

** READ ME FIRST **

We're at the last of the planned mailers for the Protocol Kit—and it's the end of the beginning.

In this mailer you'll find a big final bunch of goodies. You might find that your Kit binder getting a bit overstuffed when you get these new inserts in. A good problem to have! In this final mailer we're including a couple of spine stickers for you to make additional binders. In a way, these stickers are the highlight of this mailer. Around here we play what James Carse called an infinite game. Our goal is not to win, but to continue playing the game. More on that in a minute, but first the module preview!

Continuing to play is in a way the theme of this final mailer. When a game converges towards a natural conclusion, you enter a death-and-resurrection liminal passage. In her essay, "Good Death,"⁰¹ Sarah Friend explores the protocols of death, both physical and virtual, and examines what it has meant to die across time and cultures and what it might mean in the future. Turns out, it isn't as simple as you might think. And as the virtual world gets more artificially intelligent, embodied, and complex, the death of our online avatars, bots, and the worlds they inhabit all become matters for creative construction and yes, protocolization. Accompanying the essay is Sarah's beautiful and provocative set of design fictions, "The Order of Protocolological Death,"⁰² exploring a fictional monastic order devoted to stewarding the death processes of worlds.

In the second anchor essay, "The Protocol System Experience,"⁰³ Angela Walch explores the lifecycle of participation in protocols and lays out a fascinating universes of archetypes and roles played by the human moving parts of protocols, and how their journey through protocol spaces has a life-and-death logic of its own.

In the third anchor essay for this module, "Retrofitting the Web,"⁰⁴ Dorian Taylor explains the reasoning and philosophy behind Intertwingler, a web information architecture for dense hypermedia. Part of the rationale is to manage bitrot and other digital death-and-decay phenomena. How does information live and die online? And how can you architect things to make the lifecycle of information more graceful? Dorian points out one potential direction to explore.

Accompanying these three anchor essays, we have several other pieces that shed light on various aspects of death and resurrection.

In "The Death and the Death of Orkut,"⁰⁵ Alice Noujaim examines the death of the social network Orkut and its aftermath for participants. In "The Killswitch Effect,"⁰⁶ Eric Alston, Seth Killian, and Garette David, we have a detailed exploration of the dynamics of protocols that feature killswitches and the tradeoffs they induce for system designers. In "The Swarm Effect: China's 2022 Covid Protests,"⁰⁷ by an anonymous Summer of Protocols contributor, we have an account of the titular protests through the lens of Rafael Fernandez's theories of protocols and swarms (see "The

01 summerofprotocols.com/research/good-death

02 summerofprotocols.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Founding-Memorabilia-from-the-Order-of-Protocolological-Death.pdf

03 summerofprotocols.com/research/the-protocol-system-experience

04 summerofprotocols.com/research/retrofitting-the-web

05 summerofprotocols.com/research/death-and-the-death-of-orkut

06 summerofprotocols.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Killswitch-Protocols.pdf

07 summerofprotocols.com/research/the-swarm-effect

“Swarm and the Formation” “Welcome to the Swarm”⁰⁸ from Module 4), and how they transformed popular political movements. Trent Van Epps’ essay on enclosure movements in software, “Capital and Enclosure in Software Commons: Linux & Ethereum,”⁰⁹ rounds out this collection of writings on what we might call institutional death and resurrection dynamics.

Besides the essays, we also have our final set of fun goodies—the final patterns from Drew Austin’s collection of urban protocol patterns, the final missives from the New Time Machines Working Group, and the last of the explainers of protocol foundations from Tim Beiko and Mario Havel.

With these final items, you will have a nice full binder on your bookshelf or coffee table. As you contemplate it, we suggest you think of this kit as a true kit, as in something you might bring along on a journey or use to start a construction project. It might look like a bunch of paper, but try to look at it as though it were a backpack or a Lego kit.

The questions to ask are: where might you go and what might you build?

We hope the binder spine stickers we’ve included inspire you to grab more 3-ring binders from somewhere—we recommend ghoulishly cannibalizing binders from dead projects, but buy new binders if you like. Start filling them with your own provisions for whatever mission you take on.

To get you started, the Summer of Protocols website is now beginning its pivot towards being a persistent and growing archive for protocolish stuff. The 2024 cohort research outputs will be available there starting in a few weeks and, of course, our forum¹⁰ is a place where you might find papers, essays, and artifacts being shared by the community. Here at the Summer of Protocols, we try hard not to fall prey to the Not Invented Here syndrome and we highly encourage you to fill your binder(s) with supplemental materials you find elsewhere. And share your finds with the rest of us! So log on to the forum, share your finds, and share your ideas for things to do and places to go. The Fellowship of the Kit is now ready to go adventuring.

But wait, there’s more! By the time this module lands in your hands, we should be in the midst of the Protocol Symposium: a two-week virtual festival of protocols, September 17-29, anchored by seminars about the 2024 research projects, sessions looking forward to 2025 and beyond, and capped off with an unconference. We highly encourage you to join us and take the opportunity to organize unconference sessions. Check summerofprotocols.com¹¹ for more details.

And finally, if you plan on attending the Edge Lanna¹² popup city in October or Devcon,¹³ the flagship conference of the Ethereum ecosystem, in November, look out for us. The Summer of Protocols gang will be there doing lots of fun stuff.

We hope you’ve had fun assembling this kit and getting oriented in the world of protocols over the past 6 months or so. Here’s to our future adventures together!

08 summerofprotocols.com/research/welcome-to-the-swarm

09 summerofprotocols.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Capital-Enclosure-for-Software-Commons-Trent-Van-Epps.pdf

10 forum.summerofprotocols.com

11 www.summerofprotocols.com

12 www.edgacity.live/lanna

13 devcon.org