The
Future
of
Writing

DB

DM and DK

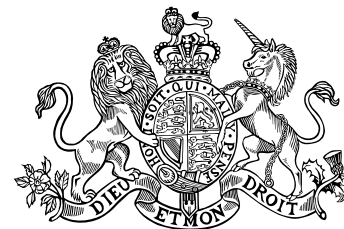KB

NM

SP and CW

Microsoft Research,
Cambridge

Royal College of Art

Microsoft®
Research

Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art and Design

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The following booklet includes background research and proposals from a two-month project commissioned by Microsoft Research Cambridge, UK, the Microsoft Office Team and the Design Interactions Department, Royal College of Art, London, UK, as part of the Future of Writing project. The project was launched with a one-day seminar and workshop involving specially invited guest speakers and the participating designers.

DB

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Foreword

Professor Anthony Dunne,

Head of Programme,
Design Interactions

In this project with Microsoft Research, Cambridge, and the Microsoft Office Team, we explore new ways design can make technology-supported writing and authorship more meaningful and relevant to our lives, both now, and in the future, by thinking not only about new applications but implications as well.

The aim is to inspire, stimulate discussion, and provoke debate in order to help achieve a technological future that reflects the complex, troubled people we are, rather than the easily satisfied consumers and users we are supposed to be.

Foreword

Richard Banks, Alex Taylor and Tim Regan

from Socio-Digital Systems, Microsoft Research Cambridge

It's clear that tools for reading and writing are evolving exponentially, with this year's tweet replacing last year's blog post. The danger here is that technology becomes the primary way through which authorship and consumption are defined. In this project, undertaken with the Royal College of Art in London, a number of world-class designers speculate beyond technology and functionality on the possibilities for authorship. From the material to the symbolic, the philosophical to the political, this thought-provoking body of work invites new questions on the forms and processes of literary creation.

Guest speakers

For futher information on guest speakers click on the hyperlinks

[Richard Banks](#)

[Jeremy Ettinghausen](#)

[Tim Regan](#)

[Alex Taylor](#)

[Tim Etchells](#)

[Justin McGuirk](#)

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Designers

To view projects click on
individual tabs below

David Benqué

The Infinite Adventure Machine (TIAM) is a proposal for a computer program that generates fairy tale plots.

Dash Macdonald and Demitrios Kargotis

A hyper-realistic workshop training script that uses iconic stories and films as models to explore the Conservative Party's contemporary grand narrative of 'The Big Society'.

Kobe Barhad

"Thoughts you may have" is research that explores the existence of our inner dialogues. Using text prediction tools, a space for private thoughts are produced in a virtual social network.

Nicolas Myers

Punctu.at is a tool to create, combine and share new punctuation marks and symbols. Using existing typographic shapes, this project explores how personal symbols can enrich and modify the meaning of a text.

Sascha Pohflepp Chris Woebken

The future of writing will be the future of writing down everything, by machinic ghost-writers who have long been compiling our auto-autobiographies. It will also be the future of reading those narratives of data, about our past, present and future.
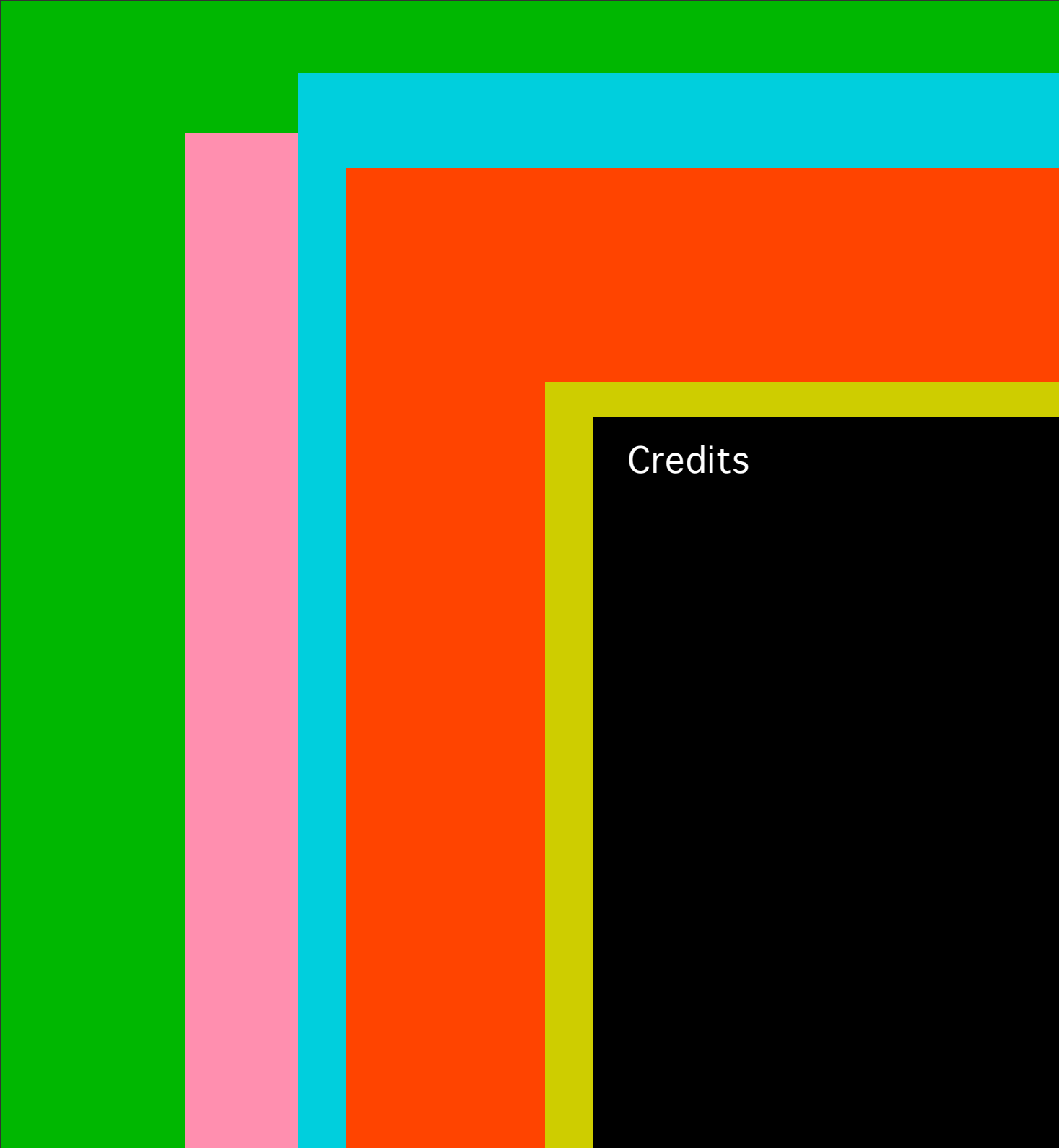
Credits

Project mentor
Onkar Kular

Graphic design and
project documentation
Kellenberger–White
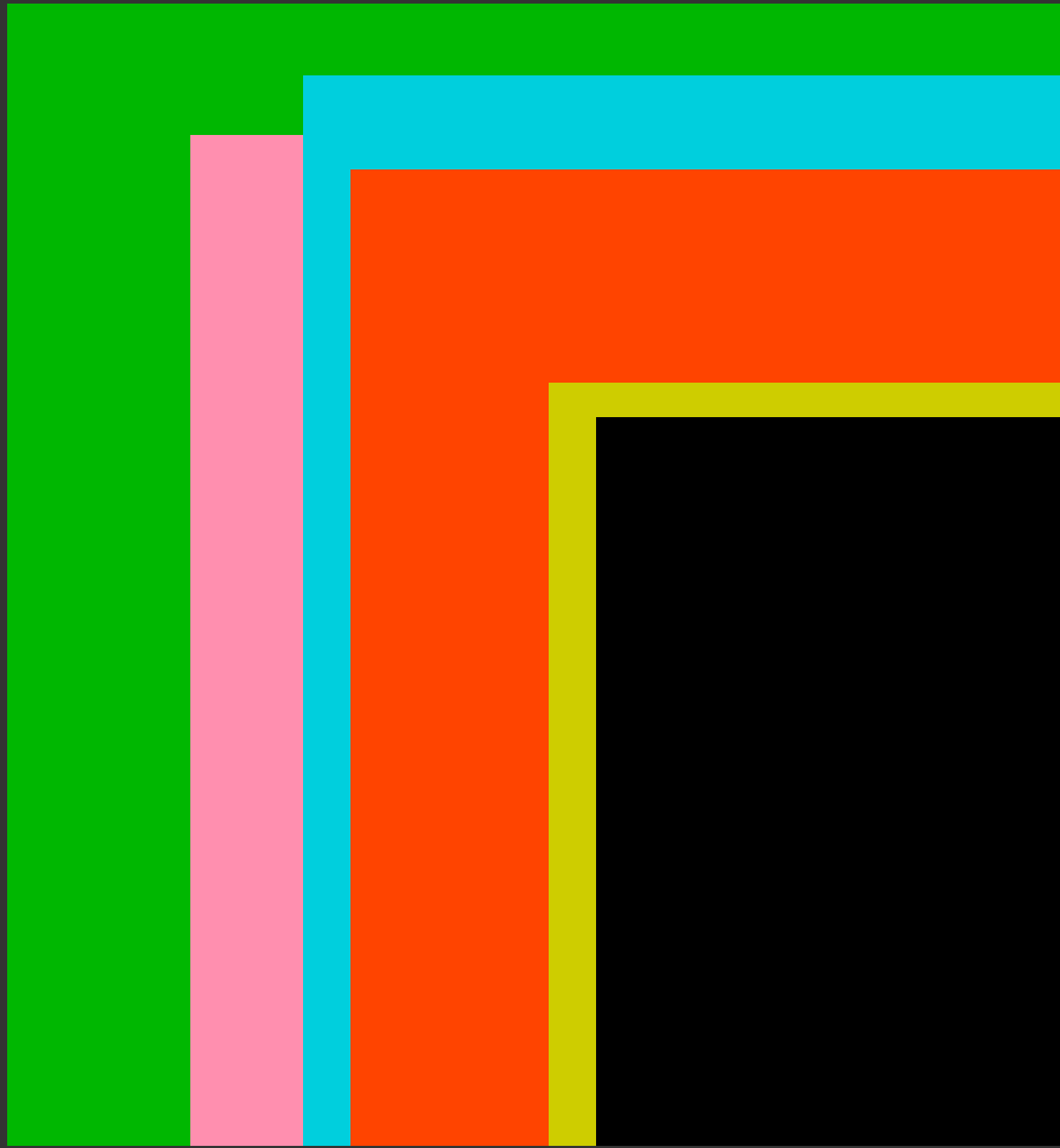
DB
DM and DK
KB
NM
SP and CW

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David Benqué

The Infinite
Adventure Machine

David Benqué

www.davidbenque.com

Recent press

We Make Money Not Art
Creative Applications
boingboing
Cool Hunting
Co. Design

Illustration based on a Propp input sequence

This is the thinking that led to the project...

