first person

essay

Victoria Vesna responds in turn

by Victoria Vesna

Tuesday, March 30th 2004

"Connect the n space to the 0 and understand that the lack of time due to information overflow is an illusion," writes Victoria Vesna.

Intervals of time and space

It is understandable that intervals are generally understood as being spatial, but the word "interval" in the context of this project and the software that is running it includes time. *N0time* takes into consideration that time spent in physical space is experienced differently from time spent in information space (i.e., the Net). Gerald de Jong describes the "elastic interval geometry" that drives this process:

> *"Spatial proximity is an evaluation of the distance between two spatial positions in the operative coordinate system. In elastic interval geometry, every inter-nexus relationship is defined wholly and explicitly by an interval, and there are no other forms of relationship. An implication of the irrelevance of spatial proximity is that two nexuses can easily occupy the same position in the coordinate space but need not experience any spatial effects as a result, and two fabrics can therefore pass through each other without noticing. Also, a fabric can be folded through itself without any consequence. In effect, each connected fabric of intervals occupies its own spatial domain, and only when two connected fabrics are brought together*

> *with a new interval or through the merging of two nexuses do they experience each other's existence."—[From the 2001-02 version of: http://www.fluidiom.com/memes/proximity.html]*

In other words, an interval of time and an interval of space are not possible without each other. Time is movement through space. Where there is no movement, there is no registration of time, and no intervals are recorded. If there are no intervals, there is no possibility for structure to emerge and there is no possibility for additional information, or memes, to be attached to the databody. Memes could be unique sounds or compositions that spread, replicate and mutate as they move around from body to body.

The trouble with memes

Seed thoughts, or key words, and eventually sounds or images, are different in each databody and they continue to evolve by additions of other words or sounds. There is no identical cloning here. If one takes a comparative look at the emergent shapes of different people, it will be clear that they are quite different and in no way clones of each other. Memetic variation, based on genetic variation, is a necessary prerequisite of evolution. No variation, no evolution. It would be a mistake, however, to compare genetic and memetic evolution too closely—so there is really no opposition or direct correlation with Jeremijenko's piece. Perhaps the greatest difference between biological and idea cloning is that, in a culture that is driven by digital technologies, memes can indeed be identical copies or clones. But then, this has been true since the emergence of the printing press. And soon enough, no matter what form ideas move through, they do start to mutate and vary, and the identical copies are simply a step in the process. What we are all participating in is a huge acceleration of idea-propagation through the Internet. For instance, many web-sites are copies of each other, with variation of content only. Yet, if one looks at the early Mosaic web sites, the design variations were minimal compared to those of today.

The community issue

The implosion of the body is in fact a community event, since all participants become aware of the shift of the databody into a static, archival state. This is done simply as an announcement, and is not a participatory event. Explosion of the overloaded databody is a result of the owner not spending time to weed out the unnecessary information. This activity does take time, or attention from the owner. Daily we come into contact with people who are so overloaded with junk information that they do not function well, and if they do not take heed and spend time to clear their mind, it is not unusual that their body is not able to withstand the information overload. Many who have spent much time in MOOs, including myself, do not have the luxury anymore. The communication patterns have shifted, times have changed, and we are in search of other spaces that offer “quality time.” Much of that activity has moved to online game environments that offer this promise as they evolve.

In relation to no time

The irony implied is lost when we are too busy to take the time to understand the intention or to create a neutral, empty space that allows us to connect to the larger picture. It is not surprising that this project is referred to as *n0* time, when in fact it is really named *n0* time. Connect the “n” space to the 0 and understand that the lack of time due to information overflow is an illusion. There is, however, “0” time in “n” space that we can strive for.

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