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Art and the API: Reflection

In this short article, Jer Thorp demonstrates and discusses the usage of APIs (Application Programming Interface) and arts.

Application Programming Interface, which bridges computer applications and enables communication. Twitter's API is one of the most recognizable: its developers have made it open to businesses, which allowed them to work Twitter into their own projects. Some may see APIs as daunting, but Thorp demonstrates that it's not that difficult with a script he wrote on his own. APIs can be elaborate or not, they can be small and make small links between programs that were once unrelated.

Bridging programs together can be used to make statements. For example, one data artist created an API that allows access to information about the latest US drone strike. This can be used for journalistic purposes, art purposes… With this tool, data that is meant to be concealed is now out on Twitter, and can easily be accessed.

More than one API can be used to connect several different applications, resulting in potentially thought provoking mashups. Thorp proposes for example an API that spits out as many names of people you know as people who died in drone strikes. These comparisons can raise interesting questions.

Thorp concludes with another quote: 'the significant artist strives to reduce the technical and psychical distance between [their] artistic output and the productive means of society'. In today's context, it means constructing networks that connect things properly and meaningfully.

<u>Works Cited:</u>

Thorpe, Jer. "Art and the API." *Blprnt.blg*, 24 June 2014, blog.blprnt.com/blog/blprnt/art-and-the-api.