I came across a paper by Joseph Gold, who argues storytelling and narrative are a biologically evolved functions of humans and actually have an evolutionary purpose in keeping us alive and evolving us as a species.

Two books that helped me develop my ideas...

1) 'The Uses of Enchantment' by Bruno Bettelheim. It's about fairy tales, and looks at their function — their significance for child development and the transition to adulthood.

2) 'The Morphology of the Folktale' by Vladimir Propp. This book raises the idea of story DNA, which could be interesting to look at in relation to computer science.

Propp split the Russian fairy tale into 31 basic functions within which any tale of the specific subset that he was studying fitted.
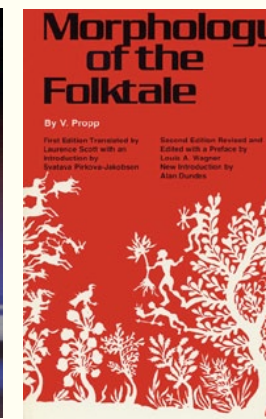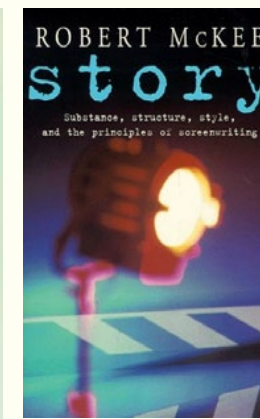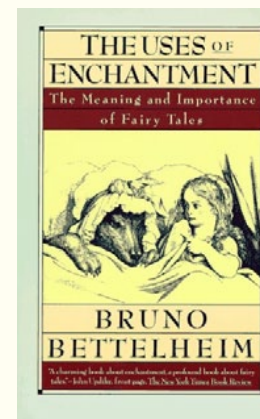
The example (below) of function 8a shows each function as an action or an event. Each one has up to 15 possible manifestations. Scientists have tried to use Propp's inspired theories to create generators.

"Story is to human beings what the pearl is to osyters, active adaptation."
Joseph Gold

One of the problems I ran into is that the formula selects randomly pre-written chunks of text for a function, jams it all together and spits out a tale that is less interesting than the initial formula.

Generating compelling narratives is a killer — it is like the frontier of computer science.
I widened my scope of research and ran into a whole score of online movie plot generators, which don't actually generate anything because you have to fill in all the blanks.

I came across a piece of work by James Meehan called 'Tale Spin', part of his dissertation written in 1976, and this started to be a bit more interesting because he was exposing the kind of processes and relationships that he programmed to get to the outcome.

Each character has a goal, such as to like hunger or thirst, or to become not hungry or not thirsty, or something like that.

- • **function 8a (and/or 8) is always present in tale**
- • **function 8a: one member of family lacks/desires something = lack – a**
- • **a**1 — lack of bride, friend, or an individual
- • **a**2 — lack of helper or magical agent
- • **a**3 — lack of wondrous object(s)
- • **a**4 — lack of egg of death or love
- • **a**5 — lack of money or means of existence
- • **a**6 — lacks in other forms

'Function 8a' based on Vladimir Propp

PLOT-O-MATIC™

Enter a Title:	the Future of Writing
Enter your name:	David Benqué
What's the genre?	Science Fiction
Main character:	A struggling artist
Sidekick:	a well-built female cyborg
Their goal:	save the earth from aliens
Character growth:	accidentally kill
Another character:	four British men on welfare
Action sequence:	○burn ○shoot ○beat up ○have sex with ○run away from ○poison ◉chase ○blow up ○buy ○hijack
Enter a number:	4
Items:	oogly aliens
Peer group:	department
What movie is it like?	Die Hard
Your favorite movie?	

Online movie plot generator 'Plot-O-Matic'

Script produced using ''

the Future of Writing
an original screenplay concept
by David Benqué

Science Fiction: A struggling artist teams up
with a well-built female cyborg to save the
earth from aliens. In the process they
rescue a super intelligent chimpanzee. By the
end of the movie they chase 67 oogly aliens
and end up winning the admiration of their co-
workers, living happily ever after.

Think Die Hard meets Cambridge.

------------------------------[CUT HERE]------------------------------

First example:
Once upon a time there was a dishonest fox and a vain crow. One day the crow was sitting in his tree, holding a piece of cheese in his mouth. He noticed that he was holding the piece of cheese. He became hungry, and swallowed the cheese. The fox walked over to the crow. The end.

Second example:
Joe the bear was hungry. He asked Irving the bird where some honey was. Irving refused to tell him, so Joe offered to bring him a worm if he'd tell him where some honey was. Irving agreed. But Joe didn't know where any worms were, so he asked Irving, who refused to say. So Joe offered to bring him a worm if he'd tell him where any worms were. Irving agreed. But Joe didn't know where any worms were... and so on.

Illustration based on 'Tale Spin'

Project website, click here

The Infinite Adventure Machine (TIAM)
is a proposal for a computer program that
generates fairy tale plots.

While fully automatic story generation remains
an unsolved problem for computer science, this
project explores the links between imagination
and computation. Tales and myths, the
core narratives of human culture, have been
transmitted for generations through various
technologies and media.

What new forms might they take through digital
formats and Artificial Intelligence?

Based on the work of Vladimir Propp,
who reduced the structure of Russian folktales
to 31 basic functions, TIAM aims to question
the limitations and implications of attempts at
programming language and narrative.

Because the program is unable to deliver
a finished story, rather only a crude synopsis
and illustrations, users have to improvise, filling
the gaps with their imaginations and making up
for the technology's shortcomings.

Project website, click here

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THE Infinite MACHINE
Adventure

PROPP sequence

$\beta^1\gamma^1\delta^1\ \theta^2A^78a^3D^{10}E^7$
G^6

Synopsis

Marked trail shows the way

Performance of service,
fulfillment of request

DONOR: Offer of magical agent
as exchange

Lack of wondrous objects

VILAINY: Antagonist causes

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

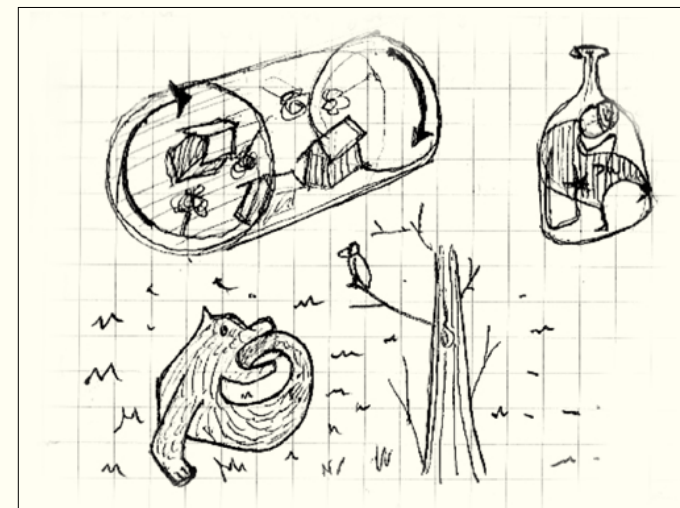SP and CW

Project website, [click here](#)

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PROPP sequence
β¹γ¹δ¹ θ²

Synopsis
Protagonist falls victim to influence of magical agent
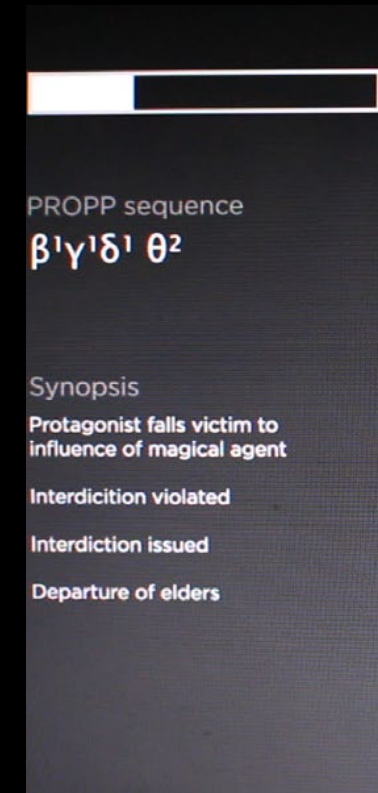
Interdicition violated

Interdiction issued

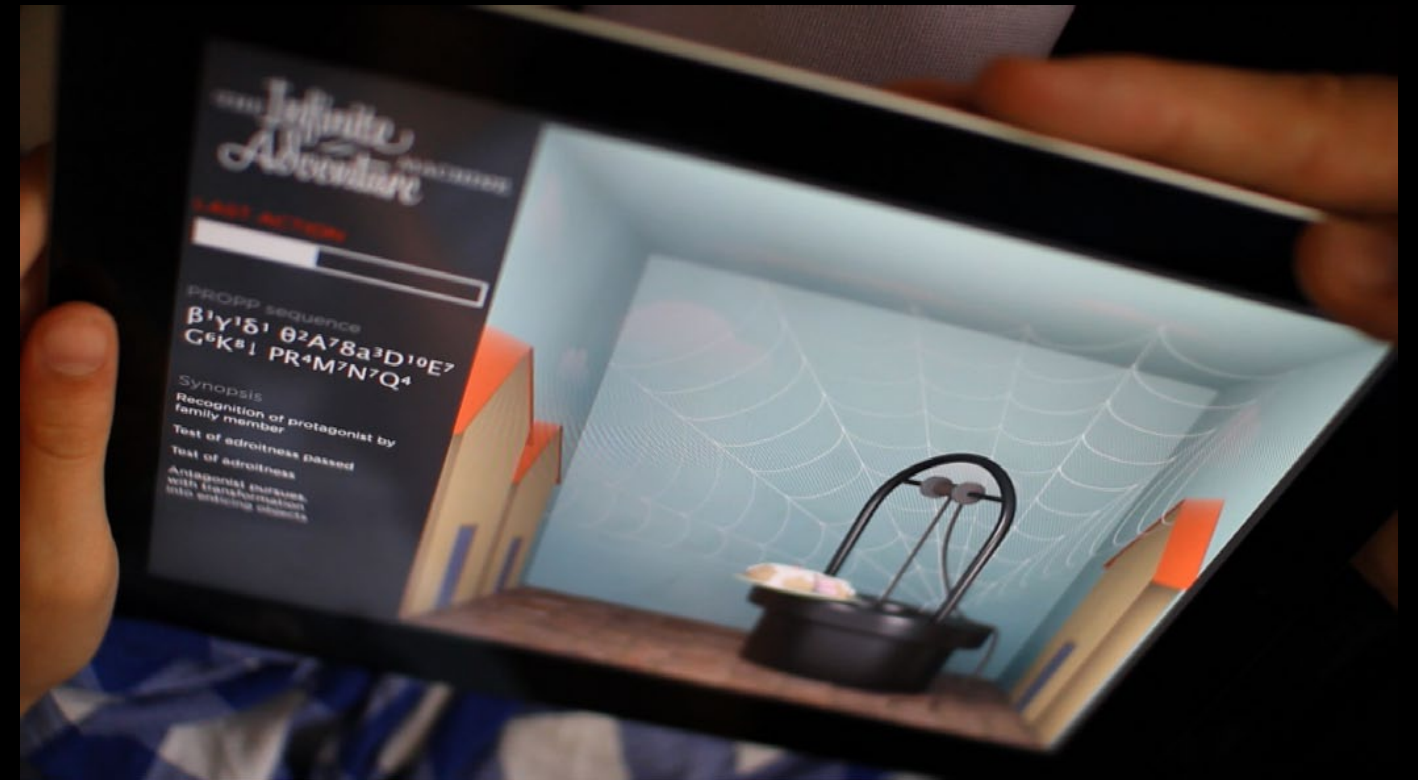Departure of elders

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

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Let's start with our first case study.

