

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Our Friend the Computer is a storytelling endeavour of technological devices that have been omitted, underknown or misrepresented in the past. As gadgets shapeshift through cultural terrains, their uses become reflective of their lifespan period, and historicities can be extracted from them. But as technology can be synonymous with power and dominance, narratives of computing and networks become misconstrued and co-opted by states, intimidating corporations and controlling enterprises. Our Friend the Computer's mission is to delve into these lesser-known histories, hoping to rupture some of its mighty narratives.

With comic anecdotes and enthusiastic research, we want to broadcast that "inanimate" technologies are

fully alive with sentimentality, personality, and drama. A part of digital literacy requires a type of self-critique-or at least an acknowledgement-that we can be as intoxicated by these socially influential technologies as we are skeptical of them. And so, conscious of their effect on us now, what can their past tell us about how it's all unfolding today?

On the note of time gone by, Our Friend the Computer is celebrating its 2nd anniversary with 24 episodes. To mark the event, we are publishing our first printed zine that consolidates the investigations we shared in our podcast, as well as Our Friend the Computer's successes, frustrations and perceptions that have altered or evolved during our time researching the episodes.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Here we share information and fun facts from all our episodes: beginning with our first Pre-Internet Networks season, a journey of non-US-centric network discoveries that predate the Internet as we know it, moving onto the Edu-Computers season which traverses the worlds of microcomputers and notebooks specifically designed for informaticizing populations and boosting digital literacy rates. Having learned about some of the intentions of the state, we one-eighty into stories about clones and crashes in Outlaw Adventures, and set out in the direction of Mobile Phones where we uncover niche developments in phones via aesthetic obsolescence of fashion trends, localised adaption, gender norms, and microloan initiatives.

Our following pages are dedicated to our friends: a conversation with our sister org the Media Archeology Lab and a text from the wonderful Rhizome.

This zine is a homage to the classic computer newsletters that gained popularity during the microcomputer boom of the 1970s and '80s. The marketisation of these affordable home computers meant that newsletters became a prevalent way of conveying the affordability and accessibility of these computers which, for the first time, did not require a tech-savvy user. These newsletters heralded a free and fortuitous type of exploration that encouraged the amateur not to shy away from this ostensibly intimidating new machine.

We welcome our readers to look through our zine with an openness and irreproachability to that of the 80's first-time user, as we hope to expose unfamiliar and underknown worlds of computer building (where they come from and how they developed). With the rise of scanners, photocopiers and pixels, this zine is an ode to the visual emergence of multimedia experiments as designer Katherine Leon revels in collages, illustrative icons and interactive graphics. As such, the following pages offer a space to ponder and dream of schismatic technological futures and deviant destinies..

✦ * *thank you, friends, and enjoy!* *

Camila Galaz and Ana Meisel



“IN OUR DREAMS WE HAVE SEEN ANOTHER NETWORK,
AN HONEST NETWORK, A NETWORK DECIDEDLY MORE
FAIR THAN THE ONE IN WHICH WE NOW LIVE.”

-ZACH BLAS, AFTER SUBCOMANDANTE MARCOS,
FROM CONTRA-INTERNET INVERSION PRACTICE #1:
CONSTITUTING AN OUTSIDE (UTOPIAN PLAGIARISM)

There have been so many internets.

The computers and networks that we have today have such a monumental aura of inevitability in how they figure our collective conscious, it is almost impossible to see around them and through them, to catch furtive glimpses of the other internets that were and might have been. The computer and the network that seem so ubiquitous today are fashion accessory, family and friend, passport, pacifier, and instrument of social control, wrapped in sleek titanium and glass. “It could never have been any other way,” our devices and software tools seem to say.

It has been said before, but it is worth saying again, and cannot be said enough: this aura of inevitability is an ideological construct. Going back to the late 1960s, US military-funded research in computer science consistently prioritized central command and control and automation at a distance-which, in doing so, bolstered their vision for military defense while undermining the power of organized labor. More recently, investment dollars from the US sought to “disrupt” industries on a global scale. Homegrown platforms that served well the needs of particular peoples and nations around the world were outmuscled by imported alternatives, backed by a flood of investment, that could be managed efficiently and from afar-while gathering information about far-flung users.

In short, the “inevitable” technologies of the present are the heirs of decades of corporate and military influence, and it certainly could have been different. In this context, recovering histories of the computers and internets that were and could have been is a vital task. By narrating the multiplicitous history of technology, we can better understand alternatives that might still be viable, and we might find new inspiration to go against the grain of the monolithic internet, to behave within it in ways that open up broader horizons of social possibility.

As my colleague, digital folklorist and conservation specialist Dragan Espenschied, has argued, the history of digital culture can be thought of as a kind of embodied knowledge. Forms of embodied knowledge tend to be underrepresented in official histories and in formal archives, because this knowledge is not rendered in forms that are legible to such bodies-think, for example, of a family recipe, or a traditional dance. Similarly, the experiences of digital culture can be very difficult to grasp except from the perspective of the people who lived it. The obsolete flip phone may offer little more insight into technology history than your average brick, and the real history may often be found in conversations and informal history practices - such as a podcast called Our Friend the Computer.

At Rhizome, the digital art organization where I work, we aim to support the narration of digital art's history by maintaining access to the legacy digital materials - software tools, websites, digital artworks, servers - that so deeply shape user's experience of the internet and, by extension, human society. (We don't do much with hardware, though - for that, you'd have to talk to Media Archaeology Lab). This memory work is sometimes described as nostalgic, which is a term that sounds innocuous and navel-gazing. But to support the memory of digital culture is important work. We must remember how we got here, in order to understand how to get out.

