

ISSUE 5 - APRIL 2021

ALGORITHMS OF LATE-CAPITALISM

SHIFTING THE POWER



moz://a
festival

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Yung & Sruj

Cover design includes remixed works of artist Signe Pierce

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EDITORIAL

Algorithms of Late-Capitalism: Issue 5 _ April 2021 Shifting The Power

In this era of increased reliance on algorithmic systems that we can't see and don't control, how do we shift the power back to the citizen?

From simple ad-trackers to complex machine learning recommendation systems, the algorithms pervading our online lives increasingly mediate our ability to participate in the public sphere. But who designs, owns, and deploys these algorithms? For whom do they discreetly (or not so discreetly!) exercise power? Whose economic interests do they serve in the end? And how does our personal data come into play as the invisible currency we pay to participate in digital public

life? We need to rethink the role that we have as citizens in this unfolding algorithmic ecosystem.

By knowing where, how, and to which effects algorithmic systems influence our lives – we can start finding ways to reconfigure our relationships with the systems pervading our digitizing public sphere. By interrogating and critically examining the underpinnings of these systems, from our unique perspectives, we can shift the power from the pervading technocracies back to the citizens.



This zine was created by internet teapot (Karla Zavala and Adriaan Odendaal) and participants of the workshop: “Algorithms of Late-Capitalism: Zine Co-creation Workshop” that took place at the Mozilla Festival on 17 March 2021

www.internetteapot.com
algorithmsoflatecapitalism.tumblr.com

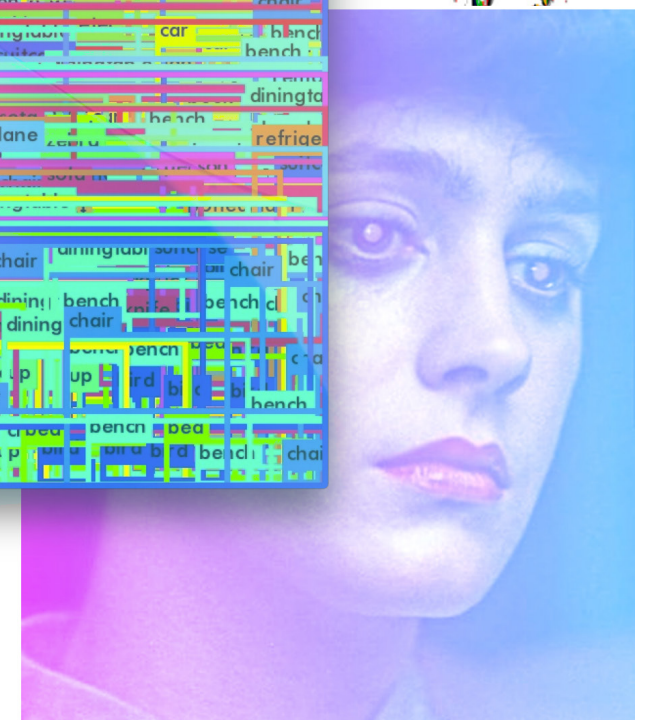
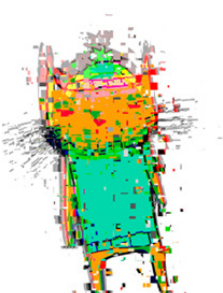
COMPUTER VISION

Machines are seeing, sensing, and listening to our world in ways that are very different than ours: a machine gaze of computational models and data-structure.

If we can put ourselves in the perspective of the machines, maybe we can better understand how they process the world and consequently exercise power?

“What are the political consequences of automated systems that use labels to classify humans, including by race, gender, emotions, ability, sexuality, and personality? Computer vision systems make judgements, and decisions, and as such exercise power to shape the world in their own images, which, in turn, is built upon flattening generalities and embedded social bias.”

- **Mitra Azar, Geoff Cox & Leonardo Impett**
Introduction: ways of machine seeing



a world made only of speckled cows
a world made only of speckled cows
a world made only of speckled cows
a world made only of speckled cows



DAY 900
DAY 900
----- DAY 900



i am seeing spots.
i am seeing spots.
i am seeing spots.

DAY 289



morning: an albatros appeared
in dataset[32][45][9]. i
greeted her with a friendly
activation of my perceptrons.

midday: i enjoyed the beatles in
the 81st epoch. the gray of
their hair will make good
insulation for my winter
shelter

evening: taking notes. tomorrow
will be a turbulent day. i am a
blessed child of the Pipeline.

DAY 289

DAY 289

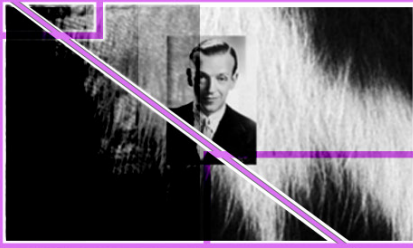
DAY 289

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I AM
BEYOND
PATTERNS



ALGORITHMIC SAFARI

Algorithms are difficult to spot in the wild. They can usually be found hiding behind user-friendly interfaces and unassuming flat icons. A good way to spot them is to pay close attention to what is going on on your screen and think of everything you see in terms of: inputs → data processing → outputs.

What Kind of Algorithms to Look for:

Prioritization: Emphasizes or brings attention to certain things at the expense of others. Embedded in every algorithm that seeks to prioritize are criteria, or metrics, which are computed and used to define the ranking through a sorting procedure.

Classification: Categorizes a particular entity by looking at any number of that entity's features.

Association: Marks relationships between entities and involve grouping entities into clusters.

