List Loving?! : Language of new media, or new media nuissance

Title	List Loving?!
Subtitle	Language of new media, or new media nuissance
Lead-in / Abstract	I wish to look at what the mailing list offers by way of an art historical tool, what adaptations we might incur in order to use such a tool efficiently, and why mailing lists aren't acknowledged for the new media language generator that the undoubtedly are.
Participants and speakers	Frost, Charlotte (GB)
Short biography of participants	Charlotte Frost is the editor of Furthertxt a website which contextualises net art practice in a variety of text-based analytical ways. She also regularly writes for Rhizome the online resource for net art and new media based at the New Museum, New York and has written for Mute magazine and Net Art Review as well as The Tube's Platform for Art. She has just produced a guest selection for Low-Fi on list-serve related artworks. She is also working on a PhD on the historicisation of Net Art at Birkbeck College, University of London, with Dr Charlie Gere. Her latest projects experimenting in the production of net art critique utilising net art technology will be launched later this year.
Full text	New Media arts debates centre on its separation from the 'mainstream' establishment, and how the history of art is unable to deal with it in the way it might when faced with object-based media. Subsequently the concern is that there isn't an adequate language of New Media either, with which to deal with the fluctuating demands of a New Media culture and provide an archive in the absence of institutional support. However this focus on the shortfalls of existing systems means that new, evolving methods aren't being adequately analysed or acknowledged. Little is being discussed about areas where New Media is being historicised, and languages are forming and instead, institutions often prefer to start up entirely new historical initiatives.

The mailing list is one such area and it seems bizarre it isn't more recognised because it is the lifeblood of New Media arts communities, being likened to Left Bank coffee houses, facilitating close collaboration, helping artists work as though they have adjacent studios, recreating the art college 'crit' and helping put the 'network' in net art. The most critical New Media comments, quotes and articles appear on lists because of their wider editorial remit and lack of commercially powered publishing and without them, you wouldn't know much of the art was even there!

New Media often bills itself as anti-establishment, suggesting by default that entirely new models must be created to deal with its distinct characteristics. However it might rather be that adaptations and reworkings of existing models can be used just as well, if not better than whole new systems, after all, New Media isn't all new! Its main source of validation is the text, something less anti-establishment or 'new' than one might have though. In fact, text is everywhere for New Media as critique and direct marketing, it facilitates curation by explaining the conceptual links between works, in an absence of physical proximity, and in the form of code, text creates the works themselves. So how can we say there is no language of New Media when the building blocks for this language are right there, in abundance, all over the web? And why shouldn't the art gallery of the internet be its text?

Despite the fact text does provide such a key validation system, placing such disproportionate emphasis on it, over the gallery or institution, still constitutes a shift and might require additional adaptations more aligned to this textual allegiance. However whilst pre-existing methods of analysis and critique can be adapted, I am also aware that this adaptation is going on almost unaided. Some of the processes forming via community facilitating technologies, might actually be generating answers to the very problems they pose.

I look at this situation in terms of an archaeology to explain the idea that communities might naturally adapt to the digital domain, and that existing bodies, might have to adapt too. History of Art for example seems somewhat buried by the layers of textual silt that the list is amassing, but with assistance, it too can develop |

the relevant tools to negotiate new terrain. Whilst list dynamics, hampered by inadequate search facilities, awkward informatic aesthetic and archaic gender divide require diligent digging!

What I am therefore concerned with is, trying to understand what answer the list provides to the question of a language of New Media, how the list might be used by researchers and how we might adapt this form of knowledge creation further to better suit our research processes and technological abilities and desires?

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