

The Interview Project

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The Interview Project

This book is a work-in-progress, launched in the summer of 2016. It gathers transcripts of interviews, talks and conferences that I have recorded, conducted, or otherwise taken part in.

It was inspired, among others, by Hans-Ulrich Obrist's *Interview Project*¹, and by a couple of outstanding interview collections, such as: *Playtime* by Fucking Good Art; *Conversations*² by Constant and Christoph Haag; *East Coast Europe* by Markus Miessen³...

Process:

This is the process for building this book:

1. Conduct interviews, ideally one per week
2. Transcribe them (or use online transcription services)

¹“An oral history of contemporary art”, running since 1996 with nearly 2000 hours of interviews.

See Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans-Ulrich_Obrist#The_Interview_project

²Conversations, Constant Verlag, Brussels, 2015, conversations.tools

³Markus Miessen (Ed.), *East Coast Europe*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2008, sternberg-press.com/index.php?pageId=1222

3. Publish (update the book, approximately once per month)
4. Repeat!

Background:

Some notes on my interviewing practice.

During the 1990s : taped interviews conducted for music fanzines (*Crépuscule*, *Transit*), with numerous electronic music acts: Kid606, Velvet Acid Christ, Das Ich, Olivier Moreau, Stelarc, Mother Destruction, Zbigniew Karkowski...

August 16th 2001: “the absolute interview / 10 small questions about music” is sent out to a number of musicians and sound artists.

On sept 13 2001, a website is created with the received answers, featuring Alec Empire, Blectum From Blechdom, cdatakill, Disinformation, Hanin Elias, Multipara, scanner, s.e.t.i., Silk Saw, Third Eye Foundation, Ultra Milkmaids, Ultra-red.

October 2001 : minidisk recordings, dream transcripts done in Georgia with members of the General Document collective.

Summer of 2002: I perform the *24 Hour Project*. Over the span of 24 hours, I produce a continuous 24-hour audio recording, using two minidisk devices.

More recently, I conducted web-based interviews with Libre Graphics Magazine (conducted over IRC in 2011), with the Open Source Publishing collective (conducted over Etherpad during the production of

the Aether9 book, 2012), and with free type advocate Dave Crossland (conducted over VOIP in 2014).

Manuel Schmalstieg,
September 2016

About the author

Manuel Schmalstieg is an artist, designer and educator, operating in the area between free software communities and hacker culture. Studies in Geneva (ESBA / atelier zero1) and Krakow (Academy of Fine arts / animated film department). Founder of publishing house Greyscale Press in 2008. Currently teaching webdesign at Eracom (Lausanne) and powering the InfoLab at HEAD (Geneva).

Timeline

A timeline of projects, 1999 - ongoing

1999: art/core collective founded - reading Critical Art Ensemble: "La Résistance Electronique" – video made in the night-train geneva-zagreb (during the 10 minutes between Cointrin and Cornavin station) – mai?: shooting Nosferatu (animation film) – june: art/core press conference – autumn: joins General Document – November: meets Stelarc, Cyborg Frictions, Dampfzentrale Bern (curated by Dominik Landwehr) – starts performing as Xipharg.

2000: various Xipharg performances (feb-may) – creation of VHS tapes for projection (sampling Vertov, Eisenstein) – June: Wave Gotik Treffen (as Xipharg) – Listening to Epiteth, Ant-Zen, kid606, Mego. – Karkowski concert at l'Arquebuse (with Hecker) – July: Fuckparade Berlin – films with Super8 camera – 29 july: Fakeparade Geneva – Buys personal recording equipment: a miniDV camcorder (Canon) and a minidisk audio recorder (Sharp) – September: trip to Marseille (w/ Andrée T.) to shoot the Mediterranean seashore with 10 super-8 cameras – October: Maschinenfest 2000 (as Xipharg). Bus travel from Cracow to Aachen.

2001: Performing in Brzeg (w/ Kielce Terror Squad) Sound performances as Syntax Error (theatre Laznia, Krakow; Kielce; Lublin) – Working on animation

film, creating HTTP606 website, collaborative video items. – Writes on prehistoric macintosh laptop. – Listening to Third Eye Foundation – Spring: storage space at Motatom in Geneva destroyed by fire (record collection, books and electronics soaked + covered with black dust). – June: official art/core reunification in Bellegarde. – Buys first mobile phone, uses Rioji Ikeda as ringtone. – Summer: Berlin, 2nd performance at Fuckparade as Xipharg, meets Imminent starvation, KTS. – Autumn: Hammarström incident – 9/11: doing paint work at Rue du Beulet (new General Document office) – October: Georgia travel with General Document, Tbilisi – October 23: discovery of an ancient VHS camera in hidden storage space.

2002: shooting art/core video items. – February : sound installation w/ Rudy Decelière, audio tape performance at Cave12 – Hears rumors about mysterious realtime video software NATO. – March: Francisco Lopez talk at ESBA, concert at archipel Festival. – Canon Camera broken. Buys a ix-1 camera for 120.- CHF. – July, in Cracow : sound recording as Syntax Error, takes part in Cadavre Exquis CD compilation. – July: Riga travel (w/ J*). BUKOLIK WERLD website. Travel to Ljepaja/Karosta. – Back in geneva: 24H recording – Listening to TATY – Shooting the VAMOS A L'ARTEPLAYA video documentary – Autumn: presentation of Arteplaya (+ computer game) at Fonction Cinéma – November: Viper (presenting Video Items) – December: Zbigniew Karkowski workshop at ESBA – Starting investigation into NATO/NN.

2003: February 2003: buys a surveillance CCTV

set. – March: work w/ Rudy Decelière on sound installation for Archipel – Creation of HAMLET.3.1 software art ready-made – Realtime video experimentation, first n3krozoft projections, creation of N3KROZOF website – April: first N3KROZOF performance in Belgrade. Buying pirate Turbofolk CD-Rs.

Geneva, Escobar: solo video performance as N3krozoft Mord. Curator: Frederic Post. – N3krozoft performance at galerie A0 (w/ Makabr and Goulart). Curator: Stephanie Pfister. – N3krozoft performance at Usine. Curator: Damien van smok. – Preparations for Metaworx/Onyx exhibition
summer: Ticino - writing/coding R.A.M., analyzing NN emails, working on ONYX – Autumn: developing the LOL project concept – November: ONYX exhibit basel (viper).

2004: January: Geneva, meeting Karkowski at Cave12 – February: travel for NN interviews (Brussels, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Berlin) – Organization of the Balkan Tour – April: N3krozoft Balkan Promenade, LOL in Belgrade. – June: LOL exhibit in Paris (w/ Cédric and 10111) – October: LOL exhibit at Plug.In (w/ Goulart and 10111).

2005: January: LOL CD-ROM programming – march: LOL @ Neue Kunst Halle St-Gallen w/ Jonas R. – Summer: travel to Serbia + Kosovo (Dokufest, interview w/ Igor Stromajer) – october: travel to Rome (interview w/ Domiziana Giordano).

2006: January: creation of “N3krozoft Annual Report 2005” – May: creating “NO SIGNAL” video

sequences – may-june: Babel Project Bucharest (Workshop) – planning LZW algorithm event (August) – summer: NO SIGNAL screened in Geneva train station – Summer: travel to Riga, WAVES conference. – November: BLACKBOX:GVA performed at Spoutnik. – December-January: work on blackbox video remix.

2007: curating Leipzig exhib./producing DVD – Avril: opening of “Reality Strikes Back” expo in Leipzig – *NO SIGNAL* screenings in Prague + Annecy. – Creation of Blutgift.de website – May: aether9 workshop @Mapping Festival – May: trip to Beograd with CCC, collab w/ Exteenager. – June: N3krozofit exhibit at MAAC, Brussels. – June-July: aether9 development/performances – July: satellite workshop dortmund / ONYX presentation – September: exhibit in Karben (Frankfurt) (plazma/pink noise) – October: trip to Belgrade, Belgrade-Kosovo Video-bridge – November: creation of dudac.org, Dubai exhibition – December: aether9 performance for NoviSad (VideoMedeja).

2008: February: aether performance @ IMAL, brussels – April: *Hotel Kyjev* project – April: aether performance w/ Bliscappen @ Mapping Festival – June: BLACKBOX video shown at Sónar. – Talk/performance w/ Laurent Schmid at Dark Designs Symposium, Yverdon.

2009: January: attending Transmediale, meeting Carole T., interviews w/ Mia, Jaromil – February: India project in Delhi, Kathgodam, Chandigarh – publishing Aether9 proceedings – Paris HackerSpace

meeting, NN video screening – October: Berlin, Aether9 meeting + performance – November: *blood sweat and code* workshop @HEAD w/ Givan Bela. Visiting CERN. December: Greyscale books exhibit in Geneva (Milkshake gallery) – *LowRez Stories* screening in Zurich (Dock18).

2010: January: editing NN book. Preparing wiki-sprint. Starting “Solaris” streetview project. – April: exhibit at ArtByGeneve with AddictLab (low-rez prints) – May: LIFT conference (VJing workshop). Wiki-sprint at Mapping Festival. Greyscale Press exhibit at Lokal.Int (Bienne) – May: montreal aether9 performance. – June: produces book on N3krosoft Ltd, *Retrospekt 2001-2010*. July-August: CAN Neuchâtel summer residency, producing the *VJing* book. – October: residency at PiNG, Nantes. – Exhibiting *Low-Rez Stories/Solaris* at Shift, Basel – November: releasing *Songs for Sophie* – Working on new N3krosoft.com site.

2011: January: interview with Libre Graphics Magazine. – February: attending Transmediale. Meeting Adam Hyde, Heath Bunting. Editing *La Décimation* w/ Catherine Lenoble. – *Low-Rez Stories/Solaris* exhibit at Kunstraum Kreuzlingen. – December: Lorient, conference on Greyscale Press. – Visit at the BNF, Paris (first step of Lumière project). December: attending WJ-Spots event @iMal, meeting Florian Cramer, Josephine Bosma.

2012: March: drafting font specimen book concept. – April-May: *Obsessive Notebooks* workshop @HEAD. – May: FLOSS Manuals Booksprint on libre VJ tools. – June: designing Aether9 Book with OSP

in Brussels. – July: talk on Open Fonts at RMLL.
– August: attending FontForge workshop in Lurs.
– Talk at WordPress Meetup Zurich. – November:
Greyscale Press work presentation at @PTT,
Geneva.

2013: January: attending WordCamp Paris, lightning talk, codex translation. – February: type specimen design workshop @ HEAD Geneva. – April: attending LGM in Madrid, giving talk on *Eve Future* (+ lightning talk on Scribus GUI) – Workshop @ EAA La Chaux-de-Fonds (specimen book) – May: Porto, LGRU meeting. Talk for opening of “Books with an attitude”. – June: *Open Graphics Night* w/ Ale Rimoldi @Dock18 – September: publishing *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* with Dock18. – Talking at *Books in Browsers* conference, San Francisco. – Release of Jacob Appelbaum transcripts. – November: talk on Lumiere Project at Free Culture event, Rotterdam.

2014: April: attending Libre Graphics Meeting in Leipzig. – Conducting interviews for Libre Graphics Magazine. – May: talking at WordCamp Switzerland, Zurich, and at *Off the Press* conference, Rotterdam. Meeting Silvio Lorusso, Alessandro Ludovico.

2015: January: attending WordCamp Paris (3rd time). – Release of libre Graphics Magazine 2.3 (Type Issue). – March: running *BookLab* workshop at Fahrenheit39, Ravenna. – Editing the *Manifestos For The Internet Age* reader. – June: WordCamp Lyon – NIFFF, interactive installation with HE-Arc (Kinetoscope).

2016: January: WordCamp Paris – March: talking at ELIF conference, Lyon – Workshop at EAA Chaux-

de-Fonds – July: taking part in 50JPG exhibition, meeting Google artists. – Launching online course materials: cours-web.ch – June: launching new book, *The Interview Project*. – November: working with Sedat A. on new book: *Faire...*

Transcripts

24h00m00s

"Je suis venu parce que je suis en train de faire un enregistrement continu de 24 heures."

On August 18th 2002 at 8 PM (CET), I started a **24-hour non-stop recording** of my surroundings and everyday activities. The project resulted in a modest object: a CD-ROM containing the 24 recorded hours in the form of a 680 Mb mp3 file.

The equipment used for the recording was very simple: two minidisk recorders (recording in alternance) and twelve minidisks (each holding two hours in mono mode). During 24 hours, the following events were recorded: a trip to the Geneva airport to welcome a friend returning from Russia (carrying a suitcase full of vodka, garlic, and fine russian techno), the last 30 seconds of a concert by Jimmy Tenor near the lake, a trip to the Salève mountain at dawn, two hours of sleep, a meeting with sound artist Rudy Decelière, a guitar improvisation by Pierre Omer at Rhino, the serial numbers of various multimedia software packages, a jam session with Wania Jaikin using Nanoloop (a music sequencer for the GameBoy), and finally the first 5 minutes of watching a VHS copy of "Mauvais Sang" by Leos Carax.

Fragmented transcriptions:

md1_3:

Objectifs de caméra pour Amélie Poulain:

9:32

Goulart vient de rentrer d'Uruguay.

27 min...

51 min : Nicolas Goulart - discussion sur la russie...

56 min : sur le tournage à St-Petersburg

sur J* 1:00

sur la techno russe 1:04

sniper tchétchène, 1:11

MD 2:

sophie meyer: 33.50

... projet expo.02 ...

Vania (raconte un rêve?) 1h59

!!!

MD 3:

rêve de Sébastien - 43:40

MD 7:

avec Rudy Decelière

1:24 récit de rêve (MS) (...)

MD 8:

9min, récit sur un récent voyage en Lettonie (Riga, Karosta)

Manuel: C'est une sorte de grand parc, avec des énormes routes. Les habitants sont passés de 25'000 à 7'000. C'est une ville fantôme, au bord de la mer.

Ce n'est pas glauque comme atmosphère. C'est surréaliste. Très calme. Des ménagères promènent leur chien, des gamins jouent. Il y a deux types de maisons. Des blocks russes, standardisés. Mais aussi de vieilles maisons, construites au début du 20e siècle. Elles sont belles, en briques, mais ravagées, elles n'ont plus de fenêtres.

Et au milieu de tout ça, il y a ce centre culturel, dans une veille maison. C'est bien équipé: des caméras, des ordis. Et c'est ouvert à tout le monde. Des jeunes du quartier y viennent pour bosser.

J'ai fait du stop pour traverser la Lituanie. On n'avait pas pu prendre de train direct, il aurait fallu attendre douze heures à la gare frontalière.

Donc on a fait du stop... puis en fin de compte, on a fini par prendre le bus, vers 18h, quand il commençait à faire nuit, et que le stop ne marchait plus.

Là, j'ai voyagé avec J*, qui communiquait en russe. Le polonais, j'ai toujours l'impression que c'est assez proche, mais en sens inverse, ça marche moins bien. Donc c'est J* qui assumait la conversation.

On a rencontré un type intéressant, qui conduisait une grande voiture noire, une sorte de camionnette.

Il avait un style slave impénétrable. Il nous a raconté avoir fait beaucoup de stop en étant étudiant. Il a traversé la Russie, aussi loin qu'on peut aller en stop vers l'est.

Il nous a raconté comment son père avait combattu avec les SS lituaniens - non pas parce qu'il était nazi, mais parce que c'était une manière de se battre contre les Russes. (..) Lui-même a participé au commando qui a pris d'assaut la centrale du KGB de Vilnius, en 1991. Il était théologien, avait fait des études de théologie.

Une autre rencontre mémorable. (..) Un jeune gars qui fait des vidéos. Visite dans la bicoque de ses parents, à 40 km de Riga, sur la côte. Dans un endroit très rustique, des maisons de pêcheurs. Maison construite par le père de son père. Sous le toit, un grenier rempli d'un fatras incroyable. Des tonnes de livres. Récupérés lors d'une liquidation de bibliothèque. Des livres dans toutes les langues, russe, letton, allemand...

Et donc, ce bonhomme, son père, c'était un personnage digne d'un film. Une tête incroyable. Une sorte de tête d'écolier, de cancre, en train de préparer un mauvais coup. Des yeux pétillants, des cheveux ébouriffés à la Beckett. Il se baladait toujours torse nu, une musculature très nerveuse. Ça pourrait être un personnage de film d'aventure. Il nous racontait des histoires dans un anglais.. Je pense qu'il parlait bien anglais dans le temps. Il utilisait des termes très précis. Il parlait un peu allemand. Russe avec mon pote. Et letton. Il était toujours un peu bourré. Il fallait qu'on boive un

verre de vodka dès le matin. Il nous racontait par exemple comment il était marin, inspecteur de douane - il devait inspecter les bateaux qui arrivaient dans le port de Riga. C'était là qu'il avait appris l'anglais. Il nous expliquait qu'il avait des problèmes de communication dans deux cas seulement - avec les chinois, qui parlaient un anglais incompréhensible. Et avec les britanniques, pour la même raison.

Et il racontait des histoires sur la guerre. Il m'a conseillé de lire Sokourov, "The Icebreaker". C'était un passionné d'histoire, il lisait beaucoup sur l'époque de Staline. Il nous racontait comment, durant les années 40, les arbres sur la côte avaient été rasés par les bombardements. Il était gamin à l'époque. C'était l'endroit où le front Russo-Allemand se déplaçait sans arrêt. Auparavant, c'était des forêts utilisées pour faire des bateaux.

Diego: Il s'est passé tellement de choses dans ces endroits.

MD9:

Thé chinois de la Rue des Bains.

Déplacement à Rue de la Servette, avec Wania et Laurent.

À 32 min: Démonstration de Nanoloop, une cartouche Gameboy contenant un séquenceur, permettant de faire de la musique.

Laurent: Alors c'est quoi cette cassette là en fait?

Manuel: C'est un truc génial. C'est c'est une cartouche développée par un gars qui a décidé de faire un séquenceur audio pour Gameboy, pour faire de la musique. Il la vend sur son site. C'est tout à fait inofficiel.

Laurent: Fais voir comment ça marche.

Wania: D'abord ça s'allume.

Manuel: Ensuite tu fais START.

Laurent: Et ensuite?

Manuel: Ensuite, tu fais des sons. En faisant comme ça, tu choisis un de tes instruments. Il y en a trois. Un qui s'appelle S, un synthé. Un qui s'appelle R, qui est aussi une sorte de synthé. Et un qui s'appelle N, qui est plutôt une sorte de bruit, pour faire des rythmes.

Ensuite, pour faire les sons, tu choisis parmi ces trucs, en allant de gauche à droite. Ça, c'est l'attaque. C'est le pitch. Et à droite c'est Pan, gauche-droite. Et pour faire quelque chose avec un de ces sons, tu entres dans ce système de pistes, et tu choisis l'endroit où tu veux aller, tu appuyes sur A, et tu bouges ça. Voilà, un joli son.

Je vais retourner au menu, prendre le pitch - ah non, il marche pas sur l'instrument N. Il n'y a pas beaucoup de nuances.

Laurent: Ah, quand même.

Wania: C'est monstrueux là, la nuance, quand même.

On Aether

Interview conducted by Pauline Eiferman

June 6, 2010

An interview for an article about “how the internet is changing the way artists collaborate and work today.”

Pauline Eiferman — Firstly, I am interested in how the project started and what exactly it aims to do.

Manuel Schmalstieg — Technically, the project was initiated during a workshop given by the N3krozof Media Group during Mapping Festival in Geneva, May 2007. The objective of the workshop was to devise methods for realtime visual collaboration in a performative context (Mapping Festival is an event dedicated to VJing).

During this workshop, a few people met on-location for the first time, and a group of people joined remotely (after a massive call-for-participation mailing) from Paris, Berlin, Brussels, the US, Colombia, Slovenia.

