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GDES 308: Web Design
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Reading Responses

J.R. Carpenter - A Handmade Web

I found this writing interesting because as much as technology is constantly developing and software makes it easier for most people to create the same results, there's a special place inside many of us when the web was still fresh! Software is faster, visually appealing, and efficient, and no string of code is required to be written by the user. However, I thought J.R. Carpenter's writing was more of a reflection or an homage to the "handmade web" because he had to write code by hand back in 1995 when the internet was a significantly smaller space. While it looks like the web-developer community is scaling down, I believe many businesses need these talented folks' code to make their brand "fancy" and engaging.

Laurel Schwulst - My Website is a Shifting House Next To A River of Knowledge. What Could Yours Be?

Using analogies to deconstruct the components of a website was brilliant and fun to read. I agree with Schwulst's idea that artists should reclaim the indie developer space, in a sense. I, too, hate the idea that Silicon Valley (aka Big Tech) has to be involved in everything we do on the web today. Building your own website with a domain is a great alternative to avoid censorship and express yourself freely. I've seen a couple of student websites and Tumblr accounts where the layout isn't perfectly polished or attempts to place everything on two pages only. I think that's where the term "indie" might fit well because the author isn't expected to put in the same level of professionalism as a brand's website.

Fei Liu - A Drop of Love in the Cloud

I thought Fei Liu's essay and research were insightful. Love and emotion cannot be tangible, which explains why they're difficult to replicate in the digital realm. A word, paragraph, or sarcasm could sound rude through text when the intent could be pure. It's easy to wear on a different character online, as well. Unfortunately, no matter how often people preach, "Kindness doesn't cost a thing," some individuals would still exploit the digital barrier to escape accountability. So to translate genuine love and care online, it starts at home. I don't think hate or love has to be measured precisely, but a wide range of interactive options is **closest** to expressing genuine emotions; it's already available. Be it comments, likes, reactions, etc. The problem isn't the platform's interface but the people utilizing them. Aki Soudanya-chan's Twitter platform is one of many spaces on the internet where people build a community to express raw emotions without fear or shame.

Frank Chimero - The Good Room

The author reflects and emphasizes the importance of a good room/positive space where a person should decompress from all the noise, overstimulation, and invasive advertising deals. He states that social media has made us anxious and decreased our attention span. There was something Chimero wrote that caught my attention. He described social media as digital spaces that we carry around. I've never thought about it that way. Places are immobile, obviously, but I realize that we could since 2004. Chimero also praises the library for shielding us from these distractions, a place where it doesn't beg for money or try to sell us a product. A community where like-minded folks gather in a single, quiet space where nothing chirps louder than our brains being immersed in the action–thinking. The reading went from praising the history of the New York Public Library to dunking on the people's lack of trust in the media to talking about how to detox from the internet. It confused me a little, but I think I get where he's coming from. In conclusion, I believe him advocating for the importance of large, quiet, and positive spaces is something to consider. I tried it at Campbell Library in early 2020, and all my focus went on finishing a four-page research paper. Being in a small space, typing away on my laptop and proofreading was easier to do, even though I was under pressure to finish before the due date. Did it work? Absolutely.