

## COOL BUSINESS: ETOY'S TOY WARS

BY BIRGIT RICHARD

The immaterial Cyberspace, the net, is by no means an empty space. In the net a topography of a new kind has been developed, in which the former pioneers, eg artists and activists, have been declared outlaws by the law offices of the big companies. The economic structures claim control over the word, the name and its phonetic and etymological elements. In the virtual space of names typing mistakes provide an increase in turnover. To submit to this structural force means that the less experienced user can vanish from of the virtual community without trace. Virtual power is and makes any virtual live invisible. It aims at destroying any communication, the total isolation from media: name and image are to be deleted. For those groups of artists and activists operating within the net co-operating closely with other media, eg print media, is imperative.

The US-company Networksolution is operating like the residents' registration office, it can reject immigrants and kick out inconvenient tenants. The loss of an arduously established domain is like a small extravagant boutique being hurled out of a capital's main street into the side-street of a village.

The software of the order of culture is the precondition of the invisible execution of a structural force that transfers abstract routines eg juridical ones from reality into the World Wide Web in order to develop new economically motivated mechanisms of discrimination. Those mechanisms are founded on the same principles as described by Foucault (Foucault: Discipline and Punishment, 1977 (engl. Version 1978- *Anm. der Übersetzerin*) The Order of Discourse 1974). In the internet the grammar of culture becomes evident: who is speaking, who is allowed to speak (Blissett/Brünzels 1998, 25f) and in which context is it allowed to speak? Another crucial factor is: what is the name of the person, the entity, that leaves a html signature in the net while speaking?

Derrida (2000, 10) puts this phenomenon as following: "Who signs with which allegedly own signature?"

The grammar of culture remains as invisible in the virtual world as in the real one. It implements routines with the intention to let them grow natural. Here, an abstract immaterial form of cutting back the discourse comes to fruition (Foucault 1974), which concerns specially the text-based structures of the internet, in which controlling names, address, URL and its neighbourhood is a crucial means of the exercise of power.

The precedent in connection with the war declared by the artists' corporation *etoy* to defend their domain name against the toy retailer *eToy* illustrates the strategies of economy and the counter-strategy of visualising and materialising. Violence, as it is the object of this article, is non-visual; therefore the imaginary has to be called into action: *etoy* use the symbols of the image-based power of the business world and the war metaphors with the greatest of ease. They illustrate their toy war against a toy company in order to show the abstract means of violence, which are difficult to make out for outsiders. Doing this they gained the support of a big web community.

### **Subversive net strategies: netart, hacker, activist**

Following the Handbook of Guerilla of Communication (1998) edited by Luther Blissett/Sonja Brünzels, conventional non-digital procedures are named, which got a new form and a new life in the net. They can be called as follows: Camouflage, subversive affirmation, overidentification, purloining and reinterpretation, fake and forgery or doubling.

In the internet, a specific media-related subversion becomes manifest by changing or doubling codes, transformed skripts and interfaces in the net, as done by the net artists jodi.org. The doubling strategy of drawing up fake websites (see <http://rtmark.com/bush.html> and <http://GWBush.com>) bases on an optical doubling effect, that means on an illusionary identity of the original site and the fake generated by a minimal amendment of the “source code”, on which every site is based. This technique has been taken over by companies like Diesel, that has taken up the story of the polish girl's Joanna tragic fate in their print campaigns and continued it in the net.

Hactivism is this sort of hacker activity, that is implemented by art-activists called “reflexive hacking” (eg the marginal amendment of the eToys site). In such a case, the aim is not entering and destruction by an anonymous puberty soul leaving a scent mark, as done to DoS and Yahoo by hacker Mixer. Mixer also wrote some sort of Tribe Flood Network Protocoll (Drösser, Die Zeit 17. Jan. 2000, 41) in order to rise attention and promote his own career as an security expert.

