

**Why is the  
No Video Signal Blue?  
Or, Color is No Longer  
Separable From Form, and  
the Collective Joins the  
Brightness Confound.**

**~A Guided Meditation~**

*Andrew Norman Wilson*

**This video is best enjoyed fullscreen with headphones. Feel free to adjust the brightness confound throughout the course of the video.**

<http://vimeo.com/27947579>

**This audio file can be played anywhere there is a projector or monitor that shows blue when there is no signal.**

<http://www.mediafire.com/?yahbtrlj0hdlhe4>

**This text can be read aloud or to oneself anywhere there is a projector or monitor that shows blue when there is no signal.**

Why is the no video signal blue?

The screen is blue unlike the blue on that day last summer when you looked up into the sky and really felt the blueness. The screen is blue unlike the pool you saw from afar on a day when the sky was clear and blue. This blue is too dark to be day, too bright to be night, entirely this blue and not that blue. Neither the light blue of comfort, nor the dark blue of fear.

This is not the blue screen of death, the blue screen of doom, or a stop error. This blue is different than a blue screen of death on a mac computer, which is different than a blue screen of death on a windows computer. These three blue screens are all meant to signify different issues. In the English language, blue often represents the human emotion of sadness. In German, to be blue is to be drunk. Yet a blue sky staring at you

tends to symbolize happiness or optimism. A blue film is a pornographic film.

On a mood ring, blue is generally regarded as indicating a relaxed mood, someone who is at ease. As blue is also the color associated with the throat chakra, this shade may appear at a time when you are vocally struggling or vocally asserting yourself.

Does this blue screen make you see bluish skin? Is that light colored clothing now blue? And the walls? Is this environment becoming no video signal blue? If you were to smile, would your teeth turn blue? If you are awake, are the whites of your eyes now blue?

If you were to take two instances of the no video signal blue, both would be different. Wittgenstein may as well have written: "In my room I am surrounded by objects of different colors. It is easy to say what color they are. But if I were asked what color I am now seeing from here at, say, this place on my table, I couldn't answer; the place is whitish (because the light wall makes my no video signal blue table lighter here) at any rate it is much lighter than the rest of the table, but, given a number of color samples, I wouldn't be able to pick out one which had the same coloration as this area of my no video signal blue table" The philosopher, staring pensively at the table in front of him, begins to unsee things, things he has seen and the color of which he knows. When he looks more closely, he notices that there is a gap between what he has seen and what he is seeing. Looking closer, he sees

that color is not separate from illumination.

The inseparability of color and illumination was dubbed “the brightness confound” by an empirical researcher frustrated at his inability to explain away the anomalies of vision. Standard “blue” or “red” or “white” separate from vagaries of illumination, are seen anytime in principle, but nowhere in particular. Anytime and nowhere: the elements of the empirical, or hues on the color wheel, are timeless and spaceless. The singular is without model and without resemblance. It resembles only itself. As anyone who has dressed herself knows, “we judge colors by the company they keep.” It is not just that colors mutually change, or reciprocally vary, when they congregate; more radically, they become unstable and even imperceptible in isolation. What is singular about color is the relationality of its ever-varying appearing. Colors are convivial by nature. Deprive them of company and they “blank out.” A color is an alteration of a complete spectrum.

What the philosopher unsees is what a baby sees: a brightness confound enveloped in an experiential confound. What is perceived is wholly and only change. The baby responds to changes in energy, ignoring modality of input. The baby perceives only transition, unspecified as to sense. Given that the spatial sense is

one of those unspecified, the transition is without beginning and endpoints: relation without its terms. Termless, relation does not objectively appear. It can only appear as a whole and energetically: as an unspecified (if not undifferentiated) intensity of total experience.

No beginning, no end. Just event, just William James’ “streaming.” In seeing, the elements of things settle only slowly into general classes divided according to sense mode and inculcated through conventional language, language used as an abstract standard of comparison.

### Letter to Sony

Hello,

I am an artist working with video and digital media. I am wondering why monitors + projectors show the color blue when there is no signal. When was this decided? Who decided? How did the decision become implemented? I understand that basic customer service will probably not be able to answer this question, but if I could be pointed in the right direction I would appreciate it very much. In short, why is the no video signal screen blue?

Sincerely,

Andrew Norman Wilson

### Response from Sony

Andrew Wilson,

Thank you for contacting Sony Support. In order to determine the exact resolution for your support issue, we require the model number of your Sony unit. Please get back to us with the complete/correct model number of your Sony unit and I will be able to research and provide you the information.

Thank you for understanding.

The Sony Email Response Team  
C6EM  
Brian

### My Response to Sony

Hello,

The resolution of my Sony unit is irrelevant for this question. I understand if it’s not within your job description to know the answer, but if you could speak to your manager and have them direct the question to the appropriate person at Sony (perhaps a senior engineer), it would be much appreciated.

To summarize, I’m wondering why the the decision was made to show the color blue when there is no signal. Why is the no video signal screen colored blue?

Thanks,

Andrew

### **Response from Sony**

Andrew,

I'm sorry for the confusion in the previous response. The product specification you are seeking has not currently been published by Sony. Unfortunately, this information is beyond the scope of what we are able to provide through our online support service.

If you sincerely require this information you can make a formal request for this data by calling our customer service division. If appropriate they will take down your contact information and pass your request through to the sustaining engineering team responsible for this product.

You may reach them at (800) 222-7669.

[No response from Sony's sustaining engineering team](#)

### **Response from Panasonic**

Thank you for your inquiry.

At this time, we cannot advise you of the reason the decision was made to make the monitors a solid blue screen when there is no signal. This decision was not determined by Panasonic. We hope this information is helpful to you. Thank you for choosing Panasonic.

### **My Response to Panasonic**

Hello,

Do you have any way of finding out who made this decision?

Thanks

Andrew

### **Response from Panasonic**

Thank you for your response.

We have no way of finding out this information. you may have to conduct an online research on this particular inquiry.

Thank you for contacting Panasonic.

### **Response from VIZIO**

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your email to Vizio. Here at Vizio we pride ourselves in our service and best in class support and honestly the blue signal screen just seems to be the industry standard. We are not certain who implemented it or why they chose blue. I do apologize that I couldn't be of more assistance to you with this issue.

Sincerely,

Leah Anderson

vizio

"America's #1 LCD HDTV Company"

Even if everything we see is blue, we are also able to imagine red. We are capable of forming feelings, and yearning after potentialities, that differ from those provided by actual entities in the actual world. The data of novelty is not present in these actualities, and so it must arise out of our subjective aim. See red, see yellow, see green, see orange, see purple, see pink, see black.

## Works Cited

### Image

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Final Cut Pro

### Audio

[Walter de Maria – “Ocean Music”](#)

[Alice DeeJay – “Better Off Alone”](#)

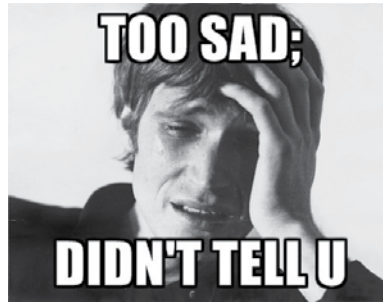
### Text

[Brian Massumi – “Parables for the Virtual”](#)

[Ludwig Wittgenstein – “Remarks on Colour”](#)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue>

**TL;DR**  
Billy Rennekamp



A short attention span paired with a critical eye is a powerful tool. Google is god of the Internet not because it produces the best content but because it shows you what you want. This becomes more and more valuable as the quantity of online content increases. Cisco Systems predicts the annual global IP traffic will quadruple by 2015 reaching 966 exabytes (over 1 trillion gigabytes).



