

Welcome to the Manyverse

Initial project presentation



Overview

- Introduction
- Why social media?
- Problem
- Opportunity
- Mission
- Challenges
- Focus
- Process
- What will help
- Questions

Introduction

- Who am I?
- What is Welcome to the Manyverse

Wouter Moraal



Age: 28

Bachelor: Film, Television
and New Media studies

Master: Media Technology

Creates around: activism,
privacy & security, tech &
society

Experience in:

- Physical game / UX design
- Data driven and heuristic research (specifically in nudging and privacy trade-offs in digital interfaces)
- Teaching
- Creative coding
- Activism



Artificial Impact artificialimpact.net



Cativism cativism.org

Welcome to the Manyverse

What: UX design work on Manyverse onboarding process (and accompanying scoping of Secure Scuttlebutt (SSB) technical developments)

When: spanning September - December 2020, part-time (approx. 3 sprints)

Who: UX design is done by Wouter Moraal in cooperation with Manyverse team/community and NGI Pointer grant SSB project core team, advisors and community.

Funding: from SIDN fund (NL)

Why digital (online) social media?

About the role of social technologies

Manyverse as a social technology

What probably started with grooming (touching to be liked and trusted) evolved with for example:

- **Voice and spoken language** - work together better
- **Fire** - longer day for socialising and telling stories about the (social) world
- **Painting imagery** - embedding stories more accurately through time
- **Written language** - traditionally empowering proprietary/ruling class

Effects of social technologies

The aforementioned technologies could, as opposed to the hours of physical grooming situation:

- Strengthen social relationships: in less time or in extra time created, with less hassle, with more people, spanning larger geographic areas
- Enable chances of survival and reproduction by people as part of larger social networks
- Enable a more encompassing "cultural ratched mechanism" spanning longer time and wider geographic and social range: increasing cultural and technological development
- Unfortunately some technologies also make it possible to keep track of debts by some

Facebook and other social technologies



Could:

- Extend social grooming over greater physical distance
- Possibly create larger social circles
- Possibly reduce time spent on social grooming
- Potentially reduce cognitive load of maintaining social relationships



Unfortunately the reduced time and effectiveness are probably limited by addiction inducing dark patterns. Also the proprietary class inserts themselves forcefully through ads.

Dunbar's numbers

- Around 150 people seems to be the limit on the number of friends you can have. Variation in number of friends vary between 100-200.
- How much you see people (or probably also contact them) is correlated with emotional closeness.

Dunbar's numbers

- Around 150 people seems to be the limit on the number of reciprocal relationships you can have. Variation in number of friends vary between 100-200.
- How much you see people (or probably also contact them) is correlated with emotional closeness.
- The 150 are both family and friends.

Approximate social circles suggested from Dunbar's research

Hunter-gatherers	Numbers	World-wide
Tribes (language)	1500	Far acquaintances
Mega-bands (marriage and trade)	500	Near acquaintances
Comunities (Dunbar's number)	150	Friends
Bands (overnight camp groups)	50	Good friends
Foraging group (support group)	15	Best friends
Intimate group (soul mates)	5	Close intimates

To explore further

Dunbar's research is something to explore further, as it can guide the design and development of Manyverse and SSB to be a useful and satisfying social technology.

Problem

Current issues surrounding digital online social technologies like Facebook and others

Surveillance capitalism & its problems

- Surveillance
- Cost of time:
 - Addictive interfaces and algorithms
 - Focus on negative and controversial
 - Distraction
 - Forceful insertion by proprietary class (brands, politics ed.)
- Censorship
- Harassment possibilities
- Focus on negative and controversial

Stakeholders

- To be delved into....

Opportunities

The opportunities that currently exist: mobile, awareness,
distributed networking

Mobile first

Smartphone

vs

desktop/laptop ownership

81%

and rising

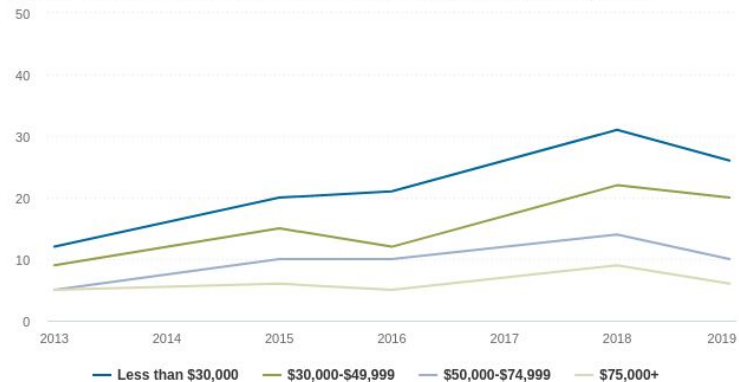
74%

quite stable

Data on device ownership United States of America, February 2019

Smartphone dependency by income

% of U.S. adults who do not use broadband at home but own smartphones, by income



Source: Surveys conducted 2013-2019. Data for each year based on a pooled analysis of all surveys containing broadband and smartphone questions fielded during that year.

Awareness

Awareness on privacy, security and censorship have become, or are becoming, more public knowledge.

