# The Web
# As a Platform for Platforms



Martin Östlund
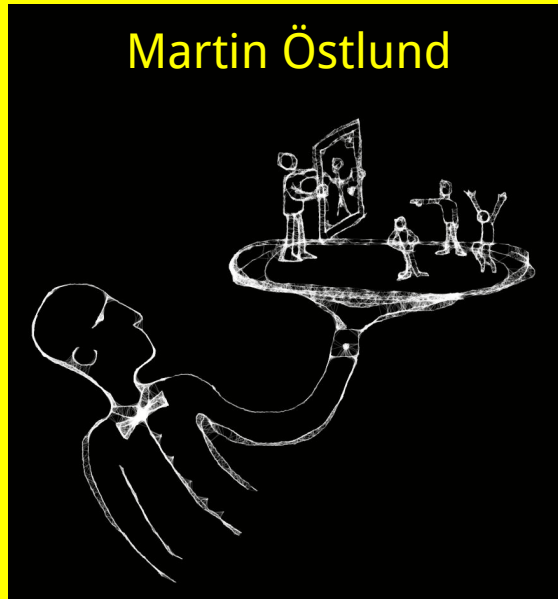
# Overview
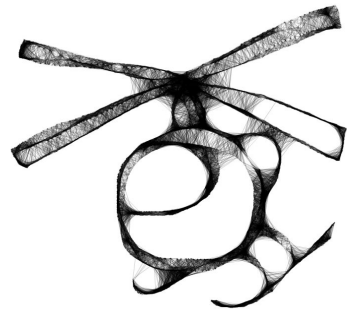
- ❖ **Platforms**
  - ➢ Structure and purpose | Content and audience
- ❖ **Money Maker**
  - ➢ How platforms make (a lot of) money | Surveillance capitalism as new economical system
- ❖ **Race to the bottom**
  - ➢ Engagement as goal function | Trolls | Fake News
- ❖ **Machine Take-over**
  - ➢ Era of implementation | Human experience extraction | Superintelligence
- ❖ **The promise of the Blockchain**
  - ➢ Unalterable record
- ❖ **The potential of the Platform**

# Platform

Structure and Purpose

- ❖ Lives on top of the Web Platform
  - ➢ Client/Server
  - ➢ Increasing dynamic potential
- ❖ Web-based Platforms
  - ➢ Fuzzy boundaries...
  - ➢ Place for others' content and interaction
  - ➢ Social media, aggregators, O2O...
  - ➢ Economic model
  - ➢ Community builder and Shaper of society

BROWSER

HTML
MARKUP
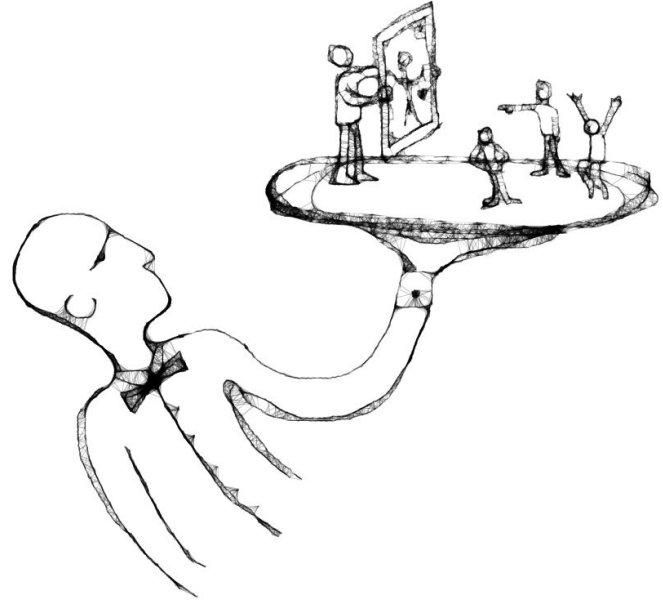
URL
ADDRESSING.

