



Internet & WWW
Consequences
@
Fine Art

Mamta B. Herland

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Abstract

In *Being Digital*, published in 1995, Nicolas Negroponte states that ‘the global nature of digital world will increasingly erode former and smaller demarcation’. As in all other area of life, this has also come true for the art world with the arrival of Internet and WWW now posing numerous challenges to the conventional concept of art, art institutions and art market. The fast evolving digital technology and the ability to create collaborative and interactive art has further blurred the definition of art, the role of art, the concept of originality, copyright and ownership questioning acceptance in the art world.

The subject of Fine Art and digital technology, Internet and WWW is too extensive to be fully covered within a short MA essay. Selected issues are therefore discussed, with main focus on interactive art presented on the Internet, consequences for art institutions and the art market. For those interested in the evolution of Internet and the World Wide Web, additional art related information is available in the Appendix.

A brief background is presented in the introduction. Chapter 2 discusses the character of art created by digital technology, Internet, and World Wide Web by presenting different works of art often developed within the alliance of art, science and technology.

The context of digital art and art theory is discussed in Chapter 3 referring to the 20th century modernist theories and movements.

Digital art and art on the Internet has always been in the tension between the philosophy of the free information space and proximity to a commercial context. The Internet and WWW have challenged the present art market by questioning the concept of 'scarcity' and 'market values' as discussed in chapter 3.

Global conglomerates have commercialised the Internet which up till 1995 had promised a new era of democracy and freedom in human communication.

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Issues regarding art institutions are briefly discussed in Chapter 5 as they are challenged with a new role involving global presentation and communication, information gathering, online exhibitions, virtual curatorship and preservation of unstable object with interactive viewers participation.

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Winchester, April 2004

Mamta B. Herland

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Introduction

The information age is upon us, a paradigm with consequences compared to the Industrial Revolution. Information seems to replace energy as the basis for economic life in post-industrial societies, as land and agriculture products were replaced by energy in the Industrial Revolution. Internet and WWW depends on effective telecommunication networks not available for a large part of the worlds population, but initiate rapid change when introduced.¹

Both the expression theory and the cognitive theory² of art hold that art communicates, feelings and emotions, thoughts and ideas. Internet and the World Wide Web is the fastest growing communication medium in the world today seen as a communication revolution. Space and time are colapsed and individuals have the ability to interactive, multimedia communications across the Globe.

'Internet' is about 35 years old, the first experimental network was created in 1969³, but the full advantage to the public and the tremendous growth came, however, with the introduction of the World Wide Web in 1994. Already in 1996 there were around 40 million users on the Internet, and nearly 20 million of them had access to the WWW⁴. During the last ten years almost everyone in the economic advanced nations, is on the

¹ Another dilemma is using billions of dollars constructing 'superhighways of information' while 1,4 billion people have no fresh water to drink.

² Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), 'What is Art?' (1896), John Dewey (1859-1952) 'Art as Experience' (1934). www.utm.edu/research/iep/d/dewey.htm and Arthur Danto (1948-), 'The Art World' (1964), www.columbia.edu/cu/philosophy/Faculty/facultypages/arthurdanto.html

³ APRANET, the predessor of Internet, was originally developed for the United States Department of Defence

⁴ Shiva, V.A. 'Arts and the Internet. A Guide to the Recolution', p 17

net; government agencies, universities, artists, museums, small companies and global conglomerates as well as private citizens.

Predecessors of today's digital installations were first exhibited in the 1960s, like Michael A. Noll⁵ creating some of the earliest computer-generated images, among them *Gaussian Quadratic* (1963). The works of John Whitney, Charles Csuri and Vera Molnar remain influential today for their investigations of the computer-generated transformations of visuals through mathematical functions. In 1968, the exhibition 'Cybernetic Serendipity' at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London presented works which anticipated many of the important characteristics of the medium today⁶.

Digital technology has revolutionised the way art is created and experienced. Not only have traditional forms of art such as printing, painting, photography and sculpture been transformed by digital techniques and media, but entirely new forms of art such as net art, software art and digital installations have emerged. Some of the vital themes raised by this development are viewer interaction, artificial life and telepresence with multiple identities and personalities. Issues regarding sales and collections, presentation and preservation of digital art are also hotly debated.