"Too Long; Didn't Read", often referred to as "Teal Deer" for the phonemic similarity to the abbreviation "TL;DR", is a common phrase and "confirmed" meme. It is used in comments and captions as a form of criticism of the length of a piece of writing. The phrase celebrates efficient brevity.



What follows are 30 tweets posted to an account made for this occasion. They are attempts at transforming various texts into more manageable sizes. Credit is given to original authors. If you find the format pleasing and create your own please tweet them @pool\_tldr and they will be reposted.

**Too Sad; Didn't Tell U – Bas Jan Ader**

**Too Drunk; Didn't Fuck – Dead Kennedys**

**Too Hot; Didn't Handle / Too Cold; Didn't Hold – Macho Man Randy Savage**

**Too Sexy; Didn't Shirt – Right Said Fred**

**Too Good; Didn't Home – Happy Gilmore**

**Too Short; Didn't Ride – Six Flags**

**Too Big; Too Wide; Didn't Fit – Beyonce**

**Too Low; Didn't Zero – Elton John**

**Too Short; Didn't Pissed Off – American History X**

**Too Slow; Didn't Wait / Too Swift; Didn't Fear / Too Long; Didn't Grieve / Too Short; Didn't Rejoice – Henry Van Dyke**

**Too Fast; Didn't Live / Too Young; Didn't Die – The Eagles**

**Too Loud; Too Old – Ariheads**

**Too Boyz; Didn't Men – Original**

**Too Black; Didn't Milk – Malcolm X**

**Too Sweet; Didn't Rock 'n' Roll – Almost Famous**

**Too Smart; Didn't Vote – Plato**

**Too Sick/Freaked; Didn't Breath / Too Sick/Freaked; Didn't Care / Too Sick/Freaked; Didn't Think – Henry Rollins**

**Too Good; Didn't True – Frankie Valli**

**Too Cold; Didn't Hell – William Shakespeare**

**Too Late; Didn't Hear / Too Late; Didn't Tear – Black Sabbath**

**Too Heavy; Didn't Get With Me – Tony Braxton**

**Too Good; Didn't Last – Bonnie Tyler**

**Too Gay; Didn't Function – Mean Girls**

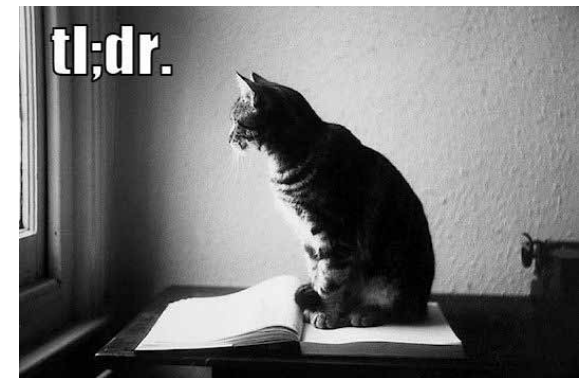
**Too White; Didn't Blues – Conway Twitty**

**Ass Too Fat; Whoop Whoop – Trina**

**Too Close; Didn't Comfort – Frank Sinatra**

**Too High; Didn't Sky – Stevie Wonder**

**Too Wet; Didn't Plow – Dusty Drake**



## User Generated Content

Casey A. Gollan

### How we got where we are today

Computers don't know anything. They have to be programmed and designed extensively to make sense as tools for accomplishing even the most basic of tasks. If you wanted to draw a circle using an untrained computer, you would have to tell the computer what a "circle" is, how to draw a line, and even that there is such thing as a canvas on which to draw. Today this is not the case. Proficient tools for accomplishing most tasks already exist, so users don't have to know how to program in order to get things done. Photoshop, for example, makes drawing a circle into a single drag-and-drop action so intuitive that users never have to consider the underlying procedures or equations.

A computer connected to the internet becomes not just a tool for drawing circles, but a platform for relationships and a magical container for all the forms of media that preceded it. Of the major websites on which artists have come to work and play: Facebook, Tumblr, YouTube, and Twitter, each does something a little different, but they are all free, mass-market, "Web 2.0" tools, intended to connect users to each other through content they contribute: status updates, pictures, videos, and profiles. Everyone uses these sites to keep up with friends and family and to express their identity, but for artists they also function as a casual, social, and surprisingly robust publishing and distribution system, and often the subject of the work itself. There used to be a saying about freedom of the press being guaranteed only to those who own one, but today's tools

are so far beyond print that an artist working with the internet has little use for something so antiquated as a printing press.

For the computer to become so widely used as a live, work and play space, it had to be modeled largely after the life which preceded it. On his Post Internet blog Gene McHugh writes, "[the] 'Internet' became not a thing in the world to escape into, but rather the world one sought escape from...sigh...It became the place where business was conducted, and bills were paid. It became the place where people tracked you down." Likewise, everyday life has become "technologized" to the extent that offline interactions now occur in the language of technology. A good conversation puts us on "the same wavelength," as if we're radios. The word "like" is becoming primarily a verb used to describe the action of "liking" a Facebook page.

Facebook didn't exist until 2004, YouTube 2005, Twitter 2006, and Tumblr 2007. Networked technology is now present everywhere in everything from our always-on cellphones to connected urban infrastructures to autonomous global stock markets. Our lives have become so integrated with networks in such short order that it is almost unimportant to distinguish between communication on and offline. While my grandpa grins from ear-to-ear each time we video chat and talks about how we're living in the future, my little sister routinely "hangs out" with her friends online, leaving the video window open in the background as a kind of presence. The perpetual connectedness of rising generations



has kicked technology's status as spectacle into rapid decline.

John Durham Peters, who ponders "being on the same wavelength" in his book Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication, writes that, "communication as a person-to-person activity became thinkable only in the shadow of mediated communication." He writes in the past tense with a certain sense of finality, as if this shift happened at a certain point in time and never changed. But new tools are being introduced every day, and with each system update or new website we sign up for the kinds of mediation we engage with change. It's not so much that technology has crept into everyday life but that there is a back-and-forth exchange of metaphor between online and off; a continuous push and pull between fashioning our tools and being shaped by them.

### How our tools have changed

In 1985, Marvin Minsky published The Society of Mind, a book that attempts to explain the possibility of artificial intelligence by atomizing complex human activities. For example, "making something out of blocks" is broken down into a tree of yes or no actions called agents. Because his reductionist philosophy is admittedly not very technical, Minsky is able

to describe how we interact with technology in a remarkably clear way:

"When you drive a car, you regard the steering wheel as an agency that you can use to change the car's direction. You don't care how it works. But when something goes wrong with the steering, and you want to understand what's happening, it's better to regard the steering wheel as just one agent in a larger agency: it turns a shaft that turns a gear to pull a rod that shifts the axle of a wheel. Of course, one doesn't always want to take this microscopic view; if you kept all those details in mind while driving, you might crash because it took too long to figure out which way to turn the wheel. Knowing how is not the same as knowing why."