HTTP
NETWORK

# Platform

Structure and Purpose

- ❖ Is created | Is an innovation
- ❖ Enables markets
- ❖ Established audience
- ❖ Scalable | Profitable
- ❖ Fluid boundaries

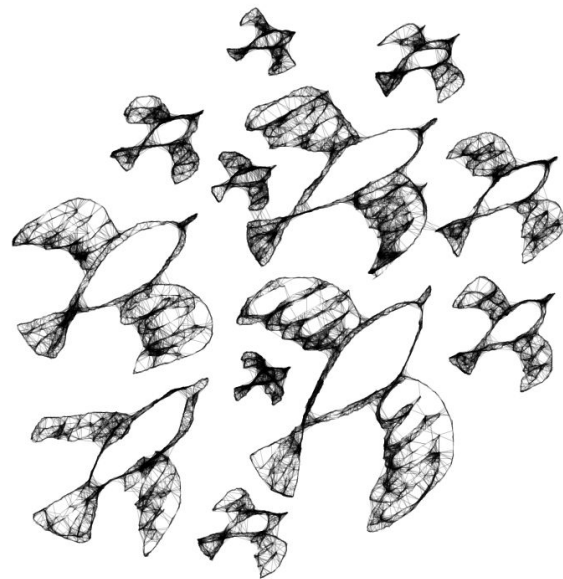*Offers a service to others who offer a service to other others*

- ➢ *First other: those who produce content OR interact with users*
- ➢ *Second other: those who consume the service*
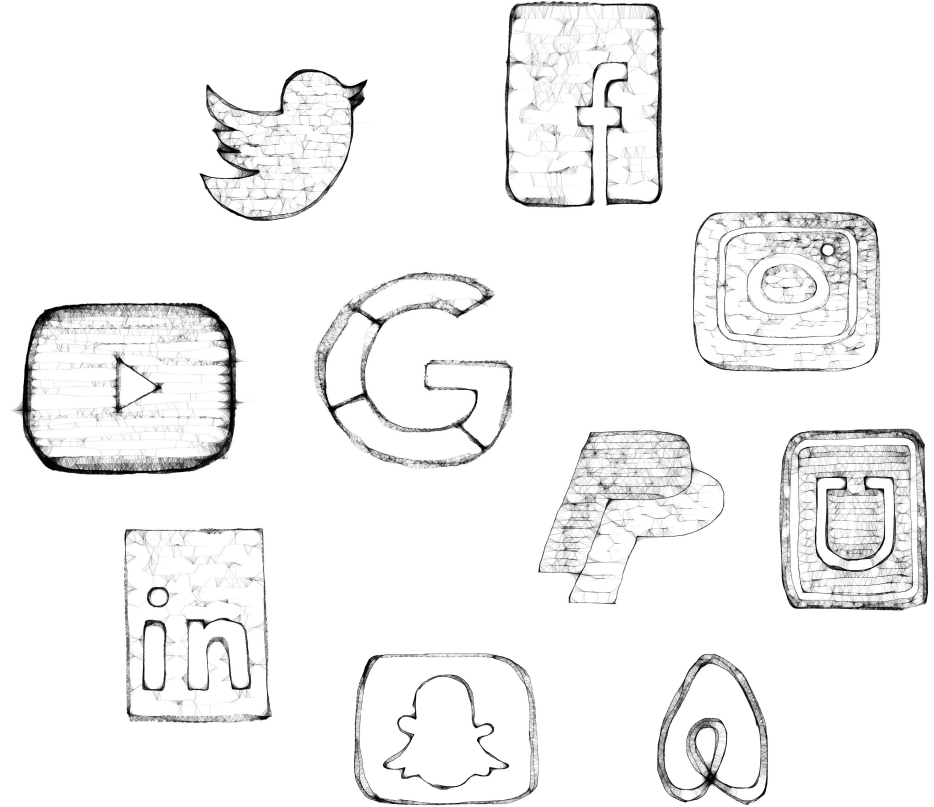
# Platform

