

Interview KVB Boekwerk for Digital literatuur - Innovatieprojecten

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And-or

*andorDada (2009)
DadaOverload (2016)*

Questions by Emma O'Hare (KVB Boekwerk, Amsterdam)
Answers by and-or, Beat Suter, René Bauer.

How did you come up with the idea/what was your inspiration behind the work?

As artgroup and-or we explore new modes of interactivity and creative cooperation between machines and their human users. Simple but distinct concepts become game prototypes or playful media art. Digital data is everywhere these days but its impact often is not considered. In our projects we make this data and its impact visible to everyone, we question it and open up a discourse on digital boundaries.

For this purpose we often use feeds of constant ideas and thoughts (digital readymades) as found in search-engines, feeds of publicly available pictures and sounds and various behavior-patterns of gameplay. Put in a playful perspective, these can easily show you what lies beneath the digital surface and beyond the common limits of communication.

In other words, we try to deconstruct processes, use the fragments to build artworks into small systems that develop into new systems of meaning.

The **andorDada** software shows this principle very clear. It captures wlan waves in the immediate area of the user and converts the wlan-waves

(respectively its data) into poetic objects. the wlan conversion uses a streamsearch algorithm which was also used by And-Or in the earlier projects streamfishing, searchsongs and sniff_jazzbox. andorDada works as an adaptive poetry-tool with locative levels. It generates new scenes and environments in the traditions of the situationists.

DadaOverload on the other hand recreates the overload of short messages that try to rule the world and destructs them. It uses a selected stream of existing live tweets, decomposes and reassembles them. Generally, tweets retweet themselves to stay alive. Our Dada destroys tweets. It subverts, undermines, disintegrates and decomposes tweeted messages. DadaOverload uses a game mechanic of shooting single letters out of tweets.

Once in a while, you get a full word as bullet. This starts a creative process. The full word shows up in orange and recomposes the incomplete gappy tweets: Reality. Truth, Naivity. You also get the choice of intervening with your own inputs and see how you feel when your annotations get destroyed by the Dada Overload bullets.

How would you describe the work?

andorDada is a road poem. The reader strolls through town and her immediate area generates a poem. She walks further through town or rides a bus and the poem changes according to her location in town. AndOrDada is an endless poem; AndOrDada is adaptive locative Dada. It reads, writes out and interprets the subconscious social structure of a town.

The AndOrDada software works as an adaptive poetry-tool with locative levels. It generates new scenes and environments in the tradition of the situationists. It captures wlan waves in the immediate area of the reader and converts the wlan-waves into poetic objects.

The software not only manages to generate subjects and objects, as a crucial addition for the poetic value of the project it manages to create verbs from the captured hotspots.

The version for iPhone was rejected by Apple in 2009. An adapted Android version is available since May 2012 via <http://www.and-or.ch/andordada/>.

DadaOverload adapts the mechanics of dada as a mental system cracker and adds the destruction mode of our time.

The world is filled with a dada overload. Today's source material for dada are tweets and spam messages, ad messages and any kind of short messages. Dada used newspaper clippings, cut them down to words and randomly reassembled them. DadaOverload uses tweets, cuts them and reassembles them.

Dada was a creative process in 1916. Today, dada is everywhere and nowhere. It is massive disintegration of language and communication. We use a process of decomposition as tweets retweet themselves to stay alive. Our dada destroys tweets. It subverts, undermines, disintegrates and decomposes tweeted messages. It is made as a web app and allows immediate interaction, alteration, transmission and recording.

What is the role of text or literature in the work?

Text is the most important element in many of and-or's works. We are particularly interested in the interface between communication and play between man and machine and man. For this purpose, text is used on different levels, as a code, as an algorithm, a statement, as a natural and artificial language. This creates streams of data of which only individual segments are perceived. We create a different view of these data streams and try to open the view for invisible structures and expressions and feedbacks and offer ways of interacting with these subconscious streams of language.

How big was the team, who did you make it with/ what were the roles?

Our team consists of three artists. We have been working as artgroup and-or since 2001. René Bauer, Beat Suter and Mirjam Weder developed the concepts for the projects together. René Bauer does the coding. Adapting language and literary vocabulary for and-orDada was done by Beat Suter and René Bauer.