Minsky's distinction between having the ability to use a tool and understanding how it works is even more important today than it was in the 80's because technology has become better, closer, and harder to distinguish, though it would appear that nothing has changed. Several years ago when my mom's car stalled on the highway, the repairman told her that the car was physically in fine shape but that its internal computer—an intermediary between the pedals and engine that serves as a sort of control center—had failed. A specialized code repairman had to be called in to run a diagnostic and

figure out what went wrong.

When Minsky wrote about cars, the underlying system was only hidden behind a facade of metal and plastic. While the workings of a car have always been complex, back then there were physically connected rods and gears between steering wheel and axle, which could be taken apart piece-by-piece and put back together in order to understand how the car works. Computers allow for an interface, like pedals and a steering wheel, to be decoupled from its mechanics. In a computerized car, changes to the steering wheel still result in a shifting of the axle but these actions are triggered by code, sensors, chips and wires (or even wireless signals) that obviate the need for decipherable physical connections. If we're not granted access to the obfuscated code loaded onto our cars' computer chips, we can no longer truly take our cars apart and put them back together again, and we have lost the potential to understand yet another one of the systems behind our everyday lives.

When we can't deal with technology on its own terms: code, we rely on the metaphors presented by its interface to come up with stories about how it works. My mom didn't even know her car had a computer in it until it broke down because it looked and worked just like every other vehicle she had owned. With a bit of clev-

erness, programmers and designers are able to make a computerized car appear no more complicated than a car from the 80's though a computer is invisibly routing input from the steering wheel to the axels and optimizing for fuel efficiency. This is a major reason our attempts at understanding the tools we work with today more often result in amassing a series of built-up misunderstandings.

The car is an example of a relatable system that is secretly complex, but we also tend to project a sense of complexity onto simple systems. Paul Ford's essay Time's Inverted Index illustrates the way we filter a computer's output, like a keyword search covering ten years of email, through our emotional brains:

"It is not the fault of the software, which is by definition unwitting. No one writing code said, 'Let's totally mess with his perception of self and understanding of free will.' The code sees an email that is filled with words as something like a small bucket that is filled with coins. It takes the coins out one by one and stacks them in squares marked out for each denomination, adding a slip of paper between each coin that indicates the coin's bucket of origin. Then it does the same with the next bucket. There are many denominations of coins; a truly big table, called an inverted index, is needed to hold them all. The coin-sorting program cannot think or advise, but it does allow you to go to a pile of coins on the table, pick them up, and know their buckets of origin. It's my unrigid brain that turns a sorted stack of coins into a story—so there I was, query-

ing against my life, tapping the touchscreens of fate and clicking the mouse of destiny, all of it suffused with a sort of sweet nostalgia. (Of my emails, 893 mention libraries; 311 mention libraries and love.)"

Early experiments in Information Retrieval aside, before web search which was only put into practical use in the 90's, there was really no such thing as search. Yet search has become a paradigm. A fundamental way we expect to access information. An inalienable right. I searched Google 46 times today alone. If we're not looking critically at the way technology orders our experience, we are operating on juxtapositions of information which may be arbitrary, unimportant, or—as is the case with the computerized car—beyond understanding. On top of that we interpret these results as bearing emotion, utility and truth, the sweet nostalgia which Ford refers to.

Google is working hard to maintain the feeling of simplicity and effortlessness while simultaneously increasing the underlying complexity that makes results better. A promotional site boasts, "at any given time there are 50-200 different versions of our core algorithm out in the wild. Millions more when you realize your search results are personalized to you and you alone." There is still only one search box, but there are as many different result sets as there are visitors to the site. While my mom misunderstood her car, she at least had a mental model of cars from before computers to believe in. Software with no real life counterpart can be tricky because all

we have to go in terms of creating our stories is an abstract, utilitarian interface like a textbox, search button, and some basic ideas about servers sending bits to and fro. The same clever design that makes complicated software easy to understand can lead users to a kind of collective hysteria as they try to decipher hidden meanings in the way their friends are ordered on Facebook.

Abstract inventions like search boxes also find their way back into real life in curious ways. I find myself strangely frustrated in offline situations that lack Google's utility, like a used bookstore with no searchable catalog. Google has not just changed expectations about the findability of information, it has shaped the way that we ask for it. We used to ask questions of a librarian or an expert but computers are not yet adept at processing "natural language," so we meet them halfway by reducing our questions to queries composed of keywords and operators. When Google tweaked their interface to instantly show results before users even finish typing a query, half-typed words and phrases immediately started to show up in the referral logs of my website.

### Life in the shadow of technology

As a cognizant user, Ford is careful not ascribe blame to his computer, but in their paper Bias in Computer Systems researchers Batya Friedman and Helen Nissenbaum examine the ways in which, "groups or individuals can be systemati-

cally and unfairly discriminated against in favor of others by computer systems.”

“Computer systems...are comparatively inexpensive to disseminate, and thus, once developed, a biased system has the potential for widespread impact. If the system becomes a standard in the field, the bias becomes pervasive. If the system is complex, and most are, biases can remain hidden in the code, difficult to pinpoint or explicate, and not necessarily disclosed to users or their clients. Furthermore, unlike in our dealings with biased individuals with whom a potential victim can negotiate, biased systems offer no equivalent means for appeal.”

The examples presented here are less concerned with the problem of users being intentionally manipulated than with the opportunity cost of docilely operating within dominant software patterns, even so Friedman and Nissenbaum’s unpacking of computer biases is eye-opening. Of the three types of bias the authors have identified, we have already encountered two: Preexisting Bias and Technical Bias. “Preexisting Bias has its roots in social institutions, practices, and attitudes.” The computer environment described by McHugh that all too closely mimics real world drudgery is an example of how computers imbued with real world metaphors inevitably carry unnecessary conventions from the physical into the digital

realm. The computerized car which masks its complexity and impenetrability behind an interface indistinguishable from its pre-computer predecessors also exhibits this type of potential bias. “Technical bias arises from technical constraints or considerations.” Complex Google searches with results sorted using a cryptic algorithm as well as the stupidly simple keyword searches which Ford found himself interpreting as an accurate representation of events, are examples of the way that technical considerations can manipulate users intentionally or thoughtlessly.

While Friedman and Nissenbaum note that almost all instances of computer bias can be classified as either Preexisting or Technical, they identify a third type called Emergent Bias, which has great ramifications for artists working with Web 2.0 tools. Emergent bias arises “after a design is completed, as a result of a change in the context or usage of a system.” The hacking and retrofitting of existing software in the service of creative expression or critique is often celebrated as clever and resourceful, but what assumptions of that software are still being carried by the work? Any time the ways a user wants to work with a system butt up against its constraints, and the work they are doing is disadvantaged as a result, it can be classified as a case of Emergent Bias called “user mismatch.” Unlike victims of bias, however, artists seem to seek out

these problematic areas.

The meta-ness of an artist like Ann Hirsch whose Scandalishious project satirizes a typical relationship with social media using YouTube itself seems to be stretching what is considered a “typical use” of the site. Typical use is hard to pin down because a site dedicated to user generated content can foster a culture of typical users as well as a group that is critical of them. Hirsch’s work and others like it may actually be strongest at the points where it becomes unclear if the artist is omnisciently addressing big problems and questions or enjoying being a part of the scene. On such general platforms neither group seems to be at a distinct disadvantage, especially because most users would agree that the companies behind Web 2.0 tools do not appear to be acting maliciously against them in providing these free web services.

