

The importance of net.art legacy and the right to communicate

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"The right to communicate is an extension of the continuing advance towards liberty and democracy", UNESCO (Many Voices, One World, 1980, p. 172).

Simple Net Art Diagram

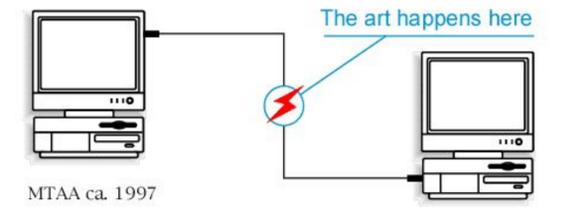


Figure 1: MTAA, Simple Net Art Diagram, ca. 1997. Animated GIF (Vote-Auction, 2020).

INTRODUCTION

The right to communicate is one of the basic human rights today in the age of intense digital communication.

This right is especially important amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROBLEM

While the world is becoming more connected by means of the internet and social networks, there are a lot of threats to the freedom of communication. One of the biggest problems is state censorship of internet media, e.g. Trump administration's proposal to limit access of U.S. users to the popular app TikTok (McMillan et al., 2020).

SOLUTION

Changing outlook of web users: from a passive mode of consumer to an active mode. Following Alvin Toffler's conception of the "prosumer" (Toffler, 1980) we can call this mode the critical prosumer of information. My **main argument** – learning and promoting net.art legacy will help to nurture critical web prosumers.

ARGUMENTATION

net.art emerged in middle of the 1990s (Vuk Ćosić, Jodi, Alexei Shulgin). The main features of net.art: **a)** interactivity and audience participation, **b)** low-brow, amateur approach, **c)** alternative distribution channels of art.

Vote-Auction (2000) by UBERMORGEN.

"Vote-Auction raised salient questions about the moral basis of law and the opacity of democratic institutions under capitalism" (Vote-Auction, 2020)

"UBER- MORGEN.COM managed to take its critique of the American electoral system <..> to a vast audience, that the art world could never have reached" (Quaranta, 2013, p. 108)

CONCLUSION

The ideas of net.art correspond well with the main directions of democratization of communication defined by UNESCO in 1980 .

- "broader popular access to the media<..>
- participation of non-professional in producing and broadcasting <..>
- the development of alternative channels of communication<..>
- participation of media users in decision making"

(Many Voices, One World, 1980, p. 169).

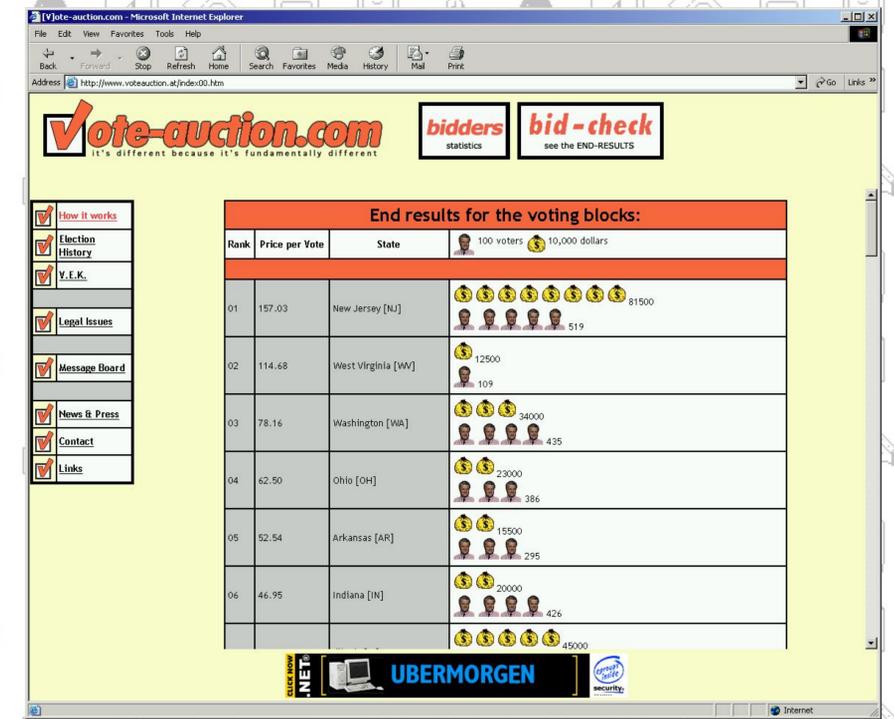


Figure 2: Screenshot from Vote-Auction.at using Internet Explorer 6.0 in Windows 2000 (Vote-Auction, 2020).



Figure 3: UBERMORGEN. The Original Vote-auction Seal (Vote-Auction, 2020).

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