There have been so many internets. Today, there are perhaps fewer than there have been. Let there be more, tomorrow.

Michael Connor
co-executive director, rhizome



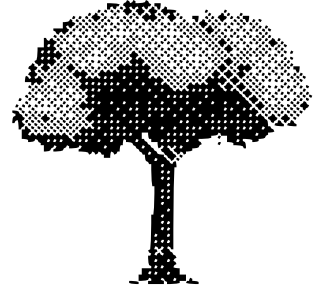
I think here is a computer heaven!

STAND

24 EPISODES

PRE-INTERNET NETWORKS

Project Cybersyn



Camila and Ana explore Project Cybersyn—an early 70s socialist cybernetics project run on a Telex network connecting factories in Allende’s Chile. The girls chat about how this research and this podcast originated from Camila’s 2021 project REDES: bread and justice, peaches and bananas. This browser-based interactive documentary, which Ana commissioned and coded through her platform External Pages, explored socialist uses of computer networks before and after the Chilean dictatorship.

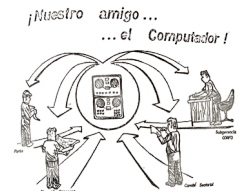


Figure 6.3 The computer, not the worker, appears at the heart of Project Cybersyn. This image originally appeared in the 1978 paper “Proyecto Sistema Sistema Cybernetico” (June 1978) and is used with permission from CUREO.

OGAS

Ana and Camila chat about the development of OGAS— a Soviet nationwide information network in the 60s that was meant to run a planned economy for the USSR. Built after Sputnik’s launch, it brought about Soviet cybernetics and promised a new era for Soviet sciences, mathematics, economics and technology. Discussing the project’s termination due to inner-bureaucratic competition, this episode also looks at ARPANET’s simultaneous development with its surprisingly socialist structures of funding and collaborative mindsets that led to its success.

“I’VE FOUND A NEW JOB. I WORK FROM HOME. I HIT ON MEN ON MINITEL... ONE FRANC PER MINUTE. AFTER HALF AN HOUR, I GET A BONUS. I GET ONE BONUS AFTER THE OTHER. AND I THINK OF YOU.” - ROSE MINITEL, OLIVIER CHEVAL.

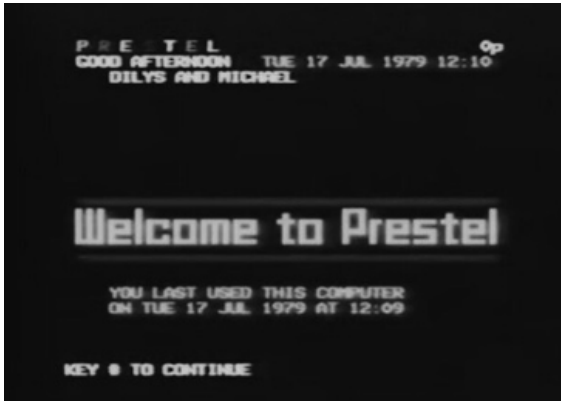
Minitel

Camila tells Ana about the French videotex network Minitel. Launched in the early 80s, it was the most successful version of an online service before the World Wide Web. While other similar networks struggled, this episode looks at how the specifics of Minitel allowed it to become integrated into everyday life and what happened when France began adopting the Internet.



Pink Minitel

Camila and Ana delve deeper into the online world of Minitel with an exploration of the many sides of the “pink minitel” services provided on the network. Beginning with a discussion of Olivier Cheval’s 2019 short film Rose Minitel (and some Agnes Varda film chat), they then talk sexy chat rooms, digital labor, online dating, LGBTQ+ digital communities, and if love is actually real. Ooh la la!



Prestel

Ana chats to Camila about Prestel, a nationwide information network developed by the UK Post Office. The videotex system was developed during the 1970s and for a brief time, the UK was at the forefront of intending to migrate its society online. However, the Conservative's acts halted the development through privatization. The girls discuss policy loopholes, Prestel's neglect in correlation to the UK's political failures, as well as its significant impact in the global technical blossoming of online communication.

CAPTAIN

Camila shares her research on the Japanese videotex system CAPTAIN which was created with the aim to informatize the country. This project connected rural and remote communities and Japan soon became a leader in telecommunications technology right up until the US dot-com era of the 90s. Even as it went through updates, this strong backbone of networking has remained largely unchanged even with the adoption of the internet. The girls discuss competing videotex protocols, how to informatize a country, biased reporting, and if a network can be successful in its aims even if the actual system failed.

Teletext/ Park Avenue

Camila and Ana explore the late 80s Teletext soap opera Park Avenue written by Robbie Burns, which has been archived by Park Avenue Archives (TW: @ParkAvenueArk; <http://www.newmailbox.co.uk/parkavenue/>). They then read through some episodes and learn about the DRAMA happening on Park Avenue!

