

DWeb Worldbuilding + Speculative Design

Workshop Instructions

Inside the workshop “Praxis 6: DWeb Worldbuilding + Speculative Design” we learned how to build a world in 3 steps!

Step 1: Recalling Belonging (10mins.)

Spend 10 mins journaling about an ancestor, chosen family member, political home/organization, friend, lover who made you feel like you belonged.

Applying a “sankofa sensibility” to our worldbuilding practice we will reflect on someone, something or some community that modeled an ethos of belonging you want to replicate or pour into the future. Recall a site, a place, a person, a moment or a group of people that made you feel how you WISHED the internet felt.

Journaling Prompts

- Engage your sensorium. How did belonging smell, sound, taste, feel? Were you in a kitchen or on a dancefloor? Freewrite about the feeling!
- What or “who” about the setting inspired belonging?
- Whose memory is still alive in you?

Set a 10 minute timer to allow participants to journal.

Step 2: Generate Prompts (5mins.)

It’s a collective problem we have — our dissatisfaction with the internet. How do we collectively generate new prompts?

Holding on to that recollection of belonging from STEP 1 we’re going to collectively generate prompts for the worlds we’re building on the web using sentence frameworks that ask us to consider the verbs/actions, site specificity and desires inside the world we’re building. We will silently work alongside eachother inside the landscape of a spreadsheet!

How to Collectively Generate Worldbuilding Prompts

0. **To start the spreadsheet is blank:** We will collectively add our own verbs, speculative places and desired outcomes. You can choose to work vertically or horizontally but we want to try to complete as many rows as we can by the end of **5mins** so feel free to fill in the blanks where your co-creators left empty cells!

1. **The Verbs:** Feel free to return to the freewriting we just completed in STEP 1! What were you **doing** in your memories of belonging? Return to the ancestors you admire, what were their verbs? What did they do to cultivate belonging? What activities can we do online and off to cultivate belonging? Fill this column in with creative actions that strengthen and inspire our networks.
2. **The Place:** Invoke other internets! Here we will use the liberating potential of our imagination. We will use the power of worldbuilding to name a place, any place, "some other where" that doesn't exist or existed millennia ago. A speculative location you dreamed about or a (web)site an ancestor whispered about through the internet to remind you to return.
3. **The Desire:** Here we are invoking Audre Lorde's essay *Uses of the Erotic, The Erotic as Power*. Lorde reminds us our desire is a limitless energy source we can trust and leverage as a collaborator. A north star we can rely on to illuminate the path as we journey. Our desire is our why and our what. **What desired outcomes are we building toward?** Think of these prompts as poetry and have fun!

Set a 5 minute timer to allow participants to collectively generate prompts. If empty cells fill up in less than 5 minutes, invite participants to review the prompts and share their favorites.

Step 3: Build Web-Site Specific Worlds (20mins.)

DWeb for Worldbuilders! Using the collectively generated prompts for web-site specific speculation from STEP 2, we will write the worlds our communities are longing for into being. Imagining the internet as a site for decolonial intervention we design worlds where resources and labor held in common is an ancient reality.

Worldbuilding Sentence Framework

Spend 20 mins free writing and imagining a world on the web! Be as expansive and imaginative as you desire. A web can be networked bodies connected through ancestral memory, a mycelial root system or the internet. This is an invitation to imagine more.

Use this sentence framework to get you started:

We know this place as _____ where _____....

Mix in any or all of the 3 Worldbuilding ingredients:

1. Ancestry
2. Algorithm
3. Aesthetics

Tips

- Use one of the collectively generated prompts from STEP 2 as inspiration!

- Feel free to leverage the existing structure of the internet or create a world on a wide web that doesn't yet exist.
- Return to the "codes of conduct/consent" in the case studies or the aesthetics of belonging from STEP 1.
- Feel free to embed the folks you journaled about in STEP 1 as characters in this world.
- Remember Sankofa. We don't come from nowhere, none of us are blank pages so we're never starting with a blank page.

Invite participants to read aloud all or excerpts of what they wrote.