**svvord** *Today at 9:14 PM*hello, I'm sword, and I make art of dubious quantity and quality

**harry** *Today at 9:14 PM*  
Hi I’m harry, I do basically the same thing

**svvord** *Today at 9:14 PM*  
about since when have you existed on the internet?

**harry** *Today at 9:15 PM*  
I’ve been using the internet for a long time, but I can clearly recognise my first time as being ‘online’ as we know it to 11 years old

**svvord** *Today at 9:15 PM*  
where did you first exist then? was there any particular site?

**harry** *Today at 9:17 PM*  
I was watching kids cartoons a lot, and I used to google them religiously after I watched them. One day I stumbled across fanfiction.net and it seemed to me to be ENDLESS content for the cartoons I had been watching.

**svvord** *Today at 9:18 PM*  
that's pretty much the holy grail to getting into fandom haha

**harry** *Today at 9:18 PM*  
I can see why  
I think there’s a kind of personality that gets very absorbed into stories, and things like fan fiction, amvs or fan content feels like a way to extend the magic into eternity

**svvord** *Today at 9:21 PM*  
I definitely feel that, you never want to stop experiencing those stories!

**harry** *Today at 9:21 PM*Yep!

**svvord** *Today at 9:21 PM*  
Did you comment on any of the fanfics you read?

**harry** *Today at 9:22 PM*  
I think so? There used to be a ‘comment if you want more’ trend and I used to comment, because I wanted more  
I mostly lurked though

**svvord** *Today at 9:23 PM*  
Very fair  
Was there a point at which you started to interact directly with others online?

**harry** *Today at 9:24 PM*  
Yep! Same site at around 12, I think I found my first ‘send me your OC and I’ll put them in the story’  
I was in loooooove with that, and I started making my own characters and sending them to the author, then checking back every day to see if my character was in yet  
They would show up for like a paragraph and I would lose my mind every time

**svvord** *Today at 9:26 PM*  
Oh man that would be the peak of my existence at 12  
Was that still on fanfiction.net?

**harry** *Today at 9:26 PM*Yep! I never moved to livejournal or wattpad thank god

**svvord** *Today at 9:27 PM*  
YEAH definitely best for a youngster

**harry** *Today at 9:27 PM*  
I think at like, age 13-14 I started drawing and I was pretty good at it  
So that’s when I joined deviantart

**svvord** *Today at 9:28 PM*  
dun DUN

**harry** *Today at 9:28 PM*  
The secret come out

**svvord** *Today at 9:29 PM*  
I think a lot of internet artists from that time can definitely relate, it was kind of The art site combined social space

**harry** *Today at 9:29 PM*  
Yep and it was the best one at that time  
I was born in 1995, so when I was on deviantart it was like, 2007-9

**svvord** *Today at 9:32 PM*  
Did you talk to other people on deviantart then?

**harry** *Today at 9:33 PM*  
I did! It was a lot more engaged

**svvord** *Today at 9:33 PM*  
What was that like?

**harry** *Today at 9:33 PM*  
Mostly fine! The audience there was overwhelmingly young for the most part  
I had my first weird interactions with adults  
But mostly just posting my OCs and being very happy if I got one comment  
I didn’t really participate in any big community activities I was scared shitless of stranger danger  
Which, wise, because my closest online ‘friend’ at the time was 21

**svvord** *Today at 9:35 PM*  
Ah!

**harry** *Today at 9:35 PM*  
Mhmmm  
He still messages me lol

**svvord** *Today at 9:36 PM*  
I hope in a nice older friend way and not in a creepy way jeez

**harry** *Today at 9:36 PM*  
He seemed nice! But it was a bit weird he was friends with an 11 year old

**svvord** *Today at 9:37 PM*  
Augh yeah  
Especially with sites like deviantart it was always interesting to see who reached out for better or for the more uncomfortable

**harry** *Today at 9:38 PM*  
Yep  
This part of my online life is kind of boring tbh  
I was mostly super passive

**svvord** *Today at 9:38 PM*  
Ohoh, when would you say it got more interesting?

**harry** *Today at 9:38 PM*  
Oh god not for wayyyyy later  
I read homestuck in 2010, and I got a lot better at art at that point  
I joined tumblr because that’s where the homestuck people seemed to be  
And I posted for a while until I did my first fan art that got 1k likes  
And that was it for me lol that was the crack cocaine my brain craved

**svvord** *Today at 9:40 PM*  
those likes get addictive IMMEDIATELY

**harry** *Today at 9:40 PM*  
I started drawing a LOT, still not very good because I was like barely 15  
But I got more followers and people actually commented on my rambling posts  
I made a friend who was my age and we talked a lot, I sent them fanart and they sent me fics we made for each other  
And I found out I was gay! So I retreated a LOT into online