Structure and Purpose

- ❖ The Audience | The Crowd
- ❖ Content creators | Service consumers
- ❖ Organisers | Evaluators | Promoters
- ❖ Herds and Flocks
- ❖ Critical Mass
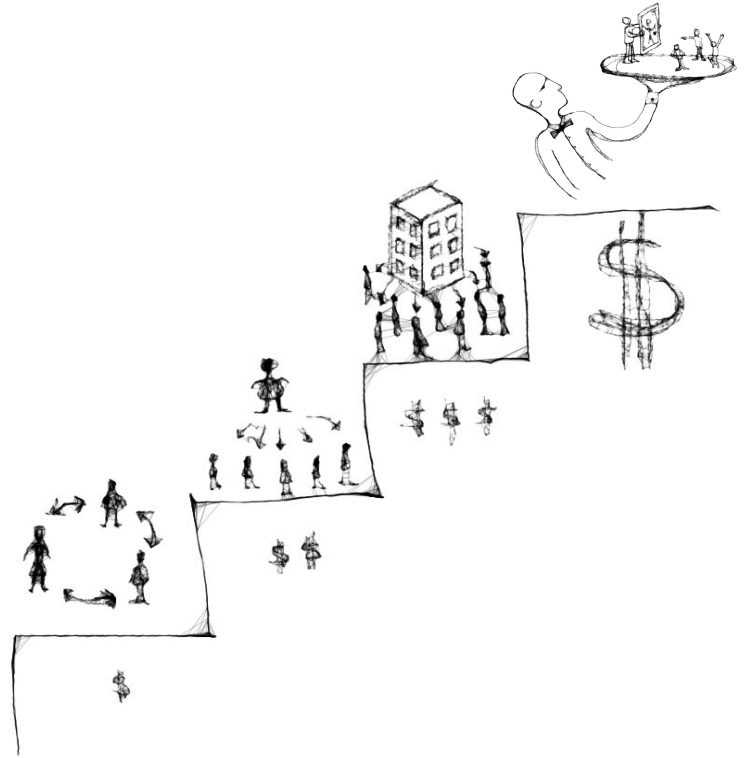
# Platform

Structure and Purpose

❖ Digital
  - ➢ Scalable
  - ➢ Copyable - Free, Perfect, Instant
❖ O2O Online to Offline | Offline to Online
  - ➢ Visibility
  - ➢ Accessible
  - ➢ Efficient

# Platform

Money Maker

❖ The Market of Free…
❖ Earner
   ➢ Users as users
   ➢ Users as publishers
   ➢ Publishers
   ➢ Platform owners
❖ Revenue
   ➢ One-time Fee | Rent | Transaction Fees
   ➢ Advertising
   ➢ Sensemaking/Intelligence
   ➢ Reselling

# Platform

Money Maker

- ❖ Surveillance Capitalism
- ❖ Data Extraction of *Behavioural Surplus*
- ❖ Manipulating users
- ❖ Selling targeting capability
- ❖ Reselling data
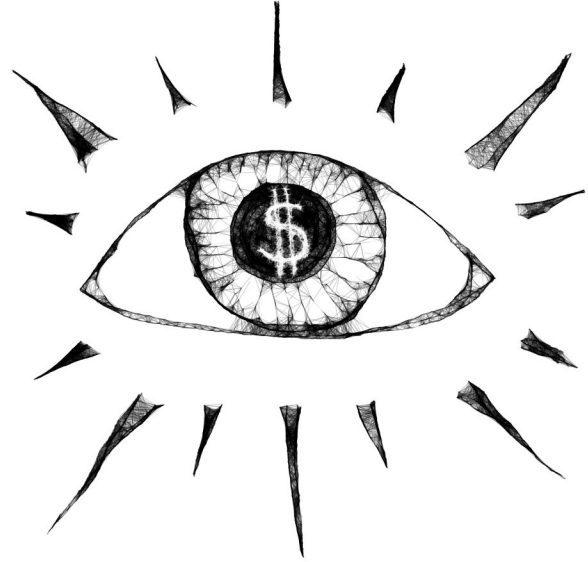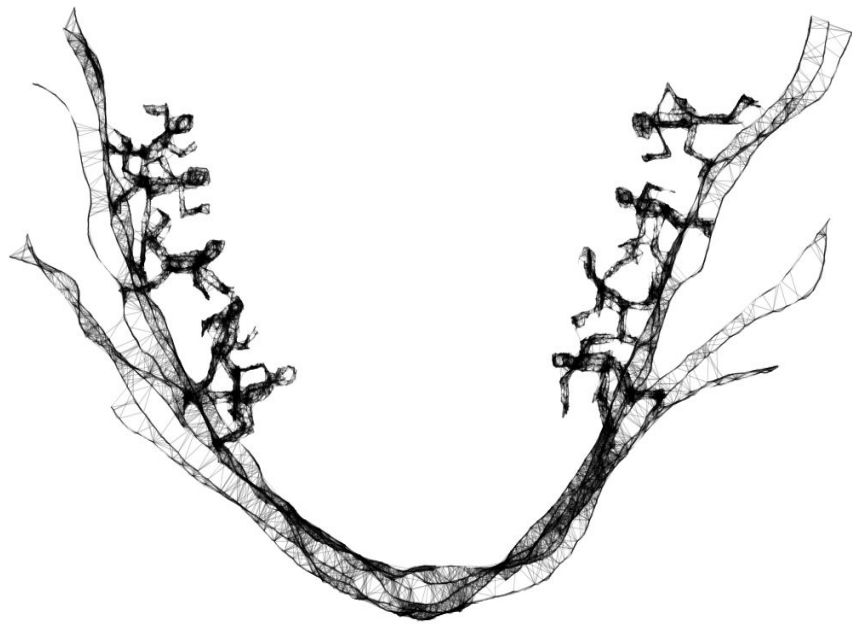
# Platform

