

Thinking Contextualising Creating

Online tools for collaborative research and knowledge-making, cultivating alternative creative practices

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Project important links

These are currently a bit outdated and in need of update, but will get there eventually, sorry

In the meantime please focus on this presentation

[Miro Board](#)

[Are.na Channel](#)

[Github Repo](#)

Starting point

Which online tools are used by artists and designers for inspiration and research? Which ones allow collaborative approaches to sharing/organising knowledge?

A possibility is nurturing the commons and creating/using tools for cooperation and exchange. One in particular is digital gardening one's knowledge, with tools such as Are.na

A Digital Garden

is an evolving collection of interconnected ideas, notes, and resources that are organized and shared online. It serves as a platform for personal knowledge management and allows for non-linear exploration and collaboration.

Post-Capital

refers to a theoretical framework that envisions a future beyond the capitalist economic system. It explores alternative models that prioritize sustainability, social justice, and collective well-being, aiming to address the inherent flaws and inequalities of capitalism.

Surveillance Capitalism

refers to the economic system where companies profit by collecting and analyzing massive amounts of personal data from individuals for targeted advertising and behavioral manipulation. It involves the exploitation of digital surveillance technologies to commodify and monetize people's private information. (Cf. Shoshana Zuboff)

Public Learning

refers to the process of acquiring knowledge and skills through open and inclusive educational practices that are accessible to a wider community. It emphasizes collaboration, shared resources, and collective participation to foster lifelong learning and empower individuals in a public setting.

Attention Economy

refers to the economic system in which attention becomes a scarce and valuable resource. In this system, companies compete for individuals' attention through various platforms and services, often relying on techniques like targeted advertising and addictive design to capture and hold attention for financial gain.

Knowledge commoning

refers to the practice of collectively creating, sharing, and stewarding knowledge as a commons. It involves the collaborative and community-driven effort to generate and maintain a shared pool of knowledge resources, often through open and participatory processes that prioritize accessibility and collective ownership.

Research Question:

How can digital gardening tools and collaborative research platforms help cultivating alternative creative practices in surveillance capitalism?

Key resources on *Design and Economy*

Design after Capitalism, Transforming Design Today for an Equitable Tomorrow, Matthew Wozniak, MIT Press, 2022

Caps Lock: How Capitalism Took Hold of Graphic Design and How to Escape from it, Ruben Patra, Valiz, 2021

Post-Capital: A Reader, Edited by Michelle Cotton, Mousse, 2022

Designing Economic Cultures, Bianca Elzenbaumer, PhD Goldsmiths 2013

The Critical Makers Reader - (Un)learning Technology

Key resources on *Digital Gardening*

The garden & the stream, a techno-pastoral, Mike Caufield, URL, 2016

A Brief History & Ethos of the Digital Garden, Maggie Appleton, 2020, URL

As we may think, Vannevar Bush, 1945

How do you use the internet mindfully, Creative Independent & Are.na

**The Community Memory Project: an introduction*, 1982

Key resources on
Knowledge & Organisation

*EKSIG 2019 Conference,
Knowing Together —
experiential knowledge and
collaboration, 2019*

*As we may think, Vannevar
Bush, 1945*

*Tools for conviviality, Ivan
Illich*

Key resources on
Commons

*COMMUNITIES AT A
CROSSROADS, Annalisa
Pelizza, 2018*

*Art as social practice,
Technologies for change,
Tine Burrough & Judy
Walgren, 2022*

Observation Method #1: Survey of Online Toolbox

- Social Media: Tumblr, Pinterest, Instagram...
- Blogs
- Editorial Press Websites
- Academic & Research platforms
- No-code Personal Vault/Garden: TiddlyWiki, Obsidian, Zotero, Notion, etc.
- Fully-coded custom personal websites
- ...
- Are.na



FOCUS POINTS:

**Digital gardens and the platform
are.na**

Why are.na and why it echoes digital gardening?

- the tool I personally use everyday
- founded by artists, for artists
- Alternative and resistance to algorithmically-filtered ephemeral streams of content
- exploratory – content linked through contextual associations
- accumulate knowledge, connect disparate information
- open-ended for various purposes with API (custom sites)
- Mindful Community behaviour around information
- Can be fully collaborative, open or private

Hypothesis

Digital gardening and using open-ended tools like are.na extends an opportunity for creatives to nurture a more open & collaborative process, encouraging an alternative to streams of monetised data.

