
<http://vimeo.com/4088325>



THEUPGRADE

<http://www.theupgrade.net>



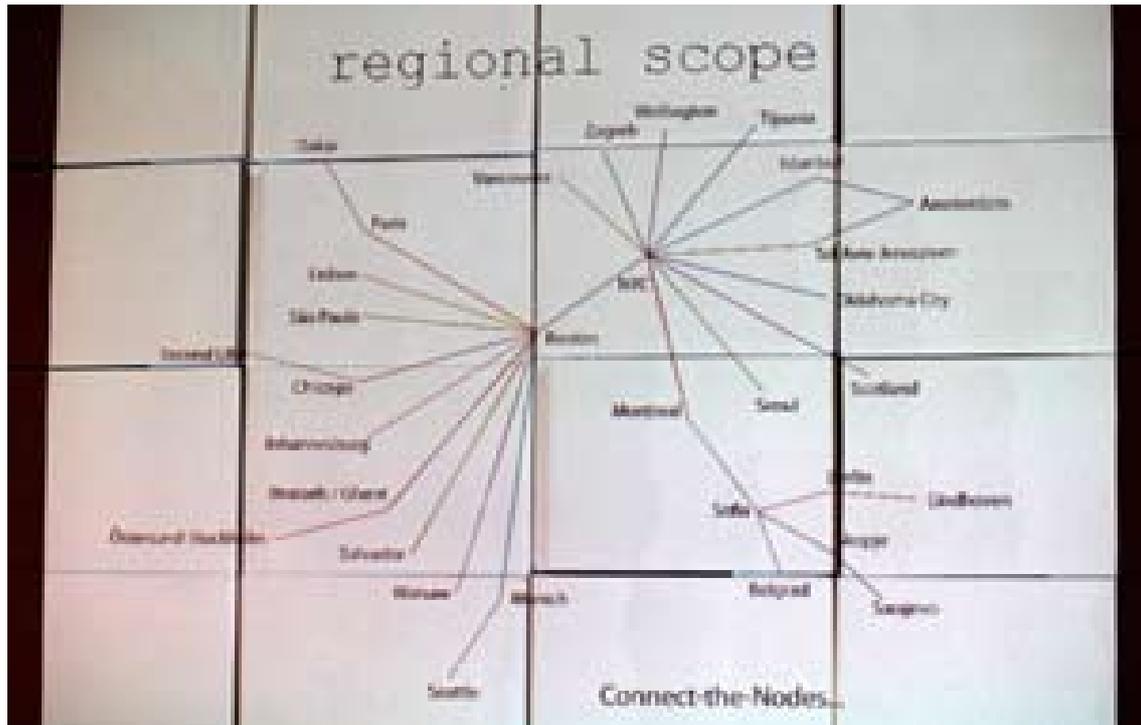
NETWORK REPORT

An ever-growing network, upwards of thirty nodes at present time, started in 1999 in New York City. Upgrade! is an international, emerging network of autonomous nodes united by art, technology, and a commitment to bridging cultural divides. Its decentralized, non-hierarchical structure ensures that Upgrade! operates according to local interests and available resources and pure data. While individual nodes present new media projects, engage in informal critique, and foster dialogue and collaboration between individual artists, Upgrade! International functions as an online, global network that gathers biannually in different cities to meet one another, showcase local art, and work on the agenda for the following year. Upgrade! operates along an axis of simplicity, leaving each node free to design their own local activities, with a focus on providing space for artists to present and share their work. As an international organization, the network engages complex problems as it struggles to find a model for decision-making, representation, funding, organization and growth within trusted community-based collaborations.

Upgrade! met in a New York bar in 1999; moved to a pizzeria; upgraded to Eyebeam in 2000; produced the network performance cabaret *Call and Response at The Kitchen*; held the Warhol Hijack in SoHo in 2001; became a network with Vancouver in 2003; expanded to Montreal and Boston in 2004; crossed the Atlantic; kicked off a two city node in Glasgow and Dundee in 2005; held the first international gathering Show, Gather, Share in New York City in 2005; crossed the Pacific; connected through Antarctica to Wellington; wrote a mission statement; resolved to meet in Oklahoma City; grew from ten to twenty-one nodes during 2006 including Johannesburg and four nodes in the Balkans; changed venues every month in Sofia; visited studios and ate Korean food in Chicago; gave birth to tiny noise; held the first ArtCamp in Vancouver; attempted to stuff the nettime list into the Society for Arts and Technology during MUTEK in Montreal; explored Berlin; passed through Belgrade, Sofia, and Istanbul with HTMLles EXPORT2; celebrated Scotland's first year anniversary with an Upgrade birthday cake; held the second international gathering, Do It Yourself, in Oklahoma City in 2006.

Upgrade! made a catalog; experienced an ice storm and got chased by feral dogs; got stranded in an airport strike in Tel Aviv; lost luggage; shared underwear and socks; co-curated the net art exhibition D.I.Y. or Die with Rhizome and Turbulence; breakfasted; presented B-Side DIY Drive-in; inspired P2P video sharing; made great plans and failed to execute them; opened a Flickr pool; considered a post-national pavilion at the Venice Biennial; supported Critical Art Ensemble with a Cabaret Auction that included parking signs stolen from Montreal city streets; took Seattle from posthumanism to swans and back again; poured a floor of concrete and pure data in Salvador in 2007.

Upgrade! screened peer-to-peer videos during the White Night in Skopje; reached consensus; made out in secret; doused a flamewar; organized a European tour for a Brazilian artist in a week; met in a Dutch art center café; discussed pros; discussed cons; invited curators and scientists to join art/tech discussions; met sporadically for loud glasses of wine in different countries and cities; paneled at Ars Electronica; lectured at PAN museum; summered at Belef in Belgrade; became electric in Melbourne; lunched at ZeroOne; sought the right place for the Second Life node on the world map; searched for more collaborators in the middle east, failed, tried again; agreed to hold the next international gathering in Skopje; felt network loyalty in São Paulo; streamed a 48-hour meeting during Economie 0 in Paris; debated cultural economy in the Balkan region; weighed art world failure against cultural success in Chicago; ate potluck; hibernated; came to life; had babies; lost friends; danced the carnival in Salvador in 2008; lived together as art; had A Day In A Life in Munich joined by Brisbane, Brighton, Sendai, Skopje and Curitiba; raised money; gathered more than fifty people and arrived at Skopje for the third international gathering, Chain Reaction; in January 2009, launched Upgrade! Dakar's first session attended by one hundred people; was invited by the Institute of Network Cultures to Winter Camp network gathering in Amsterdam in February 2009; was invited by La Maison des Metallos, for a special two-day session in May 2009 and will attend the next Upgrade! International Meeting in Sao Paulo in 2011.



Upgrade! nodes:

>> Upgrade! Amsterdam

Upgrade! Amsterdam, operating until 2007, was a series of gatherings for and by new media aficionados, artists, geeks, media makers and breakers and the generally curious. Point of departure was the premise: "No upgrade without a down-grade". Upgrade! Amsterdam was organized by Nat Muller and Lucas Evers; until 2007 actively hosted by de Melkweg, and kindly supported by Mondriaan Foundation.¹

>> Upgrade! Belgrade

Upgrade! Belgrade is a platform that serves to identify, nurture and stand for the local artists who create and inspire the field of new media. One of its primary functions is to facilitate the integration of local new media artists in the global network. Upgrade! Belgrade is an association of different local artistic agents and institutions.² Initiator of the node is Maja Ciric.

¹ Upgrade! Amsterdam, <http://www.upgrade.melkweg.nl>.

² O3one Art Space, <http://www.o3one.co.yu>; Remont Independent Artistic Association, <http://www.remont.co.yu> and Kontext Gallery, <http://www.kontekstgalerija.org>.

