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Data Gardens

Abstract/Proposal for Final Project

Initial ideas:

I want to create an interactive project using code as the medium. I'm most comfortable with JavaScript and would like to continue using it. The project will live on the internet—I'm currently building my own website and would love to have the work exist there. Maybe it's hidden like an easter egg.

I am very drawn to nature and animals and would love to incorporate them in my work. For example, I could look at live webcams (like the one dedicated to the falcon nest on the Cathedral of Learning) and use the images from them somehow. I'm also interested in esoteric forums, like the one about vultures I found for my poetry assignment. I could create poetry by using these forums, for instance by taking the first 5 words of every sentence. I'm interested in this kind of found poetry, and would love to make something in relation to the Imaginary Machine and Poetry assignments. I think it would be wise to have some kind of task or rule I follow to make sure I don't have too much control over this project. There needs to be more reasoning behind the choices I make so that I create a meaningful piece.

Another idea would be to use GeoGuessr, which would randomly place me somewhere in the world, or Google Earth where I would randomly click the map. Using one of these programs, I would take a screenshot of a location, choose one object or moment, for example a man in a yellow shirt, do a search on "yellow shirt," choose the top paid/sponsored ad if there is one, go to that website, and find one to three sentences on that site and use it in a poem.

Here is an example of what I found: "I buy my husband easy-to-wear clothes that are nice to be seen in as he recovers from illness. This was a good choice. I also ordered it in two other colors." I could select one line and have to use it in the poem. The rest can only be written using words found on that site.

Final ideas after brainstorming:

I'd love to focus on obituaries because I'm drawn to the impressions people leave on loved ones even after they're gone. I'm looking for profundity, but also the humor, beauty, happiness, and sadness that's also wrapped up in death. I'm also interested in sites dedicated to helping people find a particular grave and its location. I'd want to create a piece that feels celebratory by using obituary phrases that strike me.

I came across a site (<https://www.findagrave.com>) dedicated to finding graves and decided to look up my last name. I found it striking that there was an option to leave a virtual flower, with many flower varieties (all represented by clipart images). I left Audrey a bouquet. I assume I'm related to her, but I don't know if that's true.

Audrey A. Eden Hickoff

BIRTH 10 Apr 1930
Ontario, Canada

DEATH 19 Mar 2016 (aged 85)
Brockway, Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, USA

BURIAL Unknown [Add to Map](#)

MEMORIAL ID 159930851 · [View Source](#)

SHARE + SAVE TO SUGGEST EDITS

MEMORIAL PHOTOS 1 FLOWERS 1

Audrey A. Hickoff, age 85 of Main Street Brockway, peacefully departed 2016.

+ Add Photos + Request Photo

Flowers

Left by Anonymous on 1 Nov 2019

[Leave a Flower](#)

⚠ You can only add one flower per day to any given memorial

I decided to leave my name as anonymous. Maybe people visiting her page will think I'm an old lover of hers and find it mysterious there was no name attached to the bouquet.

There is also an option to leave different pieces of clipart that accompany your flower. Below are some of the categories. Apparently they limit the amount of virtual flowers you can place... hmm.

Leave a Flower

Choose a category

- ** My Scrapbook **
- ✓ Flowers
- Fun Flowers
- Flowers (photos)
- Children**
- Holidays
- Veterans
- Religious
- Sports and Leisure
- Occupations
- Flags
- Memorial Ribbons
- Animals
- Miscellaneous

Flowers



Flowers



Flowers Bunch



Blue



Thin Red



Yellow



Sugar Candy



Sunflower



White and Yellow



Three Levels



Subtle



Blue Bells



Orange



St. John's Wort



Realistic Rose

I could look at different funeral websites and see the differences in the option to leave flowers, light candles, plant trees etc. and perform a web scrape of these images.

Besides obituaries, I'm also curious about the financial side of funereal services and the salesmanship involved in selling urns and coffins...

Natural Green Burial Casket



Simplicity itself. Many of us say all we want is a simple pine box. Well, this is it. Natural, green and affordable. Why waste money and ruin the environment at the same time?

[Order from Amazon USA.](#)

I love the humor of the casket's description above; "Well, this is it." Sometimes the language is blunt like this example, but other times it's serious and says something along the lines of, "Beautiful, long lasting, only the best will do."

Side note: Because I was on these gravestone and funeral sites, this popup came up.
Yay data tracking!



Another possible topic to explore is funeral etiquette. What you should do... but what you shouldn't do is interesting too. A good example below:

5. Lie To Young Children



Flickr / Stephan Ridgway

Discussing death with a young kid can be a difficult conversation and one that they might not be ready for depending on their age, but telling them something like "grandma is sleeping" doesn't help them understand things any better.

In fact, you could find yourself trying to muffle their attempts to wake her back up. In some cases, it may just be best to leave them at home.

My main goal is to use this data in the most ethical way. This could be done through web scraping because it would preserve the original text I find in obituaries. I could also build off of the text and create something new like a painting or drawing. A major concern of mine is that I don't want to appear like I'm taking advantage of those grieving or writing these obituaries, or that I'm using them for my own entertainment or gain, especially when I don't have any connection to them. Even still, I am very drawn to obituaries and how people write about their loved ones. I'm also interested in learning about someone who's gone and will never meet. I actually created a folder on my desktop this year dedicated to remembrances:



"Here I am,
Here you are."
→

