

The Rise and Fall of DDS

evaluating the ambitions of Amsterdam's Digital City



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Summary

In this research project the intentions with which Amsterdam's Digital City was built are evaluated, based on a historical account. The Digital City has been a virtual city in Amsterdam between February 1994 and July 2001. It was inspired by the Community Networks movement in the US and Canada and functioned as a Free-Net in the Netherlands, but has attracted international interest for the design it had chosen: it used the metaphor of a city to structure the information and communication in cyberspace and made the users into 'inhabitants'.

The history of this virtual city is described in four distinct periods which are each put in the perspective of four themes that are important for the Community Network movement: social cohesion, third places, freedom of information and democracy.

The experience with DDS suggests that the free and open information and communication space can hardly be institutionalised. Compared with the success of the internet in this regard we can see that open standards and protocols that respect the gift economy in cyberspace are important to achieve this.

DDS might not have been open enough because of its institutionalisation and the closed design of the interface which did not allow improvement by the users. It intended to become a broadcaster and mass communicator more than becoming a community. This eventually made the users passive paying consumers of a telecommunication service. In spite of efforts to 'design' an on-line community, the major achievement of DDS has been more that it contributed computing power, disk space and connectivity to the internet for public use, much like the academic and research institutes have done in the early years of the internet.

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1 Introduction

In 1994 thousands of computer-users in Amsterdam and elsewhere in the Netherlands configured the modem-software in their computer to dial the number 020-6225222. The modem would dial this number only to hear it being replied with a busy tone. After which it would automatically start redialing the number again: Tit-tut-tut-tit-tut-tut-tut... And again, and again, endlessly without ever getting tired, unlike the impatient human being behind the keyboard who stopped humming along after the first two or three times. Under ordinary conditions - in the evening before midnight, with no important soccer match on tv - at best only one out of twenty to thirty attempts would be answered with the harsh but eagerly anticipated melody of a 'modem handshake'. Your very own computer exchanging greetings with a presumably big machine on the other side of the line. These were the sounds of a dark and mysterious cyberspace, something like pggggpip-pggggggggpip. Followed by an abrupt silence. Welcome! You were 'inside' and 'on-line'.

The number being dialed was the number of Amsterdam's 'Digital City', or 'De Digitale Stad' (DDS) in Dutch. This phenomenon of jammed phone-lines was proudly labeled by policy writers 'a traffic jam for the Digital City', inspired by the 'electronic super highway' metaphor used by senator Al Gore to familiarise the general public with the very latest technological feat taxpayers should become enthusiastic about (Schalken en Tops, 1994: 48). DDS in its turn was inspired by the American and Canadian 'free-nets' which emerged during the eighties. Free-nets are computer networks that are situated in a specific geographical place, like a town or a rural area, on which communication takes place between citizens about their already existing community in real life. The term is introduced by the National Public Telecomputing Network in the US for their initiatives in this field (Staller, 1996: chapter 2). The people operating these networks, for which the generic term 'Community Network' (CN) is used, cooperated worldwide in a Community Network movement. At the time these special kind of virtual communities elicited high expectations. They could empower people to improve their physical communities using this free communication space, unlike topdown mass-communication media that set the agenda in unsolicited and perhaps harmful ways, according to one of the spokesmen for the movement, Doug Schuler (Schuler, 1996).

About seven years later it is time to look back upon that era and see what has become of the intentions upon which these 'virtual cities' were built. Now is a good time because of the recent decline of DDS that embodied many of the Community Network values. DDS is also a particularly good example, since it has managed to survive the past seven years and is well known around the world. All the same, the management of DDS has explicitly given up on the ideals on which it was founded. Much has been written about the

marvelous achievements DDS has made, but the question is how these events should be interpreted with hindsight and which issues have surfaced over time and are facing us today.

The question we would like to answer here is: **what has become of the community networking ideals of that time?** To answer this, first another question should be asked. **What were the intentions of community networking at that time?** followed by the question **what has become of the ideals in the case of DDS?**

Four themes can be distinguished in the thinking about community networks, which will structure the answers: social cohesion, 'third places', freedom of information and democracy. These themes are chosen based on recurring issues in the writing about community networks as well as on the ambitions expressed in the mission statements of the community networks.

As the title suggests, this is both a historical study as well as an evaluation. The rise and the fall of DDS over the past seven year is described, split into four distinct phases which will be dealt with in one chapter for each:

1. the 10 week experiment in 1994;
2. the institutionalisation phase, when it became a foundation;
3. the survival years when DDS faced increasing competition;
4. the commercial era during the dotcom-era and the period until DDS became an ordinary internet service provider (ISP).

In each chapter all four themes are discussed, to evaluate how and to what extent they have surfaced in practice. This will lead to the final concluding chapter in which these discussions are summarised and integrated in an answer to the main question about what has become of the intentions. The method to do this is to describe the history of DDS while at the same organising this thematically.

The data to describe the history of DDS is coming from a variety of sources. DDS has been an interesting subject of study for both academics and others, internationally as well as in the Netherlands. The data from existing research, published interviews, policy documents and other verifiable sources is supplemented with experiences based on my personal interaction throughout the past seven years with DDS. Not only the interface, but also my experiences with the organisation and discussion with other DDS users in newsgroups since 1994 are used, off-line as well as on-line. During the writing of this thesis I have also corresponded and talked with DDS observers, founders and others involved in the history of DDS. Unfortunately, the well-known DDS 3.0 website was replaced in July

2001 by a website with only information on the new commercial services. I try to compensate this by including information taken from the DDS website in the appendix.

An important thing to note is that I was actively involved with the subject of my study as chair of the DDS users association 'Open Domein' (Open Domain) between February and May 2001, when it negotiated with the management of DDS to take over the city and attempted to establish a successor. Along the way I acquired useful insights on the workings of a virtual community like DDS. During the contacts with DDS management, DDS employees and ex-employees I saw how it was organised and what the public and hidden objectives were. This is incorporated in this thesis although it is not always possible to attribute it to verifiable sources. After I stepped down from the chair and during the writing of this thesis, I was actively discussing the policy of the second board on a public mailinglist, which might have influenced the course of the association.

The chosen approach assumes a social shaping theory of technology as opposed to the more popular technological determinism. Although the social shaping of technology is becoming prevalent in the continental European academic world, technological determinism is still dominant in the mass media (MacKenzie 1999). A deterministic view on the "fall" of DDS would look at how the chosen technology failed, or how the technology was not well applied. In a social shaping perspective, the focus will be instead on how the people shape this technology to their needs or fail to do so. The concept of DDS implies a social shaping approach towards technology because it evolved as a new use of existing technology. The new shape grew in a hackers 'do-it-yourself' culture (Lovink and Riemens, 2000). In spite of this 'adaptive' open design something apparently went wrong along the way and the concept was abandoned.

1.1 Community Networks

During the 1980s it was popular amongst computer hobbyists to set up so-called Bulletin Board Systems (BBS). A home computer was connected to the telephone network and was left operating unattended to allow other computer users to connect to this computer with their own through the telephone network. Sometimes the computer was available only on specific hours of the day, in rare cases it was available all day. Depending on the number of telephone lines the operator had available, usually only one user at a time could connect.

In the United States and Canada there were citizens who were worried about the decline of their local community and used a BBS as one of the means to voice their concerns. The community could be their neighbourhood, village, city or even a whole region. To improve

the community they lived in, they would dedicate their BBS to provide an information and communication platform for the members of that community. Back then these initiatives were called Community Networks, Civic Nets or free-nets.

From the late eighties onwards, BBSs were increasingly connected to each other through a network called FidoNet and ultimately this network was connected to the internet and practically merged with it (Rheingold, 2000: xxiv). Meanwhile, BBSs gradually disappeared in the early nineties because of the growing popularity and accessibility of the internet, a more 'professional' network that consisted mainly of computers from institutes that were interconnected for research and academic purposes. BBSs are now only being used where connection with the internet is no option yet, like rural areas and developing countries. At the end of the eighties the internet was opened up to other, nonacademic use, like these BBSs. The Community Network BBSs followed this trend and moved to the internet in the early nineties or disappeared. Also new internet based Community Networks were founded, connected to the internet from their inception onwards. Important to the Community Network movement was the National Public Telecomputing Network in the early nineties, an network organisation between Community Networks. Community Network advocate Doug Schuler has called it the fourth largest consumer online service in the world, because it was a grassroots alliance linking Community Networks around the world, adding up to 380,000 users in December 1995 (Schuler, 1995). On September 17, 1996, NPTN filed for a Chapter 7 bankruptcy because a major grant did not come through.

In this chapter the recurring themes associated with the Community Network ideology are summarised in the following four themes: social cohesion, 'third places', information and communication freedom and democracy. None of these are as such explicitly brought forward by the community network movement as their goals because the ambitions of the community networks are usually formulated in quite down-to-earth, practical terms and might not be easily recognisable in the four themes. However, upon careful analysis of the ambitions of the Community Networks and the new concept of the Digital City that evolved, all their goals can reasonably well be classified under these four headings.

1.2 Social Cohesion

The minimum requirement for a community is that the members of the community are in contact with each other in some way, perhaps even only as the passive subscribers to a group identity. The implicit assumption of Community Network advocates is that the communication between community members is insufficient, in quantity or quality. Their point of reference is not explicit, but the defects and causes of the current situation are

generally the effects of modernisation in some way: anonymity, unemployment, individualisation, fragmentation, increased differences in wealth etc. These problems are not new, but the longing for a vibrant, local, supportive community, as it was supposed to exist in pre-modern times, is strong enough to fuel the Community Network movement. At last, technology can compensate for the ills it has done to the local community. For example, the automobile and the subsequent urban zoning presumably killed community in the US (Oldenburg, 1999). The assumption of the Community Networkers is that the effect of computer mediated communication is more a compensation than another threat to community life.

The negative effects of modernisation on community life are formulated by Tönnies, already in 1887, with the concept of *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft* and more recently by Habermas with the idea of the colonisation of the lifeworld by the system. From all the writing on this topic Tönnies is the most useful in this context. In general, the issue of the effects of modernity on social life, has been the focus of attention of the best known sociologists ever since the first symptoms of it could be observed. Wellman (Wellman, 1998: ch. 3) reminds us of this by briefly listing the famous ones:

Thus the loss of community was a centerpiece of Karl Marx's (1852) and Friedrich Engels' (1885) communist analyses, asserting that industrial capitalism had created new types of interpersonal exploitation that drove people apart. Capitalism had alienated workers not only from their work but from each other. By contrast, although sociologist Max Weber (1946, 1958) extolled modern rationality, he also feared that bureaucratization and urbanization were weakening communal bonds and traditional authority. Sociologist Émile Durkheim (1897) feared that the loss of solidarity had weakened communal support and fostered social pathology. A generation later, sociologist Georg Simmel celebrated urban liberation but also worried that the new individualism would lead to superficial relationships (1922).

Tönnies distinguished between the pre-modern communally organised societies, labeled 'Gemeinschaft', and today's postindustrial societies that are organised by contract; 'Gesellschaft'. The first can still be found in some rural areas and underdeveloped societies, which could have inspired the longing for it we can sometimes see in the Community Network movement. Such societies are not yet torn apart by factory and office work, but are locally based with very close relationships of interdependence between relatives and neighbours. Yet, the contractually organised society is the norm in the western world today. Relationships are the chosen friends and acquaintances rather than given facts like the neighbours and relatives in the large family called 'Gemeinschaft'.

The objective of Community Networks is to stimulate the interdependence within the community by making the community members 'virtual neighbours'. Obviously, this can never become a 'Gemeinschaft' since it is an option, and not an inevitability, like the inherited position in the traditional large family in such a pre-modern community. The computer user can disconnect from the network any moment and take shelter in the anonymity of the city or suburbia while in the 'Gemeinschaft' it can not. It can not move out because it is depended on it in numerous ways; outside the Gemeinschaft it would be difficult, if not impossible to survive.

With the above taken into consideration, a virtual Gemeinschaft is not achievable; any virtual network will have to be incorporated in the contractually based Gesellschaft. Which might magnify problems that are associated with this way of living. Because the contractually organised communities are increasingly mediated through telecommunication, a technology that offers the possibility to overcome time and space constraints, there will be a class of people without sufficient access to these means that are effectively shut out to participate in any of these Gesellschafts at all. The explicit aim of many Community Networks, including DDS, was to prevent a class division between so-called information haves and have-nots. "Books aren't kept out of reach of the poor, so why should computers be? They may have the potential to bring people back to each other, back to their neighborhoods and back to a sense of community." (Staller: 1) It is a red line that runs throughout the history of DDS and the outcome is worth evaluating.

1.3 'Third places'

In Tönnies analysis there were communally based societies and contractually based societies. In the first people would inevitably cross each other's paths frequently while this would have to be prearranged by agreement in the contractually based society. In such a Gesellschaft the daily life is organised in different functional spheres associated with certain places. Oldenburg describes how we live today in what resembles Tönnies' Gesellschaft. There is the private place at home as the first place, and work in a factory, office or other workspace as the second place. For (political) discussion and a sense of belonging a third place is required. This is 'neutral' territory outside the home and workplace.

Such a third place resembles what Habermas writes about the public sphere that emerged in eighteenth century England, a sphere 'which mediates between society and state, in which the public organises itself as the bearer of public opinion' (Habermas 1962). At the time, the English coffeehouses where culture and politics were the topics of conversation were the embodiment of such a place. In line with a true Enlightenment spirit of the modern time there was a high confidence in reason. Culture was democratized through the

technology of print so in theory everyone could participate (van den Boomen 2000). In 1989 the sociologist Ray Oldenburg wrote a passionate book about his long search of the third places that remain today. Especially since the Second World War in the US the third places are in rapid decline; the automobile and the associated urban zoning, but also increased seclusion into the ever more comfortable home with electronic entertainment, made the third places in cafés, coffee shops, bars, pubs et cetera go out of business. Those that do remain no longer have the characteristics of third places. More on what those characteristics are below.

Oldenburg's interpretation of the third place is more relevant in relation to the Digital City than Habermas' "aim to derive the ideal type of the bourgeois public sphere from the historical context of British, French, and German developments in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" as he himself describes it (Habermas 1997: 422). His public sphere concept is more media-centric: "The modern public sphere comprises several arenas in which, through printed materials dealing with matters of culture, information, and entertainment, a conflict of opinions is fought out more or less discursively" (Habermas 1997: 430). It concerns the whole rational discourse that takes place in the mass media and third places combined. When the metaphor of the Digital City is taken literally, it is a place to visit and meet others to talk, much more like the third places that Oldenburg describes.

Yet both perspectives seem inadequate. Habermas' perspective results in a public sphere that is to some extent centralised because the mass-media are involved. The agenda of the discussion is set by a national or regional concern through the mass-media which requires rational debate by the citizens who consume this. The feedback on this might feed the mass-media and alter the agenda, but the topics remain limited to those that are shared by all other participants by means of newspapers, journals and books.

As a mass-medium the personal computer performs not very well since it is truly personal. It can serve as an interface for mass-media though, but it allows more 'personality'. There is more interactivity with the interface and with other computer users possible. It is more like the telephone but with the option of one-to-many communication, a form of communication for which the telephone by itself is rarely used. In other words, pub talk is possible through the computer, but not by telephone, radio, television or newspaper in spite of a more attempts to simulate pub talk with for example talkradio, daytime television talkshows et cetera. In Oldenburg's third places, topics taken from the mass-media can be included, but the discourse is dominated by the people themselves; they themselves are the topic of discussion in the first place. They are not reduced to rational political citizens as in Habermas' public sphere although they still can act as such. The shortcoming of Oldenburg's work in this context is that it consistently leaves out all mediated communication, while anything that

takes place in DDS is by definition computer mediated.