Activists focus on activities of limited duration, symbolic character, not without giving advance notice: disruption not destruction is their aim. A program like “Floodnet” obstructs by loading the same website from different terminals at the same time. A website is faster called up than it possibly can be build up and the server is permanently receiving the information that build up the site is not needed while it is receiving the command to build up this site. Scripts running on the own computer or on the inserted server automate this routine. Having been called up a certain number of times the attacked server gets slower and slower. (Denial of Service Attack, DoS). DoS is translated as virtual sit-in. That shows the general necessity to find metaphors for non-visual program routines that run in the background.

In addition, net art generates a new kind of artist corporations. These are world-wide networking taking globally working companies as an example. They take the advantage of the collective identity, the anonymity of individuals using pseudonym (good examples are the etoy corporation [www.etoys.com](http://www.etoys.com) and the rtmark corporation, [www.rtmark.com](http://www.rtmark.com)). The former call themselves “art virus”, the latter “activists”. The net artists refer to the business world and the virtual codes of the international share trade. Connections to a conform business identity can be traced in the web as well as in their appearance in real life.

### **Etoy vs. Etoys: The violent economic occupation of the Cyberspace**

(8 Zeilen engl. Einleitung “etoy.....”)

The centre of attention is the “violent “ clash over the domain name of etoy. An announcement to the net community (“etoy TIMEZONE/& a law suit” from 05.11.99 21:28:33 MEZ from agent [zai@etoys.com](mailto:zai@etoys.com)) says, that the US-toy company founded 1997 <http://www.eToys.com/> (with a “s”) took legal proceedings against the net artist group etoy at the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1999 in Californien. Etoy is officially and legally using their own name as com.domain and registered with the international register on the 13<sup>rd</sup> Okt. 1995. The opponent is the online retailer eToys, a virtual start-up company founded late in 1996 and present in the net since the end of 1997. In 1999 the firm had its IPO at the NASDAQ with approximately 80 million \$ starting capital; with this sum it wants to become market leader. Its rigorousness bases on its virtual existence, which is threatened by fluctuating share prices. Since 1998 eToy tries to purchase the domain (name) etoy.com from etoy. The offers range from some 100\$ (to begin with) up to 524 000\$ (cash in the form of shares by the end of 1999) before the trial started, which temporarily put an end to the art activities in the web. Etoy reject any of these offers, because they concerned the creative process. By the means of an interim injunction the unpleasant rivalry concerning the names provoked by the artist corporation has been suspended. eToys' aim is to ban the

artist corporation from the top domain level, to deprive it of its global and international status and to relegate it to the Swiss domain ch.

The attack is going to become a signal for the fight for a global art and international projects in the dot.com system. The “toy retailer” blames etoy for squatting the domain name and tries to eliminate the artists with the help of their legal staff by criminalizing them and pushing the costs of litigation. Once a Grandson and his Grandfather got lost in the net and complained at eToys; the company took the opportunity to attack the troublesome opponent. Namely the product “digital hijack” is quoted. Etoy’s reputation became that of insanes - according to Foucault’s analysis - insanes within a diffuse crowd, that is living up to the rules of economy, insames who are threatening law and order (Fink-Eitel 1989, 26); and there is an attempt to legally incapacitate the deviant.

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Even the fear of negative reports in the media that etoy launched with the support of many media activists and that can leave a negative overall impression on the investors cannot withhold the company from taking legal action against etoy. The charge is infringement of the trademark. In the USA, non-profit organisations normally have no chance to win a lawsuit of this kind, because it necessarily involves expenditures of 100 000 Dollars. Thus, the company expects that etoy cannot afford prolonged legal proceedings and hearings of evidence on American ground. “They let us bleed until we will die. But in etoy no blood is flowing, so we won’t bleed.”

At first, etoy gave themselves optimistically: “for etoy: your action entertainment agents always online - sometimes lost”, because some details give reason to believe, that they might win the suit: the small difference, the missing “s”, and the fact of having been registered much earlier than eToys gives hope. In the Californian district court a negative court decision is postponed in order to drive up the cost of litigating that the artists have to pay. On the 29<sup>th</sup> November the domain etoy.com is suspended by a temporary injunction under penalty of a fine of 10000 \$ per day.

