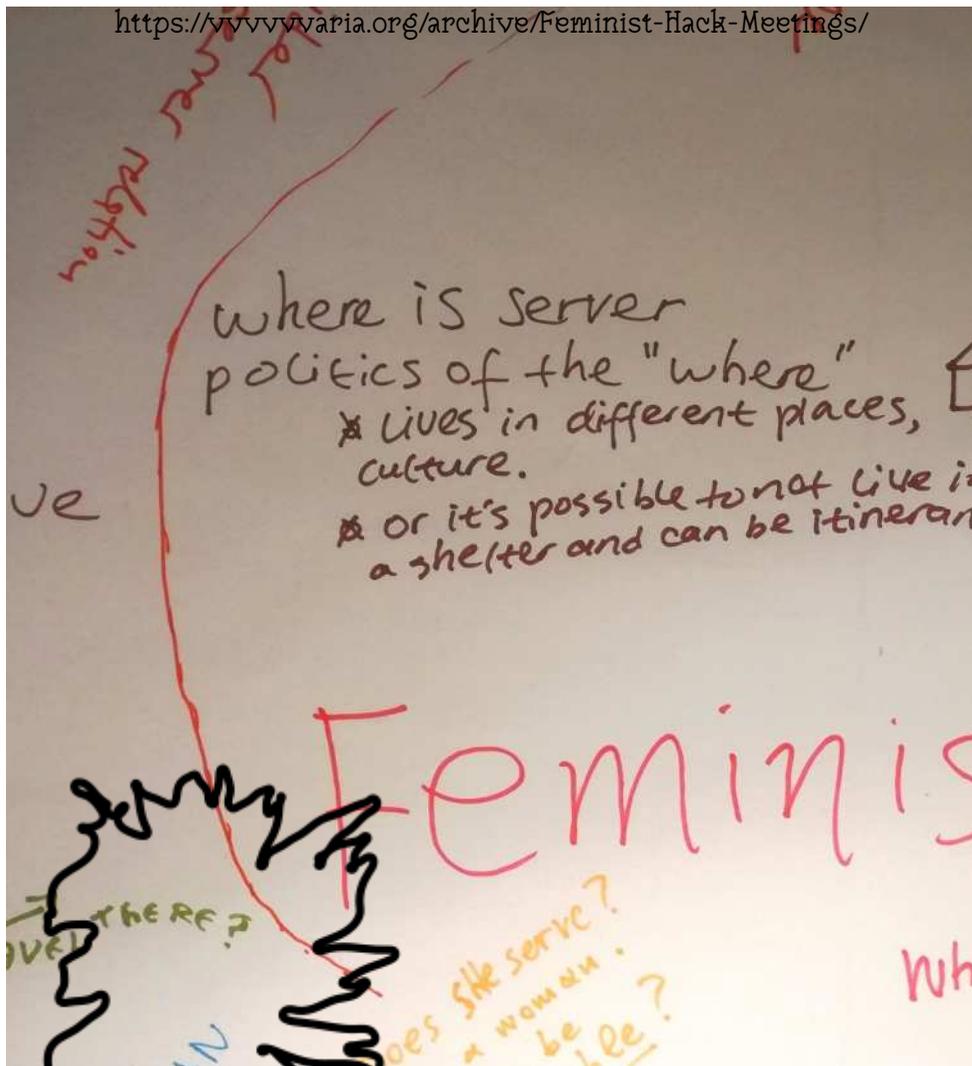


Infrastructures of collectivities

<https://www.vvva.org/archive/Feminist-Hack-Meetings/>



A note on the situated context of this zine

In the middle of projects, server maintenance, spreadsheet care taking and many, many chat messages, we find ourselves now here with you.

This zine holds a range of different understandings of the term “collectivity”. We are speaking from the situated context of Varia, a cultural member based organisation in Rotterdam, which brings a group of 20 people together who work with artists, designers, programmers, writers and educators. This group engages with different collective ways of working, thinking, living and imagining, which each can be unfolded and will render into a range of understandings of the word “collectivity”. The shared efforts of Varia these days extend towards, amongst other things, a collective infrastructure (providing digital, print and electronical facilities), resource sharing initiatives (such as Digital Solidarity Networks), a collective European project around feminist servers (A Traversal Network of Feminist Servers) and custom tools that shape collective work (octomode, logbot, distribusi), and a public programme focused on dialogical learning.

Our perspectives are partial. We are two voices of the many others and our observations will most likely differ from others who are co-shaping the multiple collective realities we are part of.

