The Modern Web Sucks

And what can be done about it
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Tags: manifesto

This is a living document. It's likely to change over time!

The modern web is huge. It's a shame that most of it is kinda rubbish.

Much of the web is dominated by people trying to make money, because of course it is. Surfing the modern web without an adblocker is unbearable. So many things vying for your attention, trying to plant themselves into your subconscious, trying to make you do something for someone else's benefit.

A huge amount of people's personal expression on the web is through social media. Be it Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, whatever - written word, video, audio, images, they're all shared on these big, centralised platforms that exist, not to serve the people, but to make (more) money for their owners and shareholders. This doesn't create an environment tailored for the wellbeing of the individual, nor does it create an environment that can foster free expression. It creates an environment designed to suck as much out of the individual as possible and to keep content as corporation-friendly as possible.[1]

Privacy is a fallacy. It doesn't pay to respect people's boundaries, it pays to know as much about as many people as possible and

exploit their habits. It's not only data that pays, but other people's time, too. It's not a coincidence that you can get unintentionally sucked into your phone for hours at a time.

Almost all of the web is extremely polished, rounded and impersonal. Most sites lack the imperfect touch of another human. They're sterile and uninteresting. Perhaps that's because it's not a place for humans, any more - it's a place for corporations.

It goes without saying, but I don't like any of this.

My alternative

Self-host your own apps.[2] If you can, this is a really good way to give yourself a lot of extra privacy. Be it a password manager, a knowlegebase, a planner or a media server, self-hosting your own apps keeps your stuff to yourself under your own terms.

Make a personal website. Do what you want with it, and go crazy. Don't be constrained by what you can fit into a single image or a handful of lines of text on someone else's property. Fill an entire viewport with what you want. Give it your own flair. A good place to start would be [the Neocities "Learn How to Make Websites" page](#).

Publish your content away from mainstream social media sites. Why not put it on your site? You can put whatever you want on there.

Share stuff you create for the good of others. Open source your designs and code. Try to use the web for making other people's lives better. You have the power to reach millions of people - use it!

Explore. Stray off the beaten path. You could browse through a webring[3] or have a play

with with [an indie search engine](#). You could create a list on your site of [other indie sites that you like](#), and read other people's lists too.

Have fun. Enjoy the unpredictability. Be wonderful to all those you encounter in your travels.

Footnotes

1. A lot of the time, this manifests itself as censorship. Stupid stuff like people on TikTok having to say "biseggual" because saying "sex" will get their videos massively down-ranked (it especially winds me up that this is essentially censoring LGBTQ+ speech), or YouTube channels being demonetised for talking about prickly topics. [Mia Mulder did a fantastic video on this](#), where she was *trying* to talk about drugs and such, but since it's YouTube, she had to replace every mention of drugs or a drug with some kind of drink. It's so ridiculous that people have to do this. ↝
2. Some interesting places to start might be [Grow Your Own Services](#) or [Awesome Selfhosted](#), the latter of which is a *huge* list of apps you can self-host. ↝
3. A webring is a collection of links to a collection of websites, typically around a certain theme. Each page links to another in the ring. An example of a webring is https://yesterweb.org/webring/ or https://hotlinewebring.club. ↝

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