>> Upgrade! Berlin

Initiated by Ela Kagel, Upgrade! Berlin has been an active node since September 2006 and co-operation partner of Upgrade! International Skopje 2008. Upgrade! Berlin is a caravan of questions, which explores venues and locations associated with media art and digital culture in Berlin. It shifts its look and appearance in every new meeting, adjusting to the participants and the contributions being made. Berlin already has a lively media art scene, so it is not our strategy to add another venue or event to the existing ones. We rather want to revisit the places which are already there and approach them with questions concerning their contemporary cultural practice and the future agenda of media art. Over the last year, we have mainly focused on international collaborations. In 2009, we have started an interesting series of collaborations with partners in Berlin, such as the Gallery Art Claims Impulse and the Transmediale Festival.³

>> Upgrade! Boston

Upgrade! Boston is a monthly gathering of artists, curators and the public that fosters dialogue and creates opportunities for collaboration within the new media community. Organized by Jo-Anne Green and hosted by the Studio for Interrelated Media (Jane D. Marsching and Dana Moser) at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, each meeting consists of one- or two-hour long presentations interspersed with questions and comments from the audience. The events are informal and free. Founded by Turbulence.org in January 2005, the Upgrade! Boston community continues to grow as a local node within the global Upgrade! International (UI) network.⁴

>> Upgrade! Chicago

Though it has been in existence for four years, the Chicago node is still a loose affiliation of artists linked together through the Chicago-new-media Google group. Members hail from local institutions including the School of the Art

³ Organizers are Ela Kagel, Public Art Lab (<http://www.publicartlab.org>) and <http://www.upgrade-berlin.net>.

⁴ Upgrade! Boston, http://turbulence.org/upgrade_boston.

Institute of Chicago, Columbia College, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Illinois Institute of Technology, and Northwestern University. Both students and teachers are represented, with a number of independent artists and a few gallery holders who exhibit new media art. The last year has seen renewed interest in regular meetings, workshops and documentation, but we are still very much self-organized and chaotic. How to build an organization and still maintain a free-flowing sense of participation seems to be an issue we are dealing with right now.

>> Upgrade! Dakar

Upgrade! Dakar was founded in October 2008 by Karen Dermineur and is hosted by Incident.net (netart online platform), Karen Dermineur and Maria Luisa Angulo. Upgrade! Dakar gathers the Senegalese art scene linked to new media inviting all artistic, cultural and technical actors to present their practices and works. The Dakar node fosters a specific orientation on Linux and open source tools. As new media art projects are not yet very relevant in Senegal, Upgrade! Dakar's first purpose is to explore this art scene and to create an awareness of the local works in process. Their goal is to begin to archive and disseminate information about this emergent art scene on the Internet.⁵

>> Upgrade! Detroit

Based in Detroit and Ann Arbor, this node launched in October 2008 will be a regular gathering of artists, curators, designers, and technologists that fosters dialogue and creates opportunities for collaboration within the art and technology community in Southeast Michigan. Managed by rooftoptwo (Cezanne Charles and John Marshall), this node will be a forum for discussing technologically-driven disciplinary convergence and will be an informal peer to peer group.

>> Upgrade! Eindhoven

Upgrade! Eindhoven started in the spring of 2008, with the aim to strengthen the network and stimulate cooperation between artists, curators, technicians, scientists,

⁵ Upgrade! Dakar, <http://www.incident.net/upgradedakar/>.

culture developers and others interested in art and technology. Unlike anybody else, artists are capable of experimenting with technology in an open-minded, independent way and of toying with the effects of technology on society and culture and develop this. Upgrade Eindhoven is organized by MAD emergent art center, a creative laboratory, network organization and public event organizer delivering projects that connect art, science and technology.⁶

>> Upgrade! Ghent/Brussels

Upgrade! Brussels-Ghent programs regular gatherings of artists, theorists, developers, curators and public interested in digital media culture, organized by Eva De Groote (fricties) and Annemie Maes (so-on), and hosted in turn by Vooruit/Ghent and okno/Brussels. Vooruit is an arts centre with a tradition in presenting live arts and music and a passion for cross disciplinary work. Okno is an interdisciplinary media center for art and technology in Brussels. Okno supports the research, development, creation and presentation of new forms of innovative cultural production, and is dedicated to exposing broad and diverse audiences to new technologies and media arts through a program of concerts, interactive installations, performances, workshops lectures and expert meetings. Okno is interested in the creative and unpredictable innovations that stem from unruly combinations of scientific, mediatic and technologic artifacts: seeds to grow new forms of expression.⁷

>> Upgrade! Istanbul

Upgrade! Istanbul is a monthly gathering for digital artists, academicians, practitioners, curators and for all of the other actors of digital culture, organized by NOMAD. Each Upgrade! Istanbul meeting presents key speakers participating in discussion along with a related presentation of new projects by digital artists and designers. Therefore, Upgrade! Istanbul operates as a platform to introduce new productions. Through these meetings, NOMAD establishes the only local archive in this field. The hosting institutions are santralistanbul and Kadir Has

⁶ See <http://www.mad.dse.nl>.

⁷ See <http://vooruit.be>, <http://so-on.be> and <http://okno.be>.

University. Contact persons are Başak Şenova, Erhan Muratoglu, and Emre Erkal.⁸

>> Upgrade! Johannesburg

The Johannesburg Node was started in 2006 by Interactive Video Artist Nathaniel Stern, Media Artist Daniel Hirschmann and Christo Doherty, head of the Digital Arts Division of the Wits School of Arts.⁹ The node is now hosted by Tegan Forbes. This node is based at the Digital Arts School, at the Wits School of Arts in Johannesburg. Staff members at the school arrange and host Upgrade! events. Upgrade! events are used to showcase visiting and local digital and new media artists. The events are also used to highlight and discuss important issues around digital and new media arts in Africa and South Africa.

>> Upgrade! Lisbon

Upgrade! Lisbon started its regular activity in January 2006. It is curated by Luis Silva and intends to be a monthly gathering of (new) media artists, curators, researchers and an interested audience. It is hosted by Lisboa 20 Arte Contemporânea, one of the most interesting and dynamic contemporary art galleries in Portugal. Besides being a venue for presenting and debating art projects and practices that engage with and explore digital technologies, the Upgrade! Lisbon has set as important local goal to help to establish an active new media art community and also to legitimate this artistic practice within a larger, institutional art scene. As a global goal, Lisbon wants to welcome artists that have already presented at other nodes as well as provide an opportunity for Portuguese artists to show their work in other nodes all over the world.

>> Upgrade! Milwaukee

Upgrade! Milwaukee is a regular gathering of digital creatives - artists, musicians, performers, writers, curators and the public - that fosters dialogue and creates opportunities for collaboration within the local new media

⁸ Upgrade! Istanbul, <http://nomad-tv.net/upgrade>.

⁹ See respectively <http://nathanielstern.com>, <http://www.plankman.com/blog> and <http://digitalarts.wits.ac.za/artworks/>.

community. It features one to three guest speakers at each event, held at a rotating venue: informal, free, and open to all. We welcome suggestions for speakers, panels or gatherings. Upgrade! Milwaukee will continue to grow as a local node within the global Upgrade! International network.¹⁰

>> Upgrade! Montreal

Upgrade! Montreal (UpgradeMTL) declared its hibernation in the fall of 2008. Launched in 2004 as the third node in the international network, UpgradeMTL was crafted and cultivated by Tobias C. van Veen, Sophie Le-Phat Ho and Anik Fournier. During its five-year occupation of La Société des Arts Technologiques (SAT), UpgradeMTL generated 32 events that explored the limits of the technology arts through a variety of strategies - exposition and dérive, publication and soundswarm, intervention and cabaret - and partners (e.g. OBORO, MUTEK, Nettime, Artivistic, Hexagram, Studio XX, La Centrale). Art never dies and UpgradeMTL is not dead. Everywhere the art of technics mutates into new and beautiful forms in uncanny places.

>> Upgrade! Munich

Upgrade! Munich was founded in March 2005 by Tamiko Thiel to network local artists, experimental art spaces and educational institutions in Munich, and to increase the national and international profile of the local media art scene. Since late 2005 Horst Konietzny has been co-organizer, bringing in his streaming performance concept A Day in the Life, Upgrade! Munich's contribution to the 2006 Upgrade! International meeting. In 2008 Upgrade! Munich is searched to increase international contacts by further development of A Day in the Life as an experimental platform for international collaborations, and by fostering direct exchanges between local artists and artists from other nodes.

>> Upgrade! New York

Since April 1999, a group of new media artists and

¹⁰ Upgrade! Milwaukee, <http://digiwaukee.net/upgrade/>.

curators have gathered in New York City to discuss ideas and present work for feedback. The first meeting took place at a bar in the East Village with Tim Whidden and Mark River (MTAA), Mark Napier and Upgrade! founder, Yael Karnarek. Upgrade! New York partnered with Eyebeam in March 2000. Since that time, Upgrade! New York has been produced in the form of artist presentations, workshops, community gatherings around local social and legal issues, and large-scale performances primarily by Eyebeam Residents, Fellows, alumni and community members. Currently, Eyebeam is in the process of distributing the Upgrade! New York node by collaborating with different New York City art collectives and organizations to produce the monthly gatherings in different parts of New York City to facilitate the interaction of different communities and networks.