Artists attempting to be critical of our relationship to social networking sites should follow the money back to advertising, where they will find irony in embedding themselves within the systems they seek to explicate. In You Are Not a Gadget, Jaron Lanier writes:

“The customers of social networks are not the members of those networks... the whole idea of fake friendship, is just bait laid by the lords of the clouds to lure

hypothetical advertisers...who could someday show up...If the revenue never appears, then a weird imposition of a database-as-reality ideology will have colored generations of teen peer group and romantic experiences for no business or other purpose."

It's worth considering on a broad level that the very idea of user-generated content is an assumption perpetuated by Web 2.0 tools which has simply come to dominate internet art. Tumblr, the only one of the four major tools mentioned that does not heavily plaster content pages with display advertising, appears to be taking a financial loss and burning through venture capital money to grow their userbase and integrate their product more deeply into users' lives. Starting a conversation about how computers shape our lives is important, but responses that don't functionally uproot those systems will have bizarrely situated a generation of artists as a product whose criticality is being sold back to advertisers.

### **In defense of building tools**

It doesn't matter how critical what you're saying is, the companies who thrive on user generated content would like very much for you to continue generating it at length. Content is an icky word for a reason, it doesn't make any distinction between what is being said or to whom; it is something measured in click-throughs and conversion rates rather than poignancy or intelligence. In Marshall McLuhan's famous words, "the medium

is the message." Power lies with the makers of mediums, or to use a term less slippery within an art context, tools and platforms. Though it has been described throughout this essay how design patterns, behaviors, and world views can swiftly circulate between the real and the virtual, it is rare to see users—artists especially—being the ones to create tools directly.

Creating new systems does not disallow hacking on top of existing ones, it just means knowing the full extent of the existing system's biases and very intentionally keeping or discarding them. There can be no compromise. Even a tiny adjustment to the way an existing system introduces bias might necessitate throwing out everything on which it is built and starting from scratch. It could be said that tasking artists with building alternative systems for digital existence is too practical. In addition to the emotional intelligence it takes to dissect the ways computers warp our relationships with ourselves and each other, creating tools that address this requires experience with code. However, organizations like Creativetime have been pushing hard at the idea of "useful art" that seem to be nothing more than a thinly veiled draft of artists into the humanitarian workforce. In a strange way, experiments with technology seem to go beyond protestors, politicians, and non-profit organizations in their potential to create change. "[Technologists] tinker with your philosophy by direct manipulation of your cognitive experience, not indirectly, through argument. It takes only a tiny group of engineers to create technology that can shape the entire future of human experience with

incredible speed," writes Jaron Lanier.

In a blog post titled In Defense of Building Tools, Derek Willis, a developer for The New York Times, writes:

"A good tool doesn't just make it easier for a reporter to create a story. It actually seeds the story, or makes it possible for more people in a newsroom to collaborate. When you have data but no tool, you become a gatekeeper of a sorts – which is appropriate in many circumstances, but not all. I can't possibly know what my colleagues are thinking about, considering or being alerted to, but I can make it easier for them to test out theories and do some exploration on their own. Some of them prefer to do their own work, and we certainly miss some opportunities for apps that way. But others consult with me quite a bit, since they now have a much better idea of what we have and what we might be able to do with it."

These examples are tailored towards journalism but the logic applies soundly to artists working with the internet too. In the words of Clay Shirky newspapers are seeing, "old stuff get broken faster than the new stuff is put in its place." Maybe because of this, journalism has been one of the more progressive fields in terms of adopting custom-made tools and interfaces. In another example from the New York Times, comment threads for highly discussed articles have been elegantly improved by integrating hard data from users that allows thousands of responses to be mapped onto a zeitgeist visual-

izing matrix. The authors of a book called Newsgames even pose that journalism has a lot to learn from videogames! As a rich experience that cannot exist on any previous medium alone, the authors propose that so called “newsgames” could teach people the dynamics of complicated systems through simulated first-hand experience, rather than by inference from an account of events or by reading dry explanations. Newspapers and other “old media” employ a paid content publishing model, as opposed to relying on the explosion of free user generated content. While the authors of Newsgames write that these would be supplements rather than replacements for news, it seems to be a vision that looks beyond content and towards systems.

Knowing how even the mundane aspects of computing like files and folders can filter back into the way we think and behave, what if we redesigned these aspects of computing to incorporate more inventive modes of working? Planetary is an iPad app by a company called Bloom which visualizes a user’s iTunes library in the form of a galaxy rather than a spreadsheet. While at first I was put off by how superfluous this seems, the designers believe “these Instruments aren’t merely games or graphics. They’re new ways of seeing what’s important.” What if instead of files and folders, we visualized what we are working on like a solar system? Turns

of phrase could be set into orbit at different velocities and a solar forecast of our filesystem would determine how things get pulled together. I often find myself navigating a crowded array of overlapping windows, which seems symptomatic of multitasking or ADD, so how would a system that takes this mindset as a starting point ideally work? These bespoke systems don’t have to save the world. What did files and folders ever do for you? Lanier seem to hint that popular interfaces become pervasive more by conspiracy or aggressive advertising than on merit anyway. Simply introducing different kinds of arbitrariness may lead to accidental discoveries about the way we work and live.

Wired Magazine has called Xanadu, a system proposed by Ted Nelson (inventor of the word “hypertext”) both, “the most radical computer dream of the hacker era,” and, “the longest-running vaporware project in the history of computing.” Xanadu assumes an entirely different relationship with “content” than we are used to. The web as we know it is made up of documents which link between each other. Xanadu’s key difference is it’s rigid structure, in which all links must be bi-directional. For example, if you wanted to take a piece of one document and put it into another, instead of “copy and pasting” you would do something called “transclusing.” While on a functional level

copy and pasting takes a series of characters in one document and replicates them in another, transclusion less redundantly embeds a linked version of the original document into the new one. Clever design might make the interaction of transcluding no more complicated than a copy and paste, but transclusions are more meaningful because they can be followed like links from use to use. If the author of the transcluded fragment had derived it from somewhere else, a user could continue to follow the phrase through all of its incarnations. Xanadu would create radically different possibilities and limitations in both digital and physical space. In fact, Nelson envisioned that Xanadu’s linked attribution could be tied into a micropayment system that would end copyright disputes and provide content creators with steady income unlike the theories of “free” which have popped up to explain our present situation. A collage of images made with source material from ten different people would be traceable back to each of them, and payments as small as a few cents could trickle back to the image owners for every single use. In the bi-directionally linked world of Xanadu, the metaphor of files and folders become unimportant too. Ted Nelson evocatively describes flying through documents in 3D gaming space. Imagine how de-emphasizing carried over hierarchical metaphors like files and folders might affect the way we work in real life, as we chew through

hyper-textual trains of thought. I'm doubtful that such a rigid system could ever be of use to a large group of people, but the prospect of such a bold experiment with more opinionated software excites me.

The way things are now is more like a pile up of metaphors and recycled code than laws of interaction which are set in stone. As can be seen in the examples above, designing computer systems is a strangely direct way of altering how people experience the world and relate to each other. Perhaps in the coming years artists will be able to create new platforms with the conceptual backbone that is lacking in today's popular offerings. Artists who are already thinking critically about the way networked technology orders our experience might try experimenting with becoming makers of mediums, if only so that whatever comes after Web 2.0 offers more to artists than free hosting of its own critique.