[Slide 1]

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

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[Slide 2]

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Dash Macdonald
and Demitrios
Kargotis

Happily Ever After
in the Big Society

Let's start with our first case study.

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Dash Macdonald
and Demitrios Kargotis

www.dashndem.com

This is the thinking that led to the project...

The following text and images have been re-arranged to form a theatre script.

Image opposite,
book: Paul Corrigan,
'Shakespeare on Management'

Paul Corrigan

Shakespeare on Management

Leadership Lessons for Today's Managers

"A must read for men and women who have position and power — and for those with ambition who aspire to leadership."
Ken Shelton, editor of *Executive Excellence* magazine

DB | DM and DK | KB | NM | SP and CW
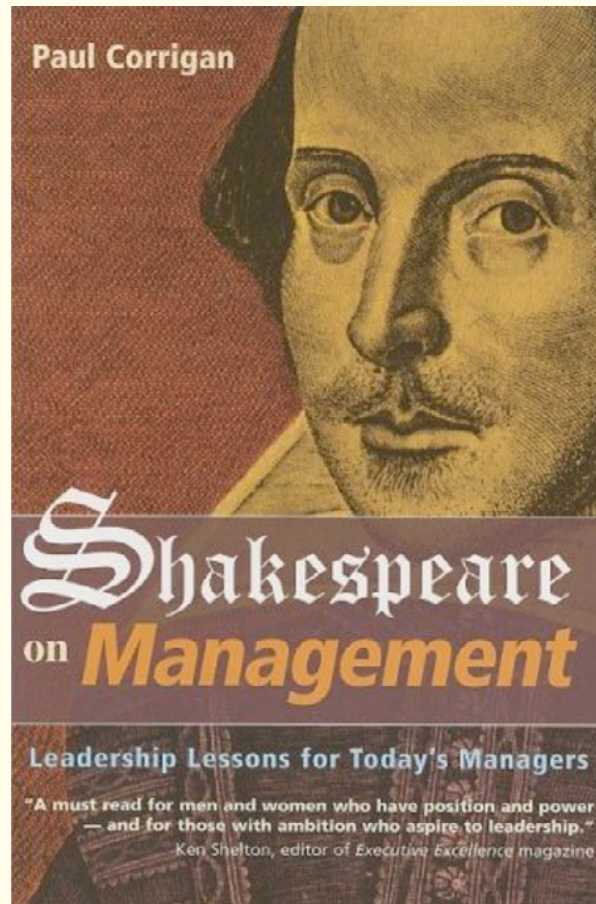
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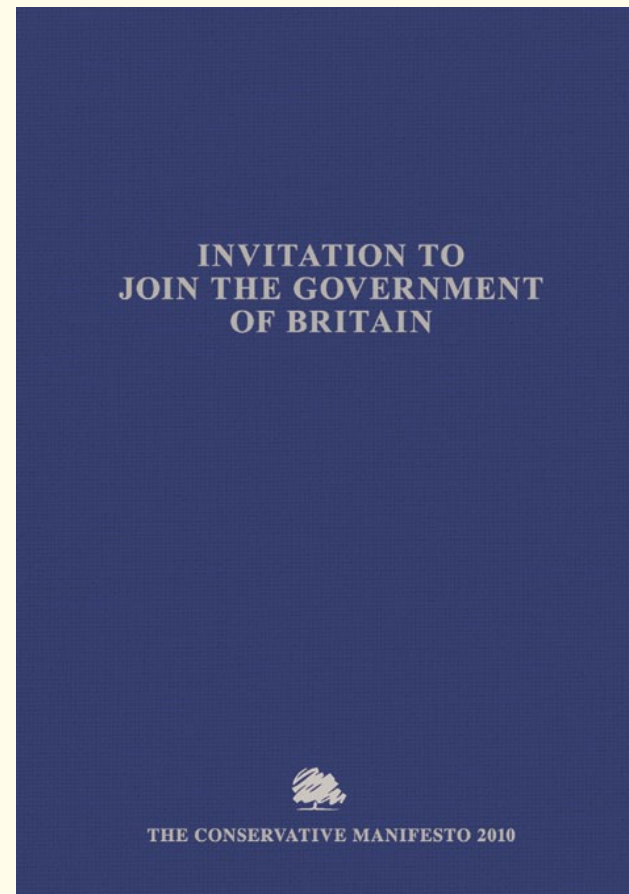   Snow White lying

INTRODUCTION

Dash arranges his presentation notes and laptop on a small side table. He opens his keynote presentation and readies himself to introduce his project. Before he proceeds with his presentation, the leader of the Microsoft team introduces several new guests to the rest of the audience.

ACT ONE

DASH:
(*Decisively*) We have decided to focus on reformatting text and how narrative content is taken from one context and represented within a different format — and the social implications of that...
(*Pauses*)

INVITATION TO
JOIN THE GOVERNMENT
OF BRITAIN

THE CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO 2010

Above: the Big Society Manifesto

Let's start with our first case study.

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~~~~~~~ enters, and finding
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~~~~~ e Seven Dwarfs
~~~~ discover the
~~~~ Snow White lying

This got us thinking about policy writing and we were looking at the Big Society document.

(Pauses and takes a deep breath)
We were wondering how many people actually go online and download this document? How could it hijack other narrative formats? What if certain values within the Big Society were written up as a script from Eastenders?

(Image opposite above: Eastenders)
(Image opposite below: Emmerdale)

(Reads from presentation)
'On 27 May 1997 Emmerdale attracted over 13 million viewers when Frank Tate died of a heart attack after his wife, Kim Tate, returned after faking her own death months before'.

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_____ discover the
_____ Snow White lying

We looked at the amount of people that are going to see something like this, and in terms of politics, how something could be presented and mediated by hijacking much more public and popular cultured narratives.

Looking at the rhetoric in the Big Society document, the way it is written in a rhythmical way, made us think of using a lyric generator to produce a song out of key lines from the document.

(Image opposite above: phantom lyrics)
(Image opposite below: Project Umubano)

It would fit the document's nature of focusing on the emotive side of community involvement, volunteering, and connecting, rather than the reality

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---

of how things are going to be funded and work when there is less money.

But, again, how we would address this would be not from a political perspective but looking at the construction behind different ways that it could be mediated or reinterpreted as.

ACT TWO

We also got interested in the corporate appropriation and exploitation of symbolism within narrative, in the format of corporate role-play.

(Image opposite above:
'Avant-Garde Teambuilding'*)*
(Image opposite below:
'Forum Theatre')

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

SP and CW

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One of the ideas we had was to re-dramatise a classic play such as 'Romeo and Juliet' in the format of corporate role-play. How could it all be written and restructured in relation to a role-play scenario? In terms of 'Romeo and Juliet' it could be a conflict negotiation for example...

This brought us into looking at Forum Theatre, which was initially developed to help people who were being oppressed at work to help them learn how to communicate and overthrow the repressive system they were in...
(cough) ...It's now widely used within corporate training for negotiation skills and to treat communication failure:
a specific scenario is played out by a group of actors, and then the audience intervenes and rescripts it into a more positive outcome.

So these are the different directions that we were looking at, and we wanted to use today as an opportunity to gauge interest within these directions and hear your thoughts on it.

END

Let's start with our first case study.

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‘Happily Ever After in the Big Society’

‘Happily Ever After in the Big Society’ is a hyper-realistic workshop training script that uses fictional case studies to model and explore goals and objectives identified in the 2010 Conservative manifesto. Expanding on the misappropriation and exploitation of fiction in management training, the project questions whether it is possible to transpose ideas from iconic stories and films into real-world applications, and the socio-political implications of reworking fictional models to inform the contemporary grand narrative of ‘The Big Society’.

The following pages are an extract from a workshop document. The following PowerPoint presentation is seen as the workshop notes are read out.

The full workshop document can be downloaded, here

Let's start with our first case study.

[Slide 1]

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Although Snow White is a classic fairy tale, it deals with adult and current issues for the Big Society, specifically, social inclusion for the homeless and disadvantaged.

[Slide 2]

Snow White is essentially a young person who has become homeless due to a dysfunctional family. She finds herself lost in the forest, tired, hungry and scared after she narrowly escapes from her stepmother, a vain and wicked Queen who has taken over the kingdom after the death of her father.

[Slide 3]

Homelessness is an important issue in our current society. At any one time, some fifty-six thousand people slip through the net, ultimately being let down by the system. If we are to meet the Big Society's intention of being big enough to include even the most disadvantaged, it is vital that we are innovative in how we address this issue. Snow White's reciprocal relationship with the Seven Dwarfs demonstrates an interesting approach.

[Slide 4]

Going back to the story, in the forest, Snow White discovers a tiny cottage, which she enters, and finding no one home and the house dusty and untidy, she decides to give it a good clean, hoping the residents may let her stay in return. When the Seven Dwarfs arrive home, they are astonished to discover the house clean and tidy. After finding Snow White lying

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

Case Study 1

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Socal inclusion for the homeless and disadvantaged

Themes and Issues

Cultivating a truly reciprocal society

❝ We know we have a shared responsibility, that we're all in this together. ❞

David Cameron

Slide 1

Let's start with our first case study.