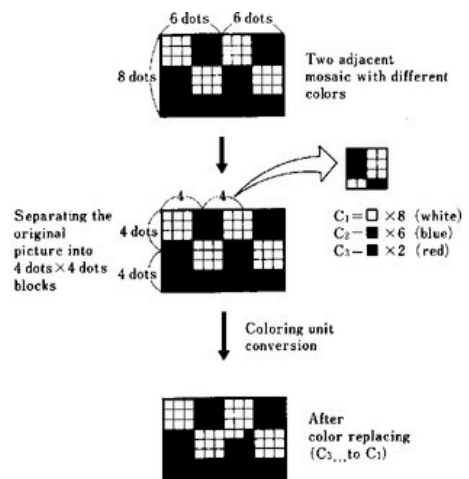


Fig. 3. Color replacing method. Two dominant colors are used to

Videotexto/ 'Reabracadabra'



Camila and Ana look at the Brazilian Videotexto network (a version of the French Minitel network) through the lens of the artwork of Eduardo Kac whose work explored the creative technological functions of Minitel's interface. Camila also recounts her visit to the opening of his exhibition in NYC From Minitel to NFT at Henrique Faria Gallery. They specifically discuss the work Reabracadabra (1985) which you can watch online via Rhizome:

<https://anthology.rhizome.org/reabracadabra>

Bildschirmtext

West Germany's network videotex system, Bildschirmtext, was largely used for payment services by the Deutsche Bank, while its system was supported by hardware from the UK as West Germany continued to liberalise its society and economy. However its liberal use and basic encryption caused a few issues, enabling the infamous BTX- Hack by Chaos Computer Club. The girls talk about the anarchist attitudes in 80s divided Germany, the post-WW2 political and economic splitting that created this videotex system, and reminisce about the nostalgic aesthetics of Deutsche Telekom.

NABU

Camila and Ana talk about Canada's NABU network. Operated via cable television services, it could be considered one of the first examples of a 'streaming' subscription model for entertainment! The girls discuss the progression of streaming services, video game development, and their love of computer history museums.

Beltel / WorkNet

The girls discuss how South Africa's videotex network Beltel fell into the hands of an oppressive government during apartheid. Although the police department grew stronger due to data storage accessibility via this videotex network, activists were also using the technology in opposition to the regime.



EDU-COMPUTERS

The BBC Domesday Project

Camila and Ana delve into a project they discovered at the Centre for Computing History in Cambridge. Called the BBC Domesday Project, this was a mid-80s attempt to survey the entire country with data collected largely by school children and presented on an interactive map. The system quickly suffered from a serious case of digital obsolescence because the data was stored on two Laserdiscs and was only accessible via specialised hardware. While a 2000s project called Domesday Revisited worked to save the data and create an emulation of the software, the book it was based on (the 1086 Domesday Book) has continued to be accessible as a printed book for 900 years.

BBC Literacy Project

The girls chat about the BBC Computer Literacy Project from the 70s/80s. They discuss the TV programing which brought the need for it to the eyes of parliamentarians, how it built on previous literacy projects which combined TV shows with adult education curriculums, the creation of the BBC Micro computer and BBC Basic, and the state of computers in the mind of the public at the time. Are we in need of a new Computer Literacy Project for the modern age??



Australia's Microbee Computer

Camila introduces Ana to some stories about the history of computer education in Australian schools. This episode is a two-for-one! Firstly, we learn about a mid-80s government plan to develop an especially Australian computer for use in schools with options for networking and for portable 'laptop-style' use. Then we hear about the rise and fall of the Microbee computer—Australia's first home-grown personal computer. This computer, which was designed and manufactured in Australia, controlled a large portion of the primary school computer market not just in Australia but also Scandinavia and Russia, even winning contracts over Apple!



CHILD PLAYING CHESS ON THE BBC MICRO.

Icon

Ana shares her research on Canada's first standardised and purpose-built computer for education, the Icon. Prior to launching in 1984, it made promises of a hypertext learning utopia where it simplified the lives of both students and teachers. The girls kick off by exploring the definition of failure (after Camila had gone to see the Minitel at the Museum of Failure), and end by discussing the criticisms of top-down government initiatives that stumped potential hypertext projects.



CANADA'S ICON 2 EDUCATIONAL COMPUTER, PLAYING AN UNKNOWN GAME.

One Laptop Per Child

Ana investigates the One Laptop Per Child initiative which auspiciously deployed millions of laptops (the OLPC XO) to children in the Global South between 2005 - 2014. The project was based on the charismatic idea of "fixing the world" via access to digital literacy. Constructivism became a new trend at the time, which encouraged learning through building, and helped to promote the project.

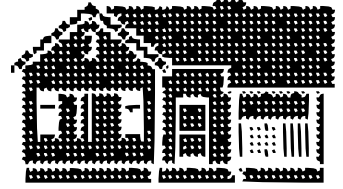
Poly-1

Camila and Ana chat about New Zealand's Poly-1: another homegrown microcomputer destined for schools and funded by a government program, but this one was crushed by corporate (specifically... Apple) interference. Before its time (and 18 months before the BBC micro), we plot its rise and then its downfall which coincided with some pretty dark moments in recent history.



NEW ZEALAND'S HOME-GROW MICROCOMPUTER, THE 1981 POLY-1.

OUT-LAW ADVENTURES



The Coleco Adam

Camila and Ana discover the infamous story of the 1983 failed Coleco Adam home computer and uncover the 1985 home computer crash, Ana learns the difference between Cabbage Patch Kids and Sour Patch Kids, and we all lose a \$500 college scholarship voucher.