>> Upgrade! Oklahoma City

Upgrade! Oklahoma City, operating until 2007, was a monthly gathering of new media artists, curators, engineers, computer programmers and enthusiasts held at the Untitled [ArtSpace] in Oklahoma City. Although presenters primarily consisted of regional people, national and international artists would periodically be invited. The programmatic emphasis of The Upgrade! Oklahoma City was to encourage the exchange of ideas between media, science, technology and culture with the group encompassing a broad range of interdisciplinary participants. Membership was open to anyone who shares an interest in the effects of new media on culture. Upgrade! Oklahoma City was the host of the 2006 international network gathering. Since 2005 it was curated by Adam Brown with Untitled [ArtSpace].

>> Upgrade! Paris

Upgrade! Paris sessions are dedicated to the relationship between art and technology. They are public, monthly and itinerants where artists, scientists, architects, theoreticians present their recent work in one hour.¹¹ Created in 2006 by Marika Dermineur, Upgrade! Paris is organized by incident.net.

¹¹ All sessions are archived on <http://incident.net/theupgrade/>.

>> Upgrade! Salvador

"Cultural and social resistance movements impose ancient alternatives for human associations and collective development". Upgrade! Salvador is an experience on living as an art experience. In the same house, artists share their ideas, beds, recipes, towels etc. In key opportunities, these artists decide to gather others to intervene in a public space for sharing practices in a festive way. The node attends directly to an ancestral reference, trying to translate methods, such as shared and oral education, personal language approach and simple life to the modern time.

>> Upgrade! São Paulo

Upgrade! São Paulo¹² is a monthly gathering of new media artists, curators and the public in São Paulo, Brazil, curated by Martha Carrer Cruz Gabriel. The meetings have Brazilian artists with the opportunity to talk about and show their work in a more flexible way than in formal conferences. Some of the events are broadcast to Upgrade! São Paulo space in Second Life. Since March 2008, people who attend the meetings donate one kilogram of non-perishable food each to a local daycare center. There is also the Upgrade! São Paulo Electronic Magazine to publish presenters' papers online.¹³

>> Upgrade! Scotland

New Media Scotland is the Scottish national development agency for art, science and technology. Through working with artists, we foster greater public understanding of the role that technology is playing in contemporary culture. Our programming focuses on the development and delivery of hardware solutions that provide artists, as well as the organization, with innovative new platforms for the presentation and distribution of artistic content. In doing so we provide a platform for greater social engagement, placing the relationships between people and place first through virtue of new technologies and a new understanding of digital culture on a national scale.

12 Upgrade! São Paulo, <http://www.upgradesaopaulo.com.br>.

13 See <http://www.upgradesaopaulo.com.br/e-magazine>.

>> Upgrade! Seattle

Upgrade! Seattle at 911 Seattle Media Arts center is a magnet group for new media artists working in the Seattle area that aims to gather, promote, critically discuss, and present new media work. Upgrade! Seattle invites artists/curators/ thinkers to anchor events, which in turn become launching points for making connections in the Pacific Northwest. Upgrade! Seattle was founded by Carrie Bodle and is organized by Misha Neiningger, curator and executive director at 911 Media Arts Center.

>> Upgrade! Second Life

Upgrade! Second Life supports and shares work by artists working with the online virtual world, Second Life. Sponsored by Patrick Lichty, James Morgan, and Scott Kildall, UPG/SL is the first virtual node in the network, although co-location events have been hosted in Chicago and Paris.

>> Upgrade! Seoul

Upgrade! Seoul is a monthly gathering of artists and practitioners in media arts and digital culture hosted by Art Center Nabi in Seoul, South Korea, organized by Suhjung Hur. Established in 2005, Upgrade! Seoul has been a forum for the presentation of new work to foster dialogue and create opportunities for collaboration within media art community. At each meeting one or two artists present work in progress and participate in a discussion.

>> Upgrade! Skopje

Upgrade! Skopje represents a forum for communication between artists, curators and cultural workers who work in the field of contemporary culture, art and sound. Upgrade! events promote and support new media art, experiment with and present art that reflects the role of technology in contemporary society. The artistic exchange and networking are perceived as prerogative for the development of the local scene, as well as for establishing collaboration with various cultural environments. Upgrade! Skopje supports local and international artists in their attempt to promote new media art practices on the local scene and vice versa. Upgrade! Skopje is organized by

Line - Initiative and Movement.¹⁴

>> Upgrade! Sofia

Upgrade! Sofia organizes talks, screenings, performances, art projects, shows and presentations. The node explores clubs, bars, squares, institutional and independent art spaces, addressing all people interested in new forms of digital and electronic art. Upgrade! Sofia is a nomadic platform providing an open space for local and visiting artists to show and exchange about their work. It was established in 2005 by Kyd Campbell and Interspace Media Art Center and is now organized by Ivo Ivanov and Interspace.

>> Upgrade! Tel-Aviv/Jerusalem

Upgrade! Tel Aviv-Jerusalem attempts to create and develop a nomadic and independent platform for meeting, discussion, exchange, and information, about art and technology, media, activism and culture. Upgrade TLV-JLM has been running since May 2005 on a monthly basis a different venue in Tel Aviv each time, and since April 2006 also at several venues in Jerusalem. This decision attempts to let artists open possible collaborations with a wider range of institutions and to keep the Upgrade! gatherings independent. Collaborative venues in Jerusalem: Daila, Barbur Gallery, Sugia Conferences; in Tel Aviv: Hagada Hasmalit, CCA, Squat Ben Atar and the Center for Digital Art Lab - Holon. The node was initiated in Tel Aviv by Mushon Zer Aviv and continued since august 2005 by sala-manca group (Lea and Diego).

>> Upgrade! Tennessee

Upgrade! Tennessee is sponsored by the Space for New Media at Tennessee State University and TERMINALapsu.org at Austin Peay State University and is administered by Jodi Hays, Kell Black and Barry Jones.¹⁵

>> Upgrade! Tijuana

Upgrade! Tijuana is a program of monthly meetings for visual artists, musicians, computer programmers and people who are interested in the development and promotion of

¹⁴ Upgrade! Skopje, <http://www.line.org.mk>.

¹⁵ Upgrade! Tennessee, <http://www.upgrade.artapsu.com/>.

electronic culture. Tijuana is located in the northeast of Mexico, bordering California. In this context Upgrade Tijuana offers a space for exchange between digital media artists from both sides of the border (Tijuana, San Diego, Los Angeles). The characteristics of migratory flow in this geographical zone allow for the opportunity to diversify the sessions with the participation of visual artists from America, Europe and Asia. In each session two projects are presented and discussed. One from Mexico and another one from the United States (or from other parts of the world). The end of each sessions includes a live performance. Upgrade! Tijuana is founded and coordinated by Dream Addictive Lab.

>> Upgrade! Vancouver

Directed by Kate Armstrong and Sean Arden and running since 2003, Upgrade! Vancouver was the first node of the Upgrade! International network outside of New York City. Upgrade! Vancouver has presented ongoing events in a monthly discussion format as well as arranging expanded engagements around presentation, community and collaboration in art and technology including Pre/Amble: A Two Day Festival of Art and Psychogeography, NFF: Audio and Interactivity, ArtCamp 06: The World's First Unconference on Art, P2P Outdoor Art Videos, and ArtCamp07/RE:USE. From 2003 through 2007 the series was held at the Western Front. In 2008 and 2009 will born new compilations of experimental art video and animation as well as ArtCamp 08: Mosaic.

>> Upgrade! Warsaw

Upgrade! Warsaw is a monthly gathering of media artists that fosters dialogue and creates opportunities for collaboration. Events are informal. Entrance is free.