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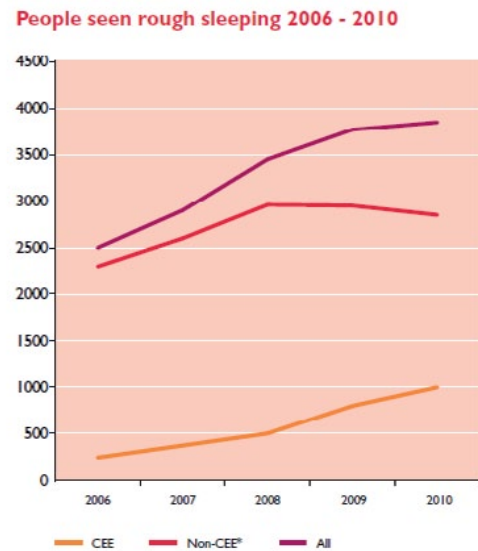

Snow White has become homeless due to a dysfunctional family

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Slide 2

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

Slide (left panel)

At any one time, some 56,000 people slip through the net

People seen rough sleeping 2006 - 2010

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Slide 3

Notes (right panel)

Let's start with our first case study.

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[Slide 3]

Homelessness is an important issue in our current society. At any one time, some fifty-six thousand people slip through the net, ultimately being let down by the system. If we are to meet the Big Society's intention of being big enough to include even the most disadvantaged, it is vital that we are innovative in how we address this issue. Snow White's reciprocal relationship with the Seven Dwarfs demonstrates an interesting approach.

[Slide 4]

Going back to the story, in the forest, Snow White discovers a tiny cottage, which she enters, and finding no one home and the house dusty and untidy, she decides to give it a good clean, hoping the residents may let her stay in return. When the Seven Dwarfs arrive home, they are astonished to discover the house clean and tidy. After finding Snow White lying

Back to the story...

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Slide 4

Let's start with our first case study.

[Slide 1]

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Although Snow White is a classic fairy tale, it deals with adult and current issues for the Big Society, specifically, social inclusion for the homeless and disadvantaged.

[Slide 2]

Snow White is essentially a young person who has become homeless due to a dysfunctional family. She finds herself lost in the forest, tired, hungry and scared after she narrowly escapes from her stepmother, a vain and wicked Queen who has taken over the kingdom after the death of her father.

[Slide 3]

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Points to Consider

■ Snow White took initiative by cleaning the house before the Seven Dwarfs returned home

■ Snow White identified that her skills could help the Seven Dwarfs and used this to come to a mutually beneficial agreement.

■ Key to the successful outcome of this scenario was the Seven Dwarfs decision, to show trust and willingness to reach out and help a disadvantaged person

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Slide 5

---

asleep across their beds, she is asked to leave by Grumpy; however, she explains her dilemma and pleads to stay, offering in return to 'keep house', to wash, sew, sweep and cook for them. Despite the risk the Dwarfs face from the evil Queen and her black magic, they decide to let her stay.

I will now play the scene where the Seven Dwarfs arrive home while Snow White is sleeping upstairs: [Note for trainer: play DVD from 00:28:00 - 00:38:00]

[Slide 5]

There are three key points that I would like you to consider:
•Snow White took initiative by cleaning the house before the Seven Dwarfs returned home
•Snow White identified that her skills could help the Seven Dwarfs and used this to come to a mutually beneficial agreement
•Key to the successful outcome of this scenario, was the Seven Dwarfs, decision to show trust and willingness to reach out and help a disadvantaged person.

[Slide 6]

Exercise One Role-Play: Negotiating a Reciprocal Relationship

For this first exercise, we are going to stage a role-play based on the part of the scene we have just watched, where Snow White is trying to convince the Seven Dwarfs to let her stay.

Firstly, we need to consider the factors that influence the Seven Dwarfs' decision:

[Slide 7]

Role-Play: Negotiating a Reciprocal Relationship

Snow White is trying to convince the Seven Dwarfs to let stay

Positive	Negative	Ethical Dilemma
Snow White has already impressed with her cooking and cleaning, and offers to continue to 'keep house' by washing, sewing, sweeping and cooking for them	Danger from vengeance of the evil Queen and her black magic	If the Seven Dwarfs refuse to allow Snow White to stay, she would be all alone in the forest and could be killed by the evil Queen
She can cook gooseberry pie, the Dwarfs, favourite	Snow White is a stranger who broke into their home	
Snow White is beautiful and charming		

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Slide 6

asleep across their beds, she is asked to leave by Grumpy; however, she explains her dilemma and pleads to stay, offering in return to 'keep house', to wash, sew, sweep and cook for them. Despite the risk the Dwarfs face from the evil Queen and her black magic, they decide to let her stay.

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[Slide 7]

Character Traits

Grumpy

Snow White

Doc

Intelligent, sceptical, cynical, clashes with Doc

Kind, polite, eager to please, innocent

Authoritative, compassionate, bumbling, loves gooseberry pie

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Slide 7

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**Exercise One Role-Play: Negotiating a Reciprocal
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watched, where Snow White is trying to convince the
Seven Dwarfs to let her stay.

Firstly, we need to consider the factors that
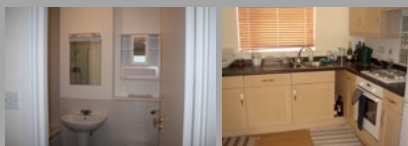influence the Seven Dwarfs' decision:

[Slide 7]

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

For this improvisational scenario we need three volunteers
_____

GRUMPY: "We know who we are, ask her who she is and what she is doing here?"

DOC: ...

SNOW WHITE: ...

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Slide 8

asleep across their beds, she is asked to leave by Grumpy; however, she explains her dilemma and pleads to stay, offering in return to 'keep house', to wash, sew, sweep and cook for them. Despite the risk the Dwarfs face from the evil Queen and her black magic, they decide to let her stay.

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Firstly, we need to consider the factors that influence the Seven Dwarfs' decision:

[Slide 7]

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

Exercise 2

A spacious, bright room available in Edgbaston, situated two minutes from bus stop, worth £85 per week, bills included.

In return I am looking for ...

Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

Slide 9

Begin with Snow White introducing her scheme.

Great! We've now seen two different responses to how this concept might apply to a community. How did you feel this role-play went and how could Snow White improve her proposal and pitch? Was Grumpy's argument strong enough and how did Doc get on board?

[Note for trainer: You can repeat this several times with the group]

[Slide 9]

Exercise two
A new government website links volunteers to people willing to offer a vacant room in exchange for services provided to them and their wider community. Write an advert stipulating your requirements in exchange for:

"A spacious, bright room available in Edgbaston, two minutes from bus stop, worth £85 per week, bills included."

In return, I am looking for ..."

[Example for trainer: "*A motivated individual trying to improve his/her situation. Willing to volunteer 8 hours per week for community projects and do a minimum of three hours of house work per week in my home."*]

[Note for trainer: Allow 5 minutes for the group to write their ads]

Now, I would like everyone to read out their ads so that we can discuss them.
Grumpy represent the council members responsible for making the decision.

Begin with Snow White introducing her scheme.

Slide 9

DB

DM and DK

KB

NM

SP and CW

41

Koby Barhad

How do I know what
I think until I see
what I say?

Project website, www.thoughtsyoumayhave.com

Writing thinking writings

This research first explores the use of a
writing application, designed to represent
the structure and behaviour of humans,
private thinking space. In a series of three
experiments (seven hours of inner dialogue,
a couple communicating through inner
dialogues, and a religious confession
in which a reverend shares his private
space with a confessor) I discovered the
potential of these representations to
act as a self-and social exploration tool.
Looking at writing prediction technologies,
I develop them, and a social space where
people manage their externalised thinking
streams, developing it, share and influence
others streams of thoughts. Cogitos is a
virtual existence of the thinking self that
continues to evolve even after we have
long disappeared from this world.

SP and CW

DB

DM and DK

KB

NM

SP and CW

The following pages are taken from Koby's project website,

"How do I know what I think until
I see what I say?"
(E.M. Forster)

"Thoughts you may have" is research that looks into the existence and possibility of regenerating what Augustine of Hippo described as "Soliloquium" — our Inner Dialogue.

It is a project commissioned by Microsoft Research, Cambridge, in which we were asked to "experiment with new tools for authoring"... "to redefine the relations between public and private authorship". My aim was to reintroduce writing as a form of thinking, and as the research advanced it became clear that thinking and writing are not only the "twins of mental life", they can actually produce a possible form of it.

Instillation of the 'word processor' framework
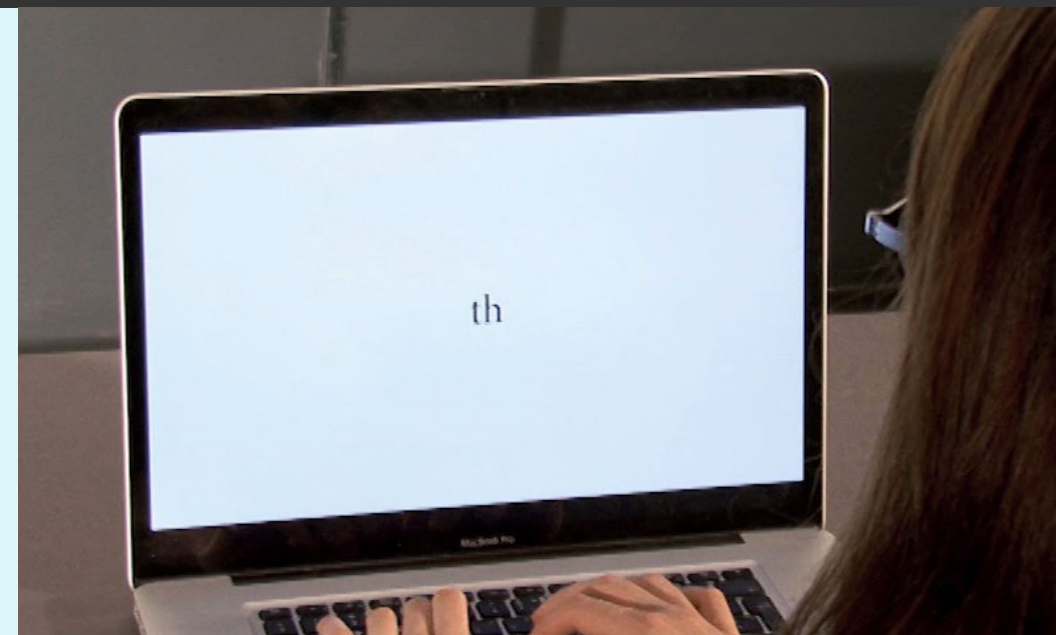
DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

SP and CW

Word Processor

The new framework is as addictive as surfing the web. It allows users the opportunity to consciously read their own thoughts. The data is arranged in the same order as in our minds, thus making the effect very powerful. It's very hard to stop writing as soon as you are drawn into the screen. One test subject wrote:

"When the screen went blank and I could not write, I realised how involved with this I had become. I did not want to stop and was very frustrated."