Here, the restrictions of unregulated net use become manifest. The confusion caused by an art project, that is leaving the art gettho in order to act in the net as a public space, is not tolerated any longer by the business world. Etoy fakes business values in such a convincing way, that the difference between parody and exaggeration cannot be told apart. They are so convincing playing their game to the rules of a economically determined value system that even the performers themselves could be part of this system.

“disclaimer ....”

The shares etoy are selling not only in a symbolical sense are visualising speculative business transactions and increase in value. They show the irrational mechanisms of the market, that became a virtual one long before the new markets e-commerce and NASDAQ did (see Baudrillard 1983). On this virtual terrain, myths, utopies, stories and rumour are the deciding factors for loss or win of trillions of dollars. One of these stories led to the first defeat of etoy.

Etoy moved onto the bare IP address <http://146.228.204.72:8080>. In addition they established the site [www.toywar.com](http://www.toywar.com) to offer a platform to net activists like [www.rtmk.com](http://www.rtmk.com), the thing new york, ninformaina, detritus.nat, illegal art, plagiarist.org, namespace, negativeland, evolution control commitee, styro2000, boombox.net and personal records who are supporting etoy’s opposition against eToy. They fight for the freedom of net art and equal rights for art and commerce. Their aim is to prevent the

selling of digital territory to corporations and to re-establish fair co-operation and peaceful digital neighbourhood.

Then, after first boycott activities submitting to economic pressure Network Solutions eliminates etoys DNS-entry, though that was not part of the court judgement. Etoy is cut off its webcommunity.

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This precedence indicates that the balance of powers within the internet has changed and that commerce and non-profit interests within the world wide web are drifting apart. From now, in accordance with the New World Order, the internet only provides specifically defined space to artists, which ties the art system to limited play areas, as it happens in the real world. The case of etoy shows that all social systems are no longer allowed to co-exist or develop equally concerning the purchase of domain names.

What all successful net activists' performances have in common is the creation of different media levels; virtual protest activities range from legal actions to purely anarchic destruction. Those artists, however, who joined toywar act from a completely legal platform. Via rhizome.org mailing list, rtmark activists condense their resistance potentials to politically efficient forms that come down to creating a network between web, print media, tv and everyday routines. There is an impartial Campaign Information Center, the so called Crisis Advisory Board driven by the theorists Barlow and Rushkoff, where all information flows together and is passed on to the press; rhizome.org is at disposal. Its supporters organize a press conference at MOMA in New York as well as protest actions in front of the companies headquarters. The measures taken in order to build up an infrastructure begin at the thing, a platform from which EDT is acting. After a Floodnet attack the thing suffers from eToys' reprisals; the thing is shut down at short notice. The next level makes up the infrastructural program-based activities. Those campaigns go beyond the boundaries of the internet, they address the shareholders and the staff of the company: a. Toby step down (the request addressing the manager to quit), b. Web against etoy and c. quit eToys, (the request addressing the staff to quit). These activities are initiated and organized by rtmark corporation and announced as a entertaining multi-player online game: Help destroy eToys.com! December 12, 1999 new INTERNET "GAME" DESIGNED TO DESTROY ETOYS.COM.

rtmark are the spearhead of the internet communities' protest, that fights against corporations and their claims to power not only on the internet. Therefore, rtmark raises one of their mutual funds that comprise subversive projects; the fund includes the following elements: the originator of ideas, executive worker and investor (<http://rtmark.com/etoypress.html>). The intention of the projects in the etoy Fund is to lower the eToys stock price to \$ 0,00. The projects also integrate DoS Attack FloodNet Applications, which are to obstruct the company servers massively during the christmas business (<http://rtmark.com/sitin.html>). Another important means of agitation is to publicize and distribute information about the company.

