

What was happening to me outside of the curriculum of the special issue?

I have begun a sound project with a cellist Lucija Gregov. We are called cTrL, [HERE](#) are some of our recordings.

[HERE](#) is a field recording I made before the Maastunnel got closed.

I collaborated in the making of [this](#) radio show.

I have exhibited at:

- ★ [Biennale of independent Illustration](#) in Ljubljana



- ★ [Transborders exhibition with my curatorial project temp.tc](#)



I have performed at:

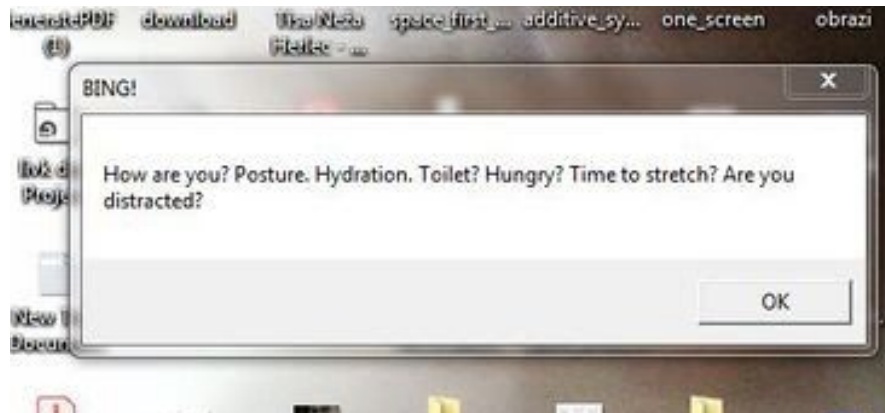
- ★ Radio Tonka in den Haag, 11-10-19
- ★ Lust in Groningen, 25-10-2019 ([OBRAZI](#) - drums: Mojca Zupančič, bass and ableton: Filippo Temperini, analog visuals: Quentin Zero aka Michiel Teeuw and Livia Ribichini)
- ★ 4-uurtje in Rotterdam, 1-12-2019 (cTrL+M: cello: Lucija Gregov, keys: Mojca Zupančič)

I started volunteering at De Player and joined the [Re#sister](#) project at Worm sound studio.

SPECIAL ISSUE #10

During the first trimester I was working on my module called Distraction Manager. I have also written a text about it (see below). Oh, and I also learned how to circuit-bend.

DISTRACTION MANAGER



DISTRACTION MANAGER

TISA NEŽA HERLEC

How are you? How is your posture? Are you well hydrated?
 Do you have to go to the toilet? Are you hungry?
 Is it time to stretch? Are you distracted?

Imagine a device, that would ask such questions.

DISTRACTION MANAGER is a wearable "notification" generator, a stimulator for awareness, a trigger generator for a human being.

The user interacts with the device - by turning the knob they decide on how often on the scale/sequence from 5 to 60 minutes they they would like to hear the short high-pitched sound it produces.

Even more, the Distraction Manager (DM) works only when it receives coequal activity from the user. The user has the responsibility to complete the function of the device, to fill in the missing commands of the protocol of sensibilization.

PROTOCOL

The Distraction Manager is switched ON by the user, the time sequence adjusted. >> The Distraction Manager produces the sound. >> The sound triggers the user. >> The user consciously activates their own set of questions. >> The user responds to these questions and makes adjustments that optimise their being. >> ...

The sound that the Distraction Manager makes acts as a productive disturbance, triggering the user to pursue with their own questions. It exists to sensibilize its user, to induce the development of good habits and taking care of oneself, to enhance focus, to reveal inner states and to manage distraction.

Each interaction between this device and its user is specific to the needs of the user. You get triggered and you are the one asking the questions.

A device to interface with yourself.

The Distraction Manager is meant to be used as a training-tool that develops the users' internal methodologies for awareness. It highlights the possibility to re-program, to rewire our subconsciousness by enhancing the users' reflexes produces by a response to the DM stimuli. It is only necessary to use this pragmatic device until the questions posed do not anchor into the subconscious mind, the trigger becomes automatic, the pull towards awareness instinctive, the protocol internalized. This is only reachable by repetition that eventually reinforces the habit and embeds the changed behaviour.

DISCLAIMER

This method of reprogramming our subconscious mind requires a firm decision and strong motivation within the human using this device.

It only works when and if the user is successfully triggered to complete their steps in the protocol, asking and answering their own set of questions. If the user fails to internalize the protocol, ignoring the sound, failing to reach a symbiotic union with the device, the DM is deemed to be completely dysfunctional and futile.

Then - the device is not needed anymore. It has served its purpose.