Distributed networking

Phones as clients/servers:

- Always on
- Almost always connected to the internet
- 10s or 100s of Gb's of storage space

(depending on internet penetration rate)



Mission

Make Manyverse (and SSB) impactful by getting as many people as possible through exponential growth to use it, instead of surveillance capitalist social media.

Challenges

Challenges in environment and user growth

Challenges

- Defeat network effect and existing monopolies:
 - Use alongside
 - Better features for target groups
 - Less distraction, more (emotional) connection to friends
 - Possible hostile interoperability
- Zero-rating anti-competitive strategies
- Distributed networking
 - Use public or private servers
 - Use tor hidden servers?
- Attract potential users
 - Mouth to mouth (phone to phone)
- Hard to connect for old and new users to connect
 - Hard for non-expert users
- Defeat image problem of open source software:
 - It just has to work
 - Attention to security and backend can scare some non-expert users
 - Possibly make the medium invisible and focus on their friends

Current and projected users

First adopters (current):

- Developers / 'solar punk' community - expert users

Next projected adopters:

- Outcasts of Facebook-related apps (LGBTQ, activists, privacy conscious) - semi/non-expert users
- Sparsely connected users (other than solar punk) - non-expert users

Bottlenecks for exponential growth

At onboarding we lose a lot of incoming potential users. Onboarding that works *for the next non-expert users* is essential to make exponential growth possible.

Also diversity among the next projected users is important for exponential growth and resilience.

Project Focus

Making the onboarding experience fit for the next projected groups of non-expert users.

Process

The process of Welcome to the Manyverse

Process: 3 sprints

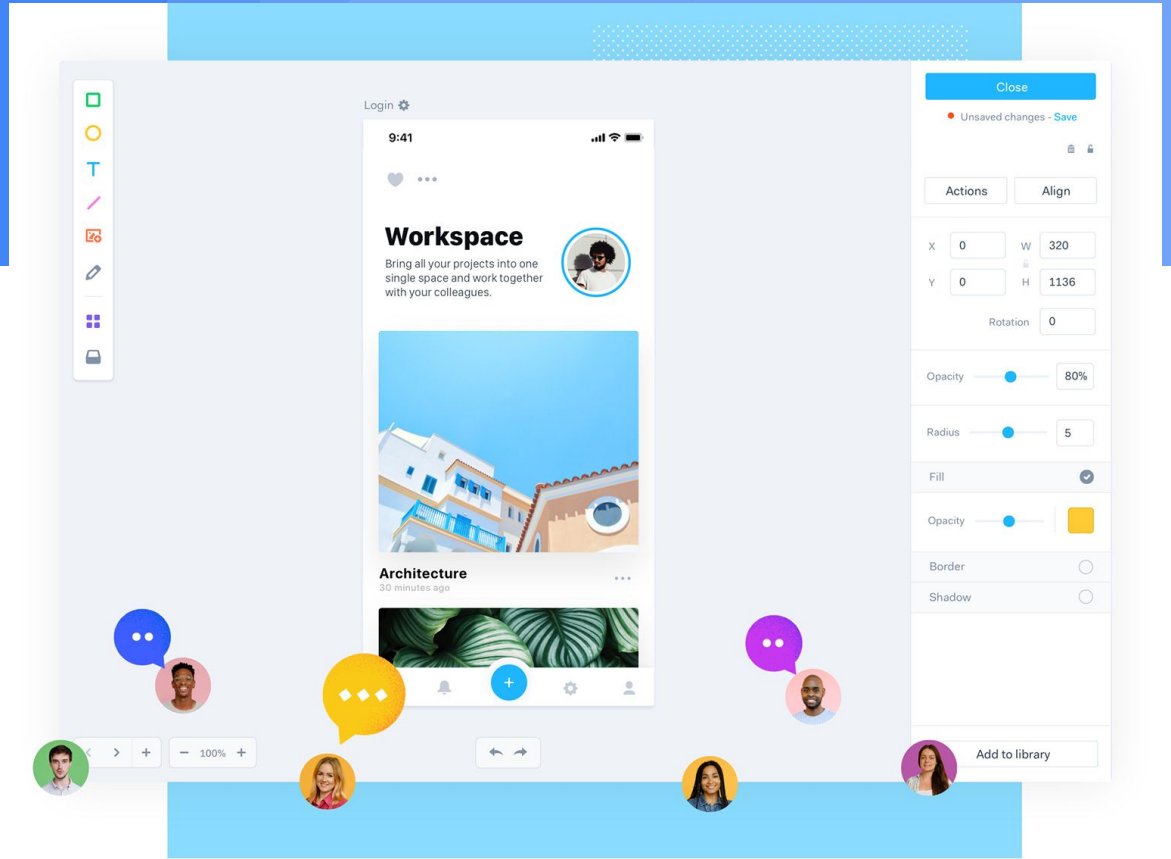
2-week sprints or less

Timeframe: september
- december 2020

1. User research
2. UX of inviting a new user
3. UX of a new user downloading the app and accepting the invite (possibly also making a profile and/or connecting to friends of the friend)

Prototyping and testing

Marvel



It would be helpful to get ...

- Technical feasibility and UI feedback on new prototypes before and after test rounds
- SSB community members for usability testing (preferably in target groups, but not necessarily)
- Contacts to target groups for:
 - Questionnaire
 - Some interviews
 - Usability test users

Questions?

Questions, suggestion and tips