Observation Methods #2

- (REMOTE) Interviewing digital gardeners and are.na users (zoom, screensharing) documenting their various use, opinion on curating and sharing knowledge, limits and risks of such platforms? Influence on their practice?
- (PHYSICAL) Direct observation: monitoring a user's exploratory journey on are.na: how one element meets another and how they are connected and contextualized by the user

Pertinent example uses of are.na

- classroom collaboration
- personal curation
- ideas and note-taking
- moodboards
- personal portfolio
- public learning
- CMS via API
- ...

Casting (WIP)

This list is not
exhaustive/final and
results will depend on
availability/possiblity
during summer 23

Casual are.na users

Clément Gicquel,
designer, FR

Florian Hilt, 3D artist &
photographer, FR/CH

Lucas Erin, artist, FR/CH

Frederik Mahler-

Andersen, designer &
developper, DK/CH

Casting (WIP)

This list is not exhaustive/final and results will depend on availability/possibility during summer 23

are.na Team

(found interviews online, if possible interview them myself)

Daniel Pianetti, co-founder, CH/US

Charles Broskoski, co-founder, US

Chris Sherrón, co-founder, design, US

Christopher Barley, Press/PR, US

Damon Zucconi, Engineering, US

Meg Miller, Editorial & Events, US

Casting (WIP)

**Regular/Advanced are.na
users**

Baker Wardlaw, artist, US/CH

Jonas Pelzer, developper, DE

**Mindy Seu, designer,
educator, US**

**David Reinfurt, designer,
educator, US**

**Laurel Schwust designer,
educator, US**

Casting (WIP)

Extreme Digital Gardeners (WIP)

- Gwen Branwen, US URL
- Maggie Appleton, US URL
- Others URL

INTERVIEW KIT

- Are.na General Use
- I've seen you are a user of Are.na, how would you describe your use of it?
- How did you discover it? What made you keep using it? Advantages/constraints Compared to others online research tools?
- How often do you use it? Is it key to your creative process?
- What role does Are.na and other visual research tools play in your creative process?
- Do you use it alone/with others? for yourself / others?
- How do you use it? Which fonctionnalités do you use most? Can you describe your daily experience and/or specific use?
- Do you use Are.na in an unconventional way? for unusual other purposes?

INTERVIEW KIT

Are.na Content

- How are your channels self-curated? Do your channels follow an underlying structural logic?
- Do you have a particular channels or suite of blocks you would like to describe?
- What do you make of your blocks once connected? How often do you come back to it?
- Is your connected content searched for , or rather stumbled upon?
- How would you gauge the agency you have over the content you browse and connect?
- How are things connected to each other? How do they fit together?
- Do you connect elements outside from are.na or only connect existing blocks already on are.na?
- How would you describe finding and connecting someone's block/channel that's relevant to you?

INTERVIEW KIT

On Are.na Community, Sharing Knowledge

- Which of your channels is open access/visible/hidden? Why?
- How often do you share access to your channels to others? in what circumstances?
- Do you contribute to other's open access channels?
- Did Are.na help you to spark collaboration with other user?
- Which users are you following

INTERVIEW KIT

Other tools/platforms than Are.na

- Which other online visual research tools do you use? did you use? What comparison between?
- Do you feel limited by what are.na can do, consider something else?

On Social Media

- What is your relationship with social media?
- How is your practice affected by your online research?
- What tools do you use for your practice?

INTERVIEW KIT

**On Digital Gardening
TODO**

Found Data #1 (source)

Lucy Siyao Liu, architectural designer, teacher at MIT

“Are.na is kind of like my brain; it’s what I’ve been thinking about lately” she says.

- has a channel called “Thoughts Not Ready” that she keeps private.**
- When ready to share and collaborate with her students or other pros, Liu will collect or create content for her public channels that anyone can see, follow, and even borrow from.**

Found Data #2 (source)

David Reinfurt,
graphic designer,
teacher at Princeton

charged his students with redesigning the interface of the Apple Watch, instructing them to take photographs of all the clocks around them and post the images to a social network called Are.na.