The characteristics of Oldenburg's third places are "important for community-network developers that are trying to foster the creation of convivial electronic spaces in which people might choose to spend time "hanging out" with other community members" according to Schuler (Schuler 1996: ch 2). The characteristics of third places Oldenburg (Oldenburg 1999: 20-42) exhibit a striking resemblance with the characteristics of computer mediated communication, especially before the world wide web, the graphical user interfaces with hypertext, became popular:

1. *On Neutral Ground*. "There must be places where individuals may come and go as they please, in which none are required to play host, and in which all feel at home and comfortable." (Oldenburg 1999: 22).
2. *The third place is a leveler*. "A place that is a leveler is, by its nature, an inclusive place. (...) Third places counter the tendency to be restrictive in the enjoyment of others by being open to all and by laying emphasis on qualities not confined to status distinctions current in the society." And there is practical function for third places: "The great bulk of human association finds individuals related to one another for some objective purpose. It casts them, as sociologists say, in roles (...)" Roles which are irrelevant in these places where everyone has the same role: providing good company (Oldenburg 1999:24).
3. *Conversation is the main activity*. "Conversation is a game" (Oldenburg 1999:30) "a game that requires two and gains in richness and variety if there are four or five more... it exercises the intelligence and the heart, it calls on memory and imagination, it has all the interest derived from uncertainty and unexpectedness, it demands self-restraint, self-mastery, effort, quickness- in short, all the qualities that make a game exciting." (Sedgwick in Oldenburg 1999:31).
4. *Accessibility and Accommodation*. "Third places must stand ready to serve people's needs for sociability and relaxation in the intervals before, between, and after their mandatory appearances elsewhere." (Oldenburg 1999:32) "the activity that goes on in third places is largely unplanned, unscheduled, unorganized, and unstructured." (Oldenburg 1999:33).
5. *The regulars*. "The third place is just so much space unless the right people are there to make it come alive, and they are the regulars." (Oldenburg 1999:33). "It is the lone stranger who is most apt to become a regular. What he must do is establish trust." (Oldenburg 1999: 35).
6. *A low profile*. "unimpressive looking (...) not advertised; they are not elegant (...) all the more likely *not* to impress the uninitiated." "Plainness (...) serves to discourage pretension among those who gather there." (Oldenburg 1999: 36-37).
7. *The mood is playful*. "Here joy and acceptance reign over anxiety and alienation (...)

The unmistakable mark of acceptance into the company of third place regulars is not that of being taken seriously, but that of being included in the play form of their associations.” (Oldenburg 1999:38).

8. *A home away from home*. “A congenial environment”, The psychologist Seamon is quoted by Oldenburg with his five criteria for the home: a) it is a physical center around which we organize our comings and goings; b) we have a sense of possession and control over a setting that need not entail actual ownership; c) we go there for (social) regeneration; d) we are at ease and enjoy the freedom to be or to express ones personality, to assert oneself within an environment (as it is exhibited in conversation in third places while at home it is in furniture and other decor) and finally e) There is warmth, support, mutual concern.

Because of the stress on community, the third places by Oldenburg are therefore more appropriate to evaluate the public element of this kind of computer mediated communication than the mass-media focussed public sphere concept by Habermas would be. Although it is not written with computer mediated communication in mind, the similarities are striking and might give an interesting perspective on the matter.

1.4 Freedom of information

“Information wants to be free” is the adagio of the old style hackers. In a world where information has no physical limitations as in the Gutenberg era of print, other limitations, like making it expensive, should not be set on the information. The motive for clinging on to information, while there are physical obstacles to make it free in the digital world, is to save certain privileges. The phrase “information wants to be free” is attributed to Stewart Brand at the first hackers conference in 1984: "Information Wants To Be Free. Information also wants to be expensive. Information wants to be free because it has become so cheap to distribute, copy, and recombine---too cheap to meter. It wants to be expensive because it can be immeasurably valuable to the recipient. That tension will not go away. It leads to endless wrenching debate about price, copyright, 'intellectual property', the moral rightness of casual distribution, because each round of new devices makes the tension worse, not better." (Brand 1987: 202)

Because information can have such a huge impact on people’s lives, the goal of most Community Networks is to facilitate the distribution of the information for the benefit of the members of the community. The perfect illustration of this is the Cleveland free-net, founded by Dr. Tom Grundner in 1986, which grew out of an experimental bulletin board called "St. Silicon's Hospital and Information Dispensary". It tested the effectiveness of using telecomputing as a means of delivering health information to the public. A person

could leave a medically related question on the bulletin board and have it answered by a board-certified family physician within 24 hours. In the case of the DDS the government information was an important element in the design. Through DDS it would be possible to give free access to all information that is of concern to citizens. This desire is common to most Community Networks and was the basis for the DDS experiment.

Not only the importance of information in people's lives matters, the information as tradable good on the internet has a very important meaning for the way this medium works. The internet could have developed as a commercial online service with a typical business model in which information is priced with subscription fees for information intermediaries (Thomas and Wyatt 1998: 683), but it became a network of scientists who shared information for free with one another. A 'gift economy' emerged on the internet. In a gift-economy people do not ask money in return for services or goods but expect not to be asked money when they are on the receiving end. On the internet in such a gift economy people give away information for free under the assumption to have the favour returned in a later stage, often by other people than they gave information to before, perhaps off-line. The favour is only indirectly monetary and most likely to come in the shape of information, a higher esteem or good reputation. The net benefit in the long run will equal the costs of giving away information for free. (Brand, 1995). This gift economy also has another practical benefit. Because the 'pricing' of information is very difficult - different people assign different value to the same information - this accounting implementation issue is overcome when each recipient can price the information individually as a mental note without it ever being measured. The only 'deal' is whether there is enough valuable information on the internet to make it worthwhile to connect to this network at all. Thanks to this continuing exchange of information on the internet, the monopoly on information provision shifts from institutions to individuals. The distinction between consumer and producer of information becomes blurred when everyone can be a producer of information, regardless of the authority the information has. How much authority an information producer has on the internet is negotiated between consumer and producer and has no predictable outcome compared to information that is not distributed through the internet.

1.5 Democracy

The introduction of information and communication technology not only gave impetus to the hackers 'freedom of information' ideology, it went further than that. Representative democracy was invented to overcome the time- and place constraints that prevented all citizens of a nation-state from participating in the law- and policy making process. Instead of all citizens participating personally in the governance in the mythical Athenian style, in the representative system one would delegate this power to a representative that would act

on your behalf. Now, with the electronic information super highway coming to the doorstep of every citizen, the time- and place constraints would no longer have to be obstacles for a direct democracy. While in the Athenian democracy the women, slaves and the poor were not considered citizens, the direct democracy on-line would resemble that democracy in the same way with information have-nots, computer illiterate and again the poor becoming the non-citizens.

But at the dawn of this new computer age in the early nineties the assumption was that sooner or later the whole country would be on-line. US Presidential candidate Ross Perot in 1992 even suggested the establishing of electronic town halls to let every citizen participate in the destiny of their country. The ultimate consequence in this line of thinking leads to 'direct democracy' in which citizens actively initiate and pass legislation.

However, this direct democracy ideal is not in the mission statement of any of the Communication Networks with grassroots action oriented perspective. The community and the community work by concerned citizens was their scope. DDS provoked more thinking on direct democracy because the local government was explicitly committed to the project, by sponsoring the initiative, which made this objective more realistic than for the Community Networks. It formed an important topic of the debate among the active users of the DDS and many of the internet users at the time. Impressed by the powerful tools to overcome time- and space constraints now at their disposal, politically interested internet users concluded that the internet makes the existing industrial age configurations to organise public affairs obsolete in favour of direct democracy. After all, there was no need for representatives of the people in the capital anymore when every citizen can be wired to the political arena.

During the short-lived history of DDS, it has generally followed fashionable expectations in this field and is worth studying step by step, although the experiments in this field were mostly to be found inside DDS during the first phases because the political actors pulled out of DDS later on. A central common ground or a shared platform for political discussion disappeared.

2 DDS, a ten week experiment

The first distinct period in the existence of 'De Digitale Stad' is from 14 January 1994 until 26 April 1994. Initially DDS was meant to be a ten week experiment, after which it was to be evaluated and would end. Towards the end of the ten weeks however, it was decided that the experiment should be transformed into something lasting. The experiment itself was not explicitly designed with popular mass use as the objective, it was an experiment to demonstrate the possibilities after all. After the experiment the municipality would decide on the policy to follow. During the experiment a reasonably large group of users would suffice to find out how the mere existence of such a free-net would contribute to the quality of the discussion on local politics and the involvement of the citizenry. A municipal election was coming up and that is usually the moment when debate about such topics, if there is any, is at its peak. The City of Amsterdam had the reputation of governing without much responsiveness to the concerns of the citizens. The voters apathy towards local politics, and the low number of Amsterdammers that vote, was already an issue for which a longer running policy was developed with the goal to decrease the distance between politics and citizens (Brants 1996: 238-241). Part of the policy were interviews with City councilors scheduled on the local cable-tv network (Stadsgesprekken), consultation through teletext (Stadsberaad) and debates in the neighbourhoods between local politicians and citizens (Francissen: 22). The Digital City project as proposed by political-cultural center De Balie and supported by hackers-network Hacktic fitted neatly in this approach and received a 600,000 guilder grant for it from the City council and the Ministries of the Interior and Economic Affairs (Francissen: 22).

The timing in early 1994 was perfect. There were practically no internet service providers (ISPs) for individual consumers. The few internet users at the time had access through their work or university. Hacktic was the first provider in 1993, later renamed as Xs4all, a loose organisation of hackers. With the arrival of the first Dutch law on computer crime it became increasingly difficult to get access to the internet for them as hacking into the university computer became illegal. As a pragmatic solution, thanks to some cooperative friends and technical know-how, the Xs4all network was founded by Felipe Rodriquez and Rop Gonggrijp. Access to the internet through Xs4all was priced at 30 guilders plus telephone charges a month. For hackers or ex-students familiar with the internet this was value for money, but for occasional exploration of an unknown computer-network quite a threshold. There was practically no way to get acquainted with the internet for the general public besides illegally sneaking into a computerlab in certain university buildings. There were no internet cafés, friends or neighbours with a connection at home, no free ISPs or generous trial memberships. Xs4all supported the initiative for DDS as a way to let people get a taste of the internet, so they would possibly buy full internet access through an Xs4all

subscription later on. Xs4all and DDS were even located together in an old 19th century former shipping school building in Amsterdam. DDS also used the services from Xs4all for their own connection to the internet. Rodriguez and Gonggrijp sympathised and cooperated with DDS, especially Rodriguez was involved with the management of DDS, but chose to focus on Xs4all sometime in the course of 1995. When the DDS experiment was launched, the first public attention for the internet started. The introduction of DDS was accompanied by sufficient media-attention to generate a little hype amongst the 'innovators' and 'early adopters' and for everyone else some awareness evolved about the existence of an international public computer network. No practical use for the general public was clear at the time, the stress by the mass-media was on the special culture that existed in cyberspace and not much more. The local community cable television network did a live-broadcast combined with an on-screen IRC-chat during the symbolic opening of the City and most newspapers sent a reporter into the city by modem the following weeks. The legend goes that for weeks after the launch of DDS all modems were sold out in Amsterdam.

2.1 All inclusive

The design of the experiment implied a contribution to the social cohesion for Amsterdam in the best free-net tradition, by making the technology available for all inhabitants of Amsterdam. The reputation of the already existing free-nets in the US and Canada was used to make a convincing case with regards to the uniting potential of such a system. But the design of the city was more ambitious, even utopian. Explicit references to Amsterdam in the interface were avoided to encourage people to think freely about their city as they would like to see it, and not to create a virtual copy of the city. That is why it is called The Digital City and not for example the 'Amsterdam Community Network', analogous to the Seattle Community Network or the Public Electronic Network in Santa Monica and similar grassroots initiatives in the US. The design was more like a highly conceptual collaborative open-ended artwork stressing the virtuality and the digitality more than any free-net before or after. This is no surprise if you take the background of the founders in account: political-cultural center De Balie and hackers network Hacktic. While building The Digital City everyone would ideally learn how to improve the real city, not necessarily Amsterdam, but any city. This is an explanation for the universal, worldwide appeal of the concept of 'The Digital City' which has been often copied, to different degrees, nationally and even internationally.

The most important founder of DDS was Marleen Stikker, also one of the founders of Press Now, an organisation to provide support to independent media in former Yugoslavia since 1992. Press Now was housed by De Balie at the time, an organisation that hosts a number

of cultural and political organisations in the Netherlands and often functions as an agenda setting organisation. Stikker herself was not unfamiliar with technology projects like this because in the years before she was involved in projects in which art and technology were combined. Working for Press Now, the power of e-mail impressed her; without e-mail it was nearly impossible to communicate with people in that region. She then learned the other possibilities of the internet (USENET, IRC, Gopher, MUDs and MOOs, Telnet and free-nets) and decided to try to bring this to more people by making it into a project in which many people would have to be involved (Stikker in correspondence with author on 20 June 2001).

In a later stage of the experimental design the hackers network Hacktic joined. If there is any grassroots aspect to DDS, it is the roots it has in a hackers' cyberspace rather than the roots in the city of Amsterdam. Unlike the free-nets that were a pragmatic response to a demand for communication and information, DDS was first of all a concept of a whole virtual city that was to be coloured gradually along the way. Only after the concept was developed, the Amsterdam grassroots organisations were recruited to participate.

Although it may not be a 'real' grassroots initiative, it was not a topdown design either, like the one in Bologna that was "created partly as a response to a new Italian law on the need for transparency in public services" (Tsagarousianou, 1998: 6) or the Digital City of Partenay that was conceived and promoted centrally by the local administration (Melis, 1998).

The links with the Amsterdam civic scene were designed into it by inviting many local or Amsterdam based organisations with a national scope, to provide information to be included in the system (see appendix 1 for a list of organisations in DDS). Upon a first visit the sheer diversity and range of information offered was impressive for such an experimental setup.

Lovink describes how DDS could only have been invented in Amsterdam because of the pragmatic DIY media and technology culture that evolved from the eighties squatters' movement (Lovink, forthcoming). But this supportive environment alone does not make it into a grassroots initiative. There was not a use and need for it like the BBS with medical information that turned into the PEN free-net, it was more like the answer to a question that was going to be formulated afterwards.

The design of DDS was deliberately all inclusive, the small and poor organisations from the civic scene were not forgotten. By not copying the real city 1:1, a utopian, idealistic city could evolve because existing shortcomings in the real world could be corrected: In a digital

world a small organisation can appear big and become influential while a big organisation can shrink into a vulnerable alter ego on-line. In DDS the power-relations between the inhabitants, both individuals and organisations, were in theory put to the test all over again, which was new and exciting. The small weekly opinion magazine 'De Groene Amsterdammer' for example appeared in equal importance and size next to the archives of national daily newspaper 'NRC Handelsblad' in the newsstand in the Digital City as a sign for this potential.