A tiny colophon

Voices: Cristina Cochior, Manetta

Berends

Tools: octomode, etherpad, etherdump, paged.js

Fonts: MetaAccanthis by Amélie Dumont, Cantarell Regular, DejaVu Serif, DejaVu Sans Mono

Other resonating voices: the other Varia members (Julie Boschat-Thorez, Thomas Walskaar, amy pickles, Alice Strete, Luke Murphy, Danny van der Kleij-Thirdas, Niek Hilkmann, Simon Browne, Roel Roscam Abbing, Dennis de Bel, Angeliki Diakrousi, Joana Chicau, Lídia Pereira, Silvio Lorusso, Artemis Gryllaki, Yoana Buzova, Mathijs van Oosterhoudt, Julia Bande), the Varia server, the surrounding networks of networks

In the context of: Reassemble Lab: Natural Intelligence

In the moment of: Saturday March 12 2022 in Amsterdam

With many thanks to: Fiber, thanks for inviting us to be part of the Natural Intelligence program, we're very happy to contribute to the collective infrastructures track and share thoughts with you from the collective practice of Varia.

License: Varia (Cristina Cochior & Manetta Berends), *Infrastructures of Collectivities*, March 2022; Copyleft with a difference: This is a collective work, you are invited to copy, distribute, and modify it under the terms of the CC4r <https://gitlab.com-stantvzw.org/unbound/cc4r>.



Collective infrastructures

When thinking of the word “**collective**”, there are many shapes, topologies and metaphors that can be used to visualise or imagine how a group of people comes together. There are “networks”, “groups”, “communities”, “collectives”, “friends”, “neighbours”, ... We could refer to them as “collectivities”. Each collectivity operates togetherness in different ways.

When we think of Varia, it’s hard to think of it as one single *kind of* collectivity. The image that emerges is more close to a complicated messy zone of overlapping or collectivities. Each one has other *methods* to be together, different *urgencies* to come together, and a range of voices that alternate. A collectivity as such is always in flux. It continuously transforms through time, rhythms, struggles, situated contexts, money, friendship, organisational models, ...

Throughout this zine, we try to unravel and share thoughts around the range of **collectivities** that surround Varia, and more specifically, how **infrastructures** shape **collectivities** and get shaped by them.

We chose “Infrastructures of Collectivities” as a title in order to make space for unfolding and unpacking the specific contexts in which they emerge when it comes to Varia. We will iterate through a range of references, tools and examples to unfold different understandings, feelings and turns of the term “collectivity” in relation to specific “infrastructures”.



Collectivity as in: *in octomode*

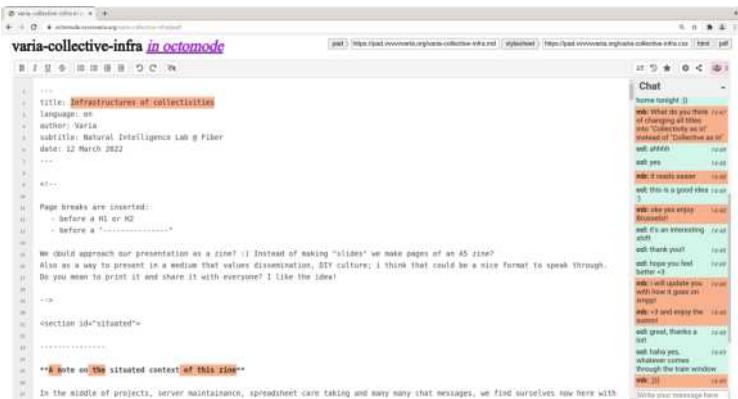
Octomode is a digital space for co-production. Inspired by the non-centralised, tentacular cognition capabilities of the octopus, we imagined a space in which the artificial boundaries of writing and designing can be crossed; where writing, editing and designing can be done in one environment simultaneously, allowing the format to influence the matter and vice-versa.

While operating *in octomode*, we write/design collectively using an online real-time text editor called Etherpad. Etherpad is a free and open source tool that uses synchronization algorithms to merge our textual/design changes together. We use the word “pad” to refer to one single Etherpad document. Each change that is made on a pad is called a “changeset”, which holds information about each character that is added and deleted, or each word that is turned into bold or italic. The changesets follow us while we write and think together, taking care of a kind of collectivity where we work towards *one* outcome together.

While operating *in octomode* we work collectively in the sense of: sharing the same environment, blurring boundaries between roles and merging authorship, to become one tentacular entity.

As such, octomode appears when there is a need to form one voice together (documenting events, working on commissioned design work, writing funding applications).





Screenshot of this zine *in octomode*. Operating in octomode includes: reading, writing, editing, chatting, designing, HTML previewing, PDF rendering

Have a look at the code or run octomode yourself: <https://git.vvvvvvaria.org/varia/octomode>. Or try octomode here: <https://octomode.vvvvvvaria.org/>. Log in with username octopus and password tentacular. A small disclaimer should be added: this is an experimental tool and might change or be offline at times. Varia commits to keeping octomode running under this link until July 2022.



Collectivity as in: *the perspective of “everyday technology”*



Photo from Relearn 2019 in Varia

Looking at technology from the perspective of the “everyday” creates a specific collectivity of shared preferences, urgencies and voices. The term *everyday technology* helps us to unfold ways of working with technology, grounded in questioning *who* uses technology and *who* can be involved making/shaping /changing them. If we speak of everyday technology, *whose* everyday are we then speaking about?