After the workshop, the group continued the work and new members joined the effort. We try to keep it very open, following methods that are used in open source software development.

Our objective: achieving new forms of art, by mixing existing forms (video, cinema, theatre) with current technical tools, most importantly the various

network protocols. There are many “one-to-one” audiovisual communication tools, also a few “one-to-many” tools, but it’s very difficult to achieve “many-to-many” communication. Our project is a practical/artistic attempt to solve this problem.

The main inspiration for the Mapping Festival workshop were projects carried out in the very early 80s by several artist groups, such as *Electronic Cafe* by K. Galloway and S. Rabinowitz in 1984, or *The world in 24 hours* by Robert Adrian in 1982 (see <http://1904.cc/timeline/> for sources).

PE – What role do you believe the internet can have in the creation of art today?

MS – What is most significant to me, is that Tim Berners-Lee originally conceived the www (and the first browser) as a “read-write” medium, where every user would have the ability to write, therefore to create. This philosophy (or “feature”) was quickly dropped by the main browser producers. Fortunately it has been brought back with the rise of wikis and “content management systems”.

One barrier, for artists, is that wikis and CMSes are text-based. Video on the web still suffers from many issues, as we see with the current struggles between h264, ogg, etc.

One wonderful example of “video management” by/for artists is <http://pad.ma>

PE – Could you talk about one specific video that is part of the project, and how it used the internet in its creation?

MS – I was never really satisfied with our “video archives”. It’s like with most performance art, you cannot understand the intensity of the work when watching archival recordings. Maybe they will be interesting to watch again in 10 years.

I will mention the “Aether9 LRRH archive remix”, though. One function that we implemented in our streaming tool, during the “Little Red Riding Hood” performances in 2008, was an automated script that uploaded one video frame per minute to a special “archive” server.

After a few months, I retrieved those thousands of images, and combined them into this “automated remix”, that consists of many little fragments of rehearsals and performances. The soundtrack of the video is the live sound-mix that I made for the Montreal performance (at Perte-de-Signal, August 2008).

Wiki-Sprint

Interview conducted by Juliana Brunello

June 29, 2010

Manuel Schmalstieg has recently directed an event called *Wiki-Sprint*. The sprint concept derived from the code-sprints of the FLOSS communities, in which a team of developers came together in order to engage in some serious code-writing. Only this time, there would be no code-writing, but article writing for Wikipedia.

For this, a team of contributors was gathered to take part in the event's workshop, which consisted of rewriting and improving the Wikipedia article of VJing. I ask Schmalstieg about this experience:

Juliana Brunello — Most Wikipedia articles are written in collaboration by people who have not met. Why did you choose to make it a face-to-face event? What are the benefits in writing an article this way?

Manuel Schmalstieg — I should make clear that my main target was actually not the improvement of this article... That was the alibi, but the actual objective was to explore the performative act of collective writing, in the tradition of Surrealism... and also informed by the “reading performances” of artists such as Arnold Dreyblatt or Rainer Ganahl, as well as the recent practice of collaborative technical “writing-sprints” that has emerged from the free software

scene, exemplified by the Flossmanuals project.

The public reading of the article, and its inclusion in Wikipedia (as an audio article), was the crowning of this performative aspect.

To answer your question, the benefits of this method of writing are: a) a much faster writing process, b) strict time management, and c), the unique experience of human interaction that derives from such an intensive work situation.

JB — Were the people involved in the sprint already involved with Wikipedia?

MS — Most of them were not. When searching for volunteers for this project, I targetted different groups: specialists in the field (audiovisual performance and VJing), who had already written on that topic; heavy contributors of the existing Wikipedia articles (in English and French version). From the 11 people who participated, 3 had some previous editing experience on Wikipedia (one of them, Sleepytom, was a major contributor of the VJ article in 2006).

JB — How was it to work with the previous editors of this Wikipedia article, who did not belong to the sprint-group?

MS — As far as I am aware, the article has practically no regular editors. It is the result of initial work by a handful of wikipedians in 2006-2007, who aren't active anymore. The rest is the result of "drive-by editing". So we didn't have any response from the original editors of the article, with the exception of Sleepytom.

However, during the writing-sprint, we had the chance to meet Anthere (Florence Devouard), who had contributed photos from Pixelache festival to the French version of the article. But she isn't a specialist of visual art, so she did not contribute to the text of the article.

JB — Have you been following the changes on the VJing article in Wikipedia? Were there any? How do you feel about them?

MS — Yes, I have been watching the changes – I'm feeling like a gardener who planted seeds, and observes the slow growing process. There were some small corrections, minor additions, a bit of cleaning up. I think it's a good sign – it proves that a "solid" article with consistent references can act as a barrier against spammy self-referential edits (which were very frequent on the previous version).

JB — How difficult was it to organize such an event? Do you recommend it and could you give us any tips?

MS — The project was organized in a very short timespan, which was a problem for getting any institutional funding partners. Also the fact that it doesn't fit into any category was an obstacle. In the end, everything was done on a shoestring budget, all the logistics being handled by the Mapping Festival team who loved the project. On the other hand, it was great to see how easily people from the "general public" understood the idea and how positively they responded to it. We had a lot of enthusiastic feedback.

However, I wouldn't repeat the project in this format, as it really was a context-specific experiment.

JB — Anything else you would like to add? Comments, ideas, thoughts?

MS — The most recent news: we are currently preparing a print publication of the article, with some statements and reflections from our participants. This very weird relationship between Wikipedia content and print distribution is something I'm looking forward to work on in the future (the next planned step is a printed edition of my favorite Wikipedia article: The KLF).

For more background information on the wiki-sprint, here is a FAQ page that I wrote during the preparation phase: wiki.greyscalepress.com/FAQ

Finally, if after this interview you want to actively engage with Wikipedia, I suggest creating some of the missing articles on pioneering media artists, such as *Kit Galloway* and *Sherrie Rabinowitz*, for instance.

Low-Rez Stories / Solaris

Low-Rez Stories/Solaris at Shift, Basel

Libre Graphics Magazine

Published January 5, 2011

An interview with Ana Carvalho, ginger coons and Ricardo Lafuente, editors of **Libre Graphics Magazine** (ISSN: 1925-1416).

In May 2010, the first edition (#0) of Libre Graphics Magazine was created during the 5th annual Libre Graphics Meeting in Brussels. It was followed by the #1 release, published in November 2010 and available at libregraphicsmag.com. The magazine, as well as the yearly meetings, are an outgrowth of the community of coders, artists and activists that surround the software projects GIMP, Blender, Inkscape, Scribus, Krita, and many more.

This interview was conducted over IRC on Thursday December 30 2010. The interview is licensed under CC-BY-SA.

Manuel Schmalstieg — First of all, I would like you three to introduce yourself, and also give an overview of the main contributors to the Libre Graphics Magazine #1.

Ana Carvalho — I have a degree in Communication Design. I currently work as a freelance web and



UI interface designer. I became involved with the Libre Graphics Community and the Free Software Movement in general in 2006. Since 2007 I'm working mainly with free software. I'm involved in a small press venture—<http://planapress.org>—that I present at last LGM. It is dedicated to publishing comics and illustration using free software and open licenses. I live and work in Porto, Portugal.

Ginger Coons — I trained as a graphic and web designer (BFA in Design, Concordia University, Montreal) but, after working for a very commercial web design firm, got fed up pretty quickly with the design for hire approach. I still do freelance work, but what interests me more is design research. I started working with F/LOSS graphics in 2001, but only got involved in the community in 2009, when

I gave a talk at Libre Graphics Meeting in Montreal. Now I'm finishing my Masters degree, working on a thesis about colour standards for print. And I do advocacy work, introducing designers and artists to F/LOSS. My own work is at <http://adaptstudio.ca>. And these days, I'm based in Toronto (Canada).

Ricardo Lafuente — My name is Ricardo Lafuente, and my academic background is communication and media design (BA at Porto Fine Arts, MA at Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam). I've been doing stuff as a designer, hacker, artist and coder. I made the switch to FLOSS tools in 2006, and since then i've been mostly working with code for design purposes, as well as coding for the web and other kinds of hacks. Since September i'm a teacher at Porto University's Fine Arts College, teaching code to design students. (I have a rather sparse and incomplete portfolio website at <http://ricardo.koizo.org>). I'm now mainly working together with Ana, at an informal design research studio that we call Manufactura Independente. We also help run Hacklaviva, a Porto hackerspace where we try to make connections between FLOSS culture, social intervention and cultural activity.

I also live and work from Porto.

MS — Thanks. I understand that you three are the core editorial team. What other people were involved, to what degree? And was the work done via online .CA / .PT communication, or rather in one geographic place?

Ginger Coons — For our very first (trial) issue, we were actually in one place at the same time. That's

issue #0, which we completed in May 2010 at the Libre Graphics Meeting in Brussels. Even most of our contributors for that one were actually in the same room as us. But things have been very different since then.

Ricardo Lafuente — (as an aside, it was done in 3 days from start to finish, and is available here⁴).

MS — So #0 was done in the context of a “local” event. Was that different for #1 ?

Ginger Coons — This time around, almost all of our work was done by distance. We met once, for a few hours, in Barcelona, in November. Our contributors are from around the world (although both interviews in the issue took place in person). And most of our collaboration was helped around by a shared git repository.

Ana Carvalho — We have a mailing list we use frequently.

Ricardo Lafuente — And also a community advisory board, made up of 5 people who are connected, in some way or another, to the Libre Graphics scene. The board’s purpose is to advise us when we reach some hard-to-decide editorial decisions.

MS — Was the release date linked to some special context - festival, conference ...

Ginger Coons — The release date actually was chosen strategically, although we overshot a little. The plan was to have print copies of the magazine on hand in November so that we could take them to a

⁴<http://goo.gl/047SDj>

number of events. At the beginning of November, FOSSASIA⁵ took place in Vietnam. The DIY Citizenship conference⁶ happened in Toronto and the HTMlles festival⁷ happened in Montreal. All in one weekend. We had hoped to send magazines to all these events, as well as to the Expozine⁸ small press fair. Unfortunately, we didn't get all of our printing sorted out in time. But that was part of the strategic reasoning behind November. Plus, it works with our release cycle. We released an issue last May, we knew we wouldn't be able to get one ready in August, so we decided to go, from November, with a November-February-May-August release cycle.

MS — Regarding the release cycle, I read sometimes 1.1 and sometimes #1 - which is correct?

Ricardo Lafuente — Both are, in a way. Our idea was to use 1.1-1.4 for our first year run.

Ginger Coons — 1.1 is the volume and issue number. #1 is the issue number. What it means is that there'll be another #1, this time next year, but it'll be the #1 of volume 2. Hence, 2.1

MS — As I see it, the mag was born in the context of the LGMeetings, but is structurally independent from it.

Ginger Coons — yep.

MS — But it's through that meetings/conferences that your team came together.

⁵<http://fossasia.org>

⁶<http://dycitizenship.com>

⁷<http://www.htmlles.net>

⁸<http://www.expozine.ca>

Ginger Coons — For sure. But we realize that we need to grow a presence beyond the confines of an annual meeting.

MS — Now a bit more about content ... what were your founding ideas, when you decided to do a “magazine” - what does this term mean actually, today.

Ginger Coons — We see the importance of a print magazine as being largely in its accessibility and immediacy. We really have to trace ourselves to two different start dates. And two different ideas. In May, someone (Femke? a.le.?) came up with the idea of doing a magazine for LGM. Ana and Ricardo took the lead on that and then brought me in to handle the editorial stuff. After that mad rush, which didn't have a huge amount of thought about philosophy, we sat for a few months and then brought the idea back in August. For me, it was because I'd been traveling around, meeting artists, designers and developers, and realizing that we had a community without a voice. So we discussed it and decided to do it again, better. And we wrote a manifesto. So in that sense, we thought about format and audience first, because the format is really tied into the audience

MS — Here I would love to have input from Ana and Ricardo as well.

Ricardo Lafuente — Sure. We jumped on the opportunity to work on #0 since we were very energised by the pre-LibreGraphicsMeeting spirit. Also, we were helping OSP with organizing the meeting, and the idea of having a magazine that could be released during the conference was too

exciting not to try. We had seen Ginger's work and texts before, and asked her to work together since she was much more seasoned in editorial contexts, while we were more comfortable taking over the design side.

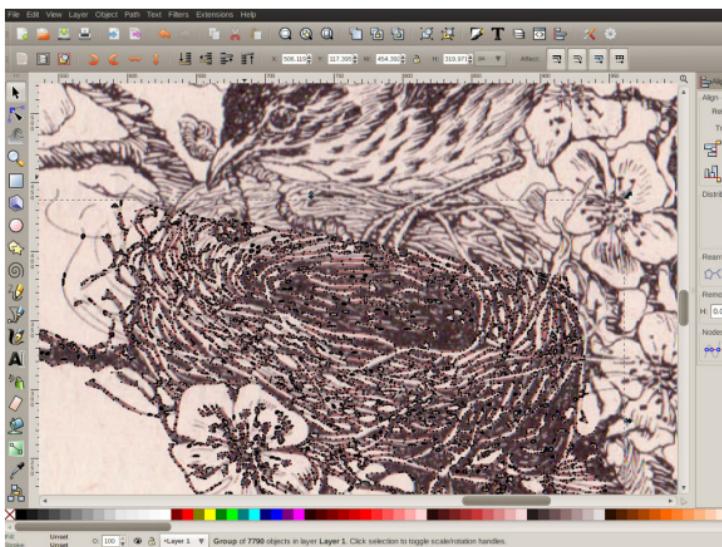
Ana Carvalho — Even though it was a ‘mad rush’ the libre graphics mag #0 was a great way to test our improvised team. A few months after we started discussing how we could take this project farther. We all knew it was a significant turning point and that it would be a great chance to put out all the great graphical work being done with free software

Ricardo Lafuente — And such a publication was definitely something that we wanted to see happen. Designers who use FLOSS are a rarity in our part of the world (and not abundant in other places either), so the opportunity to create a project to further this agenda was something that we quickly jumped on.

MS — it’s striking that your mag is unifying so many different aspects: samples of graphic work done with FLOSS, interviews, cultural discourse, and a little bit of tech stuff.

Ricardo Lafuente — Of course, it’s not only about designers; the whole idea of Libre Graphics extends to the arts in general, and other peripheral areas of thought and action (social studies, writing, etc.)

Ginger Coons — We’re really trying hard to bring in the best of what we’ve seen (and consumed!) in traditional arts magazines, too. There’s the idea that we need a little criticality and thought in our practice. But at the same time, to be useful and palatable



to people new to this world (and to ourselves) we need to be able to show off some really beautiful, professional work. And it doesn't do to be afraid of our technology, either. So we're not. Which is why we do things like include code. Because it's worth seeing the code under the image.

MS — Each time I pick up a Linux magazine in some newspaper shop, I'm astonished by the absence of cultural discourse. I guess that might have been a motivation for you too?

Ginger Coons — We're certainly pleased to see ourselves offering something Linux magazines aren't although we like to think that we serve a slightly more generalist audience. Anyone working in a visual field should be able to pick it up and enjoy it.

Ricardo Lafuente — Definitely, we've been on both sides, reading both arts publications and computer magazines. One of the first questions was how to have something that could bridge those worlds together without becoming an awkward collage of tech and culture. And it does beg the question of why tech and culture should be so much apart as they are in the current editorial landscape.

MS — In your manifesto, you mention a possible “online version” that would differ from the print mag. And when reading the PDF of your mag on screen, it's obvious that it works best as a printed item.

Ricardo Lafuente — Not that there's an easy answer, but that's one of the challenges we decided to take on in building Libre Graphics Magazine. Also, that issue pertains not only to editorial content, but to the design aspect as well—namely, we had to play with the conventions associated to both arts publications and computer magazines, again trying to combine them into something that is more than a mishmash between the two.

Ginger Coons — And we are very committed to the (forthcoming) web version, because there's something a little absurd about reading on a screen something that's meant to be held.

Ricardo Lafuente — We did plan (and are planning) for different magazine formats suited to different use cases. For instance, it's okay to have a PDF version, but maybe we can think of something better than a print-like PDF for people to print the magazine at home? We didn't have the time to work on those for issue #1, but there will be news in the next issues.

Libre Graphics Magazine issue 1.1 Dummy								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
front cover	front cover source	index	index cont. & matched	pro bono ad	letter from editor RECEIVED	production colophon	event calendar	event calendar PROGRESSING
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
new releases	new releases	new releases	reviews	reviews	reviews	reviews	reviews	pro bono ad
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
columns	columns	columns	columns	pro bono ad	dispatches	dispatches	dispatches	
26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	
first time RECEIVED	first time RECEIVED	frequently asked question	frequently asked question	pro bono ad	interview PROGRESSING	interview PROGRESSING	interview PROGRESSING	
34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	
interview PROGRESSING	house ad							
42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	
house ad						pro bono ad	Showcase	
50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	
Showcase	Showcase	Showcase	Showcase	Showcase	pro bono ad	Showcase	Showcase	
58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	
Showcase	Showcase	Showcase	Showcase	pro bono ad	Showcase	Showcase	Showcase	
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	
Showcase	Showcase	Showcase	pro bono ad	lll feature RECEIVED	lll feature RECEIVED	lll feature RECEIVED	lll feature RECEIVED	
74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	
lll feature RECEIVED	lll feature RECEIVED	lll feature RECEIVED	lll feature RECEIVED	lll feature RECEIVED	lll feature RECEIVED	pro bono ad	feature PROGRESSING	
82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	
feature PROGRESSING	feature PROGRESSING	feature PROGRESSING	feature PROGRESSING	feature PROGRESSING	feature PROGRESSING	feature PROGRESSING	feature PROGRESSING	
90	91	92	93	94	95	96		
feature PROGRESSING	feature PROGRESSING	glossary & resource list PROGRESSING	glossary & resource list PROGRESSING	glossary & resource list PROGRESSING	glossary & resource list PROGRESSING	back cover		

Ginger Coons — Once we have a little more stability, we'll be working on it. At the moment, we've been focusing on populating, publishing and being able to afford the printing costs of the print edition.

Ricardo Lafuente — I'd add that our main focus would be the printed mag; there's something in that object that a website cannot replace.

Ginger Coons — For sure. We can hand it out, it can be shared, distributed, kept, catalogued...

MS — I assume that you have used a pretty non-standard workflow for print publishing, using Git for unifying / syncing the different contributions ... how did that work, what were the problems you met, unexpected discoveries...

Ricardo Lafuente — Yes, we did use a few unorthodox procedures...

Ana Carvalho — Well, the most important thing I can remember is that we need a README for the layout document, stating which version of the software were using. Also a centralized place to keep all the relevant data relating the magazine. From content to production and planning documents.

Ricardo Lafuente — Git was a godsend. In the design world there's not much awareness about version control systems, but using one was a huge help in that all our contributions and corrections are catalogued. And Scribus, our tool of choice to create the magazine layout, held out very well from start to end. We ran into quite a few bugs (not only in Scribus), which we gathered into a list and will send to the respective bug trackers.

Ginger Coons — Plus, the nice thing about git is that it allows us all to tailor it to our personal preferences, in terms of frontends. As a case of extremes, one of our columnists likes using git from the command line, whereas I prefer Sparkleshare.

Ricardo Lafuente — Finally, to be honest, we didn't run into significant problems in that workflow. Our content was synced between all of us, we could quickly share corrections, as well as be able to change the layout at will without risk of conflicts between our versions.

Ana Carvalho — We used Git from the command line. It's quite simple.

MS — and so the git repository contained the binary Scribus files, and graphic files.

Ginger Coons — everything

Ricardo Lafuente — Yes, as well as the content in plaintext format. (little nitpick – Scribus files aren't binary, but XML ;-)

MS — good to know :)

Ricardo Lafuente — We even keep our planning documents in the repository. From end to end, it's all in one place, which is really handy.