The emphasis on the 'institutional' structure of the city shows the highly conceptual nature of the design. In order not to exclude social groups a representative institution for as many of them as possible were made present in the city: women, gay, antiracists, refugees, immigrants, human rights activists, children, inner city conservationists, artists, students, et cetera (appendix 1). Which organisations have been present in DDS from the start and which joined later is difficult to distinguish but what is clear is that the composition is somewhat skewed towards a progressive profile; gay, women and antifascist groups were included, while for example agricultural or religious organisations were absent. Illegal or criminal organisations remained invisible.

2.2 DDS as a third place

During the experimental stage the most important act of establishing DDS as a third place was to open its doors and to give access to it. At the time there was a two prong approach to this: for those who did not have a computer with modem at home there were public terminals set up in existing public places: in the town hall, the museum, the public library and the café in De Balie. These were all places with a public service character more than they qualify for third places, although De Balie might meet Oldenburg's criteria to some extent. In practice most terminals were out of order or stolen. For those who did have a computer with a modem but without connection to the internet, dial-in access was offered through a local telephone number. Twenty-four hours a day, from home or work, the first and second place, one could get access to DDS, without even leaving those places to go to the town hall, library, et cetera to wait in line for a free public terminal during opening hours. The lucky ones who already had access to the internet could be tele transported directly to The Digital City without waiting in line for a public terminal or dialing in to the DDS modems. At the time this was mostly the privilege for students and researchers because internet access at the time was restricted to the academic world, a few companies and the users of the afore mentioned internet service provider Xs4all.

Striking about DDS in the experimental stage is the similarity in design with an ordinary BBS, even its acronym sounded like a BBS. For the modem owners without internet

access at the time there was practically no other general interest destination in cyberspace. The BBSs then were not designed for the general public like DDS was with the information provided, but also with a large modembank and free accounts for everyone. When DDS opened, the already installed base of BBS users, in a country with a high percentage of home-computers and PCs, now had a new kind of BBS which would be open 24 hours a day for anonymous access. This DDS-BBS could not only accept one or two users at the same time, not even more than a dozen, but hundreds of users from the internet and about 20 through dial-in simultaneously.

In the definition of 'third place' we use, the assumption is that if it is not a first place (home) nor second place (work) it is a third place. With regards to the public terminals this might be true. The museum, the town hall and the café are all public places. The position of the DDS-visitor to the virtual city from home or work is already ambiguous. With your body in the first or second and the mind in the third place, where does that leave you? Do you enter a third place or is this more comparable to 'the world of letters'? A world of letters like the network of correspondents that carried the German intellectual debate in the 18th century, with philosophers dispersed all over the patchwork of little states that was later to become Germany.

2.3 Government information on-line

An important aspect of DDS was providing information for the community. To take the metaphor of the city further: if the buildings of the city were the presence of organisations from the real city, then the bricks the city was built with were the words and sentences of static information provided by these institutions, rather than the ephemeral interpersonal communication amongst the users. On the screen that would appear after logging in a list with names of buildings would appear rather than a crowd of users (figure 1).

This design was modeled after the American and Canadian free-nets by translating and modifying their Freeport software for the local context. (van der Haar 1995). Providing information was an important aspect for the free-nets and this was also present in the Freeport software. Where the gathering of information would be done by the users of the bulletin board, in DDS the information was actively gathered by someone responsible for this in the DDS organisation (van der Haar 1995). Much of the information would come from the local government since the main goal of the experiment was to bring the politicians closer to citizens. By means of what can be called a smart hack in the best of the old hackers' tradition the information of the City was made available in DDS. "Digital City's town hall provides access to the administrative information system of the local government (BISA), formerly exclusively reserved for municipal employees and politicians, and the

public information system (PIGA), previously solely reserved for municipal press officers.” (Brants 1996:242). For the City of Amsterdam this became an important feature of DDS considering it was presented as such to the City Council in July 1994 (van Meerten 1994).



figure 1. DDS 1.0

2.4 Democracy on-line

The functioning of democracy was one of the fundamental concerns for the experiment. In the wake of the 1994 elections the DDS was, for as far as the City of Amsterdam was concerned, designed as a democracy enhancing tool. On the main square in DDS, the first screen that appeared after signing in, option 9 was the election center “Verkiezingscentrum” (figure 1). The DDS provided the citizens with all the background information on topical issues to help citizens of the Digital City form their opinion. One was encouraged to discuss policy information with others and you could even contact your local representative by e-mail if you felt the need. In practice there was no response although DDS employees installed e-mail on the computers of civil servants and politicians. Discussion was to take place in any of the USENET newsgroups in the dds.* hierarchy, most of which were named after the different issues that were relevant for the municipal elections (see appendix 2). At the start there were only about 10 newsgroups, each moderated by a professional. There were no open discussions, even a discussion on DDS itself was not possible. This newsgroup was opened because discussion on DDS flooded other discussions, especially the one on technology, dds.technopolis.

The 53 DDS newsgroups known today can be divided in four categories: 17 discussions on politics with some overlap in the second category with 14 more or less Amsterdam specific discussions, 14 DDS-specific discussions and 8 general interest discussions like any regular on-line service would offer.

In the category Amsterdam we find: announcements, urban planning, the mayor, crime, drugs, the Docklands, art in the city, a car-free inner-city, the airport, high school students, the City Council, Amsterdam news and the local elections. Thirteen in total of which some can also be considered as discussions on national politics.

In the category politics there is: income policy, a debate set up by the Ministry for the Interior, consumption reduction, cryptography, culture, infocracy, budgets, health care, youth, art, the multicultural society, Greenpeace, the elderly, politics, technology, technopolis and the world news. Seventeen in total of which some also apply to Amsterdam.

In spite of the range of topics and platforms in the categories politics and Amsterdam, the discussion was taking place in the other two categories: the groups about DDS, especially the nonspecific group about all things DDS, and in the general interest groups, with most traffic in the women-only group where lively discussions on gender would take place between men and women. This newsgroup was opened after complaints about 'digital harassment'. The group eventually turned into a moderated group and then fell silent.

It is difficult to label any of these categories as more or less likely to carry popular discussions. The group about racism is by now legendary for the discussion that arose when one person announced the intention to vote for an extreme-right political party, while the rest of the groups with political topics remained silent. The general interest groups were moderately popular as can be expected while not all groups on DDS matters were, only the general group that concerned everyone because it dealt with the policy of DDS. The incident in the group on racism shows that the groups with topics that concerned everyone were most popular. The racism topic concerned everyone because they now had a sympathiser for an extreme-right political party amongst them, which made the issue acute.

Discussions in dds.dds were popular when the feeling that the DDS management might be listening was possible, but when it was clear this was not the case the group fell silent. Discussion would only increase when DDS employees would revive the group by regular attendance and supply information from 'behind the scenes'. This suggests that any of the other groups could have become popular if only it was made of a concern to the whole community, for example by a politician with expertise on the matter attending. In spite of repeated invitations no political figure joined the discussions in DDS.

3 Institutionalisation of DDS in 1995

After the ten week experiment it was certain that DDS should continue. The second phase then started in which DDS was to be institutionalised and was finding its position. During 1995 and 1996 the internet development in the Netherlands was unleashed and DDS had a comfortable head start, which lasted roughly until 1996 when competition from other internet initiatives was catching up.

The interest for DDS had been overwhelming with 10,000 inhabitants during the first three months (Beckers, 1998 : 5). The formalisation of the former experiment became the “Stichting DDS” on August 5 in 1994, four months after the experiment ended. This foundation was founded with statutes that contained a whole basket full of public good: public domain, access to internet, freedom of expression, transparency of and discussion on rules, laws and values, sponsorship for cultural projects, democracy, research and development, and economic development in the field of new services (see appendix 3).

Unfortunately, the institutionalisation proved to be the first move towards the decline of DDS in spite of the statutory idealistic goals. Because it was no longer an open-ended experiment with government funding, the daily operations shifted. The real goal of the organisation was a pragmatic survival first of all. The innovative reputation of DDS during the experimental weeks attracted talented employees which ensured that it was always one step ahead (Francissen: 18). The talent united by the DDS experiment was now being employed for contract work for clients in the public sector and the money earned with this work would pay for the costs of maintaining DDS as a free and open virtual city. This was a pragmatic solution but raised criticism inside the organisation from one of the employees, Michaël van Eeden. This new approach lead to a permanent schizophrenia with paid projects on the one hand which required full attention and the unpaid, loss-making DDS on the other hand, which was the *raison d'être* for DDS after all. Because the clients from the public sector brought in projects that were in line with the goals of the Stichting, the reputation of DDS for the outside world was secure. In 1995 a ‘handbook Digital Cities’ was written, not only to get some money from the government for this report, but also to help other Digital Cities with advice on how to function as a Digital City.

Meanwhile, the internet was becoming more popular. In September of that same year the public broadcasting organisation VPRO dedicated an evening long thematic television broadcast to the new on-line culture and also launched innovative internet experiments and one free dial-in access point. In 1995 the first big ISP was launched by the national telecom corporation KPN soon after the concept was pitched to some of the KPN executives by communication student Michiel Frackers at the occasion of a guest-lecture on

telecommunications policy at the University of Amsterdam. Planet Internet, as it was called, was marketed with the distribution of free CD-ROMs and a helpdesk to talk the struggling personal computer users at home through the setup problems. That same year the BBC launched their website which was supported with television broadcasts about 'the Net'. Late in 1995 and during 1996 quite a few organisations started to experiment with this new medium in the Netherlands, most important for the perception of the general public were some newspapers and the national government with their experimental websites. The internet slowly started to become potentially useful and widespread.

3.1 Popularity

Now the experiment was over, the goals of the organisation were stated clearly in the statutes of the foundation. With regards to the social cohesion we can read that the goal was to prevent a social divide between the information haves and the have-nots (for an excerpt from the statutes in Dutch, see appendix 3). This is also written in the chapter with goals of a Digital City in the handbook Digital Cities, listed after: improving the relation between citizen and politics, community-building and freedom of information (Schalken and Flint: 3.2.1). Access to computers and computer networks is prevalent, but the terminals in public places as a means to this end were now replaced by computer-literacy as the solution. DDS would then mostly function as the showcase to demonstrate the potential that people have to use this technology for their own ends, and to give them a first - educative - experience with it. The actual education is left to schools and other initiatives to do, like for example by "Technika 10 Amsterdam which organises technical courses for girls aged 10-13, given in schools and community centers by women who have been trained by Technika 10. The Girls Internet Club largely takes place around the Digital City with excursions to the rest of the Internet. DDS employees have supported the project." (Flint 1996). In an evaluation of DDS for the City Council in December 1994, Schalken writes about the experiences with a DDS-terminal in a home for the elderly: "Experiences in the Digital City, for example with elderly-home Flessenman, have taught us that just setting up a terminal will not suffice. Around such terminals social networks need to evolve in which the use of computers follow or complement the regular, non-digital activities." (Schalken and Tops 1995: 10).

It comes to no surprise that DDS at the time was not doing the actual fieldwork to educate, like free-nets would organise special computer literacy trainings in public libraries, many free-nets would have their roots in public libraries or other educational institutions. DDS needed all its resources to keep up with the huge and growing popularity. Whereas in 1994 there were 10,000 DDS users and 2,000 visits a day, in 1996 it had grown to 48,000 users and 10,000 visits a day (Beckers 1998: 33).

The profile of the typical DDS user at the time suggests that DDS attracted mostly the already computer-literate people, only 18.9% had no prior experience with computer networks (Schalken and Tops 1994). The research by Schalken and Tops demonstrates that the inhabitants of DDS had the characteristic profile of the information haves: young, male and educated, probably what marketers would call the 'innovators' or 'early adopters'. This crowd of information and communication addicts now found a platform in DDS where they could play. Where residents of Amsterdam would all have to queue to get information on the local policy or guidelines, the group of information-haves would now have a considerable advantage compared to the citizens without DDS-access. Not only in terms of access to information, but also communication and even mobilisation of action on a certain topic was theoretically easier, while the have-nots would more likely to be left behind off-line. Whether this DDS population at the time was inclined to cooperation and action remains to be seen. One movement that came out of DDS was the movement for Digital Citizen rights which claimed a right to for example cryptography. Besides a lot of debate in newsgroups there was little constructive action coming out of this group.

Unlike traditional free-nets that stressed the emancipation of individuals, the policy in the Handbook puts the focus on social movements or NGOs that should be accommodated by this digital platform to cooperate internationally. (Schalken and Flint: 3.1.2). The needs of individual inhabitants were more often put in quantitative terms (number of accounts, houses, dial-in connections, visits, et cetera) than in what they would actually do. Networking existing social movements was the tendency rather than evoking new arrangements of individuals by designing the technology to enable this.

3.2 Designing the public domain

In 1995 the interface for DDS changed in order to keep up with the latest innovations on the internet, DDS 3.0. The old Freeport software, called DDS 1.0 was not discarded but supplemented by a world wide web interface. DDS 2.0 had been in use from 15 October 1994 and was quickly replaced by 3.0 (Schalken and Tops 1994; van der Haar, 1995).

In the new interface called DDS 3.0, the metaphor of the city now took more prominence because DDS was visualised with icons for thematic 'squares' (for a list of squares see Appendix 4). which increased the interactivity, in the sense that the user would have a more intuitive user interface, that invited to associate freely while discovering the city. The text-interface was per definition more descriptive than the graphical representations of the navigation choices. It was a lesson in 'websurfing' taken to the extreme in which the use of the clickable images overruled the use of mere hypertext, as was the proposal for the DDS 2.0 concept. True to the artistic background of Stikker, who at this time began shifting

her commitment to other projects, the interface designers had ‘taken over the city’. The strong Dutch tradition in graphic design was now given a platform in cyberspace by DDS, which caused excitement for DDS in circles beyond the usual computer hobbyists and hackers scene.



figure 2, DDS 2.0

The experience for the users who had to use the interface was different than the sensational graphical interface for the conceptually interested one-time visitors. Interaction between inhabitants was more hidden than in the BBS era, not to say that it was reduced to sending e-mail to each other and reading your neighbour's homepage. The 'who is here' function that revealed who where the other users on-line was defunct, the USENET newsgroups were not integrated in the web-interface and chat was restricted to chat areas in an interface with high requirements on the user's hardware and client software configuration. Spontaneous one-to-one live chat with another inhabitant was not possible in DDS 3.0. In general, the web-interface was mainly a visual experience with interactivity reduced to pointing and clicking, while the text-interface required interaction with text and words with the system as well as other inhabitants.

The disadvantage of the graphical interface was that navigation through the city would slow down on most computers, but the advantage was that navigation itself was more intuitive. One could hop around the city freely and follow many more links at any point in any direction simply by clicking anywhere on the screen. This made the experience faster than navigation under the hierarchical menu-structure, where one could not skip steps like this. In DDS 1.0 one would have to go back and forth through the hierarchical labyrinth to follow a

preset trail to reach a destination. It was for example now possible to see the organisation of the information in the city at a glance on the map with an overview of the city (figure 3) and overcome the myopic view the 1.0 interface gave. Like the pictures of planet earth taken from space in the sixties that became an icon for environmental protection and other global issues, this interface allowed a DDS cyberspace self-consciousness. It gave a better sense of 'place' than the text-screens of DDS 1.0. The map of DDS is an internationally well known illustration to show the city and the powerful metaphor, it was the way to show DDS.