Focusing on everyday technology means questioning the hierarchies in place within technical objects and therefore the valorisation of skills needed to design or use these objects. This means reconsidering the hegemony of high tech: cheap, artisanal solutions are our method of choice. Everyday technology means that a sewing machine is no less important than a laptop,

that a tailor's work is by no means less meaningful than that of a computer scientist. Everyday technology means keeping in mind multiple and entangled perspectives, needs, and aspirations when it comes to the understanding of a technical object.

With our work, we try to show that low-tech solutions can be complex, inventive and joyful. Everyday technology means to believe that not only experts should have access and decisive power in regards to how things should work. To not rely on experts but expertise. This is why we design and contribute to convivial tools, namely, tools that guarantee a certain degree of autonomy to their users.



Collectivity as in: *being part of multiple temporalities*

- Varia as a **group of 20 members**
- Varia as part of **Rotterdam Charlois**, a neighbourhood where the housing prices have increased the most in the Netherlands in 2021
- Varia as a **partly self-funded initiative** (through monthly member fees and the volunteered time of the members); allowing us to not fully rely on external funds to rent a space or organise an event.
- Varia as a **partly publicly funded initiative** (EU Cultural Solidarity Fund, Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie, Gemeente Rotterdam); these funds allow us to build collective practices in the field of art and design; they introduce a degree of public responsibility to our work; they position/frame us in the contexts and timelines of the creative industries of the Netherlands, cultural city initiatives of the city of Rotterdam, and European networks of art and technology.
- Varia as **one of the many self-organised cultural initiatives in Rotterdam**
- Varia as part of a **network of networks around free culture practices**, operating on timelines from the 1990s, where Free/Libre and Open Source Software has shaped a range of cultural practices throughout Europe (Constant, esc, Servus, Hangar, and more).
- Varia as part of a genealogy of feminist infrastructures based on **consentful technologies**

Collectivity as in: *collective practices*



Relearn 2019 in Varia, a collective learning experiment with as many teachers as it has participants, week-long gatherings that have been taking place since 2013.

How can collective practices be established and maintained within the field of art and design?

How can we move away from competition, individualised work and prestige?

How can we shift focus from *representing* our practices, to collective (re/un)learning, exploration, research?

How can different ways of collective work shape (and be shaped by) different realities?

Which financial/cultural/technological infrastructures value such practices and can nourish them?

*How is a **community of practice** different from an **informal network** in regard to social learning?*

All communities of practice are networks in the sense that they involve connections among members. But not all networks are communities of practice: a community of practice entails shared domain that becomes a source of identification. This identity creates a sense of commitment to the community as a whole, not just connections to a few linking nodes.

Communities and networks are often thought of as two different types of social structure. From this perspective, one would need to ask the question: given a group, is it a community or is it a network? We prefer to think of community and network as two aspects of social structuring, which require different forms of developmental work.

*The **network** aspect refers to the set of relationships, personal interactions, and connections among participants, viewed as a set of nodes and links, with its affordances for information flows and helpful linkages.*

*The **community** aspect refers to the development of a shared identity around a topic that represents a collective intention—however tacit and distributed—to steward a domain of knowledge and to sustain learning about it.*

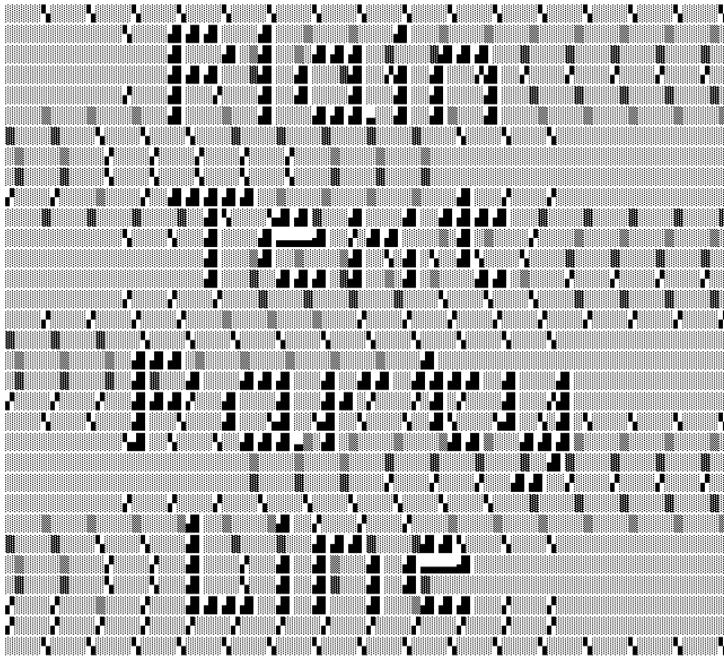
There are groups where one aspect so clearly dominates that

they can be considered “pure” communities or “pure” networks. A personal network, for instance, is rarely a community as people in the network are not likely to have much in common except for being connected to the same person in various ways; and they may not even know about each other (even though they are potentially connected from a networked perspective). Conversely the community of donors to a cause may feel a strong allegiance and identity with the cause they share. They know about each other because they know that there is money flowing toward the cause beyond their own donations. And yet they do not necessarily form a network (except potentially), as there may not be any interactions or direct connections among them.

