The Weaver Birds

0.1 Hackers spinning the Dharma wheel

You are welcome to join the new wheel spin of our history.

This document is an *open magna carta*: programmatic, visionary and inclusive, proposing you a plan to be shared and is already shared by many.

Right now our network has become 8 years old and by now you can imagine this number is very important to us. If you are curious to know what is happening please read on, we won't fancy you with special effects, but dreams, thoughts and projects we are ready to realize.

Of course this text doesn't just talks about "us": being an open network we are including multiple contexts around the world with which we share mutual help, where our contribution is mostly technical, as in our activity in free and open source development. In fact, besides the generic idea of FOSS, we are moved by the following dreams, that are slowly but steadily becoming reality...

For all this we are infinitely grateful to the GNU project[1] that let us discover how to get hold of knowledge, take control of the architecture we live in and even start building a new planet :)

0.2 Dharma youth

> *The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn, like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars.* (Jack Kerouac, Dharma Bums)

First let's declare who we are: after 8 years we are able to trace a common denominator among the people active in our network, interconnected by a nomadic approach to development and life.

We are young dreamers, as we often like to stir limitations and invent different models to learn, communicate, share and live than those proposed by the societies where we are caged. We have in

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[1]http://www.gnu.org

common that we survived out of the commonplaces, we cultivated our thoughts and sharing methods, knowledge and tools, keeping them out of any box.

This is the time in our history in which we'll speak with young voices, when we are moving some crucial steps on which we'll base our architectures, hopefully mixing the inner with the outer, the Ying with the Yang.

Some of us are nomads, some settle in different places time to time, some live in the same marginal neighbourhoods of the world where they were born, some are working for multinational IT companies, some are riding bicycles all around the world, some are lecturing in schools, some are exhibiting in art galleries and some are squatting houses. And yes, probably you are one of those, or you have been in contact with us, at least once.

What we are proposing here is a new model and we finally acquired a practical vision to develop it in harmony with our different environments.

Please continue reading if you like to discover why and how.

0.3 Freedom of Creativity

> *The growth of the network rendered the non-propertarian alternative even more practical. What scholarly and popular writing alike denominate as a thing ("the Internet") is actually the name of a social condition: the fact that everyone in the network society is connected directly, without intermediation, to everyone else. The global interconnection of networks eliminated the bottleneck that had required a centralized software manufacturer to rationalize and distribute the outcome of individual innovation in the era of the mainframe.* (Eben Moglen)

Free and open source software (often referred as FOSS) is, when referring to the original principles endorsed by the Free Software Foundation[2] (FSF), a new model for distribution, development and marketing of immaterial goods. While recommending you to have a look at the philosophy pages published by the FSF, we'll highlight some implications which are most important for us by letting our activities possible and motivating them.

FOSS implies an economical model based on collaboration instead of competition, fitting in the fields of academic research where sharing of knowledge is fundamental , and development where the joint efforts of different developers can be better sustained when distributed across various nodes. In this regards we like to quote John Nash (Nobel in 1994) saying that "the best result will come from everybody in the group doing what's best for himself, and the group".

Imagine then that all creations re-produced in this way can also be sold freely by anyone in each context: this opens up an horizon of new business models that are local, avoiding globalized exploitation, still sharing a global pool of knowledge useful to everyone.

Furthermore, in the fields of education we believe that the inherent independence of FOSS from commercial influences is crucial in order to empower students with a knowledge that they really own, not making them dependent from merchants owning their creations by imposing licenses on the tools they've learned.

At last just consider, and feel free to invent more on these tracks, the impact of FOSS in fields as communication, social networking, games, media and... evolution.

0.4 No nationhood

> *Per far che i secoli tacciano di quel Trattato*[3] *che trafficò la mia patria, insospettì le nazioni e scemò dignità al tuo nome.* (A Bonaparte liberatore, Ugo Foscolo, 1778–1827)

> *One Planet, One Nation* (Public Enemy)

Our homelands are displaced and sometimes very different, difficult to be put in contact with the boundaries given by nations. In fact we think that nation states should come to an end, for the borders they impose aren't matching with our aspirations and current ability to relate with each other.

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[2] see http://www.fsf.org
[3] *Trattato di Campoformio*

During the few years of our lives we have been taught to interact and describe ourselves within national schemes, but the only real boundaries were the differences between our languages, while we have learned to cross them.

From our national histories we mostly inherited fears and hanger, but with this network we have learned how to bury them, as they don't belong to us anymore. What's left is a just a problem that can be solved: we will stop representing us as part of different nations. Even if we could, we don't intend to build our own nation, nor to propose you a new social contract, but to cross all of these borders as a unique networked planet, to start a new cartography.

