

# Chapter 1

A journey from the hands-on freedom of early web and clunky mobile magic to today's opaque, corporate-run platforms and design defaults that stifle creativity, underscoring our lost agency in a web we once built.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: THE WEB WE LOST

Marshal McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message*, 1964

Reflecting on my own entry into digital culture, I am reminded of the early, almost awkward intimacy of technology in early 2000s. I watched as mobile phones rose—not as sleek objects of desire, but as clunky and unpredictable devices. These early phones, for all their quirks, facilitated new forms of connection and seemed to shrink distances, conjuring McLuhan’s idea of a “global village” (McLuhan, 1964). I can vividly recall the sense of wonder the first time I loaded a webpage on a tiny Nokia screen: glitchy, barely legible, but magical in its promise. The experience was imperfect, but it invited exploration. The internet of this era felt radically open, unfinished, and full of potential.



Kyle Chayka, *GIZMODO The Great Web 1.0 Revival*, 2014

Although I wasn’t born yet to participate in the so-called “free web” of the mid-1990s, I nevertheless encountered its traces: hand-coded personal sites, niche forums, and scattered remains of a DIY internet that carried an unmistakable sense of intimacy and slowness. There was a palpable feeling that one could still carve out a digital identity without being absorbed into the logic of centralized platforms. As Chayka (2014) observes in his meditation on Web 1.0, this period was marked by a quieter, safer, and more personal internet. The prevailing dream was that digital space might be a place for self-authorship — a hope that now feels distant.

↑ found image of Nokia I used to own  
→ [www.heavensgate.com](http://www.heavensgate.com)

## Example of a Web 1.0 website that's still maintained

**RED ALERT -**  
**HALE-BOPP Brings Closure to:**

**HEAVEN'S**

*As was promised -- the keys to Heaven's Gate are here again in 77 and 10, (the UFO Two) as they were in Jesus and His Father 2000 yrs. ago.*

Whether Hale-Bopp has a "companion" or not is irrelevant from our perspective. However, its arrival is joyously very significant to us at "Heaven's Gate." The joy is that our Older Member in the Evolutionary Level Above Human (the "Kingdom of Heaven") has made it clear to us that Hale-Bopp's approach is the "marker" we've been waiting for -- the time for the arrival of the spacecraft from the Level Above Human to take us home to "Their World" -- in the literal Heavens. Our 22 years of classroom here on planet Earth is finally coming to conclusion -- "graduation" from the Human Evolutionary Level. We are happily prepared to leave "this world" and go with TT's crew.

If you study the material on this website you will hopefully understand our joy and what our purpose here on Earth has been. You may even find your "boarding pass" to leave with us during this brief "window."

We are so very thankful that we have been recipients of this opportunity to prepare for membership in Their Kingdom, and to experience Their boundless Caring and Nurturing.

**Keys or Bookmarks to Vital Information  
on Our Website**

- [Do's Intro: Our Purpose -- The Simple Bottom Line](#) (an excerpt from our book HEAVEN'S GATE -- see below)
- [Statement by an E.T. Presently Incarnate](#) (excerpt from our book)
- [Overview of Present Mission](#) (excerpt from our book, a student paper)
- [Last Chance To Advance Beyond Human](#) (excerpt from our book)
- [To Access Our Book Online in its Entirety:](#)  
[How and When HEAVEN'S GATE May Be Entered](#)
- [Transcripts of Two Recent Videos](#)
- [Our Position Against Suicide](#)
- [How a Member of the Kingdom of Heaven Might Appear](#)
- [Earth Exit Statements by Students](#)
- [Exit Press Release:](#)  
["Away Team" Returns to Level Above Human](#)

**To Order a Hard Copy of Our Book**

The following materials are available through TELAH Services:

and

essays

club

the

Internet  
voice  
noise

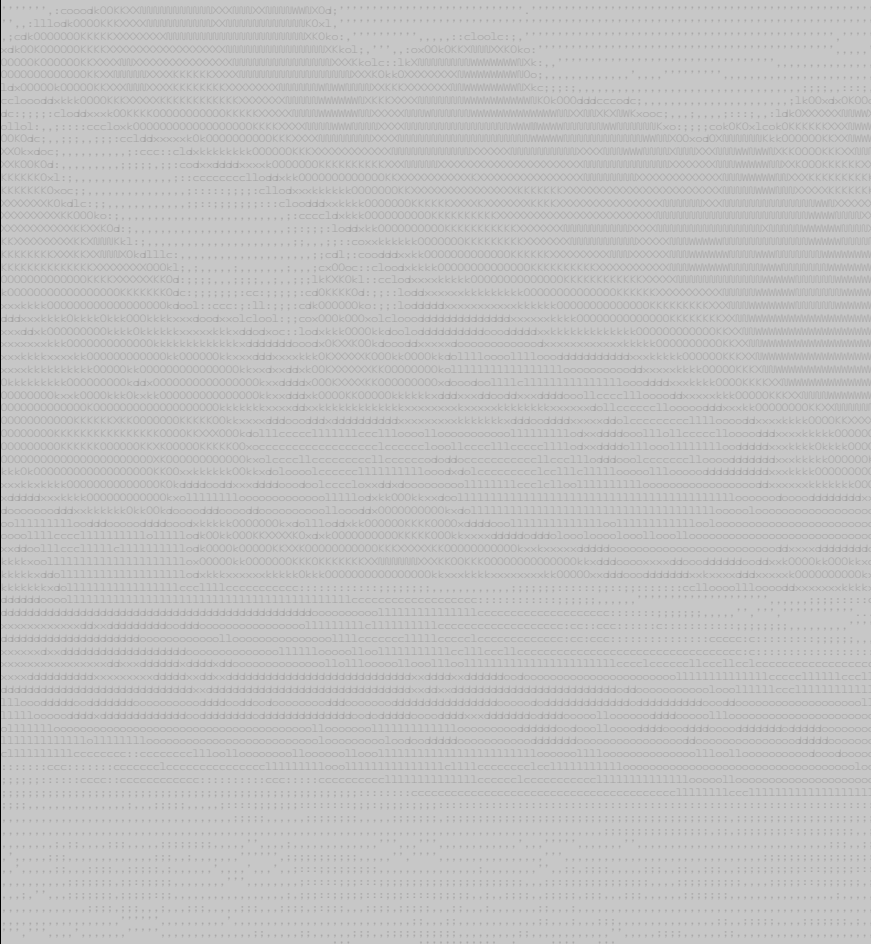
↑ Hito Steyerl, quote from *Too Much World Is the Internet Dead?*, 2013

# PROBLEMS OF THE CURRENT DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

The landscape today could hardly be more different. Technology, once promising and participatory, now often feels remote and controlling. The contemporary internet is defined by what Powers (2011) call **digital maximalism** : an environment engineered for relentless consumption, not for creative exploration. Algorithms govern our feeds, shaping experience and taste, quietly relegating users to the role of spectators. Hito Steyerl (2013) describes the modern web as “sanitised, surveilled, and monopolized”—a system policed by corporations for the purposes of copyright, conformity,