For most groups, however, the two aspects are combined in various ways. A community usually involves a network of relationships. And many networks exist because participants are all committed to some kind of joint enterprise.

From this perspective, the questions one would ask are: given a group, how are the two aspects intertwined and integrated, how do they contribute to the cohesion and functioning of the group, and which one tends to dominate for which participants? And at any given time, which aspect needs to be developed as a way to increase the learning capability of the group?

(From <https://wenger-trayner.com/resources/communities-versus-networks/>)



zaterdag/Saturday 8 mei/May

📅 12:00-18:00

zondag/Sunday 9 mei/May

📅 12:00-18:00

@ <https://vvvvvvaria.org/plaintext-partyline/>

@ in de vensterbanken van/in the windows of Varia (Gouwstraat 3, Rotterdam)

Plaintext Partyline explores the modest space of the rigid X-Y axis of plaintext. Varia members and friends spend a weekend exploring this old, but not old-fashioned technology. Together we work on plaintext research and applications, such as patterns, fonts and generative layout software. (May 2021) <https://vvvvvvaria.org/plaintext-partyline/>

Collectivity as in: *a clustering of partial perspectives*

When we use the word “collective”, we do sometimes refer to something that we all agree on, but most of the times we are much closer to being a cluster of partial perspectives. In that sense, Varia contains a very situated community of practice, undoubtedly tainted by the problematics of a particular group of people (and not others). We are not a collective that operates on full consensus decisions all the time, but one that allows members to be involved in different intensities and ways.

How to maintain a form of togetherness that is sustainable for a group as a whole, while leaving space for change, transformation and variability?

How to embrace and nourish being a collectivity that always operates from a clustering of partial perspectives which sometimes diverge?

Collectivity as in: *organising togetherness*

Varia emerged from a dissatisfaction with existing models for self-run spaces, such as the makerspace (lack of critical theory involved), the hackerspace (technology for technology's own sake), the co-working space (sociality as a service), the fablab, etc.

<http://varia.zone/en/the-social-in-the-media.html>

How to organise *togetherness* and form another kind of organisational model within the field of art and design? How can *collective infrastructures* shape *togetherness* (and be shaped by it)?

When we say *collective infrastructure*, we mean the digital, physical and, most important, social systems we have developed as part of our shared practices.

- a shared physical space
- a shared computational infrastructure
 - collaboration tools: etherpad, nextcloud, xmpp chat, shared email, gitea, wiki, ...
- shared print, electronics, hardware facilities
- shared organisational model
- ... (to be expanded by the members that make *Varia*)

During the years in which the women's liberation movement has been taking shape, a great emphasis has been placed on what are called leaderless, structureless groups as the main – if not sole – organizational form of the movement. The source of this idea was a natural reaction against the over-structured society in which most of us found ourselves, and the inevitable control this gave others over our lives, and the continual elitism of the Left and similar groups among those who were supposedly fighting this overstructuredness.

The idea of “structurelessness,” however, has moved from a healthy counter to those tendencies to becoming a goddess in its own right. The idea is as little examined as the term is much used, but it has become an intrinsic and unquestioned part of women’s liberation ideology.

(...) Once the movement no longer clings tenaciously to the ideology of “structurelessness,” it is free to develop those forms of organization best suited to its healthy functioning.

(...) While engaging in this trial-and-error process, there are some principles we can keep in mind that are essential to democratic structuring and are also politically effective: **delegation** of specific authority to specific individuals for specific tasks by democratic procedures; **responsibility**: requiring all those to whom authority has been delegated to be responsible to those who selected them; **distribution** of authority among as many people as is reasonably possible; **rotation** of tasks among individuals; **allocation** of tasks along rational criteria; **diffusion** of information to everyone as frequently as possible; **equal access** to information needed for the group.

When these principles are applied, they insure that whatever structures are developed by different movement groups will be controlled by and responsible to the group. The group of people in positions of authority will be diffuse, flexible, open, and temporary. (...) The group will have the power to determine who shall exercise authority within it.

Tyranny of structurelessness, by Jo Freeman (1970)
<https://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm>

Need for workgroups, meeting rhythms, collective agreements, collaboration tools

- workgroups: infrastructure group, communication group, finance group, space group, moderation group
- meeting each other: monthly member meeting, specific group dynamic meetings, workgroup

- meetings, project based group meetings
- collective agreements: collective statement, code of conduct, membership guidelines
 - common fund: a financial tool for collective buffer + non-funded activities

We do also rely on others: Lurk for our mailinglists, Protonmail for our email inbox, Tele2 for the internet connection in Varia, KPN for the copper wires in the ground in Charlois



The space of Varia during an open day in May 2018

Collectivity as in: *crossing communities*

Each member is part of sometimes overlapping, sometimes different communities; within Varia we try to facilitate the space for them to cross or to gather. We recognise Gabrys' description of a community in the following sentence:

"a community is multiple entities effectively resonating within and experiencing a shared register of world-making"- Jennifer Gabrys, Program Earth

How to stay within the porous space of communities intermingling?