We have a planet! and it is young enough to heal the scars left by the last centuries of war, imperialism, colonisation and prevarication that left most people around us cultivating differences and fake identities represented by flags and nationalist propaganda.

We aren't claiming to open the borders to the speculation of multinationals, since we are well aware this can be a rethoric used by neo-liberist interests to tramp over the autonomy of developing countries. The Contextual integrity[4] of different social ecosystems needs to be respected, but still as of today the national borders didn't succeeded in preserving it.

With some exceptions, most of the national programs and cultural funds we agreed to work with were pretending each of us would dress a flag, as we were recruited in a decadent game of national pride and competition, with an agenda of cultural, economical and physical domination, tracing all our movements, assimilating them to leviathans that are playing their last violent moves in a chess game for which we are just seamless pieces.

This doesn't makes anymore sense to our generation, we refuse to identify with the governments holding our passports, while we look forward to relate to each other on the basis of dialogue and exchange, approaches and architectures that can be imagined globally and developed locally, in a open way the channels that let us speak to you right now.

Therefore we declare **the end of nations**, as our generation is connected by a way more complicated intersection of wills, destinies and, most importantly, problems to be solved.

0.5   Networked cities

Creo que con el tiempo mereceremos no tener gobiernos. (Jorge Luis Borges, 1899–1986)

Naturally our cartography draws connections among nodes, hubs of intelligence that are closer in the cyber space than in the physical one. In the last century we have learned how we can share music, lyrics, stories and images, since a few decades we are able to copy them without marginal costs across the whole world.

This let us relate to each other with an outreach that is amplified by the density of our living environments, the urban spaces that somehow offered enough gaps for our agency. Those who pretend to govern our living are now busy in controlling those voids, as every tree in a public square represents an obstacle for their cameras, omnipresent eyes patronising our evolution.

We found shelter in the ancestral practices of trance[5], opening the doors of our perception to the unknown, resonating our own bones, enhancing the agility of our tongues to follow the hip hop flow of radical thoughts, skating over the universe we are constrained, painting fantasy over the imposed walls of our cities, jumping higher to join the loose ends of our parkours.

These practices are now among all of our cities[6], seeded by our own need to evolve, to influence a governance that doesn't listen to us. Some kids turn into a dark army of vengeance, some lost the faith in future, some fall in the virtual loopholes offered by the magnetic startups of the dot.com boom. We need to offer ourselves an alternative to this hopeless conflict and the first step is to build a narrative that respects all choices, that doesn't neglects sufferance.

All this creativity and despair is shared among our cities, stuffed by unnecessary needs and mirages of success of the "creative industries", while we already elaborate a concentric vision that is linked to the density of our lives and the cultural flow of our errant knowledge.

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[4]see Nissenbaum, H, (2007) Contextual Integrity - http://crypto.stanford.edu/portia/papers/RevnissenbaumDTP31.pdf
[5]Lapassade, G. (1976) Essai sur la transe, Éditions universitaires
[6]De Jong, A, Schuilenburg, M. (2006) Mediapolis. Popular culture and the city, Rotterdam: 010-Publishers

Therefore we declare the birth of a **planet of networked cities**[7], spiral architectures of living swirling above our heads and across our fingers, as they evolve in a common practice of displacement and re-conjunction, joining the loose ends of our future.

Our plan is simple and our project is already in motion. In fact, if you look around yourself, you will already find us close. While the current economical and political systems face the difficulty to hide their own incoherence, we are able to implement their principles better and, most importantly, we are elaborating new ones.

We are reclaiming the infrastructure, the liberty to adapt them to our needs, our right to property without strings attached, the freedom to confront ideas without any manipulative mediation, peer to peer, face to face, city to city, human to human.

The possibility to grow local communities and economies, eliminating globalized monopolies and living up from our own creations, is there. We are filling the empty spaces left in our own cities, we are setting our own desires and we are collectively able to satisfy them.

Furthermore, some of us are seeking contacts with the lower strata of societies, to share a growing autonomy: as much they are excluded by the society they serve, that much they are close to freedom, while it is clear that autonomy is the solution to present crisis. These marginal communities were the villagers who, mostly because of rural poverty, could no longer survive on agriculture, as well the migrants and refugees who had to escape their birth places, or never had a homeland. They came to the city and they found neither work or shelter. They created their own jobs out of the cynical logics of capitalism, mostly in refuse recycling. They look ugly to the minorities in power, while most architect and urban planners unjustly call "illegal settlements" their shelter. Some of them they organise to gain power with solidarity, and those are the squatters.