René Bauer and Beat Suter work as professors for game design at the University of the Arts Zurich, Switzerland, and manage a gamelab. Mirjam

Weder works as professor of linguistics at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

How did you finance the development?

We have not specifically financed development of those two projects. However, we contribute presentations and readings at electronic literature festivals and conferences and exhibit the works as often as possible.

Is the result a success in your opinion? Why/why not?

Yes, the apps work very well. They are simple, easy to use, a bit quirky and people generally like them. We got especially good feedbacks on guided tours through towns with festival visitors.

How many people has it reached?

The two works have reached several ten thousand people. As art projects they find an interested specialized audience at festivals of digital literature and media art and in conferences worldwide.

Has it been or will it be exhibited anywhere?

Yes, andorDada's Beta version was first introduced to audiences in 2008. Here is where it was exhibited:

- Bergen 2008: UIB, Landmark Café, electronic literature in europe, september 11 - 13.
- Vienna 2008: City Hall, future and reality of gaming (F.R.O.G.), october 17 - 19.
- Sofia 2008: Czeck Centre, Computerspace Festival, XX edition, october 31 - november 3.
- San Diego 2011: Center for Research and Computing in the Arts, UCSD, Writing becomes eclectic, january 27.
- Ljubljana 2011: City Hotel, ELMCIP E-Literature and New Media Art Symposium, september 22 - 24.

- Stuttgart 2012: Literaturhaus, Laut P. literatur und strom 4, may 23 - 25.
- Berlin 2012: Computerspielemuseum, Karl-Marx-Allee, Playpublik - Street Games, august 9 - 12.
- Karlskrona 2012: Blekinge Institute of Tech., Elmcip Anthology of European Electronic Literature, permanent.
- Warsaw 2013: super salon (miska 14/1), shoppinghour #10 feast of listen, april 19 - may 3.
- Paris 2013: Electronic Literature Festival, Ensad, chercher le texte, sept. 23 - 28.
- Zurich 2015: University of the Arts, Handlungs|Spiel|Räume der Schrift, Künstlerische Intervention, sept. 16-18.

And andorDada was mentioned in the press:

- SWR2. Lautpoesie im digitalen Zeitalter. (MP3) Susanne Kaufmann. 02. Juni 2012, 14.05 h. [german]
- Stuttgarter Zeitung. Datenströme in die Innenwelt. Interview mit Johannes Auer, von Stefan Kister. 23. Mai 2012. [german]

DadaOverload is rather new and works best via Internet. However, we have presented it in a conference and a festival:

- Zurich 2016: university of the arts, Faulheit - Spielformen des Faulen, Künstlerische Intervention, oct. 28.
- Zurich 2016: gameZfestival. Motivate Play, november 4 - 6.

For this summer, DadaOverload is scheduled to be shown in:

- Porto 2017: Electronic Literature Festival, july 21 - 24.
- Sao Paolo 2017: FILE 2017 - Electronic Language International Festival. FILE SELECTION Media Art, Fiesp Cultural Center - Ruth Cardoso, July to August.

And DadaOverload in the press:

- Gamescenes. Art Game: And-Or's Dadaoverload (11/19/2016) <http://www.gamescenes.org/2016/11/art-game-ren%C3%A9-bauers-dadaoverloadorg-2016.html>

Do you know of any similar projects?

Similar projects are our cooperative projects with the Stuttgart artist Johannes Auer:

- searchSonata 181 (2010) — <http://www.and-or.ch/searchsonata/>
- searchSongs (2008) — <http://www.and-or.ch/searchsongs/>

What are your future plans with this project or new/other projects?

We want to exhibit DadaOverload in other places. This summer, we go to Porto for the annual Electronic Literature Festival and to Sao Paolo for FILE 2017.

For the future we are planning to do more projects that merge electronic literature and game art. We tend to initiate more experiments in game art.

How do you see the future of (digital) literature? Which trends do you see?

We see more and more merging of digital literature and game art. We prefer projects that have a playful and experimental approach like the sound works of our Austrian friend Jörg Piringer or the more conceptual works of our German friend Johannes Auer.

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and-or.ch

Beat Suter, René Bauer, Mirjam Weder