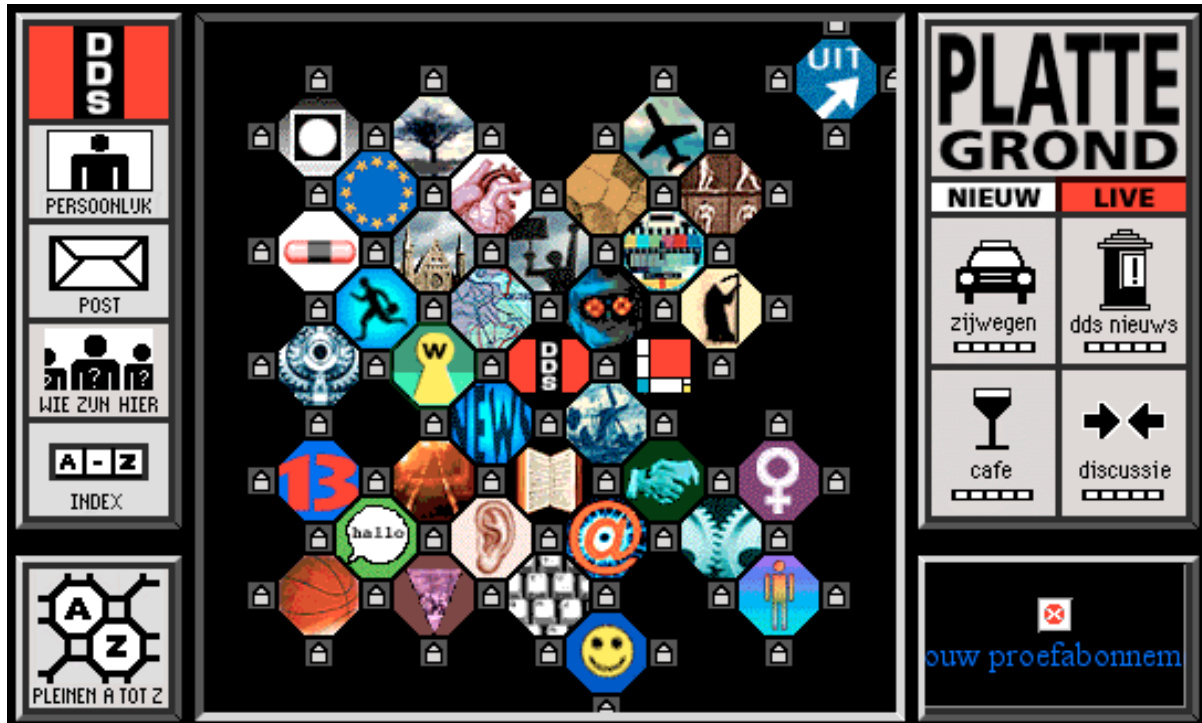


figure 3, DDS 3.0

This interface may have been avant-garde for the user-interface professionals or urban planners at the time, but it was certainly not 'low-profile' like a third place would be. At the same time a very low-profile 'underground' world in DDS called the Metro did exist. This was a text-based multi-user domain (MUD) where inhabitants of DDS could actually create their own environment using text. Unlike the DDS metaphor that was 'advertised' with the impressive graphical interface, there was nothing to see in the Metro. It promoted play, conversation and sociability because without 'talking' to the system with navigational commands, the screen would remain blank. Like the third places of Oldenburg it was not easy to get access at first, one would have to spend time to advance in the labyrinth. With some patience one of the regulars would approach the lone 'newbie' at the entrance and offer help as equals. There was not a single host with the responsibility for hospitality in the Metro because all the users of the Metro considered it as their 'home'. It was not owned by

anyone, it is a neutral ground where people would play, talk and create without any plan or structure in mind (for an impression of the Metro read appendix 5). Contrary to the rest of the 'spaces' in DDS, the space in the Metro was not 'designed'. The technology of the MUD was already developed and was installed and connected to DDS 1.0 by the system operator, Michaël van Eeden as an experiment. He had chosen a Metro as setting instead of a temple or other building because this would be a space with most freedom for play and expansion (de Jonge 2000). The already existing MUD technology gave the individual users the tools to give shape to this space themselves, which they immediately did at the time and are still doing today.

The DDS implementation of the www protocol demonstrated the potential of a graphical user interface to organise and navigate information to a wider audience, but it skipped hypertext in favour of icons. Without text the inhabitants were 'speechless' and had to use e-mail or create spaces in the underground or on their own homepages to communicate. Instead of a lively city with users congregating and communicating, the people were driven 'underground' and the urban planners of the interface structured the city into a grid of institutional information desks with beautiful facades.

3.3 No politics

One of the reasons the City of Amsterdam had originally financed the experiment was to give access to information stored in databases of local government, libraries, companies and other institutions (Schalken and Tops 1994: 2). However, an on-line survey held in DDS in April/May 1994 showed that the interest by DDS inhabitants for governmental policy information was limited. Only a few percent (Schalken and Tops: chapter 9) claimed to use political party info, council information or office district information a lot, while at least 50% said they never used it. The users did claim to be politically interested though; only around 20% had hardly or no interest in politics.

Also the information flow 'upwards' from citizens to politicians, be it in the shape of surveys, complaints, questions or ideas, was minimal. Considering the profile of the typical DDS user being white, male, young and educated, they were probably already informed through other media and did not need DDS for more or better information in this field.

Although there was a huge database with policy information available in DDS, the local representatives were not. More information from City Hall to the citizens in DDS seemed to have the same effect as more leaflets and television broadcasts on the political issues would have in the old media; less rather than more communication between politicians and citizens, the gap was widening or confirmed. Had there been a politician in DDS voicing his

or her opinions in public discussions it is very likely that a dialogue would have started.

Although during the experiment the hosting of as much information as possible was important for its success, the orientation of DDS towards information provision had changed in 1995. The new model of financing required institutions to hire the services of DDS to provide information, which is hardly an incentive to provide information. The City of Amsterdam, for example, now became officially a 'client' of DDS on a project basis. Instead of a pull from DDS to provide information in DDS there was now at best a push from paying clients to have their information in DDS because they paid for it. At this stage the nonpaying information providers were not yet expelled from the city, but DDS was not driven to stimulate these organisations to expand or update their information on-line anymore. It would just generate more work and no income. Instead, some organisations were even asked to pay for their presence.

This does not mean that this invalidates the 'information wants to be free' statement. Because of this hidden commercialisation of DDS, while before it was a kind of state funded much like the internet used to be, information was also free to leave the DDS for elsewhere on the internet, it was no longer confined to this pseudo BBS. Where the information used to be the bricks and mortar of DDS 1.0, the new city was now built with the pixels of the graphical interface which prevented the city from collapsing while the information itself was fleeing the city. In the next phase this would become more apparent. At this stage the city was rumbling before the eventual crumbling down that would precede the collapse.

3.4 No democracy

It was widely acknowledged that during the experimental phase DDS failed as a democracy enhancing tool to provide feedback for politics (Flint 1996:16), although it was the major reason for the involvement of the City of Amsterdam and the Ministry of the Interior. Merely releasing policy documents and providing a platform for discussion with a newsgroup was not sufficient to achieve this. Structurally stimulating discussions on the desired topics was by now not possible anymore because the experiment was finished. If a political discussion on off-line community matters was to be stimulated actively by DDS, it was only because it was paid to do so by a client of DDS, for example the City of Amsterdam.

It was also clear that the metaphor of the city only applied to the organisation of information in the interface. The distribution of power in DDS was not democratic, despite the high expectations, caused by a stress on the involvement of the inhabitants of the city, and the city metaphor that evoked an analogy with a democratically governed city for many. While

the citizens were debating the desirability of an elected management, the initiators were already dividing tasks among themselves and a group of volunteers. Who exactly had the power inside the organisation was obscured by the flat organisation in which everyone was allegedly equal. Inevitably there were informal power relations within the organisation that led to tensions among some of the volunteers. From 1995 onwards people were leaving the organisation because conflicts on the policy of DDS could not be resolved within this structure. For the users it was practically impossible to hold someone accountable for the performance of DDS.

In retrospect, Marleen Stikker, who withdrew from active involvement in DDS in favour of her new media research lab, “Stichting Oude en Nieuwe Media”, in 1995, said in an interview with Geert Lovink for Nettime that it is a pity that a democratic organisation of the project had not been a part of the original design for the experiment from the start. “As founder I was submerged with the responsibility for the continuation, the funding, the facilities et cetera. If DDS would not have to be self-reliant already after nine months there would have been more room for experiments and we might have dealt with it less spasmodic.” (Lovink 2001). Due to her background in the arts and her fondness of personal initiative she was not familiar with the vague, in itself politically correct, ambition of a democratic organisation of the city: “I believe in authorship and I saw DDS more like a cultural project enabling others to produce, rather than a social project. I felt little for suggesting democracy through elections while the users profile was not at all representative for society.”

During the phase of the institutionalisation the user initiated experimentation was restricted to requesting newsgroups, adding homepages and building in the Metro. Innovation though, was now one of the three business strategies for the foundation that was to provide income for the user facilities (Flint 1996). “The future organisation and form of financing will be geared towards a greater separation between the three main activities of the foundation: customers, innovation and community.” Although ‘innovation’ was separated from ‘community’ spontaneous user initiatives evolved only within the limited freedom that was given. Until a community spokesperson was employed in a later stage, many initiatives took place unnoticed by DDS management. None of these projects were collaborative projects to the extent that the Metro was one. The initiatives that now emerged were taking place on the homepages of the users or in newsgroups or mailinglists that were ‘out there’. The importance of DDS in this period was most of all that it was practically the only access to the internet in the country that had the lowest possible barriers to use. The internet technology with open DIY protocols like HTML, WWW, FTP and compatibility protocols like TCP/IP and DNS were the fundamentals for making many users into producers.

4 Competition from internet in 1996-2000

In the course of 1996 DDS lost its 'competitive edge' in relation to other, commercial internet initiatives. Both the organisation and the virtual city were not as innovative as they were in February 1994. The hackers that helped to set up DDS had already moved to other projects at this time.

After the launch of the 3.0 interface there was little innovation left, it deteriorated due to lack of maintenance rather than that it expanded much. The maintenance to keep a website up to date and attractive for visitors is a difficult and labour-intensive aspect which DDS was probably one of the first to find out. Individual webmasters on the internet at large or a good number of inhabitants of DDS succeeded in doing this by themselves for their web projects, but these were not connected to the public city space. In that sense DDS was a modern city in which DIY home-decorating and gardening was far more popular than voluntary community work for the public spaces.

Besides the decay in the interface, the need for DDS as an internet access provider also diminished. Several commercial internet service providers with the ambition to provide internet access for the general public started: Planet Internet and World Access in 1996 and Het Net in 1997. The arrival of Het Net, a KPN Telecom subsidiary, made nationwide dial-in access for a small monthly fee possible. For DDS this was the reason to formally stop helpdesk services with regards to internet access. On the helpdesk page everyone was redirected to commercial parties for internet access, the 1994 access remained functional but it did get any support or upgrades. The free ISPs that came on the market in 1999 attracted most of the new internet users on the market. DDS remained popular for a free (second) e-mail box and homepage but loyalty to the city was minimal.

The institutional presence in DDS was also crumbling down. DDS was no longer the exclusive internet hosting provider for the 'offices' in DDS. With the experience these professional information providers gained during the experimental phase and shortly after it, many organisations decided to open a website under their own domain. Most notably the local government that moved to the domain amsterdam.nl but also the national government that opened many domain names for particular ministries, themes and a central one for the umbrella site overheid.nl. This did not have an effect on their visual presence in the DDS interface though, the city did not 'shrink' in that sense. The link to their website would remain, although the user would be automatically redirected to another site. DDS was just another, yet special, interface with a link to content elsewhere. Only the smallest organisations that could not afford or did not need a professional internet hosting provider stayed in the free DDS, often with a modest webpage or 'house' just like any other inhabitant.

In short, the success of internet forced DDS, as a former national general interest BBS with a link to the international internet, to change their orientation fundamentally. Internet was not a destination for some DDS-citizens and a few hackers, it was now everywhere and everyone was hooking up to it. DDS became just another destination for everyone on the web rather than that it was a starting point. The metaphor interface was no longer covering all the content in the country as it once did and therefore only conceptually interesting. Internet access was provided for by the market and internet hosting was not exclusive anymore. DDS loyalty from the individuals depended on the free e-mail and homepage entirely.

4.1 Internet as a public or a commercial domain

Already in 1996 it became increasingly clear that commercial parties were going to provide most of the internet services DDS was providing: e-mail, webspace and access. DDS was a few years early as an appetiser for the early adopters, but now access to the internet was more or less universal for everyone with computer and modem. That goal of democratising the technology was achieved. What is then left are the intangible things in our culture that can not be formalised in a contract, the things that are not in the commercial domain; a kind of community work but with the smart use of this new technology as the social tool it was once designed for.

Characteristically the internet is not a commercial space, but a gift economy. People give away information for free as a social activity, without any conditions or prices, with the expectation that the favor will some day be returned. Unfortunately, there were entrepreneurs at this time with the intention to commercialise this gift economy. Their assumption was that if you give on the internet, you can one day take it back and convert the return gift into cash. The flaw in this design was that the gift-economy on the internet works best between individuals without commercial intentions.

DDS also found itself in a competitive commercial field but still with the one remaining distinguishing feature: the community. While the competitors had venture capital backing them, DDS was struggling to pump up the cross-subsidy between their commercial internet services and the free community services. The internet entrepreneurs intended to create communities on specialist consumer issues because communities generate content for free. Content that was given to other internet users in the old internet tradition of the gift-economy, in a way as a cigar presented from their own box. The gift economy on the internet continued as usual, with the slight difference that many people now used a commercial interface on some website for it. The entrepreneurs only offered a platform for it

on the world wide web but often added little extra extras. If they did, it remained proprietary. Along the way, many of these businesses came up with a concept used in the mass-media to convert the content and user-commitment they were 'given' into cash: the attention economy. The attention people would give to a 'community' was to be sold to advertisers just like the attention to television programs is sold to advertisers.

A clear distinction between commercial telecommunication services on the one hand and the community services could not be made during this stage. A community had become a valuable asset in the commercial world or the "threat of commercialisation of the internet" as the DDS coordinator Joost Flint said (Lovink, 1996). DDS stressed their noncommercial stand without advertising or unsolicited e-mail, a respect for privacy and freedom of speech while the service remained free for all, which many people appreciated in an internet service provider. The number of users still grew, while the community was rapidly falling apart. The interdependency and contact between the users was not facilitated, only the relation of dependency with the ethical noncommercial DDS was affirmed.

4.2 No 'DDS community'

What was left of the DDS as a community? In spite of the new interface, DDS carried fewer of the characteristics of a third place but grew at an exponential rate. Unlike many of the commercial websites it still was a more or less neutral noncommercial ground and access was now ensured with universal internet access in the country. But what really makes the third place are the people. The DDS became invisible behind the interface rather than brought to the foreground. Conversation took place one-on-one per e-mail (Beckers 1998: table 2; van den Besselaar 1998: table 2, 5.1) and the small crowd of regulars in the DDS newsgroups was disintegrating. The postings in a high-traffic group like dds.dds declined to nearly nothing in 1999 when the DDS newsserver started to malfunction and to break down completely in a later stage. The high profile interface was not as hospitable for conversation as the low-profile newsgroups were in the DDS 1.0 interface.