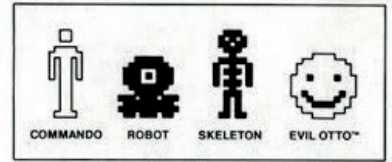
Unitron & the Brazilian Macintosh clone

Ana and Camila discuss the world's first macintosh clone, the Mac 512 by Unitron, and how Apple threatened to start a trade war in Brazil due to the clone. Although Unitron was not doing anything wrong with the Brazilian law, Apple tried to get themselves out of financial worries and seized control of how their new hardware and software package (the first Mac) was being sold around the world. This led them to force Brasil to stop producing their Macs, and tighten up restrictions on licensing. The girls dig deeper into how such political rivalry was triggered by the problems of the US's economic movement of financialization and the tech industry's laissez- faire attitude of the 80s.

TamilNet

Virtual Tamil Eelam doesn't connect itself to a physical label. Instead, it petitions to be recognised as a nation-state by publishing its heritage and cultural histories, diverse news, forums, distinct map designs and symbols, and suggestions for communal activities on websites that date back to the 90s. Ana describes how Tamils have found creative uses of the web's varying information dispersal techniques which promote their national identity as autonomous and legitimately independent.

GAME DESCRIPTION



Don't be fooled by Evil Otto's™ smile. It's deceptive. He, the robots and the skeletons are out to get your Commando!

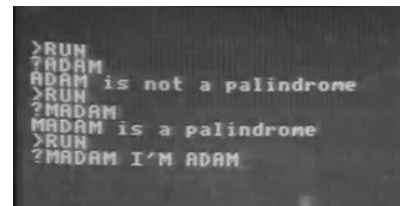
Trapped in a bizarre, alien high-tech structure and surrounded by robots, your Commando moves from cell to cell as you face a band of deadly mechanical monsters. Odd marching skeletons clunk toward you. Robotic tanks trundle into position. Face your enemy and fire, or be doomed by their fatal touch! Eliminate all automatons and proceed to the next assembly.

Stay alert! Your enemies now fire deadly blasts. Some cell walls ricochet the blasts—both yours and your enemy's—so watch where you fire! Worst of all is Evil Otto™, the bouncing menace who passes through walls and destroys any creature on contact. It's a bizarre battle for survival as Evil Otto™ bounces toward you! Will you make it?

- For One or Two Players
- Select from Four Skill Levels
- Instant Pause Control

Use your ColecoVision® Controllers or your Super Action™ Controllers

GAME DESCRIPTION OF BERZERK™, AN ARCADE VIDEO GAME PUBLISHED FOR THE ATARI 2600, ATARI 5200, AND VECTREX.





CELL PHONES

Nokia & the Mobira Cityman

Camila and Ana chat about the history of Nokia (the town and the company), the connection between car phones and mobile phones, and 80s naming conventions (like the "Cityman" and "Actionman".) They also discuss Gorbachev's famous phone call on the Nokia-Mobira Cityman—a PR stunt that led to the phone being nicknamed the "Gorba" in Finland.

The Real Housewives of Bell Telephone

Although telephones were instated into the home as a business communication tool, the women of the house soon appropriated the technology for "sociability" - checking in with family and friends, gossiping, chatting and connecting with the community. Ana and Camila aptly chit-chat about how this phenomenon became so pronounced over the years that it shaped the evolution of phones and shaped the social uses of the mobile phone now.

Fashion Phones & L'Amour

Camila and Ana chat about 2000s Nokia "Fashion Phones"! These phones preferenced a positioning of mobile phones as a fashion accessory, or fashion statement, over technological functionality. We discuss gendered product design and marketing, aesthetic obsolescence, what "retro" really means, and why Nokia may have had an interest in creating these "experimental" designs in the first place.

i-mode & Japanese mobile internet

Japanese tech giants of the '90s and early '00s created exceedingly advanced and snazzy smartphone features, warranting the creation of what is referred to in the West as the "second internet" - web interfaces designed to be used on phones more than computers. It all started with the Japanese Economic Miracle, a post-war period of rapid economic growth between 1945 and 1991 which instigated a hunger for new tech and a willingness to pay for it.

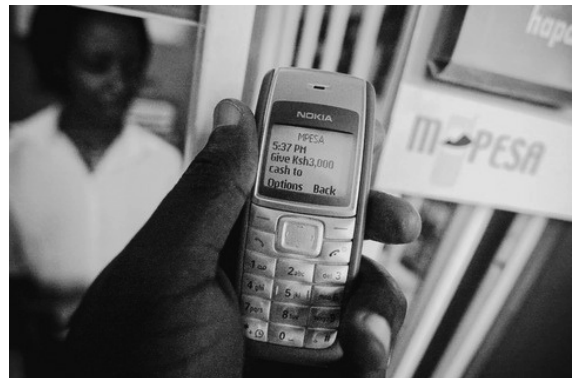
FIN-TECH & MICRO LOANS FOR THE MOBILE PHONE

Grameen Village Phone Project

Camila provides an overview of an initiative from the 90s and 2000s in Bangladesh called the Village Phone Program. The concept was that women from smaller villages could buy mobile phones through a micro-loan system and set up telecommunications businesses from their homes to make money and provide a service to their communities. The girls discuss the efficacy of this program, the concept of microcredit and microloans in general, the complicated ways that impact is evaluated in the moment and into the future, and how to measure the concept of empowerment.

M-Pesa

Ana looks at the impact of M-Pesa in Kenya—a fin-tech project enabling easy money transfer via mobile phone. We go into how and why the service took off, its use for distributing aid during crisis, and the promises vs. actual impact of these kinds of fin-tech programs.



an interview with dr. libi rose striegl at media archeology lab



C: We're so excited to be chatting with Dr. libi rose striegl, managing director of the Media Archeology Lab (MAL) at the University of Colorado in Boulder. We've been a sister project of the Media Archeology Lab for a bit over a year now, and it's been wonderful to be in community with them. In our current season on cell phones, they've been providing sounds from phones in the Media Archeology Lab Archive. We also recently guest-edited an issue of their EphemeralMAL zine with the theme The Myths of Information. Hi libi, thanks for joining us. How's it going in the lab?

