“... artists are “deviation amplifying” systems, or individuals who, because of psychological makeup, are compelled to reveal psychic truths at the expense of the existing societal homeostasis. With increasing aggressiveness, one of the artist’s functions ... is to specify how technology uses us.”


Edward A Shanken
Dorothy Kayser Hohenberg COE Lecture II
University of Memphis

April 2, 2013

www.artexetra.com
The outcomes of ‘investigatory art,’ like those of investigative journalism, have no legal authority but they can act as an agent for change by creating public awareness that instigates action.
In Part 1:

Hans Haacke – social systems and art patronage
- exemplar of investigatory art/institutional critique of late 1960s
Jack Burnham
- “Systems Esthetics” *Artforum* (Sep 1968)
- “Real Time Systems” *Artforum* (Sep 1969)
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The tendency to abstract the concrete materiality of things into ephemeral information related to technological, economic, and cultural constructs: computerization and telecommunications, the shift from industry to post-industry, and the so-called “dematerialisation of art”
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Amplified in recent social formations: open-source development and the gift economy, participatory culture incl. interactive art, social media, and SL, and discourses on the posthuman.
“The House that Jack Built: Jack Burnham’s Concept of Software as a Metaphor for Art,” 1998

“Reprogramming Systems Aesthetics...” 2009

“In Forming Software,” 2012
“systemic artworks had emerged with a vengeance [...]. Burnham’s concerns [...] seem tailor-made for the contemporary art world.”

Caroline Jones, ‘Systems Symptoms: Jack Burnham’s “Systems Esthetics”’ Artforum, Sep 2012 (50th anniversary)
“systemic artworks had emerged with a vengeance [...]. Burnham’s concerns [...] seem tailor-made for the contemporary art world.”

“Systemic artworks dialectically reject or critically torque the virtual ideologies of the Internet to *materialize* the links that join archival, research-driven, process-oriented, labor-intensive, recursive, informational social, and communicational aspects of art.”

In Part II:

• Current technologies enable users to access and manipulate previously inaccessible data about complex (and often hidden) social relationships.

• Strategic artistic uses of digital ‘real-time systems’ provide modes of relating to and interacting with information that make it concrete in ways that are particular to network cultures.
PART II: EXAMPLES

Heath Bunting, *Own, Be Owned or Remain Invisible*, 1998

Josh On, *They Rule*, 2001

Übermorgen, *Google Will Eat Itself*, 2005


Michael Mandiberg, *Real Costs*, 2007
GOALS:

1) To begin to map some of the similarities and differences in critical art-making spanning four decades as a result of technological innovation and emerging forms of sociability and cultural participation.

2) Demonstrate parallels and continuities among various streams of practice that typically have been considered as categorically discrete.

3) Bridge the so-called ‘digital divide’ between contemporary art and new media.
Part I: Haacke and Burnham – Real Time Systems
Hans Haacke, Visitors’ Profile, 1970
MOMA, Information
Kynaston McShine, curator

Visitors’ Profile (proposed questionnaire, Guggenheim.) Realized at Milwaukee Art Center, 1971. Similar to Software, 1970
4) Should the use of marijuana be legalized, lightly or severely punished?  

5) What is your marital status?  
   Married, single, divorced, separated, widowed  

6) Do you sympathize with Women’s Lib?  
   Yes, no  

7) Are you male, female?  
   Male, female  

8) Do you have children?  
   Yes, no  

9) Would you want your child to integrate into schools?  
   Yes, no  

10) What is your ethnic background?  
   Yes, no  

11) Assuming you were Indochinese, would you sympathize with the present Saigon regime?  
   Yes, no  

12) In your opinion is the moral fabric of this country strengthened or weakened by the US involvement in Indochina?  
   Yes, no  

13) What is your religion?  
   

14) Do you think the interests of profit-oriented business usually are compatible with the common good of the world?  
   Yes, no  

15) What is your annual income (before taxes)?  
   

16) In your opinion are the economic difficulties of the US mainly attributable to the Nixon Administration’s policies?  
   Yes, no  

17) Where do you live?  
   City, county, state  

18) Do you think the defeat of the SST was a step in the right direction?  
   Yes, no  

19) Are you enrolled in or have you graduated from college?  
   Yes, no
The visitors, in effect, were producing a collective self-portrait in a participatory and self-reflective process.

Hans Haacke, “Lessons Learned” Tate Papers (Aut 2009)
“real-time systems gather and process data from environments, in time to effect future events within those environments.”