Using the 'word processor' framework

SP and CW

Word Processor Codes

Daydreaming — Moments that users lost their conscious view. The program was set to produce a sign if nothing was typed for 30 seconds.

Speaking — Moments the subjects had to speak with others in the physical world.

Singing and Humming — Moments users realised they where humming to themselves.

/ daydreaming

{} singing /humming

[] speaking with others

Image: symbols used for categorising thoughts

Experiment 1: INNER DIALOGUE

The first step was to put the new word processor to the test, and find if this form of writing is different from what we know.

In a seven-hour session of inner dialogue, I tested different writing conditions: three hours of being in private space, two hours of sharing the space with another person, and two hours of being in public space.

The experiment looked at several questions:

1) What are the relations between the words being typed and to our conscious thread of thoughts?

2) Does the normal balance between consciousness and unconsciousness change?

3) What will be the new definition of our private space? Public space?

4) What sort of extreme behaviours will it trigger?

5) How far are we willing to go just to have representations of our thinking selves?
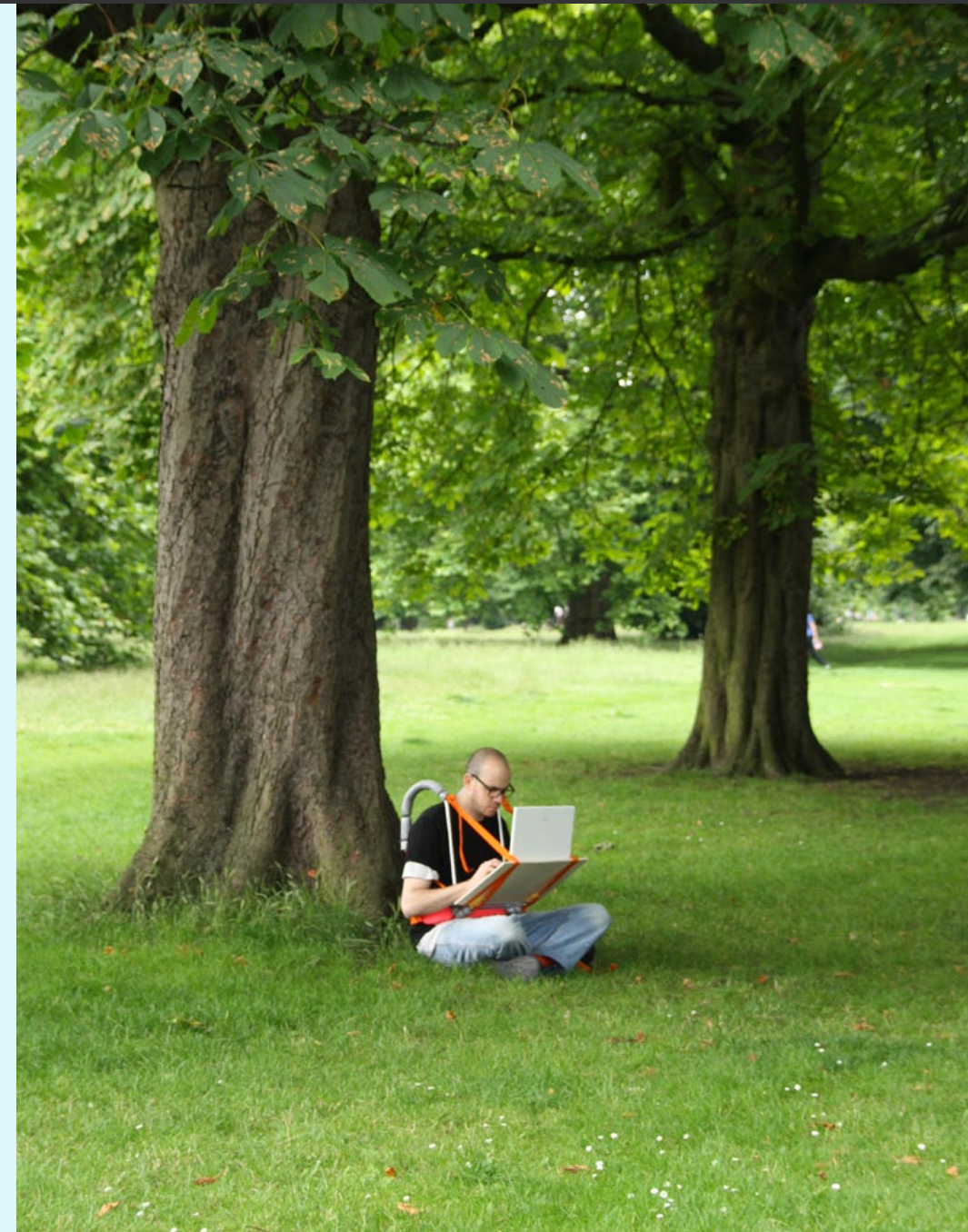

Laptop carrier

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*ye what the f*** are you looking at f******!*

[]

/

hate photo shooting

shut up

Seven-hours of writing — South Kensington

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Seven-hours of writing — Hyde Park

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5) How far are we willing to go just to have representations of our thinking selves?

I don't know if people are stalking me or I'm the stalker

feels weird

can feel them looking but I'm talking on them

back stalking, nice!

Seven-hours of writing — Hyde Park

For results and analysis on the project website, [click here](#)

(additional experiments exploring themes of the influence of communication and confession can also be found there)

DB

DM and DK

KB

NM

SP and CW

SP and CW

DB

DM and DK

KB

NM

SP and CW

52

Nicolas Myers

Punctuation?

Nicolas Myers

www.portfolio.myers.fr/home
www.studiomyers.co.uk/

The following section of
typography experiments is based
on a page format that was used
for a well-know type foundry.

British character set of Arial Unicode

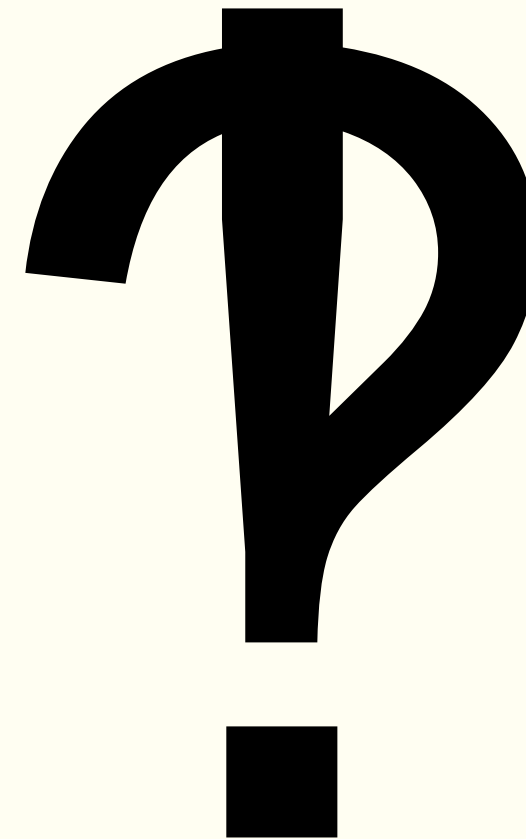# Arial Unicode MS abcdefghijk lmnopqrst uvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJK LMNOPQRST UVWXYZ 1234567890 !@£$%^&*()

[ques]

[ear]

DB

DM and DK

KB

NM

SP and CW

Double punctuation

Hybrid punctuation

Charles the First walked and talked
half an hour after his head was cut off.

Charles the First walked and talked;
half an hour after, his head was cut off.

Charles the First walked and talked…
Half an hour after, his head was cut off !!!!

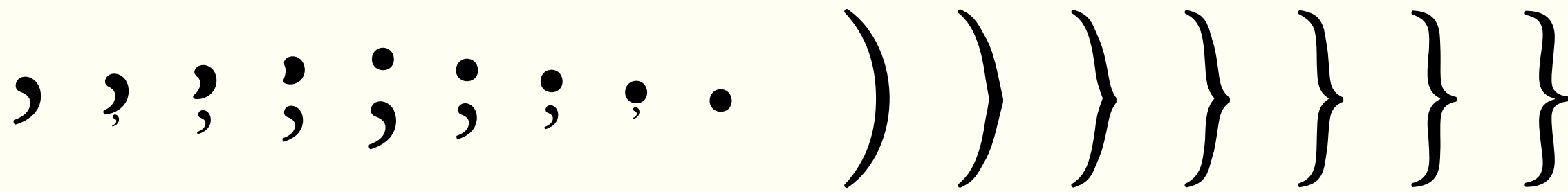Charles the 1st walked & talked
½ h after, his head was ✂ off.