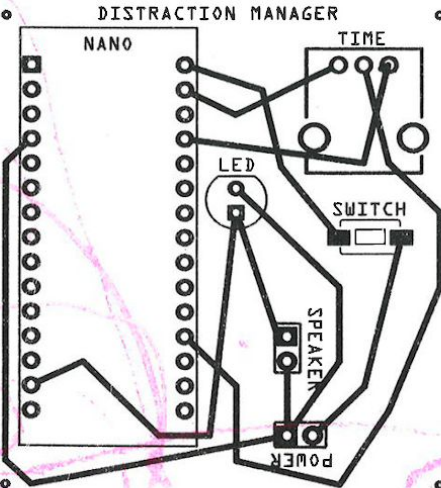
Normally, the goal of creating an interface would be to make it as user-friendly as possible, achieving the desired output with minimal input from the user. This is not the case with the DM. The users' input is far from minimal. In fact: as much input as the human gives, as well the device functions! Ranging from complete uselessness to accurate relevancy.

The interaction between a human and this device can be a productive and an inclusive relation. (Of course, looking from the antropocentric human perspective, the device can't really feel it, can it?)

Humans (in all instances) are the ones that give devices their life and their meaning, whereas this device challenges its user to reform their own behaviour - at an expense of the human no longer being blinded by other devices and the countless possibilities of use that they possess and distraction that they compell us with. (What a traitor it is, this device!)

The inspiration for the way that the DM is put together derives from the observation and usage of contemporary interfaces - black boxes that conceal their internal workings, seducing the user that remains ignorant to the intrinsic networks and protocols that these devices use.

Induced ignorance masked in a sleek design.



- PARTS**
- 1x Arduino Nano
 - 1x 10 0HM potentiometer
 - 1x led light
 - 1x speaker
 - 2x female header with 15 pins
 - 2x male header with 15 pins
 - 1x switch
 - 1x power adapter
 - 1x 9V battery
- For additional questions write to:
 tisa.neza.herlec@gmail.com

DM is simple, its physical interface is minimal and its purpose is as complex as the user wants it to be. We can consider the DM as a highly inclusive interface, as its user is in charge of the great majority of the devices' functions. The interfacing does not take place in the material world, nor in between the lines of code, nor the rumble of wires. It happens in the mind of its user, discretely and without the need for the knowledge of translation between the language of the human and the language of the device/system.

WHAT ARE YOUR QUESTIONS?

The Distraction Manager empowers its human user to take control, to exercise their capability of intervening into the protocol of the device.

The primary action that a human derives from their wish to manage their distraction (the initial reason to use the DM), switching on the device and choosing a desired time sequence of the trigger production. When the sound appears, as a mid-protocol occurrence, the human considers it as an input, triggering the sensibilization protocol. This is where the human and the machine encounter, interface each other, creating an inter-system communication. The actual output of the DM is the changed state of mind, the management of distraction that the human reaches when the protocol is repeatedly and successfully completed.

The causality of the final output is unpredictable and specific to each individual, whose conceptual input (set of questions) to the protocol is the unknown variable, that depends on the initial motivation and the needs of the individual.

Machines have shaped humanity more abruptly, causing a shockwave stronger and more lasting than any other occurrences ever since our species first stepped into existence. Tracing the legacy of tools, humans have always striven for the bettering of our lives, towards the simplification of mundane tasks.

Somewhere along the line, it seems, we have lost control over what kind of tools/machines/devices we produce and how we do it, for whom and why. How we use them and who is the boss.

Since the "discovery" of the internet, our bubble of known or possibly-known has blown up. Complexity arose and hit us hard.

It is alluring to have all the humanity's knowledge accessible anywhere, anytime. It is also perplexing. (Is curiosity thriving?)

"The world" is a distraction generator, the excessive flood of impulses results in the loss of sharpness in our sensory experiences, perception.

Our generation is severely shaped by the immense power of connectivity, the dominance of accessibility. This is why it is urgent to reassess the notion of relevancy.

Making choices, being focused, having a mission, a clear direction, following a single strong impulse has become an end in itself, being also a desirable fundamental skill to have in order to manoeuvre the entanglements of today.

To completely eradicate distraction would mean to cut off from the world that provides it, to seclude oneself in order to minimize the impulses.

The task is not to battle distraction, it is to manage it.

I consider distraction as the current systems' strongest tool that makes us obedient and conformed. Our attention is being perpetually pulled from one to the other flashy impulse, headline, infinite irrelevant content packages, our thought stream being disrupted.

Propaganda of today is strong, its tactics are detrimental, advertisements bomb us on every step. The outside world penetrates our mind with such a zeal, it is almost impossible to resist it, to finish the thought we have just started without interruption.

To be continuously interrupted, infused with the flood of impulses makes us blind, numb, insensible, inattentive - mainly to ourselves as bodies, as homo sapiens situated in the midst of this complex intertwinement of overwhelming impulses. Our time and conscious attention are swallowed by the black hole, made out of the substance called: distraction. We have successfully managed to forget about ourselves, indulged in the virtual reality that became the mirage in the desert of our time.