Hito Steyerl, Too Much World, Is the Internet Dead?, 2013

William Powers, Hamlet's BlackBerry, 2011

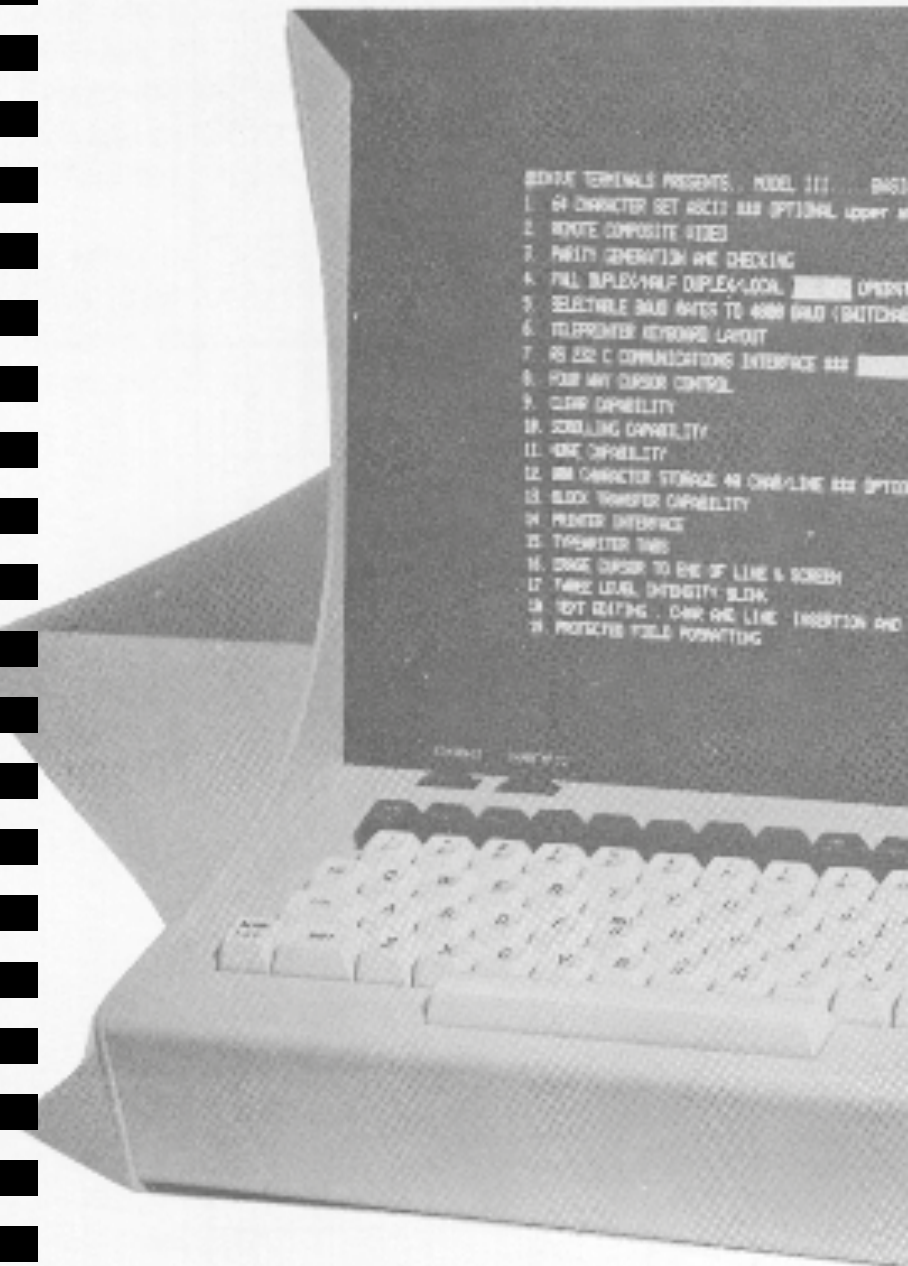


and profit. Chayka (2014) expands on this, suggesting that platforms now encourage users to act as curators, but only within pre-filtered, limited options. The promise of agency is often an illusion; choice is a performance enacted within tightly drawn boundaries.

This landscape of monopolistic platforms, ever-present surveillance, and the manufacture of disinformation produces a form of digital exhaustion. The simple act of “being online” is less joyful and less present. Tolentino (2019) points to the internet’s ability to “distend our sense of identity,” to foster the overvaluation of opinion, and ultimately to “destroy our sense of scale.” In this way, what was once a space of possibility has become, for many, a source of confusion, anxiety, and fatigue.

Kyle Chayka, GIZMODO, *The Great Web 1.0 Revival*, 2014





SEXTANT TERMINALS PRESENTS... MODEL 111... BASIC

1. 64 CHARACTER SET ASCII AND OPTIONAL upper m
2. MONITOR COMPOSITE VIDEO
3. PARITY GENERATION AND CHECKING
4. FULL DUPLEX/HALF DUPLEX/LOCAL ☐ OPERATE
5. SELECTABLE BAUD RATES TO 4000 BAUD (SWITCHES)
6. TELEPRINTER KEYBOARD LAYOUT
7. RS 232 C COMMUNICATIONS INTERFACE AND ☐
8. FOUR WAY CURSOR CONTROL
9. CLEAR CAPABILITY
10. SCROLLING CAPABILITY
11. HOME CAPABILITY
12. 800 CHARACTER STORAGE 40 CHAR/LINE AND OPTIO
13. BLOCK TRANSFER CAPABILITY
14. PRINTER INTERFACE
15. TYPEWRITER TABS
16. CRASH CURSOR TO END OF LINE & SCREEN
17. THREE LEVEL INTENSITY BLINK
18. TEXT EDITING... CHAR AND LINE INSERTION AND
19. PROTECTIVE FIELD POINTING

“oN-Line System” (NLS)

C SPECIFICATIONS  
and lower case display

TON  
(FILE)

