

Notes from the “*The dangerous rush into subscriptions vs the value of incompleteness*” Call

Here are some hooks and notes to start the discussion with :

Right now the digital lifelines are much more “visible” to most people than usual. At the same time, they are rushing into any subscription that promises “business as usual” without reading or considering what they subscribe to in addition to what they intend. Without considering that they have to learn how to use a tool, not just which tool to use.

- How can we make people aware of/ teach **the value of incompleteness**?
- People have to learn how to use a tool instead of what to use. No tool solves your problems, you solve your problems by using tools correctly and by completing them with your own abilities.
- Be aware of the dangers of a subscription society that has no control over their lifelines
- Open Source is made to be in control. It is not made for subscription models. What is the character of a subscriber? Discuss
- ...Do we need to teach different things/values in schools? To teach people to be creators instead of subscribers? How?
- What are digital/social conventions/behaviour norms people need to learn and how do we teach them?

Check in:

Alessandro:

Engineer from Italy now in Armenia is an entrepreneur developing topographic maps. Experience with tech startups.

Motivation:

- Wants to find alternative and new ways of doing things that are independent
- Wants to find a way of making a living using/contribution/in open source/alternative approaches.

#

Felix:

Lives in a community in northern germany doing a lot of it stuff. Uses mostly open source software. He is an empowered user, able to use and contribute.

Motivation:

Mixed. Big chances but also risks in acceleration.

Point for workshop:

- Platform and content are two things. Having education in the hand of capitalistic run companies. It is very problematic to give up infrastructure and content off to commercial sources.

Example:

Youtube:

Educontent, but you pay with advertisement and your information.

Other examples: platforms from companies.

This has always been the case a bit, but it increases. Companies will make the content more addictive. Competition is interesting for quality, but if it is about education, it should be in public hands at all costs, not motivated by biggest profit.

#

Allesandro:

- Beyond education. The livelines are so visible right now. So now we are all using so many services that are free, but essentially selling people's information. It would maybe be good to inform more in the general public about that even so many here already know that.

#

Erik:

There was a point in my life where open source did not matter for me. I came into it through a socialistic point of view, but I think an individualistic one would have been possible to. Many others certainly have not entered from a socialistic one.

Open source has very little to do with the economy.

I came to learn that there is a different scale in our society which is more important right now:

Authoritarian vs freedom.

It is a scale that is far more relevant today.

I am trying to compile that now into why i think it is so important what we talk about now.

It is a means of locking in knowledge. It matters for our society.

Big companies centralise a lot of knowledge in terms of software, while not contributing in the same amount as they are profiting.

If you subscribe to knowledge, you are not a participant, but a consumer in society. If you forget of the left and right wing perspective but rather focus on the authoritarian vs freedom scale.

#

Maria:

The scale of authoritarian vs freedom is also relevant in the corona response interventions.

#

Erik:

Yes, right now it is a big argument to move into the direction of tracking. China is quite far there already but the west is also moving there, maybe we are having other discussions, but it is moving in the same direction.

#

Allesandro:

If you want to be an empowered user, that is good, but many people do not aspire to be empowered users, but rather want things to work, want to use things that work, such as dropbox. It works, I use it.

Open source is often a community of makers, thinking about how they could make new things for makers. But that is not all the communities.

#

Erik:

If you approach open source from a utilitarian perspective you could buy it. Therefore I think education is so important. The process itself, to learn something has important properties.

What would we promote in school?

Should we promote them to buy a well working tool or rather something they need to finish themselves.

How do we teach the “value of incompleteness”

If you teach students to just buy a product, you devalue the process.

#

Felix:

Putting themselves in the imaginary company that provides this services to schools:

This company should include lessons for the teachers and pupils on how the things work (which you can only really show when using Open Source).

#

Erik:

Where do you draw the line? Which tool is the “primary value”. I think the primary value is the process of learning. The results are secondary.

#

Maria:

And what should teachers answer children when they ask: why should we learn this when we can just buy a program that does it?

#

Erik:

Why would you learn anything that you can learn on wikipedia? Again it is the learning process!

What I tell my children: we have fun when learning. For example with countries. I think it is necessary to make the effort to learn even if they do not remember. Remembering the country's names and the “outcomes” are just a .

#

Felix:

One answer is: this way you can found your own company! You do not have to work for google, you can make your own google.

#

Allesandro:

Are we talking just about tech education or all of it? For history it is not important to know the software the tool runs on but the background.

If I want to connect to my family I can use whatsapp or signal. If I don't care I will just use what app and it works, if I care I will maybe use signal.

#

Erik:

If you use your sources in history, how are you being critical towards your source. So the value of learning the process of learning and critical thinking is still relevant.

#

Allesandro:

WE agree. But I think it is important to be clear that it is not just about it and being able to build your own software. It is relevant to other fields as well and we need to make this clear!

People using things only see how good something works, not how transparent it is.

#

Erik:

Right now people plunge into propertory platforms to keep work and school running.

There will be a time to do that more after the crisis.

#

General consensus:

NOW: How to convene to different communities/fields?

How can we find ways of communicating this to other communities and fields. Right now many people meet online that are not usually meeting. So I think we should push for this interdisciplinary conversation now.