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rtmark starts an infowar- or desinformation campaign supported by the Electronic Disturbance Theatre. Those and others co-ordinate the different activities on different levels in the net via fax and telephone in order to severely disrupt eToys' internal and external communication and to put the investors into a state of uncertainty. On eToys' website the input area is occupied by protests. On the 16<sup>th</sup> December the virtual sit-in is successful. It causes high traffic and distorts statistical data. The server is attacked for short spans of time only, for 15-minute periods on the Christmas shopping days. All

software operations performed by the protesting netcommunity shall overload the eToys server and force it to keep busy running an innumerable number of routine tasks. Seven, eight rotating mirrorsites on which five different script are running performed a number of activities. Beside the FloodNet attacks there is the tactical approach to make the counter for the financial evaluation inefficient, that means to corrupt the company's webstatistics. Therefore the non-linear skript "killertoy.html" mounts continuously goods in cookie-based shopping carts, without actually buying anything of course. That way, the server has to generate the whole list with every mock purchase. The mirrorsites produce more than hundred thousand of requests and the time needed to calculate the list is getting longer and longer. Because of this "super plus version" script the platform the thing was shut down by the Backbone provider Verio. Beside the scripts there are tools which the individual user can install on his home computer and single email activities like "mailbombs", that the eToys service department and management has to deal with, working on them step by step and without having program routines at their disposal. This attack is meant to be symbolical, protest on a broad basis, not a hacker's activity. Affected by the marked dynamics, which means by the system's internal proceedings of NASDAQ, the company's stock price lowers by 50% in the course of this activity. The online toy retailer has to compete with traditional trading firms like toys`R us, that also want to conquer the electronic marked. The fall of the eToys share is programmed, it will be introduced to the stock exchange on the 20<sup>th</sup> Mai. After the turnover that was expected from the Christmas business in November has been brought in, the stock price is already falling. Bad news in dealing with the artists, the influence by the webcommunity on the investor forums and the bad press come just in time to speed up and consolidate the downward trend of the price. As a typical occurrence, there follows a substantial decline in stock prices after the IPO at the stock exchange, if the issued share isn't backed up by a promising story.

This does actually not depend of the actual turnover. The activities of the artists uncover the mechanisms and monstrosity of the *Neuer Markt* (which is Germany's equivalent of the US technology index NASDAQ - *Anm. der Übersetzerin*) and phenomena like start-up. They refer in a creative way to the fact, that it is absurd to speak of one reality, but that there are different levels of reality, which run crosswise to reality and virtuality.

### **Toywar Victory: the user is the judge © etoy kisses from your etoy.Agents (SOFTWARE&HUMAN BOTS)**

As you can read on the toywar victory parade on the restored website, the world-wide support for the etoy corporation is enormous. The Toywar campaign is unique, because so many activists and artists have been co-operating. An existing, loosely connected net has been activated by a joint venture, made up the connections in real life and won new members. Different kinds of activity and the Toywar battlesite call the internet community on a common platform and concentrate the powers of the individual.

The Toywar game goes on as following: a virtual battle field is opened, 700 agents represent the first elite troop. In the second round registered agents and Toy Generals can recruit soldiers, who are settling in the battle fields of Santa Monica, San Francisco, Hanoi, Italy, Ibiza, Tonga, Great Britain, Switzerland, Sao Paulo, Cuba and Tokyo. Before recruitment, the participants can decide which role they want to play. They can choose between bomber, bank employee, DJ, soldier, spy, solicitor, reporter and a programmer. At this point, etoy visualize those actions that are most important to them by figures which according to their function are appropriately equipped. Apart from a dynamite stick and a bomb with fuse there are gasmasks, camouflage dresses and cameras, laptops and turntables that are used as weapons. On the battlefields, which can be swapped, there is a radar function, which allows to make out the agents and to communicate with them. All battlefields had a particular function according to the agents and generals who settled

there. There are tools that allow eg to enter emails into a mailing list or to exchange music records; here, the CD "Toywar lullabies" is produced. Later, tourists get the opportunity to travel around on the battlefields with cameras dangling from their necks. With helicopters the curious onlookers are carried to the scene and they may have a look around for fifteen minutes. After re-conquering the domain name a victory parade is taking place on the website, which is also presenting the losers (Toby Lenk, eToys' CEO). The slogan *cheer on the heroes and heroines* is accompanying the whole parade and the participants are represented according to their contribution to the victory. The parade begins with the solicitor's stretch sedan, followed by the truck transporting the etoy tank, a number of generals and military heroes, special vehicles for rtmark or the thing net (a helicopter), and at last a troop transportation vehicle with fotmen. The parade flashes across the screen from the right to the left side. Using the military metaphor a hierarchy is implied, which is clearly visualized here.