⁵ Michael A Noll was a researcher at Bell Laboratories in New Jersey

⁶ Much of the stimulating debate about Internet art and online culture can be found on nettime (www.nettime.org) and Rhizome (<http://rhizome.org>). Interesting sites include ISEA, Inter-Society for Electronic Art (www.isea-web.org), SIGGRAPH (<http://www.siggraph.org/>) and Ars Electronica (www.aec.at/en/index.asp).

Paul Valéry⁷ predicted, in his essay 'The conquest of Ubiquity' that the near future would see the reception of artworks transmitted from afar by electricity. If we did not know this was written in 1928, it could be describing contemporary telematic art.

By integrating written, oral and audio-visual human communication, the character of the communication changes fundamentally, and thereby our cultures with systems of interaction, beliefs and codes.

Even though some of the concepts explored in digital arts date back almost a century, to understand WWW and Internet art requires knowledge of the environment it inhabits.⁸

Digital Internet Art

Digital art⁹ has developed based on an alliance between art, technology and science, and the collaboration with Universities began already in the 1960s. Nicholas Negroponte¹⁰ declared that the goal was to combine the visual capabilities of film with computer processing. The Internet, WWW and digitalisation provides new conditions for artistic creation, practice, distribution and perception. Those who master the new technology

⁷ Paul Valéry, 1871-1945

⁸ More information about Internet, World Wide Web and art, the background and history is available in the Appendix.

⁹ Digital art defies easy categorisation and the terminology is at times confusing. Digital images, Software art, browser art, net.art, and cyber art are examples of categories of digital art having their own characteristics.

¹⁰ Nicholas Negroponte founded in 1967 the Architecture Group at MIT which developed into the MediaLab.

are enthusiastic, those who don't, argues that art 'generated' by a computer cannot be defined as Fine Art.



Figure 1: *Dimension*, Mamta B. Herland, 2003

Digital technology has given artists possibilities to synthesise traditional art forms and have brought the art of collage to a much higher level than it has ever been possible. An image can be completely transformed in multiply ways and re-mixed with different visually interactive layers. Works can be copied without any decrease in quality. Digital media and traditional methods also frequently merges into new unities¹¹. Fine art, music, dance, animation, film, video and robotics can be synthesised, for the first time giving the artist a possibility to create art that includes all these elements. Art presented at Internet Web sites have a potential audience world-wide, and works created by traditional methods are presented side-by-side with reproductions of such works.¹² Digital works can be presented either as a print or on a high-resolution flat wall-

¹¹ Exemplified by e.g. Carl Fudge, *Rhapsody Spray* series (2000).

¹² Such reproductions are generally called Giclée, see Mamta B. Herland 'The Impact of Giclée. A shift towards digital print in future art' available at www.MamtaArt.com

mounted screen¹³, as 3-D works, video, animation or any synthesis of known art forms. To some artists and art institutions this fast, seemingly uncontrollable and partly unregulated development, is frightening as well as it questions the role and values in art. Values regarding originality, authenticity and uniqueness, that have been cherished for hundred of years, are not applicable to digital art. However, the technology is here to stay and it won't go away even if art communities keeps ignoring it.

Internet has allowed participation and collaboration between geographically dispersed individuals. Among the best known is Douglas Davis's *The World's First Collaborative Sentence* (1994) where thousands of people have made contributions. *Exploding Cell* was created in 1996 by MoMA with artist Peter Halley, and in *Generation/Mutation* artists world-wide were invited to choose an image, download it to their own computer, modify and return it. Artists in China and Europe are collaborating in *Art for the People* convened by Marketforces in London.¹⁴ Such cultural exchange is important, not only as new possibilities for artists, but as a mean for broader understanding between people and cultures which seems to be more and more critical for a peaceful world.

¹³ Bill Gates has presumably installed flat high-resolution digital screens in his house allowing digital art to be shown and altered as wanted, possibly rented from a company like Corbis, having the digital copyright and storing the art on their own server.

¹⁴*Exploding Cell* is located at www.moma.org/onlineprojects/halley, *Generation/Mutation* ('H-Ray' Heine) at www.digitalsouls.com and *Art for the People* at www.marketforces.org.

