

INSPIRATIONAL CONTEMPORARY WORKS

Justine Lardeux - 40030920

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Since the sixties, concerns about pollution arose with the environmental activism of the time. In 1971, an ad promoting the catchline “People Start Pollution. People can stop it” won awards for excellent advertising. People Start Pollution (PSA) was created by Keep America Beautiful (KAB), a non-profit group entirely funded by the main actors in beverage and packaging (The Coca-Cola Company, GLAD Wrap and Bags, PepsiCo, etc.). Decades later, big food companies are the world’s worst plastic polluters (Kaufman).

For decades, Coca-Cola and other consumer goods companies have relied on the myth of recycling to avoid responsibility for this pollution. They have played up recycled content as a way to continue using harmful single-use plastics, and put the onus on all of us to clean up their trash, while refusing to recognize that their plastic problem is beyond being solved by recycling or clean up initiatives (Flaharty).

Today, big corporations are still cleverly denying accountability by pointing the fingers to individuals; making it seem that the faith of the anthropocene is solely dependent on the individuals’ daily-life actions. While companies like Coca-Cola have a higher annual income than two thirds of the world's countries, they continue to have ethical issues in climate change, habitat and resources, animal rights, anti-social finance and political activities and human rights. However, these same companies spend their massive revenues in lawsuit coverups and irresponsible marketing (Ethical Consumer, n.d.b).

Following this theme, here are some projects and references that both positively and negatively influence my vision for how my project will manipulate and present data.

THE BUYCOTT APP (2013-)

The Buycott app is a tool that enables consumers to track the political and social positions of companies and brands and make informed purchasing decisions based on this information. The Buycott app allows users to join "campaigns" which are groups of consumers who support specific political or social causes. It is designed to be used as a tool for political activism, enabling consumers to make informed purchasing decisions and to shape the political and social positions of companies and brands through their consumer behavior. (O'Neil)

This particular app founded my project, since it is providing information about the political and social positions of companies and brands, aiming to empower consumers and enable them to make a difference through their purchasing decisions. However, the app focuses mainly on political activism movements within the app's framework, which may have drawbacks.

The 2016 paper "Mobile Activism, Material Imaginings, and the Ethics of the Edible: Framing Political Engagement through the Buycott App" by Karin Eli, Catherine Dolan, Tanja Schneider, and Stanley Ulijaszek identifies several limitations of the Buycott app and similar tools for political activism. According to the authors, the Buycott app has important limitations in its relationship with neoliberalism, in that it reinforces the idea that individual consumer choice is the most effective way to address social and political issues, and that it is limited by the information it provides to users. They also argue that the app's focus on consumer activism can distract from more effective forms of political engagement, such as advocacy, lobbying, and direct action. The app's campaigns may not have a significant impact on larger societal issues, and may instead provide a false sense of accomplishment for users who participate. (Eli et al., 2016)

Taking into consideration the limitations mentioned, I acknowledge that the effectiveness and relevancy of my web-based app project may be in question. My primary aim is to present information objectively, while ensuring that I do not reinforce the dominant position of large food corporations.

THE NETWORKED CONDITION: MEMO AKTEN CASE STUDY (2021)

At the beginning of 2020, the Arts Council England as part of the Julie's Bicycle Accelerator Programme involving Fast Familiar, Abandon Normal Devices, and Arts Catalyst began the project: *Networked Condition: Environmental Impacts of Digital Cultural Production*. The Network Condition is a collaborative initiative aimed at promoting enterprise, innovation, and creative perspectives on environmental issues. In their research, they interviewed Memo Akten, a computational artist and Assistant Professor of Computational Arts at the University of California, San Diego on his latest explorations on the impact of AI and blockchain on society. Despite the context being a concern about the ecological impact of NFTs (Non Fungible Tokens) in the arts community, his conclusions relate closely to the concepts of neoliberalism in technologies. Namely, he views individual actions as important, but believes that they are often misunderstood in the context of larger societal issues. He thinks that people often react defensively to criticism of their own actions, rather than engaging in a conversation about the larger issues. He emphasizes the importance of divorcing the conversation from personal attacks and focusing on the larger picture of the ecological impact of the industry. I intend to adopt his recommendations as the framework for how my project will be shaped and structured. (AND Festival, 2021).

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