>> Upgrade! Wellington

Wellington, the antipodal node, is located at the furthest point in the Southern Hemisphere to the Polar Regions. Adventurous new media-makers gravitate south to Wellington usually through unexpected cross-curating efforts of various collaborating organizations. The first meeting (Steve Deitz) coincided with the launch of the Digital Media

program at Victoria University, the largest interactive media environment in New Zealand. These regular forums connect Wellington internationally to a multiplex discourse and contribute to the program's direction and scope. The Wellington Node (since 2006) is sponsored by C-M.TV, Marcia Lyons, Producer-Program Director for Digital Media Design and Morgan Barnard, Media Artist and Curator at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

>> Upgrade! Zagreb

Upgrade! Zagreb officially started its activities in September 2008, as participant in Upgrade! International gathering in Skopje. It is organized by Maya Kalogera from CSDVU and Petar Milat from Mi2. It is hosted alternatively by Multimedijalni Institut - mi2.hr and Artenativa - Nano Gallery. All three mentioned NGOs have put into the center of their practice experimentalism and support to all those who work at the intersection between art and technology. First guest artists were Andreja Kuluncic and Darko Fritz.¹⁶

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Past goals of Upgrade! have been to increase the size of the network and add new nodes all across the world. The present goals when arriving at Winter Camp included creating cross-network collaborations and improving our online tools as well as exploring our need for 'organization/ institutionalization' and finding out how to sustain the network. We meet bi-annually, but these events are very centered on the local context and on festival activities. Winter Camp provided us with the opportunity to discuss more critical network issues outside of a production and event situation. Furthermore, we had the chance to simply spend some time together and catch up, which also is essential for any further network activities.

Structure of our discussions during Winter Camp:

¹⁶ See <http://upgrade.wowm.org>, <http://mi2.hr>, <http://csdvu.wowm.org> and <http://www.artenativa.hr>.

Growth

- >> Given that some existing nodes are inactive, others have retired, should we persist in encouraging new nodes to start?
- >> Does the network have a threshold?
- >> Can it grow too big to sustain itself (this question is of greatest interest for future hosts of Upgrade! International meetings).

Organization

- >> How can we improve communication and information flows within the network?
- >> Do we need additional tools for that, like dedicated mailing lists, IRC-chats etc?
- >> Do we need to form executive teams who have a mandate to take decisions on behalf of the rest of the network?
- >> Is our decision-making process still effective and representative?
- >> What are possible alternatives?

Inside/ outside of the network, others

- >> What can we learn from other networks?
- >> Can we network with/in other networks?
- >> What kind of groups exist within the network? (Eastern European, European, North American, 'south' orientated nodes...)
- >> Are these geographically organized to understand and collaborate more easily?
- >> Is the potential of isolating nodes through these natural and practical collaborations or is this healthy network behaviour?
- >> How do we understand networks within the network?

Archiving/ web presence

- >> How can we share content and archives from local nodes?
- >> Who makes archives?
- >> How are they formatted?
- >> What is produced by the local nodes during the year?
- >> What are the implications of pooling this production (archives, shared content, etc.) through an online interface?

The objective: to be more accessible in an international context, and develop the online presence of upgrade international with the pooling of this documentation.

Global South

>> How can we connect networks, and increase north-south and south-south cooperation between nodes (the discussion started on the controversy around the title *South-South*, about cooperation between underdeveloped countries)?

The objective: mapping media art and overall cultural activities in less documented regions, pooling resources and contact points.

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POST BY UPGRADE! BOSTON, MARCH 2009:

What was actually discussed

Recently, I spent a week in Amsterdam attending Network Cultures Winter Camp. Twelve networks were invited, including Upgrade! International. Our group consisted of representatives from Skopje, Munich, Dakar, Zagreb, Berlin, Istanbul, New York, Montreal, Tel-Aviv, Paris, Boston and Eindhoven - São Paulo and Chicago participated remotely. For four days, networks held closed morning and afternoon sessions. At the end of each day, everyone gathered for a plenary session; there were screenings and other festive events in the evenings. Many networks engaged in extra-networking activities: Upgrade! met with freeDimensional, Gengerchangers, Edu-Factory, and My-Creativity to discuss possible collaborations. We also attended a FLOSS Manuals demo. All in all, Winter Camp was inspiring and productive. The organizers - all of whom did a flawless job - provided bloggers for most of our sessions.

One of the Upgrade! outcomes of Winter Camp was the decision to create an Open Upgrade! listserve.¹⁷ Everyone is invited to subscribe and post announcements about their projects, calls for collaborators, and opportunities for residencies, exhibitions, etc.

¹⁷ See <http://open.theupgrade.net/>.

NIELS KERSSSENS WRITES ON SUNDAY THE 8TH OF MARCH:

On the final day of Winter Camp Upgrade! coordinator Kyd Campbell 'released' the outcome of three days of hard labor, during which I both heard and witnessed that some moments of crisis were overcome. Kyd clarified a point-to-point summary posted on the Upgrade! wiki, which is showing some concrete progress made during the Winter Camp get together. Signaling the becoming of a proper organized network that aims at the unification of art and technology and the bridging of cultural divides.

Before presenting the points made, it's Kyd's first remark that deserves to be highlighted. It brings out an important strength as well as weakness of the Upgrade! Network, certain qualities realized by the group during Winter Camp activity. Namely, that it's the collaboration within the local nodes that forms the strongest part of the network, harboring most of the activity, while communication about local activities on the International level of the network often is lacking, signaling a crisis in both local and international network identity. But now this network 'error' is detected, time has come to strengthen the local to the international, and vice versa. It's time for interaction and the wiki summary indicates that is happening! And as the wiki pretty much speaks for itself, I have been so free to remap these outcomes, listing the concrete practices of Upgrade! during Winter Camp successively as; considerations, realizations, initiations, collaborations and decisions.

Considerations

- >> Considered giving the option for people (organizers/ participants) to make their own profiles etc. to dialogue online (visibility).
- >> Considered voting systems, did not like them (central structure and decision making).
- >> Wanted to be more open, not to feel just like a network of organizers. (opening up).

Realizations

- >> Important to share information about our collaborative activities with each other in order to avoid frustrations that the network is not working. Helps with motivation. (invisible networks).
- >> Realized we must better use our own local/ personal network resources to make our international projects visible (visibility). Realized we have many resources of connections to universities (education).
- >> (Not yet realized) Planned to but did not manage to rewrite our mandate/ list of core values (central structure and decision making).
- >> We organized the improvised *Accidental Concert* at the Stay-Okay bar with Venzha Christ, Philippe Langlois and Vanessa Gocksch (Bricolabs), Jan-Kees van Kampen (gotol0), RYbN (visitor), and others, on Thursday the 5th of March.

Initiations

- >> The start of an open mailing list.¹⁸
- >> Made some progress on web presence (each node has an aggregated WordPress blog) (visibility).
- >> Will create a resource list of artists residency and exchange possibilities that exist already in the network (exchange of artists/cultural actors).
- >> Exchanging and disseminating art works through collaborative curatorial projects (exchange of artists/cultural actors).

Collaborations

- >> Encountered FreeDimensional, discussed many possible collaborations, especially in São Paulo.
- >> Met Genderchangers, possibility for upcoming collaboration in Istanbul.
- >> Attended the FLOSS manual writing workshop (useful for our bi-annual publications or more open source oriented contents).
- >> Connected with edu-factory and Creative Labour.
- >> South network: as a problematical etiquette, breaking the cliché; making bridges between isolated communities,

¹⁸ See <http://open.theupgrade.net> (starting up).

upgrade concrete projects to link Latin America/Africa by actions, events, network... project on mapping digital art productions and diffusion 'tools', networks and cultural actions in under-represented regions, find more other synergies through the network.

Decisions

- >> Decided to focus on educational projects using this opportunity (education).
- >> Decided to form small committees when projects arise (central structure and decision making).
- >> Decided to leave each city's 'main goal' up to them to decide freely (central structure and decision making).

Although a debate regarding the realization of a central decision making structure is still in process, and definite conclusions still have to be drawn, progress has certainly been made. For the next São Paulo event in 2010 separate Upgrade! committees have already been formed, with their own responsibilities, and mandates to make decisions.

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NIELS KERSSSENS WRITES ON FRIDAY THE 6TH OF MARCH:

Upgrade! meets freeDimensional

On the afternoon of the second day of Winter Camp a fruitful encounter occurred between the networks Upgrade! and free-Dimensional, a real network-to-network confrontation. But as I arrived early, and freeDimensional wasn't yet present, I walked into a vibrant discussion amongst the Upgrade! members. Apparently in the morning they had split into groups, which had resulted in a clear division of tasks. On a practical level they discussed the splitting up of responsibilities. So one group being responsible for overall communication (i.e. website, mailing list, archive), another responsible for production issues (i.e. events, annual gatherings, products) and certainly important, a third group responsible for setting up and controlling a fund raising body. Of course as became clear in the follow-up discussion, several essential questions still have to be addressed. For example, will the separate groups

have their own decision-making power, or will this power be distributed throughout the network? Nevertheless, this division of tasks could be the actual seed for an organized international Upgrade! Network.