Inside DDS there were several spontaneous communities present with homepages or mailing lists, but they were quite detached from DDS, as opposed to the institutional organisations invited by DDS. They happened to have DDS in common as internet service provider and not much more.

The privileges to write in DDS were restricted to the employees of the organisation, the DDS inhabitants could only write on personal homepages and not alter or contribute much to the shared space, unlike the users in the Metro. One could leave a graffiti like comment on designated spaces and it was possible to open a 'front door', a tiny picture to invite

passersby to enter your home from one of the residential squares (figure 4). The door required maintenance because it was removed periodically to make the interface more dynamic. Inhabitants would have to browse the interface to keep an eye on their front door or perhaps find a better neighbourhood, and visitors would be surprised on a next visit to find things changed. In the beginning there was even scarcity in space for front doors but this was no reason to alter the interface to give space. Instead, it became possible to ‘squat’ existing houses that were not maintained for three months. Originally meant to create involvement with the interface, even though the individual freedom was reduced to 50x50 pixels, the effect of this rule was that people did not bother at all anymore and the residential squares increasingly resembled a ghost town.

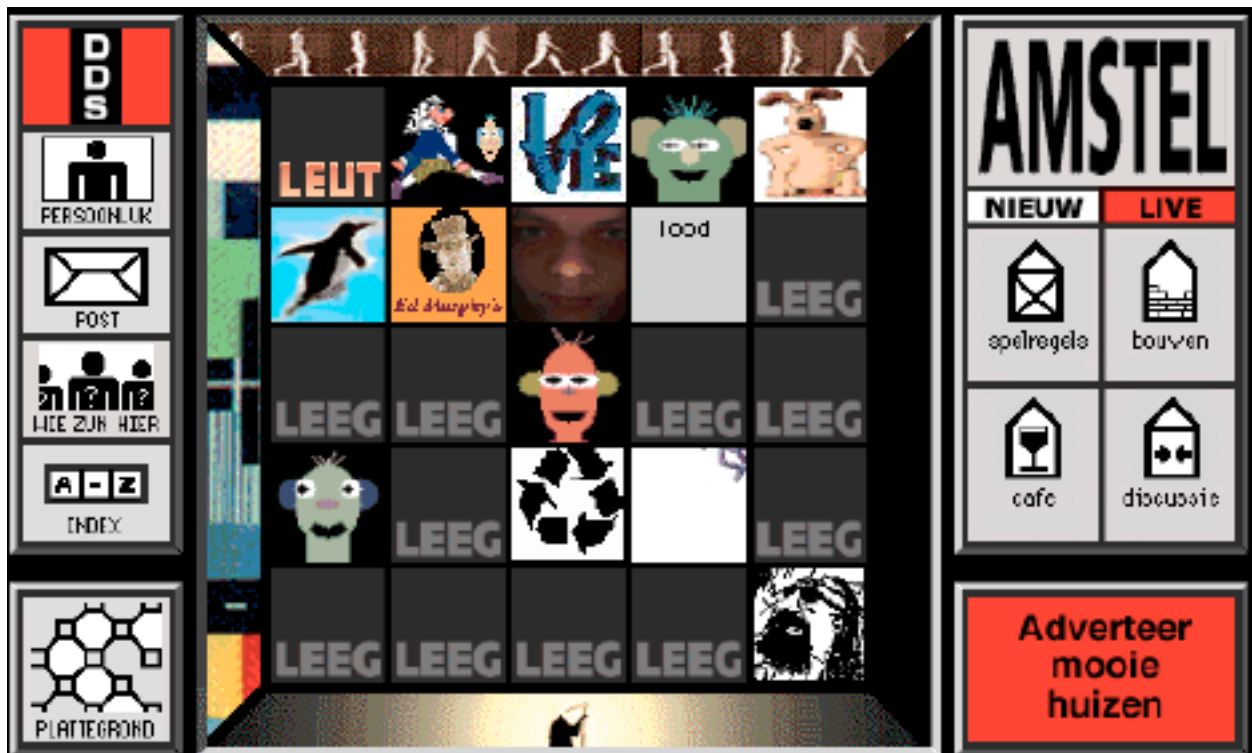


Figure 4. Residential square Amstel between Film square, Television square and Graveyard.

The Metro space was unlimited in all dimensions and only restricted by the imagination of the builders. From the outset of the Metro all creations were meant to last, for the entertainment of everyone and connected to the creations of everyone else. Homepage builders in the DDS 3.0 were connected only in a single way which required maintenance also.

There has been an attempt to lure DDS citizens into one space together with the ‘Digitale Huiskamer’ or Digital Living room project. On this webpage in DDS it was possible to

watch television together, there was even a remote control, and comment on it using a chatbox. Ironically, a mass-medium like television was needed to bring people together in DDS. It was used by the users who had the high bandwidth that it required until it broke down and was not repaired.

4.3 Information left DDS

The growing popularity of the internet made many organisations develop an internet strategy. It was now possible to address citizens and consumers directly without the need of an intermediary mass-medium to point the mass to a telephone-number, counter, response mailbox or event. Most existing organisations chose a brochure or catalogue presentation of information, instead of distributing information through intermediaries on the internet.

DDS had always presented itself as a central point people would consult for information, more like the position of a newspaper, public broadcaster or library rather than a telephone switchboard, with an appealing interface based on the city metaphor, although it should not be like such a medium. "Making connection between flows of data seems a purely technical issue. But behind the choice in data there certainly is a editorial policy hidden. (...) De Digitale Stad does not want to be just another newspaper... as yet another group broadcasting. The editorial decisions in such a computer system is yet undefined. As soon as the growth is out of this network the media-characteristic shall return." (Flint, 1996). According to Flint from DDS the digital city is 'not a medium' because the network lacks the 'media-characteristic' and therefore does not have an editorial board but only a management, while at the same time defining the editorial decisions in the computer system are the concern of DDS. This at least shows that leaving the editorial decisions to the users of the system was apparently no option, DDS was to be the editor of the computer system.

During the first year there was no experience or strategy in most organisations in this field of distributing information using the internet. At this stage some preferred to out source this to the hackers at DDS to join the front of new developments than to do nothing at all. With lessons learned from a presence in DDS, corporations then took this matter back in their own hands sooner or later.

The metaphor as an interface for organising information did not survive the competition with text based interfaces. Search-engines and directories became the most popular intermediaries on the web for finding information and the DDS interface was at best an attraction for a unique web-browsing experience. As the internet grew bigger, DDS did

never aspire to function as an interface for the information on the Dutch internet. The BBS culture with a sharp distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' DDS still continued in the interface, the goal was to keep all the Dutch information inside DDS or make it attractive to join this information space called DDS. There was now also a commercial reason for this, since DDS was now also a commercial internet hosting provider after all.

The Handbook Digital Cities is a good illustration for the DDS perspective at the time. The handbook is a quite prophetic document on how the internet is functioning today and how important it is for everyone to join this movement. The handbook shows local communities step by step how a national information structure using Digital Cities can be joined as a network of local interfaces to what the internet has to offer. But there is one major flaw in this handbook: it consistently says Digital City or Digital Cities where it should have said internet.

This 'Digital City centric thinking' is inherent to the Community Network movement ideology, which assumes that every community should have a free-net that will provide an organising principle for the locally relevant information, as it is recommended in the handbook. The National Public Telecomputing Network in the US was also organised as a national network of local franchises. Schuler stresses what a Community Network is not: "Community networks are not the ABC Nightly News. Community Networks are not kiosks containing canned information. Community Networks are not Lexis or other fee-based electronic databases or services. Community Networks are not Prodigy where censors carefully scrutinize each contribution. Community Networks are not businesses or guardianships. Community Networks are not "onramps" to the Internet nor are they the phone company. And finally, Community Networks are not home shopping networks or CyberSex services." (Schuler 1997)

A design with networks that are bound to physical communities ignores the gift economy of exchanging information on the internet, a network of individuals worldwide. By ignoring this, people are thrown back on a local community, or 'Gemeinschaft' in real life, that is supposed to be better in providing answers as the internet 'Gesellschaft'. A community that is monopolised by the Community Network. It might be good for the off-line Gemeinschaft, but a collective of individuals worldwide is much better in providing answers to whatever question. Strangely enough, most of the claims about Community Networks are especially true for the internet: it is unlike broadcasting, information is free, there is freedom of speech and it is in the public domain. The only difference with the Community Networks is that in theory there are no geographical restrictions on participation on the internet. Every Community Network serves a certain geographical community, every internet community serves in theory all internet users, although it can very well be about a geographical

community.

But where the orientation of the Community Networks is on the local communities, the orientation on DDS was on the 'local' community that was created on the internet, DDS. Instead of serving the internet better by providing a good directory of information on the Dutch internet, there was only the city metaphor as both means and end. A good counterexample of a volunteer Yahoo-like directory in the Netherlands is <http://www.startpagina.nl> that emerged in this period and was completely edited by volunteers. Every volunteer would become the editor of one page as a subdomain under the pagina.nl domain with a list of good references on a particular topic in a (hyper)text only interface.

In spite of all this, the Digital City concept from the handbook was copied by new Digital Cities all over the country and abroad, but with one important alteration. Few of these Digital Cities offered services for users from the local community, which reduced most of those initiatives to a webpage with information on a specific geographical area, much like any volunteer with a homepage would set it up without the handbook anyway. Recently more and more cities and villages are setting up a professional website with information supplied by the civil servants themselves, which nonprofit initiatives can hardly match with regards to the completeness on factual community information. An individually operated homepage on a local community will eventually focus on a specialist topic, close to the heart of the individual webmaster, to supplement or contradict the 'official' website.

4.4 No discussions

The discussions that were organised in DDS were discussions that were either initiated by DDS or by a 'client of DDS', like the City of Amsterdam. These discussions were usually moderated, guided and scheduled, related to a pragmatic outcome, rather than the discussions on values and norms that were set as the objective in the statutes of the foundation (appendix 3). The 'electronic town hall' optimism from the early nineties faded. The anarchistic, spontaneous USENET newsgroups were dropped in favour of discussions using hypertext (appendix 6) because the discussions in the newsgroups were not considered constructive. The existing representative democracy, with a political debate taking place through the existing mass-media channels and professional lobbying of issue-groups was the preferred design to which DDS seemed to subscribe and in which it positioned itself as an actor. The on-line debates were complementary to this with specialist or niche topics.

Individuals could have a discussion hosted by DDS on an e-mail list server if there were at

least five members for it. A few dozen of those mailing lists existed of which only a few were non-DDS topics, but this certainly was not a popular nor well known service. The emphasis on non-governmental organisations remained and no new network alliances or insights were created, in spite of the networking potential of DDS and the internet. The debate with and among these organisations was not taking place in DDS either. The power relations were not being established on-line in spite of the optimistic start. At best some mobilisation for social action was facilitated with electronic newsletters and web-brochures by some organisation that happened to be hosted by DDS.

Internally the say of the users in DDS did not matter, they could not really shape the technology they were using. On this Flint from DDS said: “DDS is now a foundation, but it is set up by de Balie and Hacktic which, like the City of Amsterdam, have invested in it. 99% of the users of such a free service appreciate it and do not contest the ownership of DDS by De Balie and Hacktic, who bought all that equipment and put so much energy to realise it. A small part thinks that they as users should have the last say. Should it not be possible to create a service that provides access to information for people, without sharing ownership with them? I read the newspaper, but do not contest the ownership of it. I go to the library, but do not feel owner of it. It is annoying if a small group contests your control over a service that is free. At the moment we like to manage it with a small group of people.” (Flint 1996: 20)

Once this was clear, and given the open structure of the internet, all the users that were not happy with the choices the management made were ‘voting with their feet’ and moved elsewhere on the internet or start an initiative themselves. The position of DDS as a free collaborative space was lost with this decision and the community of DDS users would swarm all over the net and join other on-line communities that better met their needs or were more adaptable.

5 Commercialisation in 2000

The movement towards the professionalisation of the DDS experiment, to ensure the survival of DDS, found its turning point in 2000. Because the government funding stopped after the first year and the potential benefactors were now labeled 'clients', the organisation was competing commercially with the internet services they were selling. The competition during this dot com-era was peaking with many young and small businesses joining the now profitable business of commercial internet-services. The Amsterdam New Media Association that was founded in 1999 for businesses working in the new media business had over two hundred members, DDS was one of them.

The management of DDS said it could not operate as freely as others because it was a foundation. It was difficult to attract capital for the huge investments that were inevitable to compete with the commercial alternatives at the time while there was at the time there was a lot of venture capital available. Without consultation of the inhabitants of DDS, the only remaining stake holders at that time, during the birthday celebration of DDS on 15 February 2000 the announcement was made that DDS was going to be transformed into a limited company. The foundation had set up a holding company in which the assets and debts of the organisation was put. The holding was sold to the foundation's manager Joost Flint and Chris Göbel. The audience fell silent with surprise and discussion in little groups ensued among puzzled DDS watchers.

The holding company DDS Ltd. consisted of four companies: DDS Venture Ltd., DDS Services Ltd., DDS Projects Ltd. and DDS City Ltd. DDS Venture was set up to keep the innovative reputation of DDS high. New and innovative projects that came out of the DDS were to be developed in this company to be brought to the market later on. DDS Services was the technical department of DDS where the web sites of the clients were hosted and maintained. DDS Projects is a company for the development and implementation of web projects. Finally, there was DDS City in which DDS was fitted in as some kind of public service.

As a solution to revive the city the management installed an editorial board which would bring 'content' into the city. Along the lines of many dot com business models, this would attract 'eyeballs' which could possibly one day be sold to advertisers. DDS had already begun to position itself more as broadcaster/publisher than it ever did by bringing four live radio and television broadcasts nonstop. One editor was employed to report on the goings on in the city in the publication 'Digitale Stedeling' (Digital Urbanite), an on-line publication that was until then written by volunteers.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to attract enough venture capital in this new configuration and parts of DDS were sold. In the fall of 2000 the one remaining editor for DDS City was fired. In DDS Venture there was one project called internetcollege.nl, a useful website with free study material for students. This was sold to Malmberg publishers for an unknown figure while it was acquired from Sjoerd Ruyg, the DDS citizen who set it up himself, for only 8000 guilders. He was fired in September 2000. DDS Projects is not yet sold but shrinking. DDS Services was sold as an internet hosting company to the British telecommunications corporation Energis for an unknown figure. The equipment has been moved from the DDS offices in July 2001.

At the end of 2000 it was not at all clear what the future of DDS would be, the future of DDS City was most uncertain. The management of DDS at the time kept the option open to pull the plug from DDS completely. Some action had to be taken because the servers on which DDS was running were sold to Energis and could not stay on-line for much longer. At 13 December 2000 I commented on this news on the website SmallZine.nl with the suggestion to take over the city as inhabitants if pulling the plug was the alternative. This received support from some DDS and former DDS employees as they were concerned about the future of the project in which they put much of their underpaid time and volunteer work. The result was an association with the name “vereniging in oprichting DDS” (association in constitution DDS) which eventually became “vereniging Open Domein” (association Open Domain) with about 80 paying members and a few hundred interested bystanders. The board of the association, of which I was elected as president, tried to reach an agreement with the company on the public use of and service by DDS. Meanwhile, the management of DDS did two surveys under the population. About 15,000 of the estimated 70,000 active users responded. Based upon these results, the management chose to continue as an ISP, with an expected 5,000 to 10,000 users which would at least cover the costs. The DDS inhabitants were asked to pay or otherwise they would lose their account on October 1. At the end of 2001 DDS exists as an ISP in collaboration with telecommunications company Scarlet as a subcontractor for the internet services. Besides the management and a few employees for DDS Projects, little remains of DDS. None of the initial objectives remain.