The fotmen's fighting could consist of eg the writing of emails. 80% of the game's participants don't understand the rules of the game at the first go and cannot manage to get registered: As a result, the sreen shows a cemetery filled with coffins in the Indian Ocean.

"No physical movement, no contact by phone. Email and websites, everybody can do it, you too" (Grether 9.2.2000 telepolis). As many people cannot understand Beuys concept of the social plastic, the users lack of financial and technical skills made it difficult at times to support the activities, though their skills could be of use in other levels.

The underlying participation concept is a hierarchic one: Only those could rise to be general, who were able to write scripts or knew the right places and people. The toywar is successful: At the beginning of 2000 the company eToys drops the lawsuit against etoy and pays \$ 40 000 reimbursement of expenses, as a countermove etoy drops their claims.

Knowing eToys' vulnerability was the deciding factor, namely that the only evidence for the company's existance is the website. In spite of the fact that eToys is selling material goods, it hasn't got only one site in the web as Toys'R'us, which does not depend on being present online. As an abstract virtual company without face, the retailer is initiating abstract legal proceedings. It depends on abstract stock market prices having no direct link to the real material world.

### **From the "entry to the data highway" to "Thank you for flying etoy" (Street Style and Business to Business)**

"offensive, depraved, insane, obscene, prurient, perverse, destructive, anarchistic,. rebellious and anti-social in nature" (from the statement of claim against etoy)

The Surface Visuals and the Corporate Identity etoy as artist and stock corporation have their effect in different ways: in a material way by the personal appearence of the etoy agents, who were wearing an etoy uniform appropriate to the situations and to the virtual appearance of the website in the course of the company's history.

During the company's history, they were more and more concentrating on Hyper-Business surface presentation, which could also be military ones. They expropriate visible business concepts and e-commerce and give an estetic form to it. The etoy corporation has shareholders. Their countersigned shares are not neutral ones, but a reproducible "unique specimen", though the etoy corporation considers only the blueprint of the shares to be of value. Etoy share distribution only takes place via the website. By purchasing shares or performing special tasks during toywar, user can become a part of the etoy art and business system, that is oscillating between net and reality.

The shares' visual surface include an important message. In a new stock market style, the shares' motifs adapt the ups and downs of the company's history which can be read on a chart on the website. The motifs provide the visuals for their selfmade history of accumulation of cultural values. Etoy shares represent the subcultural and creative resources, which the user can participate in and whose increase in value is a precondition for further projects. The increase in the resources of art and subculture increase even the value on the market.

Etoy take the standard modules of Business-Visuals as a basis for layout and editorial and transform them. In the module structure of the etoy corporation, specific elements are varied and presented in an abstract way in the web as well as in reality eg in the Postmasters Gallery in New York 2000 (exhibition Impact Management) and at Ars Electronica. This is specially the concept of the tank as TCP/IP Data Package, a Business and Creative Think Tank and a mobile etoy Headquarter, consisting of an orange container with the etoy name on it and, connected to it, communicating labyrinth pipe systems, which are the grid for the web appearance and lead in the form of floating hotspots to the next level.

For the overall impression, strong contrast is an important formal principle. Screen and screen background very often are black or darkblue (Shares eg by cui). On this background the letters are printed in primary or secondary colours. Black and radiant orange is the dominating combination.

Etoy quote different reference systems and blow up their trivial stereotypes: Those start their career as agents, some in security business, some as figures inspired by James Bond. The agents are trotting carrying a suitcase or getting out of an helicopter landing on snow covered heights. At Ars Electronica 2000, the agents for the first time appear with two stewardesses, who are dressed in compliance with etoy CI in black and orange, orange forage cap on their heads, orange skirts, black gloves. Their excaggerating poses are imitations from those known by civile aeronautics or the airline companies. According to their slogan "Thank you for flying etoy ...", a logic development of the corporation.

