IMMATERIAL LABOUR UNION

SOCIAL GRAPH

#3

Not sure how to get that to happen, but those are the possibilities.

The other angle is about strategy and tactics. Do we use FB and Google for subversive purposes? Or create alternatives? Or both? I'd guess both, but I'm not good at the former.

Lídia - I completely agree with the perspective of the Social Graph as a tool for governance, a foucauldian technology of power which effectively objectifies the subject by charting his/her interpersonal/non-personal (with brands, companies, political parties, etc) relationships and general well-being with the purpose of organisation, surveillance and value extraction. I have also come to think of it as the architecture of the 'social factory', decentralised yet under control. And here I also agree that we should provide a link to the material conditions which allow for social networking cognitive labor.

Bob Haugen - Yes, thanks for reminding me. I should have included Amazon and the voter databases pioneered by the Obama election organization. I recently seem to have landed on the Elizabeth Warren mailing list. Could be worse, I guess.

Örsan Şenalp - You did put it in a dialectical plane Bob thanks :) Thinking of these as two core modules of, kind of, a networked map of a complex and systemic class warfare(s) going on, probably it is good to see the both at once to figure out the chance for the win: both social network map, or graph of alternative and radical inter-networking of good people, their struggles, creativities, productions, emancipatory forces and energies, and the social graph of the elite and oppressive counterparts..

Conversation on the Networked Labour Mailing List

Bob Haugen Lídia Pereira and Örsan Şenalp

Bob Haugen - Maybe we could write something together? I'm thinking about social graphs from a couple of angles. Unfortunately, got nothing funny - or even pithy - yet. Both of the angles have at least two sides. Probably more. One angle is the creeping creepiness of being globally networked by forces beyond our control, who do not have our best interests at heart, if they have hearts at all. The side of that that most people focus on is the creepy side. Both Facebook and Google want to BE the Internet. And the NSA is intertwingled with both of them. So I totally understand the paranoia. Or, it ain't paranoia if they are really out to get you.

TPP and stuff like that is the current global government-by-corporation at work. But those are already the old guard. FB, Google, NSA and the algorithmic stock traders are all part of the new guard. The global corporate government of the future. Just like the current corporate government, it is not monolithic, but a class coopetition.

The other side is the increasing socialization of labor, of which the social graphs are part. If you believe like Marx did (and I do) that the increasing, global, socialization and coordination of labor is preparing the human race for something new, then this is all necessary. I'm thinking here of the global supply chains, the global communication networks, the software and hardware than runs them, and all of the labor that makes them work, down to the miners of rare earth minerals.

We collectively built and run all that stuff. Including all the software than FB and Google run, almost all of which was not invented by them, much of which is open source, and the stuff that was invented "by them" was actually invented by people who work for them, who took all of their ideas from predecessors, etc. So FB and Google just expropriate the collective intelligence, the General Intellect. That should all be public property running a better political-economic system. I include Walmart in there, too.

Editors' Note

Lídia Pereira and Rosie Gram

Welcome to the third issue of the Immaterial Labour Union Zine!

This time around we'll be analysing the technology of power put in place which organizes us, the *produsers*, for more advantageous, profitable governance - the Social Graph. Initially introduced during the Facebook F8 conference in 2007 within the context of the Facebook Platform, the Social Graph has now expanded to become an attempt at the graphical representation of relationships between everybody and everything on the Internet. In 2010, just three years after its introduction, the Social Graph became the largest social network dataset in the world. The Social Graph, despite and thanks to its blatant bi-dimensionality, is successfully transforming the digital space into the realm of the quantified subject, the privileged structure for power infiltration within the human soul.

We'll be thinking about alternative platforms, counter-mapping for the advantage of the *produsers*, and reflecting graphically on how these power structures archive and organise our interpersonal relationships.

Contributions by:
Bob Haugen, Lídia Pereira, Marisol Sandoval, Örsan Şenalp, Simone Cassiani, Δεριζαματζορ Προμπλεμ ιναυστραλια, Tony Cage