5.1 Sponsored by DDS

In the final phase DDS had lost the relation with any community in real life and functioned as a special interest group by itself. Most of the civic groups invited by DDS had a website under their own control and individuals were left to themselves on their homepages. DDS initiatives to empower or mobilise people to help improve their situation in society by connecting them with their community as the original objective was, changed in favour of

political actions by DDS itself.

Throughout the history of DDS there have been issues in which it defended a firm position on issues where the real world clashed with cyberspace: the right to cryptography, no censorship by internet providers and the protection of privacy against the authorities or commercial interests. These are all legitimate issues that are widely acknowledged as such and received a fair amount of interest from all parties involved, including the commercial competition of DDS.

The single terrain in which DDS made a difference in relation to ordinary ISPs was the social responsibility and commitment to the community and how it could be best served with this technology. This was now abandoned. Any project in this field could now only apply for sponsorship by DDS while 'running a business' was the single goal of the organisation.

The faith in the input of the users themselves was low. Flint of DDS introduced the metaphor of the 'grasshopper' to describe his experience with the DDS citizens. They would come to a place where resources are for free and abuse it to the maximum. This refers to the proverbial teenager that saturates the servers with duplicating copyrighted material on a large scale. This might have been true for the publication technology www, the examples of the Metro, USENET and mailing lists have shown that the individual users do create original material once collaborative tools are provided. The input of each single individual may be insignificant, a community on-line can be very productive once the communication and interdependency increases. DDS on the other hand, isolated the users from each other more than it turned them into a community. The loyalty to DDS was based on loyalty to the values DDS claimed to represent, more than a loyalty to a DDS community with interdependent and communicating members.

The outcome of this policy was that there would be a contractual commitment to social noncommercial goals by sponsoring precisely defined projects. Haphazard, random, spontaneous cooperation between individuals was not facilitated by tools nor resources.

5.2 Brand-name

The negotiations between the inhabitants association and the company focussed on the use of the name DDS. The interest of the association was to secure the domain name dds.nl that united the websites of individuals and organisations and the e-mail addresses at dds.nl. If e-mail or web addresses are changed, the already weak social networks or communities that do exist on the internet can fall apart. Many users had grown attached to their old address @dds.nl and did not want to give it up.

Open Domein wanted to bring back the early days of DDS and convert this known and old space into a new experiment that would be a collaborative space run by the same volunteers who embody the city in order to finally give meaning to the concept of DDS. A concept a few hundred people were still loyal to. What the exact manifestation of this would eventually be was not determined in advance, the only important requirement would be the use of the domain name dds.nl and access to the database with DDS-accounts.

From the perspective of DDS City Ltd the development of DDS as a free and open public space was a possibility as a sponsored DDS project. It recognised the marketing value of such a project in the spirit of DDS and that it would benefit the company. There were only a few professional restrictions. Because the domain name was of crucial importance to the operations of DDS City as ISP and to attract clients for DDS Projects it could therefore not be freely operated by a relatively small group of unstructured, unorganised volunteers. No free services could be offered that might in any way compete with the products offered by DDS City Ltd. The metaphor and structure of squares should be made an integral part of the interface the volunteers wanted to create for the public sphere in the city. The interface of DDS should be respected in this, because the ownership was in the hands of DDS Holding Ltd.

The work that was to be carried out by the volunteers, which would then also automatically fall under the ownership of DDS Ltd. Because DDS was the only self-acclaimed public and open place on the internet in the Netherlands, the volunteers should be prepared to give their work to the company if they were serious about their commitment to this cause, just like many employees have done throughout the history of DDS was the reasoning. In other words, the volunteers would become employees or interns for DDS without the benefits of being an employee, but with their freedom limited by DDS management.

The demands made by Open Domein were too high to be taken seriously from the perspective of Flint. The domain name was the property of the company and belonged to no one else. The public domain goals were nice and important but “I can not run my business with it” and should not interfere with the business interests of DDS either. For Open Domein there was no ground to continue a cooperation with DDS and negotiations ended because the association was ‘unrealistic’.

5.3 Communities moved out

The dismantling or privatisation of DDS contests ‘the information wants to be free’ hypothesis because information did disappear when the DDS interface was replaced by a

DDS City Ltd. as ISP interface. There was an action to mirror all the houses before they would go off-line but this was only a small portion of the whole of DDS. The information in DDS had become a sort of cultural heritage for the internet community in the Netherlands; if DDS would go off-line, a lot of websites and e-mail addresses would go down with it. The mass-mediated call for making DDS into an internet-monument appealed to a larger number of people than the ambition to make DDS into a playground for new experiments in virtual community building. If experiments could not take place in DDS, they could move elsewhere.

The demise of DDS also showed that some information is more free than other information. Search engines and the current domain name system favour information that is linked to and has a lasting domain name. If information changes location often, hyperlinks to it work less good, which also has an effect on the position in search-engines. Visits coming from referrals on other sites also decrease. The best insurance to keep information on the web is to be the owner of both the domain name and the information.

The ownership of the information is the most important for the dissemination of it in the digital networked age. Information that is 'alive' continues to circulate but 'dead' information that is the product of and owned by organisations is more likely to die. The information that individuals produce contributes to their curriculum vitae and their identity, information by organisations does not and is more likely to put the organisation in trouble. At best the information 'out there' in the public domain is subject to deletion and needs guardianship if organisations pull their hands off it.

Two examples of communities that survived DDS are De Metro and the association of the DDS-inhabitants. The Metro moved their system to their own domain name www.demetro.nl and the former DDS-fans have grouped together on a mailing list on their own domain where also homepages can find shelter.

What is remarkable about both groups is that they are limited in size, a few hundred at best. The postings made in the DDS newsgroups in the early years were also done by around 60 regulars per newsgroup. This contrasts sharply with the 70,000 DDS accountholders who are unknown to each other and can hardly be considered a community in any sense. The irony lies in the fact that the one organisation in the country that has always claimed to be the community organisation hosted only a few communities that have grouped together around an idea, the concept DDS, while the organisation had little hand in it. DDS hosted organisations and acted as a broadcaster with mass-medium characteristics.

5.4 Democracy revisited

The movement to rescue DDS aspired to be self-governing from the very start, to correct what had fundamentally gone wrong in DDS. At first, when only support had to be mobilised, this worked very well and much of the work was done electronically. If it could have remained an on-line initiative built on conversation, this could have worked out, but the off-line world required a legal entity to deal with, otherwise no agreements could be made. As an interface to the real world an association was constituted with a board that was to negotiate with DDS.

As long as those involved were voluntary cooperating individuals the workload was spread and the discussion was constructive, comparable with a community like De Metro. Once a board was elected initiatives were monopolised by the board. In attendance of the outcome of the negotiations no new initiatives emerged. Because the information on the negotiations were not public, the initiative ended up completely in the hands of the board and the members were by definition reacting to rather than taking initiatives. Information was to remain confidential which inevitably made the supporters passive and suspicious.

After the negotiations with DDS ended, the board resigned because the goal of taking over or cooperating with DDS was not realised. A new board was elected, that was to built up a new organisation which was, except for the ideals, not oriented on DDS. A breach of confidence arose in this board after some weeks and an internal board conflict was made public to the members. Because the board as a whole was responsible and the individual members disagreed with individual solitary actions, eventually the entire board resigned.

With a lack of board candidates for a new board the association was about to be terminated, when at the last moment enough candidates for a minimal board stood up and were elected. This board explicitly chose to serve only as an interface on the background with the off-line world and let initiatives grow from the ground up. Unlike the previous board, it would not interfere with the daily operations of the system that was left up to volunteers. Meanwhile, the free internet hosting and e-mail service that the previous board set up was functional and being used. It did not in any way bring the users of the service into contact with each other. Like the services in DDS it was available for free.

All three boards have had difficulties with organising an on-line organisation, much like DDS has had. Neither of the two organisations have succeeded in organising on-line communities as effectively as is already happening spontaneously, as we can see in USENET newsgroups, mailinglists, MUDs like De Metro and even on webpages. Both organisations have retreated to the position of facilitator of bandwidth and connectivity: DDS

as a commercial ISP and the association as a nonprofit free ISP run by volunteers. 'Designing' a virtual city has failed; a topdown architecture for a 'place' on the internet is impossible. Communities on the internet surface and recombine incessantly and can at best be facilitated technically.

6 Conclusion

With all of the above taken into consideration, we can evaluate the community network ideals in relation to the four themes in chapter 1: social cohesion, third place, freedom of information and democracy. The themes remained relevant since 1994 in different ways, although the optimistic expectations from the early nineties with regards to the benefits of community networks can now be compared to the praxis in the peculiar DDS case.

What has come out of the ruins of DDS is the demonstration that the open design of the internet has been the best way to ensure the goals of the community networking movement. A grand design for the use of information and communication technologies on a local level in a BBS system has not been viable. It is not needed either, because the users of the internet are already inclined to use the internet in a way in line with the four themes. The main condition is that there are no limitations set on individual initiatives by some design for the structure it is supposed to become a part of. The only thing that can be a hindrance to that end are organisations that do not use the open protocols the internet is built on accordingly, but strive to direct the use of this technology into some desired way with interfaces that are not continuously open for improvement and adaptation by the users themselves.

- I. Social cohesion. The community network movement's deterministic view on how the technology would develop if their model would not be adopted has underestimated the strength of the internet. The internet is a social medium that can facilitate all the goals the community network had with regard to community. The major social cohesion issues off-line remain off-line. The access to the internet is the major issue that remains. Education and community building on-line are irrelevant for social cohesion in off-line communities if access to the network is problematic. Education off-line and public terminals have also been the first aspects of the experiment that did not survive. But also the on-line communities have not benefitted per se from DDS. Once the on-line community is institutionalised in an real organisation, the members of the community become passive and the community falls apart. Two characteristics of a community in the *Gemeinschaft* meaning of the word is that the members are interdependent and in communication with each other. The interdependency, good for the gift economy, was not stimulated by DDS. It positioned itself more as an ISP at first and increasingly as broadcaster/publisher for the DDS mass only to end as ISP at the end of the line. The communication between DDS inhabitants declined when the new interface did not support newsgroups, chat and other communication. To some extent this was better in the BBS era, when the command line interface gave the sensation that people shared

the system with each other. The Metro community inside DDS has always been the shining counter example in this respect and still exists.

- II. Third places. Besides the underestimated possibilities for virtual *Gemeinschafts*, the internet also facilitates a contractual *Gesellschaft* with specialist communities that gather under the terms of some shared topic of interest. In relation to 'virtual *Gemeinschafts*', the characteristics Oldenburg gives for public places are also valid online although the position of interface design is precarious in this. The DDS interface did not give the feeling to feel at home, on neutral ground, but in DDS the inhabitant was mostly a user of the system rather than under equals. DDS did not function as a leveler when the interface took over and it positioned itself more as publisher or broadcaster than a second virtual home. The city planning and organising did not work in favour of the social dynamics that can be observed in the Metro environment where conversation and play is the main activity.
- III. Freedom of information. At first DDS was actively involved in freeing information by collecting information from many organisations and building a connection to the information database of the City. Information from civic groups and the local government were made available on-line. But once the internet became widely available 'this information wanted to be free' and it left the city. DDS as an information intermediary was no longer needed and organisations opened their own websites. The driving force behind the circulation and duplication of information on the other hand, are individuals rather than organisations. Individuals use information as currency of their gift economy on the internet; it is in their self interest to spread information. Organisations have more to lose than to gain by spreading information for free. The dotcom era demonstrated that it is difficult to convert the gifts of information to the internet community back into cash. DDS tried to convert the DDS community into a profitable business model and failed. Only when individuals go on-line there is an exchange of money when connection fees are paid to the internet service provider. Once on-line the gift economy prevails.
- IV. Democracy. The funding for the DDS experiment was based on the potential to enhance democracy in Amsterdam by closing the gap between politics and citizens. Politicians remained focussed on their work in politics, rather than that they used this medium to establish a direct line of communication with citizens. Citizens in DDS were more interested in the governance of DDS itself, at least as long as they had the feeling that they could have any influence. Once this option was shut off the interest from the DDS-citizens for their city went dormant, only to be awoken by the news that it might be possible to take control over the city years later. This

demonstrates that it is possible to involve citizens on-line in the democratic process, as long as it has an effect on the outcome. The association Open Domein that made the transition from an on-line community to an organisation in real life demonstrated that the link between the on-line world and the off-line world is difficult to formalise in a democratic way that fits the internet customs. The City of Amsterdam was the first organisation to retreat from such an experiment although it never really reached the stage of making a link between the on-line citizenry and democracy. DDS soon decided not to experiment with democracy in its organisation while much discussion on this was taking place at first. The association Open Domein was the last to take the position of an organisation at a distance that sponsors the internet. The Metro has developed a way of organising itself on-line without ever materialising in an off-line organisation. The link with reality are the individuals who participate on-line, but a link between the individuals on-line and democracy off-line remains problematic.

In order to achieve a functioning on-line Gemeinschaft on the internet, there are two conditions that have proven to be important in the DDS case: the community should not be approached as a mass and the protocols and design that enable the communication should be a part of the open and adaptable internet standards and customs.

Even the commercial dotcom initiatives have not been able to destroy the principles of freedom of information and configurations based on the gift-economy on which the internet is founded. It is inherently open and adapted to cater the needs of individuals whether they are community focussed or not. The position of most organisations in the history of the internet was that of internet service provider. At first this was restricted to the academic institutes which were later joined by commercial telecommunications corporations. Both DDS and the successor, Open Domein, ended up in positions very similar to those of respectively the telecommunication corporations and government funded research institutes the internet was reliant on from the start. Universal local internet access made the position of DDS as provider for the rest of us superfluous.

6.1 Community versus 'group'

DDS has adopted a one-to-many sender-receiver model of communication instead of a many-to-many, it aimed to be a broadcaster/publisher before it retreated into a telecommunications company as ISP. When it institutionalised and effectively shut out the community in the design of the communication space, it ignored the self-governing capacity of individuals grouped together on the internet. The second attempt to institutionalise a community, as an association, was also problematic. The group that did not formalise itself but remained a collection of interdependent and communicating individuals, the Metro, was

successful survived everything.

The size of the community matters and is perhaps better described as a group than a community. The word group resembles more the loose collections of individuals that are permanently regrouping together on the internet as if it is a third place, rather than the 'community' that seeks to confine its members by a sharp distinction between inside and outside. On the internet the interdependency is voluntary and optional, in a community favours are restricted to the members of the community.

In the many-to-many communication pattern we find on the internet, the only remaining constants are the individuals that are the 'many', the internet as a huge swarm of individuals and not much more. One-to-many communication assumes a single organisation as 'one' that is by definition less capable of communicating personally to 'many' as 'many' other individuals are in small groups.

6.2 public protocols and private interfaces

A special characteristic of the internet is that for the large part the tools on it are made by the users of it: USENET, IRC, e-mail, www, et cetera were born as an answer to the communication needs of the designers of it. Unlike the tools in the industrial age that are designed by other people than those who are going to use it. The digital technology in a way goes back to the pre-modern age when the tools are made by the same people who are going to use them. DDS did not support this and took the position of an organisation from the industrial age; it made the interface and supplied services to a mass of people on which little to no alterations were possible, only the designers could change something assumed that the DDS management would have no objections.

