

# Investigating longforms in a research context

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BLOG:

## Investigating Longforms in a Research Context

By [Miriam Rasch](http://networkcultures.org/blog/author/michael/) (http://networkcultures.org/blog/author/michael/), June 16, 2015 at 12:56 pm.

In preparation for the new [longform series](http://networkcultures.org/longform) (http://networkcultures.org/longform) the INC started a research into the genres of longform or longread. Miriam presented the project during a lunch meeting for co-workers in the research center of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. You can find the slides and notes on the website of the PublishingLab and below. Interested in finding out more? Contact [miriam@networkcultures.org](mailto:miriam@networkcultures.org).



### Longread investigation

So, what are longreads and longforms? There is no clear definition, but we can say it is something that is long rather than short, more multimedial than just textual, more journalistic than academic. We take longforms to always be based on thorough research, which makes it an interesting form of communication for research done within our school.

We took the chance to take these plans further within our art criticism project (De Kunst van de Kritiek) that has been running since the beginning of this year within the PublishingLab. In this project we worked with four art magazines, both paper and online, who wanted to do more with their online presence, while maintaining their goal and function of critical medium in the art world. How can art and cultural critique be performed on the web? How can the digital environment enrich this critical function? Looking at the rise and success of the longform genre, we decided to start by further investigating in this direction and set out to understand the possibilities of this genre in art criticism together with the magazines and our hired developers. We asked them all to keep a log of the process, so we would be able to transfer the experiences they had into guidelines to be used by other writers, editors, developers in the art criticism industry.

We asked several questions to guide the production:

1. Which open source (<http://networkcultures.org>) existing content?

2. In what way can a purposeful connection be made between a paper edition (magazine) and an online addition, making use of the options the web offers?

3. How can we leave the primacy of the text behind, and use other modes of expression to convey a message?

4. How can the readers be involved in a text in a meaningful way, to create a dialogic essay instead of a 'monologic' one?

The results were presented at De Kunst van de Kritiek, May 21st, and can be found [here](http://www.publishinglab.nl/dekunstvandekritiek/2015/05/27/experimentele-vormen-van-kritiek-van-longread-tot-filmessay/) (<http://www.publishinglab.nl/dekunstvandekritiek/2015/05/27/experimentele-vormen-van-kritiek-van-longread-tot-filmessay/>).

## Lessons learned

1. Which open source tools are available to enhance and enrich existing content? An overview of the tools examined can be found [here](http://www.publishinglab.nl/dekunstvandekritiek/2015/04/30/timeline-and-annotation-tools/) (<http://www.publishinglab.nl/dekunstvandekritiek/2015/04/30/timeline-and-annotation-tools/>).

2. In what way can a purposeful connection be made between a paper edition (magazine) and an online addition, making use of the options the web offers? Think about a [hybrid workflow](http://networkcultures.org/digitalpublishing/2014/12/23/out-now-from-print-to-ebooks-a-hybrid-publishing-toolkit-for-the-arts/) (<http://networkcultures.org/digitalpublishing/2014/12/23/out-now-from-print-to-ebooks-a-hybrid-publishing-toolkit-for-the-arts/>): Start with the concept, the desired result from the beginning. Do you need audio, video, photos, quotes? Think modularly from the start and get together the stuff you need, perhaps the people you need, also: how to connect the two?

3. How can we leave the primacy of the text behind, and use other modes of expression to convey a message? Think from the content. This seems obvious, but for writers (like researchers) there is a lot to gain. For example, if you write about film which you can't show on paper, it is possible online, there are immersive possibilities. Still, describe the scene as well for offline readers.

4. How can the readers be involved in a text in a meaningful way, to create a dialogic essay instead of a 'monologic' one? We're used to comments beneath articles, but these are not a discussion. How to break through the usual hierarchy? How to design for meaningful engagement and how can you stimulate readers to participate?

Overall the following pointers are important. Looking from the developers side: think about the back-end, about responsiveness and offline reading possibilities. The sky is the limit, but so is your wallet. To sum up: you need to co-operate, involve designers and developers, editors and others in an early stage, to open up the mind to possibilities you can't imagine when you are just used to writing.

