

Reflection on 1337, a PowerPoint game about the future of cybersecurity. By Hızal Çelik

This project concept is based on our direction as a technologically advanced society towards a future of the “internet of things,” which means our increasing demand that every item and device in our life should be connected to the internet. Today, generally analogue devices such as refrigerators, light bulbs, thermometers and even pet fish feeders are already available in wifi-connected forms. In the future, almost everything and anything will be available in an online state. What does that do for cyber security? Sure, security will increase as the years go by, but if the past has taught us anything, it’s that nothing is ever fully secure, and that hackers will always be one step ahead of the security game.

This interactive artwork is meant to place you in the future of our society, and you are a hacker. In fact, this art piece is not only about how hacking will still be an issue in the future, but that there will be tools available to the general public that can “make anyone a hacker!” So in this art piece, you are in the future, and you have just logged into an example software that makes hacking easy. You simply log in, and it automatically hacks into a security camera feed overlooking a city street. From here, you simply have to click on items, things and people, and the software will do all the back-end bypassing of security systems and hacking of the mainframe for you, making it easier than ever for “an average Joe” to wreak havoc. If I had more time, I would have expanded the number of triggerable events, however as of now, the events generally consist of changing the text/imagery in wall signs/advertisements, killing a man using anti-terrorism defense systems, locking and unlocking a bar door, causing traffic accidents and ejecting the contents of a vending machine.

I chose this medium because I personally enjoy making hyper-detailed art pieces using only available default shapes in PowerPoint. It’s just a specific art medium that I’ve adapted to my benefit, and many others may “go insane” as they put it. In fact, as I was making this project, in the news it was reported that America’s internet was under attack, one of the largest cyber attacks in history. Millions of hijacked “minor devices” such as baby-monitoring cameras and other “internet of things” items were puppeted by a single group or person and directed their attacks on the largest DNS server in America, slowing down the internet for civilians and companies alike (such as Netflix and Twitter). This I felt was very relevant to my project. Therefore I believe this project does a good job at critically evaluating, and demonstrating the possible near future of our society. Viewers can experience my artwork in first person, controlling the various hackable items, and allow them to think how things might be in the future, and the risks involved in having everything connected to the internet. It was also risky choosing this medium to demonstrate this, since there has to be a degree of relateability and believability/realism to this project but I believe I achieved that despite the somewhat cartoony result from a PowerPoint artwork. Although there was not too much research involved in this project concept-wise, it is not made up- I have extensive knowledge of the subject and have been following news and events for years about this topic. As for any research that was involved in this project, it was mainly finding imagery to help guide and piece together my artwork, as some architectural items in the artwork were based on concept artwork from online, the lighting and mood from the underground imagery of Coruscant from Star Wars, and the feel of the game based on other futuristic video game environments.

I believe this project succeeds at both relating to my personal interests, and in effectively communicating with my audience of the possible dangers our future has in store for us, and what it's like to be in the shoes of "the bad guys." I also believe the medium is effective at catching the viewer's attention, once they pass the initial moment of realization that it's all made in PowerPoint. It helps create a unique artwork, and employ a unique usage of an otherwise mundane and possibly outdated software. This piece also does a good job of making a realistic imagery that successfully utilizes all of the available tools of PowerPoint aside from Macro scripting language.

Link to my documentation of the work:

<https://vimeo.com/190474347>