MS — Was that method a first, or did you use it already before LGM?

Ricardo Lafuente — It was a total first for us 2, at least. We had never worked on a non-programming project using a VCS. And now we're wondering how we ever lived without that :o)

Ginger Coons — Same here. And for #0, we weren't even using it yet. This was something we started in September or so.

MS — And how did the print production work .. I guess people often wonder about that when working with FLOSS tools ..

Ricardo Lafuente — I'd start by dispelling a very common misconception: we had absolutely no problems with file formats, with regards to sending output to the printer. Usually I hear many criticism of FLOSS tools in that it doesn't output proper PDF files for print, but I never found any case where this applied.

Ginger Coons — We were also lucky enough to work with a really amazing printer. Mardigrafe, which is owned by one of the developers of Scribus, tends to be incredibly accommodating. Basically (as I like to say), we kept it in the family. Louis Desjardins, who owns Mardigrafe, has also organized two LGMeetings and is working on a third right now. So we didn't have any misunderstandings or mis-communications that might be possible with other print shops. Although, in an ideal world, the printer would never notice what software we'd used to create the magazine ;)

MS — You are using “crowdfunding” (Pledgie, Flattr) to gather resources for the printing costs. What is your experience with this?

Ginger Coons — The crowdfunding is a wee bit of a sore point. It's quite a small crowd, for a start, which means there isn't much money going around. Our

main source of revenue isn't actually donation based. As it breaks down, we make some revenue from sales of print copies.

MS — So what is the main source - cultural funding?

Ginger Coons — The main source at the moment is us. Issue #0 was funded by several levels of Belgian government. Issue 1.1 was out of our own pockets for the most part. At the moment, we have about half of the cost of printing recouped, which is nice. But we're aiming, in future issues, to offset the cost of printing with advertisements. Although not many. And once we've published two issues, we'll be eligible to apply for cultural funding in Canada (since we are, structurally at least, a Canadian publication). The real goal is to take revenue from sales completely out of the equation. So that we're actually able to give away as many as possible, without having to think that we need to hold back x amount in order to make our money back. So in that sense too, it's a pretty traditional print publishing model. Except we're not "filling the content hole". We're very careful about the balance of content and advertising.

MS — One thing about Scribus, your main layout tool : has the fact of being in contact with that software's developers trigger some exchange, in one way or another ? such as features specifically needed for your work being implemented etc ..

Ricardo Lafuente — Not yet, but that's definitely in our plans. We worked by ourselves on this issue so that we could get used to a magazine workflow inside Scribus. And from there, realise where we could streamline some bottlenecks that we found. With

that, we now have quite a few feature requests, we'll be approaching the Scribus team about those.

Ginger Coons — It's worth mentioning that Scribus is in a really interesting place right now. They're just finishing up a period of really intensive work, funded by the *Organization Internationale de la Francophonie*, to implement a number of new fixes and features. Three developers have spent the last several months working very nearly full time to put in some exciting work. So we're pretty excited to see what'll be coming out the pipe from Scribus in the coming months.

MS — Across the articles, I notice a certain focus on Fonts : are fonts a key element of broadening the impact of FLOSS in the graphics sector (with CSS3 webfonts notably)?

Ginger Coons — In this case, it's a matter of a lot of interesting and high profile work being done in fonts. There's a sort of convergence at the moment, among many F/LOSS design people, in the area of type design. but it's certainly not our sole area of focus.

Ricardo Lafuente — As well as typography being a field where a libre approach can bring some really interesting additions. We ran with this for the 'official' magazine typeface, which is a fork of OSP's *NotCourierSans*⁹. Being able to work on someone else's typeface and make it yours, without having to bother with authorisation, is something that's just not present in traditional type design. Either practically or philosophically.

⁹<http://ospublish.constantvzw.org/foundry/notcouriersans/>

MS — Is there anything you want to add, regarding the future or your project?

Ginger Coons — in terms of the future... we've got most of our year a little planned out already, which is quite promising. In February, 1.2, *Use Cases and Affordances* is coming out. And we've got some pretty exciting stuff for that already. Although the call for submissions is still open. In May, we'll be releasing (in time for LGM 2011) the *Collaboration, Collaboratively* issue. Which is, as the name implies, a collaborative approach to collaboration. And in August, an honest to goodness, actually *Type Design* issue. Devoted to type design.

What links all of these topics is that we believe they're areas which can be uniquely approached by F/LOSS. We feel that things like workflow, collaboration and indeed type design, are areas in which F/LOSS already has some expertise.

Meeting with Attila Bujdosó

February 2012

Attila Bujdosó writes:

“This year again I am participating the great Lift conference. It is one of the most exciting and inspiring events in Europe, so I am happy to be back.
(...)

Funnily I met Manuel Schmalstieg, the originator of the wonderful concept wiki-sprint, which we adopted last year when organizing McLuhan wikisprint¹⁰ at Kunsthalle Budapest. Somehow he discovered that I’m in town, and contacted to meet up for a beer. He showed me a tiny-cute bar, La Petite Reine, and we had a nice discussion about wikipedia art projects, speculative wikipedia entries, and generally what we do.”

Source: <https://bujatt.com/2012/02/23/lift-conference-workshop-and-meetings/>

¹⁰<https://vimeo.com/22137508>

OSP on aether9 book

Conducted over Etherpad, november 2012

Manuel Schmalstieg – Pouvez-vous situer, en quelques mots, le travail du collectif Open Source Publishing (OSP)?

Ludivine Loiseau – OSP est un groupe de travail produisant des objets de design graphique uniquement à l'aide de logiciels libres et/ou open source.

Fondé en 2006 dans le cadre de l'association Constant¹¹, la caravane OSP rassemble aujourd'hui une douzaine d'individualités de parcours et pratiques différentes.

MS – Depuis combien d'années collaborez-vous en duo, et en team dans OSP?

Pierre Marchand – 3/4 ans

MS – ...et ce livre est le combientième ouvrage que vous ayez conçu?

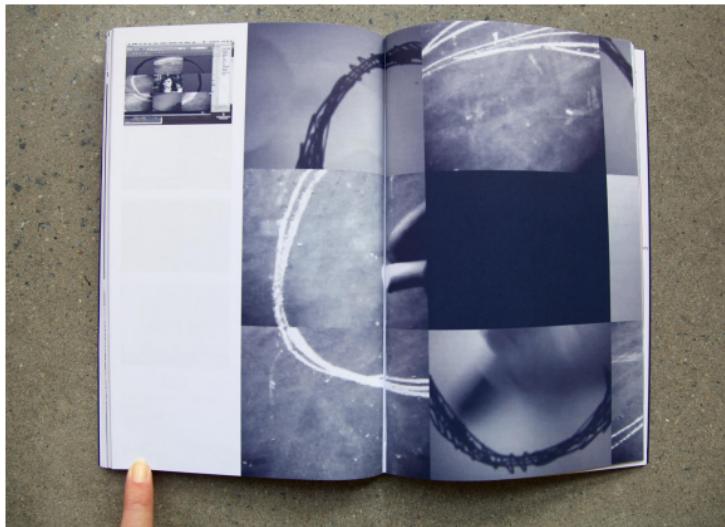
PM – Pour cette équipe, c'était le premier livre livre. On avait eu l'occasion de travailler ensemble auparavant sur un projet un peu similaire d'exploration d'archives, mais sans matériel imprimé au bout¹².

¹¹<http://www.constantvzw.org/site/>

¹²<http://www.ooooo.be/interpunctie/>

MS – Similaire dans le type de contenu, ou plutôt le processus ?

PM – Le processus, on a développé des scripts pour “scrapper” les archives du projet, mais la restitution était plus abstraite. Il s’agissait de récolter les fontes utilisées dans l’ensemble des fichiers et d’en produire un graphe. Et ces archives là n’étaient pas structurées, d'où une voie d'exploration moins linéaire.



MS – Le choix de l'environnement logiciel utilisé pour “générer” ce livre s'est rapidement porté sur **TeX/ConTeXt**¹³. Etais-ce un choix évident au vu du projet, ou avez-vous hésité entre différentes approches?

LL – La construction du livre s'est fixé autour de 2

¹³fixme: ajouter de l'information sur ConTeXt

axes/ fils conducteurs : chronologie et champs de mots clés “Traceroute”.

Dans cette optique de lecture et de navigation par références, ConTeXt est apparu comme un outil approprié.

MS – Le monde de TeX (logiciel écrit en 1978 par Donald Knuth) est très intrigant, en particulier pour des graphistes. Il me semble que c'est à chaque fois une sorte de combat pour repousser les limites de ce qui est “prévu” par le logiciel.

PM – ConTeXt est une lutte de tous les instants! Je n'en dirai pas de même d'autres instances de systèmes TeX.

Avec ConTeXt, on s'est trouvé en face d'un projet très personnel, dans le sens où des décisions de composition sont codées en dur, parce qu'elles seyent au mainteneur principal du paquet. Et lorsque l'on se heurte à ces décisions, on se trouve dans la position un peu étrange d'usage d'un outil avec le facteur duquel on est en désaccord.

LL – Comme exemple très concret, on peut mentionner les réglages automatiques d'interlignage avec lesquelles il nous a fallu batailler pour les lignes comprenant des mots clés typographiés dans les fontes custom des “Traceroutes”. ConText voulant “bien faire” il augmentait l'interligne de ces lignes comme pour éviter les collisions.

MS – Avez-vous eu de “vraies” craintes, que ce que vous vouliez obtenir n'était pas faisable? Y-a-t-il eu des choix - dans le graphisme, mise en page,



structure - qui ont été rejetés en raison de limites logicielles?

LL – Oui. La mise en page en 2 colonnes s'est révélée assez raide avec le contenu, introduisant des sauts. À un moment, nous avons fait le choix de resserrer le format sur une simple colonne.

Pour obtenir une mise en page en doubles colonnes à la fin, le tout est recomposé au moment de construire le pdf, par l'intermédiaire d'OSPImpose.

PM – Cela nous a permis des micro ajustements en fin de production, et aussi introduit de nouveaux jeux, en particulier le glissement des images en double page.

MS – OSPImpose – je présume que c'est un logiciel conçu par OSP, pour l'imposition de pdf?

PM – Well, c'est a peu près ça, une re-écriture du logiciel d'imposition que j'avais composé il y a quelques années pour PoDoFo.

MS – Encore au sujet de ConTeXt: ce système a été employé pour d'autres travaux d'OSP - notamment le livre *Jonctions* (distingué par le Prix Fernand Baudin 2009). Est-ce actuellement un “outil de base” principal au sein d'OSP?

PM – C'est plutôt une plongée initiatique :)

LL – Mais ce n'est pas encore devenu un standard de notre workflow. Actuellement chaque nouveau projet de mise en page conséquent, de type livre, repose à chaque fois la question de l'outil. Scribus et Libre Office (tableur) font aussi partie de notre boîte à outils livres.

MS – Une chose que nous avons constaté, durant notre session de travail à ConstantVariable, était la difficulté à simplement obtenir un environnement TeX/ConTeXt/Python suffisamment complet pour pouvoir générer le livre ... est-que la machine de Pierre est toujours la seule, ou avez-vous pu configurer d'autres postes?

PM – On a fini par avoir tous des setup semblables, et donc une génération généralisée. Mais il est juste que cela a représenté une difficulté à certains moments.

MS – Le code source, les scripts (python?) créés pour produire le livre, sont ouvertement accessibles sur le serveur Git de OSP. Est-ce que ces sources seraient réalistement ré-exploitables? Un autre projet de publication pourrait-il réutiliser des parties de

code? Ou, en l'absence de documentation, cela serait hautement improbable ?

LL – Effectivement la partie documentation reste toujours sur la to-do liste.

Cependant une bonne partie du code est assez directement réexploitable. Les scripts permettent de parser différents fichiers. Mails, chats font souvent partie des archives d'un projet. Ici les scripts python permettent de les ordonner suivant les infos dates et vont automatiquement styler les différents champs de contenu.

PM – Le code lui-même est une source de documentation, autant sur des aspects très concrets, tel que parser un e-mail, que sur une architecture possible, usage de certains motifs de programmation, etc. Encore plus, il constitue une forme d'expérience commune.

MS – Est-ce que vous pensez ré-utiliser certaines de ces fonctions générales de traitements d'archives (mails, chats) pour d'autres projets?

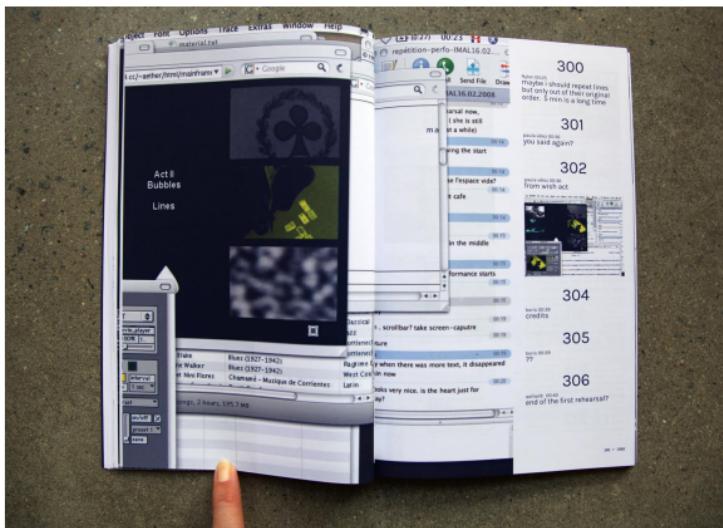
PM – Difficile à dire, nous n'avons rien en perspective qui se rapproche du projet Aether9. mais pour sûr, si le besoin de tels traitements revient, nous irons rechercher ces composants logiciels.

LL – Peut-être pour une publication / compilation des aventures OSP.

MS – Est-qu'il y a eu des “révélations”, des fonctions insoupçonnées de python/context découvertes durant ce développement?

PM – Je ne me rappelle pas avoir eu ce genre de plaisir. La révélation, au moins de mon point de

vue, se passait plus dans cette articulation très riche d'un propos graphique acté dans des objets de programmation. Ça reste un territoire peu défriché dont l'exploration est toujours une aventure, excitante.



MS – Dans ce livre ont été employées trois fontes, *Karla*, *Crimson*, *Consola Mono*. Trois fontes assez récentes, nées il me semble dans le contexte des webfonts. Quelles considérations ont conduit à ce choix?

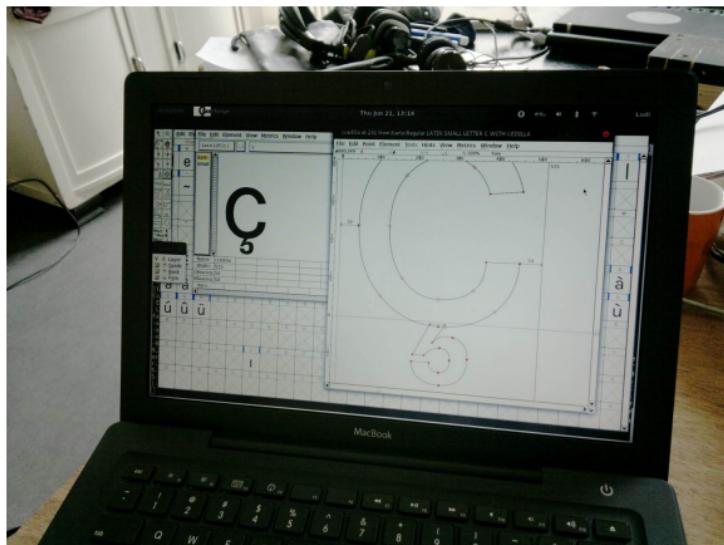
LL – Notre recherche et choix typographiques s'est tourné vers des fontes comprenant plusieurs variantes de graisses. Le contenu texte étant assez riche et de déployant sur plusieurs niveaux, la questions des variantes était première.

Ensuite, chaque projet étant aussi l'occasion de

tester de nouvelles fontes, nous avons opté pour des publications récentes, publiées effectivement entre autre sur Google font directory. Cependant *Karla* et *Crimson* ne sont pas des fontes dessinées spécifiquement pour un usage web. *Karla* fait partie des quelques rares grotesques libres, et son autre spécificité est de comprendre des glyphes Tamil.

MS – Vous avez dessiné - en dehors des glyphes originaux créés spécifiquement pour ce livre - le glyphe Ç qui manquait à *Karla* ... va-t-il être adopté par la distribution officielle ?

LL – Aah, c'est une proposition à faire à Jonathan Pinhorn. Nous ne l'avons pas encore contacté. Pour l'instant cette cédille s'est fait happer par la collection de variantes Traceroutes.



Création du ç de Karla par Ludivine

MS – Dans le passage à l'impression, y a t-il eu des

surprises? Je pense notamment à l'usage d'une encre colorée à la place du noir, ou la définition généralement faible des images 72 dpi.

PM – Cette décision spontanée en fin de processus d'échanger l'encre noire par un bleu était une source de surprise assurée. On pensait bien que ça n'allait pas détruire le livre, et on ne prenait pas trop de risques en travaillant justement avec des images en basse définition. Mais on n'avait pas vraiment idée de comment les images ressortiraient d'un tel outrage. Ce fut une excellente surprise de voir que cela lui donne en fait un éclat tout particulier.

MS – Quels sont vos prochains travaux en perspective?

LL – Nous opérons actuellement comme collectif invité aux Beaux Arts de Valence dans le cadre d'une série de workshops intitulée "Up pen down".

Nous préparons une performance pour le théâtre de la Balsamine¹⁴ qui programme cette saison 5 rendez-vous sur la thématique du bootstrap.

En avril, nous serons en voyage groupé à Madrid pour LGRU¹⁵ et LGM¹⁶.

En continu nous avançons sur "Co-position", projet de constitution d'un outil de typographie post Gutenberg.

¹⁴<http://www.balsamine.be/>

¹⁵<http://lgru.net/>

¹⁶rencontres internationales autour des logiciels graphiques libres - <http://libregraphicsmeeting.org/2013/>

Designing a Libre Font Specimen Book

A talk delivered at Libre Graphics Meeting, 12th April 2013, Medialab Prado, Madrid.

Manuel Schmalstieg — Thanks for having me here. I'm very glad to follow this presentation by Nathan Willis (...), because what I will tell you about is also a project that was a sprint.

It happened in one week, in five days, it happened a bit less than two months ago, and it was a workshop that I directed. This workshop was about producing, designing a specimen book with libre / open source fonts.

What is a specimen book and why do we need a specimen book?

If you design a project with type – be it a book, a magazine, or a website – one of the first steps you have to tackle is to find the good font, that will match the content and that will work. This is an important step, and it can take a lot of time, because there are many good fonts that you may want to use.

It's a very personal process to find the appropriate font for a specific text, for a story or narrative. It's not simply about beautiful letter shapes. Actually, when you read a story, an article, or an interview,

you don't want to see beautiful letters. You want to focus on the written words. The font has to become transparent. It has to become invisible.

Your choice will be very dependent on the subject, on the language also. The texture of type changes with different languages. It can have a temperature. A font can be sharp, or thick. Fast, or slow.