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By contrast, ‘ideal time’ concerns the contemplation of beauty in isolation from societal and temporal contingencies.

“real-time systems gather and process data from environments, in time to effect future events within those environments.”

“What a few artists are beginning to give the public is real time information, information with no hardware value, but with software significance for effecting awareness of events in the present.”

Jewish Museum, NY, 1970
Jack Burnham, curator
The processing speed of the computer makes it possible that at any given time the statistical evaluation of all answers is up to date and available. The constantly changing data is projected onto a large screen, so that it is accessible to a great number of people. Based on their own information a statistical profile of the exhibition’s visitors emerges.

Hans Haacke, artist’s statement in *Software*: 34.

Jewish Museum, NY, 1970
Jack Burnham, curator
“The artist’s business requires his involvement with practically everything ... It would be bypassing the issue to say that the artist’s business is how to work with this and that material ... and that the rest should be left to other professions ... The total scope of information he receives everyday is of concern. An artist is not an isolated system ... he has to continuously interact with the world around him...”

Hans Haacke, from a talk delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Intersocietal Color Council, April, 1968.
Hans Haacke, *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time System, as of May 1, 1971*, 1971

142 photos of New York apt buildings, 2 maps of Lower East Side and Harlem with properties marked, 6 charts outlining business relations within real estate group.
Haacke, L: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Board of Trustees (1974)
R: Creating Consent (1981)
Haacke, L: *Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Board of Trustees* (1974)
R: *Creating Consent* (1981)

An unexamined exchange of capital: “financial capital on the part of the sponsors and symbolic capital on the part of the sponsored” – Bourdieu & Haacke, 1995
We are not patrons. We want something for the money we spend. And we are getting it.

- Peter Littmann,
  President, Hugo Boss
Haacke’s works challenge the traditional aesthetic notion of ideal time and fit Burnham’s conception of real-time in the sense that they undermine idealistic notions of aesthetic autonomy.

Haacke, Visitors’ Profile, 1970
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Visitor’s Profile “offered the audience an opportunity to recognize that art is not produced, viewed and traded in an awe-inspiring world apart but in a continuous social universe.” (Haacke, 2009)
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Visitor’s Profile “offered the audience an opportunity to recognize that art is not produced, viewed and traded in an awe-inspiring world apart but in a continuous social universe.” (Haacke, 2009)

Immaterial information can make a concrete impact on the future. This applies as much to the critical insights revealed by art as it does to the publicity garnered by the patrons who support it.

Haacke, Visitors’ Profile, 1970
Part II:  New Media Art as an Extension of Real Time Systems and Investigatory Art
Haacke’s explorations of real-time interactive systems, combined with his use of the instantaneous quality of digital computing, can now be interpreted as a harbinger of more recent work by a subsequent generation of artists that explicitly use electronic media as a platform for their work.
Heath Bunting, 1998

Own, Be Owned, or Remain Invisible

www.irational.org/_readme.html

www.all.com - unused appraised $1 million

www.slot.com redirects to cirsas.es (gambling)

“www.sub-culture.com may be for sale... contact Jimmy.com”

“... RL.com is owned by Richard Lau.... “Domainer of the Year”.... not ... the Hong Kong star – Andy Lau, and NO this domain is not for sale”
The investigation undertaken in *Own, Be Owned* is not conducted by the artist and delivered as a *fait accompli* to the viewer. Rather, it is performed in real time by the viewer who is explicitly activated as a participant in the investigation.

Heath Bunting, 1998

*Own, Be Owned, or Remain Invisible*

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“This new ‘metamedium’ is *active* – it can respond to queries and experiments – so that the messages may involve the learner in a two-way conversation.”

- Alan Kay and Adele Goldberg, 1977

Heath Bunting, 1998

*Own, Be Owned, or Remain Invisible*

[www.irational.org/_readme.html](http://www.irational.org/_readme.html)
The form of *Own, Be Owned* equally constitutes is *message*.

Heath Bunting, 1998

*Own, Be Owned, or Remain Invisible*

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It endows one with a sense of agency – if not to impact the future then at least to ride the wave of “changing modes of signification [which] affect the *codes* as well as the subjects of representation.” (Hayles, 1999)

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It possesses an electronic tactility that parallels the real economic effects of E-commerce.