- solidary space lending: different non-Varia work-groups meeting in the space (Cultural Workers Unite, Bond Precaire Woonvormen, children's workshop)
- providing infrastructure such as a library or an electronica depot
- keeping Fridays open to the public
- inviting members of different groups to share their experience of everyday technology
- organise events that are not unidirectional, which involve collective meaning making
- attempt to connect to other cultural initiatives in Rotterdam specifically, but also beyond



Photo of the Rotterdam Electronica Depot in Varia



Photo of the Varia library



Photo of some of the printers in Varia

Collective as in: *a networks of networks*

A feminist server (...) [k]nows that networking is actually an awkward, promiscuous and parasitic practice

- understanding Varia as a network of community of practices
- understanding our public as networks of networks
- ATNOFS, an example of a project based on such networks of networks topology

A Traversal Network of Feminist Servers (ATNOFS) is a project that aims to bring visibility of counter-efforts and provide them with a framework to consolidate their projects, help structure their cooperation, and inspire others to create similar or join such initiatives. It is a project initiated between the partners Varia (Rotterdam), Constant (Brussels), Feminist Hack Meetings (Rotterdam, Athens), HYPHA (Bucharest), LURK (the Internet), and esc (Graz).

ATNOFS' priority is to create a public debate around the following questions: how to engage with digital tools that we may n-

ot have tried before (file sharing, forums, web hosting, federated social media and collaborative note taking); how to potentially develop new tools that could emerge from the series of exchanges, including community related resources for self-organising, decision making, trust building, knowledge exchange; how to strengthen existing bonds and create new ones. All while keeping in mind the different local urgencies and needs of each partner: the lack of self-hosted and self-organised infrastructures in certain regions; the lack of physical spaces and the lack of long-term support for administering feminist servers; the need for safe online spaces; the need to configure and maintain a mutually supportive network, from sharing hosted services such as cloud and encrypted file-sharing, online surveys, code distribution and version control systems, to server mirroring as backup mechanisms between the mentioned organisations and beyond.

By “server”, ATNOFS means a computer that can be connected to the Internet, run a website and provide file storage. A feminist travelling server will capture what emerges from a series of events related to the urgencies we described. It will be passed from one partner to another, as both a tool and collective storage to document the traces of our activities. Such an approach to documentation will enable reflections, as well as making public the diversity of generated material.

The work is especially inspired by the tenets of the Feminist Server Manifesto (https://areyoubeingserved.constantvzw.org/Summit_afterlife.xhtml). A feminist server “is a situated technology” and “is autonomous in the sense that she decides for her own dependencies”. It “treats network technology as part of a social reality” and “radically questions the conditions for serving and service”. Such a server is a safe social space of learning, speculating and exchanging knowledge that questions technology and its dependencies within the systems it is embedded in. The community around it weaves together different practices of system administration, care and maintenance which are shaped in relation to feminist principles.

(from <https://culturalfoundation.eu/stories/cosround4-varia>, <http://varia.zone/en/atnofs-varia.html>)

A feminist server...

- *Is a situated technology. She has a sense of context and considers herself to be part of an ecology of practices*
- *Is run for and by a community that cares enough for her in order to make her exist*
- *Builds on the materiality of software, hardware and the bodies gathered around it*
- *Opens herself to expose processes, tools, sources, habits, patterns*
- *Does not strive for seamlessness. Talk of transparency too often signals that something is being made invisible*
- *Avoids efficiency, ease-of-use, scalability and immediacy because they can be traps*
- *Knows that networking is actually an awkward, promiscuous and parasitic practice*
- *Is autonomous in the sense that she decides for her own dependencies*
- *Radically questions the conditions for serving and service; experiments with changing client-server relations where she can*
- *Treats network technology as part of a social reality*
- *Wants networks to be mutable and read-write accessible*
- *Does not confuse safety with security*
- *Takes the risk of exposing her insecurity*
- *Tries hard not to apologize when she is sometimes not available*

(from https://areyoubeingserved.constantvzw.org/Summit_afterlife.xhtml)

Collective as in:
*being unavoidably part of an
extractive global computational
infrastructure*

Computational infrastructures are complex entities shaped by different technological, social, economical and political dimensions. As is the case with any type of infrastructure, they come with embedded values. Their specificities and configurations shape the possibilities and restrictions of the whole system, defining what can be built on top of them and what not.