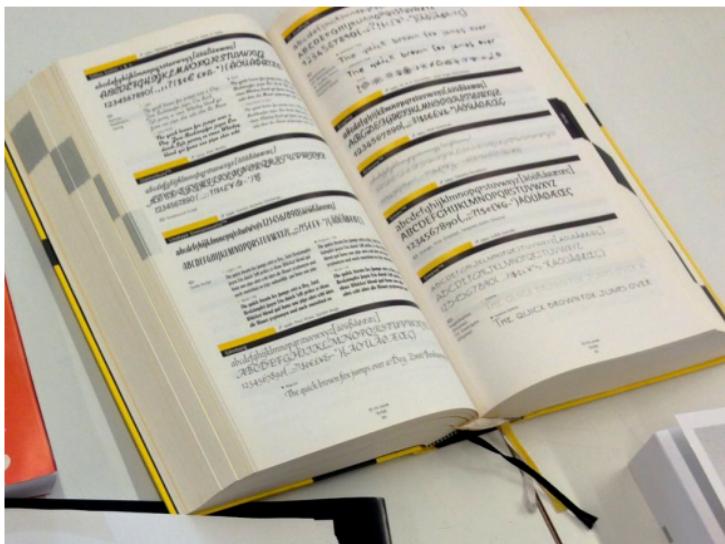
For that, already centuries ago, since we have type, producers of typefaces have designed specimen sheets. Here is an 18th Century example by the great typefounder William Caslon.



Specimen sheet by William Caslon (1728)

We can see a pattern here that we still use nowadays. A specimen sheet on Google Web Fonts looks very similar to this. You have different weights, you have short paragraphs, different sizes, showcasing all the different cuts.

There is some sample text, which should not be too distracting. Here it is in Latin. On a very small surface, the type producer wants to show you everything that the font can do. Also, since he is a font producer, he wants to sell the fonts. There are sometimes conflicting interests with those specimens.



The FontBook by FontFont

This is a very well-known book, used by typographers during decades: the great “FontBook” by FontFont, which has hundreds and hundreds of fonts. Each font has a few lines showcasing the letters, the glyphs. Short paragraphs of four lines... which is actually very little to judge how the font will render on a whole page of a book.

For me, this was always very frustrating. It was like if you would be a musician, and try to select a sound

from a sound library... but you have to listen to 20 sounds at the same time, which makes it very hard to concentrate.

For a strange reason, they stopped producing the book recently. Apparently, print is too expensive. They made an iPad app. So you cannot actually test those fonts on paper – which, for me, when you make a paper project, is essential because it works completely different than on screen.

There is another interesting font specimen collection, the “Free Font Index” by Hans Lijklema. It gathers lots of free fonts, but doesn’t make a distinction between *Free* and *Libre*, which is an important point. It also puts many fonts on a limited number of pages, leaving little space to appreciate diverse body sizes. And it juxtaposes fonts that may not match in terms of style.

I think those books are useful. They show you many different fonts. But they have some issues: too little space for a font, always the same “lorem ipsum” repeating all the time, so it starts to feel quite unnatural, and you don’t get the impression of a real body copy.

Then, another category that appeared recently is print-on-demand books made by independent type producers. This one is made by Radim Peško, a Czech type designer. Another one is made by French type designer Jean-Baptiste Levée.

We can see that they have one thing in common: they love to display the fonts in very big sizes, so you can appreciate the beauty of the curves and angles of



The Free Font Index



Specimen book by Radim Peško

each glyph. This makes them great for type design study, but for many use cases, like doing books or magazines, it's really not useful. You have too little paragraph size text, too much big type.

The logical thing to do, if you work with Libre fonts, is to produce your own specimen book. There are thousands of open source fonts. You have print on demand technology – so just do it!

This would be extremely expensive if you would want to make your own printed specimen book with commercial fonts. You would have to be really rich. But now, today, it is possible to do.

I had that idea in mind one year ago. It was clear to me that this had to be a collaborative project, not one person sitting for months doing it, but rather a book sprint, a group of 5-10 people gathering and doing it.

I started to pitch the idea, and I talked about it at the RMLL¹⁷ conference in Geneva in summer 2012. I thought it would be a really, really good idea to do that with design students. I managed to get a gig at the Design Department at HEAD Geneva. I had a workforce of 12 students to work for one week on that project.

We established some rules. To use exclusively *Libre* fonts, that allow all of the Four Freedoms¹⁸. To focus on *body text*, text that can be used for long form. And to make the book as open as we can, which

¹⁷Rencontres Mondiales du Logiciel Libre.

¹⁸'the four freedoms' of the Free Software Foundation. These are the freedoms to *use*, *study*, *modify* and *redistribute*.



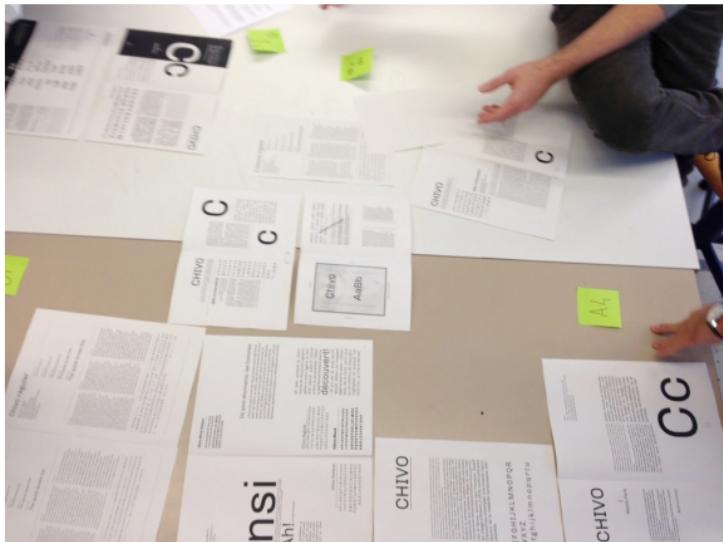
The workshop team

means: sharing the sources, documenting everything, using an open format. That were the main three bullet points.

The first step was that the students had to produce a standardized specimen layout. This involved a lot of research during the first two and a half days, with many different approaches, different formats, different graphic attempts. Lots of discussions, lot of criticism.

I had a pragmatic approach, I simply wanted to display paragraphs of text that looked close to what we usually see in books. The students were very focused on perfect harmony, breathing space, white space, and so on. Here's what they achieved and agreed upon, in the end. It was a mutual compromise.

The next thing that was needed, in parallel, was



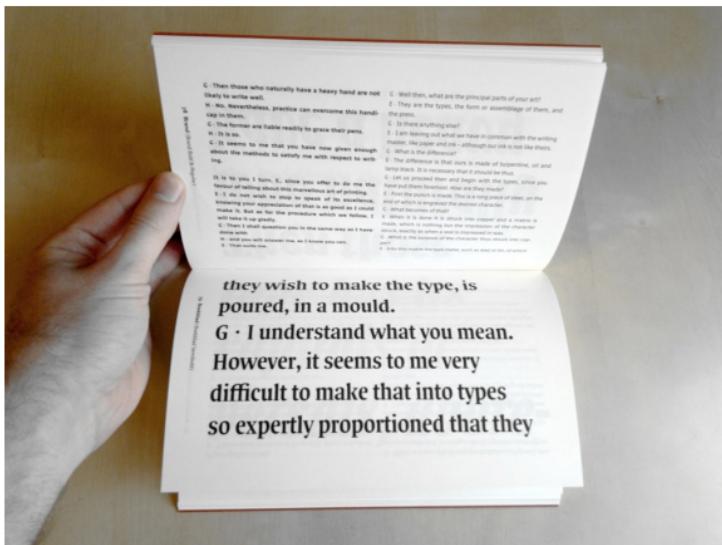
Searching for the layout



The final layout

an appropriate source text. When you design a specimen, you need to have some sample text, something to put on the page. This is a tricky choice as well.

We looked at what other specimen books did. We studied the competition. What inspired us a lot was this little book, *Type Now*, by Fred Smeijers, a great Dutch type designer. The book has about 20 pages of specimens showcasing his own fonts. What is interesting is that it's not always the same sentence repeating, but it's one text that flows through those 20 pages.



Specimen by Fred Smeijers

It's a dialogue about the production of fonts, written in the 16th century by Christophe Plantin. It works very well as a specimen text – you can study the fonts, but it also feels like a live, real text.

So we were looking for a real text, a real narrative. It had to be in the public domain, of course, because we want the book to be freely distributable. It had to be French, because, as we said, language influences the texture.

Finally we came across that book, “L’Ève Future,” a pre-science-fiction novel from the 19th century, by Villiers de L’Isle Adam. Thomas Edison is the main character. The story is something that influenced, later, “Metropolis” and “Bladerunner,” a female artificial human. It was published more than 100 years ago, the author died in 1889. It is in public domain in most countries.

Now, the word count: it was quite a lot (85'388), so we had to check if it was feasible. We divided by the number of people (12), estimated the number of words per specimen (500): about 15 specimens per person, may be a bit more... Doable!

Now the real sprint started, and it was a lot of work. On the little sticky notes, those are the names of the fonts, which are labeled by color for *serif*, *sans*, and *mono*.

The students also designed some personal, creative specimens. Some of them had to be dropped, because Amazon’s print-on-demand proofer didn’t accept them. The result, the part that worked, is that the book exists. You can purchase it online. It’s really useful, I think, honestly.

The sources have been shared. I managed to get all the students into GitHub and participate, commit, and so on.



The sprint

They had some live interaction with some of the designers of the fonts, which was really important. They had to handle the communication. There was a debate internally in the school, about if we can actually publish it or not.

Shortcomings and failures: the proprietary workflow broke the ambition of doing it in Scribus. I learned something from that, which is: I thought "*I will let them do just freely what they want at the beginning and then, at some moment, I will teach them to do it in Scribus*", which doesn't work.

It has to be decided from the beginning very strictly. Otherwise, under time pressure you will fail. That was a big lesson for me.

I wrote down some analysis that can be interesting if you want to do similar workshops.

 **Omnibus-Type**
@OmnibusType

Abonné

Nice! Chivo in use: @TypoLibre Workshop at @HEADGENEVE @googlefonts @davelab6 #freefont #typography #opensource pic.twitter.com/fTDoEwDPPm

Repondez Retweeter Favori Plus



23:20 - 20 févr. 2013

Signaler le média

Répondre à @OmnibusType @HEADGENEVE @googlefonts @davelab6

A retweet by Omnibus Type!

Conclusion: get the book, or have a look at it. Do your own version of it. Improve it. Collaborate. Thanks!

Lessons from the Libre Type Workshop

Published March 15 2013 on ms-studio.net, as part of the #back2blog series.

In this post, I am trying to formalize a few practical lessons from the Libre Type workshop, which I gave in February 2013 at HEAD in Geneva.

Here are some raw notes about things that worked great, or could be improved.

1: forming the working groups

This was an important step in the process: in the very beginning, we defined the main work areas that were needed to achieve the target (i.e. produce a comprehensive type specimen catalog of open source fonts, in five days). I wrote those areas on sticky notes, posted them on a wall. Then each participant wrote his name on a sticky note, and added himself to one of the work areas.

We didn't actually consult this pinboard during the week, since everybody knew what they had to do... But I think this simple action helped in making everyone feel involved. It didn't leave room for ambiguity.

What could be improved?

We could have made that board more useful, so that it would serve as a graph of « what has been done, what needs still to be done ». A work process visualization, with accomplished tasks being checked off.

2: tools

I brought along a few basic things: Post-It sticky notes of various colors and formats, colored tape, black markers. I printed a schedule of the week, which I distributed to each participant. I printed a table where the participants could enter their names, phone nrs and emails. It was another way to formalize the participants' involvement in the workshop – there was a written record of their presence.

I also brought along a number of books related to the workshop topic: a little library on typography, including specimen books by Jean-Baptiste Levée, Radim Pesko, books on type design by Jost Hochuli and Cyrus Highsmith, etc.

This was extremely useful, it showed some possible directions, it provided examples of **book formats**, participants could look at them for inspiration, it gave a **reference framework**.

We could see that we weren't working in a vacuum. It showed real-world applications, a gate out of the confinement of school exercises. The books served as

physical proofs of how ideas and experiments can be turned into reality.

What could be improved?

Participants should be encouraged – from the first day – to bring along their own reference books.

Also, add a pair of scissors and a ruler on the list of materials.

3: photo documentation

Put two people in charge of photo-documentation.

Documenting the work process is important – I learned this from previous workshops. Meaningful actions need visible traces. This seems like a secondary thing at the moment of the workshop, but it will prove extremely valuable afterwards.

Documentation won't happen automatically. It's a serious task, it's real work, and has to be clearly assigned. It's best handled by two people (otherwise the photographer will be excluded from the documentation).

Check who in the group owns a high-resolution photo camera – actually the camera doesn't matter that much, but usually that person will have a good eye for composition, will take the task seriously, and will do a good job, even with a phone camera. Make sure that photos are being taken regularly, documenting all the steps of the process. Make sure that they make good portrait shots of the individual

participants. Make a few group photos (for instance, one in the beginning, one in the end).

Overall, this worked extremely well, the people in charge produced an impressive amount of quality imagery. We set up a shared folder (using AeroFS to accommodate the size of RAW images – after the 5 days we had about 5gb of pics). Selections of photos were shared, almost in real time, through Twitter and Facebook accounts.

What could be improved?

We could have been even more systematic, and make individual portrait shots of the participants holding a sample font specimen they designed. We did such an iconic photo which was successfully spread through social media. It would have been even better if we did such a photo with each participant.

4: technical issues

A few important areas for improvement are related to the technical particularities of print-on-demand publishing, and working with shared template files.

- Study very precisely the **requirements** of the print-on-demand printer. They need to be followed accurately, more so than with a traditional printer, since **EVERYTHING** is automatized and there's no room for approximation.
- For instance, we used a “standard” bleed size of 5mm, which is wider than the required

Amazon bleed size. I didn't think this would matter, believing that the validator would be smart enough to recognize where the bleed stops, and where the content (art box) of the PDF begins. **Wrong assumption!** If your bleed is larger (and if the *interior bleed* isn't set to zero!!) it will add to the margins of your book (in our case, it shifted the right page by 1 cm).

- Don't make any assumptions – test all the time, not just in the end. As soon as you have 5 pages, make a PDF with those 5 pages + a few hundred blank pages (important: match the target size of the book, as the number of pages will determine the required inner margin) upload it, and run it through the validator.
- When preparing the shared file templates (to be used by the whole group), even when time's running out, **don't rush**. The time spent verifying and optimizing the templates will pay off. Any mistake in that file will vastly increase the debugging time (multiplied by the number of workshop participants). Once they start making individual copies of the template, every further correction has to be done in *each file*. This happened to us, when on the third day, once we had our template, we were so impatient to begin. So we rushed forward with some small mistakes both in the template and in the source text file. In the template, the copyright information wasn't right. In the source file, the text was justified (we should have adjusted it to the left) and it had line returns (we should have search/replaced all

of them in the source file).

- Once we discovered the corrections that were needed in the template, we didn't **convey this clearly** to each participant. We tried to correct it person-by-person – and of course we missed some people in the process, so several mistakes were carried over into the finalized file. Instead, once we identified the mistakes, we should have done a **group session**, to make sure that everybody gets the same, full information, at the same time.

5: File naming conventions

This was actually on the to-do list of one of the groups. But we didn't implement a clear file naming and folder structure policy, so things « just happened ». As a result, the folder organization wasn't very clear, and once everything is on GitHub, it's not easy to move the files around (you need to go into the command line...).

So, don't skip that topic in the very beginning. It's important! Ensure that the following gets done:

- Implement a coherent file naming scheme, with version numbers, identifiers of the participants, etc.
- Create a clear folder structure.
- Explain in the README file how the file naming and folder structure work.

Some other ideas for improvement:

- for gathering feedback, a survey could be sent to all the participants, a few days after the workshop.
- A participation certificate could be designed, and handed out to each participant at the end of the workshop.

Books with an Attitude

From 22 May until 31 May, 2013, the Libre Graphics Research Unit presents *Books with an attitude*, an exhibition of printed books made with Libre digital tools. This exhibition includes Libre book design and typography from all over Europe, demonstrating how content, aesthetics and Libre tools can play together.

Location: Maus Hábitos, Porto

Exhibition design and curation: Manufactura Independente (Porto)

Manuel Schmalstieg — Thank you, Ricardo, for that introduction. Thank you for having me here. Thank you Femke for the invitation. It's a big pleasure to introduce, to celebrate this opening of the exhibition. And most importantly, of a new library, that has been assembled by Ana and Ricardo. It is a little library, but a very important one. It consists of books made with F/LOSS, Free/Libre and Open Source tools.

What does this mean? Let's think first about what is actually a book nowadays. Is it a decorative object? Is it a tool? Or is it a vehicle for an idea? Or is it something like what Elisa is holding right now in her hand, for instance?

[laughter]

Does it matter *how* the book has been made? It isn't

actually the content that is historically the main feature of a book? The cover is important, of course, in order to sell. Then maybe some people throw the dust jacket away, because they just prefer to hold it naked, without an image.

Traditionally, we think rather about the message, the content. A novel written by Tolstoy, will it be different if it has been typeset on a Gutenberg printer, or on a Linotype machine? Or in the mainstream commercial type setting software of the moment? Or on some underground tool written by the author himself? Does it make a difference? Does it make a difference if you cannot actually see it? Maybe.

For instance, in an apple – can we see if it contains genetically modified organisms or not? We cannot see it, maybe it will look even nicer. Will it make a difference if you eat it? Probably not, scientifically... but who knows?

With books, it could be the same. Details matter, maybe unconsciously. For typography freaks, the typeface of a book will matter a lot. You will read the novel completely differently if it has been typeset in *sans* or in *serif*.

The word spacing also makes a difference. For school children, the word spacing is very important. They will learn more easily if words have more visible separations. Different software tools do the word spacing differently. They do the hyphenation differently. So, maybe it matters a lot.

Actually, to know that, we have to look at the books, and we have to compare them. I think when you

started building this library, you didn't really know how it would fit together. It's like when you invite a lot of friends, a lot of people. Friends who don't know each other. You put them in a room, and maybe they will get along and have a good party, or maybe they won't really talk to each other.

We have to read a little bit, and check out this library to see if it makes sense. If there are common trends, or if it's just random. The interesting thing, if you look at it... [makes a move like preparing to unwrap to library, then stops] ...I will do it after.

[laughter]

MS — You will see that there are very, very different books. Novels in many different languages, like in Flemish. Mathematic books, comics. With a lot of different intents, like *made to entertain* or *made exactly not to entertain*. Informative books, or books with disinformation. For some of them, the FLOSS-y aspect of creating them is fundamental and completely part of the layout, like in many works of the OSP team, of which two representatives are here.

Like the *Aether9* book, where archives have been parsed and transformed by the software that was custom written. Or the recent work [by OSP] for the Balsamine theatre, of which which we see here a very fresh example, where code was written to create a layout that could not have happened otherwise.

Other interesting works may look like an ordinary, classical book, following typesetting rules of centuries ago. But they were written in a *book sprint* in five days, through FLOSS software such as booki.



Books with an attitude

Elisa¹⁹ can tell you more about it.

Elisa De Castro Guerra — The process of a book sprint is to write a book in five days. Some people here have participated in book sprints. The books are written collaboratively. The first day is used to establish the structure, the next three days people write, and the last day is for proofreading the book.

MS — There is one example here of the FLOSS Manuals ecosystem: *Collaborative Futures*. There is another book that [Elisabeth Nesheim] participated in, that was also written through a hybrid collage system that transformed it, written by Brendan Howell.

¹⁹ Elisa De Castro Guerra : Présidente de Flossmanuals francophones, facilitatrice de BookSprints et graphiste utilisant les logiciels libres.

There is a book that is made from Wikipedia articles that were parsed and compiled, and that was probably written by 500 or maybe by 1,000 people. There are many other examples, but I will stop here.

[laughter]

Elisabeth — No further ado.

MS — Let's have a look.

[laughter]



A Book isn't a Book isn't a Book

Abstract:

Would a time-traveling author from the past centuries stumble upon our everyday read/write tools, he would envision a techno-utopia that allows anyone to act as an archivist, librarian, content curator, or publisher. But the electronic publishing disruption comes with a couple of side-effects: print-on-demand spam is sneaking into our search queries, massively distributed authorship is taking the infinite monkey theorem at face value, while a generation of writers is turning SEO-aware.