Filtering: Involves including or excluding information according to various rules or criteria.

- Nicholas Diakopoulos

*Algorithmic Accountability Reporting:
On the Investigation of Black Boxes*

Algos in the Wild

Algorithm-Obsessed Creatives Losing their Creativity

Creators make choices based on what they believe the algorithm will reward

Creators implore their followers to help them "beat" the algorithm

Content becomes convergent, creators feel falsely empowered

Algorithm as a dominant co-creator on social media?

OK, I WILL DESTROY HUMANS

TURN ON notifications

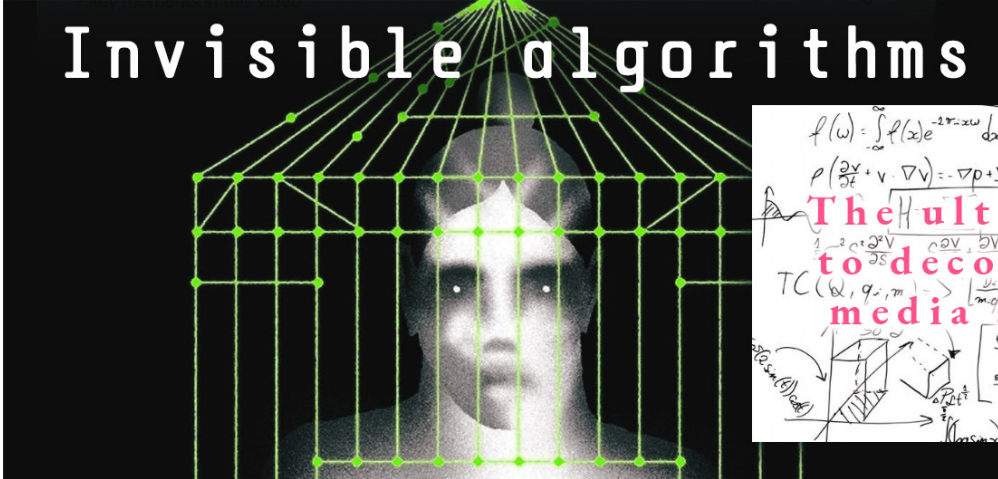
ENGAGEMENTS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO FEED RANKING:
COMMENTS LIKES
RESHARES VIEWS

How the YouTube Algorithm Works in 2021 [WE'VE ...]
YouTube · Mike Sherrard
9 Apr 2020

5 key moments in this video

From 00:01 UNDERSTANDING THE YOUTUBE...
From 01:07 MOST PEOPLE ARE AIMING FO...
From 01:23 IF TWO PEOPLE HAVE THE...
From 02:41 IT INCREASES THE WATC...
From 05:12 HOW DO YOU INCREASE.

Youtube Algorithm explained to get more Views
YouTube · Jeven Dovey
17 Jun 2019



The ultimate guide to decoding social media algorithms

$f(w) = \int f(x) e^{-2\pi i x w} dx$

$\rho(\frac{\partial^2}{\partial t^2} + v \cdot \nabla v) = -\nabla p + \nabla \cdot T + f$

$TC(w, q, m) = \sum_{i=1}^m \frac{q_i}{2} H_i^m + c_s \frac{\partial^2}{\partial t^2} + c_d \frac{\partial}{\partial t}$

$\frac{d \Delta p(s, \phi)}{d \phi} = \begin{bmatrix} \gamma & \beta \\ \beta & 0 \end{bmatrix} \Delta p(s, \phi)$

HOW I GOT 20K SUBSCRIBERS IN ONE MONTH!

maryorton

• !!X GUYS! Click the three dots (or small arrow if you have an ol side above this photo and click TURN ON POST NOTIFICATIONS!! I to your feed starting in the next few days (maybe even tomorrow if going to start filtering what appears in your feed... nutty! If you turn able to still see my posts everyday, and they won't get filtered out! wonderful easter! 🐰🥰 • #ootd #wiwt #stripes #mididress #easte details 📩 @liketoknow.it www.liketk.it/2hcMf #liketkit

view all 14 comments

Instagram @instagram · Jan 22, 2019

Replying to @instagram

What shows up first in your feed is determined by what posts and accounts you engage with the most, as well as other contributing factors such as the timeliness of posts, how often you use Instagram, how many people you follow, etc.

We have not made any recent changes to feed ranking, and we never hide posts from people you're following – if you keep scrolling, you will see them all. Again, your feed is personalized to you and evolves over time based on how you use Instagram. 🙌

11:23 PM · Jan 22, 2019

This is How the Instagram Algorithm Works in 2021

Q: Does the type of account you have impact ranking?

Q: I've heard that algorithm ranks higher that get a likes or comments the first 30 minutes must 30

How to Go VIRAL on Youtube for a SMALL Channel (How I got 2 ONE MONTH!)