**World Wide Web  
or the Incidents**  
*Constant Dullaart*

This speech was dictated to my computer add to speech recognition software on 27 August's 2011 I chosen this format of the dictate that the rants and do illustrates the miscommunication and confusion in word or definition of the Internet within our content at the contemporary arts practice them at the moment I'm sitting alone in my room and or exceeding my studio and I'm lying on the floor talking to the ceiling butts to the way that I talk is translated by the software into a long piece of text might within the syntax of spoken language of course is completely different than written language so there are no periods! School mouse or the like but this is the emphasize the problem with the translation between media the Internet as a medium as a networked medium is a challenging medium because it's the first time that so much artwork but also so much representation of the world around us is experienced in private most of the time you sit at home alone experienced the new Iraq, loaned actually behind the computer alone an experienced the news contemporary arts all these the messages from friends your social life while you wear are alone at the computer this creates a need for the social or group meetings this for example also causes the popularity of a thing by BYOB but not only the idea of experiencing art in private and experiencing net art in private but also the availability of its big continual availability of its them causes that problems

translating this to the context in which most contemporary arts are still viewing these problems our or have been there for the last 20 years and the efforts that were made to overcome these gems is sure that translational problems them our but there were other many of them visit the bad eToys Jodi's view although most of the order most people that read this text well no older the efforts that were made but them by now it seems as if the more more and more curators I speak to are using the term Internet arts also for works that on the board have a more and more vague relation do the incidents for example the use of the word Internet and post Internet is for me a very confusing one because of course it suggests at the idea up after the Internet as if add there was something resolved already but the course in its use it's because you accept the idea of the Internet in our daily life and as a cultural input and the accepting the idea that the Internet is changing our daily approach or approach to aesthetics that and in that sense of course it is also valid but how come there's more and more miscommunication about this outcome does more more confusion about the Internet art if of course the term is was already that specific but I think that it's not so much most Internet but the more intimate nowhere aren't most of it and a lot of the Ark in the presented within the school text is actually computer art or computer related arts and if these

terms would be used more specifically I think we would then create a larger impact for these works and they would fit better with in a larger cultural and artists or who can but let's say that there's still problems of documenting works that are natively within a networked circumstance that there's problems archiving them because most of them are still ephemeral and their surroundings change then if they're within Google or YouTube or Facebook their surroundings to change a law to graphic the interface changes then and these things are very hard to the place within a larger the contemporary arts discourse because it is so fleeting and so he said his the while the federal so so not only do the the way of exhibiting his problems also the archiving these works also storing them also protecting them or the the elements may they be digital or may that be natural the is the day a very big part of the of this discourse so if trends like more traditional ways or accepted forms of art are being used do the to present these works that's one thing but if these traditional forms by themselves become cold Internet art again and that relationship to the Internet as more and more vague this becomes disturbing and almost insulting two the people that were actually the still trying to emancipate the medium with in this larger contemporary art practice because I feel this is the most important medium that of our time them most representation of the world around us is being experienced through the computer at the moment through a network the done surrounding this is something that has never been done before to experience so much representation individually then these kind of things are very necessary to I

discuss with in the contemporary arts how come these the the things won't be discussed and people fall back on more traditional even more nostalgic forms of presenting arts of course that this can be a part of your arts practice it's also part of my art practice but please let's they care about these definitions I'm continually talking to bad people about these definitions because there's so much Ms. confused there so much miscommunication and confusion about this so therefore I would like to ask people to be more precise about what they're doing or actually about which work and what were doing what then even if it's floating between several things of course I understand that you don't want to be boxed in and don't want to be the but Seyed defined the nature work shouldn't be defined but them but for me the hardest thing is to see all these efforts that were made even by the the the conceptual artist in the 60s but also by net artist in the 90s see them also always almost insulted by easiness that now things can be called Internet arts for a translation of Internet art wow they're actually computer are 12 actually just the relationship to the Internet of course the Internet chains and of course it's not only about the nuts and bolts and what but the thing is that there's still these core problems the core problems are still the same it's not and that even with all these newer additions it's not that new it's not that new that you don't care about the nuts and bolts and more them they were social networks before there were social circumstances within these networked environments in the 90s Facebook is of course a new thing and it's the influencing of things but these things were used in the 90s and

then I have on that site I find it hard that these problems are not the finding its way into then museums into the galleries and that's the more and more people tend to make gallery the related work and choose save safe options I think then what we need now that there's more and more attention for this kind of works and people realize that this is the most important medium in our time also for the arts that's the there should be we should seek for creative and I've larger solutions that would involve then new approaches to dealing with showing these words that are the Borg are basically only the the existing within these network circumstances of the World Wide Web or the incidents



**Notes on a Drive**  
*Daniel G. Baird*

In the summer of 2009 I went on a road trip to visit NASA spaceflight centers and the pre-Columbian ruins that scatter the southwestern continental United States. I paired these two seemingly disparate historical sites to experience their similarities. The ruins and NASA are both time capsules for cultural moments in a shared technological history. Geared toward the contemplation of the heavens, each site represents an engagement with cosmic ideas through ephemeral and physical spiritualism. What occurred to me after visiting them was unexpected.

I wanted to understand the technology that pursues the abstraction of space, and to gain a physical encounter of a place in this era of virtual ease. This interest is derived from an engagement with issues surrounding the preservation of ideas through technological artifacts. When thinking about NASA and advanced science in its eventual obsolete state, they become future artifacts of the present. The thought of the future as a ruin lying in wait makes for a fruitful leap in thought. I was making objects that specifically referenced preservation and I felt a disconnect with using these ideas without seeing them in person. I needed to visit these sites to fully understand their significance within my practice.

The influence of these sites in my work actually comes from the ideas surround-

ing the site rather than from the experience of seeing it. Working in the manner of direct referentiality of historical objects and ideas, experience is a borrowed enterprise. The activation of certain sites, objects or ideas can occur without a full understanding of them. One cannot time-travel to activate the zeitgeist of a past age, but the ideas produced during those times are embedded within the objects that remain. I wanted to see how my work would be modified from the experience of physically seeing and engaging with these historical and technologically advanced places. I wanted to travel back into our generational past and touch the margins of the anticipated technological future.

My journey began in the desolate landscapes and strangely familiar crumbling structures of the Southwest. In these altered and unfamiliar landscapes the presence of a rich history has a distinct weight. The picturesque ruins fade away and the experience of a place takes hold over all preconceived notions. There was a surreal feeling of nostalgia and sympathy for these places. The structures were unfamiliar yet I felt a close ness to them.

When presented with the ruin we are confronted with our potential (inevitable) destruction. We are forced to consider the destruction of ourselves in the uncertain future. The built object carries the trace

of humanity in every mark. Natural forces usurp the cohesive built structures of ancient civilizations and elicit terror within us. It is in all cases a matter of sympathy for the past. We recognize the passing of humanity in crumbling walls and eroded structures. This sympathy entices an existential consideration to our own ruinous future.

Visiting is no longer necessary when one can walk down any street in Google Earth, or stitch the experience of the site after multiple images of its location are viewed online. These specific physical sites contain a much different trajectory of meaning than the mundane location that is easily arrived at through viewing pictorially. I became fully interested in the reactivation of an aura, seemingly gone missing from much of our current experience. !!

After my exploration into these locations of archaeological significance, I looked into locations and sites of technological importance aimed at the future of anticipated posterity. I arranged tours of the NASA hubs speckled along the coasts, got chased by unmarked vehicles after wrong turns at Government missile ranges and broke into abandoned aircraft graveyards where planes sat in disarray with weeds emerging throughout. This was an investigation into the ruins of the contemporary.

