Relasticity of knowledge

Author

Bettina Marianne Bruder

Balmain, Sydney, NSW 2041

Australia

b.bruder@student.unsw.edu.au

Abstract

The discussion pages of *Wikipedia* reflect the ongoing interest to define and sharpen terms and definitions. In reference to the topic of *Ars Electronica* 2012 we encounter a dilution of perceived standards and structures. Boundaries of meanings and definitions are blurred, flexible interpretations, heterogeneous needs and expectations can be observed. Through this openness new insights and structures become possible, new translations can be made. The research project oscillates in this specific stress field of human culture which is the organisation of knowledge. It is an artistic research and exploration to approach and investigate an idea of (r)elasticity within culture and the development of a methodology for the research question:

How to cope with current sociological areas of instability and flux in human culture and how to take into account that we are part of changing, flexible networks with an increasing dissolution of structures, meanings and definitions?

Introduction

WikiSym 2012 is organized by Ars Electronica and Open Commons Region Linz. The conference Ars Electronica 2012 aks for the Big Picture and new concepts for a New World. The festival website states: "What we need is a broader, more open-minded perspective that enables us to peer beyond the boundaries of our habitual ways of doing things, our specialized disciplines and our conventional ideologies, and that can also visualize the pluralism and the inherent contradictions of our modern, globally networked world. A new Big Picture that is no longer from a centralized point of view and isn't projected out of the centre of a global force but is instead a patchwork of diverse positions."

Organisation of knowledge

Wikis can therefore serve as a possible model for the Big Picture as wikis are reflecting these dynamics of

renewability, diversity, extendibility and connectivity. Wikis are templates for the organisation of knowledge. In contrast to a monocultural view of rational knowledge, Diderot and d'Alembert described different forms of knowledge in their *Encyclopédie* from 1750. The structural and modular organisation of knowledge is continued in *Wikipedia's* content, organised within portals and categories.

Partial, situated, interpretive, transformed
Every organisation of knowledge, depending on different modules and processes can be described as relational, partial and situated (Haraway 1988, Barad 2003). In my research, I argue that the principle of elasticity is necessary in our understanding and therefore in an idea of a Big Picture to be able to switch, link and negotiate between partial, situated information and furthermore to apply the knowledge to a respective situation. The area of interest is therefore the modularizing, fragmenting, conditioning and regulating character of inscription devices determined through technology such as protocols, templates, categories and measurement instruments. Latour speaks in this regards from a turn of matter of facts to matter of concern. In my research I take this a step further and explore the matter of interpretation, transformation and elasticity of knowledge.

Wikipedia separates the discussion from the article itself, but allows access to the background information of the discussion. This allows for an observable process of the convergent, commonly edited information within *Wikipedia. Wikipedia* is based on a structure, which allows it to stretch, extend and grow. As human language and naming conventions are not exact and accurate, different strategies are required to avoid vagueness. The separation of the article and the discussion pages is one main design principle, which gives room for sense making, argumentation and discourse on one side versus the current state of information and facts on the other side. The interest in my research is on these pages of discussion and *talk*, the multiple versions of entries and documents with multiple ascriptions and recontextualizations. These are the pages where subjective, personal points of views for respective selection and phrasing become visible; these are the areas where different viewpoints, background information, considerations and negotiations become apparent. Knowledge and facts are organised in relation, never alone and never autonomous. The pages facilitate discussion and represent the moments of negotiation. This allows for a holistic approach of documentation within an interpretative dialogue, which is made comprehensible to a wider community.

Goals
The aim of my research is the exploration of conventions of knowing. I am looking into the processes of conventionalization of knowledge organisation as these processes are constituent for our construction of reality. In my practice based research I examine situations when we twist things to make them fit certain patterns, expectations and standards. Technology and media make it possible to express and work with the *vital agency* of information (Bennett 2003). The research is therefore a philosophical investigation in the relasticity of knowledge. The discussion pages of wikis capture invisible patterns during the organisation and structuring of knowledge. The outcome of my research will offer new, elastic ways of reading and understanding within the production and organisation of

information. Focus of the research is on the subjectivity of knowledge represeantation and the aesthetic of transformation of knowledge as a matter of interpretation. The range of meaning is extended through the discussion pages.