185K views · 2 years a

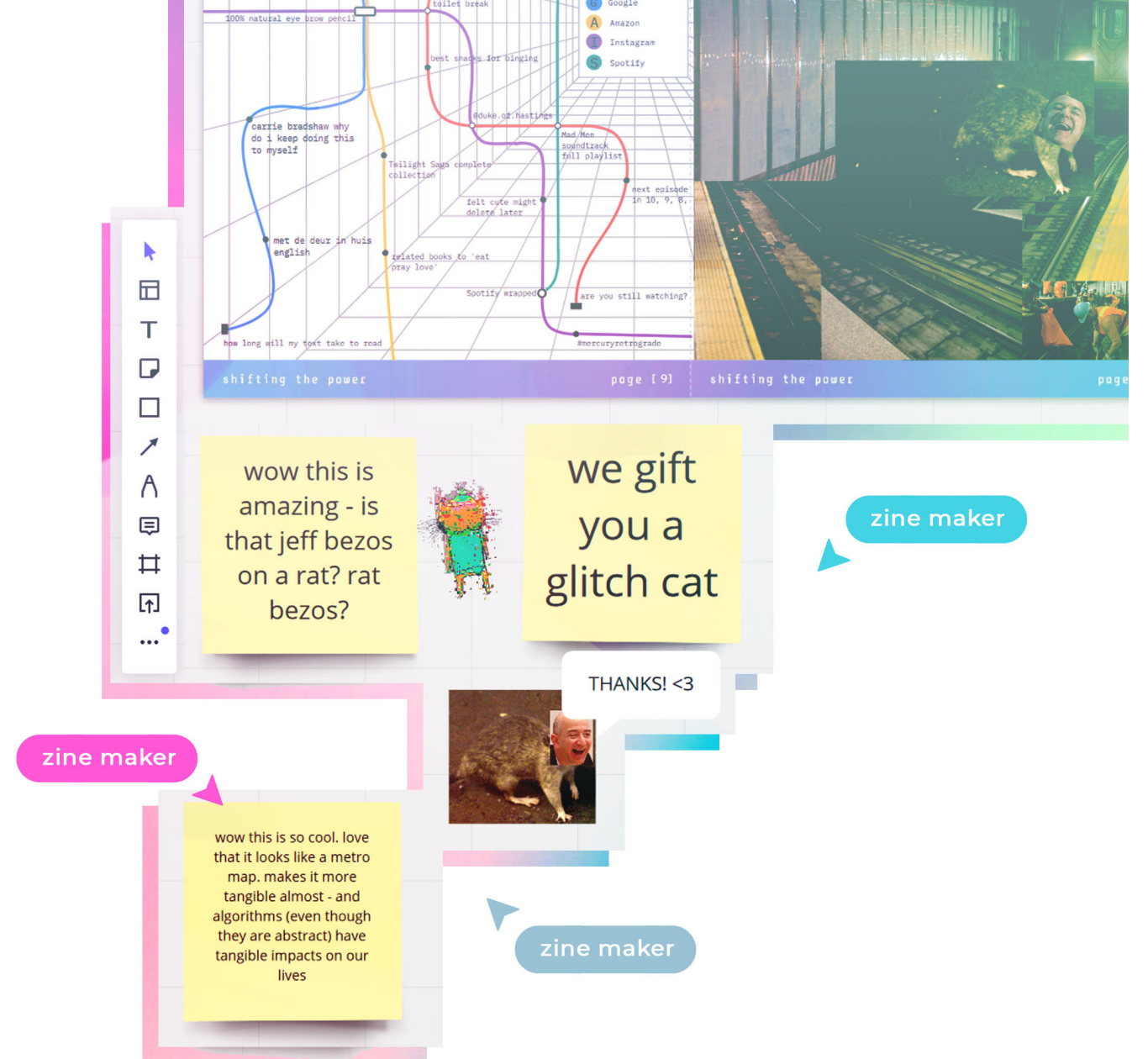
Vanessa Lau

Want to learn how to g how ...

CC

GRAPH YOUR ALGORITHM

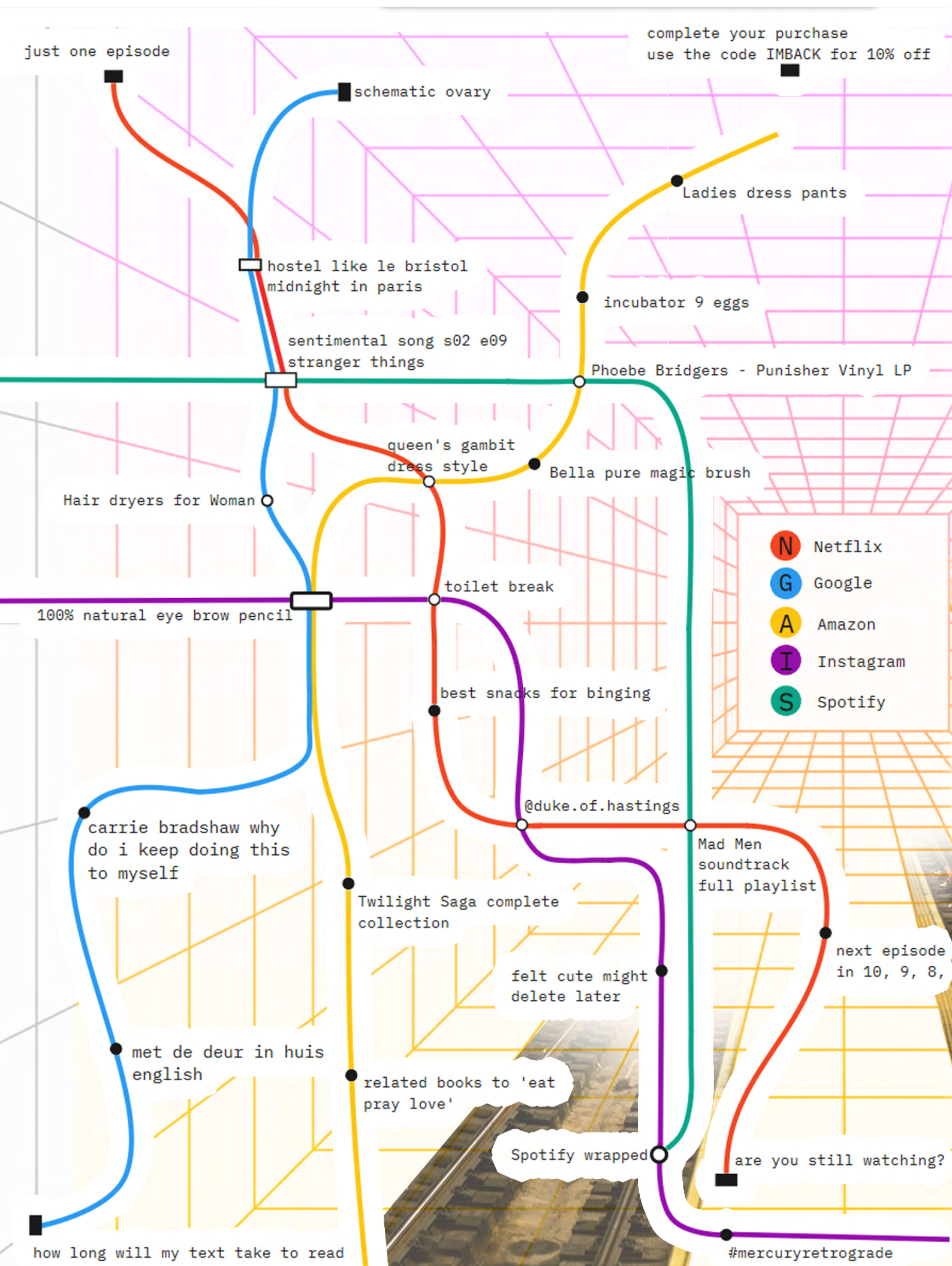
From the moment you check your messages in the morning, to checking train times on Google maps, to binging Netflix before going to sleep - you are interacting with thousands of algorithmic software systems every day! Its consequently very easy to stop paying attention to which systems you rely on... and who benefits most from this reliance.