In that context, Greyscale Press – a post-digital publishing house – is crafting book-like artifacts, merging the toolsets inherited from 20th century modernist avantgardes, post-structuralism, the free software and copyleft movement, up to the latest crop of crypto- and cypherpunk activists.

Transcript:

[Video begins midway through introduction] ...that he published. That he used, and in open source manner, he put it on his website. Probably it's out of date right now because the Twitter API changes every day, and this is another example of a publisher [video cuts out]

[Video resumes] form that was accepting entries. It was launched in the end of 2011. It was running during 2012, and it's not working anymore. Again, those APIs are unstable and dangerous. Those are a few examples of books that have been done by people.

This is an amazing book by [video cuts out]

[Video resumes] doesn't necessarily have to be a vanity press 2.0, but you can very well react to political events in the world, and you can put meaning into this.

This is a recent project that was done earlier this year in Geneva with students, and the objective was to make a useful book for graphic designers working with libre / open source fonts. So this is a specimen book designed entirely by students during one week of work, using the book sprint methodology that Adam Hyde, who is in this room, is pioneering across the world.

After the workshop, the book has been put on Amazon. Anybody can order it [video cuts out]

[Video resumes] mostly those are web fonts. There are about 200 of them in the book.

After those examples of exciting and enthusiastic and experiments with the technology, I'm going to look a little bit at the dark side - because every technology that appears on the world also brings with it some dangers and some responsibilities. So actually, print-on-demand quite unexpectedly has unleashed very very strange phenomena that not many people, I think, have noticed - but that have been invading the

world of books and publishing during the past few years.

Who of you is aware of book spam? Roughly 30 percent. Who of you has printed or seen a spam book physically? Good. Excellent. Any of you has made a spam book? I want to talk with you afterwards. Thanks.

So, I found this out. I came across this in early 2010
[video cuts out]

[Video resumes] thousand and some books in this inventory. All of them on very very specific and focused topic, with interesting cover art sourced from stock photography databases. Here is a brilliant example of the history of the country Georgia in the former Soviet republic, which is adorned by a stock photograph of Atlanta the capital of Georgia. It gained a lot of attention, and there was a comment of an Amazon user who wrote, “When a book has the wrong image for the cover, you know this is a big indication that something is wrong.”

Another example, and you see a pattern familiar from internet spam, where the title or the content contains a maximum of keywords. Those books spread from one platform to the other, so once it has appeared on Amazon, it will infect virally other book platforms. Sometimes it will lose some metadata along the way. For instance, the cover will be missing, which will make it more and more hard to detect what is actually about.

If we approach this scientifically, we can see that there are different types of book spam. Some of

you have maybe seen the great talk by Nicolas Nova yesterday, so this is a kind of continuation of it. We have *algorithmic spam*, where the entire book has been generated by a computer. Some of those authors are engineers, and they are proud of their invention, and they will talk about it openly - like Icon Group International, which is producing those world reports on amazing topics, like the "*World Forecasts of Artificial Guts Made of Hardened Protein or Cellulosic Materials*". If you would tell me that this is an example of algorithmic poetry, I would certainly agree. This is a book search from this morning for this publisher. He has 870,000 and more books.

Another category, even more intriguing, is *human-made spam*, where actually there weren't algorithms in play, but there were real human agents who were involved in the creation of those books. It may seem unbelievable, but we have what is called outsourcing. That's a type of work. This is from the front page of one of those publishers advertising its location on the island of Mauritius, and as an investigative data researcher, I figured out that there was a Facebook group launched by the editors themselves. For those understanding French, the subtitle "nu trop bon" is an interesting case of querization. Those are photographs of the workers who are churning out the books, and those are some of the comments that they shared on this group, which was of course deleted shortly later.

By the way, it's also an interesting insight of what is happening behind all the data centers and all the digital services that surround us. To some people,

if you have a service that is transcribing your text messages, this might well be happening in some other country through outsourced work.

In a way, those workers are an incarnation of the infinite monkey protocol, as defined in RFC 2795.

[Video resumes] a quick overview of the different elements in the real world that have enabled this practice. One is the convention of academic publishing that produces very formalized books and items that have a strict design, that can be easily imitated by algorithmic or by simple intervention.

This is a legitimate scientific publisher publishing books, probably also with print-on-demand, and you can see that with a quick glance, it's hard to differentiate them from an artificial spam book that has been harvested, or to figure out that is a legitimate scientific work.

Another key element is that open source, openly licensed content is largely available on the web. Wikipedia is the biggest example, which is used here by those books, and those books comply to the rules. On the last page, they will show, in very small print, all the names of the contributors and the full license on one page.

PediaPress is another cornerstone. This is a start-up in Germany who made an amazing job, they created a way of generating books out of Wikipedia articles. It's a legitimate business, and it's an extraordinary idea. You can use it on Wikipedia itself, or use it as a plugin on your own Wiki. Their tool is used by those spam printers, as I found in this little Facebook

statement: “PediaPress pa bon!” The servers of PediaPress were slow that day.

Yet another element is that large book distributors now have print-on-demand built in. Amazon, for instance, is printing a lot of books themselves. They will show them as being available, but actually once the book gets ordered, it will be printed in a couple of days in one of their warehouses.

So, the print-on-demand spammer actually abuses those four cornerstones and exploits the system in a brilliant way.

Those books, unbelievably, have been infiltrating academia. You can find them in all university libraries around the world. Here in Switzerland I made a quick search. I found that there were 25 books by the publisher Alphascript about various topics: *The judicial system of the People's Republic of China* for instance or *The legal history of China*. Those are printed Wikipedia articles on the shelf of that University. I borrowed some of those books from the University, and I brought them to the tombstone of Jorge Louis Borges - the inventor of the “Library of Babel” - in the hope of making some connection.

[Video resumes] happening in our century.

It also means that the people who acquired those books failed the spam detection test. We all know the CAPTCHAs that we encounter every day on the web, so those are the Turing tests that [video cuts out]

[Video resumes] thing is human-made or bot-made.

Now, what has Amazon done to counter this? I noticed that recently they managed to decrease the number of spam books in their database. They took countermeasures, and they have started to eliminate those books.

I had one interesting experience with this project. This was a book that I made. Again, with the original book sprint technology, I gathered a team during an art festival who was working during five days and producing an improved Wikipedia article on the art form of audiovisual performance (aka VJing). After one week of editing, we had a large article that we printed in book form, and I attempted later on to place this book on Amazon through their print-on-demand service. After I submitted this, I received an answer that the title had been blocked and couldn't be published because the content was against the Terms of Service of Amazon CreateSpace [video cuts out]

[Video resumes] you have to hold the exclusive rights, and the content shouldn't be available on the web.

Or, in the original terms, “we will not accept content that is freely available on the web unless you are the copyright owner of that content”. The way it is phrased is interesting because the first part of the sentence has more weight. The “freely available on the web” content, by default, is banned unless you can prove that you are the copyright owner, and they insisted it should be exclusive rights. This is intriguing, and I think there would be many reactions here that would question the usefulness of

this rule.

I think I'm reaching the end of my presentation and [video cuts out]

[Video resumes] it's a bit too early in the morning, and I'm a practitioner and I'm saying thank you therefore.

Reviews:

Manuel Schmalstieg, Head, Geneva and Greyscale Press, kicked off the presentations (his was entitled “A Book Isn’t a Book Isn’t a Book”) and taught me several things. The first is that Jorge Luis Borges is buried in Geneva, which I hadn’t known. (The Argentinean writer spent much of his childhood in Switzerland.) The second is “very strange phenomena that not many people have noticed:” book SPAM. Spam books are “harvested” (by bots I think) from content that already exists on the web, such as Wikipedia entries. As a result of this phenomenon, some publishers of digital books now apparently say: “we will not accept copy that is freely available on the web unless you are the copyright owner.” Imagine that (note sarcasm in my comment)!

I was also amused when Schmalstieg said that POD has enabled us to “do projects that would have been completely suicidal for an editor to put in the world.” A lovely way to express the challenges editors have taken on since time immemorial – risking death indeed – let’s hear it for editors!

Source: Lynn Rosen, Radical Publishing: *Taking Apart the Book at Books in Browsers IV*, October 31,

2013 - <http://www.bookbusinessmag.com/post/radical-publishing-taking-apart-book-books-browsers-iv/>

Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqaUNkWKXCU>

VdR - Power Tracks

Genève, 17 avril 2014.

Un court entretien avec Vincent de Roguin, au sujet de l'exposition *Power Tracks Vol. 1* (curateurs: Vincent de Roguin et Jérôme Massard) montrée dans le contexte du festival Electron.

Manuel Schmalstieg – Qui est-ce qui a fourni tous ces disques? C'est ta collection personnelle?

Vincent de Roguin – Non, c'est surtout des achats.

MS – Ebay? Discogs?

VdR – Plutôt Discogs. Disons que 80% des archives présentées a été acheté et 20% provient de prêts de collectionneurs romands.

MS – Et quelle est la réception, l'avis du public?

VdR – Pas mal d'avis tranchés et aussi d'étonnement face à l'étendue du sujet et au nombre d'artistes qui ont joués de ces codes. Ce qui est étonnant, c'est qu'entre le début de ce projet, les premières recherches et sa finalisation, ma propre opinion s'est développée dans un sens qui va du préjugé au doute le plus complet. Mes opinions sur la question sont de plus en plus vagues, comme diffractées devant toute cette complexité. Donc c'est vrai que ça m'a plutôt amené de l'inquiétude, plus que de la certitude.

MS – Au début, tu avais un peu une intention de “statement”?

VdR – C'est ça, exactement, quelque chose d'assez affirmatif. J'ai rapidement réalisé que c'était évidemment plus compliqué que ce que j'avais initialement en tête; une sorte de cartographie de différents mouvements culturels et histoires liés à cette thématique militaire ou guerrière, comme un historique de ces réseaux d'influences qui s'incarnent à travers le design graphique, la mode, sous l'influence des contextes politiques des diverses époques qu'on a traitées. Mais derrière tout ça, il y a évidemment des forces qui sont extrêmement complexes à identifier. Et notamment des choses fondamentales ou archaïques, qui touchent à l'humain, à la violence, à la masculinité...

C'est très tortueux comme histoire et donc, globalement, j'ai plus de peine à en parler maintenant qu'au début (rire). Le statement du départ, c'était quelque chose comme: «*Quand est-ce qu'on va sortir de ce capital imagier, qu'on va cesser de recourir à cette symbolique guerrière? Est-ce qu'il n'y a pas un moment où on va réussir à passer à autre chose? Et comment?*» C'est plutôt ça. «*Pourquoi les gens continuent d'exploiter toujours ce puits d'images, d'idées?*» Voilà. Peut-être qu'il y aussi un fond un peu pacifiste.

MS – L'objet des conférences, c'est de faire l'analyse des faits exposés?

VdR – Non. Ça serait plutôt de prendre des bouts de cette histoire, et de faire des zooms. Mettre en lumière certains aspects de l'exposition, regarder de

plus près.

Dans le cas de *Eimert, Stockhausen et les débuts de la WDR*, l'intérêt c'est évidemment les références au contexte d'immédiat après-guerre, des liens entre création radicale et enjeux politiques.

Entre «*l'invention*» de la musique électronique, et les outils militaires laissés par exemple en Allemagne par les américains.

Et Dave Tompkins, avec l'histoire du Vocoder, c'est finalement assez proche de Stockhausen et des studios de Cologne, où la création musicale s'inscrit dans un contexte lourdement militaire, où l'imaginaire se nourrit de cet héritage, qui navigue entre la recherche guerrière, les avant-gardes, l'ésotérisme, les politiques culturelles de la guerre froide.

MS – Je trouve que l'exposition questionne la lecture de l'histoire musicale par « genre ». On y constate des similitudes de codes graphiques dans des genres musicaux très distincts.

VdR – Je crois que la quantité fait émerger l'évidence qu'on est beaucoup moins original et libre qu'on le pense. Quand on met les années 1980 un peu en perspective, on réalise que de la pop mainstream la plus crasse, la plus exploitative et son pendant underground et radical, jouent souvent avec les mêmes codes, avec les mêmes stratégies de provocation, de mobilisation de l'attention. Les intentions sont peut-être différentes mais mis côte-à-côte, la thématisation de la guerre froide est par exemple très uniforme, on a recours aux mêmes slogans et métaphores. Les choses se ressemblent, au

point d'être carrément souvent interchangeables.

MS – Le focus sur les genres électroniques, est-ce que c'était au final pertinent? Est-ce qu'il y a un fil rouge conducteur, ou bien finalement c'est une délimitation arbitraire?

VdR – Cela a permis de délimiter les choses. Parce que je pense que si on s'était ouvert, notamment au metal...

MS – Oui, vous avez exclu le métal et le punk, par exemple.

VdR – Oui, aussi parce que le festival Electron est ciblé sur les musiques électroniques. Donc c'est clair qu'on n'allait pas mettre du metal. On aurait pu ouvrir cette histoire au metal – mais du coup, si tu ouvres au metal, tu ouvres à tous types de musiques. Pourquoi pas, mais ça sera pour une autre fois.

Ce qui est important avec la musique électronique, c'est qu'il s'agit d'une musique dans laquelle la technologie a une place plus importante que dans n'importe quelle autre musique. La technologie *fait* la musique, dans le sens où la musique devient souvent un outil pour "*mettre en son la technologie*". Ce n'est pas la même chose avec une guitare, ou une voix. C'est pas les mêmes problématiques.

Ces problèmes spécifiques à musique électronique – la prédominance de la technologie dans le discours et les esthétiques – amènent des questions justement liées à l'origine de cette technologie. Ses ramifications métaphoriques, dans l'imaginaire... Par exemple dans la techno, l'élément martial est autant

le fruit d'un imaginaire mytho-poétique que d'un imaginaire technologique.

C'est-à-dire que la technologie amène aussi cette dimension militaire à travers les origines militaires de ces machines. Mais aussi à travers la simple activité de la machine, du *beat* qui continue jusqu'à ce qu'on l'arrête, qui a une autonomie, et qui pose plein de questions spécifiques à la technologie. Ce qui n'est pas le cas d'une guitare. Si on ne la joue pas, la guitare, elle ne joue pas, la plupart du temps. A part si on la fait en feedback... et là, ça devient peut-être de la musique électronique.

MS – Peux-tu dire quelque chose sur la conférence de tout à l'heure? C'est une invitation de ta part?

VdR – Oui, c'est une invitation spécifique. Dave Tompkins est un journaliste américain. Il habite à New-York, mais il vient de Caroline du Nord, je crois. C'est un mec vraiment passionnant, et passionné. J'espère que sa conférence sera un peu à l'image de son livre, qui est vraiment inspirant, qui s'appelle *How to Wreck a Nice Beach* et qui est, pour moi, un jalon dans l'histoire de l'écriture musicale de ces dernières années. C'est donc l'histoire du Vocoder, depuis les premiers systèmes de brouillage de la parole, jusqu'au Vocoder utilisé dans la pop des années 80 — la disco, puis la pop, Alvin Lucier, la musique électronique savante...

MS – Le graphisme de l'exposition, c'est l'œuvre de qui? Le livret, la typographie?

VdR – C'est Todeschini et Mamie. Nicola Todeschini et David Mamie, qui sont des amis, et des

professionnels aguerris, à l'œil et aux choix que je trouve toujours pertinents.

Dave Crossland - Future Type Tools

Interview with Dave Crossland about the floss type design ecosystem, recorded in April 2014. Conducted for *Libre Graphics Magazine*, the Type Issue.

On FontForge

So, George Williams started FontForge²⁰. He ran it for about ten years. Then, a couple years ago, he lost the interest. From his perspective, it was technically complete.

This is similar to the way Inkscape emerged from Sodipodi²¹. The Sodipodi developer, as I understand the story, was very much involved in the technical development of the SVG editor. Things which were mathematically interesting for him to develop, but he wasn't really focussed on making a tool for end users.

Manuel Schmalstieg – Was that was the person who

²⁰<http://fontforge.github.io/>
<https://github.com/fontforge/fontforge>
License: GPLv3+

²¹Sodipodi is an open-source vector graphics editor, discontinued in 2004, which is the predecessor to Inkscape.

developed *Spiro*²², and the *Inconsolata* font?

Dave Crossland – No, no. Raph Levien, who wrote **Spiro**, initiated the code base that is now most widely recognized as **Inkscape**.

He made a program called **Gill**, as in Eric Gill, which was the “Gnome Illustration program”. Raph also developed a very simple font editor, which I don’t think he ever published. This is about fifteen years ago.

Raph moved on, I think he was working around that time on his first PhD, which was on “*Attack-Resistant Trust Metrics*”. And he dropped these projects, stopped developing them.

Gill, the SVG editor which he developed, was taken up by Lauris Kaplinski, in Estonia, and was called **Sodipodi**. And then, there were some Americans, who wanted to make the program more user-friendly: key bindings, actually they removed some functionality... this kind of thing. This is how *Sodipodi* was forked into **Inkscape**, in 2003.

A couple of years ago, I was looking on **FontForge** in a similar light. I was keen to start using FontForge to teach type design to beginners. It’s technically very complete, but for new users, it has a lot of rough edges.

It isn’t much effort to polish that up. Similar to Inkscape, we did the key bindings system, so that all of the hotkeys are defined in one simple text file.

²²Spiro is a toolkit for curve design, especially font design. It is shipping in development versions of FontForge and Inkscape.

The most recent workshop I ran was at a design school in Sweden called Hyper Island. Obviously most of the students there had swedish keyboards, and the US keyboard of the FontForge native package wasn't working for them. It was very easy to take ten minutes, and step the class through shutting down FontForge, opening the MacOSX application bundle, navigating to the text file where the hotkeys are defined, and editing the hotkeys.

Realtime collaboration mode

MS – Last year, at the Libre Graphics Meeting in Madrid (LGM 2013), you presented that “Fonts of Doom” collaborative mode in FontForge. How has this evolved?

DC – There has been a lot of tiny little changes made. We redid the icons on the toolbar. We redid the hotkeys. We fixed a lot of crashes. We added that you could interact with the metrics in a more easy way. But I have been fairly shy of actually adding any major features to fontforge.

This is the irony: everyone's like “Wow, Fontforge is so much better than two years ago.” But actually, we didn't change anything in the functionality. We just made a lot of little changes to the user interface.

About a year and a half ago, I proposed to add a major feature to Fontforge, to see how that would go. So we added this realtime collaboration feature, which hijacks the *undo* system, and uses the ZeroMQ library to basically broadcast the undo stack across

a network. So that people can have a realtime collaboration experience.

This threw up all kinds of problems, it crashed a lot, it was pretty difficult for Dr Ben Martin to develop. He has a PhD in computer science, and he could do it. But there's very few other people in the world, comparatively, who can contribute to that codebase.

So it's been a bit of a dead end, because if I can raise money, through running workshops or other means, to fund development, then it's ok. But that's relatively difficult to do.

After Madrid, we had a working basic prototype level, so I could do the demo on stage, and it basically works. If you set it up right, then it works very well. We polished it up a little bit after the LGM 2013, but we didn't really make it rock solid.

The user interface of FontForge is difficult to work on. And working on the Fontforge user interface toolkit doesn't just make any sense whatsoever. Because *the web* is the default dominant user interface toolkit for software these days. That leads me to the conclusion that we should be writing *web based* font editors.

One of the things that we did, at LGM 2013, and at the *Interactivos* workshop, the week after the LGM in Madrid, was to work on a web interface to FontForge. And the way that this worked in the collaboration mode was that, everytime someone in the work session does something, if the font is in a buildable state, then the font is built - and pushed, using web sockets, to a web page. You have a live

web-document preview of your typeface, as you're developing it.

The way I see the development proceeding, is that we are developing *plugins* for FontForge, for additional functionality.

