

A somewhat depressing realisation

Not sure if you're aware of this but for the past few months or so I've been curating a list of quirky personal websites discoverable on a tiny little website called ~~the forest~~. *check out later*

And also—and this you probably are aware of—I've been thinking about personal websites and the web a lot lately. It just so happened that the other day these two facts combined to make me realise something that was probably just hidden in plain sight.

This "fight" I'm trying to fight here, to push people away from social media and go back to own their little corners of the web is already over. I had this sudden realisation the other day. I didn't measure it precisely but I'd say 80% of the links to personal sites I'm getting on the forest are from people who are involved with tech at some level. The vast majority of them are developers.

the takeover of SNS & the death of individuality

The only people who are still caring about an independent web are the people who have the tech skills to do something about it. But they're obviously a tiny minority. And they probably live in a tech bubble. The reality of this fight is that the vast majority of people fundamentally don't care.

Sure, some of them can probably be convinced to try run their own website, but they're just a tiny percentage. For everyone else, it's just not important to them. And this is not something that's unique about the web. It's the same story in every medium. The majority of people don't spend their time watching niche and unique movies, they watch Hollywood blockbusters. They don't play niche and quirky games made by solo developers, they play triple A titles.

an unfortunate truth / remove yourself from elitism

★ Personal sites are not going to "come back" because they never "went away" to begin with. At one point they were the only available tool and that's why they were everywhere. But at that time the web was also dominated by tech oriented people and those same people still have personal websites to this day. They've simply become a minority. Today's web is filled with people who are not tech savvy—or nerds—and they are content to use social media platforms. They never cared about having a

personal site. It was never a thing for them.

So I think I finally found the answer to my question about what can I do to help people go back to personal sites: nothing.

Since I'm trying to be a good friend I have to add this extra bit. It's from Carl and he'd be really upset if I publish this post without also including his comment on the whole matter:

Personal sites aren't a quest for web domination. The indie web is an expression of digital freedom. They don't need to be mainstream, they don't need to be works of art. They just need to be allowed to exist, even in the outer reaches of the web! There is a sad reality, yes, BUT, so fucking what? Let the indie web exist and if anyone wants help with a digital garden landscape that is a personal site, you are here to help where you can. This isn't about winning or losing. It's about having the option to create something of your own if you are bothered. Most aren't, sure. But some are, and those people should be celebrated which is why The Forest exists.

Where do you go from here?

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