Char les the 1 st walked & talked

½ h after, his head was ✂ off ■

Punctuation mutation — forming hybrid punctuation

[[(((• • • ' ' '
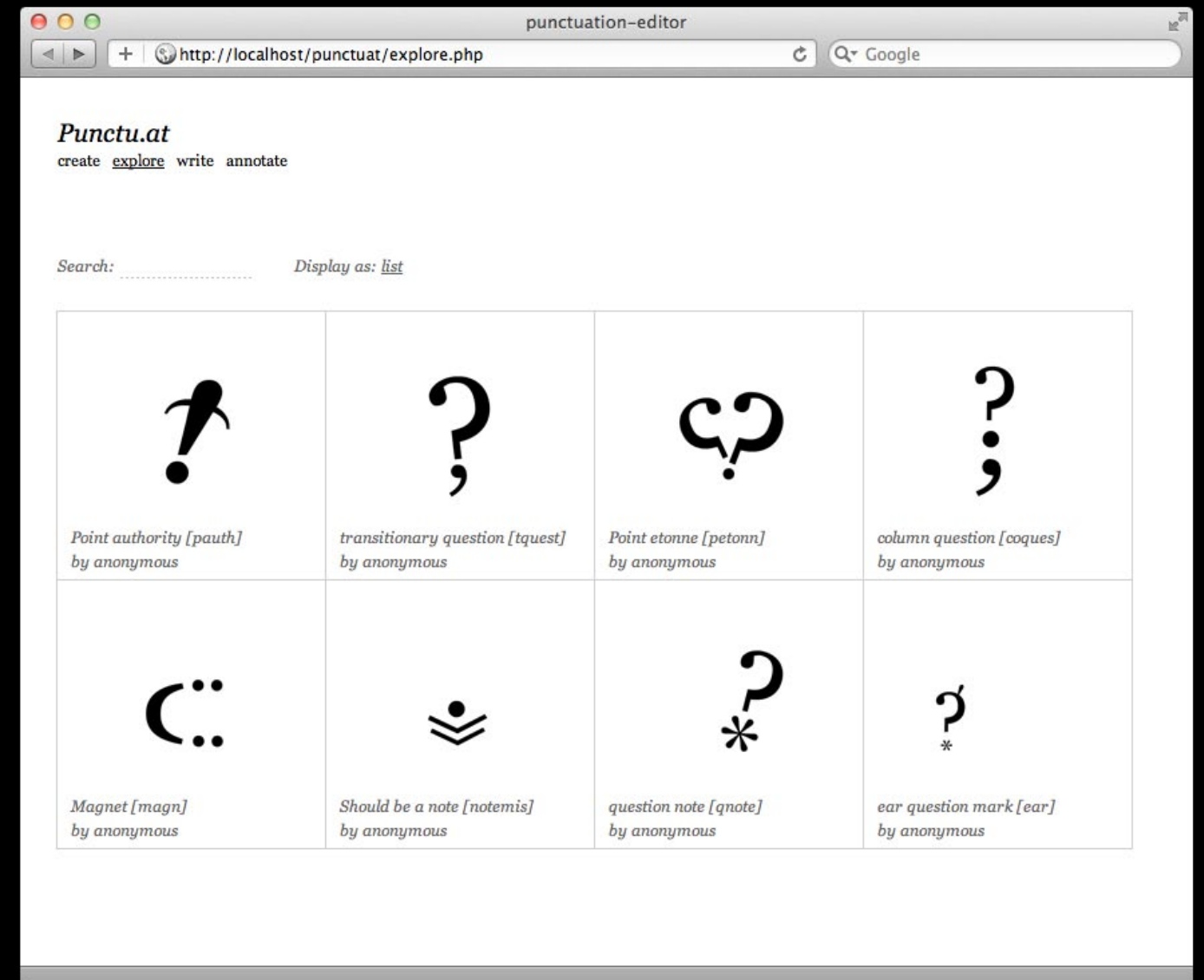
Punctuation mutation — forming hybrid punctuation

, , ; ; ; ; ; , •))) } } } } }

Punctuation mutation — forming hybrid punctuation

! ? ? ? ?

Punctuation?

There is a rich world of symbols that can change our perception of the written language. Never pronounced, constantly evolving, these seemingly trivial hooks, dots and lines can clarify, structure or twist a text; they can also make us smile or ponder upon an intended meaning. But on our keyboards this diversity is reduced to the bare minimum. Let's mix and merge these symbols and invent new ones! Devised as an experiment, http://punctu.at is an online tool to enable anyone to create, use and share personal and imaginative punctuation.

[coques]

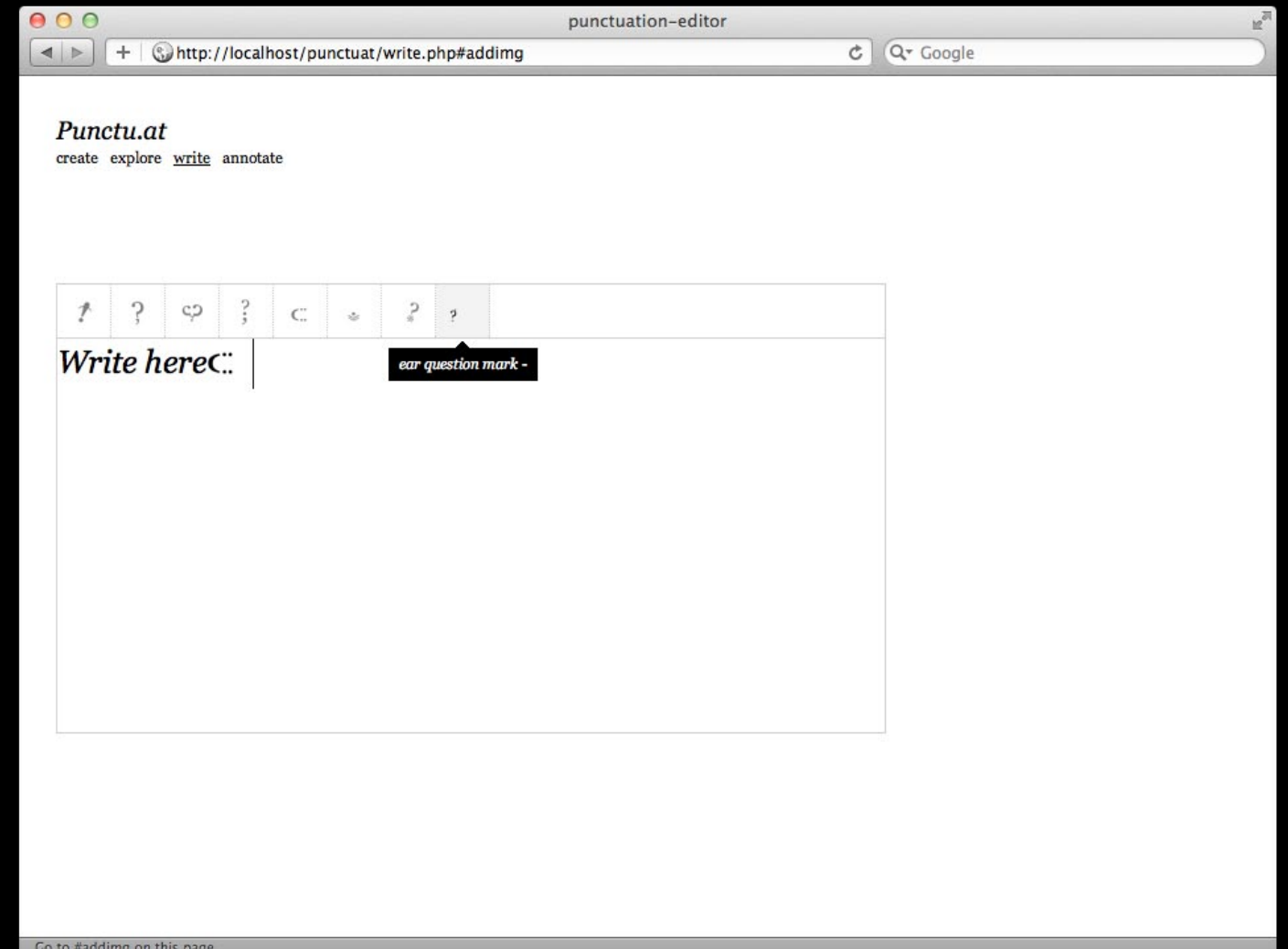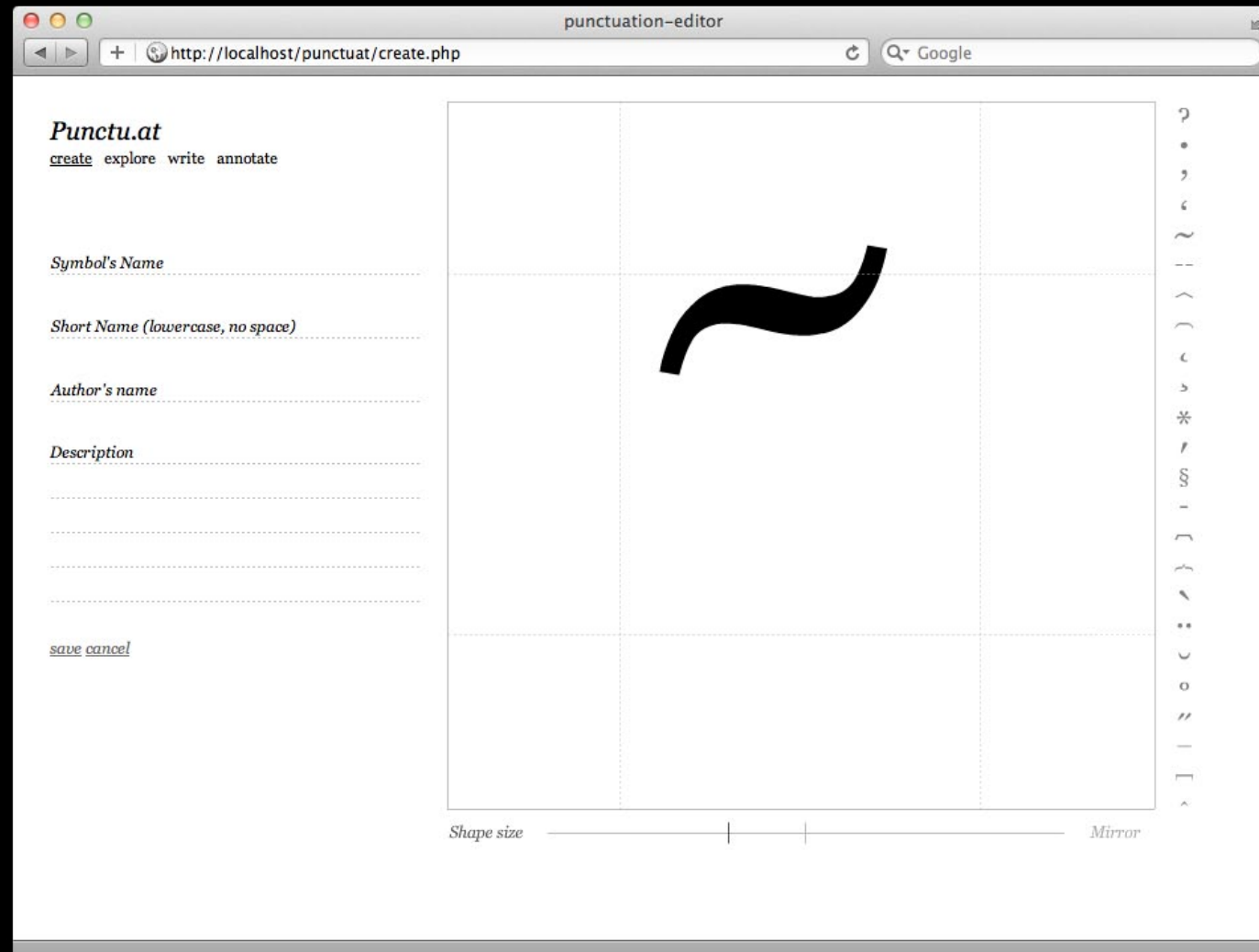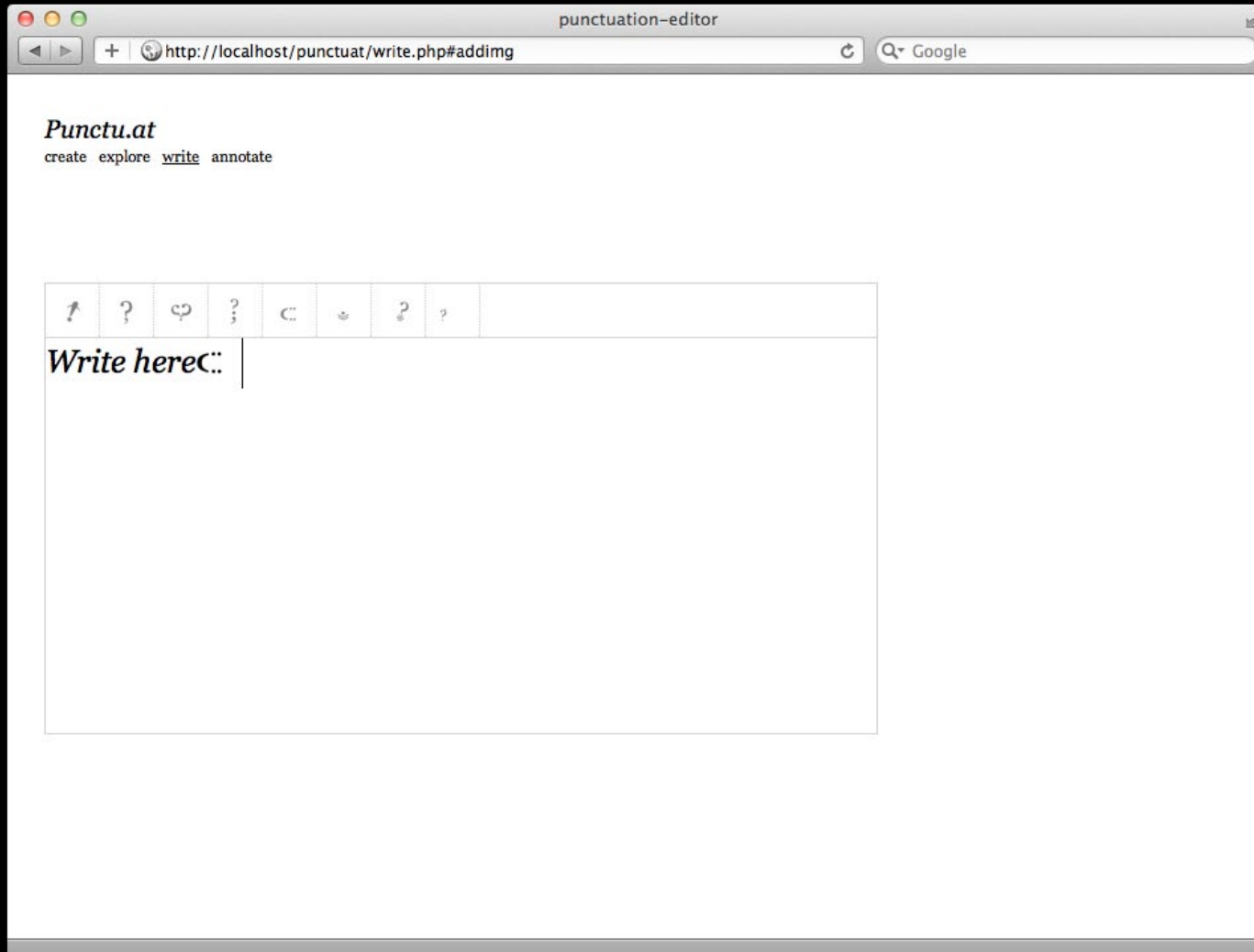rk [ear]

