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Face to Facebook

<http://face-to-facebook.net>

A project by PAOLO CIRIO and ALESSANDRO LUDOVICO.

Stealing 1 million Facebook profiles, filtering them with face-recognition software and then posting them on a custom-made dating website, sorted by their facial expression characteristics.

<http://lovely-faces.com>

In an attempt to free personal data as Facebook's exclusive property we spent a few months downloading public information from one million profiles (including pictures). Immersing ourselves in the resulting database was a hallucinatory experience as we dove into hundreds of thousands of profile pictures and found ourselves intoxicated by the endless smiles, gazes and often leering expressions.

After a few weeks we had to face the evidence. All that people wanted was to attract new people, have more relationships, to express and receive love through their digital traits. But they were trapped by Facebook owning their data and restricting their actions with primitive privacy rules. They wanted more than just their restricted circles of "friends" and they wanted it quickly and easily.

Our mission was to give all these virtual identities a new shared place to expose themselves freely, breaking Facebook's constraints and boring social rules.

So we established a new website (lovely-faces.com) giving them justice and granting them the possibility of soon being face to face with anybody who is attracted by their facial expression and related data. Now they are there, in full effect, free to keep in touch with a whole world of men and women and anything in between. And we accomplished our mission: the final piece of the free relationships interface is now running.

Mixed media installation of Face to Facebook:

Premiere of the installation with more than 2000 printed pictures at the Transmediale festival in Berlin.

<http://www.face-to-facebook.net/face-to-facebook.php>

The Hacking Monopolism Trilogy:

Face to Facebook is the third work in a series that began with Google Will Eat Itself and Amazon Noir. These works share a lot in terms of both methodologies and strategies. They all use custom programmed software in order to exploit (not without fun) three of the biggest online corporations (Google, Amazon and Facebook), exploiting conceptual hacks that generate unexpected holes in their well oiled marketing and economic system.

Technology:

The Facebot was coded to accumulate data from one million Facebook public profiles, continuously feeding the Face-to-Facebook database. This holy grail of personal data was sifted by a self-learning neural network through a sophisticated face recognition algorithm. The consistent database of faces/profiles was sorted into specific social categories (inferred by analyzing facial expressions). Finally the sorted database was carefully uploaded to a specific dating website with a public URL.

Authors' biographies:

Paolo Cirio works as media artist in various fields: net-art, street-art, video-art, software-art and experimental fiction. He has won prestigious art awards and his controversial works have been sustained by research grants, collaborations and residencies. He has exhibited in museums and art institutions worldwide. As public speaker he delivers lectures and workshops on media tactics.

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Alessandro Ludovico is a media critic and editor in chief of Neural magazine since 1993. He's one of the founders of the 'Mag.Net (Electronic Cultural Publishers organization). He also served as an advisor for the Documenta 12's Magazine Project. He has been guest researcher at the Willem De Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. He teaches at the Academy of Art in Carrara.