Being distracted prevents us from noticing that we are governed and manipulated, it takes away our empowerment and therefore we are weakened, not able to intervene, to react. We are less aware of our own emotion, our attention span is shortened, the capability of complex thoughts is crumbling, we dedicate our time to instant indulgence instead of managing our long-term well-being, satisfied by the virtual quick dopamine fix that we are entitled to receive.

It is a hard task to rewire our mind anew and adopt more optimised patterns of functioning. We run on an autopilot of our subconscious mind taking decisions for us in a much quicker way than the rational, analytic consciousness though. But that does not mean that it is optimal, how we would want it to be. The distraction manager disrupts this autopilot and triggers a crucial moment in all of this distractive complexity, it aids us to develop the good habit of checking-in with ourselves from "time to time", a moment of presence and self-care.

Sensibilization is the first step. By taking it, we reclaim agency, we empower ourselves to see, to react, to change.

We have the capability to expand our attention from only seemingly relevant matter, missing out on the core of the issue, the hidden mechanisms and intrinsic causes of things, if we are not distracted by any of the random impulses that try to trick us. Distraction works like a magician does - guiding our gaze where he wants to, while the real trick happens outside of the area of our attention.

If we develop our potential, sharpen our awareness of things, if our sensibility is well-trained we can reveal the trick of the magician, understand better, direct our focus in the midst of the urge to simultaneously process a lot of information.

Being sensible to ourselves holds another asset. It makes us instinctively sensible to others, our empathy grows. This leads to a change in the way we communicate, being more sensitive and compassionate.

Communication is the basis of any community, of any conglomeration of individual parts, striving towards mutual understanding and well-being.

Separate individuals, modules get interconnected by efficient communication channels, functioning as one organism. The overall function of a system is a sum of specific functions of its constitutive parts.

Community is a modular system.

Social contracts are so deeply embedded in us that we don't even see the very possibility of them being questioned, hacked, shaped, remodeled. We are used of acting and interacting in certain ways. We mostly don't react until the moment when something suddenly hits us - when the way humanity functions reveals itself as cruel at a very explicit level. Then, it is too late.

Isn't this aggravating, maddening? It calls for action, it calls for the change in our subconscious patterns of interaction that would allow undistracted, direct, honest, raw and well-intentioned exchange of content.

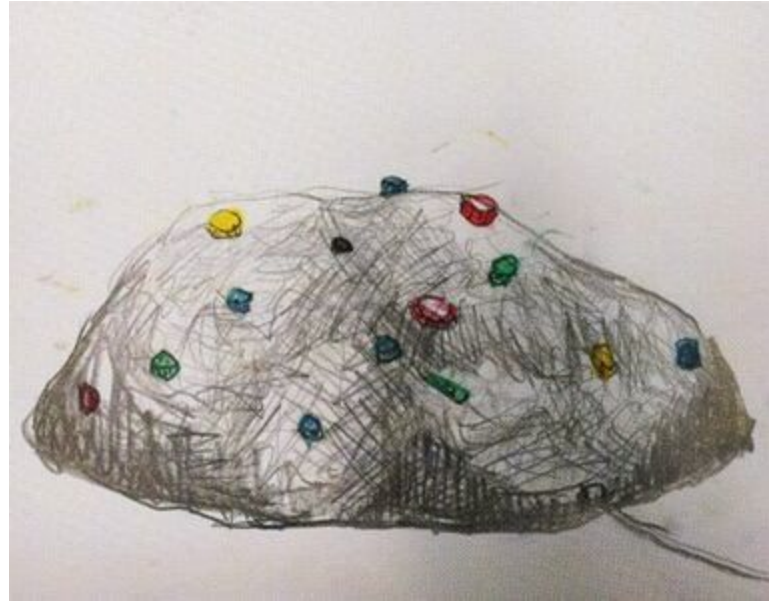
The optimization of the whole system can happen only by optimising individual parts that constitute it and this is what the Distraction Manager does - constructs a proposition for reality, an experiment in the everyday life as a form of resistance to the unsocial politics of today, especially regarding awareness of oneself, expanding onto the awareness of others and reciprocal communication.

>> sensibilization >> awareness >> understanding >> reacting >> change

Being sensibilized, gaining awareness and gradually understanding the structures and the mechanisms of contemporaneity, seeing its faults and difficulties, acknowledging other people (especially) within our communities. Reacting and being critical to ignorance, to distraction, to the means of control governing us, elegantly masked and fragmented, omnipresent and sly. Making, creating something that is beneficial for others. Sharing individual insights, combining and producing new forms of knowledge. Merging and cross-pollination qualities of separate particles. To empower and be empowered.

BLOB

The Blob is a seemingly organic structure with the function of combining my noise machines into an intuitive system, a form, a different kind of an interface. Thinking of an organism. Tactility. Unpredictability.



[HERE](#) is the overview of all my machines it would host.

Prototyped but never finished in terms of actually having a manufactured host body.
Below: mixer that I've constructed, connecting all the machines together.

