

## **Narrative Megan Hoogenboom**

### **Outcome**

#### **Previous work**

1) Abandoned websites, an online book about 6 abandoned websites and the elements that make them abandoned. I took the websites apart, and researched all the elements. Every chapter begins with an analysis of the html-code, and all the broken links and not working parts are highlighted. The second part is the part where the meta-data of the images that is visible on the website is shown.

At the end of the book, there is a template on how to make your website look abandoned. This is a reaction on the template websites one can use, and the standardisation of the internet, where a lot of websites are beginning to look the same. With this template you can make your website look unique, without having to know a lot of html coding. It is a simple reaction on the free template-websites that are available online.

This project succeeded in that it was a nice process to the end of the work. I started with a small project about my traces on the internet, my old social network profiles, and my fascination grew bigger and bigger while I was researching it more. The book is a finished project, but there is more that can be done with this subject. There are so many abandoned websites and blogs online, most of them hard to find, which I can still search for and examine further.

2) A poem from Paul van Ostaijen transformed from paper to an Ebook reader. Paul van Ostaijen was one of the first poets who began to use text as image in his poetry, at the beginning of visual poetry. This inspired me to research what would happen to his poetry, once you transform it into Ebook format. I used all the elements, opportunities and limitations, of the Ebook reader. These elements I added to the poem, in the transformation. Other elements, like the notion of the page, I had to discard. As a font I used an open source font, this was a reference to the woodcut and pressure print that was used in the original poem.

This project succeeded in a way that it was the outcome of research. This was the first project I did with a new medium, one that I never used before. The project was an ongoing research about this medium, and I feel like I got the most out of it. I tried to use all the elements it has to offer, and include these in the translation.

3) Phobias in Rotterdam, what phobias experience people while being in Rotterdam, and at which specific places.

The work started as a project about the risks of Rotterdam, and developed into a research/parody to phobias in Rotterdam. 50 People were asked to answer 31 questions about if they experience certain fears in Rotterdam. The questions and fears were based on phobias I selected, all which you can develop in the city. The results I transferred into percentages and corresponding info-graphics. The phobias were split up into 5 different

categories: Social phobias, Personal phobias, Street phobias, Nature phobias and Space Phobias. I made 5 posters, each for every category. In the end I made 5 Rotterdam specific phobias, based on the five highest scoring phobias. The sixth poster displayed these five Rotterdam specific phobias, with new names. The new names are completed with the location, or specific situation, where most responders experienced this fear. The last step was to make stickers of the five Rotterdam specific phobias and place them on the accompanying locations. When you walk in Rotterdam you can see the stickers and be more aware of the fears that live there.

This project succeeded in that it felt like a finished project, it could be lifted to another level, but the element of the phobias in Rotterdam is finished. The process towards the end result was not one of my best. The inspiration was there, but I had a lot of trouble finding the right direction. While collecting data in all different directions, I wasn't making any decisions. Near the end of the project, the pieces fell into place, and this project came out.

In all three projects a few subjects are constantly coming back. These are degrading and decay, and how they can be seen as productive. And the nearly new, by Walter Benjamin. These subjects I also want to include in my final project, because over the years

## **Proposal**

The proposal for my graduation project came out of my last thematic project. As I said in the description, it could be lifted to another level. I want to research what fears and phobias people experience or develop by using the internet.

The fears and phobias people developed by using the internet. The neurotic part or the more physical part: the neurotic/psychological effects, which are the more interesting for me, and the epileptic and RSI effects computers cause, but these effects can also be caused by other mediums, like flickering lights. The neurotic and psychological effects are more in connection to the virtual world, they are internet specific.

A few examples of these effects the internet causes can be:

### **Cyber-hypochondria**

This is hypochondria, but then online. There are all these websites where you can click on symptoms you have, and the disease or illness you may have will appear. If you have a stomach-ache you may have stomach cancer. Self doctoring, also being able to order medicines online and talk about the disease with other people. Does getting a doctors advise without a doctor or any human involved create scary results? Do more people experience cyber-hypochondria then normal hypochondria?

The overload of information generated by the users

Here the focus is on the blogs and forums people create themselves on subjects they are interested in or they think they know something about. These forums are especially

scary, because here people advise other people with sometimes weird information. It would be nice to look more at these “dark sides of the web.” The question I ask myself here is who these people are behind their nicknames. Why do they have these nicknames, and why do they expose themselves totally except giving their real name. What is more personal, your name or your secrets and where is the line.

#### Self-help-websites

These also go under the category of the “dark sides of the web.”

#### Fear of the not knowing.

This can be caused by the blackberry or smart phone as a tool of companies to enslave its workers. People get totally stressed and have burn-outs because of the overload of information. I also experience this constant, almost neurotic, checking of my email. How does this affect us, is it really getting neurotic?

#### The technologically-based fears.

How are they triggered and what do people do to avoid the experience of these fears. Are these fears comparable to fears they have in the physical world? (Like crossing a busy street and using google to search for something).

#### The computer as a human body

How different are we from the computer? What are the human aspects of the net. The internet can be seen as a brain. Where things that happen on the internet are similar to things that happen in our brain, like: sexuality on the internet, the physical parts of a computer but also the cyberporn and internet-viruses as STD's. What happens if you take the human aspect out of the internet? What fears or limitations does the internet have, that we also or don't have in our brain?

I would like to do more reading about this subject, because I could hardly do that for my other projects, there wasn't enough time. The outcome can finally be, and feel like, a complete project. It has to be everything it should be. The only thing I am afraid of is that I fall in the same loophole I did with my last thematic project. I have to stay focussed on the subject, make clear decisions and not get lost into my own research. With the help of different tutors and tutorials of different people, I think this will be possible.