

Description:

Nowhere.com

Internet Installation

This mysterious Internet domain appears as the return address on hundreds of thousands of pieces of electronic junk mail, or "spam," that fill our "in" boxes daily. As it also pops up as a default setting in numerous Internet software applications, nowhere.com's traffic has grown to thousands of pieces of mail a day, often as much as 2000 return messages a minute. Over the years, lack of supervision of the domain has encouraged widespread abuse. So much so, the FBI has investigated abusers of the domain. But the domain itself remains a mystery. Where is nowhere.com?

Artist Nick Philip directs you to a row of garbage cans placed below twelve whirring fax machines at Tokyo's Intercommunications Center. The domain nowhere.com, he explains, is often used as a return address by shady Internet spammers to disguise their actual Internet location.

Irritated recipients reply to the spam but because of the false return address the replies are returned to nowhere.com instead of back to the spammers. That is, until Philip directed all email addressed to nowhere.com to a series of fax

machines at the ICC. Now the piles of lost missives are redirected into a physical representation of their final digital destination—the trash can.

"Confronted with 57,000 feet of thermal garbage, Nowhere instantly lets you experience, touch, hear and smell a small part of this incredibly vast media landscape, at the same time making a tongue in cheek nod to the fact that the more things change the more they stay the same," Philip says.

"Despite all the hopes and hype for a shiny, blue-sky highway of empowerment, the Internet and technology in general are but humble expressions of ourselves that include the good, the bad, and the ugly," Philip says. "Perhaps what's most interesting about Nowhere is not that it's a networked anomaly, but rather an insightful glimpse into the darker recesses of our online psychology."

Emails are copied as they pass through nowhere.com on to their final destination. They are distributed through 12 fax modems and then printed by 12 fax machines. Thermal paper is collected in trash cans, then allowed to overflow onto the gallery floor.

Concept: Nick Philip
Programming: Nic Harteau
Assisted by: Jeff Taylor

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