L: It's very busy! We just had an artist in residence wrap up her stay last night with a knitting machine workshop, directly communicating to it from her modern computer. And then we had another scholar in residence start this morning and he's going to be doing some research into old facial recognition technology while he's here. I also just finished up a class tour, we took in a decent-sized In Memoriam collection yesterday that included some pretty cool, pretty rare machines, like the 20th anniversary Macintosh. So it's been a busy couple of weeks!

C: What was it about MAL that drew you to the lab, to your research and your work?

L: I always worked with machines that are somehow out of their time in my art practice. I started with analogue photography when I was in high school and learned to do general camera maintenance and repair. And then from there, I did my undergrad in film studies and film production and I was working almost exclusively with 16-millimetre cameras. I've always had this fascination with older machines, with their maintenance of care, with taking stuff apart to understand how it works. I went back to do an MFA in which I ended up working through this fascination I have with how to make legacy or vintage machines or processes work with modern technologies in various ways. The Intermedia Arts Writing Performance Program allowed me to write a proposal that would get me into this experimental PhD program specifically to work with the Media Archaeology Lab. And that has turned out really well! My interest in the lab was that I like repairing stuff and taking things apart but also I like figuring out how to situate this space into the broader community. So I was doing a lot of workshops, taking things off site and doing events. I gave myself a ridiculously long title like "Media Integration Communications Director" which I thought was funny, but really I was making sure that we were doing the appropriate amount of outreach for the lab.

C: That's the thing that we connected with you on. There are a lot of these archives and collections that are doing an amazing job of storing and keeping objects but which don't have that much outreach or community connection. And for us with OFtC, it's about taking these stories out of the archives, out of the purely research framework, and trying to make them accessible and known. What we love about the Media Archaeology Lab is that it's so integrated and accessible—it doesn't feel like it's behind some guarded wall of knowledge.

MEDIA ARCHEOLOGY LAB

L: Yeah, I'm glad that it feels like that to people outside because I've worked very hard on developing a character for the lab. Friendly, kind of weird, a little bit blunt, like it's me with less cussing. It's deliberate in welcoming people who are maybe less comfortable with this stuff in a way that meets them where they're at, while also trying to maybe give a little bit of a nudge to the folks that are dominant in the retro, vintage technology space and saying hey, maybe don't be the way you are, gatekeeping in a way that makes people not want to engage with this stuff. That's important. I try to walk that line as much as I can.

A: I think also the fact that it's a bit of a hacky space makes it accessible, or at least that's what hacking is supposed to do. And it's interesting that you have this strong skill to hybridise these technologies in your projects because, yeah, technological systems are accelerating in becoming obsolete so you have to be very creative with maintaining them. So it's a political skill as well. And it's also interesting that your background is in film - the same as Camila.

C: I'm an experimental filmmaker!



L: Me too!

A: I think film can often be a very important gateway to digital literacy because you get this direct visual outcome, while it's still quite techy.

L: It is! It's also a space where I had to learn to navigate exclusionary personalities pretty fast because it's another world that is very masculine, very boys' club. People get so wrapped up in the tech and less interested in the human side of it. And so I have had a lot of practice in shooting boys down mostly!

A: And surviving in that space!

L: Yeah, it's a skill for sure. Lori [Emerson, MAL founding director] and I always talk about making sure that the lab is welcoming to people who are not that. While we do have a lot of volunteers who maybe fit that stereotype on the surface, they're all people who are comfortable with being as open as possible, not excluding, learning how to teach folks, engaging with the public and with students that are from a wide background.

A: I felt that when we were putting together the EphemerMAL zine. A lot of the content was so anti-capitalist, more than I would have expected while being techy and specific. I was impressed with how people were using these gadgets and devices in such subversive and playful ways.

L: Yeah, it's so cool. We have a very strongly anti-capitalist vibe for a space that is basically a collection of the detritus of capitalism.

C: I was going to ask, how do we feel about the current trend of '00s and '90s nostalgia within the context of our research? It's cool because it means there's a lot of discussion and memes around it that we can repost and be involved with. But our research is long-term while this nostalgia is very specific to now. So I wondered what your thoughts are on that.

MEDIA ARCHEOLOGY LAB

L: I mean, I guess some form of nostalgia is always present. An interesting thing that I run into a lot is that students experience nostalgia for these things that they've never actually experienced firsthand. I've seen it referred to as "Neostalgia", nostalgia for a thing that you never had. But it's good to use nostalgia as the hook to lure people in, and then subvert that expectation in some way to start a whole other conversation about like, what does the fact that you're nostalgic for this thing that is a product of capitalism mean? What does it mean that it's being weaponized against you? What does it mean to preserve stuff and never use it? All of these conversations can come to the hook when nostalgia is the starting point. So I weaponized nostalgia I think!

A: We come from an initial place of nostalgia in the same way that any kind of learning starts from a place of emotion. We try to do that as well a little bit in our episodes. Camila had this epiphany in our mobile phone season, although it's been coming up for a while, where she noticed that excitement and nostalgia can be a very intentional emotion created by the marketing powers through technological and aesthetic obsolescence. So it's meant to induce a type of sentimentality later down the line.