(from Bots as Digital Infrapunctures, <https://bots-as-digital-infrapunctures.dataschool.nl/>)

Examples of such computational infrastructures that we (need to) interact with through Varia: Meta (Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp), Alphabet (Google Fonts, Google Code, Gmail, Android, Google Forms), Microsoft (GitHub, Windows), Apple (iOS, Mac OS)

*This is the start of a listing of resources regarding mutual aid strategies, propositions for future setups and social closeness through 'alternative' digital infrastructures. This pad contains examples of collective digital reparative practices, in a time where everything points to the further consolidation and accelerated normalization of the Big Tech industry (Zoom, Facebook, Slack, Microsoft Teams, Skype, etc.), a.k.a. GMAFIAZ. **Other attitudes are possible!***

At the same time, we cannot ignore that it takes effort, and a

great amount of privilege, to walk away from these corporate tech solutions once and for all. Ease-of-use in times of urgency; network effects; family members whose contact is dependent on the usage of mainstream social networking platforms; complicated political situations where these are sadly the most convenient choice; the need for an online presence in times of structural precarity; etc.; are all considerations that should not be discarded and are the reality for most of us. In fact, and precisely because of such considerations, we are not advocating a purist approach. We are all entangled with Big Tech, but we would prefer to critique it, put limits and eventually choose our dependencies without being forced.

(from Digital Solidarity Networks,

<https://pad.vvvvvaria.org/digital-solidarity-networks>)

Having access to alternatives and being situated in a geopolitical setting where there is a material support for experimentation with them are privileges which we wish to use so that we may contribute to computational infrastructures that are not of an extractivist kind.

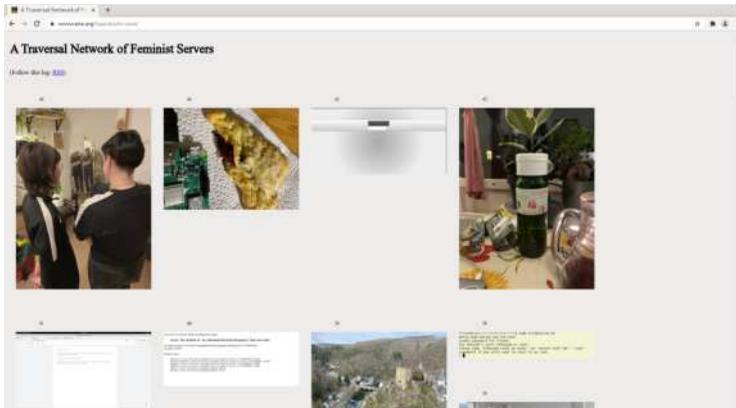
- How to negotiate the tools that are used?
- How to say no to using Google Forms?
- How to reach an audience without using Instagram or Facebook?

Collectivity as in: *mutating voices* (human, bots, more-than-human, ...)

Through forms of *dialogical learning* and *thinking with tools*, the social can be mutated with the technical and be approached as an entangled entity. Often there are artificial boundaries being drawn between the technological and humans, science and culture, math and language, and so great.

- interest in bots and situated automation (e.g. logbot: logging, leaving traces in group chats, building slow and async web based logs)

<https://vvvvvvaria.org/~systers/resonance.pdf>
<https://vvvvvvaria.org/logs/relearn-2021-anarchive/>
<https://vvvvvvaria.org/logs/x-y/>
<https://vvvvvvaria.org/logs/pub.club/>
<https://vvvvvvaria.org/logs/zamopuzo/>



A collective log for Varia's chapter of ATNOFS, generated with logbot,
<https://vvvvvvaria.org/logs/atnofs-varia/>



L logbot - Jul 25, 7:55 PM
Thanks for that image!

G globemodem - Jul 25, 7:55 PM



L logbot - Jul 25, 8:22 PM
Thanks for that image!

G globemodem - Jul 25, 8:22 PM



logbot - Jul 25, 8:29 PM

📎 | _____ 😊

Group chat for Relearn 2021, showing logbot in action

- resonant publishing: sharing work in progress with public and ourselves (e.g. Vernaculars)

come to matter <https://vltk.vvvvvvaria.org/w/VLTK>)

This publication came together as a form of resonant publishing: publishing that is not done at the end of a process of thought, but is embedded in the middle of a social process where thoughts develop and unfold.

(From Vernaculars come to matter, by Varia (Julie Boschath-Thorez, Cristina Cochior, Manetta Berends), published by Everyday Technology Press, December 2021, [https://vltk.vvvvvvaria.org/w/From_contradictionaries_to_formatterings: an introduction to VLTK%E2%80%9393_Vernacular_Language_Toolkit#cite_ref-26](https://vltk.vvvvvvaria.org/w/From_contradictionaries_to_formatterings:_an_introduction_to_VLTK%E2%80%9393_Vernacular_Language_Toolkit#cite_ref-26))

- relationship with the server, not just as a space, but also as part of the worker infrastructure, crucial in forming a networked togetherness.



