

WJG

Grasping at bits - Art and Intellectual Control in the Digital Age

Introduction

At the turn of the millennium, the international art community has begun to recognize the significance of the Internet as a milieu for expression and critical inquiry of issues such as the globalization of capitalist culture. The increasingly Blade Runner-esque role of corporate culture and 'big money' in global society, and cyberspace in particular raises questions vis-a-vis freedom of expression and the controlling influence on intellectual property by multinational corporations. Artists who critique the expanding role of corporate power make visible the cultural terrain of this power relation, frequently through the subsequent litigation by those very same institutions under scrutiny. In addition, events such as the Leonardo and etoy controversies have brought to light corporations wishing to enforce their brand identity over artistic groups that predate them through the exertion of legal force.

This essay is a continuation of my six years of research into the use of aesthetic metaphors and spatial narrative in critical discourse. GAB uses a mindmap interface metaphor powered by Natrifical's SiteBrain to create a dynamic associative map of relations between topics. In addition, the entire essay employs embedded annotations, rich cross-linking and a system of relative color coding to one of four dominant themes from which emerges a rich information architecture. In this way the essay exhibits no less than five layers of organization, and so seeks to maximize the interactive, non-linear potential of new media discursive structures.

The site requires no more than a Netscape or Microsoft 4+ browser.