All items (suitcase, radio set, the agent's batons in Digital Hijack) are labled with the name etoy. The name etoy appears everywhere even on the adhesive tape for the packing of the etoy shares and on e-pilles 1996. The etoy name is spelled with small letters as a sign of globality. One of the etoy accessories is the magnetic card for the members of the community and the shareholders, which serves as visiting card.

The appearance of the agents is always the same. They are unifomed and present themselves as de-individualized collective. In Digital Hijack 1996, they are wearing orange bomber jackets, mirror sun glasses, and bald heads and present themselves as de-personalized non-human cyberagents. Their image of black skin trousers and DocMarten's steelcaps is borrowed from the underground and reinforced by electronical means. The agents have an aura of lonesome bold heros' masculine coolness and toughness strictly organized in the etoy collective. The businessman style has only been developing during the following years. The non-individual attitude and collective anonymity have a protection function at auctions beside of its conceptual importance, because the agents are not easy to differentiate.

Even for an event as Toywar the agents clothing style is fitted and carried out in compliance with the etoy style. Appropriate to the threatening situation the agent wears an orange bullet-proof vest underneath his Business outfit consisting of a jacket with the sponsor's name sewed on it (which rather seems to be taken from motor sports). Also in this case the original (protecting) function is annulled by removing the protecting plate from the vest and by its striking colour. Having finished the toywar successfully, the agents

wear general insignia made of lego. Etoy turn from outlaw online-muggers into businessmen being sponsored.

Etoy have a reduced CI, because they exclusively address the outer world. Thus the principle of representation is similar to the representation concept of HipHop, which is based on the reality of the self-created picture.

### **Radical and digital conservative = subversive = etoy**

Etoy know the rules of the game of the immaterial business and developed a sound Corporate Identity based on an artificial language. While nothing can bring their opponent, the e-commerce company eToys, out of its purely virtual existence, the make-up of the personality of the etoy corporation is embedded in reality. If their slogan "... we left reality behind ... long time ago..." etoy generating cultural value & global impact ... since 1994" would be true, they never had won the lawsuit. The slogan is not, as Stalder insists, the reason why unpleasant reality has caught up with them (Stalder Telepolis 22.11.1999). The etoy corporation's work consists of a skillful and easthetic meshing of media world and real world, which for a long time has been controlled by abstract and legal facts. The effectiveness of the net activities as described above consists in commuting from art to life and from life to art.

The combination of well designed and well timed web strategies, toywar web support, and first of all the connections of the individuals to real life eg to print media, lawyers, activists and theorists have made the artists win this time.

The example toywar demonstrates potential interfaces for future art and business strategies: via platforms within the web and between the web and reality. Only those who possess suitable interfaces to both levels can win the battle.

Also the toys are presented in an ambivalent light, the Lego-playmobil-styled etoy soldiers are a purely virtual product. They have a connotation relation to reality. This is the reason why a material counterpart needn't but could exist. Their probability or potential truthfulness, that consists in a total phantom life, is the crucial point. All visual presentations could be real, that's the way the etoy concept is working.

Grether considers etoy to be a purely virtual net creature, a code controlled data set (telepolis 29.4.2000). As a purely virtual thing without relation to people from the real world, they would have been defeated by eToys. Just the anonymous agents' physical presence, their particular style, the tank systems make etoy so attractive and efficient. Etoy present each of the different levels in a way appropriate to the subject. Voluntarily, they bring their activity into the context of art. Their art concept has many rootes eg action art, Happening or an extended concept of virtual conceptual art. They represent an interface concept that is controlled by the artists. Etoy consider the accessibility of their material and the possibility for everybody to work with it as a essential principle of their work. They never give away the controll over their work. There are precise regulatives from the artists side, which never leaves anything to chance in their CI. Rather than developing and testing a new participation concept, they transfer the aquisition and merger business to art network and there it into new aesthetic dimensions.