FontForge Plugins

DC – Making a completely new font editor from scratch has this dilemma that you need all this functionality that is in FontForge, but at the same time, you want the new interface, to do what the new interface can do. To run these things concurrently is ideal.

We started with Lasse Fister's **iPython**, as a plugin for FontForge, so that you could do interactive scripting development, while running fontforge.

Then Juraj Sukop has developed **Even**²³, which is a very simple little Qt IDE, very similar to the classic *NodeBox* or *DrawBot*, where you have a three-paned window, with input, output and display. You can write a Python program in the input area, you can run the program, you can see its standard output in the tray underneath, and on the left you get a canvas where the program output is drawn. It can be used to produce test document PDFs from within FontForge.

We also added this to the FontForge codebase, as a plugin. So we now have GTK and Qt plugins bundled

²³<http://xxxyxyz.org/even/>

with FontForge. Therefore, it's possible to develop functionality for FontForge, using either GTK, or Qt, or the web, as your toolkit.

What I would like to see, over the next year or two, is to replace the FontForge user interface by web or Qt or GTK plugins.

My preference is the web as a toolkit.

Web-based Font Editors

DC – Currently, various web based font editors are being developed. There's *Glyphr Studio*²⁴, which is developed by Matt LaGrandeur, a UX designer and developer who works at Microsoft. *Glyphr Studio* is a classic font editor, based very much on the TrueType spec. Even if it has some nice features.

Then there is *Prototypo*²⁵, which has been running a successful kickstarter in May 2014. The basic idea of Prototypo, as I see it, is to apply Mustache style templating to SVG fonts.

MS – Mustache style templating... Which means?

DC – In web development, there's been hundreds of templating syntaxes developed over the last years. The one which has really come to dominate is called

²⁴<https://github.com/mattlag/Glyphr-Studio/>
<http://glyphrstudio.com/>

License: GPLv3

²⁵<https://github.com/byte-foundry/prototypo/>
<http://www.prototypo.io/>

License: GPLv3

Mustache. There's lot of derivatives of the Mustache syntax. Liquid Templates is also quite popular.

Prototypo is putting that kind of templating together with SVG²⁶. So you can have a SVG path syntax, and the point positions, the x and y positions on an SVG path, rather than being defined literally as integer values, are defined through a templating syntax. That gives you an algebra-equation power of specifying point positions, parametrically.

This being web based, it's a self contained *node.js* application. What I am interested in doing, is making that kind of thing possible to turn into a FontForge plugin. So that you would be able to click "export" in the web app, and then have that immediately appear in FontForge.

Design tools for font families

Metapolator is in a very similar position to this. Simon Egli has done quite a lot of research into Metafont, how Metafont could be used in a way which would be more accessible to designers.

Metapolator imports and exports UFO fonts²⁷, so it can fit into any UFO-based workflow. It has a parser, which parses UFO into Metafont, and allows you to store Metafont parameters and values in the UFO format. This means that you can "round trip" fonts

²⁶Scalable Vector Graphics, a file format for vector graphics. The standard is being developed by a W3C working group.

²⁷A file format for fonts (like TTF, OTF), used by many modern font editors (Robofont, Glyphs...).

in and out of Metapolator, into any UFO tool.

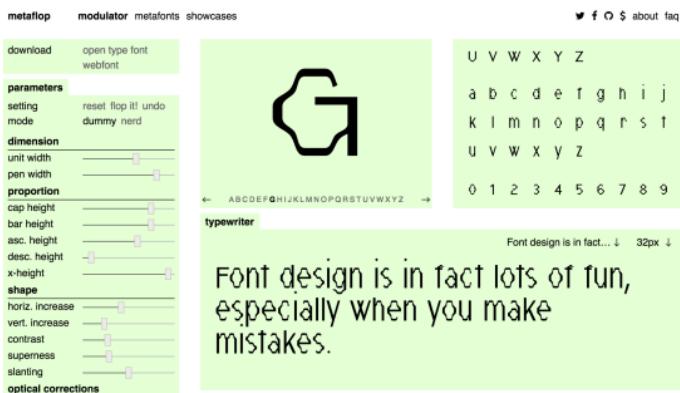
Metapolator is a font family design tool. It's not about drawing the masters - that would be done in FontForge, or any other UFO editor. Metapolator is about multiplying those masters into families. It's very much a type designer's tool, same as Prototypo and Glyphr Studio.

Another big thing we have been working on since LGM 2013: the UFO support in FontForge. It's now working a lot better than it used to. And we started to implement UFO version 3, which at the moment still isn't supported by any other font editors. We will see how that goes.

MS – At LGM 2014, you pointed out the similarities between the interface of Metapolator (a sidebar with *design* parameters, and a specimen card), and of the Google Fonts directory (a sidebar with *search* parameters, and a specimen card).

DC – The basic idea of a font directory is that you have specimen cards for each typeface. And similarly, in **Metaflop**, which is kind of a Metapolator version one, you also have these three cards, where a glyph palette is showing all letters, then there's another card with one letter scaled up very big, and there's a third card where you can have a couple of lines of text.

This is conceptually very similar: you have this main staging area, showing type. To the left you have the sidebar with sliders. The Prototypo user interface is also very much like this: there's a sidebar with sliders, then you have the main stage area, with different



Metaflop

views of type at various scales.

These tools are all very much focused on the *type designer*. There's a couple of other tools that I have been interested in, which are for different kinds of users. For myself, as a kind of curator of the Google Fonts library, I am hopeful for a couple of tools to validate the technical quality of the fonts, and manage the process of making updates - this is the **Font Bakery**²⁸ tool. And then I'm also interested in validating the *design quality* of the typefaces, not just the technical quality.

Pablo Impallari has been developing a testing tool, that he uses doing his type design development. I would love to ramp that up. So I have been discussing the possibility, working with various foundries, taking the knowledge of how they test type, and bring this together in a kind of Master Type

²⁸ License: Apache 2.0 License
<https://github.com/googlefonts/fontbakery>

Testing page, or rather testing application.

And again, you are having little cards, there is typography on each card, where instead of sliders to change the type rendered in the card, you have a sidebar with questions. When you have a typeface, and want to put it through its paces, then you have dozens or hundreds of test cases, that allow to evaluate various aspects of the typeface.

MS – this is the thing a designer will do, before he submits the font?

DC – They can be used as a part of the type design process. There are different kinds of users. Someone who manages a collection of hundreds of fonts, is different of someone who is trying to originate a new design.

MS – TTFautohint – this has now reached a stable version number?

DC – Yes, that's right. Werner Lemberg has been doing a great job during the last few years. He is probably the leading example of somebody working on libre font tools who has been able to sustain it financially. I made a little video for him when we started the project, for the initial fundraising, a campaign that was run on Pledgie. We managed to find funding from Fontlab, Extensis, Webink, the Android project, the Google Fonts project, and also hundreds of individuals.

That has been working very well, it's now the point when you can design with ((TTFautohint)) to be able to hint as part of your development process from day one. So that you can draw a glyph, and

TTFautohint it, and preview how that's rendering in browsers. And by integrating TTFautohint in your design process, you can produce designs which render extremely well on legacy Windows platforms, without needing to do any hinting.

MS – Is it integrated into existing design software?

DC – There is a very simple graphical user interface to TTFAutohint. You can load a font file, and check the boxes with the options, rather than reading a manual and setting it up through the command line. I would expect all these programs to integrate TTFAuthint into their build process.

And one of the things I am very excited about in technology is **Enscripten**, and `asm.js`. So, Enscripten is *transpiler*, that allows you to take a C or C++, or even Python, or Lua, or other scripting language program, and it allows you to compile it into JavaScript. This allows us to take a lot of existing free software, and run it in the browser. It should be possible to take TTFAutohint, and have that hinting process done as part of a web application.

MS – as part of Metapolator, or whatever?

Obviously with FontForge, since FontForge is a binary application, this isn't totally necessary. But what I would like to see, over the next year or two, is to replace the FontForge user interface by web or Qt or TTK plugins. I'm kind of agnostic to whatever wins out, personally I'd be betting on the web stack. But if people jump in, develop Qt or TTK functionality, then that sounds great to me.

MS – There was one last thing: **Kernagic**. What's

happening with that?

DC – So, **Kernagic** (pronounced ‘Kemagic’) is a project by Pippin (Øyvind Kolås). He has pretty much come to the point where he’s happy with it. It is very much an intellectual exercise to him, as a kind of hacker nomad, who was trying at the LGM 2013 in Madrid to crack at the spacing. Here we are a year later, and he has done an amazing job.

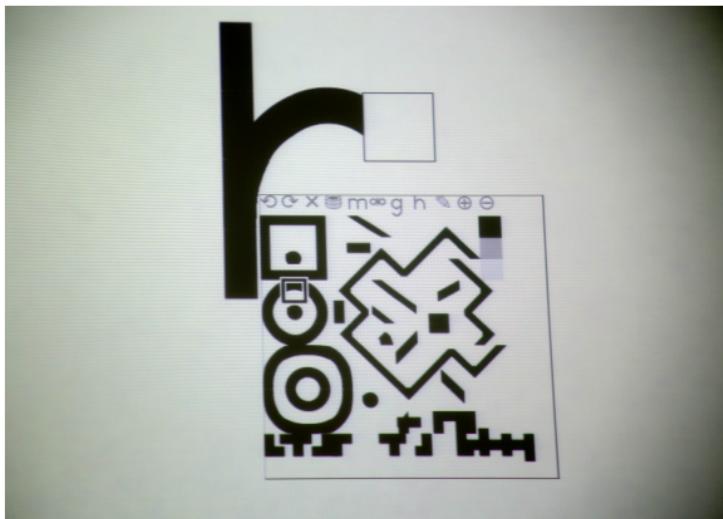
Kernagic has two modes. It has the *table of cadences*, from Frank E. Blokland’s letter model. And then it got Pippin’s own independent thinking, which was informed by Frank’s model, but is an independent perspective on the whole problem.

Pippin’s gone forward with fonts now, he has also done **Fontile**, which is his “puzzle style interface” for creating pixel fonts. It’s pretty amazing stuff really, you see a lot of functionality, in Fontile, which you only see in major web applications, and it’s something that he was able to put together in a couple of months.

Kernagic is a C application, it’s TTK2, so it’s not that easy to package for Windows or Mac OSX. So the best way to use Kernagic is to run it on a GNU system. And obviously, most type designers are using Mac OSX, so it’s got a somewhat limited audience. But the results that designers, like Vernon Adams, achieved with Kernagic are very compelling.

MS – so, Kernagic is an independent application?

DC – Yes, it’s a standalone TTK application. It uses UFO for input and output, and it follows the UFO live-file-system-watcher model, so that you have



Demonstration of Fontile at LGM 2014

one UFO file, and you can open that in several UFO applications at the same time. And when you click the “save” button in one of the applications, the other applications are watching the file system, and allow you to select how you want to take the update. So it doesn’t really make sense to have Kernagic as a FontForge plugin, because it is cooperating with FontForge by the file system.

Something that underpins all of this is: all of these project are developed on Git version control, and almost all of them are developed on GitHub. So, becoming familiar with Git and GitHub is essential for designers, especially type designers - because that’s really the dominant collaboration channel of today.

((Q: Payment model of FontForge))

As I said, we packaged a Windows native build of FontForge, which runs pretty good. And the Ardour audio editor has been quite successfully working to provide a “pay for libre software” model, where users are asked to pay for a copy, or to buy a subscription, so that they get updates on an annual subscription basis. I’m very keen on this idea, because I think that freedom is valuable, and we live in a capitalist system where people pay for valuable things. So I think that free software should be more expensive than proprietary software - because it’s more valuable.

I definitely think that not enough free software developers are funded to work on it full time, and that’s a major stumbling block for the free software movement.

((Q: how is the decision taking done in FontForge))

Only a couple of people had commit access on Sourceforge. Somebody brought FontForge over to Github. Then we set up FontForge as a GitHub organization. And there’s 35 members in the organization right now. But only a few of them are really active contributors.

LGM 2014 - Leipzig

(add some notes)

Black Holes in the Gutenberg Galaxy

A talk (on behalf of the Greyscale Press publishing project) given at the Off The Press conference, May 22-23 2014, organized by the Institute of Network Cultures, Rotterdam.

[beeping sounds]

[cricket sound]

Manuel Schmalstieg — Thanks for the introduction.
Did I really write that?

Silvio Lorusso — You did.

MS — OK. I am so happy to be here in WORM, finally for real. I have been here a few times, but virtually through video projections and through the interwebs. Now, it's great to be here live. It's a great space.

What I am talking about here, actually this title — Black Holes in the Gutenberg Galaxy — I decided to change it. I came across a new concept by reading the little glossary that Silvio has put together on some piratepad somewhere.²⁹ Actually, we should share it with the audience, maybe.

SL — Oh, yeah!

²⁹ p-dpa.titanpad.com/1 - see the last pages of this book.

MS — We will talk about it later. This is a concept that I read about in this wonderful glossary (around publishing, post-digital stuff and so on). So, the Flip-Flop. Who knows what the Flip-Flop is? Who wrote that definition, in your glossary?

SL — Robin Sloan.

[crosstalk]



Flip-Flop (n.)

SL — Yeah, that's the original definition.

MS — Flip-flop, from the physical to the digital, and then back into the physical. The more it goes against the stream, the more interesting it becomes. This is what has been happening with Greyscale Press.

Greyscale Press started randomly as a side project with no funding, no big ambitions — just the interest of actually reading some texts that accumulated in some corner of my hard drive. I wanted to have them on paper so I could sit down quietly, at some

moment, and read them while traveling or while having a bad Internet connection.

It started with a dummy text, or I thought it would be a dummy text.

I guess every one of you, when navigating the Internet, sometimes you come across some long, interesting-looking article or text that you save, somewhere on your hard drive in a corner. And then you find it two years later, and you don't remember what it was. In this case, I came across that on that blog, a typical blogspot.com whatever thing, which was written in October-December 2004, never updated since, totally abandoned.

The screenshot shows a blog post titled "report from the Desert" from Thursday, December 03, 2004. The post contains two paragraphs of text. Below the post is a comment section with one comment from "rd". To the right is a sidebar with "About Me" (Name: rd, View my complete profile), "Previous Posts" (links to other posts), and "Archives" (links to October 2004 and December 2004). At the bottom is a "Blogger" logo.

report from the Desert

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 03, 2004

The first rule of the desert is: you don't know where the desert starts or finishes.

the second rule is: you don't really know where you are when you are in the desert.

posted by rd @ 5:56 AM 5 comments

Stood in this damp city makes my bones freeze beyond recognition. It's also hard to breathe normally, very much like the very hot weather of the desert.

Take out the zire from the coat pocket and read a few pages of the book of the month just to kill a little time. I don't concentrate on what I'm reading. Instead I think about the best way to get these local people to cooperate in my mission. It's not always like this, but today, this is how I feel; kind of lost in too many doubts and too much humidity.

I wonder how long does the winter lasts around here... I Hope not too much. But anyway, I'm only here for a week or two...

posted by rd @ 5:36 AM 0 comments

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2004

Possibly to discard...

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Blogger

Report from the desert, reportdesert.blogspot.com, 2004.

It was actually a very, very long page, narrating a story, a literary work. It sounded very mysterious, truely fascinating. I downloaded it and forgot about

it. Later, when I published my first print-on-demand book, I used this as a test pattern, as a *Placeholder*.

I read it for the first time when I was proofing it, and then I figured out that it was actually a masterpiece of 21st century post-modern literature. Really, it is, even if it's not written in standard English, hard to publish through a traditional book publisher. It's a worthwhile read, and I have been spreading it since then.

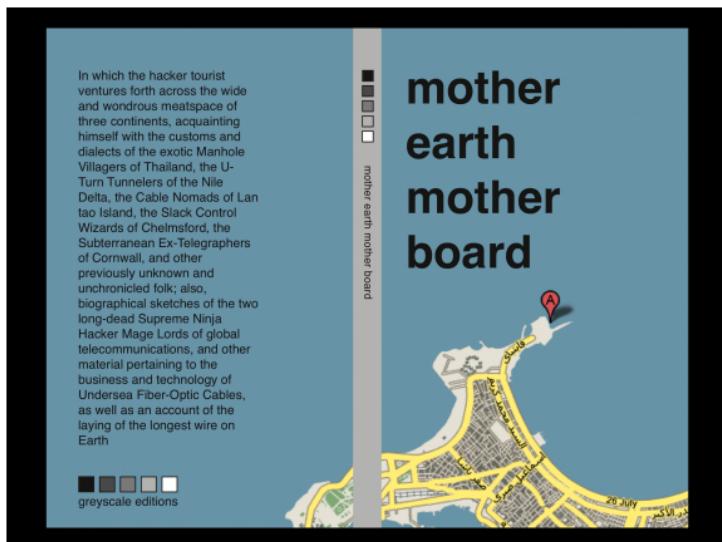
That was the beginning of Greyscale Press. I came up with that name because I needed to put something on the cover of the book, to make it look professional. Like those decisions that you take in just half a second, it sticks and it can become really a good thing.



Exhibit at Lokal.Int, Biel/Bienne, 2010.

Now, there have been other things added to this

collection. It has been expanding, and it has always been working on the principle that there is that digital file, that is too long to be watching the screen for hours. So I print it, and I will read it at some point, actually I will also distribute that book to other people.



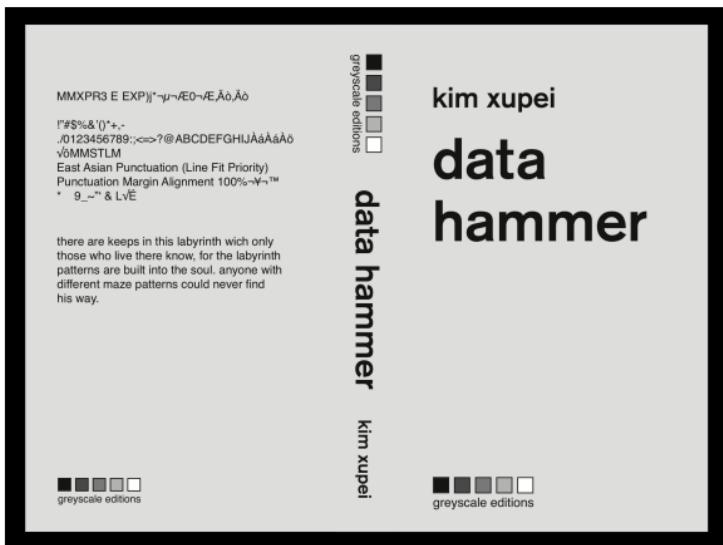
Neal Stephenson, *Mother Earth Mother Board*, print-on-demand version released in 2008, one copy.

Some of those books are bootlegs, undercover releases. For instance, this great essay by Neal Stephenson [on the screen: *Mother Earth Mother Board*] of which I made a printed edition, illustrated with images which weren't in the original.

He's writing... You know the article? It was published in WIRED magazine in 1996³⁰. It's an epic travel diary that follows the path of the undersea Internet

³⁰<http://www.wired.com/1996/12/ffglass/>

cables. It's a great read, and as a geeky detail, Stephenson includes the GPS coordinates at the beginning of every chapter. So I made an illustrated version, with maps that show the locations³¹.