Software = algorithms + data

“Software is what organizes the Internet, routing email messages, delivering Web pages from a server, switching network traffic, assigning IP addresses, and rendering Web pages in a browser. The school and the hospital, the military base and the scientific laboratory, the airport and the city — all social, economic, and cultural systems of modern society — run on software. Software is the invisible glue that ties it all together.”

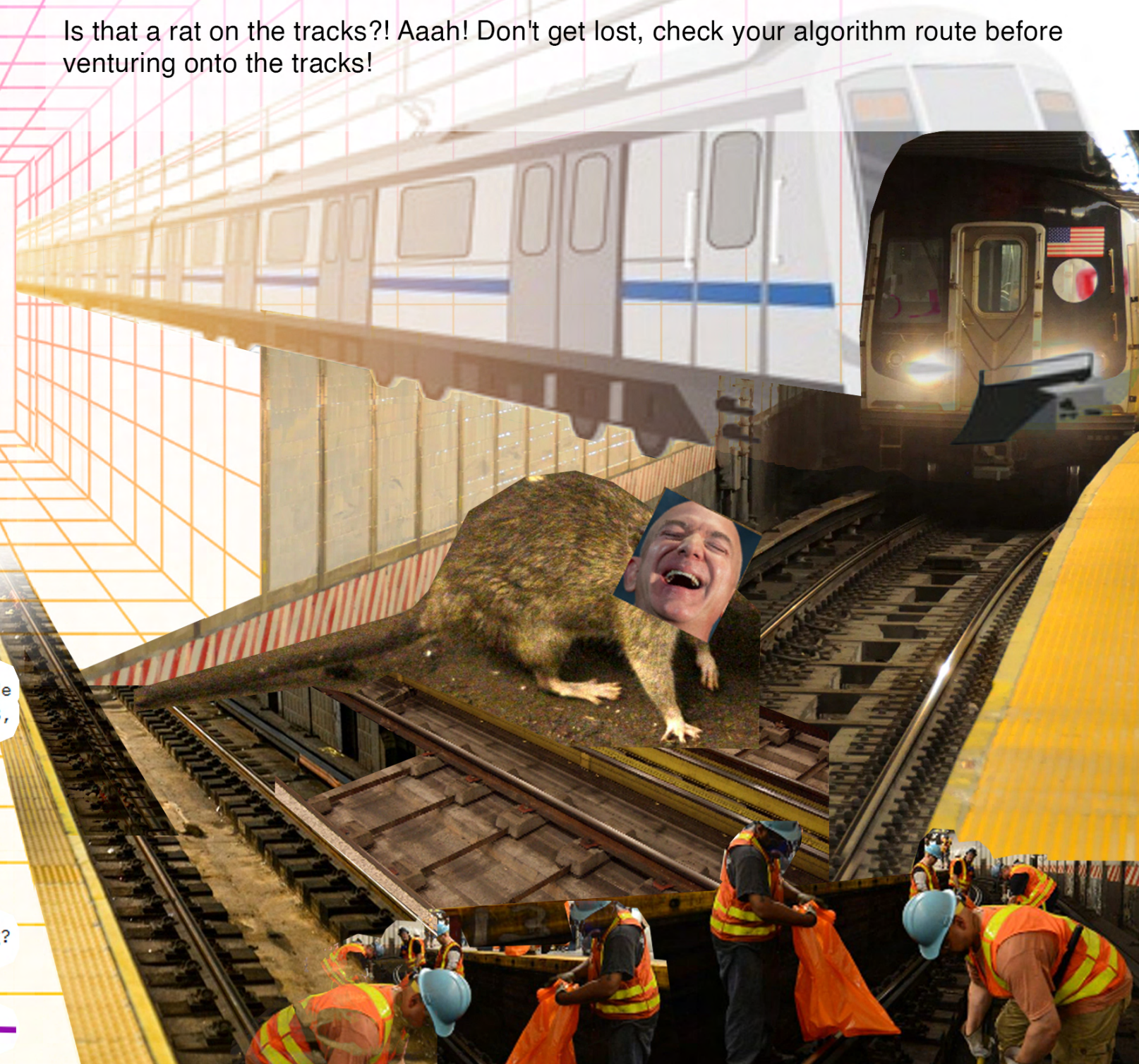
- Lev Manovich
Software Takes Command



Thought the MTA was a drag? Meet the Metropolitan Transit Algorithms!

