

Week 1 - Assignment 1

Rebecca Davidson

- What is a question, topic, or thing you are curious about, drawn to, or unable to stop thinking about right now?

Why do we feel trapped by technology that was created to be expansive, connective, and imaginative?

What has been lost in the process of corporations capitalizing on this technology?

How can we restore or reclaim our digital agency?

- Where might this interest have come from? What experiences, stories, histories, or references feel connected to it?

Independence and agency are important values to me, so viewing them in the context of digital technology feels natural. I feel a cultural shift of discomfort with how invasive technology has become, but also a sense that we can't escape it. This led me into the political aspects and design elements associated with digital agency and I started to see references on social media and opinion pieces popping up on independent media platforms.

- Who do you think about when you think about this topic? What identities, communities, histories, or systems might intersect with it?

I think mainly about Gen Z and Millennials, because of how deeply ingrained digital platforms are in our daily lives, yet we can also remember a time before it. I also think it's interesting how much the landscape has changed in accordance with our personal and professional growth. As we were growing up, these monolithic technological empires were being established and growing to the point where we couldn't avoid them.

- Why does this topic matter to you personally?

The topic matters to me, because I feel dread when I look at the corporate control of my life through technology. At the same time, I think of the internet and digital technology as a gift that has infinite potential to alter and improve our world.

- What questions are becoming more complicated as you learn more?

As I progress into the topic, I realize it is quite difficult to understand the complexity of the topic and how multidimensional it is. I haven't effectively been able to understand the context of the flattening interface design with the political components of corporate control. The topic has exponential layers the more I research.

- Has anything already changed the way you think about the topic?

I released my resistance to politicize my topic and once I did that it opened up a more interesting and nuanced aspect of my topic. This also weirdly made me able to personalize the topic and think of it in the context of my own life.

- Who could you talk to, learn from, or observe to understand it differently?

I'm not sure about who best to learn from or observe and I'm interested in getting references.

- How might this project connect to the kind of designer, artist, researcher, or practitioner you want to become?

I want to be an experimental designer that doesn't just follow design trends and standards, but challenges them and speculates about what design has the potential to be. I think this topic is the essence of this aspiration on an abstract level.

If this project could open one conversation or shift one way of thinking, what would you want that to be?

What can the digital world look like? How is design being limited by corporate control of digital technology? What tools do people need to reclaim their agency?

Links:

[Resisting Reduction](#) by Joichi Ito

[Platform Capitalism](#) by Nick Srnieck

[Flat Design: Its Origins, Its Problems, and Why Flat 2.0 Is Better for Users](#) by Kate Moran

[The Politics of Cyberdecks](#) by Nicole Froio