**svvord** *Today at 9:42 PM*  
That will definitely lead to that

**harry** *Today at 9:43 PM*  
That was probably the first time I became AWARE of the disconnect between myself and the people around me  
I was always super awkward and I’d been getting a lot more awkward as I grew up and realised I just wasn’t very good at being social, or that I had much in common with other girls  
But in a place like tumblr, being gay was so uncontroversial even in 2009 that it was very easy to come to terms with it in that environment  
But it was NOT okay in my school, or my house  
There wasn’t a single other openly lgbt kid in my grade, even now I think there was like only one other who came out after school and we never talked  
So that whole ‘double life’ thing got very real

**svvord** *Today at 9:47 PM*  
Did it become harder to keep them cleanly separated as you were able to be out online, or easier with having that outlet?

**harry** *Today at 9:47 PM*  
Kind of the opposite, I got very good at compartmentalising, nobody even knew I had a blog  
I only ever really told my therapists about it, my mum knew my internet stuff because she kept tabs on everything but my parents weren’t interested in my art so I kind of skated by

**svvord** *Today at 9:48 PM*  
That's nice at least

**harry** *Today at 9:49 PM*Hahahahaha  
Yeah it worked  
Kid me had the right idea, that school sucked and I was not a tough cookie I couldn’t have handled homophobia  
Or transphobia, god I had so many egg moments at that age  
But I had no idea what trans people were at the time sooo

**svvord** *Today at 9:51 PM*  
Did you end up having different kinds of friends in school/offline than you made online?

**harry** *Today at 9:53 PM*Like different kinds of people?

**svvord** *Today at 9:53 PM*  
yes!

**harry** *Today at 9:53 PM*  
Yes absolutely  
The people I had to pick from in school was very limited  
I went to a private school, we had maybe 100 people in the grade max  
My friends were mostly friends of my BEST friend who was very protective of me, without her I don’t think I really would have had any  
But online you’re allowed to talk to anyone so of course!  
I talked to dorky queers all day

**svvord** *Today at 9:55 PM*  
The dream

**harry** *Today at 9:55 PM*  
I’m doing it right now :)

**svvord** *Today at 9:55 PM*  
//UuU//

**harry** *Today at 9:56 PM*  
Did you want to move past high school?

**svvord** *Today at 9:56 PM*  
Now that you're older, would you say those lines have started to blur more?  
you read my mind lol

**harry** *Today at 9:56 PM*  
Hehehe  
Yeah  
I got online brain very clearly in 2015-6, when overwatch came out  
I had made some friends online who were actually local and we hung out, and I posted art that got SUPER popular  
I made a bunch of comics and people interacted with them constantly, ended up with like 20k followers within a month and IMMEDIATELY disabled the ask box

**svvord** *Today at 9:58 PM*  
Smart

**harry** *Today at 9:59 PM*  
Yeah, so I was kind of freaked out by how many eyes were on me  
Obviously I had never really dealt with anything like that before  
And I joined a discord with people who promised to be chill, and there were other artists there that I admired  
And voila  
You have the harry of today, basically unchanged

**harry** *Today at 10:01 PM*  
So innn 2013 I was drugged and assaulted, and they used ketamine  
And I spent like, 2 years in a very foggy haze not really doing well in school and being a bit of a shithead  
And when I came out of that, and it was time to face being gay, and being traumatised, and being gender, real life was just too much  
Online was such a balm it really felt like an escape  
I would just draw for hours and hours and forget to eat, and talk on the discord and read fanfiction  
It was super unhealthy but I had become like a different person in those 2 years there was basically zero desire to see what else life had to throw at me

**svvord** *Today at 10:06 PM*  
Being able to go into a place removed from your physical self is really addictive

**harry** *Today at 10:07 PM*  
It is!  
It was coping, and I wasn’t in an environment where I was around people who were like me, and if I ever met them at cons or stuff there was usually a huge disconnect because you know  
I’ve lived a bit of a life, and a lot of white online cis people haven’t really lived that  
So I would talk about doing drugs, or getting into fights, or stealing shit or casual sex and it was like, a chasm in front of me and everyone else  
I had one foot in one life and one foot in the other and I didn’t belong in either  
I still feel that way

**svvord** *Today at 10:11 PM*  
I'm sorry you had to go through that   
And then to get out the other side and end up isolated because of it too is a real nice added salt in the wound

