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A Handmade Web – J. R. Carpenter

1. What is the thesis of this article?

This article talks about the “handmade web”. By handmade web” the author refers to a time of the early-internet days which was the mid 1990’s where webpages were manually created by individuals without using automated softwares. These web pages were representative of the individualistic expression of the maker and often experimental. After the corporate take-over of the internet, we mostly rely on big companies for everything on the internet. For example: when I want to create a portfolio website, I would probably select some pre-made templates on the internet and so will a million of others. This would end up making everything look the same.

In essence, the thesis of this article is a call to preserve and cherish the spirit the early days of internet, where we play an active role in shaping the online world rather than relying on big companies.

2. Carpenter describes the handmade web as a form of resistance. In your own words, what is being resisted?

Carpenter describes the handmade web’s slowness and smallness as a form of resistance. The handmade web is a way of doing things differently. It is slower and smaller, but also has a personal and creative touch to it. This unique quality definitely stands out in today’s web which is filled with similar looking templates from big companies. It’s resisting the idea that the internet is mainly about big businesses making money from ads and selling things. Instead, the author pushes the idea that the internet is about regular people having their creative space online.

He says that the act of hand-coding and self-publishing web content is a form of resistance against the growing commercialization and standardisation of the internet. It means, taking control of the internet instead of letting big companies do it.

3. Reflecting on your own experiences, what are other examples of drawing attention to the “physicality” of the web?

I had come across this really interesting website:

“If the moon were only 1 pixel: a tediously accurate scale model of the solar system.” Here is the link: https://joshworth.com/dev/pixelspace/pixelspace_solarsystem.html

This website represents an accurate model of our solar system. As we tediously scroll through the website, we can get a sense of the vastness of the space and the physical relationship between the planets and other objects.

What Screens Want – Frank Chimero

1. What is the thesis of this article?

The author started off by asking what screens want? But over the course of the article the writer believes that its more important for the screens to match what we want. Screens and technology have evolved a lot and it is important for us, designers, to focus on how things have changed and adapt them when designing for them.

The author also criticizes the current state of the internet which is dominated by big companies and their commercial interests which is further away from the original vision of the internet. The article suggests that we need to circle back to the original vision which focuses on being open and creative, allowing people to communicate freely without being watched, building communities rather than concentrating power to big companies.

2. Where do you stand with the two ideological camps: flat and skeuo?

I personally feel the choice between flat design and skeuomorphism should depend on the target audience, project goals and the desired user experience. However, if I had to choose, I usually go for the flat and minimalistic design approach. I believe it makes the design user friendly and the interface more intuitive. This kind of design also requires fewer graphical elements which makes the file less heavy and reduces the loading time. But also the previous reading has influenced me a bit, and I do agree that our webpages need to have a little bit of character and personality to it and flatter design, even though it being efficient, is kind of boring. So I am actually torn between the two ideologies.

But to conclude, I would circle back to the first point I made, which was, the project brief and the target audience would define the style that one should go for.

3. What is a zoopraxiscope and how does it relate to web design and interaction design? Find another example from filmmaking or another medium that has inspired digital design.

A zoopraxiscope was a device that was invented in the late 19th century to create an illusion of motion by displaying a series of still images in rapid succession. It was the foundation of the modern-day animation. In the web-design and interaction design concept, the zoopraxiscope serves as a historical example of how the concept of motion and animation has evolved in web-designing to create more user-engaging and interactive designs.

An example of animation that has been adapted in digital design is parallax scrolling. This technique creates illusion of depth by moving different layers at different speeds. As the users scroll, they perceive a sense of depth because the foreground content appears to move faster than the background elements, similar to how our eyes perceive depth in the real world. This technique is often used in 2D animation to create a 3 dimensional illusion between the foreground, midground and background.