Money Maker

❖ Solidification
  ➢ Head Start in user base
  ➢ Head Start in data
  ➢ Buying up the competition
❖ Push-back
  ➢ Activism
  ➢ Legal action | Antitrust
  ➢ SOLID | Data ownership
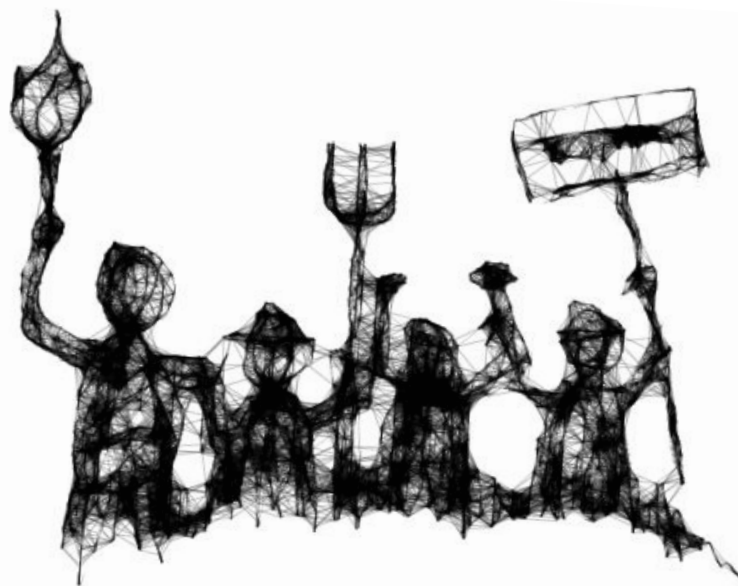
# Platform