The research points to a specific aesthetic of the Big Picture communicating aspects of elasticity of knowledge through

- Connectivity
- Multiplicity
- Diversity
- Modularity
- Subjectivity

(R)elasticity serves as a performative metaphor pointing to these facets of knowledge and understanding. The background information of Wikipedia allows for a new room of interpretation and viewpoints. Elements and parts of different stories, exchanges and discussions will be taken as material for newly organised, linked information in form of a novel. Remarks and statements will be connected differently to offer an open-minded way of looking at this big undertaking, while revealing background information and allowing new insights. This artist based project is about making sense of current complexity and potential disorder and highlights its usefullness and usability. The artistic, practice based research is questioning conventions and standards. It looks into alternatives and possible strategies in the attempt to provoke different perspectives and subtle destabilizations. There is no such thing as accuracy and exactness. Instead, the inaccuracy gives room for development and

innovation. I am interested in processes of conditioning, the assignment of meaning and translation.

I develop my argument of elasticity within the formation of a worldview by investigating in the specific area of standards and interpretation, suggesting that man-made decisions and organisations of knowledge are not as rigid, infallible and axiomatic as confirmed in standards and conventions. In the attempt to work and manage the complexity, multiplicity and heterogeneity of human culture a library of disciplines, rules and units has been created. The research is making aware of these structures by questionning and analysing the forces through the practice of destabilization of meanings and the remix of background discussions.

Expectation and contribution

By taking part at the WikiSym 2012 conference I'm getting the possibility to be exposed and be part of an agile process of exchange and transition of knowledge. Through my artistic practice based approach in the areas of technology and language I'm offering different angles of knowing. At the same time I'm actively involved in the development of understanding and the interpretation in a wider community.
Personally I'm hoping to be able to foster my knowledge of theories and concepts in the area of collaborative and participatory processes.

The proposed approach with presentation, discussion and mentoring support allows for an active, direct exchange and the development of ideas from different point of views. This makes an integrative pluralist

approach possible while still being focussed and framed by fundamental propositions developed by WikiSym.

I am hoping for further exchange and collaboration with international researchers and peers even after the event.

figure 1. Prototype of an elastic measure tape as example for the destabilsation of standards.

WE DONT HAVE ANY LOCAL EDITER THAT HAS THE 'MOVE / TAG' DROPDOWN ACCESS YET, BECAUSE **WE ARE SO NEW TO WIKI. THANK YOU AGAIN.** (I'm not screaming...just trying to get some help).

Perhaps if someone who can read Turkish could shed some light, it might be salvageable. Or maybe not, considering the page has been created and deleted nine times on the Turkish Wikipedia. XXX (talk) 08:22, DD Month 2012 (UTC)

Weak Keep - You seem to be mistaking this website for Winnerpedia.

Hello , could i please have advice about **assembling the cleaning parts**. Any instruction would be appreciated. Thank you — Preceding unsigned comment added by XXX (talk) 15:06, DD Month 2012 (UTC)

Yes, carefully take the thing apart and **take the bits to your local waste disposal site**. Then **buy a Dyson**. — Preceding unsigned comment added by XXX (talk) 21:30, DD Month 2012 (UTC)

I do not recall adding this comment. I notice it was auto signed by a 'XXX'? Is it possible that this bot has mistaken me for somebody else? **I read the talk on this article, but I can't remember making this comment (unless I was very drunk at the time - which is possible).** It is rather witty though, so I don't mind too much. XXX (talk) 18:08, DD Month 2012 (UTC)

It was your account—you can see by looking in the history. So, either you were drunk, or someone was on your PC. -- XXX (talk) 19:06, DD Month 2012 (UTC)

figure 2: Examples of content of discussion pages. This kind of material will the base for a new novel.

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Biographical Sketch - Bettina Bruder, PhD Candidate, Media Arts, COFA, UNSW, Sydney

Bettina Bruder studied Communication Design and received her MFA in Design & Technology at Parsons, School of Design, New School University in New York. She is a guest lecturer at the University for Applied Sciences in Salzburg. In her creative work she is interested in anthropological, post-structural questions which she is refining in practice-based projects and installations. Through her experience in the brand communication department of a global company she got inspired for her academic research as PhD candidate in Media Arts.

In her artistic research, exploration and reflexion on the basis of several interdisciplinary, experimental projects she is approaching and investigating an idea of relasticity within culture. She is aiming to develop a methodology for the research question of how to cope with current sociological areas of instability and flux in human culture and how to take into account that we are part of changing, flexible networks with an increasing dissolution of structures, meanings and definitions. Currently she is based in Sydney.

CV - Bettina Bruder, PhD Candidate, Media Arts, COFA, UNSW, Sydney

EDUCATION
September 2000 - June 2002
Master of Fine Arts, Design & Technology, Parsons School of Design, New School University, New York.

