



Reverse
Engineeri...
Social Me...
2014



Weaving
the Dark
Web: Leg...
2018



Contemporary Social Media and Creative Practice 2018

Hosted by
the Social Media Narratives Class
Art and Technology Studies
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Twitter , November 1 - 6, 2018

Transcript: Robert Gehl

In this era, when ethical issues with contemporary social media platforms, raise concerns about social media, it is important to look at alternatives. In *Weaving the Dark Web* (MIT Press. 2018, 208-209), Robert Gehl, writes:

“Facebook is arguably the largest identity authenticator on the Internet, with services using Facebook Connect as a login system to authenticate the identities of their members. In contrast, of course, the anonymizing networks Freenet, Tor, and I2P have been developed to dissociate user identities from their reading and publications. Facebook’s entry into Tor hidden services is thus a collision between a culture of real identities and that of the anonymizing networks.”

The following informal and unedited conversation took place on Twitter in November 2018 as a part of the *Contemporary Social Media and Creative Practice 2018* online panel. Logging on with anonymous ids, the art students who were part of this discussion, were interested in the Dark Web as an alternate to commercial social media platforms -- specifically as regards issues of hospitality and identity. - Judy Malloy



@robertwgehl@scholar.social @robertwgehl · Oct 30

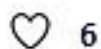
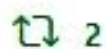


I'm going to participate in [#socmedianar18](#), a discussion about social media, arts, activism, and society. The discussion will take place on the birdsite, but I will cross-post to Mastodon at [scholar.social](#). This will happen in a few days.



Scholar Social

A Mastodon instance for academics Scholar Social is meant for: researchers, grad students, librarians, archivists, undergrads, academi...
[scholar.social](#)



[Show this thread](#)



trying to remember my fourth grade science class @nutritional... · Nov 3 ▾

Replying to @robertwgehl

Welcome Robert! My name's Sam and I'm in Judy's class. I'm excited to hear what you have to say, and if needed I have a few questions about your work I'm curious about.



@robertwgehl@scholar.social @robertwgehl · Nov 3 ▾

Hello, Sam! I would be happy to answer your questions.



trying to remember my fourth grade science class @nutritional... · Nov 3 ▾

Awesome! Because of your focus on alternative social media and building communities on the dark web (were there isn't one governing body), I was wondering how situations involving hate speech and threats are handled. In light of recent events this seems like a pressing issue.





@robertwgehl@scholar.social @robertwgehl · 17h

Indeed it is; great question! The short answer is: it varies. Some ASM are "free speech absolutist" (e.g., Gab), which can devolve into hate speech pretty quickly. Others have codes of conduct (e.g., many Mastodon instances). The same range appears in Dark Web social networking.



@robertwgehl@scholar.social @robertwgehl · 17h

So disputes over speech or threats get handled in different ways. Some sites have administrators who actively warn and/or ban those who violate community norms; others allow a lot of leeway.



@robertwgehl@scholar.social @robertwgehl · 17h

An example I would point to is Galaxy2, which was a dark web social networking site. The admin of the site was very mindful of the bad reputation of the dark web, and so he worked to cultivate civility, even as he acknowledged the openness that anonymity provided.



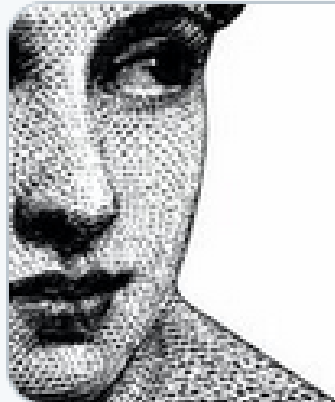


@robertwgehl@scholar.social @robertwgehl · 19h



Replying to @robertwgehl @nutritonalyeast

See [this interview](#)



Socializing the Dark Web

Can there be social networking among the pseudonymous?

thenewinquiry.com





Rionel Lichie @HamienDirst · 4h

Hi Robert, I'm Dexter, also in Judy's class just chipping in here. What is the benefit of having social media on the dark web? Social media is meant to be about the singular person, and having a face, what benefits does anonymity have when its meant to be "Social?"



1



1



@robertwgehl@scholar.social @robertwgehl · 2h

Hi, Dexter! This is why I like studying alternative social media. It expands and challenges our current definition of "social media." Dark web social networking challenges the emphasis on "real" identities. Other ASM challenges the surveillance capitalist model.



2





trying to remember my fourth gr...

@nutritonalyeast

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Replying to [@robertwgehl](#) [@HamienDirst](#)

One might think a Dark web site offers more room for someone's 'real' identity to show through without the consequences of traditional social media sites.

10:39 AM - 4 Nov 2018



1



@robertwgehl@scholar.social [@robertwgehl](#) · Nov 4



Replying to [@nutritonalyeast](#) [@HamienDirst](#)

That's the argument that I heard a lot during participant observation on dark web social networks: that Facebook-style socializing is fake, and that anonymous interaction is authentic. [#socmedianar18](#)



1





Rionel Lichie @HamienDirst · 15h



Replying to @robertwgehl @nutritonalyeast

Ha haa thats fantastic, I suppose thats why 4chan exists too, you don't have to worry about coming off weird, because you arent real. Nice





trying to remember my fourth grade science class @nutritionalyeast · 3h ▾

Replying to [@robertwgehl](#)

It seems as if a dark web social media site might offer more room for one's 'real' identity to show through, without the consequences a traditional social media site might have.





@robertwgehl@scholar.social @robertwgehl · 6 Nov 2018



Replying to @JudyMalloy @mitpress

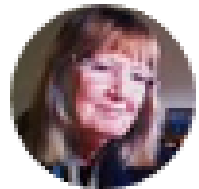
Today's my turn for the #socmednar18! Here's a link to my draft background statement, socialmediaalternatives.org/?p=165. And here's the bio page: narrabase.net/Gehl_darkweb.h...



1



 @robertwgehl@scholar.social Retweeted



Judy Malloy @JudyMalloy · 6 Nov 2018

Thank you @robertwgehl ! Your first book, Reverse Engineering Social Media -- which clearly &thoroughly deconstructs the architecture of contemporary social media platforms &in the process provides the groundwork for alternative social media -- should be on every SMN reading list