Race to the bottom

❖ Conflict, Strife, Smut and Trash

❖ Volume | Velocity | Variety | Veracity

    ➤ Too fast No filter, no natural dampers

    ➤ Too fluid Everchanging

    ➤ Too persistent There forever

❖ Engagement as goal function

    ➤ The negative engages more

    ➤ Click-bait

❖ Makes money - big money

❖ Self-regulation…?
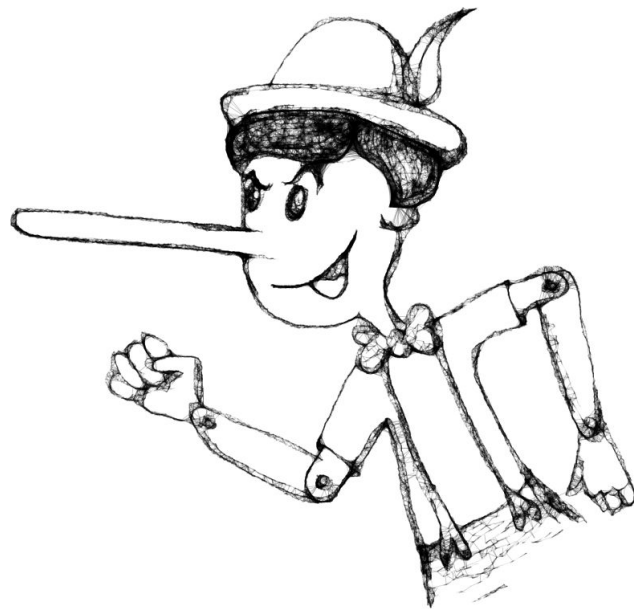
# Platform

Race to the bottom

- ❖ Trolls
  - ➢ Setting awakens inner Troll
  - ➢ Attracts true trolls
- ❖ Mob/Pack mentality
- ❖ Circle of Me/Us
- ❖ Fight instinct
- ❖ Transient anonymity
  - ➢ Non-accountability
  - ➢ Empathy divide
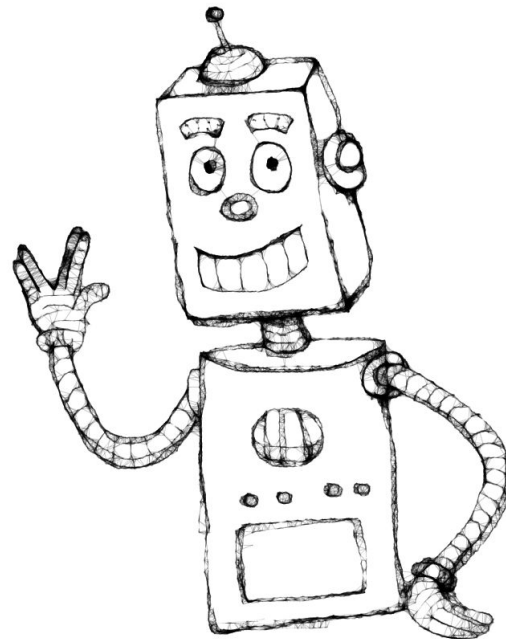
# Platform

Race to the bottom

- ❖ Fake News
- ❖ Viral amplification
- ❖ Serious consequences
    - ➢ Lack of trust
    - ➢ Lack of truth
    - ➢ Opinion over Fact
    - ➢ Choosing one's news
        - ■ By Choice
        - ■ By Algorithm
- ❖ Democracy under attack
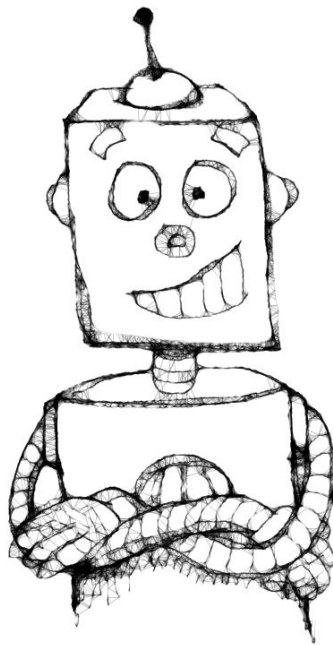
# Platform

Machine Take-over

- ❖ AI
- ❖ Think like us | Act like us
- ❖ Narrow | General
- ❖ Era of implementation
  - ➢ Data-driven
  - ➢ Efficiency
  - ➢ Collaborate | Replace
  - ➢ Collect and Conquer