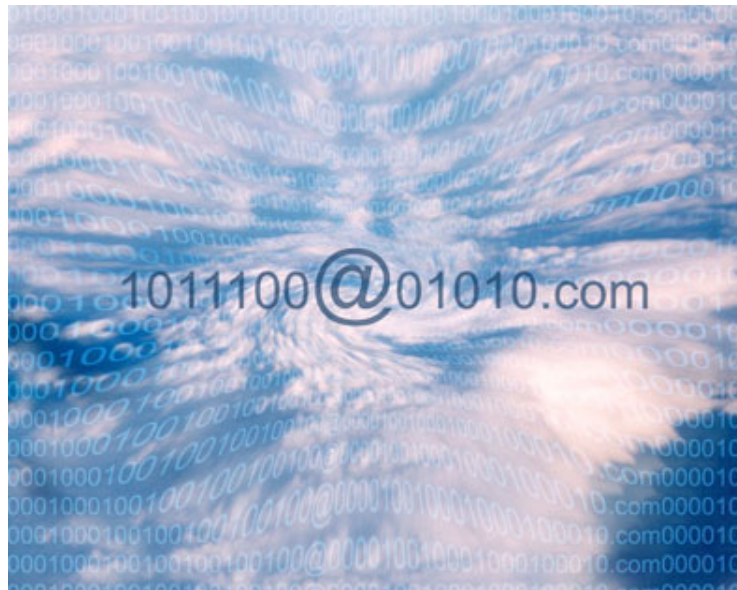


Figure 2: *Bi Connected*, Mamta B. Herland, 2004

The introduction of networked telecommunication have, however, introduced an art totally different from anything experienced before. Roy Ascott has defined Telematics¹⁵ as 'computer-mediated communications networking between geographically dispersed individuals and institutions...and between the human mind and artificial systems of intelligence and perception'. Telematic emphasises the process of artistic creation and the systematic relationship between artist, network and viewer¹⁶. The idea of art as a system capable of transforming behaviour and consciousness was fundamental to Ascott. To achieve this the art have to be interactive¹⁷, allowing the audience to be

¹⁵ Ascott, Roy. *Telematic Embrace*, p 1 (Edited and introduction by Shanken, Edward A.). Roy Ascott is an artist, Telematics theorist and founder director of CaiiA, CaiiA-STAR and 'Planetary Collegium', www.planetary-collegium.net

¹⁶ Even though the term 'viewer' somehow indicate inactivity, the term is used also for the active user, observer or participant since the term is well established in art.

¹⁷ The notions of interaction in art were also explored by artists such as Marchel Duchamp and Man Ray with their *Rotary Glass Plates (Precision Optics)* (1920) inviting users to turn on the apparatus to see the effect unfold.

actively engaged. Control over content, context and time can be shifted to the viewer through interaction, thereby questioning the distinction between artist and participant.

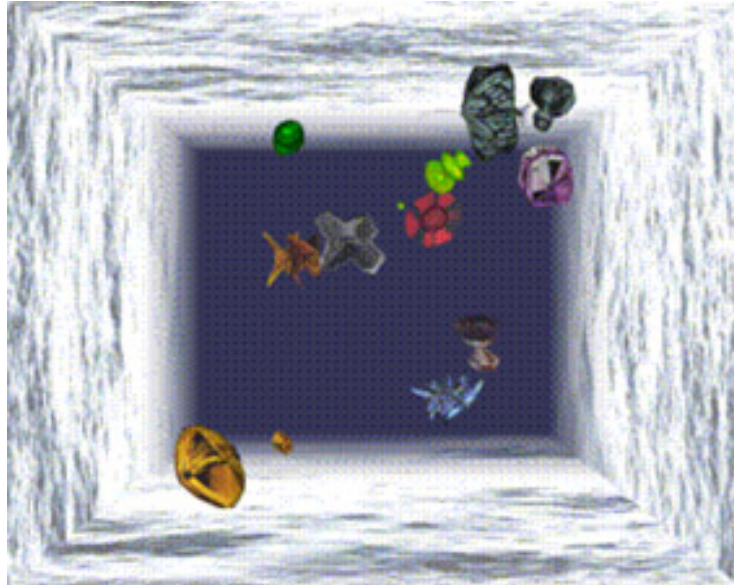


Figure 3: *A-Volve*, Christia Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau, 1994

Internet also provides for a field of interaction between human and artificial intelligence. Telematic art therefore challenge the traditional notions of realism by facilitating the creation of alternative or simulated forms of reality, or the 'hypereal'. In the early 1990's Demetri Terzopoulos, developed a bio-mechanical software model of a fish, and Karl Sims created 3-dimentional images of forest and plants with highly complex structures in *Panspermia* by (1990). In 1994 Christia Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau presented *A-Volve*¹⁸, a bright virtual habitat. Other artists-scientist such as Thomas Ray and Jane Prophet (*TechnoSphere*, 1995) also simulate processes of life. Evolution, breeding and selection have become methods for creating art works with

¹⁸ Sommerer and Mignonneau has together created other works like *VERBARIUM* (1999), *PICO_SCAN* (2000) and *IKI-IKI Phone* (2001)

'living' image worlds and viewers 'playing God' creating new 'life', manipulate the reproduction system, control the simulated biotype and 'kill' by withdrawal of 'nourishment'¹⁹. Some virtual-reality environments that completely immerse the audience into an alternative world have been developed within an art context, and Canadian artist Charlotte Davies's *Osmose* (1995) and *Ephemere* (1998) are classic examples.