The choice for an interface to the information and communication on the internet is then best left to the end-user. It can choose to make an interface, to use an interface made by others or buy an interface. What is most important in this, is that the underlying protocols and standards do not end up in the hands of a single company or organisation, but that it should belong to the internet community at large. Only then the internet can live up to the ideal of a truly open network.

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Last visit: 25 September 2001.

Appendix 1: organisations present in DDS in 2000

Alphabetic index

Achter de Regenboog (Stichting)
Activiteiten van Homosexuele Y-landers
Ada Project, the
AdamNet
ADO -Anti Discriminatie Overleg
Advocare
Afriesj Reizen
Against Racism
Agora Europa, stichting
Allochtoon Video Circuit
Amnesty International Amsterdam
Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst
Amsterdams Uit Buro
Amsterdamse Telematica Raad
Anne Frank Stichting
Anti-discriminatie bureaus
ANP Nieuws
APCP
Aric
Artis Zoo Amsterdam
Arti et Amicitiae
Ashraf Reizen
Asielzoekerscentrum Drachten
Automatisering Gids
Averroes Stichting
AZC Burgh Haamstede
Babushka (Stichting)
Balie, de
Baobab Reizen
Bazar Latino
Bedrijven Centrum voor Vrouwen
Belastingdienst
Belle van Zuylen Instituut
Bibliotheken
Binnenlandse Zaken
BIZA
Bouwproject IJburg
Buiten Beelden Binnen Amsterdam
Bureau Coördinatie Emancipatie
Channels, the
Chinese Jongeren Organisatie
City Net, Amsterdam
CJO
CJP Café
COC
Commissariaat voor de Media
Congoned
Consortium, Het

Verzamelgebouw Cyberchess club

DB.NL
DDS kantoor
DDS Centraal
De Jonge Onderzoekers
D H K de DigitaleHuiskamer
DELA
Depo, Y-tech
Desk.nl
Dictionary of Computing
Digitaal Werknet Nederland
Digital Galleries and Museum
Digitale Advocaat, de
Digitale Regio Limburg
Digitale Regio Friesland
Digitale Regio Twente
Digitale Regio Utrecht
Digitale School, de
Digitale Stad Delft
Digitale Stad Den Haag
Digitale Stad Eindhoven
Digitale Stad Groningen
Digitale Stad Leiden & Omstreken
Discussiegroepen in DDS
Documentaire Kanaal
Documentary Filmsite
Dodenkunst
Doodgewoon
Droomtheater

Echo
Economische Zaken
Emancipatie Adviesraad
Emancipatie Bureau Amsterdam
Envirolink Network, the
St. Europa Centrum
Europees Parlement
Europese Beweging Nederland
Europese Commissie Bureau Nederland
Europese Commissie
Euro Summit Amsterdam
EZ-winkel

Fanspot
Fietspad langs de digitale snelweg
Filmfestival Rotterdam
Filmhuis XI
Filmkrant
Forum

Gay Games
Gaylinc
Gehandicapten Software Centrum
Golfnet
Greenpeace
Groen Links
Groene Amsterdammer, de

Haikupad naar Doolhof, van
Park
Helpdesk
Hivnet
Hivos
Hoeksteen, De
Hogescholen in Nederland
Homodok

Inburgernet
ING bank Amstelveen
Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek
Intakt beveiliging
Internet bloemen service
Internet College
Internet kaart Nederland
Internet Movie Database
Internet Vrouwen
ISMS
ISIS

Jansen & Janssen
JobNews
Jobs
Justitie Vreemdelingenbeleid

Kidalert
Kidlink
Kidon Media Link
Kinderen voor Vrede
KIT -Soeterijn theater
Kindertelefoon, de
Koning Aap reizen
SKVA / Kunstweb
KWW-TV

Laatste nieuws in DDS
DDS Centraal
Laurens Jansz. Coster
LBR
Le Weblouvre
Lesbisch Archief Amsterdam
Libelle

Loesje
Lokale Nieuwsdienst Amsterdam
Loket Parlement
LOKV

Maasstad Radio
Meer Kleur in de media
Mediaage.net
Memento Mori
Melkweg
ME-Net
Metro
Midlink Magazine
Migranten Televisie Amsterdam
Milieu Loket
Milieuboek, boekhandel
Mileudefensie, vereniging
Mokum TV
Moluks historisch museum sedjarah maluku
Mona Lisa Club
Monte Video
Montessori Scholengemeenschap Amsterdam
Mooi Zo, Goed Zo
Monster Board, The
Museum of the city of New York
Muziek Netwerk Nederland

Nationaal Brandweer Documentatie Centrum
Nationaal Chipcard Platform, stichting
Nederlands Filmmuseum
Nederlands Migratie Instituut
Nederlands Pop Instituut
Netherlands FAQ
Netview
Next 5 Minutes
Nine Planets, the
NIZW
No boundaries
Noord Holland Nu
NOS Teletekst
Noticias
Nova College
NPS
Nucleaire Geneeskunde (Ziekenhuis Rijnstate)

OC&W
Onderwijsprojecten
Onze Taal
Open Space
Openbare Bibliotheek Amsterdam
Opportunity in Bedrijf

Pandora, stichting
 Peace Project
 Perdu, stichting
 Pezzi
 PH31
 Platform Binnenstad Autovrij
 Platform Telewerken
 Politeia
 Polytechnisch Tijdschrift
 Pop Against Racism
 Power Radio
 Press Now

 Quality Software

 RADAR
 Radio Netherlands
 RAPID
 Rathenau instituut
 Ravijn, uitgever
 Referendum website
 Refworld
 Rembrandthuis, Het
 Rockropolis
 Roze Zaterdag 1997

 Salto Omroep Amsterdam
 Saparua
 Schaakkampioenschappen, Nederlandse
 Scheltema Holkema Vermeulen
 Scouting
 Serviceburo Europa (REGR.NL)
 SFA-Financieel Adviseurs
 Shoestring Company, The
 SIB Amsterdam
 Sigra
 SIPRI
 Sitara, Sticing
 SKVA / Kunstweb
 SNP Natuurreizen
 Stadhuis Amsterdam
 Startnet Noord
 Steim
 STEW
 Stichting Agora Europa
 Stichting Omroep Allochten (STOA)
 Studieverenigingen
 Studio Brandend Zand Light Design
 Summum Reizen
 Sur Vive-It
 Surya radio

 Tamara
 Technika 10
 Teylers Museum
 Theater concert online
 Thika Travel
 Transparant Amsterdam
 Triple X
 TTP/Automatiseringsdiensten
 Tweehek - jeugdvakantiekampen

 Uitvaart.nl
 Ultimate Band List, the
 Ultimate Gay Links
 United Nations
 Universiteiten in Nederland

 VADA, Voor Allochtonen Door Allochtonen
 Vakantie Kampen (Stichting)
 Verloren Zaak, de
 Virtual Tourist II, the
 VNC Travel
 Vocaal Ensemble Tiercero
 Vormgevings Instituut
 VPRO
 Vrienden van het Vondelpark
 Vrouwenhuis
 Vrouwen Belangen
 VWS

 Werkgroep arbeid v.d. Clientenbond in de GGZ
 Westerdok Bewonersvereniging
 Wijkcentrum Havens Oost
 Witfiets
 WK Voetbal 1998
 Wouw

 Xantippe
 XS4ALL

 Yahoo
 Y-tech

 ZAMI
 ZAO
 Zorg en hoop
 Zoo Artis Amsterdam
 Zuinigheid met Stijl (Stichting)
 Zwaluwen, de

Appendix 2: USENET newsgroups in DDS

| | newsgroup name | in English | category |
|----|--|------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | dds.agenda <i>Aankondigingen van evenementen</i> | agenda | Amsterdam |
| 2 | dds.banenmarkt <i>werk gezocht en aangeboden</i> | jobs | general |
| 3 | dds.basisinkomen * <i>moderated by Joost Flint, DDS during experimental weeks</i> | income policy | politics |
| 4 | dds.biza.debat | domestic affairs | politics |
| 5 | dds.bouwen | building | Amsterdam |
| 6 | dds.bouwen.breken * <i>moderated by Steven Lenos during experimental weeks</i> | building.demolishing | Amsterdam |
| 7 | dds.burgemeester | mayor | Amsterdam |
| 8 | dds.commercieel <i>commerciële aankondigingen</i> | commercial | general |
| 9 | dds.consuminder | reduce consumption | politics |
| 10 | dds.contacten | contacts | general |
| 11 | dds.criminaliteit | crime | Amsterdam |
| 12 | dds.crypt | cryptography | politics |
| 13 | dds.cultuur | culture | politics |
| 14 | dds.dds <i>Over de digitale stad</i> | dds | dds |
| 15 | dds.ddskrant | newspaper | dds |
| 16 | dds.debat.infocratie | infocracy | politics |
| 17 | dds.divers <i>Diverse onderwerpen in De Digitale Stad</i> | miscellaneous | dds |
| 18 | dds.drugsbeleid | drugs policy | Amsterdam |
| 19 | dds.enquete | survey | dds |
| 20 | dds.femail <i>Discussie voor, door en over vrouwen en emancipatiezaken</i> | female | general |
| 21 | dds.femail.mod <i>een gemodereerde nieuwsgroep voor zaken die vrouwen aangaan. Dezenieuwsgroep is gelieerd aan het vrouwenhuis, en het vrouwenplein</i> | female moderated | general |
| 22 | dds.fictie | fiction | general |
| 23 | dds.geldstromen | budgets | politics |
| 24 | dds.gezondheidszorg | health care | politics |
| 25 | dds.help <i>als je ergens niet uit komt</i> | help | dds |
| 26 | dds.hoorspel | audio drama | dds |
| 27 | dds.huizen.bouwers <i>over een huis bouwen in DDS</i> | homepages 'houses' | dds |
| 28 | dds.ij-oever | river IJ-bank | Amsterdam |
| 29 | dds.jongeren | youth | politics |
| 30 | dds.kidcafe | kidcafe | dds |
| 31 | dds.kiosk | kiosk | dds |
| 32 | dds.kunst | art | politics |
| 33 | dds.kunstenstad | art-city | Amsterdam |
| 34 | dds.markt <i>Markt van vraag en aanbod nederlandstalig</i> | market | general |
| 35 | dds.metro.bouwers | metro builders (a MUD) | dds |

| | | | |
|----|--|----------------------------|-----------|
| 36 | dds.metro.forum | metro forum | dds |
| 37 | dds.metro.gridcity | metro gridcity | dds |
| 38 | dds.metro.bouwers | metro builders | dds |
| 39 | dds.multicult * | multi-cultural | politics |
| | <i>over multiculturele samenleving, racisme en aanverwante zaken</i> | | |
| | <i>moderated by the Anne Frank foundation during experimental weeks</i> | | |
| 40 | dds.org.greenpeace | organisation Greenpeace | politics |
| 41 | dds.ouderen | elderly | politics |
| 42 | dds.pb-autovrij | platform innercity carfree | Amsterdam |
| 43 | dds.poezie | poetry | general |
| 44 | dds.politiek | politics | politics |
| 45 | dds.schiphol * | Schiphol (airport) | Amsterdam |
| | <i>moderated by Wijnand Duyvendak, Milieudefensie during experimental weeks</i> | | |
| 46 | dds.scholieren | high school students | Amsterdam |
| 47 | dds.stadsbestuur | city council | Amsterdam |
| 48 | dds.stadsnieuws | city news | Amsterdam |
| | <i>Nieuwsgroep over de stad Amsterdam</i> | | |
| 49 | dds.technologie | technology | politics |
| 50 | dds.technopolis * | technopolis | politics |
| | <i>oude nieuwsgroep van dds waarin men filosofeert over techniek en samenleving,</i> | | |
| | <i>moderated by Marianne vd Boomen during experimental weeks</i> | | |
| 51 | dds.test | test | dds |
| | <i>Test hier hoe je iets kunt schrijven of lezen in een discussiegroep</i> | | |
| 52 | dds.verkiezingen | elections | Amsterdam |
| 53 | dds.wereldnieuws | worldnews | politics |

| | |
|-----------|----|
| DDS | 14 |
| Amsterdam | 14 |
| Politics | 17 |
| general | 8 |

*= confirmed present from the start of DDS

Appendix 3: statutes of the DDS foundation

17 Jun 2001 154547 bewoners

DDS: beleidslijnen en doelstellingen

De Digitale Stad was een stichting van 5 augustus 1994 tot 15 februari 2000. Hieronder volgt een uittreksel uit de statuten van de Stichting DDS.

Artikel 2:

1. De stichting heeft te doel:

- het, ten behoeve van een ieder (doen) ontwikkelen en onderhouden van elektronische communicatiefaciliteiten (telematica) en het stimuleren van kennis over en het gebruik van deze faciliteiten;
- het initiëren en stimuleren van het publieke debat tussen burgers onderling en tussen burgers en bestuur in elektronische discussieplatforms;
- het langs elektronische weg, voor burgers gratis of tegen kostprijs, toegankelijk maken van de overheid en overheidsinformatie, (zowel bestuurlijke informatie als publieksinformatie, van zowel gemeentelijke, landelijke als Europese overheid en van internationale organen waarin Nederland participeert);
- het stimuleren van het debat over normen en waarden, rechten en plichten van burgers, overheid en andere partijen op het `elektronische wegennet` en het waar nodig behartigen van belangen van burgers in deze;
- het begeleiden en ondersteunen van maatschappelijke en sociale groeperingen bij participatie in telematicaprojecten en bij het elektronisch aanbieden van hun informatie;
- het plaats bieden aan en (netwerk)verbanden leggen tussen diverse telematica-projecten en dienstenaanbieders, ook in internationaal verband;
- het onderhouden en uitbouwen van contacten met internationale civiele netwerken; en voorts al hetgeen met een en ander rechtstreeks of zijdelings verband houdt of daartoe bevorderlijk kan zijn, alles in de ruimste zin van het woord.

2. De stichting tracht haar doel onder meer te verwezenlijken door:

- het opzetten en/of doen opzetten van één of meer `digitale steden` en het creëren of doen creëren van netwerktoegang tot deze faciliteiten;
- het verrichten en/of doen verrichten van experimenten en onderzoek en het tot ontwikkeling brengen van succesvolle innovaties (research en development);
- het ontwikkelen van een gebruikersvriendelijke ontsluiting van informatiediensten;
- het organiseren van debatten, congressen, het geven van lezingen, het verzorgen van scholing en gastdocentschappen;
- het adviseren van organisaties bij de ontwikkeling van civiele informatiediensten
- het verwerven en aanbieden van nieuws/informatie en het verzorgen en/of uitgeven van (elektronische)

publicaties en producties;

- het aanbieden van faciliteiten, het verhuren van apparatuur, het werven en verstrekken van fondsen en andere middelen;
- het deelnemen in, het samenwerken met, het zich op enigerlei wijze interesseren bij andere instellingen en rechtspersonen.