C: Yeah, we were getting excited about these old styles of cell phones, thinking they're so cool, they're so different, they show our personality! But then we realised that it's just on-purpose aesthetic obsolescence, where every year there's a new trend and a new style which is why there's all these very specific, weird cell phones from that era. Now we're so used to the same look, but they've just switched to a different form of planned obsolescence. So really it's still the same thing and we were sitting there going like, damn, I missed my Motorola Razr.

A: I think there's something useful in nostalgia, especially when we're thinking about technological products because there's this desire for a simpler time and although there was mass production then, the scope of energy has shifted. I read the other day that the average amount of phones someone has in a lifetime is 35, whereas back in the day that used to be a lot less. In some ways, the nostalgia means we're craving a time when there wasn't as much production. When a phone is produced it makes a much larger carbon footprint than the actual use of the device once it's out in the world. So I think, yeah, there's something very instinctual about just wanting to go back and use less.

L: I think also there's a broad sense that things lasted longer at that point, which is accurate. Like, you could replace parts on cell phones much more easily at that point. If the battery popped out, you could take it out and put a new one in. That was the most consumable part of that device. The rest of it tended to last a lot longer. I accidentally dumped my last Razr in a bucket of chemicals at work as it fell out of my pocket and it was the saddest day. I remember it distinctly because that was when I was forced to upgrade to a smartphone since it was cheaper than buying an old Razr. The lifespan was significantly longer on those things. And I think we [MAL], as a space, re-emphasise that you could have things with a longer life and you have to ask for that. You have to make it apparent that they need to exist again because otherwise, it's much more profitable to make things that have a very short lifespan and a very short turnover.

A: And now these "energy-efficient" technologies are part of the marketing process. So it's a selling technique to say that these new phones have less of a charge or whatever. But then actually it's a very contradictory cycle because the amount of energy to produce them is so much larger than any non-rechargeable battery that you had in the early 2000s, as you must come across a lot in the lab and the archive.

MEDIA ARCHEOLOGY LAB

L: The greenwashing of energy efficiency and stuff is so rampant. I watch too much TikTok, but there's an old appliance restorer guy that I have come across many times who has done actual energy tests. For example, he compares '60s fridges to modern fridges that are listed as energy-certified or whatever, and the older ones draw less power because they are made better, smaller, don't look fancy in whatever current aesthetic is appropriate, and don't have a camera inside them to take a picture of the grocery list you made.

C: It's been great having the sounds from the Lab in our current season on cell phones, what was it like for you collecting those sounds?

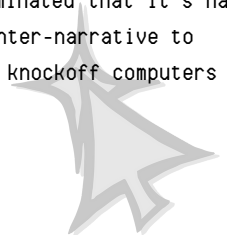
L: Darija [Medic] did most of the recording but it was just fun to find the devices together and go back to these old phones that have that external bell. That was really fun.

C: Because I guess you in the lab are keeping these objects, but the actual experience of these objects was very much about that sound. The ringtone was the thing that you would get attached to. Particularly the old Nokia ringtones. I was listening to them and thinking, my gosh this is bringing me back to a very different era of my life. It's a beautiful thing to keep the technology alive and workable so that those memories are alive as well.

L: Yeah! The sound of the phones, but also the sound of using keyboards, certain games or machines powering up. Those noises have gone away. But then there's also the obnoxious noises that you don't remember, like hearing the CRT screens. For those of us who grew up with CRT screens in our homes, it's something that you're conditioned to just ignore. Our students are getting young enough now that they have never experienced a CRT screen in some cases and so they'll come in and go "What is that terrible buzzing? Like, why is everything ringing?" It's like oh, your ears are still good, here, have some earplugs. Those sounds were ever-present. Very young kids like to put their hands close to a CRT screen to feel the crackle and they're not familiar with that either, all these textures. Also, when you see those pictures of old secretary schools where there are dozens of women working on electric typewriters, it would have been maddeningly loud.

C: I've never thought about that, you're right! In our second season on educational computer programs around the world, we used a lot of academic journal articles, but also looked at online forums and comments. People talked about their memories of being a kid at school and using these very specific, unique computers and what it felt like, the sound, the weight, the size, and the classroom experience of it. And for us, because we usually focus on non-U.S. stories, it's been challenging to find those sorts of experiences when we do stories that are from non-English speaking countries. I noticed the gap in our research in some episodes because what I really wanted was these anecdotal and embodied experiences.

L: Yeah, the history of computing is so US-dominated. Some UK, but so US-dominated that it's hard to find, and then very exciting when you encounter somebody who has some counter-narrative to that. We had a guy who was visiting from Brazil who was telling me about the knockoff computers he had that were replicas of the ones we have.



MEDIA ARCHEOLOGY LAB

C: We did an episode on that! Brazil's Macintosh clones, Unitron specifically?

L: He was actually talking about a Commodore 64 clone. It's like a precious little prize when you can finally find a story like that. Part of it is probably economic development related, just that there was less opportunity, but part of it is just that the US is extremely loud and there's so much shit about Oregon Trail.

C: Oh my gosh, I know that. It's about the translation into English too—those histories might be there and we don't necessarily have the access. I'm half Chilean and I do a lot of work in Chile researching archives, so when my Spanish got better I had way more access. A lot of my work is about that process so I noticed that sometimes when researching for OFtC what we find is actually a US framing of the non-US story. You have to be conscious of that, find another side to the research and go into some old newspaper articles for instance.

L: Into the actual source, yeah.