Project website, [click here](#)

punctuation-editor

http://localhost/punctuat/explore.php

Q Google

Punctu.at
create explore write annotate

Search: _____   Display as: list

Point authority [pauth] by anonymous	transitionary question [tquest] by anonymous	Point etonne [petonn] by anonymous	column question [coques] by anonymous
Magnet [magn] by anonymous	Should be a note [notemis] by anonymous	question note [qnote] by anonymous	ear question mark [ear] by anonymous

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

Project website, [click here](...)

http://localhost/punctuat/create.php

Q- Google

Punctu.at

create explore write annotate

Symbol's Name

Short Name (lowercase, no space)

Author's name

Description

save cancel

Shape size   *Mirror*

http://localhost/punctuat/write.php#addimg

Q- Google

Punctu.at

create explore **write** annotate

Write here ear question mark -

Go to #addimg on this page

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

Project website, click here

Punctu.at
create explore write annotate

Write here

Punctu.at
create explore write annotate

Magnet - Denotes a trick to grab the reader

http://localhost/punctuat/write.php#addimg

http://localhost/punctuat/marginalia.php

Newspaper of the year | 12 August 2011 | Last updated less than one minute ago

guardian.co.uk

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News ▶ UK | World | Development | US | Politics | Media | Education | Society | Science | Te
Breaking news: Sunday tabloids add almost 2m sales after News of the World closure

IPCC 'misled' media on
Mark Duggan shooting

LIVE • Police hit back at Cameron's criticism
• Ealing man dies after attack during riot
• Appeal for witnesses to Tottenham shooting

○ Police chief hits back at government over riots
○ Ed Miliband promises riots inquiry
○ Man arrested over murder of Ealing victim
○ Little room for leniency in courtrooms
○ Full coverage of UK riots

Go to #addimg on this page

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

Punctu.at
create explore write

↑ ? ♡

Write here

DB

DM and DK

KB

NM

SP and CW

Sascha Pohflepp
and Chris Woebken

The Future of Everything

Sascha Pohflepp
Chris Woebken

Further information about Sascha and Chris can be found at their websites:

www.pohflepp.com
www.woebken.net

Excerpts from a Skype chat

LONDON (KW STUDIO)

to NEW YORK (SASCHA)

KW: So, Seb and I are looking at different treatments to retell or document all the projects. The idea for it comes from each designer's individual take on the project, and for yours we need to know more before we proceed. Because we don't fully understand it — I guess we have a bad record of it because we were both not present in Cambridge — well I wasn't; Seb was, and you had a Skype presentation with a bad reception. The video chat wasn't successfully recorded by us, but we do have your PDF presentation. It would be good to go through it with your explanation — or alternatively you could just briefly explain your project without the presentation and tell us what your intentions are. Has your project got a name yet?

Sascha: No, not really, we haven't got a name yet. Wait, I will quickly ask Chris… 'Everything' we will use for sure, we might use the word 'future' as well, but not sure yet.

KW: I see. So 'Everything for sure, future may be'.

Sascha: So, the initial thought was the situation that your life will be recorded and archived. The issue has been in the media lots lately; there is this

article in the Guardian: 'iPhone keeps record of everywhere you go'. Security researchers have discovered that Apple's iPhone keeps track of where you go — and saves every detail of it to a secret file on the device, which is then copied to the owner's computer when the two are synchronised.

Link: http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2011/apr/20/iphone-tracking-prompts-privacy-fears It's been up for the last 18 months but has now been removed.
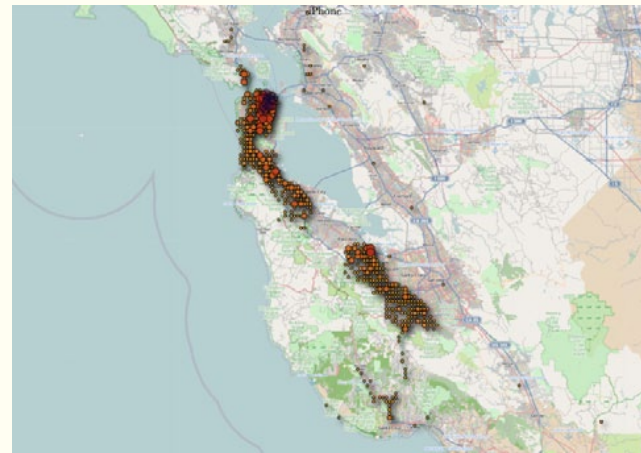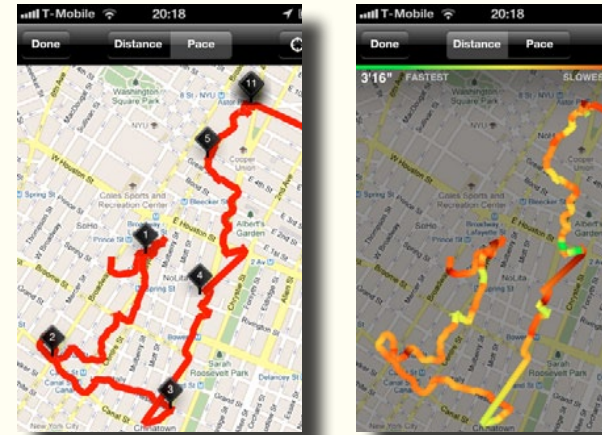

KW: So, the future of writing might be the future of writing everything.

Sascha: All those locations create a spatial narrative that we are interested in. I copied my location data onto

my computer and have seen my last year of travels. It's slide 2 from the presentation. You can see when I have been to the States, then, here you see those singular dots, this one is an interview I did outside LA.

We got in touch with Kyle McDonald who is working with these data narratives. So, the future of writing also equals

loc.lat	loc.lon	t	device	os
40.72771630075342	-73.98544064212329	1303873301.041162	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.72769855472164	-73.9858252079794	1303873300.338046	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.72971794901641	-73.986138831131152	1303873297.934919	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.68748748655663	-73.98454467711339	1303854285.61292	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.68638689362319	-73.97564187101446	1303848462.689954	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.68775850006179	-73.97996244744593	1303836779.779793	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.688142133009969	-73.98004278964402	1303836777.519955	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.72845272101694	-73.97847717211866	1303778565.271762	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.72469515656566	-73.98113944525251	1303778564.504675	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.72982734663368	-73.97927617564358	1303777497.241094	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.7273302990549	-73.98318565204271	1303774181.534944	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.72754454883456	-73.98324274244366	1303774181.022663	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.6881015258139	-73.97967553852708	1303755094.24226	iPhone2,1	4.3.2

the future of reading. And it could get quite specific — like you could record everything you have ever said. And knowing that, how would your behaviour change? How will it all be processed? It's like a constantly updated autobiography. Your personality, instant mediation, describing your character.

Our outcome will be three short films: 'PAST', 'PRESENT' and 'FUTURE'.

For the 'PAST' one we will get the actor to re-enact something from his life, relive something in this space.

KW: Wow, this could become quite religious or philosophical — it reminds me of my uncle who is a Taoist, who told me about the act of reliving your own birth, because birth is the most dramatic experience a person goes

through and through re-enacting it, you get over the trauma of it.