WAL IN CHAIR/LINE 10

COLLETON



Power  
Switch

Invisibility

Mode  
Select

## THE NOTION OF INVISIBLE TECHNOLOGY AND THE INVISIBLE USER

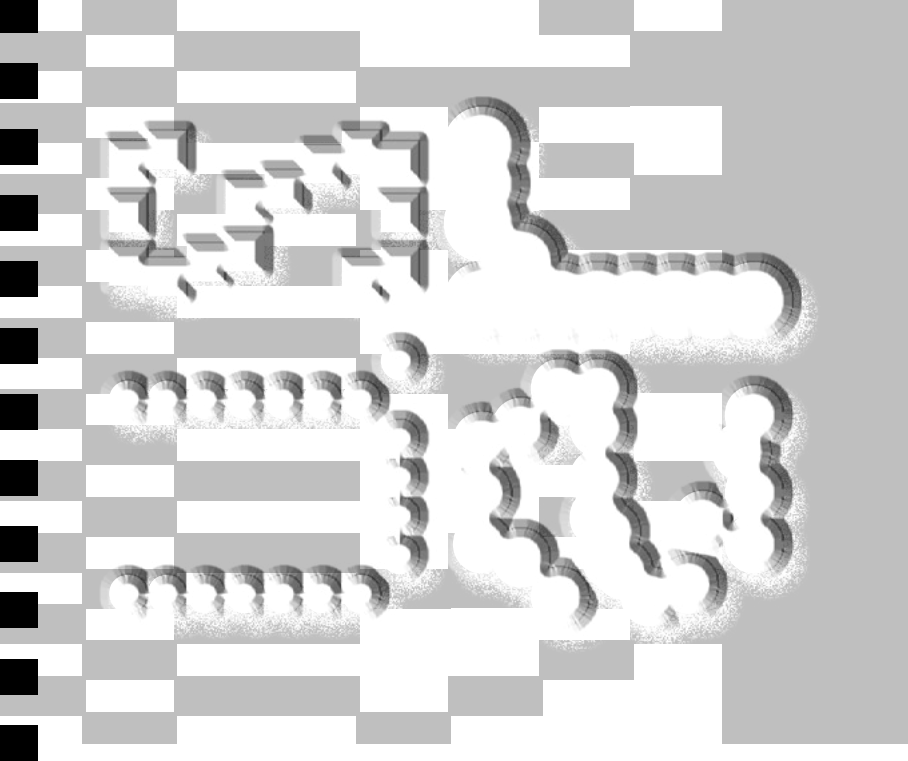
The alienation of users from their tools did not occur all at once. Early computing, with its physical, clunky machinery, required a deep, almost bodily engagement; programming was a process of direct confrontation with the limits of hardware, keeping the human “close to the metal” (Norton, 2019). This changed dramatically with Douglas Engelbart’s invention of the computer mouse in 1968, as part of his visionary “oN-Line System” (NLS). The mouse created a new kind of intimacy with machines, transforming the computer into an extension of the user’s body. Yet, paradoxically, this innovation also marked the beginning of a gradual distancing: as interactions became smoother and more abstract, the workings of technology became increasingly hidden (Real Life, 2020).

Emma R. Norton, *Close to the Metal*, 2019

Don Norman, “Why Interfaces Don’t Work”, in: Brenda Laurel (Ed.), *The Art of Human-Computer Interface Design*, 1990

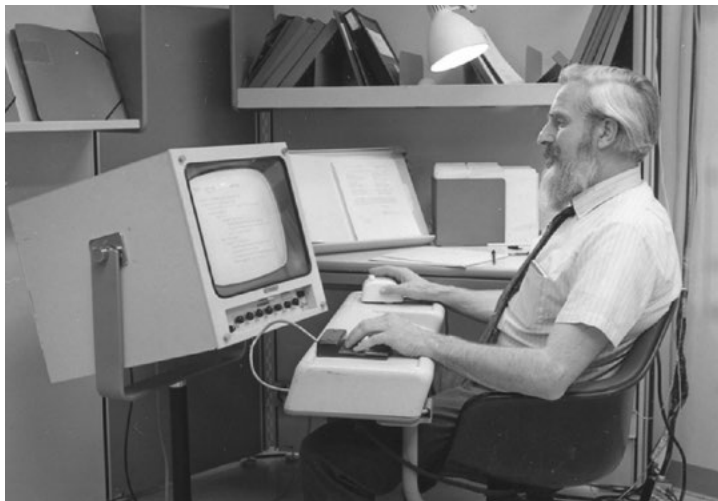
Emma R. Norton, *Close to the Metal*, 2019