A: A political analysis is also really useful when contextualising and talking about a technology that is undertold and the US is kind of getting in the way, like the CIA's involvement in Chile in the Project Cybersyn story for instance!

C: We're just so glad to be partnering with Media Archeology Lab, and we truly feel like we found a great organisational friend.

L: Thank you so much, we're also very happy to have found a partnership with y'all.

A: Yeah, thanks for being so collaborative, flexible and hacky. We love!

! ☆ • • 「 ✦ *this conversation has been edited for length and clarity* ✦ 」 * ☼

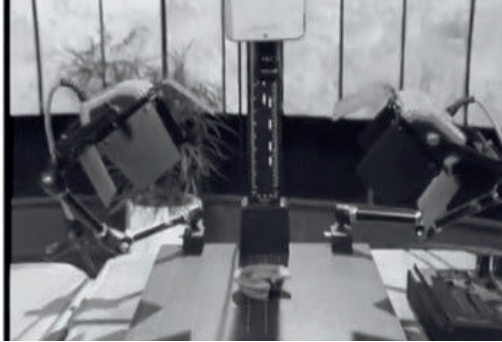


ICONS FOR APPLE IN THE 1980S BY ARTIST SUSAN KARE (PICTURED ABOVE). SHE DESIGNED MANY OF THE SYMBOLS, FONTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR APPLE, NEXT, MICROSOFT, AND IBM.

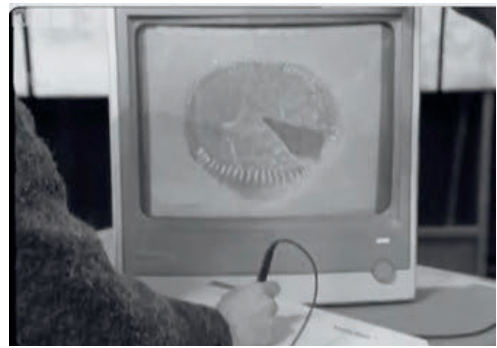
An electric paintbrush!

Presented
by Lesley
Ludd

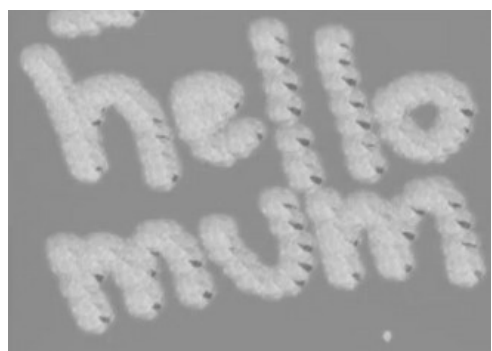
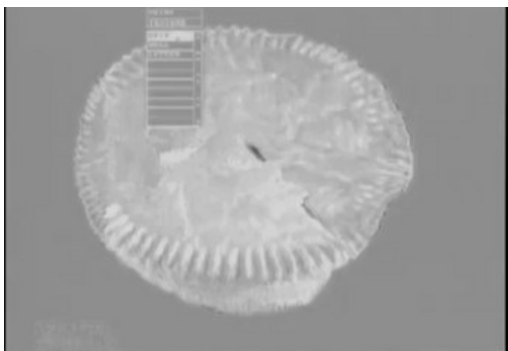
Tune in to Micro Live to see how you could have your mince pie and eat it -- for just £30,000! These systems are used to produce artwork for books, magazines, and company glosses. Paired with a conventional color printer or a digital camera - see it come to life!



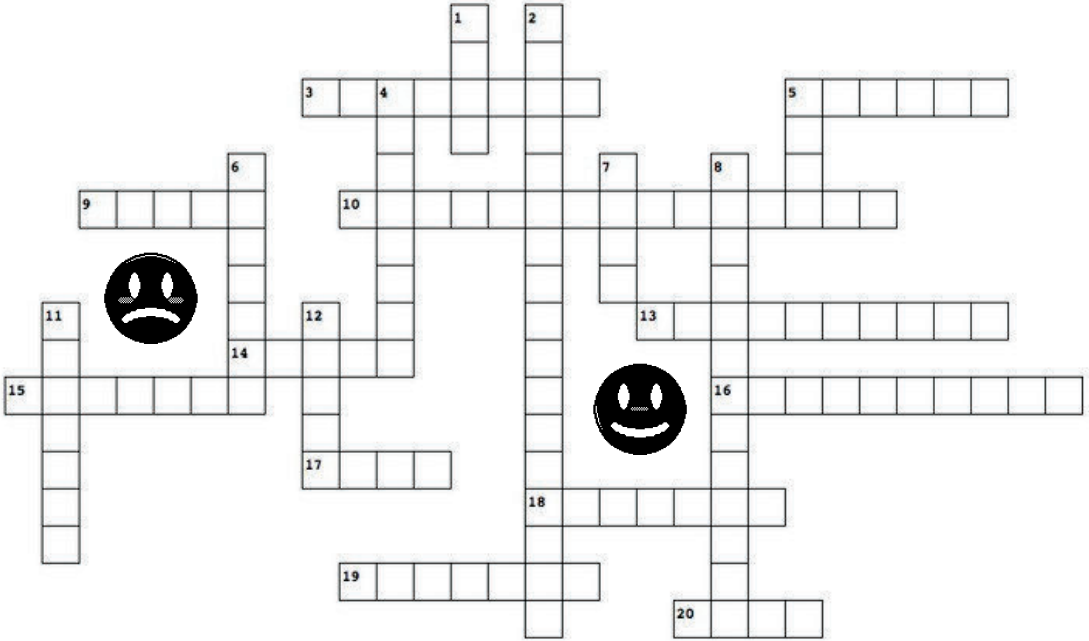
Here, a digitized mince pie - what can we do with that apart from eat it?



