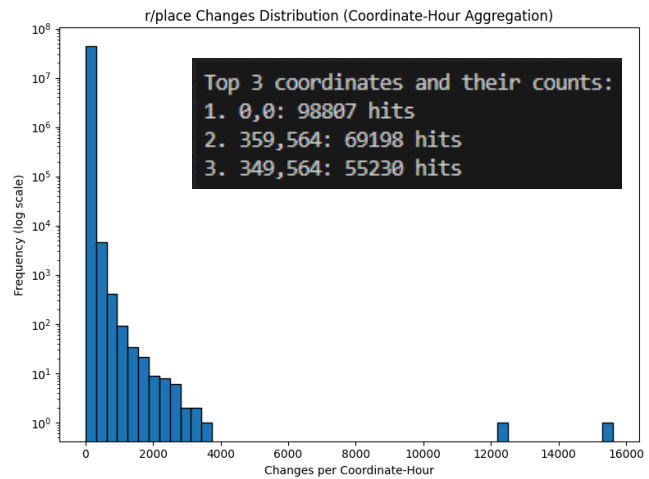


Week 4 Analysis: r/place

During r/place 2022, certain pixels were more active than others. In particular, the coordinates (0,0), (359,564), and (349,564) were the most frequently painted. This analysis aims to understand why those certain pixels were hit so often in the duration of this event by using the Five Whys methodology.



Why were these pixels targeted so much? The coordinate (0,0) is relatively understandable as to why

Connection lost.
Please wait - attempting to reestablish

it is changed so much since it is the first pixel on the canvas and can be easily located due to it



being a corner pixel. It is also part of a message box that originates from a video game called *Runescape*. The other 2 coordinates were the center points of the eyes of a skull on a pirate ship flag which represented the protagonist group from an anime called *One Piece*, the Straw Hat Pirates. The colors of the eyes were a subject of dispute and the noticeability of changes in the background of the message.

The default color of the eyes from *One Piece* is white which matches the source material. However, it was frequently changed from white to blue and vice versa. Many participants wanted to change the eye color to blue in order to add a reference to a character called Sans from a video game, *Undertale*. The *RuneScape* message box at (0,0) had a white outline, leading to many overwrites to maintain its structure. This led to back and forth color switching between different users for those coordinates.

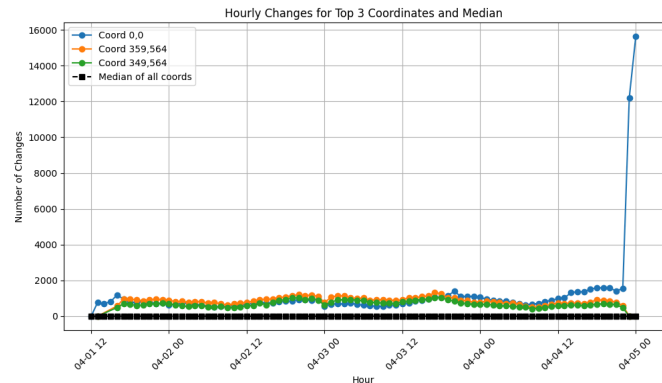
The reason why these changes happened at these sections of the canvas is because they have very dedicated fanbases. *Undertale* is a widely recognized and beloved game with an active fanbase, *One Piece* is a very well known and one of the longest running anime series, and *RuneScape* has a strong nostalgic appeal that had many fans from the past. The blue eye is one of the most iconic traits of Sans, a major character and eyes are keen points of interest when looking at a face or a skull. The data analysis showed that those coordinates had white and blue as the most painted colors. The "Connection Lost" message from *RuneScape* is also well known in their community and outside of it. Internet culture on r/place encourages blending pop culture references into existing artworks and many communities band together to create their own unique art, which can lead to conflicts with others.

```
Top 2 colors for each of the top 3 coordinates  
  
Coordinate: 0,0  
Color: #ffffff => 59282 times  
Color: #000000 => 8715 times  
  
Coordinate: 359,564  
Color: #000000 => 34726 times  
Color: #51e9f4 => 26940 times  
  
Coordinate: 349,564  
Color: #000000 => 27804 times  
Color: #51e9f4 => 19404 times
```

A lot of conflicts happen in r/place due to it being a battleground where different communities take control over an area of space. Groups with large organizations, big influencers, or bots can have a major influence on what gets put on the canvas. The competitive nature of r/place, tribalism of humans fosters the constant overwriting of pixels, and getting attention. The reason why (0,0) was painted often is because people can easily spot that there is irregularity when the border is supposed to be white, but instead one pixel of the border is black. Internet trolls are another reason why certain pixels change a lot because they want artworks to be messed up. This is why the eyes of the skull are also targeted due to being easily spotted and it would get the most attention when it is modified.

Many artworks have sustained battles over time because they are associated with strong fandoms leading to high engagement. These iconic symbols from these media attract more

attention and make people participate in painting those regions. As seen on the graph below, most coordinates have a lot less engagement than the top 3. There is a spike near the end because that is when people rush and participate more due to the fact that r/place doesn't happen that often. Internet influencers could also have an effect since they want to stay till the end and they would convince their audience to participate and help them.



The top three most painted pixels were highly contested due to their association with popular fandoms, high visibility, and internet culture. The coordinates (359,564) and (349,564) were painted by the people from the fandoms of *One Piece* and *Undertale*, while (0,0) was mostly painted by fans of *Runescape*, internet trolls, and maybe even bots. Understanding these painting patterns would help us learn more about how people self-organize in collaborative spaces.