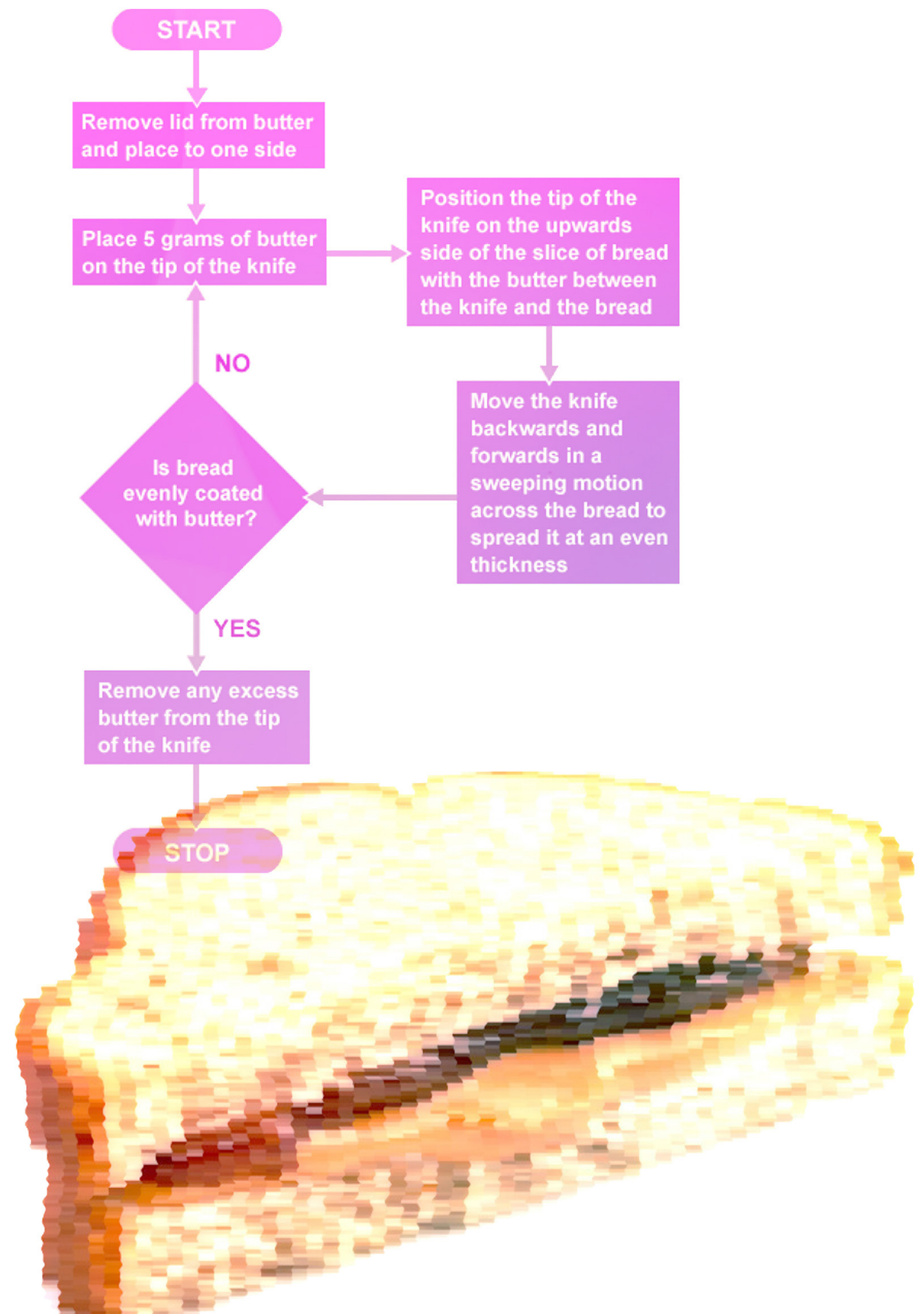
Start with an innocent Google search and before you know it you are the proud (unsure?) owner of an incubator that fits 9 whole eggs. Perhaps you were just listening to Spotify but realised you need that snazzy Phoebe Bridgers EP on vinyl - now you're on Amazon (wondering why there are so many egg-related ads...?). Watching Stranger Things on Netflix might just connect you to the Green and Blue lines because what song is playing in that one scene in the final episode? What you thought was just one episode is now you wondering whether you can buy the Bella pure magic brush because mercury is in retrograde??

Is that a rat on the tracks?! Aaah! Don't get lost, check your algorithm route before venturing onto the tracks!