But then freeDimensional arrived and the topic changed to a mutual interest. When looking at the focus and organization of both networks, this meeting seemed to be quite logical, as there are numerous similarities. Both have the same amount of local nodes that are geographically wide spread, and both offer a platform for artistic as well as activist strategies. But where the focal point at Upgrade! is more on the artistic side, within freeDimensional activism takes a dominant stand, thus in difference offering each other some solid ground for knowledge sharing.

After both groups explained the merits of their organization, previous collaborations were briefly discussed. Each of the networks zoomed in on their ideas and activities and addressed each other several questions. For example, Upgrade! asked freeDimensional if approached art centers ever refused a request for collaboration because they were afraid that activist projects would stir turmoil when being too politically sensitive? As freeDimensional cooperates a lot with human rights organizations, and addresses related issues, in the past they certainly dealt with art centers that were hesitant about collaborating and fearful about political consequences.

Without reiterating the specific merits of the discussion, it is most important to point out that both networks benefited from this 'confrontation' through the sharing of ideas, as well as the sharing of their practical experience. At the end of their meeting even some concrete collaborations were proposed, which was certainly entertaining. While the Boston node of Upgrade! offered their turbulence.org webspace to free-Dimensional for exhibiting their net-art projects, free-Dimensional responded directly, offering a position for Upgrade! as an affiliation on their site.

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ON MARCH 4TH 2009, NIELS KERSSENS WRITES:

Questions of Identity in Upgrade!

As written in the big Winter Camp book Upgrade! is an ever-growing network, upwards of thirty nodes at present time, started in 1999 in New York City. All these nodes share a similar interest: uniting art, technology and a shared commitment to the bridging of cultural divides, for which the regular organization of local events is one of their main activities. The nodes are widely spread across the globe, resulting in numerous geographical boundaries. On this first day of Winter Camp, an international group of node representatives gathered at Studio K to discuss some important issues relating to their network structure. All topics of discussion were on forehand cleverly organized in a wiki, starting with questions of network identity.

The Upgrade! network consists of two network structures. Firstly, there is the international network of nodes, of which some representatives - mostly curators - are present in the Winter Camp group. Secondly, there are the individual nodes that also form their own local network, mostly consisting of curators and artists from the local community. Both levels struggle with questions of identity, but as the discussion revealed, it is primarily on the local level that a lot of issues pop up. What became clear in the discussion is that every individual node has to deal with its own specific local reality, resulting in multiple local identities. Not every network shares the same amount of activity. The organization of events, and internal gatherings follow a very irregular

schedule amongst the different nodes. Some of the nodes even had, or are still in, a mode of hibernation, in which they don't organize events at all. A serious lack of budget seems to be an overall issue, affecting every individual node in the network. With no financials to pay yourself, or the exhibiting artists, persevering in Upgrade! looks like a constant funding struggle. Logically this financial issue relates to matters of motivation, as money still is a powerful motivator.

But the lack of motivation isn't much of an issue for the individuals in the Winter Camp group itself, as each of them seems to have their own strong motivation to keep the network functioning. It is also important that each of them knows each other in person, and they thus already form a strong group that keeps motivation intact. The issue is rather how to spread their motivation to the actors, mostly artists, which are active in the individual nodes. Moreover, the issue how to make these artists aware of the international Upgrade! structure without forcing them to be part of an international institution. Again this issue denotes a tension that exists between the international structure of the Upgrade! network and their individual nodes.

At present it looks like the individual Upgrade! nodes don't share a collective identity, as the local identity of the individual nodes seems to be incompatible with the international Upgrade! network that is far more homogeneous. The nodes are spread across the globe, and thus face a lot of geographical boundaries that don't only complicate communication amongst the nodes, but also cause problems in setting up a general and coherent identity, and spreading that within the local setting.

It seems the international level is working, the question is how to get the local nodes working as well. So what can the international structure bring to the local? The wiki that is shared amongst the nodes seems to be a useful step in sharing, and collecting information that can contribute to the functioning of every node. Maybe it can be a shared resource, and help the network to come up with some ideas and models that in general can be organized amongst the nodes.

ON MARCH 6TH 2009, LILIANA BOUNEGRU POSTS:

Upgrade! Decision-Making in a Distributed Network

During the previous two days, after having discussed their identity, mission, core values, and crises, the sixteen members of Upgrade! gathered this morning with several issues on their agenda, which had not yet been touched upon at Winter Camp: collaborative tools and managing collaborative tools, lists and managing lists, and the decision making process. The discussion about potential models of network organization was combined with discussing the upcoming event organized by Upgrade! International in São Paulo.

Upgrade! defines itself as a decentralized, non-hierarchical network of currently thirty local nodes. It seems to me rather that the network has a distributed structure, considering that all the locally defined nodes are equal and autonomous. The network structure fundamentally defines the decision making process. While the network maintained a quite democratic mode of organization and decision-making so far, this model has its weaknesses as well. Not all the members felt motivated to contribute in the decision-making process by voting at the right time. A potential solution that has been discussed during the group meeting today was voting versus mandate, or a combination of the two, according to the various circumstances. In situations which require higher effectiveness over a short period of time, the democratic procedure would be 'sacrificed' in order to meet deadlines and objectives, and the decision power would be delegated to a smaller representative group. As a matter a fact, working in smaller groups has proven to be an effective method to accomplish results during work at Winter Camp.

A vulnerable issue with which the network seems to be confronted at this moment is the decision-making process, reason to consider changing the currently used collaborative tools (mailing list, wiki, website). There seemed to be an oscillation between working democratically and giving people clear responsibilities and mandates to work on. An important value

for a distributed network like Upgrade! is transparency. Introducing a wiki as communication platform is a way to achieve transparency and avoid isolation of the local nodes.

The growing number of group members might also turn into a vulnerability of the network unless the mode of organization is adapted. An important point of discussion for Upgrade! at Winter Camp was precisely how the growth of the network should be approached and how membership should be defined. Since the network does not impose constraints of activity on its nodes, each of the nodes has the freedom to be active or passive. The nodes may be inactive until an activity of local interest determines the engagement of the node and consequently the network's support. The weakness of this approach is that it is difficult to distinguish between temporarily idle nodes and 'retired' nodes, which makes it difficult for the network to have an idea of who it can count on.

The local nodes are connected in an online global network that meets twice a year. The question arose of how to activate the nodes and make them more efficient without imposing constraints on them. The network does not seem to have a set of predefined norms to regulate the interaction between nodes. The conditions of participation in local events are established ad hoc and depend on the circumstances of each event and the needs of the local host, as it had been evident from the discussion regarding the organization of their upcoming event in São Paulo.

The group also noticed a difference of involvement between generations of nodes. The old nodes seemed to be more involved and dedicated than the newer ones. This situation may be connected with the fact that friendship was an important value on which the foundation of the network was based and which guided their relations. Now that the network is growing and more nodes are being attached, the strategy of accepting new members might change from friendship to more formal criteria.

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Exchanges of artists/ cultural actors

- >> We plan to create a resource list of artists residency and exchange possibilities that exist already in the network.
- >> We plan to continue and expand our activities in exchanging and disseminating art works through collaborative curatorial projects.

Central structure and decision-making processes

- >> We considered voting systems, but decided we did not like them.
- >> We came to no current conclusions regarding central structure, institutionalization, decision-making.
- >> We decided to form small committees when projects arise.
- >> We decided to leave each city's 'main goal' up to them to define freely.
- >> We planned to but did not manage to rewrite our mandate/ list of core values.
- >> Network gatherings: We evaluated the Skopje 08 meeting and made plans for the upcoming São Paulo 2010 event.

Collaborations (inside and outside our network)

- >> We encountered FreeDimensional and discussed many possible collaborations, especially in São Paulo.
- >> We met GenderChangers and discussed the possibility for upcoming collaboration in Istanbul.
- >> We attended the FLOSS manual writing workshop which may be useful for our bi-annual publications or more opensource oriented contents we may produce.
- >> We connected with the edu-factory and Creative Labour networks. Starting from the connection with Creative Labour, we have already invited a team to different events in Europe, like a workshop night on free culture in Berlin.
- >> We discussed "South-South" Networks: the problematic etiquette of geographic groupings, breaking the cliché, building bridges between isolated communities, upgrading concrete projects to link Latin America/ Africa by actions, events, networks... We now plan for a project on mapping digital art productions and dissemination 'tools', networks and cultural actions in underrepresented regions and we hope to find more synergies through our network to further this dialog.