During the past decades we have learnt to enhance our own autonomy in the urban contexts[8], diving across the different contexts composing the cities, disclosing the inner structure of their closed networks, developing a different texture made of relationships that no company can buy.

We are the **Weaver Birds**, burung-burung manyar[9], we share our nests in a network, we flow as the river of the spontaneous settlement of Code in Yogyakarta[10], the gypsy neighbourhood of Sulukule in Instanbul, the Chaos Computer Club , all the hacklabs across the world, the self-organised squatters in Amsterdam Berlin Barcelona and more, the hideouts of 2600 and all the other temporary hacker spaces where our future, and your future, is being homebrewed.

This document is just the start for a new course, outing an analysis that is shared among a growing number of young hackers and artists, nourished by their autonomy and knowledge. Our hacker spaces are quickly proliferating as we don't need to build more space rather than penetrate existing empty space, we are highly adaptive and we aim at connecting rather than separating, at being inclusive rather than exclusive, at being effective rather than acquiring status.

To those who feel threatened we ask: do not resist us, for we will last longer than you, and leave us space, for you don't use it while we do. Do it for the good of all of us, because we are your own kids.

0.6 Horizontal media

Whoever controls the media -the images- controls the culture. (Allen Ginsberg, 1926–1997)

Our concern about freedom in media is serious, the current urgency justifies all our acts of rebellion, as they become necessary. One of our main activities is patiently weaving the threads for open networks that put us all in contact. But greedy national regimes and criminal organisations threaten us as if they can avoid their fascist nature to be known, while opportunist provokers use our open grounds to have granted the right to offend and generate more wars.

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[7]Batten, D.F. (1995), Network Cities: Creative Urban Agglomerations for the 21st Century, SAGE

[8]Lapassade, G. (1971), L'Autogestion pédagogique, Gauthiers-Villars

[9]Burung-Burung Manyar means "Weaver Birds" in bahasa indonesia, is a book by Romo Mengun published in 1992 by Gramedia (Jakarta)

[10]the Code riverbank was considered an "illegal settlement" of squatters, while Romo Mengun has been active between 1981 and 1986, gathering the sympathy of intellectuals believing that these poor members of society should be accepted and helped to improve their living conditions. The government of Indonesia planned its forced removal in 1983, but as protests followed the plans were cancelled. Nine years later in 1992 Kampung Code was selected as the winner of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in the Muslim World. The Code riverside settlement continues to exist until this day, as a remarkable example of urban architecture.

About media we certainly accumulated enough knowledge to trace a clear path for our development, as we have been doing since the early days of our existence: we are active in implementing the liberties that the digital age grants us. This intellectual freedom is very important for the development of humanity, for its capacity to analyse its own actions, to weave its faith in harmony.

Our plan is to keep on developing more on-site and on-line public space for discussion, following a **decentralised pattern** that grants access to most people on our planet. We created tools for independent media, to multiply the voices in protection of common visions, to avoid that a few media tycoons take over democracies, as it is happening in many different places of this world.

We are aware of the limits of the present implementation of democracy: while they are busy celebrating their own success over archaic regimes, these systems stopped updating their own architecture and have fallen in control of new enemies which they cannot even recognise anymore.

The solution we propose is simple: maximise the possibilities to recycle existing media infrastructures, open as many channels as possible, free the airwaves, let communication flow in its multiplicity, avoid any mono-directional use of it, give everyone the possibility to run a radio or TV station for it's own digital and physical neighbours, following an organic pattern that will modularise the sharing of sense and let ideas propagate in a horizontal, non hierarchical way.

If these media architectures will be linked with education models that foster tolerance we have hope to accelerate the evolution of our planet and grant protection to the minorities that are populating it.

0.7 Freedom of identity

We believe that current governmental efforts of biometric control by governments, private data mining operated by companies and public schools watching over students activity, profiling programs that are targeting people worldwide are a crime against humanity.

Each of those efforts are not taking into careful consideration what can be done when dictatorial regimes take control of such systems , in fact this already happened as half a century ago when the first action of the Nazi was numbering people and labelling them with a symbol marking their biological ethnicities (as biometry can nowadays).

Conscious of the lack of responsibility of current governments worldwide, we will oppose with all means necessary their efforts to number and control all people in the name of a safe and unreachable security that, as hackers we can demonstrate, cannot be enforced by such means.

As hackers we are well conscious of information flows and how several leaks in the digital domain are actually disclosing personal information of large amounts of people worldwide. We do believe that people shouldn't be numbered and included in databases, that's probably what still differentiates governments from operating systems merely suppressing the processes that aren't optimised for their tasks.