By the involvement and interaction of the viewer, the artist has no longer control of the final result or even the survival of the work. Besides it seems like art has become a testing ground for scientific theories. With *Netlife* Thomas Ray predicts that artificial intelligence will form in the Internet and be able to go anywhere on the planet in milliseconds.



Figure 4: *TechnoSphere*, Jane Phrophet, 1995

¹⁹ With *Galápagos*, now in the permanent collection of ICC in Tokyo, Sims visualise Darwin's mechanism of evolution and selection. Interactivity and telepresence has also far-reaching social and political consequences. For example, who has the legal responsibilities lie actions commanded electronically and carried out by robots?

Body and identity is a subject with long traditions in art, even more so with Internet.

Online identity allows a simultaneous presence in various spaces and contexts, a constant 'reproduction' of the self without body. Subcultures are fostered, with groups existing only on Internet and group members geographically far apart, possibly only knowing each other as avatars²⁰. Roy Ascott's vision is 'a multiplicity of bodies', and his *Aspects of Gaia: Digital pathways across the Whole Earth* (1989) combined the disembodied experience of telematics and cyberspace with the corporeal experience of concrete reality in physical space.

Several philosophers, including Jean Baudrillard celebrate what they call the techno-body.²¹ In her book *How We Became Posthuman*, Katherine Hayles states: 'Increasingly the question is not whether we will become posthuman, for posthumanity is already here. Rather the question is what kind of posthumans we will be'²².

Since the introduction of photography in art, realism has been hotly debated. Telematics adds a new dimension to this debate with artificial life and multiple identities. Another dimension was added in September 2001. Wolfgang Staehle had a solo show at Postmasters Gallery in New York, where he presented three live views, one of them through a Web camera pointed at downtown Manhattan. The events of the 11th of September was unfolded live on the gallery walls and created an unexpected, shocking context for the concept of 'the ultimate realism' in art.

²⁰ An Avatar, a hindu world used in Internet community meaning alias, present oneself under a different name and/or with a different personality

²¹ Vivian Sobchak at UCLA, reproaches him with the comment that such a concept of the body 'is thought always as an object and never lived as a subject'.

²² *How We Became Posthuman*, University of Chicago Press, 1999 . Katherine Hayles, is one of the prominent theorists of the 'technologized body', <http://online.itp.ucsb.edu/online/colloq/hayles1>

Digital Art and Theory

Digital art did not develop in an art-historical vacuum, but has connections to previous art movements, among them Dada, Fluxus, and conceptual art. The important of these movements for digital art resides in their emphasis on formal instructions and in their focus on concept, event and audience participation, as opposed to unified material objects. The Theory of the Avant-Garde; technology as a sequence of creations, adoptions and liquidations of technical forms was radically different from the traditional attitude. Net artists in the early 1990's often combined an avant-garde rejection of the artist's individuality and originality with the possibilities provided by computer mediated communication to generate anonymous, parodic, shared, multiple and inauthentic identities.



Figure 5: *Connected*, Mamta B. Herland, 2003

Jean Baudrillard²³, 'a theorist of the computer screen', describes an audience that is absent, absorbed into the PC-monitor, losing own's image and predicting the disappearance of reality. Baudrillard's concept of 'Hyper-realism' designates an experience of the contemporary world which is radically 'unoriginal'.

Marshall McLuhan²⁴ believed that new technologies promote democracy and enhance human perception. In claiming 'the medium is the message'²⁵, McLuhan meant that content matters less than the structures of media and they shape human consciousness in profound ways. Roy Ascott²⁶ believes that the Net is the infrastructure of a dynamic new human consciousness powered by associative thought. The viewer is empowered as his Internet interactivity levels artistic authority. It can even be argued that the participatory mode of the Internet heralds a culture where everyone can be an "artist".