# Platform

Machine Take-over

- ❖ Data Extraction
- ❖ Feed Machine Learning systems
- ❖ From Us To Serve US
  - ➢ Improve service
- ❖ From Us To Manipulate Us
  - ➢ Targeting
- ❖ Reselling refined data
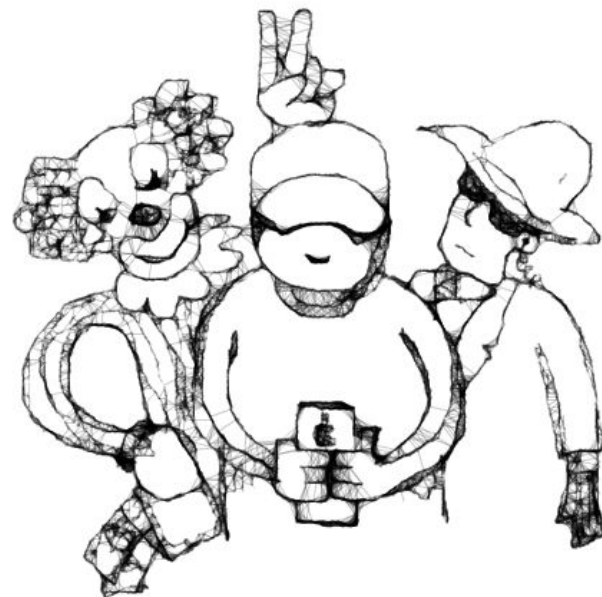  - ➢ Intelligence products
- ❖ Self-regulate…?

# Platform
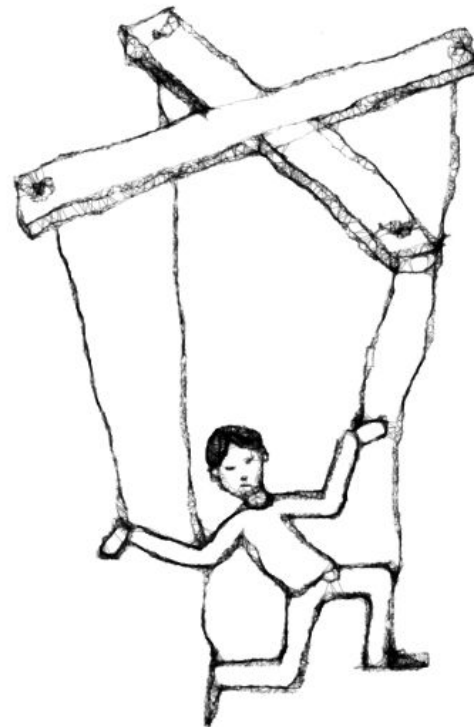
Machine Take-over

- ❖ The American Way
  - ➢ Collusion
    - ■ Secondary Surveillance
  - ➢ Pressure
    - ■ Legal
    - ■ Public Opinion
  - ➢ Business focus
    - ■ Domestic | Global
    - ■ One Size Fits All
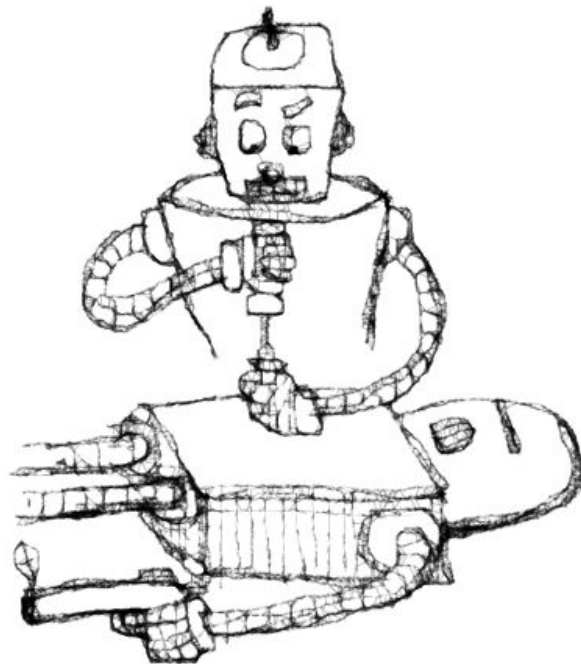
# Platform

Machine Take-over

❖ **The Chinese Way**
  ➢ Copycat | Innovation
  ➢ Cut-throat Markets
  ➢ AI Top Priority
    ■ Government Funding
    ■ Government Nudging
  ➢ Social Credit Score
  ➢ Hardest working

# Platform

Machine Take-over

❖ Superintelligence
  ➢ Self-learning
  ➢ Self-improving
  ➢ Self-building
  ➢ Narrow | General
  ➢ Data Not Enough… Probably...