The launch pads of Cape Canaveral, FL are the doorways into the frontier of space and the infinite expansiveness of the sublime. They sit like complex scaffolding waiting for the missing underlying structure. They embody a connection

to pure virtuality. It is the entryway to a location of no-location. This location of nothingness that space represents is the sublime. The infinite possibility of space is the sandbox of creative thought and expression. Being presented with these technological artifacts of awesome power brought into focus their significance through a lens I had not been able to understand before. In a similar vein to the comprehension of outer space, I could not fathom the greatness of these locations. To walk the length of a Saturn V rocket lying horizontal cannot be repeated through any medium. Seeing these sites was the closest I could get to the exploration of space. Just like the enchantment of a meteorite, these locations held a power of the otherworldly and embody a transgression from the possible to the impossible.

The landscape that contains the launch pads to the Kennedy Space Center are flat with little to no natural markers to grasp one's own location. It is barren, save for the occasional buildings spread along the few roads that lead through the site. Weather has a minimal (at times) effect on the scheduled launches of spacecraft, the terrain is mostly flat and the vast ocean that surrounds it allows for the safe recovery of expelled aircraft for re-use.

Driving through the desolate landscape of the frontier to space exploration, I had a realization after seeing a pristine structure. Sitting like a perfect Judd in the far and open plain was a cube-like structure of enormous size, proportion and magnitude that could be seen from miles away. This structure was the Vehicle Assembly

Building where rocket parts bound for space are assembled before they are rolled out to one of the two launch pads a few miles away.

The massive cube sitting on the horizon became a site of specific importance for me. It was the beacon of my collective interests. It was the last connection to the terrestrial. It was in all cases a metaphor for the death of progress, a mascot of our contemporary cynicism and despair towards the future.

It was in this moment of fixating on this structure as I drove through the landscape that the sublime effect of a sacred experience erupted within me. This structure spoke to me through an ancient connection of ritual and devotion. It is our collective temple for the physical transcendence of experience. With each launch we touch the face of death thus betraying the law of life. My accessing this structure was parallel to the experience the ancients must have had upon encountering the Sacred temples of Tenochtitlan or Chichen Itza. Emerging from its doors, humanity is bound for nothingness and the infinite expanse of incomprehensibility that is characteristic of the sublime.

## Capture Culture

Kate Steciw

JPEG/Exif is the most common image format used by digital cameras and other photographic image capture devices; along with JPEG/JFIF, it is the most common format for storing and transmitting photographic images on the World Wide Web. These format variations are often not distinguished, and are simply called JPEG... JPEG should not be used in scenarios where the exact reproduction of the data is required... JPEG is also not well suited to files that will undergo multiple edits... The compression method is usually lossy, meaning that some original image information is lost and cannot be restored. – Wikipedia

Photographs are created, disseminated, digested and redistributed at volumes as yet unseen in human history. Vacations, momentous occasions and everyday occurrences are more likely to find a home on Flickr than they are to find their way into a frame or album and, more likely yet, to be stored on hard drives ad infinitum. Indefinite storage of large quantities of image data is both economical and practical—creating a situation in which one can conceivably capture and store more images than there is time to review or archive in any meaningful fashion. The act of capturing, sharing and archiving images is encouraged and expedited by nearly every aspect of contemporary culture, yet the basis of our persistent and evolving impulse to photograph is often taken for granted.

No single creative act is more often equated with memory than the act of taking a photograph. In contemporary culture, a JPEG is often the result of this act. Current thinking on memory creation and retention tells us that human memory, not unlike the JPEG, is not a tool of precision but rather of subjective storytelling and retelling by way of complicated associative functions with exponential and unavoidable lossiness. The JPEG is, at its core, data, and it is only when this data is called through the mechanism of a computer that it can take the form of an image.

The technologically mediated nature of contemporary photographic practice leads to automatic and perpetual storage. That is, images that would have been discarded in the days of the glossy 4" x 6" end up being saved and stored indefinitely and whether intentional or automatic, the saving and storing of these images imbues them with an aesthetic and psychic value, albeit shaky and unarticulated. Human memory is trumped by digital memory while digital memory as a concept remains elusive to most.

Somewhere along the line, our language around the act of photographing changed. We went from making or taking a photograph to capturing an image, signifying a transition from an act of agency over the

physical to a happenstance interface with the immaterial—a kind of accidental parcelling of seemingly unintelligible data into readable images. The technological evolution of consumer-level cameras reinforces this shift; favoring the automatic over the manual with an emphasis on the similarity and predictability of photographic output.

There is cultural significance in this shift. Ideologies—political, social, aesthetic, etc.—evolve out of new ways of interacting with the symbolic language of technologically mediated images. If image-making remains a reflection of our endeavor to concretize the ineffable and elastic nature of a subjective experience of time, can the formless nature of image as data serve as fodder for a new philosophy of image-making?

Acts of alteration and/or publishing free image data from this seeming inertia, allowing it to manifest new forms. The image as data is viewed, augmented and published within networked space, allowing for a multiplicity of potential and simultaneous actualizations. While the JPEG in its original form may find its way back to its particulate existence in perpetual storage, the ever-evolving publishing potentialities available for digital images (blogs, photo-sharing websites, online self-publishing services, custom photo rugs, baseball caps, mouse pads, etc.), produce new and significant cultural information disseminated by way of the original's interactions and associations online. Rather than remaining a vessel of static meaning, the image, via immaterial interface, potentially gains as-

sociative and/or additive meaning to become a more efficient and faster evolving conveyor of culturally significant material.

## Double Visions

*Riyo Nemeth*



One of the main features of modern digital cameras and camera phones is the inclusion of the LCD (Liquid Crystal) Display, providing both real-time preview and immediate feedback of the cameras view. As a result, the physical relationship between ourselves and the camera has shifted from the old model (pressed against one eye) to a new position at the end of our arms reach, or at whatever distance is most comfortable, taking into account an individuals eyesight and viewing preferences.

This technological innovation reconstitutes the image as a physical object, situated within the context of what it represents, rather than the old analogue cameras where we experienced the image surrounded by black as we squinted to exclude the intrusion of light from the reality beyond the frame. As a result, we are able to directly compare reality and photographic representations of it.

The image has become a physical object, graspable, it no longer appears to us in a void.



There is a crisis in the value of a photographic image, these new technologies (in addition to taking the camera away from our faces and out into the world) have devalued the singular, auratic moment of decision which previously characterised the photographic image.

They have also eliminated the delay between shutter click and getting the film back from the developers, producing a constant stream of images per second the whole time the device is switched on. The only distinguishing feature separating the frames of the preview image from the real photographs being the difference between display resolution and the saved image file resolution. An excess of choice characteristically produces and unwillingness to choose, and seeing images directly compared to what they represent throws the superiority of the real world into relief.

We experience a double vision/version of reality. Visual and virtual, a physical version, and a digitally reflected flat version. – But how do the values and characteristics of the two change as we live more and more in a conflation of the two?



Another transformation has occurred in terms of how we use these devices in the sphere of public, collective experience. Finding yourself in a crowd of onlookers in some public spectacle, the number of people capable of actually seeing whatever disturbance or attraction was previously limited to those directly in front of it, the view of others obscured by people's heads. In the above image, we see spectators using their cameras as a to overcome the density of population and extend their vision with the help of the device. In this sense, the camera becomes a third eye, extending the field of vision and magnifying the resolution with the use of zoom lenses and higher pixel counts.