Digital technology and Internet raises critical questions about the concepts of originality and authenticity, but already with the invention of photography the authentic original was less relevant and challenged the uniqueness of a work of art. Walter Benjamin²⁷ favoured the newer, more democratic forms of art and discussed the impact of mechanical reproduction believing that it contributed to human emancipation by promoting new modes of critical perception. Artworks 'aura' was related to their special power in religious cults and the unique situation in time and space. The concept of time

²³ Jean Baudrillard (1929 -), 'L'Echange symbolique et la mort', 1976, translated by Charles Levin as 'Symbolic Exchange and Death' in 'The Structural Allegory edited by J. Fekete. Baudrillard, a French philosopher sometimes referred to as 'the high priest of postmodernism', www.egs.edu/faculty/jeanbaudrillard.html.

²⁴ Marshall McLuhan (1911– 1980), 'Understanding Media' (1964), www.marshallmcluhan.com

²⁵ 'The global village' is another of his well-known phrases.

²⁶ Roy Ascott, 'Art and Telematics: Towards a Network Consciousness'

²⁷ Walter Benjamin (1892–1940): 'The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936)

and space has radically changed with the World Wide Web, an artwork being able to be anywhere anytime reproduced with unlimited digital high-quality, it can be argued that we are now on the threshold on the real democratisation of art.

The project *life_sharing*²⁸ (2001) by Duo, challenge control over information and intellectual property when the project was turned into public property, published on the Web and thereby reproducible by anybody.

Art Market

The art market does not merely sell art commodities but actively helps to define what counts as art and particularly what is ‘significant’ art, and thereby alters our perception of art²⁹. Sales and price of art attracts more public attention than most other commodity, and when Charles Saatchi buys an artwork it is published widely³⁰. If someone like him starts collecting digital Internet art, the perception of digital works might be changed as well.

²⁸ The project is located at www.0100101110101101.org

²⁹ Marchel Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917) and Andy Warhol's Brillo Boxes are well-known examples of art work changing the perception of art.

³⁰ 'Dagens Næringsliv', a Norwegian commercial newspaper, February 2004 (26.02) had an article about Saatchi buying a Diana painting 'Hi Paul Can You Come Over' by Stella Vine, and her success it now taken for granted. Daimen Hirst was bought by Saatchi in 1988, but was it Saatchi who 'created' Hirst or was it the other way round?

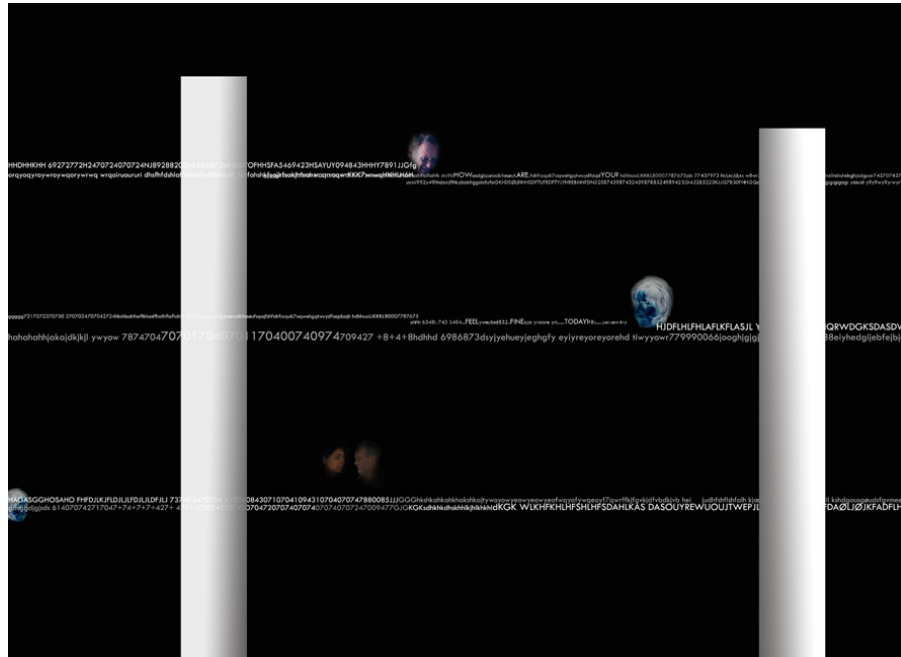


Figure 6: *net meeting*, Mamta B. Herland, 2004

Internet Galleries

One of the most well-known consequences of WWW is the growth of Web based galleries, either existing dealers going online or virtual galleries existing only on the Web³¹. Internet has opened up to a global market for artists, and Paul Wytner, at London Art, says: 'The site features 10.000 images from 900 artists and sells 20 to 30 works a month at an average price of £ 750 - £ 800..... Between four and five thousand people visit every day. A Cork Street gallery doesn't have that.'³² London Art takes only 35 % commission, instead of the more usual 50 %, because the business is

