

Written Response

As a human, it is incredibly humbling to walk around life realizing billions of other people share a life as complex as your own. You can travel the world, but it's not possible to have physically occupied every area of the earth's vastness. The contrast of this vastness with your small presence is a sense of dissonance we grapple with fleetingly, mostly because we are preoccupied with the challenges and thoughts of day-to-day life.

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When we interact with the internet, it is that sense of dissonance amplified. As Drulhe says, the internet knows no gravity or physical distance, it simply is a *"concentration of power in a single point incorporating the whole world."* Even as we traverse the web aimlessly on GUIs built for our ease of use and addiction, we expose ourselves only to what is indexable or visible. As we scroll through simple text, the soundless undercurrents of data and electricity pulse unknowingly at a pace we can neither feel nor hear. While this dissonance feels otherworldly and unknowable, frighteningly and excitingly enough it occupies this same reality. The satisfying swishes and swooshes of Google's Material Design inoculate us from realizing we are surfing on a sloped plane, its steepness dictated by the shapeless dynamism of well-designed pages.

The "shape", however, of the internet is especially elusive. Owing to a number of forces at play, not including that it is still expanding, we navigate a projection of the internet through our individual localities. Distortion due to reticular connection, coupled with the ever-changing versions of the various Internets, evokes both anticipation and fear: *What can we create*, and later, *what did we create?*

Designed on Adobe Illustrator, the graphic response aims to portray both the fluidity of the internet as it evolves and our conceptions of it.

- What is the “shape” of the internet?
- What does it mean to “read” space? Space fundamentally defies our 2D notion of reading from left to right.
- The internet distorts distance, and “search engines control Internet architecture”, and Google is its heart. The internet as this stress point between ourselves and an invisible cyberspace.
- Distortion of sovereignty based on ICANN and the US’ outsized influence
- “The internet we use is actually a projection of itself through the prism of locality. The idea of projections evokes our debates on truth and mistruth that are very much of the zeitgeist.
- Evolution of the internet:
 - “In the early years of Internet, its architecture was distributed, users published their own personal home pages and had a decentralized occupation of the space.”
 - Nowadays, access and content are led by a few leading players
- Reticular connection: activity increases without the space getting physically bigger
- “The deafening sound of the air conditioning telling its stories in these secret centers whose limited access makes them even more fascinating.”
- This idea of attraction and sliding down the “web slope” either by want or by force.
- Metadata infiltrates the Internet’s surface. We are not the clients but the products.
- Search engines: indexed web, darknet, and deep web.
- There are as many Internet architectures as there are users. While browsing online, we are modeling Internet space. Each of our clicks serves to sculpt the Internet according to our own image.