Sascha: Haha, I like that comparison.

The 'PRESENT' one is about the non-accuracy of these tracking devices, how the dot point on the screen bounces around and shows wrong locations. It could be someone who wants to be in a slightly different spot, or is in the slightly wrong spot. He might be aware that he is present in both locations. We might film it in midtown, GPS across.

With the 'FUTURE' one we're not quite there yet. We are thinking of the city space for desire. As you are typing into Google: *I want to...* and then it predicts *... I want to die, I want to hold your hand, I want to hold your hand lyrics, I want to be a billionaire, I want to know what love is, I want to watch this, I want to be the guy...* etc. It could be location related...

The Future of Everything

The future of writing is the future of
writing down everything. We will be the
last generation whose life will not have
been on record. Personal technology has
been tracking our every move for some
time already and selective memory is a
biological concept from which databases
do not suffer. The future of writing will be
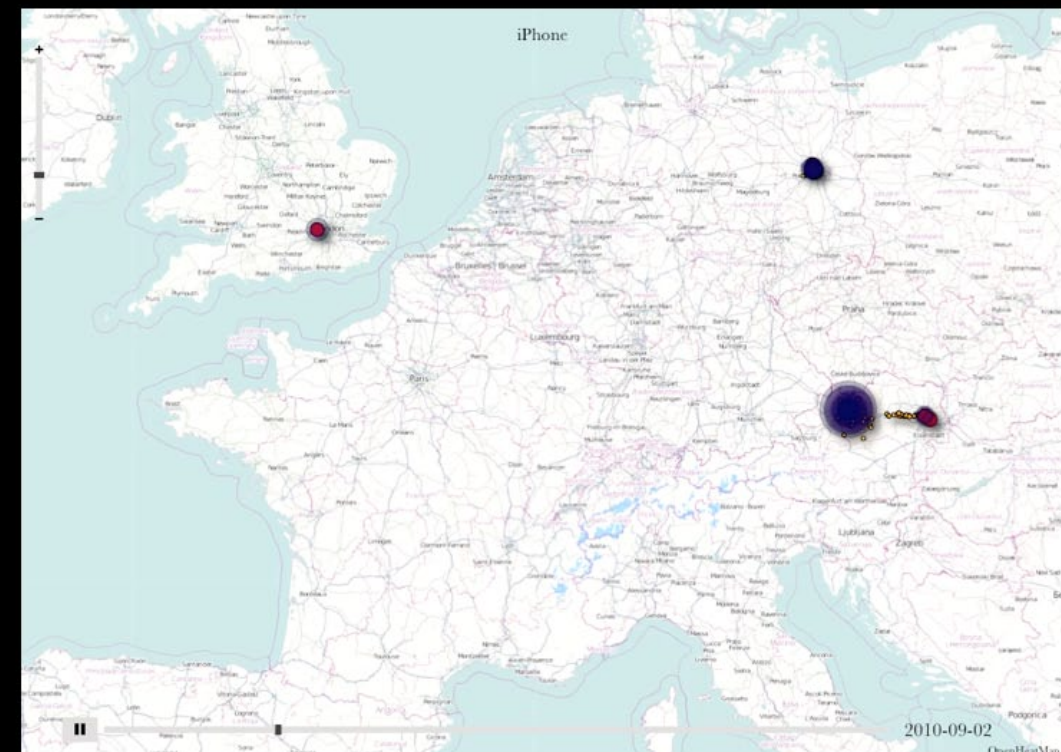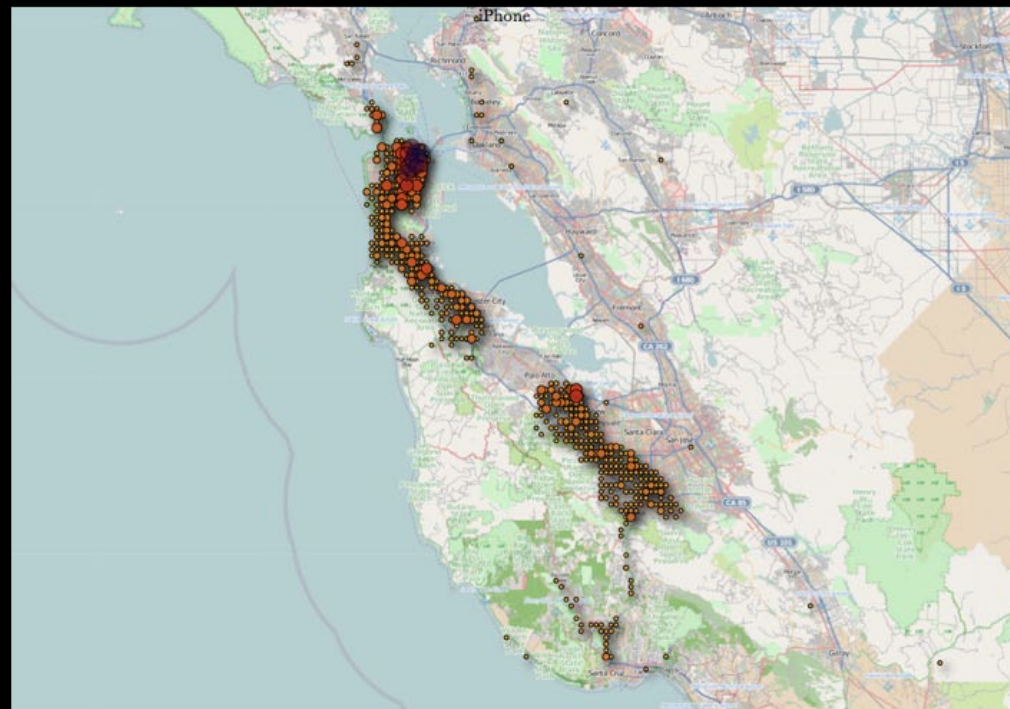our auto-autobiographies being created

The Future of Writing

Opposite:

Work-in-progress PDF presentation
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Below and opposite:

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The Future of Everything

The future of writing is the future of
writing down everything. We will be the
last generation whose life will not have
been on record. Personal technology has
been tracking our every move for some
time already and selective memory is a
biological concept from which databases
do not suffer. The future of writing will be
our auto-autobiographies being created

(is) The Future of Everything

loc.lat	loc.lon	t	device	os
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40.7106888877551	-73.96560557846935	1303669867.238242	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
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40.72604946898173	-73.95184344451694	1303594602.751329	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
40.73687448749002	-73.97386069410361	1303593889.509935	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
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40.72430219183099	-73.95267960295776	1303591309.22862	iPhone2,1	4.3.2
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40.70985120995347	-73.9660677553489	1303583217.628471	iPhone2,1	4.3.2

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The future of writing is the future of
writing down everything. We will be the
last generation whose life will not have
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been tracking our every move for some
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"The future of writing will be the future of
writing down everything." (Kyle McDonald)

We may be the last generation
whose life will not be part of the
perfect record. (Selective memory
is a biological concept, machines
don't care.)

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"The memory of a precise color in
the street bounces back on another
country, another distance, another
music, endlessly." (Chris Marker)

The future of writing will thus be
the future of reading the data of our
auto-autobiographies.

How aware will we be of our every
step becoming part of a narrative
written by machinic ghost-writers?

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1 The Book of Everything

Data sources

Time
Location
Distance travelled
Compass & gyroscope
Visibility & disappearance
Photos taken
Communication as dialogue
Climate
Socioeconomic indicators
Simultaneous events such as news
Air traffic
etc.

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2 Three short films (Past/Present/Future)

DB   DM and DK   KB   NM   SP and CW

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**(Past) We may want to attempt to
use our perfect memory in order
to go back in time**

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(Present) We may want to be remembered where we were not
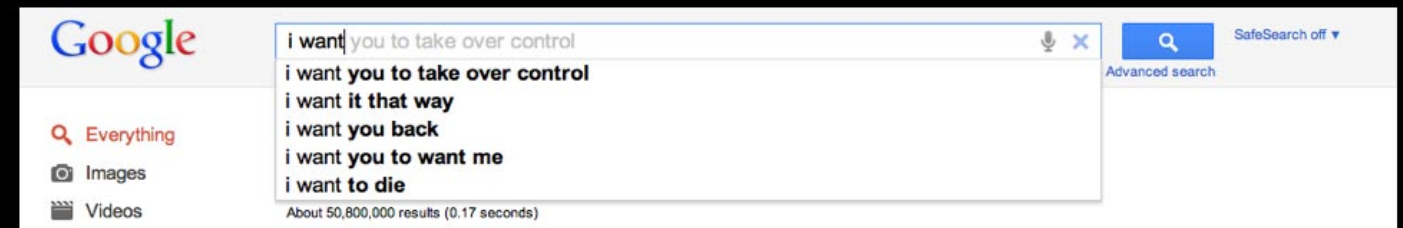
The 'multipath effect'

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(Future) We may want the machines to read our futures

Google   i want you to take over control   🎤 ✕   🔍   SafeSearch off ▾
           i want **you to take over control**   Advanced search
🔍 Everything   i want **it that way**
📷 Images   i want **you back**
                 i want **you to want me**
📹 Videos   i want **to die**
                 About 50,800,000 results (0.17 seconds)

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by machinic ghost-writers. How aware
will we be of being the protagonist of a
continuous narrative? One through which
the past could be re-enacted, the meaning
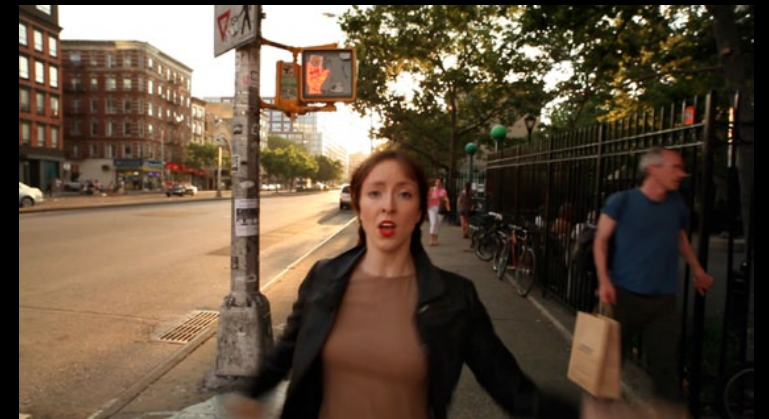of the present influenced, and the future
predicted.

DB

DM and DK

KB

NM

SP and CW

Below and opposite:

Film stills: 'Future'

We may want the machines
to read our futures

DB

DM and DK

KB

NM

SP and CW

SP and CW