³¹ An example is Peter Nahum's the Leicester Gallery, (www.leicestergalleries.com). LondonArt, www.londonart.co.uk and WorldPrintmakers (www.worldprintmakers.com) are examples of galleries with no physical presence. ³¹ Both Sotheby's (www.sothebys.com) and Christie's (www.christies.co.uk) are represented on the Web, and eBay (www.ebay.com) is an example on a Web auction house selling nearly everything, including art.

³² In the article How the web has enticed collectors by Virginia Blackburn, The Times, 14th February 2004.

not so expensive to run. In March 2004 World Printmakers had 112.000 page views³³, reflecting an interesting exposure for artists represented at virtual galleries. Most of the Web galleries, though, have art made by traditional methods and Internet galleries are not especially in the forefront promoting and selling digital art.

An artist with a personal Web site promoting her own works, have the possibility to deal with potential customers directly without going through commercial galleries or other middlemen, and many find it fascinating to be free of any interference. However, it requires thorough technological knowledge as well as long-lasting hard work to develop and navigate potential clients to the Web site³⁴. As always it is prioritising, between using the time to creative artistic work or the joyous feeling of controlling it all by yourself.

Art as a digital commodity

The art market is based on ownership and scarcity, with a few artists as international stars. The concept of a unique original, limited editions and exhibitions in well-known galleries are important when art is basically an investment, and works as a tool for further increasing the price and thereby the assumed value of the artwork.

Digitised art and digitised copies of artworks originally created by traditional methods, can be perfectly multiplied in infinite numbers, manipulated and made available to others without the owners knowledge with no attachment informing about the original artist and work. Digital art and Internet ideology can therefore be seen as an anti-

³³ Newsletter # 28, World Printmakers, 13th April 2004

³⁴ See for example 'The Secret of Fine-Art Print Sales In a Virtual World' by Mike Booth, Editor & Publisher, www.worldprintmakers.com, published also at www.dpandi.com.

commodity with questionable authenticity and ownership and little or no copyright protection.

Commercial galleries are trying to convince potential clients of the possibility of earning money based on the 'scarcity model', mostly of interest for wealthy clients.

From an investment point of view it is understandable that the market for digital and Internet art has been limited. Digital prints have, however, been sold as limited editions and customised art, software art being licensed and Internet art acquired as a Web page³⁵. Digital art can be distributed and priced in a way affordable to ordinary people, buying art for art's sake.

Democratisation or Conglomeratisation

We live in the 'Age of Access'³⁶, and more and more the questions is: who has access to the communications channels, as a user and as a content provider, how can it be controlled?

The issues regarding copyright and ownership might threaten the democratic and free ideology of the Internet since it actually questions our capitalist economic system. The 'piracy' war fought by the music industry, the new digital copyright laws³⁷ and large global companies aggressively³⁸ commercialising the Internet questions its future. Many

³⁵ Since naming of the Web site is controlled by ICANN, Internet Corporation for Assignment of Names and Numbers (www.icann.org), it can be argued that the art is 'physical' and saleable.

³⁶ The title of a book by Jeremy Rifkin (Putman, NY, 2000)

³⁷ Under the American Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 (www.loc.gov/copyright/legislation and www.law.berkeley.edu) one can be prosecuted simply for breaking copy protection.

Versions of the European Union Copyright Directive at Eurorights (www.eurorights.org/eudmca) at the European Community's site (www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/intprop/docs).

³⁸ As an example, Spam (received unwanted advertising by e-mail) have grown from 15 billions in 2003 to estimated 35 billions in 2004 according to 'Dagens Næringsliv' (a Norwegian newspaper), 7/12th April 2004, p 34.

argue that copyright is one of the most valuable commodity in the new millennium.

Corbis already controls 76 million digitised images³⁹ and has spent more than \$ 100 millions to purchase the rights to reproduce images from Louvre, Hermitage, London's National Gallery and the Detroit Institute of Art. Together with Getty Images Inc.⁴⁰ they are currently buying the digital rights to nearly every image that may have a market value. Based on the globalisation and the conglomerate's market power, Joost Smiers⁴¹, propose the complete abolition of copyright arguing that investors, not artists, are the main beneficiaries.



