

Relaying Memory

You have said the decentralized web movement is an effort to break apart “all the layers” of the current online experience. This reminds me of [Stanley Kunitz](#):

Oh, I have made myself a tribe
out of my true affections,
and my tribe is scattered!
How shall the heart be reconciled
to its feast of losses?
In a rising wind
the manic dust of my friends,
those who fell along the way,
bitterly stings my face.
Yet I turn, I turn,
exulting somewhat,
with my will intact to go
wherever I need to go,
and every stone on the road
precious to me.
In my darkest night,
when the moon was covered
and I roamed through wreckage,
a nimbus-clouded voice
directed me:
“Live in the layers,
not on the litter.”

What have we lost? How do you guard yourself from bitterness and cynicism? What does it mean to live in the layers online?

How does this relate to the idea that the web should have a memory, that it ought “no longer exist in a land of the perpetual present”?

Consulting Privacy

The web is centralized, the internet is distributed. Decentralizing the web makes it more resilient, and it also makes it more private. Clearly, privacy relates to our ability to think for ourselves? How can privacy and the social uses of knowledge as they apply to **consultation** and Bush’s “user trails” exist together?

“In this way, the readers of files become the servers of those files.” ← perhaps this provides a clue? What I serve, as part of a distributed system, is equivalent to my trail...

Distributed Culture

“Internet Service Providers (ISP’s), for example, want their users to have a good Web experience and would be likely to serve as a close and fast host for their users. This would also help save those companies on bandwidth bills because more of their traffic would be local. In this way, there can be cultural institutions as well as commercial organizations that have incentive to replicate parts of the Distributed Web, thus increasing reliability and performance for users.”

It is fascinating that distributed services lead us to local incentives and help both preserve and amplify the relevance of cultural institutions and third spaces in healthy civic life. Can you reflect more on the socio-technological relationships between distributed services and local culture?

Tiny, Joyful Subversion

The DWeb movement is interested in subverting the status quo. The [principles](#) by which this is conducted are clear:

1. Technology for Human Agency
2. Distributed Benefits
3. Mutual Respect
4. Humanity
5. Ecological Awareness

You’re quoted in The Atlantic as saying, “When there’s a new technology, people gravitate towards it with their existing anxieties.” We’re interested in subverting the status quo [joyfully](#), inspired by your words “I believe we can now build a Web that is reliable, private and fun all at the same time.” According to May Li Khoe, this can be achieved with:

1. Small things, otherwise known as [tiny subversions](#).
2. Experimenting with format
3. Creating a space
4. Minding Symbolism
5. Building on history
6. Shifting the nature of work

You’ve experimented with format, you’ve definitely built (on) history, you mind symbolism and create spaces for universal access to knowledge. What are the most **personally memorable** ways you have seen the status quo subverted?

Inviting New Names

“This new Web could be an **inviting** system that welcomes people to share their stories and ideas, as well as be a technology platform that one can add to and change without having to ask permission— allowing technological change just for the fun of it.”

“The Distributed Web could also incorporate new naming systems that would exist alongside the DNS to support **new approaches to naming** and the technologies to support them.”

Naming things is fundamental in all our mythologies. This indicates how deep a shift creating a new web really is. How can we keep inviting more inclusive approaches to how we name things with new technologies?

Functional Archives, An Intelligent Internet

“There is another significant advantage to the Wayback Machine application in the Distributed Web: it would archive and serve fully functional websites, not just snapshots of what it looked like through time.”

“I have [this vision](#) of an intelligent internet where every individual, company, country, and culture has their own generative search engines that are interacting with each other.”

Interoperable Scripts

“There is an additional advantage to building the Distributed Web in JavaScript: it can be changed and added to by many people independently. In fact, different websites might use different Distributed Web systems all interoperably on the Internet at one time. It does not require coordination or relationships with the browser manufacturers to make changes to how the Distributed Web works. Features can be added, subtracted, and experimented with in parallel, without permission. The Distributed Web could evolve much faster than current Web technologies and yet still be interoperable.”

How do you feel about this statement seven years later? Is it still valid? How much has been achieved since 2015 and where are the best places to look for further development?

Mutability & Control

It is very difficult to host mutable content in distributed systems, because it raises the questions, “who has the latest version?” and “how can we be sure?”

Blockchains solve this by being append-only, and propagating blocks slowly enough to account for bandwidth and latency. IPNS does it too, with slightly more nuance. However, you say we require malleability in addition to permissionless innovation in order to keep the web fun.

How have your thoughts evolved here over the last seven years?