The number of useful applications for the digital camera has expanded outside the limited sphere of photographic documentation for the sake of memory, sentiment or aesthetics, and now encompasses a wider range of social functions. The use-value of digital photographs has often expired as soon as they have been viewed, or shared.

"In the digital world, spectators become navigators wending their way through a variety of interactive experiences, and images become spaces of visualisation with more and more intelligence programmed into the very fabric of communication processes." – Ron Burnett



The possibility of creating an almost infinite amount of images of the same subject often has the unfortunate effect of nullifying the event itself, yet it seems we take more pictures than ever before.



I find myself living more and more through this LCD screen, documentation of this kind seems to produce nothing but stream of images, their differences so slight that aesthetic preferences become irrelevant, and the event itself is reduced to nothing but a series of differently flawed reproductions. When technology comes to a point where its representation of reality is so self-evident, it seems to lose any usefulness.



In 2009 Nikon launched the first compact digital camera with a built-in projector. The benefits of this new system (according to Nikon's recent TV ad campaign) include sharing holiday photographs together, projecting a photograph onto the wall after taking it, allowing for immediate collective viewing, projecting images onto people, allowing for infinite mirrored reflections of reality. It allows for individual perspective to be layered back onto its subject and so on. It seems we never get bored of our own faces. Although perhaps we prefer a still image of reality to the real thing, to observe, to consumer – it is manageable, finished, fixed, recognisable, familiar, but not the same.



"Needing to have reality confirmed and experience enhanced by photographs is an aesthetic consumerism to which everyone is now addicted." – Susan Sontag (from 'On Photography')



Narcissus saw a reflection of himself in the water and fell in love, without realising that it was his own image.

Every time he smiled, the reflection of himself smiled back, anything he did, it reflected back, yet when he tried to touch the reflection, his vision broke up on the water and disappeared.

**I am Such a Failure:  
Poetry On, Around, and  
About the Internet**  
*Sofia Leiby*

**There is a move towards artwork and writing that abandons irony completely in favor of sincerity.** "New sincerity" has been a buzzword for the art and literary world since the mid 1990s. It was the name of a literary movement in the late 1990s, sparked by David Foster Wallace's essay, *E Unibus Pluram*, where he cited the "new literary rebels" following the age of irony and passivity. These rebels "risk sentimentality and melodrama"; the accusation of banality; "treat of plain old untrendy human troubles and emotions in US life with reverence and conviction." It's an honorable, yet completely utopic, goal.

This interest, in the works for a while now, is most recently exemplified by the New Sincerity exhibition at the Future Gallery in Berlin, but also the press release for Feature Inc's July-August show, titled I AM NOT MONOGAMOUS, I HEART POETRY, in which the curator, in a postmodern move, is extremely open about his choices in the exhibition and divulges his experiences with a therapist, even patting himself on the back. There's something confident about his tone.

"from fall 05 to fall 06 i went to a shrink to help figure my way thru some anxiety i was experiencing. the two things from that shrinking that i continue to reflect upon are process resistance / outcome resistance and, from a long-winded rambling about my range of sexual interests, the amusing awareness of a parallel between that and my gallery' exhibition program...while we move even further into this age of information, poetry becomes an increasingly important way to help create balance. the limitations of the

brain are becoming clearer, intuition and feelings offer other ways to progress."

The curator vaguely identifies "intuition" and "feelings" as avant-garde strategies. He or she sets up a dichotomy between "feeling" / "poetry" and the "information age", roughly equating poetry to "feeling", assumingly on the opposing end of the "information age." He or she argues that, that which might serve to create 'balance.' As a result, "poetry" is assumed to possess feeling or intuitive qualities, and though generalized, presented in opposition to "the information age." Similarly, in the New Sincerity press release, Jaakko Pallasvuo tentatively suggests that the works in this exhibition are "honesty at last; a hot knife through post-ironic butter. [but] Perhaps just another borrowed pose, quickly returned." Post-irony, as opposed to sincerity, is a strategy that still steeps itself in irony, uses it as a jumping off point. Therefore, "sincerity" is somehow something completely new and different in the context of art concerned with the Internet and our relationship to it. Pallasvuo suggests that "sincerity" is what will finally slay the old and cold, bitter and dry net art and what might be the "new casualist" aesthetic in painting.<sup>1</sup> Yet – obviously – nothing is 100% "sincere" / "authentic" and the creation of these categories is problematic. What is sincere is not opposite to what is ironic: many of Pallasvuo's pieces, like much of today's net art, leans heavily on a nostalgic affection for early 90's internet and "folk" aesthetics (the title of his blog being *DawsonsCreek.info*). To me, constantly referring to a sort of overall objective nostalgia for the early Internet is yet another



layer of distance placed between the artist and his intention. As viewers, we get in on the joke, which is a trademark move by ironists.



Jaakko Pallasvuo,

<http://www.jaakkopallasvuo.com/newsincerity/screen1.jpg>

Some net art uses poetry and emotional content opposed to what I consider to be the predominant ironic, distanced, slick and surface-based aesthetic of the (art of the) "information age." Perhaps as we continue to suffer from the Internet's commoditization, alienating and distancing power over us, we are finding the positive parts of it. The parts that allow us to meet other people, and to be honest online about ourselves – or not. There is an extremely varied way of codifying our emotions, emphasizing how we can defer our emotions through technologies, or at least face them.

The forms the poems take are varied,

some with no manipulation at all (a screencap to "prove" things aren't mediated, such as a gchat), to a casual stylization (drop shadow'd or scribbled in Photoshop, perhaps an attempt to include "the hand" of the artist) to elaborately rendered images. These artists create images that convey usually short, pseudo-ironic/ embarrassingly poetic and/or "sincere" short poems that, at their most successful, function like little monuments to feelings. How it feels to be in a relationship online. How the Internet arrests and limits our forms of expression; how we must distill our emotions to emoticons. Some of this art creates poetic/subversive image macros by placing anachronistic images with text. To generalize text-based digital image creation, it runs the gamut, but on one end mostly groups around irony, humor, and cliché, and on the other, statements that feel more or less distanced, more sincere, poetic, and creative. Often, vexingly, the artists produce both kinds of images.

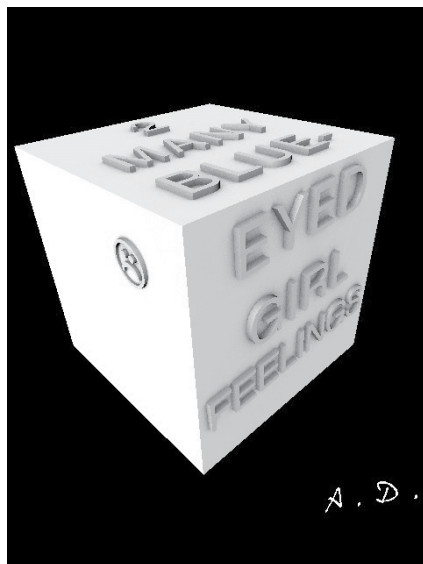
Christian "Megazord" Oldham,

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/megazord/5227993791/>

The emo .jpg circulates quickly on the Internet, allowing for an endless appropriation of sentiment. Especially suited for a tumblr context, it is at once very personal and extremely vague. "I am sad", "I hate myself", "I am pathetic", etc. A new element is added, that of the viewer and the Internet context. Reblogging Oldham's "I am a failure and my reputation is ruined" allows a viewer to align him or herself with this sentiment. But what is Oldham's intention? Does he really think he is a failure, and is the audience that reblogs his artwork empathizing with him? Is there space for "authenticity" in this work? Perhaps it is in the space of appropriation by others who identify with it. Other than this piece, the vast majority of Oldham's work does not seem to be concerned with silly emotions or feelings, more with the intersections between digitally rendered and painted surfaces. There are no other (that I can find) "I" statements that seem to have any sort of affective echo, but "I am such a failure" is nonetheless interesting.

