net.art

Net.art, identifiable by its distinct dot, has been deemed a historical term referencing the origins of Internet based art. Unlike present-day net artists, who are able to expand their network by way of mobile devices, net.art, a site specific art form, was bound to the confines of the World Wide Web (W.W.W.), solely existing within a browser.

Prevailing throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, when the accessibility to a constant stream of information was idealized, the ulterior motives of search engines soon became apparent. It was then, many artists showcased their concerns through their work.
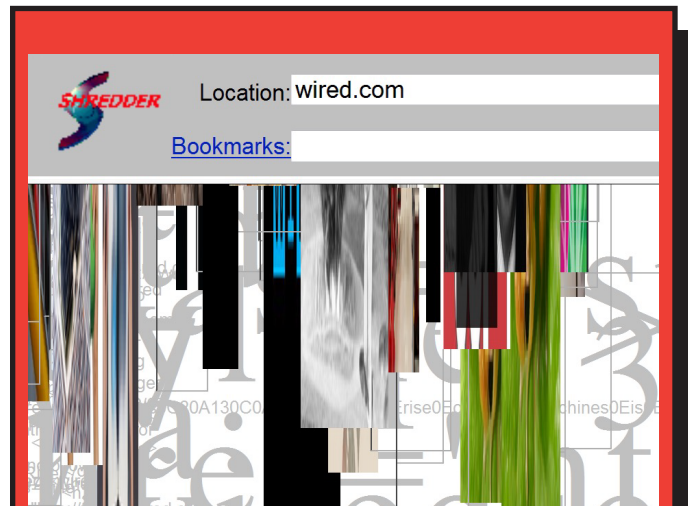
Mark Napier

, an artist who's work is the epitome of net.art, explored multiple aesthetics in protest to the so called "utopian" world of search engines and browsers. His first noted appearance was 1998's *Shredder*. *Shredder*, an alternative web browser, would deconstruct a user-searched website in a way that was described as a "digital Jackson Pollock." Napier exposes the web pages' raw material, codes, text and images, at a time when there was a struggle between web browsers and print material.

Just one short year after Napier launched *Shredder*, *Riot* was introduced. In order to highlight the issues, Napier allowed the Tompkins Square Riots and gentrification of the East Village in 1990's New York City to inspire his next big project. *Riot*, another alternative web browser, is the only "multi-user browser" that combines user-searched web pages into a single display. This jumbled set of images and web pages leaves one with the feeling that "less is more," in regards to the parade of political agendas.

Following Napier's alternative web browsers, which would distort the images each user would see, Napier created an interface each user would interact with, building an image rather than destroying one. *Net.flag* would serve as a symbol for a territory existing solely within the Internet, connecting each user. Napier aimed for this Internet based flag to become a representation of each user, allowing for an interactive experience in which each user may alter the flag to represent their territory or create an entirely new flag.
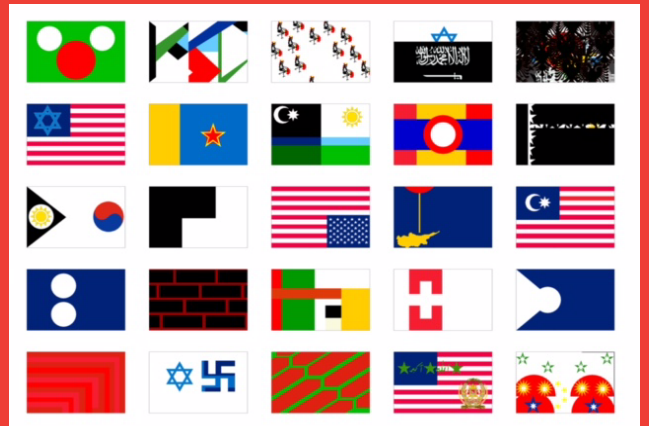
Napier speaking out against the WWW with his net.art created a pathway for other artists, like himself, to have a voice. However, as the Internet evolved, so did net.art, ultimately straying from the fundamentals of net.art.

Shredder 1998, Mark Napier, "wired.com shredded"

Riot, 1999, Mark Napier, "wired.com and yahoo.com"

net.flag, 2002, Mark Napier,
"net.flag:collection of user contributed flags"