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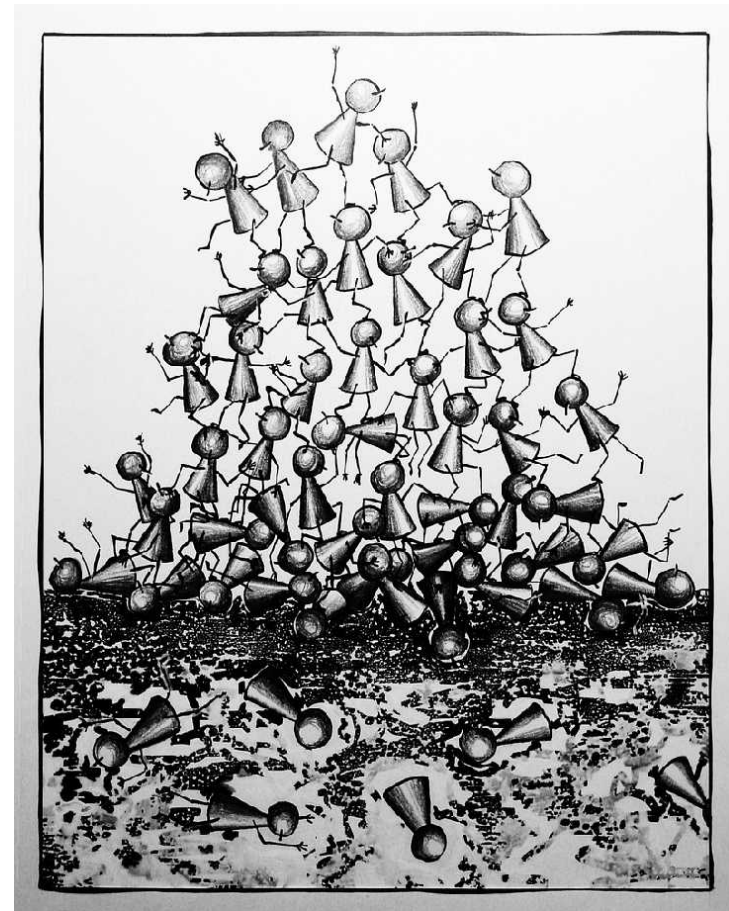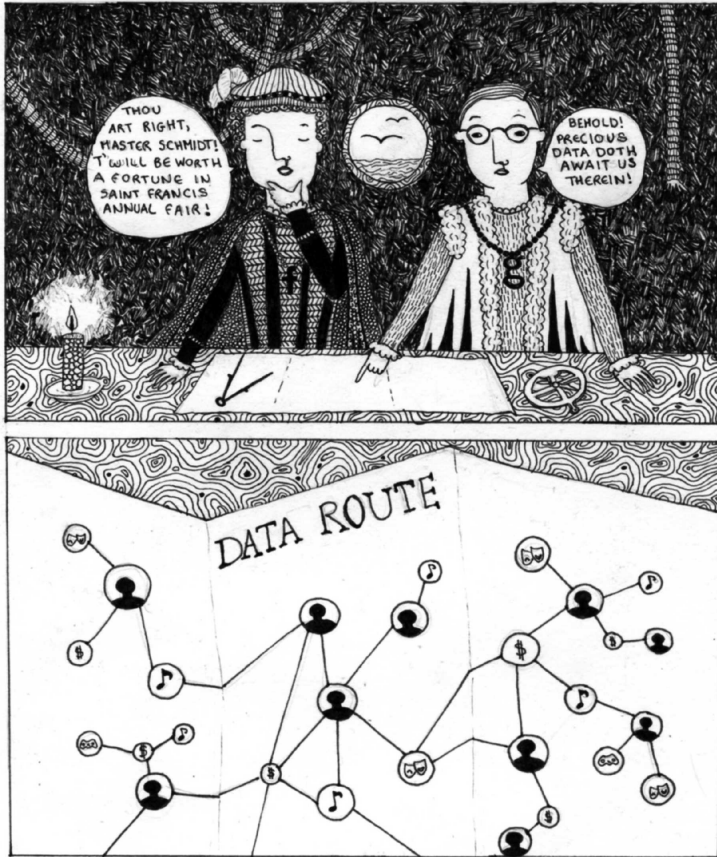
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Data Trade

Lídia Pereira

Untitled

Tony Cage

Architectures of Desire

Simone Cassiani

Organized in pecuniary disposition
Architectures of desire organising data flows
Node to node, linking love
Links of interest, nodding quiet acquiescence
How vastly superior it is to profit from conscience.

Poet of algorithms, engineer of souls
A soul for sale...
My desire composed in graphics pale.

Prosumer Co-Op

Marisol Sandoval

Have you heard of an online social network called Commonicate? No? Well, that's because it does not exist. But it could. Commonicate could be a non-commercial prosumer co-operative, commonly owned and controlled by all its members and supported by a publicly funded participatory media fee.

The idea of co-operatives is not new. From co-operative shops, factories or cafés, to entire villages - people have been looking towards collective alternatives to capitalist businesses since the early 19th century. Co-operatives are organisations that are collectively owned and democratically controlled by its members who can be workers, consumers or also prosumers (producers+-consumers). Today, creating prosumer co-ops could be a way to confront the problems of commercial 'social' media such as surveillance, free labour and corporate power.

The owners of commercial 'social' media platforms not only have the power to decide on the design and functionality of these platforms, to set the terms of use and sell user data to advertisers, they also generate profit from the unpaid labour of social media users. On corporate social media, the discourse of sharing serves to obscure the appropriation of social labour for private profit.

On the contrary, in our fictitious prosumer co-op Commonicate, users would not only be sharing ideas and information, but also sharing ownership and decision rights. Membership would have to be open to all Internet users. Collaborative decision-making on a global scale could be organised through a combination of voting systems and decentralised grassroots politics.