Although there are a lot of lessons learned, still we have some questions left open: the relation between form / content, how to engage the reader, criticism in a world of Likes etc. We will work further on this and hope to make a small guidebook, for art critics firstly, but useful for anyone who is interested in writing stuff like this.

As mentioned it has been a dream for some time to add a new publishing range to our existing publications series at the INC. So importantly, we wanted to launch a new publication *series*, it should not be a one-off essay, but the start of a body of work. So the question we asked was about seriality: what do we need to start a series of longreads to build on? We formulated criteria, related to the experiments of the magazines: the chosen tools should be easy-to-use, recognizable as a series, adaptable to the needs of the article at hand, usable within the INC online environment (WordPress), and fitting in a hybrid workflow. We decided on the Aesop Story Engine with theme Novella, as the tool that served these criteria best. The investigation of all the available options is published [here](http://www.publishinglab.nl/dekunstvandekritiek/2015/03/31/developing-a-longform-platform-for-the-inc/) (<http://www.publishinglab.nl/dekunstvandekritiek/2015/03/31/developing-a-longform-platform-for-the-inc/>).



We believe it is possible to offer people in-depth writing, in an attractive form and style, suitable for mobile and offline reading, catered to their professional interests and that researchers in an Applied University should use these genres to reach their target audience. Especially since these longer essays are popular first and foremost in our field of creative industries and tech/media research.

The INC hopes to set an example with INC Longform, essays that cover INC subjects such as social media, online knowledge, creative work, alternatives, art and media activism – always critical and reflective, but aimed at a wide audience. You!

Do you want to contribute to the INC Longform series? We are looking for essays in Dutch or English. We offer elaborate feedback, professional copy-editing, a broad readership, and an opportunity to connect with the INC network.

For more information or to submit an idea for a longform, contact Miriam Rasch at [miriam@networkcultures.org](mailto:miriam@networkcultures.org) (<mailto:miriam@networkcultures.org>).

Tags: [longform](http://networkcultures.org/blog/tag/longform/) (<http://networkcultures.org/blog/tag/longform/>), [longread](http://networkcultures.org/blog/tag/longread/) (<http://networkcultures.org/blog/tag/longread/>), [publishing](http://networkcultures.org/blog/tag/publishing/) (<http://networkcultures.org/blog/tag/publishing/>), [research](http://networkcultures.org/blog/tag/research/) (<http://networkcultures.org/blog/tag/research/>)

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MOST RECENT READINGS



## Out now! Deep Pocket no. 2 Shadowbook: Writing Through the Digital by Miriam Rasch

By Leonieke van Dipten, June 16, 2018

The second volume in our series with experimental writing, Deep Pockets, is available. INC's very own Miriam Rasch collected some of her work from the past years for an English edition called Shadowbook: Writing Through the Digital 2014-2018. Five experimental essays and one exposition, all dealing with the question 'How do we write when we [...]

(<http://networkcultures.org/blog/2018/06/16/out-now-deep-pocket-2-shadowbook-writing-through-the-digital-2014-2018/>)

## Welkom bij de federatie-bijeenkomst over alternatieve sociale media

By Geert Lovink, May 29, 2018

1 & 2 juni in Varia, Rotterdam Naar aanleiding van recente discussies en bijeenkomst in de Waag over alternatieve sociale media zou ik jullie graag willen uitnodigen voor 'Welcome to the Federation'. De eerste in een reeks ontmoetingen waarbij we makers van open source gefedereerde sociale media uitnodigen in Varia in Rotterdam om te komen [...]

(<http://networkcultures.org/blog/2018/05/29/welkom-bij-de-federatie-bijeenkomst-over-alternatieve-sociale-media/>)



## Facebook Liberation Army Link List (April 12, 2018)

By Geert Lovink, April 13, 2018

Compiled and edited by Geert Lovink & Patricia de Vries (Institute of Network Cultures)

Facebook Delete Manuals <https://pageflows.com/blog/delete-facebook/>

<https://www.ghostery.com/blog/ghostery-news/after-cambridge-analytica-scandal-how-to-delete-your-facebook-account/>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/news/2018/03/28/people-really-deleting-their-facebook-accounts-its-complicated/464109002/>

<https://androidreader.com/how-to-delete-your-facebook-account-step-by-step/>

(<http://networkcultures.org/blog/2018/04/13/facebook-liberation-army-link-list-april-12-2018/>)



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