#

Erik:

Every community has its own challenges. Even Edgeryders as a very techy community does not have all types of online meeting platforms.

Most communities are not primarily interested in the tech part, but into what they want to be doing. The danger in many communities is that they do not weigh in the dangers of not using open source.

#

Allesandro:

This is why I thought it so interesting when Matthias made this initiative to get people “off google and amazon” by offering alternatives. This way you could get people off while still functioning.

I think this approach is relevant in this day and age.

“You can have this and it costs you this” or you can have this and it costs you your date> I found this approach very interesting. If you can go to a company and can bring them step by step into a new system you can explain it step by step while also keeping it running. Same with operating systems.

#

Erik:

You are touching on some very important points: It is easy to look at anything that you are doing and to find a tool that is doing it for you. Today we usually have subscription models. People sign up and it can get dangerous. It is awesome that it can be so easy, however, some of these subscriptions are doing things with you that you do not want to happen and it fosters the idea that subscriptions take care of things for you. Down the line things might happen. For examples: you are stuck with your dropbox, even if you can not pay for it anymore because you are dependent on it.

We need to speak about the meanings of entering into a subscription.

#

Felix:

Here it could be good to explain different models to people. There are different models. In social media it seems to work with some alternatives where you can explain the upsides of using protocols not products (like email).

#

Erik:

I gave this lecture in front of young people asking them which subscription I could just shut down X,Y,Z subscriptions. I Asked facebook, icloud, etc, including your bank account. They had not been aware that some of those things were subscriptions.

#

Maria: SUB-ED, like SEX-ED, sex is good when done with informed consent and precautions, same with subscription?

#

Webinar idea:

SUB-ED webinar:

#

Felix:

Examples in the introduction: paypal, skype etc. one needs to make the research to show people who people are giving their information to.

You can jumpstart with something very practical.

#

Erik:

Try to ask also: what if you were denied subscription? How would that effect you? You can not even perceive that that could happen.

- What if you were denied a cell phone account
- What if you were denied a bank account
- What if...

We can discuss china as a society who have gone quite far in this development with their social credit system.

#

Felix:

It is a good example, but at the same time one needs to be very careful there. There are some very positive reports were people argue from the other side that it actually improves their lives. You can disagree with that, but you can not deny their perspective.

#

Erik:

This is where we come back to the scale of authoritarian vs freedom. It is not really about technology. It is about the context of how things are used. Even if the intentions are good, and I think we are headed in a similar direction, but I do not want to live in such a society. And that is why I think it has to be a discussion about values.

#

Felix:

I agree that ist is absolutely relevant, but it is more far from the problem we now want to tackle. Therefore I would not put the chinar social credit example into that webinar topic/discussion at this point, even if we want to have that conversation in the long run.

#

Felix: list of paypal data connections:

<https://www.paypal.com/uk/webapps/mpp/ua/third-parties-list> Searching a visualization of that that I have seen a year or so ago, was a very nice graph showing the connections. Got it I think: <https://rebecca-ricks.com/paypal-data/>

#

Wrapping up:

Maria: Next steps?

#

Allesandro:

In regard to the webinar, if you leaf it to people to read the text it will not happen. There is a tool I remembered that did something where it evaluated subscription agreements on if they are good for you or for the companies. (will add later)

#

(general feedback by all and discussion, including the question if to focus on online webinars instead of in person workshops for the time being (corona))

#

These calls will take place now every Tuesday evening 18:00. They are on a regular basis. Maria will send out a reminder 2-1 days ahead. Nobody is required to come, it is an offer. We

*can use these calls for open conversations or to develop something like the
“Submission-education”webinar as needed.*

*Webinars like for a wider reach with more preparation will be announced 2-3 weeks ahead on
top of that and prepared well ahead.*

#

GOAL for now:

Develop a “submission education” webinar in 3 weeks time.

#

Chat:

18:15:28 Von Edgeryders Community :
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D3lhMB0rkvW9_nbvhFGFyl65JdtkjvprLZob2vJMo-8/edit?usp=sharing

18:18:36 Von Erik : Elo

18:18:53 Von Edgeryders Community :
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D3lhMB0rkvW9_nbvhFGFyl65JdtkjvprLZob2vJMo-8/edit?usp=sharing

18:20:27 Von FelixWSL :
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D3lhMB0rkvW9_nbvhFGFyl65JdtkjvprLZob2vJMo-8/edit?usp=sharing

18:25:49 Von Edgeryders Community an Alessandro Mambelli(Privat) : thank you for
your point allesandro. I am trying to sum it up in the notes, feel free to adjust to it if you want

18:57:24 Von Erik : <https://nextcloud.com/>

19:02:25 Von Alessandro Mambelli : A good podcast about Tristan Harris:

<https://samharris.org/podcasts/what-is-technology-doing-to-us/>

19:02:57 Von Alessandro Mambelli : This TED Talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/tristan_harris_how_better_tech_could_protect_us_from_distraction

19:03:43 Von Alessandro Mambelli : This is what he does (possibly among other things)

<https://humanetech.com/>

19:26:38 Von FelixWSL : <https://www.paypal.com/uk/webapps/mpp/ua/third-parties-list> +
<https://rebecca-ricks.com/paypal-data/>