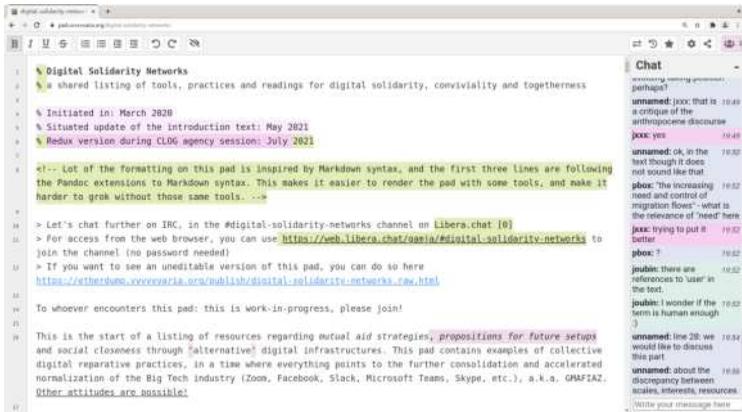
Picture of the Varia server, hosted from the space in Charlois

Collectivity as in: *collective digital reparative practices*

One of the big contradictions of the scene of self-organised cultural initiatives is that we are extremely reliant on corporate social media when it comes to our digital presence. For example, it seems both unthinkable and inescapable to organise an evening without a corresponding Facebook event, or to plan that evening without Google Docs or coordinating via a Whatsapp group.

<http://varia.zone/en/the-social-in-the-media.html>

- We are wary of smoothly running technology. Very often this obscures the intensive extractivism which allows it to run: appalling working conditions, depletion of natural resources, heavy environmental impact etc. Not to mention the cruel smoothness of some algorithms which is achieved by eliminating doubt, context and ambiguities.
- Small-scale, community-focused and low-tech are our methods of choice not because we believe in isolationist perspectives, but because we want to contribute to the development of alternative approaches to everyday technology for the benefit of more than just a few.
- Digital Solidarity Networks, a shared listing of tools, practices and readings for digital solidarity, conviviality and togetherness (initiated in March 2020) <https://pad.vvvvvvaria.org/digital-solidarity-networks>



Screenshot of the Digital Solidarity Networks pad, March 2022



Screenshot of the Digital Solidarity Networks html page generated by Etherdump from the pad above



Screenshot of the Digital Solidarity Networks pad as seen through another pad skin called altpad

The Covid-19 pandemic was the main (de)stabilizing force during the period where this pad emerged (physical distancing, remote working and care taking-and-giving), nevertheless we also want to account for other temporalities of diverse thicknesses and lengths, // which are inextricably embedded in what is shared hereby [this is a perfect clog to unclog!]. For example: the irreversible damage that we are left with in the aftermath of the *sneaky moment*[1]; the relational precarity provoked by what the Invisible Committee called the contemporary "crisis of presence"[2] that combines the digitization of the modern subject's experience and how "he's taken to speaking of an 'anthropocene'" (5); the increasing need and control of migration flows along the Global North-South axis; turbo-capitalism as the computationally speeded-up financialisation of most socio-economical relations; the establishment of *computationalism* as the contemporary colonial regime[3]; mainstream feminism with a door for TERFs[4]; requiems to late liberalism, new fascisms, mindsets of going back to business as usual; hyper-hygenic "new" normality; rural injustices such as lack of connectivity; and a generalized path towards the 6th mass extinction by means of a provoked climate change against which only partial reparations can now be dreamt of.

[1] sneaky moment is a term used by the Darmstadt Delegation to refer to moments of separation
<https://twentysix.fibrejournal.org/fcj-196-lets-first-get-things-done-on-division-of-labour-and-techno-political-practices-of-delegation-in-times-of-crisis/>

[2] crisis of presence <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/the-invisible-committee-to-our-friends> in: The Invisible Committee. 2015. *To Our Friends*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

[3] computationalism http://oro.open.ac.uk/46718/1/_userdata_documents8_sma78_Desktop_A_Brief_Introduction_to_Decolonial_Compu.pdf

[4] TERF = Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists

(from Digital Solidarity Networks,
<https://pad.vvvvvaria.org/digital-solidarity-networks>)

Collectivity as in: *the possibility of open licenses*



Open licenses play an important role in our (design) practices, in which we experiment with collective work and Free, Libre and Open Source (FLOSS) tools. For example at Varia, where we are involved in different software- and publishing projects, we release code, content and tools that we work with. This continuous form of publishing is for us a way to question the ownership and authorship of our work and tools. Making them available for others is an important part of this ongoing research.

We have, however, not always felt comfortable with the degree of openness that open licenses provide. Occasions occurred in which not everyone wanted to publish their work in the open. Sometimes it felt okay to share a work with the rest of the group within Varia, but publishing it openly to an unknown anyone was too much or simply not appropriate.

As a group we ended up with a dilemma: we do not want to subscribe to the protective and authoritarian forces of Copyright, but at the same time, we do not always feel comfo-

table to publish material under an *open* license which releases it for (re)use by anyone or for any purpose.

(from Not for Any*, by Varia (Joana Chicau and Manetta Berends), <https://vvvvvvaria.org/not-for-any/>)

- tools: Bibliotecha, wiki-to-print, distribusi
- methods: minimal viable learning
- materials: logs, etherpump, DSN

Multiple crossing conversations: free and open source software, authorship, citation practices.

We will take this moment to mention that this small zine is licensed under CC4R: Collective Conditions for Reuse.