**harry** *Today at 10:12 PM*  
It’s cathartic to look back and get bitter about how I got fucked up, but honestly the only upsetting thing is how hard it is to connect with people  
I actually really like who I am  
If it was just my own company forever that’d be okay I think

**svvord** *Today at 10:14 PM*  
I honestly feel a bit similar sometimes. Coming from a weird family situation, I'd see someone online briefly mention something super specific and I still think about it, that someone else might understand even a small part of me

**harry** *Today at 10:14 PM*  
Yeah  
It’s an intoxicating thought

**svvord** *Today at 10:15 PM*  
And it's a bit easier to find those snippets of connection online than in person, at least in my experience. even though then it's hard to build a connection or ask more about it

**harry** *Today at 10:15 PM*  
Sometimes shit happens and you feel yourself detach just a bit more from people who live comfortable lives  
Yeah I think with online people are looking for each other  
And it’s easier to find other people  
I’ve kind of slid back into that state I mentioned earlier where I’m not really doing anything other than being online, post the disaster that was me coming out as trans  
But now I’m making money doing it so $$$$$$$$$$

**svvord** *Today at 10:17 PM*  
Money Always Fixes Everything  
Or at least is nice validation :sob:

**harry** *Today at 10:18 PM*  
Makes it a bit easier, I do enjoy eating

**svvord** *Today at 10:20 PM*  
Do you see yourself coming to a place where even if you're spending more time online, you feel healthier doing it?  
Or trying to find that balance of off and on

**harry** *Today at 10:20 PM*  
Healthier than before? Of course  
I think it’s generally unhealthy to spend all day in your room  
And I think socialization outside of online helps you keep the balance  
But that need for a community is a lot stronger than it was when I was 14 because now I don’t really have anyone

**svvord** *Today at 10:22 PM*  
Once you're an adult you don't really get that built in school socialization

**harry** *Today at 10:23 PM*  
I got back from Korea and broke up with my bf after he hit me, I came out to my parents and they kicked me out, my brother is in Copenhagen, my best friends are in Korea or went back to their home countries, I have basically one close friend and he’s moving away in 6 months  
So yeah I’m pretty isolated  
And now that I’m trans making friends is an absolute nightmare, I was very social a couple months ago but I’ve abandoned that after a few really bad encounters

**svvord** *Today at 10:29 PM*  
With all the risks and the pull of online it def feels safer sometimes than running the gamut of bigotry and physical risk offline.

**harry** *Today at 10:30 PM*  
Yep  
I’ve turtled up a lot

**svvord** *Today at 10:30 PM*  
We need to figure out instant blocking for real life

**harry** *Today at 10:31 PM*  
I should be allowed to mute men

**svvord** *Today at 10:32 PM*  
That would solve like a good 10% of my problems. I've similarly seen myself not wanting to bother with the effort of offline friendship and social life  
Do you find yourself acting a particular way online vs offline? How you interact with people differently?

**harry** *Today at 10:35 PM*  
Ummmm I’m nicer online  
There’s a lot of things like content warnings and stuff that have me like Concerned about people’s health and safety  
Bruh when I say I don’t give a shit about telling people they’re cunts irl I’m not lying

**svvord** *Today at 10:36 PM*  
Sometimes they need to know

**harry** *Today at 10:36 PM*  
I’m like ‘why don’t a have any friends :pensive: ‘  
I know why, it’s because the patience for people in my life has bottomed out

**svvord** *Today at 10:37 PM*  
Do you think you're able to be more patient online? Or it just doesn't come up as much

**harry** *Today at 10:37 PM*  
I just like you guys more  
Like, genuinely  
People in our discord are funnier and sweeter and gentler with me  
I want to pay that back and take care of you guys  
I don’t care about cis men.  
And even cis women, I’ll cut them some more slack but I’ll call them out too

**svvord** *Today at 10:39 PM*  
You definitely deserve better treatment

**harry** *Today at 10:39 PM*  
:heart:  
You want to know what the number one most common thing I hear from these people is?

**svvord** *Today at 10:39 PM*  
Oh?

**harry** *Today at 10:40 PM*  
‘You should try and understand that your parents are just having a hard time with this’

**svvord** *Today at 10:40 PM*  
WOW

**harry** *Today at 10:40 PM*  
Maybe a half dozen times in the last 6 months

**svvord** *Today at 10:40 PM*  
Thats so shitty

**harry** *Today at 10:41 PM*  
It sucks, but it’s because they don’t know  
Because the people I want to be around DO know  
But those people are ONLINE and not in MY TERRIBLE CITY

**svvord** *Today at 10:42 PM*  
As is the curse of offline

**harry** *Today at 10:42 PM*  
Fuck offline  
I want my friends ;-;