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CART 211 Reflection 3 ~ Net.art

One of the biggest downsides present in the modern internet is the way that corporations have manifested to monopolize it. As the internet grew progressively more mainstream, this became more and more evident. Of course, we now live in a time where the mainstream is essentially no more – content online is better represented by a vast land filled with countless smaller, interconnected streams going off in infinite directions. This current landscape – while it has always existed – was especially utilized in the early days of the web, by net.artists. The idea is fascinating – what results from an open space where individuals are free to create whatever they wish and share it with the rest of the world? Art, being such a subjective and nuanced concept naturally flourished as many chose to express themselves directly to the world. An interesting result of this was the expression of political and social beliefs. When compared to the boring corporate image of much of the current internet, these individual works published online provide an interesting contrast.

In a sense, it’s fascinating to see how the early adopters of the internet learned to use it for artistic purposes, developing new forms of expression and pioneering activism in the process. The ability to express oneself is always important in an anonymous, depersonalized space. While the pioneering of art on the internet isn’t something that wouldn’t have happened otherwise, it’s always fascinating as an example of counterculture developing ahead of the curve of the masses. Even when such expression gets used for propaganda or disturbing, experimental sites, it’ll always be more interesting to analyze the work of the common folk than that of the overly neutral corporations attempting to appeal to the masses.