Figure 7: *Wired*, clip from @ 01010, Video animation, Mamta B. Herland, 2004

Global cultural conglomerates will, with little doubt, force the Internet into their existing economic system and values. Without an open software code, ways to

³⁹ Source: Smiers, Joost. *Arts under Pressure*, p 43

⁴⁰ Corbis is a privately owned company by Bill Gates, the world's richest man, and Getty Images Inc. is controlled by Mark Getty, son of oil magnate J. Paul Getty.

⁴¹ Smiers, Joost. *Arts under Pressure, promoting cultural diversity in the age of globalization*

introduce control of content as well as access and countries in Asia already attempting to introduce censorship, Internet's future as a free and open communication channel is definitely debatable. The largest content providers are American, and we might as well face Americanisation and homogenisation instead of globalisation in Fine Art, as witnessed in the music and film industry.

When buying a piece of art is just a click and a credit card away, and massive advertising by large international players influencing local buyers to buy internationally 'known' names as an 'investment', the survival of the local art market the local artist is at risk. Walter Benjamin might not after all be so impressed by the Web as a democratic space for art.

Art Institutions

The art establishment, trained to operate within the boundaries of the art traditions, seemed to have found it difficult to recognise digital projects as being art. Museums, curators, educators and gallery owners all have to learn new skills, both with regard to technology and receptivity. The traditional way to exhibit, evaluate and preserve art changes with digital net based art.

Museums

Digital art made its official entry into the art world only in the late 1990s, when museums and galleries began increasingly to incorporate such art forms into their shows

and dedicate entire exhibitions to it.⁴² Major international art events, including Documenta, the Whitney Biennial and the Venice Biennale have showed Internet art, and large institutions such as Guggenheim, SFMOMA, Walker Art Center and ICC have acquired digital Internet based art.⁴³

Museums can store written information about art objects together with digitised images, video, sound and oral presentations, with enhanced capabilities to present versions of an art work as it evolves to a finished state, multiplying and intensifying visitors experience.

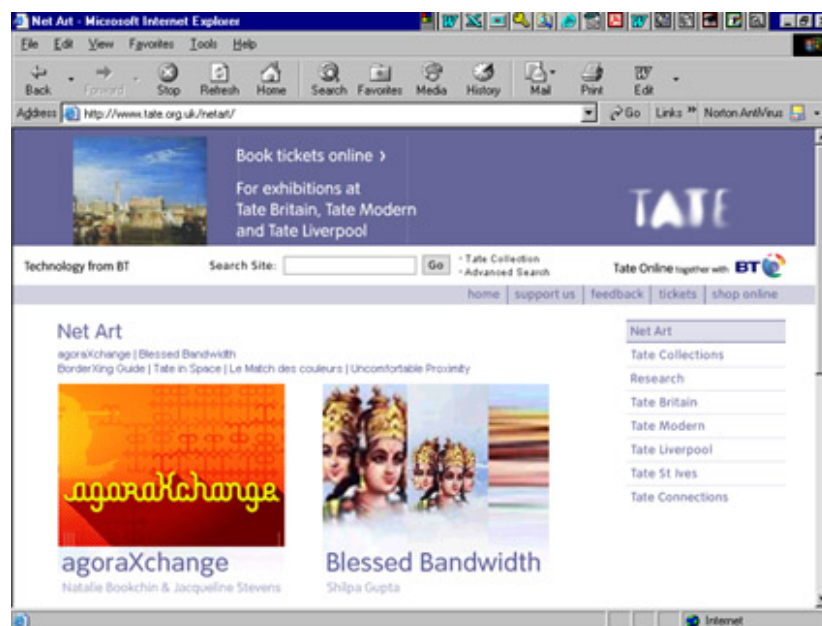


Figure 8: Tate presenting Net Art, April 2004

⁴² For the previous two decades, the main exhibition forums for digital art were festival like the Ars Electronica (Linz, Austria), EMAX (Germany), Next 5 Minutes (Netherlands) and VIPER (Switzerland).

⁴³ The Whitney Museum of American Art acquired Douglas Davis's *The World's First Collaborative Sentence* to host it from their server. Other examples are the [Guggenheim Museum virtual projects](#), ["Virtual Museum Project"](#) and Karl Sims *Galápagos* in the permanent collection of ICC in Tokyo.