No rebell-type artist, no avantgarde-like denial-of-art-attitude as it has been taken up by activists like rtmark. Here, anti-individualistic smart well-styled people appear, who on the first sight look all the same. The transfer of surfaces from the business world into art also is an escape from the uniform art system as the aparent adaption to the business world doesn't comply with the understanding of the artist's role. So unifomity and the collective temporarily give a shock. The apparent de-individualization and voluntary uniforming increase the efficiency of the collective approach as individual competences are

concentrated on a platform. Etoy represents the next artist generation: smart and web-based, elitist and creative. Net art, activism, traditional art and marketing strategies as well as youth culture subversion meet in the etoy corporation concept. Etoy appropriate not art but business visuals. Instead of the usual revolt an appropriation of business weapons for a structural surface war and the aesthetic occupation of space is taking place. In addition they make use of the anarchic impudence of the youth culture. What Felix Stalder in his Telepolis article called bad boy attitude is the typical dandy attitude of the aesthetically acting individual (vgl. Mattenklott 1987). Etoy bring the artist's boheme attitude and youth's provocalational power together again.

This net art crosses political and economic space. It doesn't stay within the provided space. Etoy offend against the unwritten rule of the art system not to interfere in other systems. The company eToys wants to hurl etoy out of real life back into the field of art, because as pioneers for business visuals in art and as visual virus they occupied commercial territory when it still was officially available. This kind of art is not modestly confined to those niches, which has been left to them, but it has conquered and filled a globally accessible place a long time before. It is unbearable for the commercially ruled world that artist corporations dominate the strategies of a corporate identity in different media, that means that they expropriate their practices. The brand etoy makes art competing against the business on a visual and structural level. Etoy's visual doubling of the representation of business creates a second business world, which on the surface hardly differs from the original.

Etoy possess the content-lacking verbal elegance of the advertising branch and of the public surfaces which are influenced by the business world. Etoy continue the business art that Jeff Koons created in the 80ies. He referred to himself as a "radical conservative". To transfer this attribute means that there are new subversive strategies in art that impact on many levels and can change from one system to another depending on the situation. "Radical conservative" makes etoy an up-to-date representation of a subversion concept, that is the only possible contemporary one. Revolutionary gestures and rebellion are expected and have no effect within the art system. Other phenomena of our time are "radical conservative" as well, eg the pop quartet or the latest styles of the club culture. Those phenomena are not recognized as new important deviation because of its apparent conformism, its superficiality, its orientation towards business, consume and luxury. The domination of business images over public space is overcome by exaggeration and by indicating their artificial and constructed character. Etoy re-occupy public images and set up new ones. Like Koon, they are not afraid of legal and financial battles, because this are the conditions artists are grown up with.

"we....."

Etoy create a collective body on the basis of a comprehensive aesthetic concept, their CI. The virtual body is able to resist temporarily economic and legal pressure. Their new forms of organization are related to the forms of the business world. This makes them an expression of the super-modernity (Augé 1992). On the other hand there are the collective forms of computer games, that set up virtual bodies following a pre-modern clan or tribe principle (Maffesoli 1996).

Net art invisibly uses individual or collective bodies the reverse way: It creates an anonymous collective body, which protects the individuals by integrating them completely. The collective body is not as easy to defeat as the individual artist, who has to give way to the global economic pressure.

The net collective is a selected joint de-localized accumulation, which once will disperse again. Etoy's collective is temporarily open to activities as toywar, otherwise the CI-structure is not accessible.

Joint activities of art collectives and activists are accompanied by a Hydra phenomenon: where the head of an individual is chopped off a new collective body is growing and new members of the net community are following - like Medusa's head. Also online multi player computer games show this new quality; not the lonely fighter is requested, but a collective defense of the opponent's attack. So, in spite of all the primitiveness, computer games are good practice for joint activity. Net art redefines the computer game; the same did toywar; net art uses the attraction of the common game and can therefore resist any invisible form of economic pressure. The selected merger is a new non-committal but identity establishing form of community. In the case of computer games, collectives become evident while playing together. Net art prefers the initially invisible principle of collective disturbance and of forming swarms. For this purpose an interface, a visual surface is set up. In this connection, the net activists make use of the uniform images of the global trade and on this basis they develop the efficient collective strategy of *uniform subversion*.