During Winter Camp, we had the opportunity not only to discuss all the above mentioned issues, but also to understand that the strength of our network is rooted in the personal bonds between the different organizers and artists. This is what basically keeps the network activities going. This also involves the acceptance of sometimes chaotic structures, as well as ups and downs of network energy. The Winter Camp meeting was most helpful in getting a deeper understanding of how networks actually work and what keeps them alive on a long term basis.



Video Interviews with Upgrade!:

Başak Şenova <http://vimeo.com/3832269>

Kyd Campbell <http://vimeo.com/4275113>

Mushon Zer Aviv <http://vimeo.com/4163745>

Images

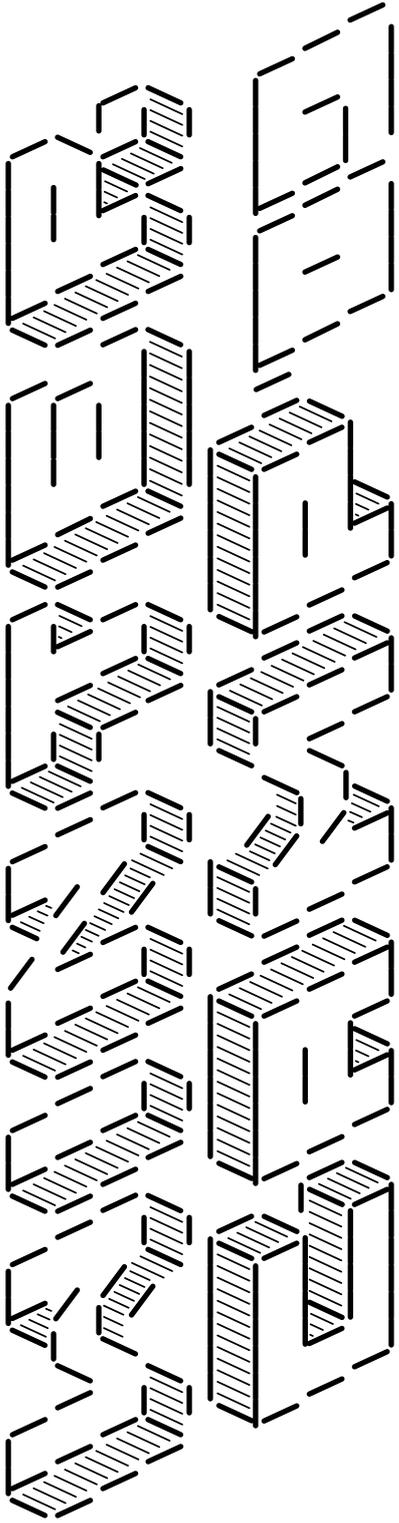
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/23998937@N02/sets/72157614789701094>

Blogposts

>> http://transition.turbulence.org/upgrade_boston/2009/03/winter-camp-report/

>> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/08/final-day-presentation-upgrade/>

>> <http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/wintercamp/2009/03/06/upgrade-meets-freedimensional/>



www.networkcultures.org/wintercamp

OVERVIEW

VIDEO INTERVIEWS

Blender

Interview with Nathan Letwory by Geert Lovink

Nathan Letwory is software developer at the Blender Foundation, the free open source 3D content creation suite, available for all major operating systems. In this interview Nathan tells about the governance structure of this worldwide, collaborative software effort. How are decisions made? What is the role of meeting in real life? The Dutch-Finnish Nathan Letwory is also the founder and maintainer of Planet Blender. <http://vimeo.com/3814877>

Interview with Ton Roosendaal by Sabine Niederer

Blender is an open source software package for 3D modeling, animation, rendering, post-production, and gaming. Initially developed by Ton Roosendaal's company NaN in the Netherlands, its popularity and capabilities have grown over the years. The large and active user base contains dedicated hackers who continuously work on improving and further developing Blender software. Blender thrived during the dotcom bubble, and had to reinvent its organizational model after the dotcom crash. To survive, Blender developed an innovative business model whereby they raised 150,000 Euros within seven weeks, in small donations from the community. In this interview, Ton Roosendaal elaborates on the history of the organization, the product and the community of Blender. <http://vimeo.com/3836064>

Bricolabs

Interview with Venzha Christ by Annette Wolfsberger

Venzhal Christ is an active member of Bricolabs and founder of the House of Natural Fibre in Indonesia. He explains the importance of Bricolabs not as being yet another network, but as an interlinked system of people interested in similar issues and offering interesting different solutions. Although it is an open network there is mainly driven by a core of very active members. He stresses the interrelationship of the local and the international: taking into account local contexts and solutions while learning and vice versa being inspired by international exchange and collaboration. Format and procedures of a network are of less importance to Venzha, as long as Bricolabs achieves its goals: developing alternative generic infrastructures - by doing rather than talking.

<http://vimeo.com/4166163>

Interview with Vicky Sinclair by Gabriella Coleman

Vicky Sinclair, an activist and artist from England, speaks about Bricolabs, "a distributed network for global and local development of generic infrastructures incrementally developed by communities". Bricolabs was one of the more informal networks at Winter Camp composed primarily of a list on which various participants would discuss theoretical as well as practical concerns. As such, they have no formal organizational structure nor do they have need for external funding. Many participants of Bricolabs have local projects running where they live (for example Vicky spoke of her work in Brazil) and then would go to Bricolabs for support and ideas.

<http://vimeo.com/3864637>

Creative Labour

Interview with Valeria Graziano by Soenke Zehle

Valeria Graziano reflects on organizing in the so-called creative industries, the tension between macropolitical forms and the micropolitical conflicts built into them, and possible strategies of resistance to the subsumption of 'creativity' under an economistic paradigm.

<http://vimeo.com/3831826>



Interview with Merijn Oudenampsen by Annette Wolfsberger

Merijn talks about the beginning of the Creative Labour network which started during the MyCreativity conference. It stems from the desire to move beyond the critique of Creative Industries (CI). Creative Labour is an open network, now consisting of approximately 15 CI activists operating under the umbrella of EuroMayday. It is still a relatively young network, which mostly serves as a tool for exchange and inspiration between its members. Merijn discusses differences between activism and campaigning, as opposed to continuous work on issues within a network with the goal to achieve transformation.

<http://vimeo.com/4076099>

Interview with Zoe Romano by Ned Rossiter

Zoe Romano came to Winter Camp with the Creative Labour network. In this interview, Zoe discusses her work with Euromayday network and the way design memes operate as connecting devices for political movements. The question of translation is addressed in the context of collaborations with activists from Japan around issues of precarious labour and the organization of networks.

<http://vimeo.com/4163121>

dyne.org

Interview with Jaromil by Soenke Zehle

The free software programmer, media artist, and activist Jaromil discusses the nomadic structure of dyne.org, the multiple roles played by its members (including hackers who also work for corporations and governments), the struggle to put the question of social justice back into technology, the need for open technologies that allow users to reprogram devices and interfaces and organize local economies, and the refusal of scarcity.

<http://vimeo.com/4165209>

Interview with Tatiana de la O by Soenke Zehle

Tatiana de la O reflects on dyne.org as a net.cultural hub, including free software development projects (FreeJ, Netsukuku), hosting services (Streamtime), a computer museum, and poetry

hacklabs. She speaks about the need for a 'brother plugin' to function in the dyne.org 'brotherhood', and comments on clashes across the network, the dyne.org ethos of resistance to subsumption, and the difference between the visions of open source and free software.

<http://vimeo.com/4089494>

edu-factory

Interview with Claudia Bernardi by Geert Lovink

In this interview Claudia Bernardi speaks of the edu-factory initiative ("conflicts and transformations of the university"), a global network that organizes militant activists and researchers in (higher) education, using specific theoretical frameworks. The initiative was founded 2006 in Southern Europe. "As once was the factory, so now is the university. We start with this plain and apparently unproblematic statement, not to affirm but to interrogate it. We want to radically rethink this assertion by means of both theory and politics". Edu-factory runs a list, website and online journal. Claudia Bernardi also tells about her involvement in the Italian struggles against the privatization of universities.