Copy points around the whole pie, picking up some crush and background!



Pick a mode to push texture, much like an oil paint brush.



ACROSS

- 3. A record of everything on two Laserdiscs
- 5. A charismatic machine
- 9. Political nickname for a cell phone
- 10. Cybernetics for para el pueblo
- 13. A soapy boulevard in text
- 14. A tiny internet
- 15. Clone makers
- 16. Computer with a \$500 college scholarship
- 17. Year of the home computer crash
- 18. Like the walkman, the actionman
- 19. Love, of a fashion
- 20. The first streaming entertainment subscription service

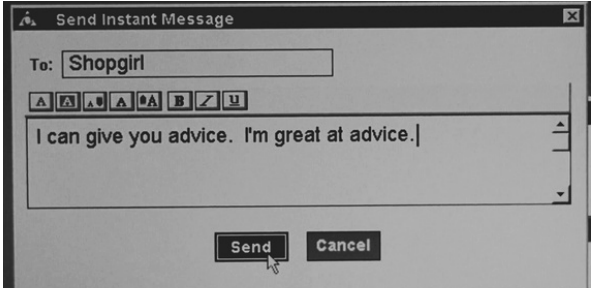
DOWN

- 1. The color of love online in France
- 2. BTX-Hack conspirators
- 4. A home grown and dinky-di computer
- 5. After Sputnik
- 6. Informatizing a country
- 7. She's a legend, she is the moment (a hypertext learning utopia)
- 8. Opens doors again (an artwork by Eduardo Kac)
- 11. How to buy tickets online circa 1982
- 12. The first for many in New Zealand

OUR FRIEND THE COMPUTER is a research-based podcast exploring alternative and under-known stories from the history of computing. OFtC promotes digital and historical literacy and forefronts stories from diverse countries and groups -- providing context and analysis which places their importance alongside the traditional US-centric tech timeline. Produced and hosted by Camila Galaz and Ana Meisel, OFtC is a sister project of the Media Archaeology Lab at the University of Colorado and represented by Camila as a Y10 Incubator Member of NEW INC.

find us on

SUBSCRIBE: [HTTPS://WWW.OURFRIENDTHE.COMPUTER/](https://www.ourfriendthe.computer/)
INSTAGRAM: OURFRIENDTHECOMPUTER
TWITTER: OURFRIENDCOMP
EMAIL: OURFRIENDTHECOMPUTER@GMAIL.COM

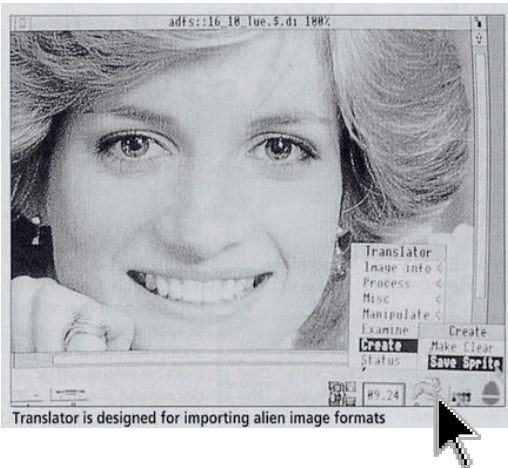


CLASSIFIEDS

COMING SOON! NEW FLOPPY DISC PC GAME "MOZART'S GHOST" - THE HOTTEST BAND ON THE INTERNET! PLACE ORDER NOW SEND \$2.95 TO: ANGELA BENNETT 407 FINLEY ST. VENICE, CALIFORNIA 90291 (310) 853-3472

FOR SALE: NIX SUPER GUPPY SOFTWARE SYSTEM - FULLY ASSEMBLED MICROPROCESSOR BOARD. SUPPORT HARDWARE INCLUDED, ON-BOARD OSS CAPACITY OF 8K BYTES. DEALER INQUIRES INVITED.

770 CORTEZ ST.
SUITE 23
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94304



CAMILA GALAZ is an Australian-Chilean researcher, writer, and multimedia artist based in New York.

ANA MEISEL is a web developer and technologist from Czechia, based in London, UK.

‘.♥ thank you ♥.’

THANK YOU to Katherine Leon for designing this publication and Studio Jetstream for icon designs seen throughout. Many thanks to all our collaborators and communities at MAL, NEW INC and Rhizome, particularly libi rose striegl, Lori Emerson, Darija Medic, Raul Zbengheci, Kayla Drzewicki, Briana Griffin, and Michael Connor.

- CROSSWORD ANSWERS
- ACROSS:
- 3. DOMESDAY
 - 5. OLPX
 - 9. GORBA
 - 10. PROJECTYBERSYN
 - 13. PARKAVENUE
 - 14. IMODE
 - 15. UNITRON
 - 16. COLECOADAM
 - 17. 1985
 - 18. CITYMAN
 - 19. L'AMOUR
 - 20. NABU
- DOWN:
- 1. ROSE
 - 2. CHAOSCOMPUTERCLUB
 - 4. MICROBEE
 - 5. OGAS
 - 6. CAPTAIN
 - 7. ICON
 - 8. REABRACADABRA
 - 11. MINTEL
 - 12. POLY1