0.8 Education

> *Because this New Order of ours is a military order, an authoritarian order, commando style, there is no education. There is only instruction, a mere taming experience. (Romo Mangun)*

As privatisation of educational structures progresses, the academy assumes corporate and business mindset, while we assist to a shift of the educational mission in society from *inclusive* to *exclusive*.

The influential play of industries has permeated most academical disciplines, in particular regarding the adoption of technologies. The choice of educators has become biased by logics of short term profit, rather than **Solid Knowledge**.

On the other hand, notions are rapidly becoming universally available. *Heuristic*, *maieutic* and *infrastructure* functions provided by academies are best satisfied by the global action of free software communities **horizontally** sharing methods, experiences, working implementations, on distributed and versioned R&D platforms.

As components can be combined and redistributed, copied and modified[11] students learn a knowledge that is durable, free from "*intellectual properties*" restricting their rights to produce and redistribute creations. This situation will provide an advantage for new generations, as it does for developing countries.

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[11]following the GNU project philosophy and further applying to more fields of human knowledge.

Media hubs and hacker spaces constitute a great potential to activate cultural growth, fulfilling an educational role that is progressively lacking in higher schools and universities.

In 1998 it was the first edition of the hackmeeting[12] in Firenze when its assembly launched the idea of *independent universities of hacking*, spawning numerous hacklabs across the networked cities, with annual meetings that have been taking place until today in various places in the south of Europe. We believe the results of these initiatives have been greatly influential for our own cultural and technical development, as they hosted an errant knowledge otherwise dispersed and neglected by the academies, with the participation of people like Wau Holland, Richard Stallman, Tetsuo Kogawa, Andy Muller-Magoon, Emmanuel Goldstein and even more collective and individuals.

With such a short but intense history behind us we are well motivated to continue developing our independent paths of knowledge, an auto-didactic literature that liberates the students from corporate interests and opens up an horizon of variety and creativity that cannot be envisioned by the most advanced, yet faulty, implementations of the so called "creative industries".

0.9 Consolidation

> *Inverno. Come un seme il mio animo ha bisogno del lavoro nascosto di questa stagione.*
> (Giuseppe Ungaretti, 1888–1970)

If you read until here and you think our plans deserve support, then you should know we are really struggling for better quality, which in our vision we didn't yet fully reached. That's what we call consolidation here.

As our activity mostly focuses on free and open source software development, we have to admit we are not yet there in satisfying all the needs of the various communities relying on them.

For example the on-line radio streaming software MuSE[13], being developed since 8 years now to provide an user friendly tool for community on-line radio streaming, being used by various radios worldwide, is not yet fully developed to the point it should and we have an hard time in keeping the pace with updating it.

Another example is the popular GNU/Linux multimedia liveCD dyne:bolic[14] developed since 2001 which has now reached version 2.5.2 released last winter: it focuses on several important issues as supporting old hardware, implementing privacy for users, offering media production tools and providing all development tools on its single liveCD. We won't hide we are experiencing major problems in keeping the project alive, lacking funds to involve more developers for such a huge effort. In fact since more recent "phylantropic" startups (that, considering the nature of their funding, aren't grassroot at all) obscured our long-standing grassroot development we have been deprived of the media attention that is also necessary to gather support: this all follows the logic of the big fish eating the smaller fishes, killing variety even in the open source context.

Yet another example is the FreeJ vision mixer software[15] developed since 2002, implementing an open platform for producing and broadcasting audio/video online in a completely open way, also relying on development done by the xiph.org foundation[16]. With FreeJ we hope to rehabilitate the vast knowledge about the javascript language with a tool that let it be used for video production, as a 100% free alternative to Flash and other recent commercial startups. The horizon for this project is very promising, as finally Ogg/Vorbis/Theora support is being natively integrated in Mozilla Firefox[17], and we are actively seeking funding support for a short term development sprint, which never really arrives.

In economic terms all these projects have been developed with very little support so far and actually don't need much to go on, still proper expertise is needed and that in most cases requires a budget to keep people committed on a medium or long term.

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[12]see http://www.hackmeeting.org and the book Networking Art http://www.networkingart.eu/english.html (Costa & Nolan) ISBN:88-7437-047-4 ISBN:978-88-7437-047-4

[13]see http://muse.dyne.org - a tool that is well documented for usage by the flossmanuals project at http://flossmanuals.net/muse

[14]see http://dynebolic.org - also listed among the few 100% free distribution by the Free Software Foundation, as well nominated among the top-10 open source projects in 2005 by the Independent UK.