Heath Bunting, 1998
Own, Be Owned, or Remain Invisible
www.irational.org/__readme.html
Josh On, *They Rule*, 2004


Josh On, *They Rule*, 2004
They sit on the boards of America’s largest companies. Many sit on government committees. They make decisions that affect our lives. They rule.
Like Moreno, On wanted to “reveal the hidden structures that give a [corporation] its form: the alliances, the subgroups, the hidden beliefs, the forbidden agendas, the ideological agreements, the ‘stars’ of the show.”
“[e]very participant should feel about the experiment that it is his (or her) own cause [...] that it is an opportunity for him (or her) to become an active agent in matters concerning his (or her) life situation.” - Moreno, 1951
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“I gave [people] the ability to actually move things around ... save that as a map, and annotate it”  - On, 2011
Übermorgen (Hans Bernhard, Liz VLX)
with A Ludovico, P Cirio, et al
Google Will Eat Itself (GWEI), 2005 -6
“this auto-cannibalistic model ...deconstruct[s] the new global advertisement mechanisms by rendering them into a surreal click-based economic model. After this process GWEI hands over the common ownership of ‘our’ Google Shares to the GTTP Ltd. [Google To The People Public Company] which distributes them back to the users (clickers)/public.”

Übermorgen (Hans Bernhard, Liz VLX) with A Ludovico, P Cirio, et al

Google Will Eat Itself (GWEI), 2005 -6
How much do "we" own Google

Google Shares owned by GWEI: 819
Amount of USD: 405,413,19
Adsense-Clicks: 1,556,361
Adsense-Page Impressions: 37,538
Adsense-CTR: 2.41%

Google Ownership Counter
202,345,117 Years until GWEI fully owns Google.

Google Share Price*
Current Google Share Price: 495.01 USD
Symbol: "GOOG"

Übermorgen (Hans Bernhard, Liz VLX)
with A Ludovico, P Cirio, et al
Google Will Eat Itself (GWEI), 2005 -6
“On March 27, 1969, Levine bought five hundred common shares of stock in the Cassette Cartridge Corporation. After a period of one year, or at any time which it is deemed profitable prior to that, the Cassette Cartridge shares will be resold. The profit or loss of the transaction will become the work of art.”

Levine claimed that ‘[w]hat is more important for the artist to deal with [...] are the ambient systems and the software patterns which influence our culture.’

GWEI shares a similar approach.
Haacke, *Rhine Water Purification Plant*, 1972
Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld
“Pollution levels were visualized and plotted in real-time over Google’s mapping environment, thus allowing immediate access to the collected information to anyone with connection to the Internet.” - Da Costa, 2012
What is Real Costs?

Real Costs is a Firefox plug-in that inserts emissions data into travel-related e-commerce websites. The first version adds CO2 emissions information to airfare websites such as Orbitz.com, United.com, Delta.com, etc. Following versions will work with car directions, car rental, and shipping websites. Think of it like the nutritional information labeling on the back of food... except for emissions.

Download Now:

Download Current Real Costs Firefox Plugin

For Developers:

Current Greasemonkey Development Snapshot:
realcosts.user.js
Requires Greasemonkey
This is like the source code for the plugin. Developer? Get in touch: Michael Mandiberg
unsure what this is? you probably should click above.
Current version (v0.0.6) is beta. It works on these websites

Michael Mandiberg, The Real Costs, 2007
Michael Mandiberg, *The Real Costs*, 2007

HSL/HRT Journey Planner, Helsinki
Michael Mandiberg, *The Real Costs*, 2007

Mandiberg’s innovative work not only creates awareness in an art context but also anticipates and provides a model for similar applications in a larger social context.
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- Jack Burnham, 1968
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‘Just as the entire mode of existence of human collectives changes [...] so too does their mode of perception. The way in which human perception is organized – the medium in which it occurs – is conditioned not only by nature but by history.’ - Walter Benjamin, 1935-8
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Strategic uses of new media – the prevailing media of our time – may offer precisely the perspective required to ‘reveal psychic truths’ and ‘specify how technology uses us’.
“The digital is imbedded in the larger [...] systems within which we exist and operate [...]. Through this embeddedness, the digital can act back on the social so that its specific capabilities can engender new concepts of the social and of the possible.” - Saskia Sassen, 2006
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Metacritical approaches to new media – ones that use new media to interrogate new media - provide a particularly useful method to reflect on how new media tools, theories, and practices are deeply embedded in modes of knowledge production, perception, and interaction, and are thus inextricable from corresponding epistemological and ontological transformations.
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The explicit use of new media in and as art may offer an advantageously embedded position from which to investigate myriad hidden connections in network culture and to contemplate central perceptual and existential shifts of the early 21st century.
INVESTIGATORY ART:
INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE, REAL-TIME SYSTEMS, AND NETWORK CULTURE

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