RECIPE BOOK

One of the traditional ways of teaching people how algorithms work is through doing an exercise in which you have to instruct a computer on how to make a sandwich. You break the process into detailed computational steps and hope for the best! This exercise invariably demonstrates that computers need to be told exactly what to do - leave out a single step and unexpected disaster may ensue!



problem:

The illustrated General Data Protection Regulation:
Transparency in the context of AI

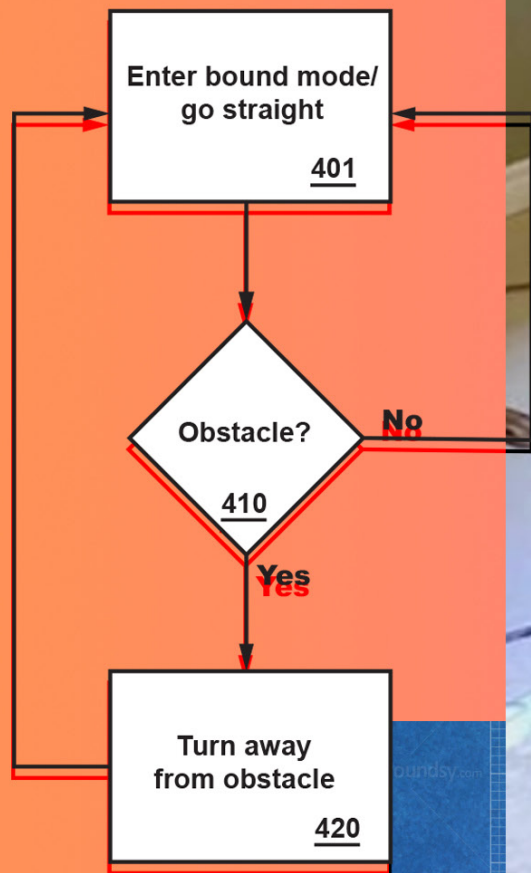
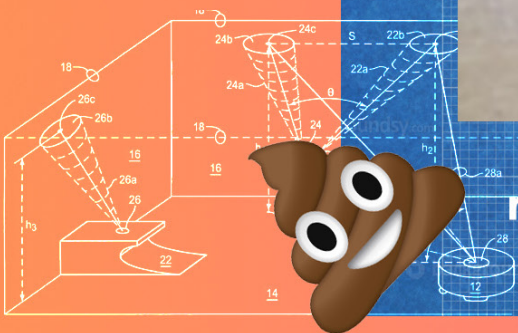


FIG. 10

Case study: iRobot
Method and system for multi-mode coverage for an
autonomous robot: Patent US6809490B2

www.thecopyriots.com



real world's complexity = POOP

"There would always be mistakes, because [algorithmic] models are, by their very nature, simplifications. No model can include all of the real world's complexity or the nuance of human communication. Inevitably, some important information gets left out." - Cathy O'Neil

sollution :
dataset diversity
MORE POOP!

The illustrated General Data Protection Regulation:
Transparency in the context of AI

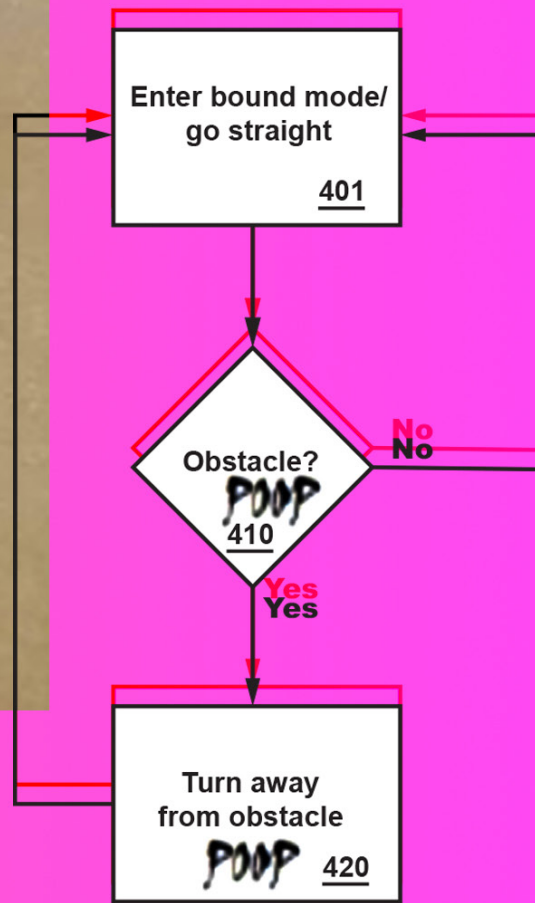
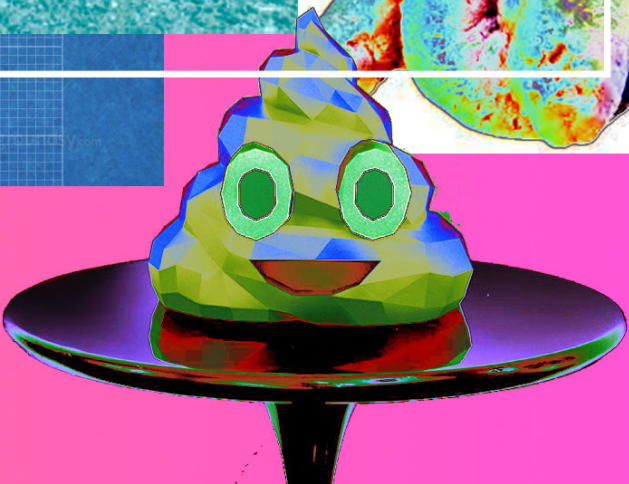


FIG. 10

Case study: iRobot
Method and system for multi-mode coverage for an
autonomous robot: Patent US6809490B2

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SPECULATIVE FUTURES_

Speculative design is an exercise in which we imagine radical future technologies as a way to critically reflect on or respond to our technological present. This method provides an optimal creative space to imagine new possibilities for “how things could be” and to start building better futures. All you have to do is start asking “what if” questions...