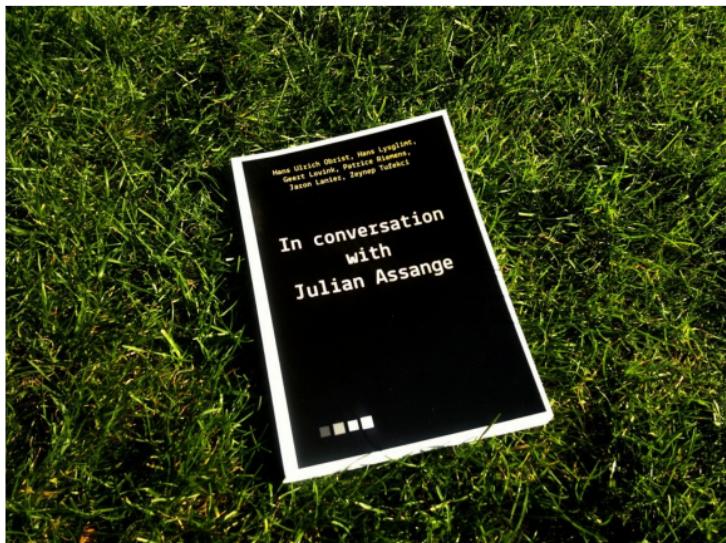


Kim Xupei, *Data Hammer*, 2009.

This was maybe one of the first “not found, but actually created” pieces: *Data Hammer* by Kim Xupei. It’s a made-up personality and a made-up book. The concept was to write a fictional biography of a Chinese hacker, by basing the content on all that press that we have since 10 years, about the cyber threat coming from China. The Chinese hackers attacking Google, attacking American military systems, and so on.

³¹Sidenote: in 2012, software developer Dan Williams also created a personal print-on-demand edition of that article. See <http://www.iamdanw.com/wrote/i-dont-know-what-books-are-any-more/>

The concept here was to aggregate those news stories, to find some ghost writers to write a rough biographical novel from that, to assemble it into a plausible biography. It's still a work-in-progress. You can order the book if you want, but its not a coherent story yet. If there are people interested in the topic, talk with me and it may go forward.



In conversation with Julian Assange, 2011.

This was another undercover project [on screen: *In conversation with Julian Assange*]. I came across that brilliant interview done by Hans-Ulrich Obrist with Assange³², with contributions by Ai Wei Wei and many other artists. And I wanted to have it in print and to distribute it to my friends, to get other people to read it. So I produced an edition, I added some

³²<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-conversation-with-julian-assange-part-i/>

other texts, by Geert Lovink who is maybe in this room, and Jaron Lanier who refused that I would publish it, and so it stayed a kind of undercover thing.

[on screen: *Jacob Appelbaum - Talks*]

This is a more recent one in that series about cypher punk activism. Those are talks, public speeches by Jacob Appelbaum, who is one of the persons who has been raising public awareness on the NSA's spying infrastructure, and has been covering the Snowden case for the german magazine *Spiegel*.

He has been giving numerous talks, and also a delivered a testimony for the European Parliament. You can watch those videos on YouTube and on many places. They are full of information, it's an extremely dense and technical topic. I needed to read that on paper, black on white, to be able to take my yellow marker and to analyze and process the data.

I had those talks transcribed by online services and then, with Jacobs's acknowledgement, I published it as a print-on-demand book that you can order cheaply. For your education, or as a propaganda piece to spread and support the cause.

It's typeset in a very traditional way, since the point was to make the content, the hard facts as readable as possible. It's a raw transcript, so it's sometimes a bit rough around the edges. So the layout had to be as clean as possible.

While producing those books, I became interested in the technical process, and also in the issues of

proprietary file formats, expensive software that makes collaboration difficult.

For instance, this book by Jacob Applebaum was produced with Scribus, and has been shared on Github³³, in the intention that other people can improve and contribute to it. Many of his recent talks have been co-transcribed by lots of people through Etherpads, and put online just a few minutes or hours after the talk. There is an opportunity for collaboration. Therefore, it is important that the files are accessible, the file format is open.

I have been working with **Scribus**, an open-source typesetting, graphic design software which uses an XML file format, which could potentially be used for all types of processes, transforming into Epubs and whatnot. Some people are working on that!

Once you get into that process, you start also becoming obsessed by typefaces and fonts. This [on screen: *L'Eve future*] was probably the most successfully selling book that was published by Greyscale Press, and it's called *L'Eve future - spécimens de fontes libres*.

It's a book of type specimens. It was done in book-sprint mode, during a one-week workshop with graphic design students who worked on that intensively. They gathered a selection of high quality open-source free and libre fonts, that were assembled in a type specimen book.

They used the novel *L'Eve future*, which is an early

³³<https://github.com/greyscalepress/ioerror>



science fiction novel from the 19th century, and decided to make it run through the whole book. So it's not one text sample that just repeats, but it's a full novel that you can read from page 1 to page 500. It was a big challenge, and they succeeded. It's selling quite well, it's actually useful as a design tool.

Now, I'm not a big fan of presenting work. If you want to see the books, come tomorrow to the Bazaar. When is it? In the afternoon? Here?

SL – It's here.

MS – So, that will be the opportunity of seeing real stuff.

Now, I want to add a little bit to that great and fascinating topic: the study of “book spam”, or “spam books”. You have seen some brilliant

examples by TraumaWien. When did you do that Epub/Amazon/YouTube compilation? Do you remember the year when it was?

TraumaWien — In 2012.

MS — 2012, OK. The whole story has started when print-on-demand books were really taking off. I think the earliest traces were in 2009, 2010 around that date. First examples of algorithmic, automatically produced spam started to appear on Amazon.



The 2013 World Forecasts of Artificial Guts (Sausage Casings), Icon Group International.

Now, it depends how you define spam. This can be useful for some people probably, and those books have been produced by one person who came up with engineering methods for producing reports by gathering data from the web and putting them together.

[laughter]

MS — It's a form of poetry, I think. There is an

algorithm that generates random prices, as you can see. The name of the publisher is Icon Group International.

The last time I looked, I found that he has produced quite a number of books. He has been patient, and Amazon hasn't been kicking him out, unlike [TraumaWien]³⁴. So, they consider this to be "good enough" content.



Search results for "Icon Group International"

This is how I personally came across that phenomenon: I was looking for documentation about the great conceptual art group **The KLF / K Foundation**. I saw that book [on screen: *K Foundation Burn a Million Quid*] and I was surprised by the cover, because they are famous for having burnt one million *british pounds* in the 90s. Here, the banknote on the cover is not a pound note, but a dollar bill.

There was something very wrong... and actually upon further inspection, this book is a compilation

³⁴ **TraumaWien** — Can I add something?

MS — Yes.

TraumaWien — I wasn't blocked because of the content, but of the multiple accounts.

MS — Because of the multiple accounts? From one IP?

TraumaWien: Yeah, 50 accounts.

MS — OK!



K Foundation Burn a Million Quid: K Foundation, Bill Drummond, Jimmy Cauty, Burning money, Pound sterling, Jura, Scotland, The KLF, Alan Goodrick ... K Foundation art award, Fuck the Millennium (Taschenbuch)

von [Frederic P. Miller](#) (Herausgeber), [Agnes F. Vandome](#) (Herausgeber), [John McBrewster](#) (Herausgeber)

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Verleger: So können Kunden in diesem Buch suchen.

Produktinformation

Taschenbuch: 100 Seiten
Verlag: Alphascript Publishing (8. Dezember 2009)
Sprache: Englisch
ISBN-10: 6130245858
ISBN-13: 978-6130245856

K Foundation Burn A Million Quid, Alphascript Publishing, 2009

and aggregation of Wikipedia articles by an imprint named **Alphascript Publishing**. I thought that was a lovely name, so I researched further. I saw that they had at that time a small number of 17,000 books...

[laughter]

MS — ...Which covered a very wide array of topics. After some time, this caught the attention of the Wikipedia community and big debates and emotions arose, wars erupted. This is a brilliant example, “History of Georgia (Country)”. You can guess what the photograph is. It’s Atlanta, not Tbilisi.

MS — Those books have been spreading through all those online distribution channels. [on screen: *Modul8*, by Betascript Publishing, at Barnes &

History of Georgia (country)

Author: Frederic R. Miller, Agnes F. Vondracek, with Melisende (Eds.)

Editor: John McBrewster (Editor), Frederic P. Miller (Editor)

Customer reviews: 4 stars (4 reviews)

Price: \$77.00 & this item ships for FREE w/ [Details](#)

In Stock.
Ships from and sold by [Amazon.com](#). Gift-wrap available.

Want it delivered Monday, January 25? Order by 12:00 PM PT, minutes, and choose **One-Day Shipping** at checkout.

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Publisher: learn how customers can search [Inside this book.](#)

History of Georgia (Country), Alphascript Publishing.

Noble] This is a Wikipedia article that I co-wrote, about some video software. And sometimes on the way, passing from one platform to the other, they lose some metadata. [on screen: *Novels By Jerry Pournelle*, at AbeBooks.com] Here, the cover has been lost and it becomes harder and harder to identify, if it's a serious work of research or documentation, or not.

On Wikipedia, some people have been passionate about that, have done very deep research. They made a table of all the alternate imprints that Alphascript Group has been publishing under.

They generated random imprint names and fake editor names, probably in order to avoid being blocked too easily. This has been running for some time. I noticed that the spam books are now appearing less and less and in the search results,

Imprint	Editor names	Year of creation	Language	Number of titles in June 2011
Acu Publishing	Evander Luther	2011	English, French	408
Alphascript Publishing	Frederic P. Miller Agnes F. Vandome John McBrewster	2009	English, French	176919
Anim Publishing	Norton Fausto Garfield	2011	English, French	433
Aud Publishing	Eldon A. Mainyu	2011	English, French	443
Bellum Publishing	Othniel Hermes	2011	English, French	419
Betascript Publishing	Lambert M. Surhone Miriam T. Timpeldon Susan F. Marseken Mariam T. Tennoe Susan F. Henssonow	2010	English, French, German	319214
Brev Publishing	Germain Adriaan	2011	English, French	414
Cede Publishing	Barnabas Cristóbal	2011	English, French	481
Ceed Publishing	Aaron Philippe Toll	2011	English, French	527
Cei Publishing	Iustinus Tim Avery	2011	English, French	393
Chromo Publishing	Adam Cornelius Bert	2011	English, French	383
Chrono Press	Pollux Évariste Kjeld	2011	English, French	457
All	All authors	2011	English, French	474

Table of alternate publisher names

but at some moment, it was massive. If you were querying for some obscure topic, you would certainly find several spam books in your results.

As you see here, they had 350,000 for Betascript Publishing, 180,000 for Alphascript. It was a serious business. They invented some impressive author names, with a middle initial, which is proven to increase your seriousness and credibility.

[laughter]

MS — There have been studies about that³⁵. The proof that this works is that if you... Sorry what is

³⁵ See: van Tilburg W. A. P. and Igou E. R. (2014), *The impact of middle names: Middle name initials enhance evaluations of intellectual performance*, European Journal of Social Psychology, 44, pages 400–411. DOI: 10.1002/ejsp.2026 - <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2026>

your question?

Audience member – Did anybody purchase them ?

MS — There are reviews on Amazon. Some people complained that the quality wasn't what they expected.

[laughter]

MS — A person sent me a scan of a book she returned, because some unicode glyphs didn't print correctly. There were also some glowing reviews by a German fellow, who is probably running the business. But he didn't manage to keep up with the number of books being published. Strangely, it seems harder to automate the reviews than publishing actual titles.

Another proof that this spam does work on a certain scale is that, if you go into any university library, and search for Alphascript Publishing, there are big chances that you will find some titles in the university book shelves. This was where I live in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. They had about 25 books, on extremely specific topics. *The Judicial System of the People's Republic of China* for instance.

You could argue that the person who acquired those titles didn't pass the spam detection test — like the Turing test, which is detecting if somebody in front of you is human. Now, when you purchase books, you have to perform also a sort of book Turing test — has it been made by a human or not? — when you purchase them online.

Those are two titles that I got from the library, just to be sure that they really exist, and they do.

Notices 21 à 25 sur 25

[Ajouter sélection au panier](#) [Sélectionner 21-25](#) [Tout désélectionner](#)

 **21**

Sélectionner

Titre Judicial system of the people's republic of China : judiciary, people's republic of China, chinese law, legal history of China, law of the people's republic of China / Frederic P. Miller... [et al.] (Ed.)

Lieu / Dates Beau Bassin, Mauritius : Alphascript Publ., 2009

ISBN 9786130057756

Collation 153 p. : ill.

[Service](#)

 **22**

Sélectionner

Titre Legal history of China : chinese law, law of the people's republic of China, Jiangxi-Fujian soviet, legal systems of the world, traditional chinese law, law, rule of law, confucianism, codification, civil code, jurisprudence / Frederic P. Miller... [et al.] (Ed.)

Lieu / Dates Beau Bassin, Mauritius : Alphascript Publ., 2009

ISBN 9786130045258

Collation 162 p. : ill.

[Service](#)

Alphascript books in the University library of Neuchâtel.

They aren't that different optically from traditional academic publishing. And here I photographed them in front of the gravestone of Jorge Luis Borges, the inventor of the *Library of Babel*, just to make that little connection.

[on screen: tombstone of JL Borges at Cimetière Saint-Georges, Geneva]

A side note about “spam as books”: writers nowadays can also be SEO aware. You know, *Search Engine Optimization*. That's also a way to attract an audience for your titles, like giving them a title that is relatively close to an existing best seller. This isn't a big movement on Amazon, so it's not as massive as the Wikipedia generated spam.

[laughter]



MS — But it happened, there are some examples. This is actually more an art prank, because inside, they are effectively 50,000 times the words “shades of grey”, so it can be considered an art project. That’s why it got positive reviews as you can see.

[laughter]

MS — Or that one. “I am The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo”.

[laughter]

MS — That’s the end, actually, of the interesting part of the presentation.

[laughter]

MS — Was it 15 minutes?

Silvio: It’s fine. It’s fine. If you have something to say you can continue.

MS — OK. I wasn’t totally sure how this evening part would go. So I had some little thoughts regarding the

general topic of that conference, like the tools, the *Digital Publishing Tool Kit* thing, that I was expecting to see a bit more what it would be. I'm curious when it will be released.

My position as a producer of books between the Web and between the print, taken in that format war that we live in, is that it's an exciting time. We have lots of unfinished tools around us, lots of tools being developed. It's an interesting phase to be working in. Of course, there are things that are much needed and that everybody wants. Nobody's still got it right. Maybe they won't ever be totally right.

Here are my rough notes of things I would love to see in that ecosystem of producing book-like content for print and web.

I would love to see a *Silkroad* — like the illegal Tor-based anonymous marketplace — where e-books get exchanged and actual books as well.

A *Mesh Network* of booksellers. It would be interesting to talk about this with Alessandro Ludovico. We discussed a bit during the break. He has the same idea in a more precise way. Having booksellers organizing themselves by a powerful software buying system that would be targeted, not to have another giant silo, but to put in contact small local book-selling places.

The *Digital Touch Publishing Tool Kit*. Everybody wants it. Everybody has a different idea of how it should work.

For sure, it should be command-line-based, so that you can automate everything. You don't want to be

blocked by the user interface, especially if you want to produce 300,000 books in one step.

If there is a user interface, make it be a Web user interface. It's more flexible. It will work on every platform. Be it a tablet or be it a Linux operating system. And you will have lots of coders who know the language to make it work.

Version-control everything, of course. We got already used to it in the field of programming. We also need it in the field of book production.

Allow us to work in offline mode. For programming, it may be OK to be all the time online. For writing, or proofing a text, or that kind of activity, it tends to work better, at least for me, when there is no Internet.

The Distributed Version Control Systems allow us to have the copy always with us. So, it has to be possible to write offline. If the whole system has to be web-based, and needs a permanent Internet connection, it doesn't work for me.

That's the main points. Thank you.

[applause]

Reviews

by Arie Altena, in: *Off the Press, Report I*, May 25 2014, <http://ariealt.net/2014/05/25/off-the-press-report-i/>

“The last presentation I see is by Greyscales’ Manuel Schmalstieg – *Black Holes in the Gutenberg Galaxy*. He starts with the idea of the flip-flop: going from digital to analog and back. He made a couple of printed editions, sometimes pirated – for instance Neal Stephenson’s essay from Wired on the undersea cable, with new illustrations. He aggregated a novel from texts written by various ghost writers. He made the edition ‘In Conversation with Julian Assange.’ Some of these book remained undercover, as they were pirate editions, and rights were not acquired. His most successful publication is a book with transcriptions of talks by Jacob Appelbaum, – a book which can be added to every time a new talk is transcribed. He ends with on overview of spam publishing – which very nicely complements the presentation by TraumaWien.”

The NETworkshop

In a meeting in summer 2014, Manuel interviewed Boris about Julian Oliver and Danja Vasiliev's (of the Critical Engineering Working Group) *NETworkshop* that Boris attended earlier that year.



Manuel Schmalstieg — Donc, tu parlais du workshop.

Boris Kish — Oui, le workshop.

MS — Tu as fait des rêves pendant ce workshop, paraît-il?

BK — Je t'ai dit ça ? Ouais, ouais. C'était stimulant, quoi.

Ensuite, ce que je craignais s'est un peu passé, c'est qu'après, ça part très vite. C'est un peu comme quand tu fais des exercices spirituels de méditation. Quand t'as des expériences profondes, métaphysiques, comme un concert de Karkowski, ou bien certains films d'Apichatpong Weerasethakul — tu en gardes quelque chose de profond, mais ensuite, la question c'est comment conserver cet état dans le temps.

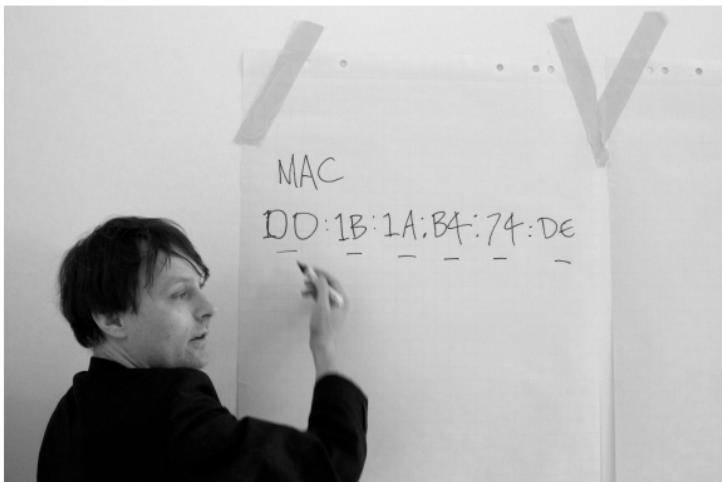
Parce que, petit à petit, ça s'émousse, ça s'effrite et ça se perd. Il y avait une sorte de conscience nouvelle qui était ouverte, des espaces liberté de conscience... c'était un agrandissement de la conscience ce workshop. Et ensuite, petit à petit ça part. Parce que c'est quelque chose de pas familier, de très étrange. Et ensuite, petit à petit, ça se fait bouffer par l'inertie du quotidien.

Il y avait deux ou trois très jolies étudiantes de St-Luc, qui avaient évidemment des Macintosh dernier cri et des ongles rouges, qui étaient dans l'art digital, en nouveaux médias ou je ne sais quoi, en *digital art* à leurs écoles... qui semblaient absolument pas... enfin, à la fois politisées, mais à la fois pas du tout. C'est très étrange. Mais jeunes, tu vois, entre 20 et 25 ans.

Il y avait une série de vieux gars un peu bougons, solitaires. Et puis il y avait des activistes. Et puis il y avait des provinciaux, qui venaient, qui étaient en formation infographique ou des trucs comme ça, dans des centres technologiques dans les villes de province wallonnes, qui étaient plutôt les représentants de Windows. Evidemment, les vieux bougons, ils étaient sur Linux, ainsi que les activistes.

Et donc, il y avait Julian et Danja. Très

complémentaires.



Julian Oliver commente une adresse MAC

MS — J'adore leur style vestimentaire!

BK — Oui, oui. Ils ont un style monstrueux. Ils avaient l'air d'être très contents, les deux, d'être là en général, et de partager tout ça. Ils avaient l'air très contents. Très excités en général, très énergiques.