<http://vimeo.com/4090148>

Interview with Brett Neilson by Gabriella Coleman

Brett Neilson speaks behalf of edu-factory, a collective that started as a transnational mailing list, which theorizes the precarious conditions of university labor as well as student-led uprisings that protest the neo-liberalization of the university system. Among many topics, the issue of organizing group discussion through a moderated and highly focused mailing list was raised. This model is not one that many groups follow but has worked well with edu-factory to streamline and focus networked conversations that can often grow unwieldy. Brett also discussed the role of one of their recent publications, *L'universita' globale: il nuovo mercato del sapere*, in the recent Italian-based protests against the university system.

<http://vimeo.com/3834655>

FLOSS Manuals

Interview with Adam Hyde by Soenke Zehle

Adam Hyde on his understanding of FLOSS Manuals as offering (low-cost) tools of collaboration and education, the role of communities of content developers in the ongoing translation of free content. He talks about book sprints as examples of collaborative writing, the return of print, and why arts and design education should teach principles rather than products.
<http://vimeo.com/4078924>

Interview with Andy Oram by Gabriella Coleman

Andy Oram, an editor for O'Reilly Publishing speaks on behalf of FLOSS Manuals. In the interview Andy discusses why and how FLOSS manuals could lead to the spread and adoption of Free Software. He also highlights the methods and tactics, such as book sprints, being developed by FLOSS manuals to write quality free software documentation.
<http://vimeo.com/3819143>



freeDimensional

Interview with Todd Lester by Soenke Zehle

Todd Lester speaks about the ambivalence of humanitarian work that creates 'added value' for artists and their supporters alike, the necessity to think strategically about collaboration as co-branding, and the need to relate tactically to juridical and political forms.

<http://vimeo.com/4162653>

Interview with Issa Nyaphaga by Soenke Zehle

Issa Nyaphaga speaks about the need for safe havens and the success of cooperation between resident artists and human rights efforts. With origins in experiences of censorship in Sudan, fD saves lives and gives freedom to victims of persecution - if you do not have a network you can disappear. Support from fD comes with access to a large number of other networks (art, human rights, migration, journalism) and global reach, its geography of placement is global as well. As people have always desired to travel, fD supports their choice of location, but does not choose for them. In a broader context, state-led development efforts transfer resources from the poor to the rest; instead, we should directly support the coming together of people, which is why freeDimensional collects and recycles resources to support local efforts.

<http://vimeo.com/3833707>

Genderchangers

Interview with Donna Metzlar and Tali Smith by

Gabriella Coleman

Tali Smith and Donna Metzlar speak on behalf of Genderchangers, a group initiated in Amsterdam but which has since grown beyond its local roots into an Internet based network. Tali Smith was one of the original founders and Donna Metzlar has been one of the more active members in the last number of years. They wanted to do a joint interview (though that was not possible due to the camera set up) so we did a back to back interview. They preferred speaking together because they were uncomfortable speaking for the entire network, which indeed points to the problem of representation that many of

these informal networks face. As a group, they seek to build an environment where women can learn about technology (free software as well as hardware) and support each others in this quest by hosting classes, tutorials, etc. Genderchangers is primarily an online network (though there is a core of participants in the Netherlands) but they also hold a tech festival every year in a different location, which has proved to be an important part of their past, present, and future and is a way to recruit new members (eclectictechcarnival.org). At Winter Camp they composed a new manifesto entitled *WTF: Women, Technology and Freedom*.

<http://vimeo.com/4089791>

<http://vimeo.com/4090016>

GOTO10

Interview with Jan-Kees van Kampen by Annette Wolfsberger

Jan-Kees defines GOTO10 as a rather closed (exclusive) organizational format, which is very open (inclusive) for collaboration - and even more open in the use of its tools: GOTO10 operates on FLOSS principles without compromises.

GOTO10 has experienced different stages of development to agree on its current common goals and its internal relationships. It can be better regarded as a friendship collective than a network: people and personal skills are chosen above (professional) qualities. Kees describes GOTO10's life as based around projects (proposed by its members which engage in them in different levels of activity) and its decision-making procedures as non-hierarchical, almost non-democratic and issue- and trust-based.

<http://vimeo.com/4277699>

Interview with Aymeric Mansoux by Gabriella Coleman

Aymeric Mansoux, one of the collective members of the free software/ art collective GOTO10, discussed the rise and transformation of the group. Configured as a tight-knit circle of friends, GOTO10 at one point experienced a long crisis over growth and institutional stability. As they took on more projects and more members they had to decide how and whether to formalize their group. Their solution: ungrowth. They decided to stay small and flexible, which they achieved by keeping regular funds at bay, by acting primarily as a seeding ground

for new projects (as opposed to overseeing the growth and development of long term projects), and by keeping the collective small.

<http://vimeo.com/3816756>

Microvolunteerism

Interview with Gaia Sprocati by Soenke Zehle

Gaia Sprocati talks about how Microvolunteerism provides freely accessible (and newly developed) communication tools to support projects such as Visible Difference, an effort to document leaks in oil pipelines across Nigeria using GPS-equipped mobile phones. She discusses her work for Stakeholder Democracy, the role of local oil activists in setting the agenda of transnational networks, and the effects of the financial crisis on NGO work.

<http://vimeo.com/4091559>

MyCreativity

Interview with Prayas Abhinav by Soenke Zehle

Prayas Abhinav talks about the need for a new language of relation. While networking is related to communication, often only that which can be communicated is communicated, and the 'latency' of networks - resources available within or outside the network, silent members not addressed or engaged by the protocols that dominate network communication - limits their productivity. No script exists to include the spoken as well as the unspoken, but a greater awareness of the physicality of communicative relations can help imagine, that, which is not expressed along with plurality of social forms and modes of relation. Because many people want their online identities to be consistent, they behave in 'starchy' ways and end up contributing to a further formalization of the social - more spontaneous and open-ended voices and tones are less and less common.

Collaboration is work, which makes it less attractive; but working together negotiates a range of issues that conversation would take much longer to accomplish. Even if people really do function in 'clouds', our computing environments have

grown too large to provide useful models to think about relation. The idiom of networks should be developed further, taking into account other experiences (doctors, traders) to explore how the size of their networks affects their livelihood and survival, and create a vocabulary to capture the physicality of relation.

<http://vimeo.com/3865326>

Interview with Michael LaFond by Ned Rossiter

Michael Lafond participated in the MyCreativity meetings at Winter Camp. With a long background in managing Berlin-based id22: Institute for Sustainable Creativity, Michael shares his insights into the challenges of keeping a culture lab alive and the strategies adopted to facilitate collaborations with a range of institutions, organizations and individuals with diverse interests and agendas.

<http://vimeo.com/4088325>

Upgrade! International

Interview with Kyd Campbell by Annette Wolfsberger

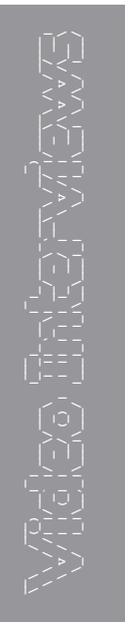
Kyd Campbell has been involved in Upgrade! for several years and experienced the network from many different angles and organizations. Since the network started in 1999 in North America, it has gone through several phases, including fast expansion of the network and hibernation of some nodes, and now has approximately 30 nodes.

Kyd regards Upgrade! as a very open network, in which members are free to act, communicate is on a personal level. While informality is crucial, the lack of clear procedures, can make deciding on common denominators, opinion forming or decision making (e.g. for international events or new members) difficult. Kyd discussed issues of membership (i.e. problems with gate keeping), levels of trust and free reign, and finally challenges of openness (idealism) and closedness (practicality).

<http://vimeo.com/4275113>

Interview with Mushon Zer-Aviv by Gabriella Coleman

Mushon, a digital designer based in New York City, talks about the genesis and evolution of Upgrade!, an extensive network of independent artist hubs/nodes that was initiated in 1999 by



Yael Kanarek and was crafted as a place where local artists could meet, share ideas, and show their work. While the first node in NYC served as the template or inspiration for other groups (which have popped all over the world, though with a heavy concentration in North America and Europe), each group is run autonomously. One issue he raises is the question of inactive nodes. What might they, as a network, do to reanimate them? They are currently trying to initiate more cross-node interaction so as to learn from each other and encourage sharing across the network.