Commonicate could be based on open source software, creating a transparent and adaptable technological infrastructure. Prosumer co-operators worldwide could use the platform to discuss how it can best support their needs for communication, collaboration and creative production. They could share ideas, knowledge and technical skills to empower all members to participate in the creation of a truly social media platform.

The modern and almost realized Panopticon, the complex anti-social and destructive relationships it is built on go well beyond the production lines of all kinds. One has to think of and locate the concept of 'social-graph' against this background in order to grasp this concrete-complexity from its fundamentals... Anti-social-graphing of the complex-totality of this surveillance architecture, from the people's and worker's point of view is essential to figure out which social relationships between who are forming it. This way it would help out us to understand the elements and working processes of global power structures; state, corporate and civil actors acting simultaneously at local, national, international levels. This means better identification of the weak spots to be targeted, as well as better ideas on how and when to strike.

Counter-mapping of the production process from workers point of view, has been a useful organising methodology developed by industrial workers of the Fordist factory. Enriched with variety of adopted techniques it has been used to understand how the production process is designed from the bosses' point of view; what role given to each departments and workers, and why; and where would be the best time and place to strike. The idea of 'social graph' can be hacked in a similar way to think of and challenge the bio-, geo-, geno-, and pysco- conditions imposed on digital, analogue, manual and mental labour today. It can become a key tool to building new and concrete forms of immaterial and digital labour organising.

Counter-Mapping

Örsan Şenalp

Ruling segments of communities have always developed mental and on-paper maps to understand and manage the key relationships flowing through and cutting cross 'their peoples', connecting their hearts and minds to each other and, from rulers' point of view, to the rules that put for them; it one way or another must have been made sure that the peoples are staying in order and obeying. It just took several millennia to advance the level of systematic, as well as the necessary tool-kit for command and control, before we arrive the idea of Panopticon. Building on the idea, it did not take too long until the most sophisticated control machinery has emerged. The composition of a big-data gathering and storing, meta-data processing and classifying methodologies and tools, took a form that is very close to Bentham's original idea.

'Meta-data' is the classified form of big-digital data gathered and stored through the webs of digital-sensory networks forming the global surveillance architecture of which is the backbone. All the data extracted from the individuals, and abstracted from their living community context is brought together and put at work using high speed (near quantum) computing hardware which process massive amount of data flows through complex algorithmic modelling software. Many complex processes involve from gathering, storing, classification and sorting out of the global mass-flow of the raw data, and the follow-up process- es. Think of here the work of ranking algorithms running meta-search 'engines' like Google. This all package turns the Internet into an 'intelligence' production network working in real-time. Most of the information about the individuals, their inner, inter, intra, and infra relationships contain billions of raw-data, that becomes meaningful when put in various context. The massive amount of such data flows through the networks are captures at big-data storage, of which size is multiplied as you I write and you read these lines. Such storages absorb literally 'everything', including data makes these lines readable to you, of my writing style, character, readers' profile, so on.
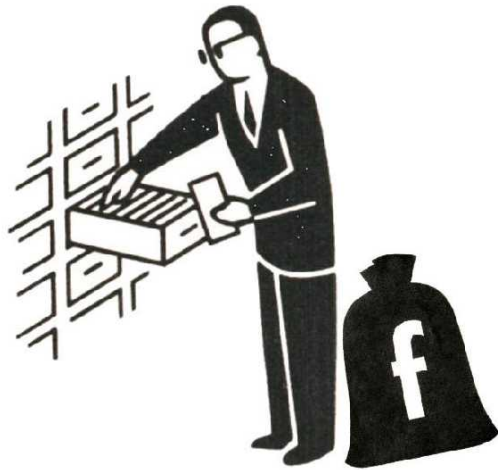
As a non-commercial prosumer co-op, Commonicate would not rely on private investment or on the sale of user data to advertisers. The income needed to pay for technological infrastructure and the labour of designers and software developers could come from donations, a socially just membership contribution or a participatory media fee - funded for example through an advertising tax as Christian Fuchs suggested in the previous edition of the ILU Zine.

Prosumer co-ops will not change the Internet single-handedly. But along with ideas such as creating an immaterial labour union, a guaranteed basic income as a social wage for everyone, a publicly funded participatory media fee or other progressive media policies such as a opt-in requirements for advertising, prosumer co-ops could contribute to challenging today's commercial media landscape, creating democratic and collaborative social media commons.

General Archive

The International System Of Typographic Picture Education was developed by the Viennese social scientist and philosopher Otto Neurath(1882-1945) as a method for visual statistics[1]. The work appropriates symbols from the standardised pictorial language of ISOTYPE, drawing connections to the social engineering of post war modernism. Moreover to illustrate two basic questions around the social graph: who is responsible for its material structures and its classification system?

who is building the walls of the general archive?

who is the librarian of the general archive?

1: http://www.gerdarntz.org/content/gerdarntz#isotype