October 1992 - December 1997
Bachelor-Diploma, University of Applied Sciences Wuerzburg, Communication Design

February 1995 - January 1996
Exchange semester, Queensland University of Technology, Film and Television, Brisbane, Australia

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
June 2004-March 2011
Senior Art Director, adidas, Dep. Corporate Design, Brand Experience Design

since April 2004
Seasonal Lecturer for Motion Graphics and Crossmedia(Master, Bachelor and Diploma)
Thesis Advisor at University for Applied Sciences, Salzburg, Austria, Faculty Multimedia Art

July 1998 - September 2000, August 2002 - November 2003
Art Director, DMC, Design Media&Communication, Vienna,
Corporate Design, Print, Broadcast Design, Web

March 1996 - August 2000
Freelance Designer for several companies and clients: SWR Suedwestrundfunk Stuttgart,
Dep. TV-graphics; Agency Gruppe Maylaender, Stuttgart; Existenzgruenderzentrum Stuttgart

October 1990 - February 1996
Visual Merchandiser for several clients: Karstadt, Galerie Valentin, Lamy, The Prop House

AWARDS, EXHIBITIONS, PRESENTATIONS
- Exhibition, Designcenter, Munich, 1997
- Mecon New Talent Award, Cologne, Gold in category Station-ID, 1998
- Erstausgabe, Messe der Ideen, Leipzig 1998
- Output, International Yearbook for Graphic Design, 1999
- Scholarship, DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service, 2000
- Dean's Scholarship, New School University, New York, 2001
- Storefront Exhibition, New York, 2001
- Parsons School of Design, Exhibition, New York, 2002
- Promax & BDA Europe Awards, Silver for agency DMC brand design of ARD, 2004
- Red Dot Award: Communication Design, 2007 for adidas Mi Innovation Centre
- UIPA, University Scholarship for Postgraduate Research from UNSW, Sydney 2010-2013
- Exhibition in NIEA POP-UP Project in the Rocks, Sydney, Nov 2011

- AUT, University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand, Presentation 2004
- James Cook University, Townsville, Australia, Presentation and Talk, May 2008
- Presentation at Conference for Experimental Arts, National Institute for Experimental Arts, Sydney, 2011
- 2 Transmedia Presentations at University for Applied Sciences, Salzburg, Austria in Winter 2011

Supervisors - Bettina Bruder, PhD Candidate, Media Arts, COFA, UNSW, Sydney

Dr. Petra Gemeinboeck
http://www.cofa.unsw.edu.au/about-us/staff/10

Petra Gemeinboeck's practice crosses the fields of architecture, interactive installation, mobile media, robotics, and visual culture. In her current research, Petra explores the potential of robotic intervention as an investigative lens into the politics of surveillance by deploying autonomous robots, embedded into the architectural fabric of a gallery. She is a founding member of the international artist group *In Serial*, working with performative assemblages of choreographed robots and chemical fluids. Previously, Petra has developed immersive virtual spaces that experimented with feminist and postcolonial concepts of the body. Her locative and sensor-based interactive works explored the paradoxical ground common to both intervention and surveillance. Her works implicate participants in negotiation scenarios in which they are challenged to face, conspire with or perhaps even solicit a machine-generated co-performer. They have been exhibited internationally at venues including Archilab (FR), Ars Electronica (AT), Gallery Fabrica (UK), ICC Tokyo (JP), MCA Chicago (IL, USA), and the Thessaloniki Biennale (GR)

Associate Professor Paul Thomas
http://www.cofa.unsw.edu.au/about-us/staff/18

Dr Paul Thomas, is the Head of Painting at the College of Fine Art, University of New South Wales. Paul is the co-chair of the Transdisciplinary Image Conference 2010. In 2000 Paul instigated and was the founding Director of the Biennale of Electronic Arts Perth 2002, 2004. Paul has been working in the area of electronic arts since 1981 when he co-founded the group Media-Space. Media-Space was part of the first global link up with artists connected to ARTEX. From 1981-1986 the group was involved in a number of collaborative exhibitions and was instrumental in the establishment a substantial body of research. Paul's current research project 'Nanoessence' explores the space between life and death at a nano level. The project is part of an ongoing collaboration with the Nanochemistry Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology and SymbioticA at the University of Western Australia. The previous project 'Midas' was researching at a nano level the transition phase between skin and gold. Paul has recently completed working on an intelligent architecture public art project for the Curtin Mineral and Chemistry Research Precinct. Paul is a practicing electronic artist. He has been working towards developing sustainable research in the areas of convergence between science, industry and the Fine arts in Western Australia. Some of these objectives he has managed to secure through the instigation of the Biennale of Electronic Arts Perth. Paul now believes he could use his knowledge and experience in exploring the intersection between art, science and culture to assist with key research strategies at the College of Fine Art, University of New South Wales.