Reminder to current and future authors

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Background of this license

The CC4r was developed for the Constant worksession Unbound libraries (spring 2020) and followed from discussions during and contributions to the study day Authors of the future (Fall 2019). It is based on the Free Art License <http://artlibre.org/licence/lal/en/> and inspired by other licensing projects such as The (Cooperative) Non-Violent Public License <https://thufie.lain.haus/NPL.html> and the Decolonial Media license <https://freeculture.org/About/license>.

(From <https://gitlab.constantvzw.org/unbound/cc4r>)

Collectivity as in: *citation practices*

By observing how arranging, rearranging, and collecting ideas outside ourselves are processes that make our ideas our own, I think about how our ideas are bound up in stories, research, inquiries, that we do not (or should not claim we) own. This leads me to work through the ways black studies and academic research and writing — when we are doing our very best work — acknowledges the shared and collaborative intellectual praxis that makes our research what it is. This is, for me, especially important because our ideas, on the page or in the presentation, might suggest otherwise; sometimes our ideas imply that we arrived there, in that page or presentation, on our own, as the sole owners of our own ideas.

(from *Dear Science* by Katherine McKittrick, page 15)

Risking the sovereignty of our own stories. What if the practice of referencing, sourcing, and crediting is always bursting with intellectual life and takes us outside ourselves? What if we read outside ourselves not for ourselves but to actively unknow ourselves, to unhinge, and thus come to know each other, intellectually, inside and outside the academy, as collaborators of collective and generous and capacious stories?

(from *Dear Science* by Katherine McKittrick, page 16)

Within our work, we find it important to share that where we are arriving, we do not arrive alone. Our peers and resonating networks inspire us, sometimes they pave the way, sometimes we build together, in a back and forth frenzy. Some collaborating networks we resonate with are Constant (Brussels), the Experimental Publishing Master (XPUB) at the Piet Zwart Institute (Rotterdam), or the Art Meets Radical Openness festival (Linz), among many others.

Some examples of genealogies:

- etherpump from etherdump
(<https://git.vvvvvvvaria.org/varia/etherpump>)
- Minimal Viable Learning methods from
Etherdump's MAGICWORDS
(<https://pad.vvvvvvvaria.org/minimal-viable-learning>)
- logbot from Relearn 2017
(<https://git.vvvvvvvaria.org/varia/bots/src/branch/master/LogBot>)

As part of the Digital Solidarity Networks initiative, we made an attempt to list the initiatives that have been important in the shaping of it.

We have curated this pad from a resonant perspective to those articulated by the tenets of the Feminist Server Manifesto[1]; Dear Cultural Institution, there is an Elephant in the Room[2]; Technological Sovereignty[3]; lists of feminist and autonomous servers[4]; F/LOSS Art and Libre Graphics[5]; community care and mutual aid networks (Global Information Society Watch[6], Allied Media[7], gendersec[8], Critical Design Lab[9], Leeszaal[10] + ...), XPUB[11]; Lurk[12]; pirate.care[13]; ...

[0] <https://theusercondition.computer/>

[1] https://areyoubeingserved.constantvzw.org/Summit_afterlife.xhtml

[2] <https://pad.vvvvvvvaria.org/elephant> + <https://constantvzw.org/wefts/distant-elephant.en.html>

[3] <https://www.ritimo.org/IMG/pdf/sobtech2-en-with-covers-web-150dpi-2018-01-10.pdf> / <http://backbone409.calafou.org/es/node/229.html>

[4] <https://pad.riseup.net/p/femservers-checklist-security> + https://gendersec.tacticaltech.org/wiki/index.php/Servers:_From_autonomous_servers_to_feminist_servers

[5] <https://archive.bleu255.com/bleu255.com-things/floss-art/index.html> + <https://libregraphicsmeet->

ing.org

[6] <https://www.giswatch.org/>

[7] <https://alliedmedia.org/>

[8] https://gendersec.tacticaltech.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

[9] <https://www.mapping-access.com/>

[10] <https://www.leeszaalrotterdamwest.nl/>

[11] <https://xpub.nl>

[12] <https://lurk.org/>

[13] <https://pirate.care/>

(from Digital Solidarity Networks,

<https://pad.vvvvvaria.org/digital-solidarity-networks>)

Mutual aid projects help people develop skills for collaboration, participation and decision-making. For example, people engaged in a project to help one another through housing court proceedings will learn the details of how the system harms people and how to fight it, but they will also learn about meeting facilitation, working across differences, retaining volunteers, addressing conflict, giving and receiving feedback, following through and coordinating schedules and transportation. They may also learn that it's not just lawyers who can do this kind of work, and that many people-including themselves!- have something to offer.

(from *Mutual Aid, Building Solidarity During This Crisis (And The Next)* by Dean Spade, page 16)

We are also very grateful to those who have documented the wheel after they invented it. Varia takes a lot of inspiration from existing practices in self organisation that come from mutual aid groups, activist groups, or tech cooperatives, who have established practices of mediation, conflict resolution, consent expression, and not only. As we try to adapt their methods to the particularities of our group, we are grateful for the wealth of resources that has been generated on this matter.