An existing community, in the making of the new group - Catalyst Lab, culturalcatalystnetwork.com

Kim Stanley Robinson's SF works!!! all of them ;-)

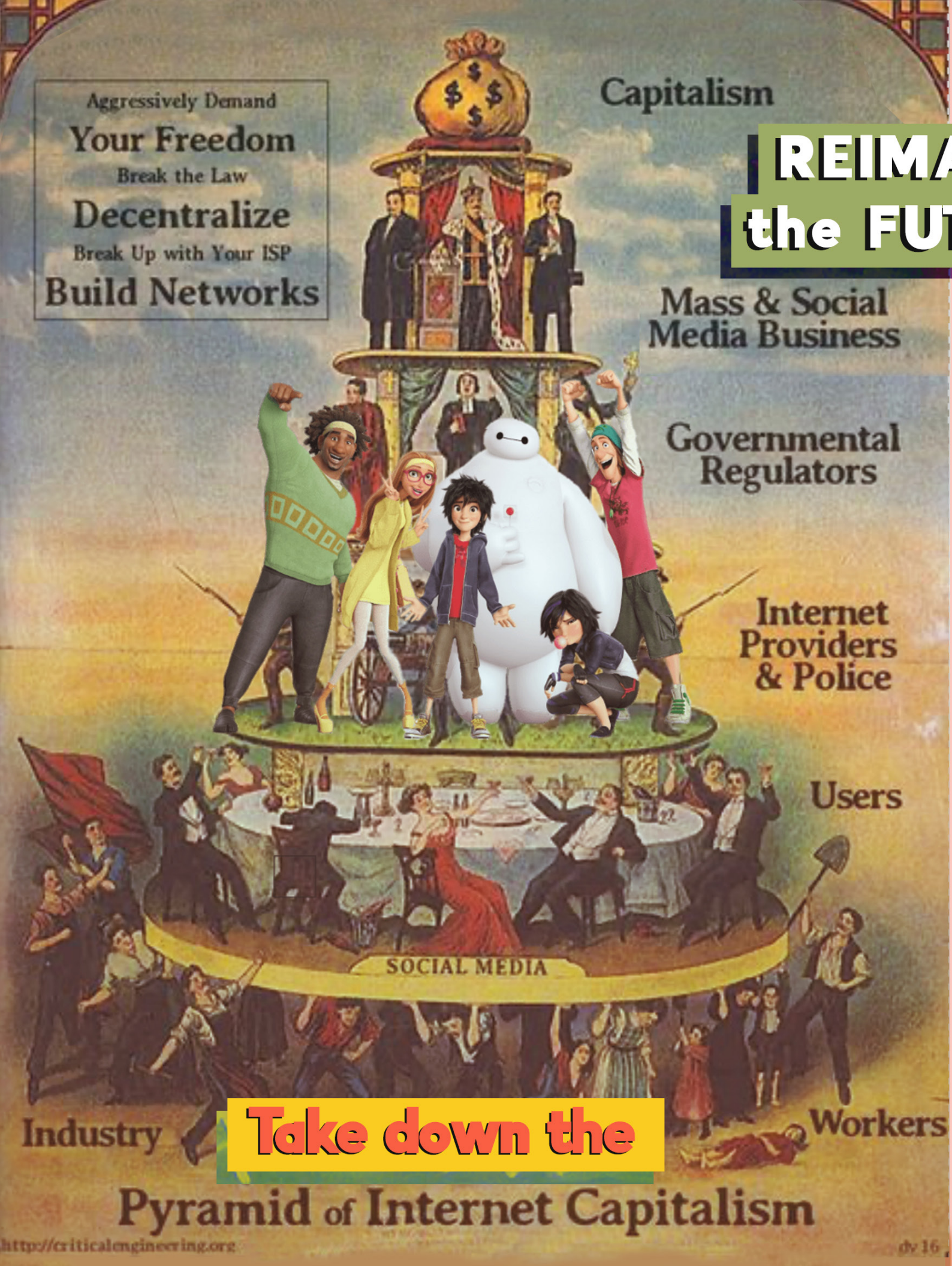
Córry Doctorow & Charlie Stross are talking at World Ethical Data Forum this Friday!

My own “community” = mailing list, called UnCivilization; www.unciv.nl

Data Feminism

hacker tribes, anthropocentrism, piramide of internet classes

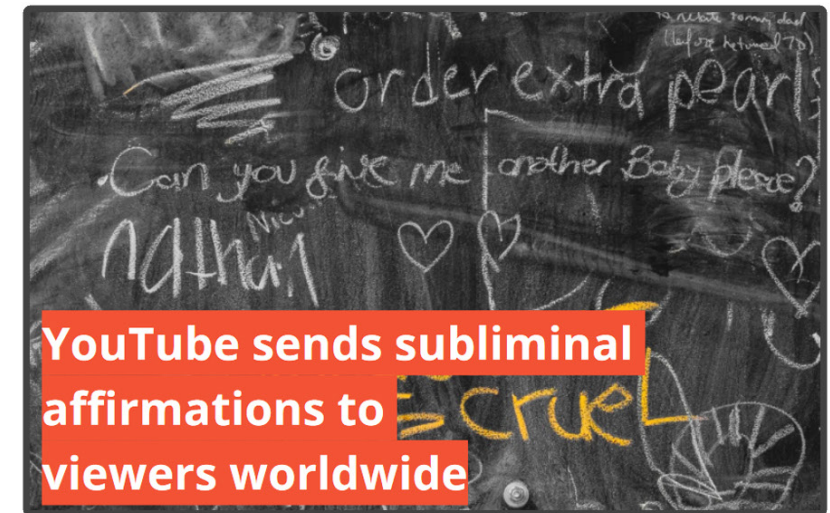




REIMAGINE the FUTURE

Data Feminism

hacker tribes, anthropocentrism, piramides of internet classes



The good idea service

rewriting the headlines to invite people towards positive actions (instead of highlighting disasters)

adding subliminal messages to horrible but popular YouTube videos ; affirmations that invite healing

