

Networks Of One's Own

Networks Of One's Own is a periodic par-nodal¹ publication that is itself collectively within a network². Each of the episodes is thought of as the 'release' of an experimental software stack, contextualised in its specific practice. The series aims to document a set of tools, experiences and ways of working that are diverse in terms of their temporality, granularity and persistence.

The title *Networks of One's Own* refers to Virginia Woolf's classic essay *A Room of One's Own*³ which makes the case for a woman needing a space of her own to write. It was published in the historical context of Victorian England where women were expected to occupy themselves with domestic and marital duties rather than the autonomous practice of writing. Woolf's claim for a Room Of Her Own is complicated by the fact that her autonomy depended on her ability to hire staff that would take care of her household chores. *Networks Of One's Own* takes this text as an inspiration to rethink digital intimacy, dependencies and relations in networked practices. It wants to re-imagine how technical work and content production grow together, and to radically question the way tools and collaborative practices shape each other.

The idea of a publication series arose from conversations with Aymeric Mansoux and Michael Murtaugh during the development of the Experimental Publishing Master at the Willem De Kooning academy in Rotterdam in the fall of 2016. With the advent of inexpensive so-called "single board computers" such as the popular Raspberry Pi project, it has become imaginable to distribute "disk images" that can be loaded onto an SD card which then contain a fully working software stack. The idea of a pluri-form publication (textual, networked and executable) suggested the possibility that unique software platforms could themselves be published in tandem with content (collectively) written using the platform itself.

This series continued to develop in conversations around the Relearn network and new collective spaces such as *Varia*. It became clear that practices oriented by a two-way relationship between tools and content, which also depend on collective authorship, require specific forms of maintenance. They rely on

complex forms of interrelated ownership that cannot count on the ongoing commitment of all involved. The series invites acts of active documentation, both in the sense of updating manuals and software packages, but also making the projects available to a wider network. In doing so, *Networks Of One's Own* contributes to a support structure that takes care of decentralised projects themselves, but also of the relations between them.

Networks Of One's Own is set up as a series of pluri-form publications that reflect upon and experiment with collaborative networked practices in a time when commercial interests dominate digital working conditions. It appears at a moment when under the guise of data protection (GDPR), self-hosted, un-supervised network practices are under threat of being reigned in as potential liability. "Cloud services" offered via Internet access are typically provided by multinational corporations and it is easy to forget that today's seamless experience of the digital historically originates from an inter-network linking together different autonomous and disconnected networks of varying scales: institutional, personal, educational and military.

The series *Networks Of One's Own* is taken care of by related but independent collectives. For each of the episodes, we propose different experimental and collective practices for situated writing, technical learning and (digital) publishing. In this way, the series allows for showing multiple perspectives, to generate multivoiced forms of documentation. It makes the editorial process of each episode a test case for the same practices that it reflects upon. Like the old adage of the PERL community ("There is More Than One Way To Do It")⁴, this project is about the heterogeneity of tools and ultimately foregrounding that there are many ways of being social with software.

A READ/WRITE version of this document can be found here: <https://pad.vvvvvvvaria.org/nooo2.seriesintro>

This file can be created with the following command:

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$ curl https://pad.vvvvvvvaria.org/
nooo2.seriesintro/export/txt | pandoc -
f markdown -t html -s -c assets/
networks-of-ones-own.css -o networks-
of-ones-own.html && echo "
Written at $(date '+%A %d %B %Y (%H:
%Mh)')." >> networks-of-ones-own.html
```

Notes:

1. See: Paranodes in *Contra-Internet*, by Zach Blas. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/74/59816/contra-internet/>
2. The initiative for this periodic publication is currently located in-between the following nodes: Constant, association for art and media (Brussels), Relearn, Varia a space for developing collective approaches to everyday technology (Rotterdam) and XPUB or experimental publishing, a study path of the Piet Zwart Institute's Media Design Master programme (Rotterdam).
3. Read *A Room Of One's Own* via project Gutenberg. <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200791.txt>
4. Also, TMTOWTDI or TIMTOWTDI. <http://wiki.c2.com/?ThereIsMoreThanOneWayToDoIt>

Written at Wednesday 25 September 2019 (22:13h).