# Platform

Blockchain potential

- ❖ Unalterable record
- ❖ Decentralised
- ❖ Anonymity optional
- ❖ Uses
  - ➢ Currency
  - ➢ Ledger
  - ➢ Smart Contracts
- ❖ Potential
  - ➢ Copyright enforcement
  - ➢ Data ownership and Traceability
  - ➢ Micropayments
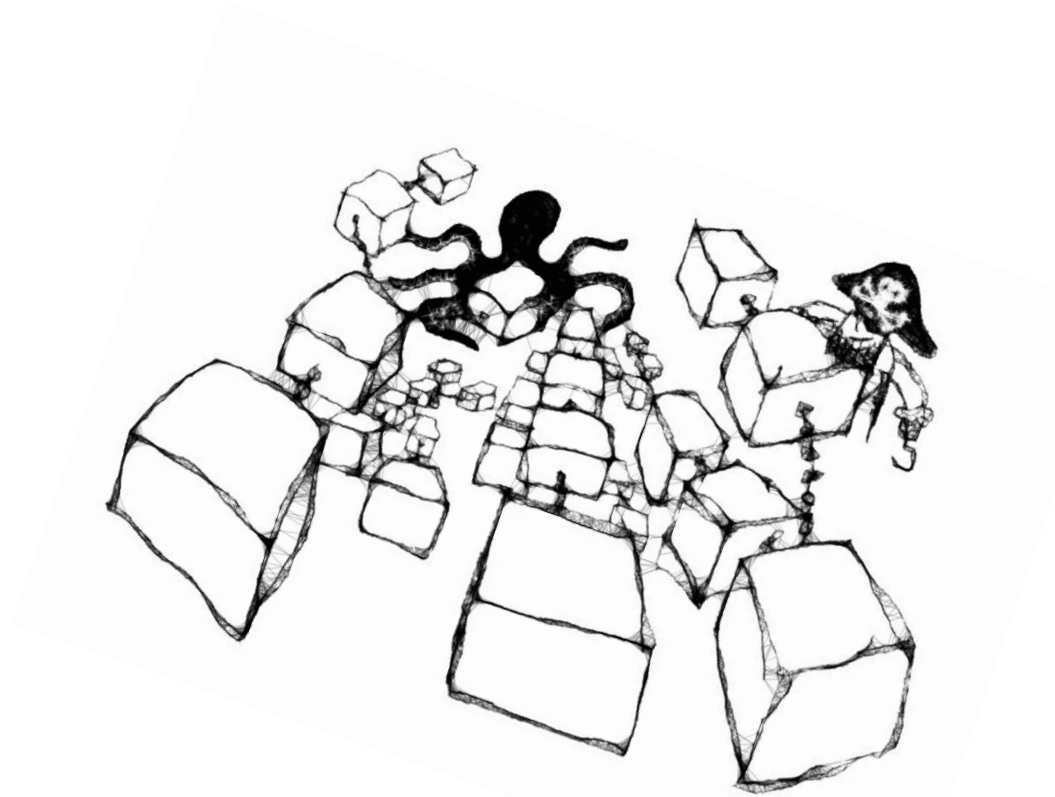
# Platform

Platform potential

- ❖ Open Closed
- ❖ Free Restricted
- ❖ Free Pay
- ❖ Adaptive One Size
- ❖ Useful Meaningless
- ❖ Exiting Dull
- ❖ AI Empowered AI Dominated
- ❖ Blockchain Empowered Blockchain Tainted

# Further Reading

- ❖ The Age of Surveillance Capitalism Shoshana Zuboff

- ❖ Platform Revolution Alstyne et al

- ❖ AI Superpowers Kai-fu Lee

- ❖ The Attention Merchants Tim Wu

- ❖ Who Controls the Internet Goldsmith, Tim Wu

- ❖ The Master Switch Tim Wu

- ❖ You Are Not A Gadget Jaron Lanier

- ❖ Machine, Platform, Crowd McAfee, Brynjolfsson

- ❖ Zucked McNamee

- ❖ The Filter Bubble Eli Pariser

- ❖ Superintelligence Nick Boström

- ❖ Here Comes Everybody Clay Shirky