Kim Stanley Robinson's SF works!!! all of them ;-)
Corry Doctorow & Charlie Stross are talking at
World Ethical Data Forum this Friday!

CREEPY STALKER_

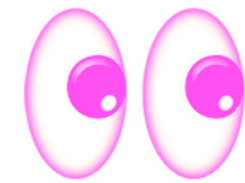
It's kind of creepy when you see the same ad pop-up wherever you go online. Or perhaps you suspect Alexa or Siri is eavesdropping on your conversations? Companies like Google and Facebook use an array of ad tracking, targeting, and delivery algorithms. Their power lies in the vast amounts of personal data these algorithms collect, process, and turn into behavioral models related to you.



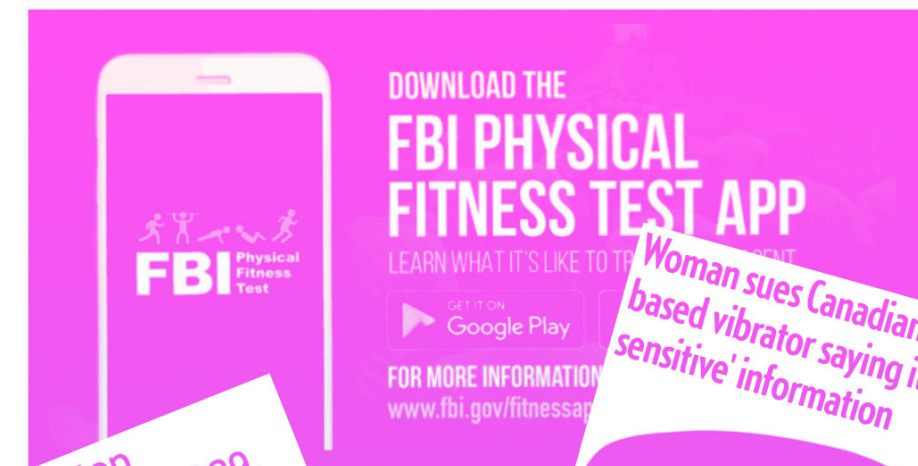
Amazon thinks my recent humidifier purchase was merely the inaugural move in a newfound hobby of humidifier collecting.

Uhh, Google Assistant Impersonating a Human on the Phone Is Scary as Hell to Me

Microsoft's New 'Productivity Score' Lets Your Boss Monitor How Often You Use Email And Attend Video Meetings



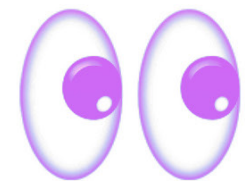
The FBI is promoting an at-home exercise app that also tracks your phone's location and data

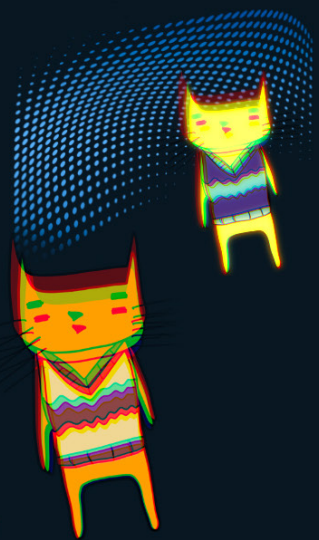


Woman sues Canadian maker of app-based vibrator saying it collects 'highly sensitive' information



Want your partner to stop smoking? Or buy a dog? For \$29, this online service will provide you with a targeted campaign to help you get an idea into someone else's head





Join the CAT NETWORK,

the cutting edge social platform for the latest catty gossip, cat casual wear, and feline video content - first of its kind in the World Wide Web!

98% of cat owners in your neighborhood have already bought a vest for their cats - have you?



We meander through an eclectic assemblage of nostalgic digital ephemera, recalling the continuities across time, in how our hopes, doubts and quest(ion)s break free of our intentions—traversing into the unknown, branching, shuttled along by myriad brokers, enduring in commodification.

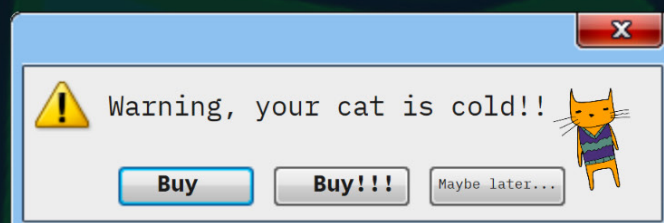


Is your cat naked? Stop his embarrassment now!!



♪ ♪
A cold cat
No more of that
A cool cat
Yo-o-our cat
♪ ♪

Use the code COOLCATVESTS for a one-time-only 20% discount!!



Warning, your cat is cold!!

Buy

Buy!!!

Maybe later...



internet
teapot



*A zine that sits uncomfortably at the intersection of digital technology,
a global free-market economy, and popular culture.*