[15]see http://freej.dyne.org

[16]see http://www.xiph.org

[17]see http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0808/msg00003.html

What we are seeking for our consolidation is to develop a publication platform that let us modestly merchandise these products, keeping them still free and available online, plus eventually some benefactors trusting our work and investing their phylantropic instincts the visions hereby described. Anyway, any suggestions regarding consolidations are very welcome and of course, as a good old Yiddish proverb says, a penny is a lot of money—if you haven't got a penny.

0.10   Infrastructure

It is best to keep one's own organization intact; to crush the enemy's organization is only second best. (Sun Tzu, 6th century BC)

We are planning (and realizing already) a decentralised structure of on-line and on-site facilities to be independently shared among us.

On site we successfully link to squats and liminal practices among our networked cities, developing patterns that can be implemented locally and shared globally. Reuse of existing empty structures is a crucial point, as it is keeping these initiatives independent from corporate and national influence, freeing the potential of various cultures composing them.

On line we are yet more powerful, having established a redundant network of servers and protocols that, even if opposed by corporate interests, are flourishing and well spread across the populace.

In this phase we are still very young and we need all your support to help us stay independent, host our efforts in different contexts and share their visibility.

As we have composed a comprehensive cartography of such efforts you can be confident that all the economical and practical support contributed will be carefully shared by all nodes and documented by a growing literature of examples, facts and periodic reports which will keep all our network informed.

On site

So far we are emerging two locations: the poetry hacklab[18] in Palazzolo Acreide, near Siracusa, where we are struggling to establish a museum of historical working computers[19] (also reachable online) as a permanent interactive exhibition where visitors can experiment with the machines, an educational effort that also implies the preservation of our digital past.

Second is our hacktive squatted community in Amsterdam, a city that is probably among the last places in the world tolerating the occupation of empty spaces, resulting in a balanced urban architecture that is open to independent cultural initiatives and grassroot social movements, helping to control the growing speculative trend on private properties by business magnate and criminals white-washing their money.

And next are even more grassroot run places ready to be emerging, with which we plan to share common plans about sustainability, open source practices and open spaces for the global and local communities crossing them.

On line

The network of servers we are so far relying on is very much resembling our on-site architecture, where hospitality plays a main role, as several independent organisations or institutions offered us hosting space for our projects, while half of the fleet is hosted on a limited number of commercial collocations financed by self taxation.

All software employed is free and open source: servers run stable versions of Debian GNU/Linux, code development is hosted using Git[20], webpages are served by a custom written setup (that we plan to evolve following this wheel spin) using Apache PHP and Mysql, while whenever possible we use static pages. Open discussion forums are provided using Mailman, IRC and in future phpBB, open publishing and editorial flows are hosted using the MoinMoin wiki platform. Most of our facilities are made redundant and of course we keep backups, having preserved so far every single bit composing our digital history.

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[18]see: http://poetry.freaknet.org
[19]see: http://museum.dyne.org
[20]fast and distributed code versioning system, see: http://git.or.cz

Besides the dyne.org website itself, we host several artists and activists engaged in projects as Streamtime[21], Idiki[22], ib-arts[23], Morisena[24] and more, plus some free independent radios[25] and in future more TV, as software like FreeJ will be soon ready for it.

0.11 Collaboration

Nadie es patria. Todos lo somos. (Jorge Luis Borges, 1899–1986)

Thanks for reading until here, in case we sparked some interest in you with this document, then finally let us point out some practical ways to get involved and collaborate with us.

Being still a young phase of our evolution we need to carefully economise participation in our development, so we are looking for talented hackers wishing to contribute to software development, as well independent communities wanting to join our network and amplify our practices and dreams across the world.

As we will hopefully get some funding (and this phase basically opens our network to such opportunities) we won't neglect to support your participation with money. In fact we plan to pay out fees for specific development tasks as the ones described in the Consolidation chapter, which will be progressively detailed on our websites.

We also plan to open up residencies and remote stage programs, in collaboration with educational institutions recognising our efforts and the involvement of their students in them.

Please get in touch then! from this webpage `http://dyne.org/hackers_contact.php` and specifying your email address, we will reply and plan our future collaboration.

Thanks, a thousand flowers will blossom!

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[21]free blogging from Iraq, see http://streamtime.org
[22]a wiki for ideas, see http://idiki.dyne.org
[23]ib_project for the arts, see http://ib.dyne.org
[24]collaborative art, ecology, sustainability, summer camps, yoga, see: http://www.morisena.org
[25]see: http://radio.dyne.org