Évidemment, il y avait des gens qui connaissaient le code, à différents niveaux. D'autres gens absolument pas, ils n'avaient jamais écrit une ligne de code de leur vie. Plutôt proche de moi.

C'était rigolo, parce que, du coup, il fallait vraiment compter sur les autres. Ça allait assez vite, et il y avait souvent des gens complètement paumés. Ça créait beaucoup d'échanges.

MS — Il y avait des rencontres intéressantes ?

BK — Pas pour moi, non, j'ai pas rencontré des gens...

Mais, attends, comment il s'appelle ce gars ? Il me semble que c'est un gars qu'on avait déjà vu à l'iMAL, qui faisait un truc de radio. C'est un gars qui était dans le son. Il y avait plusieurs gars et filles qui étaient dans le son, plutôt des français. Mais, par contre, ce qui est un peu décevant aussi, c'est qu'il y avait une mailing-liste, mais il y a jamais rien eu. J'ai jamais été tenu au courant de quoi que ce soit, sur les activités de Julian et Danja.

Et puis, aussi, ils devaient aussi envoyer toute une doc sur ce qu'on avait fait. Et ils l'ont pas fait... C'est un peu étrange.

MS — Ce que vous avez fait, c'était quoi ?

BK — Alors, on a... Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait ? Je me souviens pas ! [rire]

On a fait un réseau local... on a fait des pings. On est sorti... on a appris à capter du WiFi qui passait dans le coin. Et à le décoder — ils ont donné toute une série d'outils pour ça. On a installé une version de Linux *standalone*. Attends, comment ça marchait ce... bon, bref...

MS — Un truc virtual box.

BK — Voilà, c'est ça. Exactement. Et qui était préparé pour, avec toute une série d'outils, de bibliothèques, pour faire ce qu'on faisait.

MS — Du “war driving” ?

BK — Ouais. Je l'ai toujours sur moi... Ah oui, on a aussi installé Tor. On a fait ça, on a “toré” aussi. Il y a eu tout un moment où ils ont pas mal parlé de Tor théoriquement.

Un grand moment, c'était quand on est sorti dans la rue et chacun était à gauche, à droite, avec son laptop, son dieu sait quoi, et a enregistré une chiée de flux WiFi qui passaient. Ensuite, on rentre et on décode tout ça. Ça, c'était hyper fun.

MS — Il y avait des trouvailles ?

BK — Ah ouais! Des selfies. Souvent c'était un peu glitché, très glitché. Souvent les images n'étaient pas complètes, ou des trucs comme ça, c'était recomposé en partie. Ce qui était spectaculaire, c'était les images. Il y avait aussi quelques fragments sonores. C'était assez convaincant! Ça marchait vraiment.

Mais, ensuite, maintenant, si je devais... Je crois que sur mon ordi, il y avait un problème, je ne sais plus quoi. Je n'ai pas vraiment réussi à capter moi-même du matos intéressant. Je ne sais plus pourquoi. Si je voulais le refaire moi-même, il faudrait que j'y passe... pfff... vraiment un certain temps pour refaire marcher l'histoire. Ce que je n'ai pas essayé.

Mais c'était super intéressant de le faire. De voir que c'est possible, et que ce n'est pas très sorcier. Enfin, les outils existent et sont là, accessibles.

MS — OK. J'arrête le fragment.

BK — Oui.

Ale Rimoldi on LGM History

Entretien avec Ale Rimoldi, le 28 novembre 2015, à l'occasion d'une séance de travail à Zurich, dédiée au site web du LGM 2016. L'interview porte sur le début des rencontres LGM (Libre Graphics Meeting).

Manuel Schmalstieg: C'était en 2006 que tu étais au premier LGM, à Lyon. Qu'est-ce que tu faisais là-bas?

Ale Rimoldi: J'y étais pour rencontrer les gens de Scribus. On travaillait depuis quelques années ensemble, sur Scribus. Et puis, le team, entre eux, s'était presque jamais rencontré. C'était la chance de voir des gens avec qui on avait des contacts réguliers. Il n'y avait que 2 ou 3 personnes du team qui s'étaient déjà rencontrés. Les autres ne s'étaient jamais vus, alors qu'on travaillait depuis des années ensemble.

Il y avait quelques Français, des Allemands, un Néo-Zélandais, un Australien, un Canadien, un Tchèque, un Finlandais... et puis moi, le Suisse. Moi j'étais pas dans l'équipe, je suis toujours pas dans l'équipe. Mais ces gens, la plupart étaient dans l'équipe, sauf Louis du Canada. Il y avait un australien, un allemand au moins, Andreas. Comme Français il y avait Jean. Un

Américain, Peter. Et puis ((Peter Barnek)), Tchèque. C'était l'occasion de rencontrer ces gens avec qui j'avais des contacts par Internet.

MS: Ce LGM était organisé par qui?

AR: C'était organisé par GIMP. C'est sorti de l'équipe de GIMP qui avait déjà une rencontre de GIMP, et quelqu'un leur a proposé: "Mais pourquoi ne pas inviter les autres projets de graphisme libre?" Et c'est ((Dave Neary)) et ((David Odin)) qui avait organisé ça. Après c'est Dave Neary qui a continué le travail avec LGM pour quelques années. Ils ont organisé ça à Lyon. C'était simple, mais c'était assez bien, c'était assez gros quand même. Il y avait 2 ou 3 tracks, pas mal de projets étaient présents, c'était un bon succès.

Mais c'était pratiquement que développement, en tout cas ce que j'ai vu n'était que développement. Pour les utilisateurs, il y avait peu.

MS: Cédric Gémy était la aussi?

AR: Oui, mais pour Inkscape. Il était encore dans Inkscape à l'époque, donc je l'ai pas connu.

MS: Et donc, Louis Desjardins était venu du Canada? Il était dans un projet spécifique?

AR: Scribus.

((Ale cherche la photo de groupe sur Internet, sur Flickr))

C'est moi, il y a Jean, il y a Craig, de Nouvelle-Zélande, Andreas Vox, Peter Vanek, Peter Linell, Louis, et là un français qui fait des traductions pour Scribus.

Là aussi, c'est l'équipe de GIMP au LGM 2006. Là c'est l'atelier qu'il y a eu. Cédric Gemy.

MS: Donc, après ça, il y a eu Montréal.

AR: Oui, c'est Louis qui l'a fait, j'imagine, à Montréal. Ensuite l'équipe de GUI GIMP a organisé ça à Wroclaw, en Pologne. Et c'est là que ça s'est établi, qu'on a décidé de refaire un LGM chaque année. C'est là qu'on a eu Constant qui sont venus. Ils ont fait une police typographique durant leur voyage.

MS: Toi, tu as été à quels?

AR: Je n'ai pas été à Montréal en 2007, et en 2015. C'était trop loin, si je n'ai pas quelque chose à faire. Sinon, j'étais à tous les autres. Il y en a qui étaient à tous les LGM... Je crois Pippin, et Jean.

MS: Et tu t'es joint à l'organisation à partir de quel LGM?

AR: Le 2eme Montréal, en 2009, avec Louis. J'étais chez Louis, et j'ai commencé à participer à l'organisation. J'ai organisé celui de Vienne, en 2012. J'ai repris celui-là, parce que personne n'était en train de le faire.

MS: L'identité graphique du LGM, par exemple le logo, il a été fait à quel moment, dans quelles conditions?

AR: Le premier, je ne sais pas qui l'a fait. Le deuxième était fait par Louis, pour Montréal. Le troisième, celui avec le splash, c'est celui de Wroclaw, qui a été repris par Montréal en 2009. Et Bruxelles a refait le logo pour celui de 2010, qui est toujours utilisé maintenant.

C'est Alexandre Leray qui l'a fait, que je sache. Et pour moi c'est un faux logo.

MS: Un faux logo?

AR: Ce n'est pas un logo pour "Libre Graphics", c'est un logo pour "Meeting". C'est le "M" de meeting. J'aurais mieux aimé un logo pour "Libre Graphics". Mais c'est resté, et presque personne ne sait que c'est un "M".

MS: Sais-tu qui a géré l'aspect visuel global?

AR: En général c'est l'équipe locale qui s'occupe de l'aspect visuel des LGM. Dans certains cas c'est repris des LGM précédents, dans certains cas plus d'effort est fait pour faire quelque chose de nouveau.

Greyscale Press workshop in Ravenna

(publish some notes on the event)

Daniel Sciboz: discussion journée Wikipédia

11 février 2016: enregistrement de 4 minutes -
discussion dans le train Genève-Yverdon avec Daniel
Sciboz.

Nous discutons autour du projet d'éditathon
Art+Feminism, pour lequel je planifie la création
d'un article Wikipédia sur Silvie Defraoui.

Daniel réfère aux volumes Ars Helvetica. Un volume
sur l'esthétique industrielle, décrivant l'arrivée
des ordinateurs en Suisse, ce que ça a produit
comme travaux. Notamment avec une mention du
laboratoire de Nadia et Daniel Thalmann, à l'EPFL,
qui est devenu un laboratoire de modélisation 3D et
motion-capture, à l'Université de Genève, le Miralab.

C'est pas exclu qu'il y ait quelque chose sur l'art
vidéo.

Autres références:

François Bovier, qui a écrit sur un groupe de
vidéastes, à Lausanne, très actif dans les années 70.

Et l'actuel directeur du Musée Cantonal des Beaux-
Arts à Lausanne, Bernard Fibicher. Il avait fait cette
retrospective sur l'art vidéo, il y a un an ou deux. Il
doit y avoir du matériel là-bas.

On Google Art

(publish some notes on Google Streetview Art)

Livia Gnos: voyages

À Lausanne, le 22 décembre 2016, entretien avec l'artiste Livia Gnos. Récit de voyages au Japon et en Islande.

Appendix

A glossary of terms and concepts related to publishing and digital technology

Compiled by Silvio Lorusso, initiated April 30, 2014

Source: p-dpa.titanpad.com/1

Authors: Ethel Baraona, Luc, Becks, Francesca Battiato, Michael Dieter, Federico Antonini, Silvio Lorusso... and 3 unnamed authors

Appropriation (n.)

Appropriation in art is the use of pre-existing objects or images with little or no transformation applied to them. The use of appropriation has played a significant role in the history of the arts (literary, visual, musical and performing arts). In the visual arts, to appropriate means to properly adopt, borrow, recycle or sample aspects (or the entire form) of human-made visual culture. Notable in this respect are the Readymades of Marcel Duchamp.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appropriation_\(art\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appropriation_(art))

Blook (n.)

A blook is printed book that contains or is based on content from a blog.

Jarvis, Jeff. 2002. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
Blook](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blook)

Book Spam

A variety of spam that takes advantage of print-on-demand book production, which has been growing exponentially between 2006 and 2010. Similar to “content farms” on the web, spam books are mass-produced, either through algorithms or outsourced labor. Content is typically derived from the public domain, or from Wikipedia articles, under an appearance that is mimicking conventions of academic publishing (editor names sporting middle initials, stock imagery cover photos and exorbitant price tags). Using those techniques, BiblioBazaar has engineered 270'000 titles in 2009, while VDM Publishing generated 500'000 unique titles from aggregated Wikipedia content in 2011.

Another form of book spam consists in publishing copycat books, with titles that are “nearly identical” to international bestsellers – e.g., “Thirty-Five Shades of Grey” by J. D. Lyte, or “Fifty-Thousand Shades Of Grey” by S. C. Ashen.

Source: [http://ms-studio.net/notes/le-grand-
archivage/](http://ms-studio.net/notes/le-grand-archivage/)

Book Sprint

A Book Sprint brings together a group to produce a book in 3-5 days. There is no pre-production and the group is guided by a facilitator from zero to published book. The books produced are high quality content and are made available immediately at the end of the sprint via print-on-demand services and e-book formats.

The term ‘Book Sprint’ was coined by Tomas Krag and the Book Sprint method was founded by Adam Hyde. In the first sprints held under this term Tomas brought together a small group of people for a week to plan the outline for a book and then the group worked remotely on developing and editing the contents over a period of 6-9 months.

Source: <http://www.booksprints.net/about/>

(The Aesthetic of) Bookishness

“What I’m calling ‘the aesthetic of bookishness’ is a trend in novels published since 2000. It is not limited to American or even Anglophone novels, and, I will argue, it is more than just a coincidence: it is an emergent literary strategy that speaks to our cultural moment. These novels exploit the power of the print page in ways that draw attention to the book as a multimedia format, one informed by and connected to digital technologies. They define the book as an aesthetic form whose power has been purposefully employed by literature for centuries and will continue to be far into the digital age.”

Pressman, Jessica. 2009. “The Aesthetic of Bookishness in Twenty-First-Century Literature.” <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.act2080.0048.402>.

CodeX

“*Codex*, derived from the Latin *caudex* (meaning “trunk of a tree”) even happens to contain the English word *code*, which will be central to the future of reading in a variety of ways. The things we’ll be reading in the future will not only involve a lot of programming; they’ll also require readers to decode complex, multilayered experiences and

encode their own ideas as contributions in a variety of creative ways. Since standard printed books are technically codices, we propose (with significantly more trepidation) to distinguish our variant with one of those annoying midword capitals: *codeX*, to remind us that these new things involve experience, experimentation, expostulation ... you know, all those X things.”

Finn, Ed; Eschrish, Joey. “The Word *E-Book* Should Be Replaced With *CodeX*”. *Slate*. OCT. 17 2013. http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2013/10/we_need_a_new_word_for_e_book_here_s_one_idea_beyondthebook.html

Counterpublish (v.)

- 1: To make a public announcement in response to a public announcement.
- 2a: To re-disseminate to the public.
- 2b: To produce or release for distribution as a reaction.
- 2c: To reissue the work of an author, with or without permission, with high or low fidelity, for the purpose of reacting to said author or to the broader zeitgeist.

The Post-Art Poets. 2013. <http://www.postartpoets.com/counterpublish.html>

Demediation

“[...] the process by which a transmissible text or image is blocked by the obtruded fact of its own neutralized medium.”

Stewart, Garrett. "Bookwork as Demediation", *Critical Inquiry*. Spring 2010, p. 413.

Differential Text

A text "that exist(s) in different material forms, with no single version being the definitive one".

Perloff, Marjorie. "Screening The Page/Paging The Screen: Digital Poetics and The Differential Text" in Morris, Adalaide Kirby, and Thomas Swiss. 2006. *New Media Poetics Contexts, Technotexts, and Theories*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, p. 146.

Digital Esperanto

Insider language which evolves from computational communication mechanisms, often picked up as mainstream typed or even spoken language. "the 'slang of YouTube' – a digital Esperanto that emerged out of millions of users worldwide".

TRAUMAWIEN, June 2012. <http://traumawien.at/ghostwriters/>

Electronic Literature (or E-Lit)

Electronic literature, or e-lit, refers to works with important literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or networked computer. Within the broad category of electronic literature are several forms and threads of practice, some of which are:

- Hypertext fiction and poetry, on and off the Web
- Kinetic poetry presented in Flash and using other platforms

- Computer art installations which ask viewers to read them or otherwise have literary aspects
- Conversational characters, also known as chatterbots
- Interactive fiction
- Novels that take the form of emails, SMS messages, or blogs
- Poems and stories that are generated by computers, either interactively or based on parameters given at the beginning
- Collaborative writing projects that allow readers to contribute to the text of a work
- Literary performances online that develop new ways of writing

Source: <http://eliterature.org/what-is-e-lit/>

Flip-Flop (n.) The process of pushing a work of art or craft from the physical world to the digital world and back again—maybe more than once.

Sloan, Robin. March 2012. “Dancing The Flip-Flop”. <http://www.robinsloan.com/note/flip-flop/>

Grey literature

Grey literature is informally published written material (such as reports) that may be difficult to trace via conventional channels such as published journals and monographs because it is not published commercially or is not widely accessible. The identification and acquisition of grey literature poses difficulties for librarians and other information professionals for several reasons. Generally, grey literature lacks strict bibliographic control, meaning that basic information such as author, publication

date or publishing body may not be easily discerned.

Many of the problems of accessing grey literature have decreased since the late 1990s as government, professional, business and university bodies have increasingly published their reports and other official or review documents free on the World Wide Web. The impact of this trend has been greatly boosted since the early 2000s by the growth of major search engines such as Google, Yahoo! and Bing. Grey reports are thus far more easily found online than they were, and at radically lower cost, at least in the immediate aftermath of their publication.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_literature

New Aesthetics

The New Aesthetic is an artistic movement. It is sometimes described as physical versus virtual, or the tension between humans and machines. Its major visual emblems include pixelated images, Photoshop glitches, gradients, render ghosts, and, yes, animated GIFs. Data visualization, like an elaborate Venn diagram, can fall under the New Aesthetic umbrella, as can graphic information, like a Google Maps screengrab. Strategically placing marks on a human face, so a machine can't recognize it as a face, is an act of New Aestheticism. Another popular trend: Photos of people taking photos.

Source: <http://gizmodo.com/5901405/what-is-the-new-aesthetic>

Performative Publication

“[A publication in which] the mode of publication performs one of the central ideas the text itself seeks

to articulate and explore.”

Christopher Long. 2013. Source: <http://www.cplong.org/2013/07/performative-publication/>

Print on Demand

Print on demand (POD) is a printing technology and business process in which new copies of a book (or other document) are not printed until an order has been received, which means books can be printed one at a time. While build to order has been an established business model in many other industries, “print on demand” developed only after digital printing began, because it was not economical to print single copies using traditional printing technology such as letterpress and offset printing. In 2009, a million new titles were released via POD in the US, more than three times the amount of titles released through traditional publishing.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Print_on_demand

Post-Digital

“A condition in which digital technology is no longer new media; and where “new media” is no longer by definition digital.”

Cramer, Florian. 2014. Source: https://twitter.com/florian_cramer/status/474683019002130433

Publication

“not just the production of books, but the production of a public. This public, which is more than a market, is created through physical production, digital circulation, and social gathering. Together these construct a space of conversation which beckons a public into being.”

Publication Studio. Source:
<http://www.publicationstudio.biz/about/>

Privishing

Privishing (private publishing) is a recently coined term for publishing a book in such a small amount, or with such lack of marketing, advertising or sales support from the publisher, that the book effectively does not reach the public. The book, while nominally published, is almost impossible to obtain through normal channels such as bookshops, often cannot be special-ordered and will have a notable lack of support from its publisher, including refusals to reprint the title. A book that is privished may be referred to as “killed”. Depending on the motivation, privishing may constitute breach of contract, censorship, or good business practice (e.g., not printing more books than the publisher believes will sell in a reasonable length of time).

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Publishing#Privishing>

Relational Publishing

Relational publishing is preoccupied with publishing's effects, extending beyond the form of the publishing object and its attendant meanings and cultural symbolism. It is concerned with performance or use, not as the natural result of some intended functionality but rather in the realm of behavior and uncontrollable consequences.

Source: TRAUMAWIEN, February 2014.
<http://traumawien.at/stuff/relationalpub>

Robopoetics

“A condition whereby machines write literature

meant to be read by other machines, bypassing a human readership entirely.”

Kenneth Goldsmith paraphrasing Christian Bök in Goldsmith, Kenneth. 2011. *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bök, Christian. “The Piecemeal Bard Is Deconstructed: Notes Toward a Potential Robopoetics,” Object 10: Cyberpoetics (2002), http://ubu.com/papers/object/03_bok.pdf; accessed June 19, 2009.

Technotext

“Literary works that strengthen, foreground, and thematize the connections between themselves as material artifacts and the imaginative realm of verbal/semiotic signifiers they instantiate open a window on the larger connections that unite literature as a verbal art to its material forms.”

Hayles, Katherine N. 2002. *Writing Machines*. Mediawork Pamphlet. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, p. 26.

Notes

Notes

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Greyscale Press

