Let's take a journey together, a journey about how text can be glitched, not in the way as "scripts", but as the forms that can communicate meaning between humans and the digital. By scripts, I mean the format that is compliable and executable by computational machines. An alternative expression is that forms such as PNG and MP3 files are not compliable and executable, but solely as storable data, without the ability to compute.

Hopefully, after this journey and the experiments we gonna do, you will have a better picture of what I'm proposing and problematizing.

Let's start with this python file, extract.py

A constrictive critique

The Illusion of PNG Glitch

UCNV is a programmer and artist based in Tokyo. He develops programs to damage images and movies, and creates visual works and gives performances with them.

https://ucnv.github.io/pnglitch/, this is the artwork I'm gonna discuss today.

Approaching "The Art of PNG Glitch", the first thing that came to me is the digital image made of orthogonal shapes and colors, what we might call glitches. It happened and is happening in digital formats, where images are made of square pixels. As an accident of coding or algorithm, glitches occur easier than ever before.

Here, the artist uses algorithms as creative tools to generate glitch art. As a form of artwork, "Glitch" has its significance and deserves respect and appreciation in many ways. However, this work catches me fairly quickly and strongly, for it soonly shows its issue, an essential one. What is with this work? I think the artist failed to dig deeper into the technology itself, but only treat it as an apparatus, and through tweaking the mechanism of the apparatus to make images glitched. Then, what is glitched? What does it mean? It is already a cliché when we think of glitch art, many of us can come up with an impression of that art form fairly easily.

There is no such thing as PNG Glitch! Or put in an alternative way, PNG images are already glitched. It might be absurd to say so, however, if you agree with what computationally PNG files mean, this format is already coded with algorithms, and there's no fundamental difference with more coding processes added. After I read through its method, I realize, this work is not treating PNG files as images that humans can perceive visually, rather, it is treating PNG files purely as data, the data can be filtered, compressed, coded, decoded, and recoded with algorithms. If the manipulation of data can produce

glitches, we might also agree that PNG files per se, in some way, already are glitches, they are just not that kind of glitches in humans' perception. Therefore, in the epistemology sense, it might not too hard to see a normal PNG file, the one without those tweaking that the artist did here, already is glitched.

The purpose of any algorithms that PNG files used is to cheat, to make people believe that's the "raw" image. It can be argued what is raw? Are there images that really are "raw"? This could be another huge topic to dig into.

Here, I would like to focus on the missing part, or in a computational sense, the missing data. What's the missing part? Compare to the raw image, a PNG file has a smaller size, however, consider using a lossless compressing algorithm, a person barely can tell the difference between the so-called raw image and the compressed PNG image. So what happened to that missing part? A set of data gone, the image could remain the same. One might argue, there are resolution differences, but how this resolution difference influences humans' interpretation and the meaning of one image?

Let's take a picture of a wine bottle. What is this image, what does it stand for, does it has meanings, if so, what are they? One would say it is a shape, a certain shape, that stands for a wine bottle, and it tells emotions and feelings, human desires, and the madness, the craziness that comes with it. Interpretations could differ. However, it is not through algorithms and codings. With or without algorithmic compression, would any interpretations occur and change?

Merging visuality and literacy, and making meaning

What if we add text on the image, on the object, the shape, the form in that image. The overlapping of text and image. Here, I would like to introduce Chinese character writing, which is text and image at the same time. Might this open a new perspective for us to think about computation, text, and meaning-making?

On the Cosmotechnical Nature of Writing

https://youtu.be/qm7H1EwYSRg

https://miro.com/welcomeonboard/MVVjT3QyV1ZHUVFaVFA2M3cwZWp2dEFLRHJpcE16YktBTUxqcHJ1UVpqYU5FYUM5N1VuRW5IZGdHQWIzR01taHwzMDc0NDU3MzQ5MTE1NDIwMDMy?invite_link_id=134552817839