<http://vimeo.com/4163745>

Interview with Başak Şenova by Soenke Zehle

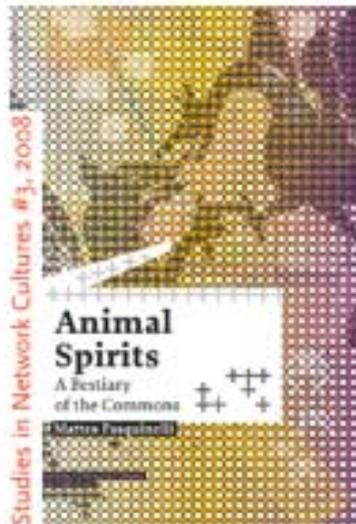
Başak Şenova speaks about the operational logic of the Upgrade! network. Network development is based on personal relationships (30 nodes, perhaps 33 by the end of 2009). All members are linked to (art, academic) institutions; local nodes link up to Upgrade! International. Nodes are not individuals, but systems or networks (Upgrade! Istanbul works with Nomad, offering it a platform for meetings, art and content production within digital culture, including the first digital culture archive in Turkey); there is no standardization of formats and platform, but curatorial principles do exist.

International meetings help find common denominators and establish collaboration, but peer-to-peer collaboration among nodes also occurs as members (many of whom are artists and curators) are already friends and now that collaboration will work. Upgrade! does not offer an "Upgrade! Identity" to affiliated artists, but promotes sharing. Language differences do not overshadow collaboration; the common language is English, but local solutions and multilingual websites exist, other software-based tools are being developed. Other conflicts relate to the difficulty of creating new nodes in Gaza or Cairo, but such projects also promote acquaintance with these geographies.

<http://vimeo.com/3832269>

STUDIES IN NETWORK CULTURES

Studies in Network Cultures is a book series that investigates concepts and practices special to network cultures. Network cultures can be understood as social-technical formations under construction. They rapidly assemble, and can just as quickly disappear, creating a sense of spontaneity, transience and even uncertainty. How to conduct research within such a shifting environment is a key interest to this series. Studies in Network Cultures are edited by Geert Lovink, and published by NAI Publishers, Rotterdam and the Institute of Network Cultures in Amsterdam.

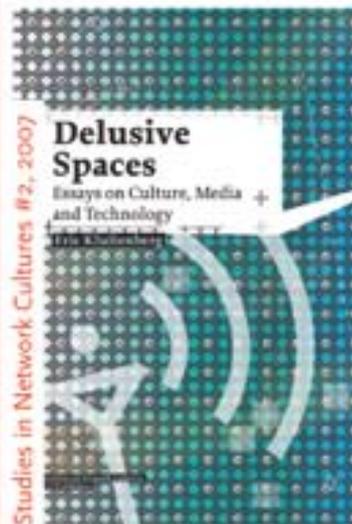


Studies in Network Cultures #3, 2008

Animal Spirits:
A Bestiary of the Commons
by Matteo Pasquinelli.
Animal Spirits is a conceptual 'book of beasts', revealing the irrational forces at work behind the digital economy and cultural production. Against the disembodied theories of postmodernism, Pasquinelli finds in the 'animal body' a concrete ground to reverse the capitalist exploitation of collective imagery.
ISBN 978-90-5662-663-1
€19,50

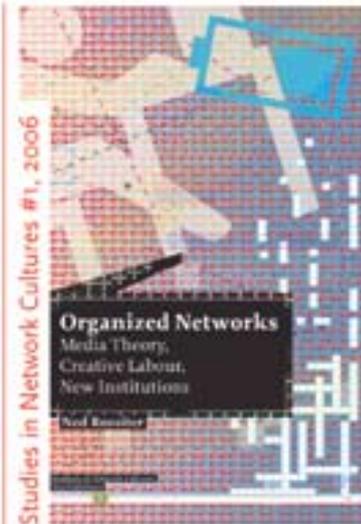
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**Institute of
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Studies in Network Cultures #2, 2007

Delusive Spaces: Essays on Culture, Media and Technology
by Eric Kluitenberg.
With this book Kluitenberg insists upon a cultural reading of media and technology, and argues that in order to reach the desired critical position it is necessary to understand the much larger histories of the linkages of culture and technology and to situate 'new media' cultural practices carefully within the local contexts they emerged from.
ISBN 978-90-5662-617-4
€19,50



Studies in Network Cultures #1, 2006

Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions
by Ned Rossiter.
The celebration of network cultures as open, decentralized, and horizontal all too easily forgets the political dimensions of labour and life in informational times. Organized Networks sets out to destroy these myths by tracking the antagonisms that lurk within Internet governance debates, the exploitation of labour in the creative industries, and the aesthetics of global finance capital.
ISBN 90-5662-526-8
€19,50

Studies in Network Cultures are available in bookstores worldwide and at www.naipublishers.com.
For more information, check www.networkcultures.org.

Colophon

Editor: Geert Lovink

Editorial Assistance:

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Design: Michael Schenkyr

www.schenkyr.com

Illustrations:

Het Harde Potlood

Photos:

Anne Helmond and others

Printer: Raamwerken

Printing & Design B.V.

Publisher:

Institute of Network Cultures,
Amsterdam 2009

ISBN: 978-90-78146-08-7

Bloggers: Liliana Bounegru,

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Winter Camp was supported by:

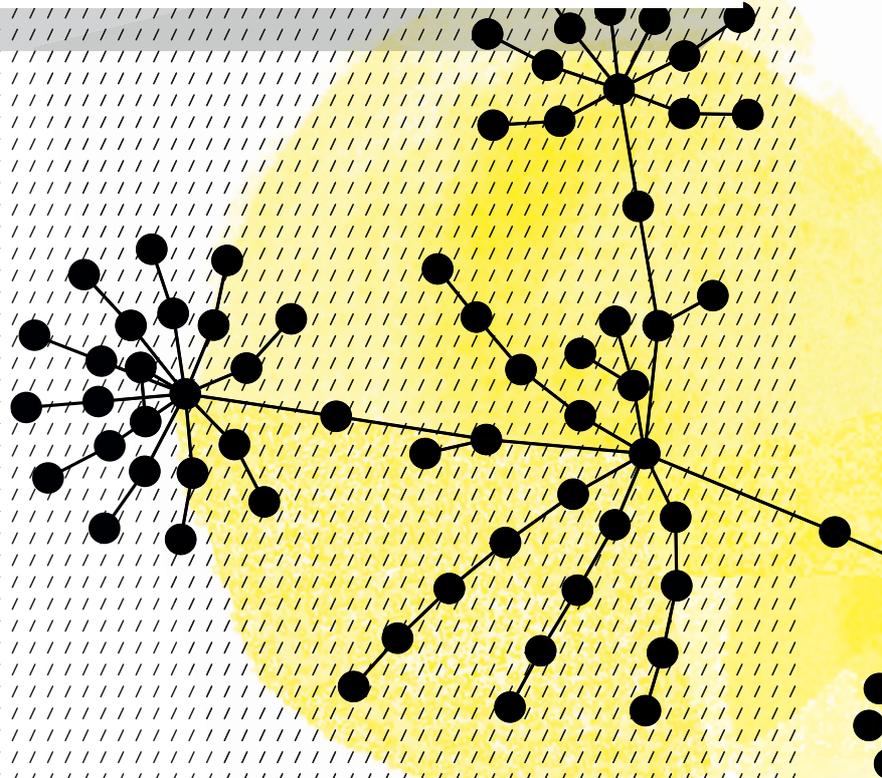
Mondriaan Foundation, Democ-
racy and Media Foundation,
Amsterdam Art Foundation and
the Institute of Interactive
Media at the Amsterdam Uni-
versity of Applied Sciences
(Hogeschool van Amsterdam).

A special thanks to all the
authors for their fantastic
contributions and making the
event such a great success
and thanks to Minke Kampman
and Urte Jurgaityte who did
a wonderful job helping out
organizing this unconference.

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In March 2009 the Institute of Network Cultures brought 12 networks to Amsterdam for a week of getting things done. Aim of Winter Camp was to connect the virtual with the real in order to find out how distributed social networks can collaborate more effectively. The more people start working together online, the more urgent it becomes to develop sustainable network models. Do we just go online to gather 'friends' or do we get organized and utilize these tools to provoke real change in how we work together? How do networks deal with difference, decision making and economic issues? Together with 28 online interviews, this report provides a comprehensive overview of the general issues that the participating networks dealt with during Winter Camp.



Institute of
network cultures



Hogeschool van Amsterdam
University of Applied Sciences

ISBN: 978-90-78146-08-7

