<http://www.creativeapplications.net/arduino-2/internet-of-shrimps-ironic-and-playful-look-at-iot/>

I seriously love this. I think it’s actually really funny – Ralph Kistler created this weird idea for a ‘smart’ home integrated with a universal remote-like network. The result is a bunch of ideas that seem good in theory – delivering food on command, playing music, turning on and off lights vocally… However, the execution is all off. All of the different functions are goofy and Wes Anderson-y, for lack of a better phrase. I think the way Kistler plays off the notion of technology and the analog world is really interesting. We live in a world that worships the sleekest and most efficient versions of things. Just look at phones, buildings, and cars. This piece gets its strength from its ironic approach to this concept. Everything is clunky and inefficient. It’s super awkward and the aesthetics clash throughout. I think that a deeper look at this piece makes me think about society and how our preferences shape our products.

<http://www.creativeapplications.net/arduino-2/ad-inifitum/>

I like how when people use physical computing artistically, the technology very often has a personality of sorts. Boston Dynamics, for example, builds robots whose movements certainly mimic those of reality – the robotic movement is almost cute and innocent. This piece, Ad Infinitum by Pedro Lopes, is a machine that can trap a human’s arm and channel an electric pulse from the human to keep the machine running (and the parasitic host trapped). The machine is described as a parasite because it lives off the energy of the human host and is harmful (by trapping its host). This concept is very interesting – if machines can mimic the behavior of humans or other types of beings (like dogs, birds, etc), then this is an exploration of a robotic parasite. Our whole world is beginning to integrate digital into the analog world, and that comes with some scary questions about the role of computing moving into a continually advancing technological age.

The piece also humorously plays off the idea of ‘human energy.’ Although energy is an indefinite term for humans – it is affected by physical elasticity, mood, emotion, and is unquantifiable. However, the machine uses the electric imbalance in humans to drive its operator. This is pretty cool and the end result is a kinda funny, kinda terrifying look at parasitic relationships and different iterations of digital media in a human-compatible format.