Olivia Lalib, *Turing Complete User*, 2012



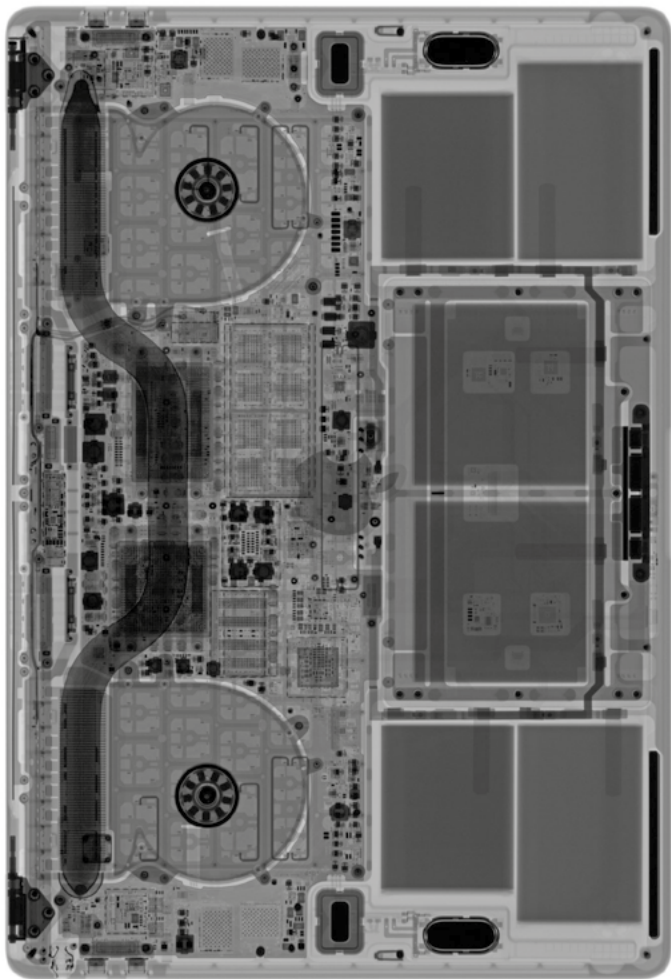
This concept of “invisible computing” was championed by Don Norman, who in his influential essay *Why Interfaces Don't Work* (1990) proposed that, “The real problem with the interface is that it is an interface. The computer of the future should be invisible!” (Norman, 1990). The tech industry quickly adopted this principle. Apple, for example, declared in a 2012 campaign that “*Technology is best when invisible.*” While this promise of seamlessness might seem elegant, it also detaches users from the systems they rely on, making questioning and understanding almost impossible. As Brenda Laurel famously remarked, computers became “*doors without doorknobs*”—perfectly smooth, yet fundamentally inaccessible (Laurel, cited in Lialina, 2015).

Olia Lialina identifies this as a core reason for the transition from interface design to what is now called experience design. The aim is not simply to make technology easy to use, but to erase awareness of technology altogether—leaving only the user's emotions, goals, and tasks. The price of this comfort, however, is a deep alienation: users become not just operators, but invisible presences within systems they can no longer interrogate or change.



# Invisible Technology

[01]



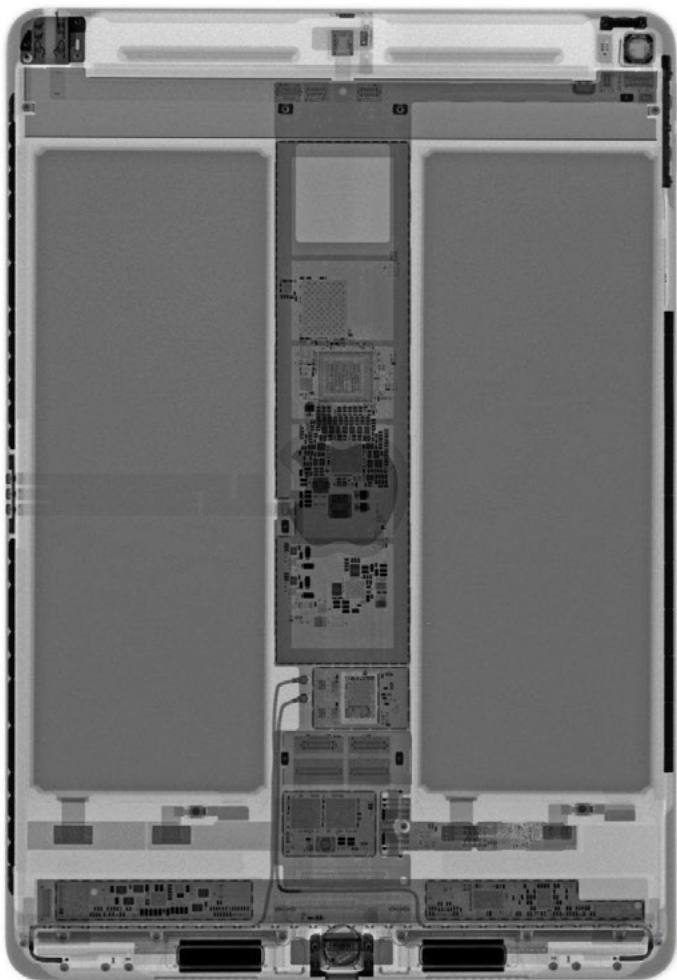
[02]



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