The digital medium, however, poses a number of challenges with regard to collection and preservation. The curators have to take new roles, curating information as well as preserving art depending on changing, unstable technology with an interactive audience and art works not intended to last. An increasing number of international exhibitions and art events like e.g. SIGGRAPH rely on virtual curatorship.⁴⁴ Many also argues that Internet art should only be presented on-line since it belongs to the context of the Internet, and should not be taken into 'the white cube model' of museums.

Educators

Art schools face a challenge by the fact that the new generations of students use computer and Internet as their daily tools, with the Web as the obvious place to gather information, and the technology gap between generations seems to enlarge.

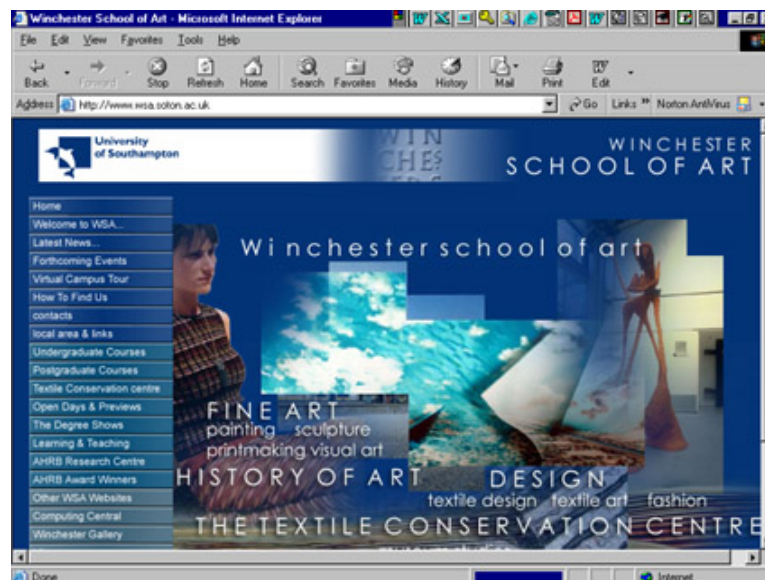


Figure 9: Winchester School of Art, April 2004

⁴⁴ For a more thorough discussion regarding the new role of museums, curators and collecting Internet art, papers by Steve Dietz, Director of New Media Initiatives, [Walker Art Center](http://www.walkerartcenter.org) is available at http://www.archimuse.com/mw98/papers/dietz/dietz_curatingtheweb.html

Most universities use Internet as a way to present themselves to future students and teaching professionals. Publishing research projects and documents having interactive discussions with other professionals and students are becoming more common. Already in 1980 Roy Ascott organised an international artists computer-conference, 'Terminal Art', and he later founded the Centre for Advanced Inquiry in the Interactive Arts (CaiiA). In 1995, CaiiA became the first online Ph.D program with an emphasis on interactive art, and in 1997/98 CaiiA-STAR was established (now 'Planetary Collegium') as a global network for advanced research of art and technology.⁴⁵

Conclusion



Figure 10: *I am on the Net, therefore I Am*, Mamta B. Herland, 2004

⁴⁵ CaiiA-STAR was developed between CaiiA and the Science, Technology and Art research centre (STAR), where many of the most important contemporary artists have studied for Ph.D.'s. As Ascott describes in *Art @ the Edge of the Net* (2000) CAiiA-STAR is a stepping stone to the larger conception of a 'Planetary Collegium' (<http://www.planetary-collegium.net/>.)

Digital technology, Internet and the World Wide Web represents a total paradigm shift comparable to the industrial revolution and artists have the possibility to radically change content, context and form, but with limited control of the artworks final destiny. Artistic creation, practice and production have been revolutionised by the possibilities to synthesise art created with traditional methods, as well as with sound and audio-visual art forms.

With Internet and World Wide Web collaboration between artists and viewers geographically dispersed became a way of new artistic practice and cultural exchange. Viewers are invited to interactively participate, even to the extent of 'playing God', with art utilising telecommunications and artificial life techniques.

Even though accepted and collected by highly prestigious museums, digital art has not so far been embraced by private collectors. Digital Internet art oppose the current market model by no physical original, unlimited unaltered quality editions, questionable authenticity and ownership, jeopardising art as an investment.

Internet has had an ideology and tradition as an open, free and democratic communication channel prerequisite access allowing a global audience. However, large international conglomerates have commercialised Internet enforcing the capitalistic system and values, questioning also the future of the local art market and thereby the local artist.