Maybe this cliché – "I am such a failure" – is a sort of hyper "sincerity", a sort of over-generalization that becomes the only way we can express, rather than trying to muse metaphor or nuance. We feel anything that is short of immediate expression is ineffective, and so we resort to clichés. Placed on an elevated "poetic" platform, what might have once been a

status update, or a Livejournal entry, is concretized into an image-poem. Emotion and sincerity are fetishized. Cliché statements are the result of frustration at our arrested abilities to express ourselves. From pathetic, banal, and everyday, to the sweaty and embarrassing. Digitally rendering feelings is one way to experiment with how our emotions are filtered through technology, whether those emotions are sincere or not and whether the artist chooses to make them so. To create a “monument” to blue eyed girl problems, a virtual box to put them in, adding extra levels of references – to anything — becomes a way to remove, rather than infuse, content into artwork, when we are talking about the artist’s authenticity. The intentions of the artists are disguised behind a sort of “universal” objective nostalgia that claims to be “sincere.”



Alex Dolan, <http://alexolan.tumblr.com/post/7644426866>



Alex Dolan, <http://alexolan.tumblr.com/post/7287935576>

In conversation with artist Alex Dolan, he spoke of the technological distancing that results from using digital software. “Because it’s a 3D model, it’s not as embarrassing or tricky. It’s some weird sort of seductive, extra smooth computer image.” He added that distancing is one technique he uses to allow himself to be more sincere. For Dolan, the “scenes and toms and fake objects authenticate the emotions.” Certain types of distance, whether ironic, technological, or aesthetic, provides the freedom to be sincere. Warm and Naked is one of my favorites of Dolan’s works, because it relies on the friction between the sterility and coldness (literally blueness) of the digital image, and the evocative nature of the text. It reminds me that my laptop is warm. I think about lying next to someone. It’s reminiscent of Chris Wool’s *Lazy and Stupid* and Ed Ruscha’s unattached sentiments.



Alex Dolan, <http://alexolan.tumblr.com/post/7995858385>

### beach house s/t

you leave and i walk to the couch to watch you from the window  
 i see you walking away until you pass behind some bushes  
 i turn back to my laptop and see messages on facebook left from friends  
 most friends seem upset  
 i look through my chat for someone to talk to  
 some people appear online but go offline when i click their icon  
 i let myself cry for about 30 seconds  
 walk to the kitchen and heat up some lasagna in the oven  
 i come back to my computer and look for torrents of the movie “putty hill”  
 after failing to find one i get my lasagna and eat it on the couch  
 i send my mom a text message:  
 “hey mom,  
 would really like to talk with you early tomorrow.  
 call me when you can”  
 i lean back on the couch  
 listening more intently to songs by the love of everything

[view comments](#)

The author screencapped this work by Jared Boger in order to draw attention to the artists’ own stylistic choices in terms of blog formatting.

Jared Boger ([jaredboger.tumblr.com](http://jaredboger.tumblr.com)) interestingly engages ideas around authenticity in his poetry, also favoring tumblr as a platform for his work, producing both screencaps and text posts. He told me, “It’s just a personal process/therapy that i might as well share,” but, like the more rendered images I mentioned earlier, Boger’s work is specific to its context on tumblr. He told me he “generally thinks about tumblr”

when he makes something, although the work is not completed by viewers, rather he favors the screen capture as a way to facilitate discourse with followers, i.e. his audience. The screencap, which appears “unmanipulated,” provides an illusion of transparency to the work, a slice of real-time, although of course, the cap is often manipulated by the artist, which then may appear to behave as a product of digital self design, choosing your blog layout, font, etc. Boger’s poetry is also reminiscent of Brandon Scott Gorell’s, whose poems are a kind of sleepy description, stream of consciousness, encapsulating the kind of intimate memory or moment involving a group of your friends—one that you don’t talk about it because it’s so awkward to reenter into. The rule of not saying, “that was awkward.” Then he covers it up with “seems really bad” to distance himself from the emotion. In a similar way, Jared Boger’s poetry seems to be about feeling emotionally connected to technology, but deferring, alienating ourselves from our feelings. Looking through your Facebook to see if friends left you messages. It’s this profanely banal experience that becomes extremely emotionally heavy. Boger favors straightforward syntax rather than description because it is straightforward, and a little embarrassing, and it feels sincere. It’s so sincere that it’s almost ‘cute’, in its middle class-ness, its Beach House and Love of Everything references. It holds nothing back.

FROM MY CHAIR I CAN SEE THE STREET AND IT SEEMS  
DEPRESSING  
BY BRANDON SCOTT GORRELL

my friend is coming over

last time he came over we were eating crackers and i tried to hand one to him and it was kind of close to his face, and he thought i was trying to feed it to him so he ate it from my hand, but messed up and like sucked two of my fingers momentarily

it was really weird

i have had regular images of that moment since it happened

seems really bad

Brandon Scott Gorrell

In the September 2010 Bookforum, in a “review” of Richard Yates by author Tao Lin, Joshua Cohen argues that one aspect of what it means to be a sincere or genuine person is to expose yourself online. “To Lin’s generation, which is to say to mine as well, transparency is the new sincerity; many of our peers maintain that it’s psychologically healthy, and artistic, to expose oneself entirely online. Anonymity was so 1990s—the Age of Fake Screen Names. Today, only utter exposure can set one free, while the only thing prescribed is regret.”<sup>2</sup> [my italics] Boger believes that it is important for one’s online identity to not only be very close to reality, but even to be a “more liberated” version of yourself. Maybe, then, the Internet is not a place for hiding, for irony, coldness and nostalgia, but a place that makes sincere, open, warm, human gestures in art.

1. <http://www.brooklynrail.org/2011/06/artseen/abstract-painting-the-new-casualists>

2. Camera Obscura, [http://www.bookforum.com/in-print/017\\_03/6361](http://www.bookforum.com/in-print/017_03/6361)

**truEYE surView**

Compiled by Katja Novitskova with texts by Karen Archey, Timur Si-Qin, Joshua Simon, Martin Jaeggi and Anne de Vries

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## Colophon

In august 2009 IKEA changed their corporate typeface from Futura (Paul Renner, 1927) to Verdana (Matthew Carter, 1996).

Futura is perhaps the most utopian/modernist font ever.

Verdana was design for Microsoft, with the pragmatic purpose of being legible in small sizes on screen. It is one of the 10 Core Fonts of the Web and comes pre-installed on most computers.

Even pages of this PDF-file are set in Futura and odd ones in Verdana.

– *Rasmus Svensson*

**Pool** is a platform dedicated to expanding and improving the discourse between online and offline realities and their cultural, societal and political impact on one another.

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