In goed Nederlands betekent dit zoveel als:

Publiek domein

De elektronische snelweg is een nieuw communicatiekanaal met belangrijke sociale, economische, politieke en culturele aspecten. Het is van vitaal belang dat een ieder die dat wil volwaardig kan deelnemen aan deze elektronische samenleving. Stichting De Digitale Stad vervult als private organisatie taken in het publieke domein:

Toegang

Het is van belang dat een ieder toegang heeft tot Internet. In dit kader biedt DDS:

- een gratis inbelvoorziening
- beleid gericht op achterstandsgroepen
- ondersteuning en educatie van gebruikers

Vrijheid van expressie

In de publieke ruimte vinden we vrijheid van expressie en de pluriformiteit van ideeën. Deze vrijheden maken onderdeel uit van onze cultuur en democratie. In dit kader biedt DDS aan alle burgers:

- de mogelijkheid tot het zelf aanbieden van informatie
- de mogelijkheid tot communicatie zowel privé als openbaar

Regelgeving

In de nieuwe publieke ruimte dienen deze vrijheden ook beschermd te worden en dienen burgerrechten en plichten opnieuw gedefinieerd te worden. In dit kader houdt DDS zich onder meer bezig met:

- machtsconcentraties, monopolie- en kartelvorming op de elektronische snelweg
- wet- en regelgeving
- normen en waarden
- privacybescherming

Culturele organisaties

Niet alleen burgers maar ook culturele organisaties dienen over de mogelijkheid te beschikken in de nieuwe publieke ruimte aanwezig te zijn en deze mee te ontwikkelen. DDS biedt in dit kader:

- sponsoring van cultuur middels een platform voor experimenten
- participatie in projecten

Democratie

De nieuwe publieke ruimte en de technische mogelijkheden van het Internet bieden ook nieuwe mogelijkheden om democratische processen te versterken. DDS werkt in dit kader aan ondermeer:

- de transparantie van het bestuur
- participatie van burgers

Kennisontwikkeling en overdracht:

De Digitale Stad levert een bijdrage aan de ontwikkeling van het wereldwijde Internet door zelf aan innovatie te doen. De Digitale Stad vertaalt bovendien nieuwe technische mogelijkheden in nieuwe manieren om informatie te ontsluiten en aan gebruikers te presenteren. De Digitale Stad zorgt in dit kader ook voor kennisoverdracht aan burgers, projectpartners, diensten aanbieders, maatschappelijke organisaties en andere digitale steden in Nederland en Europa.

Economische ontwikkeling:

Globalisering en automatisering zetten werkgelegenheid en daarmee de sociale samenhang in de samenleving onder druk. De Nederlandse samenleving zal in toenemende mate moeten zoeken naar nieuwe kansen en nieuwe diensten. De elektronische snelweg biedt dergelijke nieuwe mogelijkheden. De Digitale Stad is een platform voor iedereen om deze te verkennen.

Appendix 5: logfile of a visit to De Metro on 26 June 2001

afkortingen: IRL=in real life, k= okay, mieg=Michaël van Eeden, oprichter Metro, opper=opperbouwvakker, B=bouwvakker

```
[localhost:~] rrr% telnet dds.dds.nl
Trying 194.109.20.21...
Connected to dds.dds.nl.
Escape character is '^]'.
```

UNIX(r) System V Release 4.0 (fatima) PnP

*** DE DIGITALE STAD ***

Typ hierna je loginnaam en wachtwoord in, of typ 'gast' als je die nog niet hebt!

```
login: rrr
Password:
Last login: Thu May 24 15:50:18 on pts/9
```

```

                                De Digitale Stad (p1 of 5)
*** Alle pleinen in De Digitale Stad ****
*** Metroplein ***
* Boekenplein          * BVE-plein

+ Cafe
+ Magazine
+ Discussiegroepen
+ Zijwegen
*
=> Lijst met alle pleinen
=> Huizenwijken rond dit plein
```

lHelp | Post |eKaart |rIndex | Persoonlijk | Wie zijn hier | Overige functies

Pijltjestoetsen: Omhoog, Omlaag = verplaatsen. Rechts = volg; Links = terug.

```
TinyFugue version 3.5 alpha 10
Copyright (C) 1993, 1994, 1995 Ken Keys (hawkeye@tcp.com)
Type `help copyright' for more information.
Regexp package is Copyright (c) 1986 by University of Toronto.
Type `help', `/help topics', or `/help intro' for help.
```

```
% Loading commands from /usr/local/lib/tf-lib/stdlib.tf.
% Loading commands from /usr/local/lib/tf-lib/macros.tf.
% "More" paging enabled. Use TAB to scroll.
% Loading commands from /usr/local/lib/tf-lib/space_page.tf.
---- World metro ----
Momentje, je kunt zo aan een korte introductie beginnen...
*** Nieuw ***
```

Welkom in De Digitale Metro!
(1.8.0r5-2K8(nis,fup,ansi,dnscache,dhbf,limit))

| Bij technische problemen kun je mailen naar: metro@dds.nl |
| Vragen over bouwen en programmeren kun je sturen aan: metrohelp@dds.nl |

----- Meetingpoint van het Centraal Station

Er is een [trap] die naar beneden naar de hal van het metrostation gaat.
Je ziet hier ook een [b]ouwkeet staan. Erop staat: "ALLEEN VOOR BOUWVAKKERS".
Bij de ingang van de metro zie je de [h]elpdesk en de informatie[balie].
In de hal is een [kiosk] waar je actueel Metro-nieuws kan vinden.
Je kan vanaf hier ook naar het [S]tationsplein, de [haven] en de [trein]en.
Je kunt de metro verlaten door de uitgang naar het [plein].

Je ziet een bord met informatie voor nieuwe reizigers ('lees bord') en een NowMOO bloem hier.
% Laatste keer in de Metro Di 26 Jun 2001 13:54:01 vanaf dds.dds.nl
Je hebt de nieuwe Metro-Gids nog niet gelezen. Typ 'gids' om hem te zien.
% Er staan nog 21 ongelezen berichten op 'Het Prikbord'. Typ: PB A of PB HELP.
Wil je een korte introductie tot de metro doorlopen? [Geef ja of nee]
n
OK, dan niet! Tik 'intro' als je van gedachten verandert en het toch eens wilt proberen.
s
Je loopt door de hoofduitgang van het Centraal Station.

----- Stationsplein

Je staat op het plein voor het Centraal Station.

west => [t]ram- en busstation
noord => [s]tation.
oost => [P]rins Hendrikkade
zuid => [D]amrak

Je ziet Een dakloze, een GELE DEUR en een magische skippybal hier.
Een dakloze zegt, "Koop de daklozenkrant! Dan helpt u een dakloze uit de brand!"
d

----- Damrak

Je staat in een grote drukke straat. Er lopen hier en daar wat zwervers te zoeken in de vuilnisbakken.
Langs de straat zie je een paar winkels. Een van die winkels heeft de naam 'het feature magazijn' [1].
Verder kun je spelletjes spelen op in het metro-fun-cafe [2].
Wil je iets weten over een bepaald onderwerp, probeer dan eens een kenner te vinden in het Gilden
Hoofdkwartier [3].
Je kan vanaf hier naar het [S]tationsplein en de [D]am.
Je ziet EEN RODE DEUR, Klaas de zwerver en Piet de zwerver hier.
Jildou zwaait vanuit de verte naar je!
Klaas de zwerver zou ook wel patat bij de Vlaamse patatboer willen kopen...
2

----- Het Metro Fun Cafe

Je kijkt om je heen en je ziet allemaal mensen die met veel plezier spelletjes zitten te spelen. In
tegenstelling tot in de meeste cafe's zijn hier alle spellen wel compleet. Af en toe hoor je uit de kelder

iemand 'schaak!' of om de hoek iemand 'laatste kaart!' roepen. Ook moet je niet vreemd opkijken als er een dobbelsteen richting je schoenen rolt. De tijd vliegt hier gewoon voorbij, maar je hebt geluk: het cafe is dag en nacht geopend.

Voor je ligt de [v]ier-op-en-rij-kamer, met daarnaast de [3D] vier-op-een-rij kamer.

Ergens verderop ligt de [g]algenkamer.

Heb je zin in een quiz, speel dan mee met [t]roviant.

Als je de trap oploopt, kom je bij het scrabble [c]entrum.

Om de hoek kan je een spelletje [p]esten spelen.

In de kelder zit men lekker rustig te [s]chaken.

Op de zolder doet men een spelletje [r]eversi.

Aan de bar kan je rustig een spelletje [A]balone spelen.

Op de grote tafel wordt [W]ie-is-de-dader gespeeld.

De [u]itgang leidt terug naar het peintje van Whaley. De [z]ijuitgang komt uit op het Damrak.

r

Je ziet Nieuw Metro Kwartet (speel kwartet), Russisch Roulette en gieter hier.

Er kan weer een nieuw spel Metro-Kwartet! beginnen. Tik 'speel kwartet' om mee te doen.

* Jildou juicht, "open domein komt kijken!"

Reversi

Hier zou je reversi kunnen spelen...

Voor meer informatie kun je typen: 'help here' en 'spelregels'.

Als je het een stom spelletje vindt, probeer dan eens de [u]itgang naar het Metro Fun Cafe.

Momenteel spelen tegen elkaar:

furlila tegen Orkysoft

xwing tegen ghost007

Orkysoft tegen kotulek

Atrox_Ultor tegen Isabella

Isabella tegen PizzA

Isabella tegen Jildou

Recyclable #36895 tegen Isabella

Jasper tegen Isabella

Jildou tegen Nimf

morrissy tegen sTaMgAsT

xwing tegen ogion

Momenteel hebben de volgende mensen iemand uitgedaagd:

Recyclable #30841: dEIsvOIEntiBUs

furlila: Riker

Recyclable #36727: sjoekie

ghost007: kotulek

Isabella: Fero

ogion: kotulek

ogion: Jelle

Isabella: Serra

ogion: Abeltje

morrissy: aDSYs

morrissy: Abeltje

morrissy: TOEKAN

Jildou: Abeltje

ogion: baka

Je ziet Gino en Friso hier.
Gino kijkt verward om zich heen.
Friso kijkt verward om zich heen.
Gino rent achter haar baasje aan.
Friso rent achter zijn baasje aan.

u

Het Metro Fun Cafe

Je kijkt om je heen en je ziet allemaal mensen die met veel plezier spelletjes zitten te spelen. In tegenstelling tot in de meeste cafe's zijn hier alle spellen wel compleet. Af en toe hoor je uit de kelder iemand 'schaak!' of om de hoek iemand 'laatste kaart!' roepen. Ook moet je niet vreemd opkijken als er een dobbelsteen richting je schoenen rolt. De tijd vliegt hier gewoon voorbij, maar je hebt geluk: het cafe is dag en nacht geopend.

Voor je ligt de [v]ier-op-en-rij-kamer, met daarnaast de [3D] vier-op-een-rij kamer.
Ergens verderop ligt de [g]algenkamer.
Heb je zin in een quiz, speel dan mee met [t]roviant.
Als je de trap oploopt, kom je bij het scrabble [c]entrum.
Om de hoek kan je een spelletje [p]esten spelen.
In de kelder zit men lekker rustig te [s]chaken.
Op de zolder doet men een spelletje [r]evers.
Aan de bar kan je rustig een spelletje [A]balone spelen.
Op de grote tafel wordt [W]ie-is-de-dader gespeeld.
De [u]itgang leidt terug naar het peintje van Whaley. De [z]ijuitgang komt uit op het Damrak.

Je ziet Nieuw Metro Kwartet (speel kwartet), Russisch Roulette en gieter hier.

z

Damrak

Je staat in een grote drukke straat. Er lopen hier en daar wat zwervers te zoeken in de vuilnisbakken. Langs de straat zie je een paar winkels. Een van die winkels heeft de naam 'het feature magazijn' [1]. Verder kun je spelletjes spelen op in het metro-fun-cafe [2]. Wil je iets weten over een bepaald onderwerp, probeer dan eens een kenner te vinden in het Gilden Hoofdkwartier [3].
Je kan vanaf hier naar het [S]tationsplein en de [D]am.
Je ziet EEN RODE DEUR, Klaas de zwerver en Piet de zwerver hier.
Klaas de zwerver huult, "Ik heb het koud (snif snif)"
kijk rode deur

Je doet de deur open en stapt naar binnen, dan wordt alles wazig...

darkheart of the wood

Hoge bomen omringen je als je om je heen kijkt, je bevindt je in het hart van het woud, het mos voelt lekker zacht aan en nodigt uit om op te gaan liggen.
De zonnestralen die tussen de bomen door glinsteren geven de bloemen een mooie vurige glans. De rust hier is onbeschrijfelijk.

je ziet hier een grote boom staan.

je ziet hier een richtingaanwijzer.

duidelijke richtingen zijn (n,w,e,s).

Jildou is ineens wat duidelijker herkenbaar in dat vlekje dat aldoor al op de vloer lag.

Jildou zegt, "Hoi rrr!"

zeg hoi jildou

Je zegt, "hoi jildou"

Jildou denkt, "nu al verdwaald?..."

Jildou gniffelt, ""

zeg eigenlijk wel

Je zegt, "eigenlijk wel"

kijk jildou

Je kijkt naar Jildou.

Je ziet een heel klein meisje. Ze is zo klein dat je haar bijna niet ziet...

Ze heeft een tatoeage met de tekst 'MIEG RULEZ!'

Ze heeft een tatoeage met de tekst 'WIM DEUR RULEZ!'

morrissy heeft haar verrast met een reuze-echte vriend, zonder makken, met veel geld en extra loveabilities.

Ze wordt continu geboot, wat haar eigen schuld is.

Ze heeft blozende wangen door de zoen van Supergrover

Jildou is heerlijk geknuffeld door Supergrover en voelt zich nu een stuk beter.

Ze heeft een enorme bos okere chrysanten van ocin gekregen

Ze ruikt heerlijk naar de geur van bloemen en heeft een rustige vredige uitstraling.

Ze is wakker en ziet er helder uit.

Heeft bij zich:

knapsak (#1978) dobbelsteen (#22564)

Mysterieus Boekje (#1133)

Jildou vraagt, "wat zoek je?"

zeg ik zie dat je mieg kent?

Je zegt, "ik zie dat je mieg kent?"

Mantis komt aanrennen.

Jildou grinnikt, "wie kent Mieg niet..."

Mantis grinnikt, "hoi..."

Jildou legt uit, "Mieg is een legende"

zeg hoi mantis

Je zegt, "hoi mantis"

De zon straalt hoog aan de hemel

zeg komt mieg hier nog wel eens?

Je zegt, "komt mieg hier nog wel eens?"

Mantis geeft Jildou een stevige hand.

Mantis kijkt naar je.

Jildou denkt, "nee... tijdje geleden 1 keer voor het benoemen van een nieuwe opper..."

zeg is het druk in de metro tegenwoordig?

Je zegt, "is het druk in de metro tegenwoordig?"

Jildou geeft Mantis een stevige hand.

Mantis denkt, "druk..."

Mantis denkt, "neeee..."

Jildou knikt, "gemiddeld 30 mensen"

"toch gezellig..."

Je zegt, "toch gezellig..."

Mantis denkt, "vanochtend waren we met z'n 3en..."

Jildou knikt, "zeker weten!!"

"jullie waren daarbij?"

Je zegt, "jullie waren daarbij?"

Mantis gilt als een klein meisje met paardestaartjes, "!"

Jildou vraagt, "waarbij?"

kijk mantis

Lief van buiten, gevaarlijk van binnen!

Naam uitleg:

Mantis= een bidsprinkhaan, vrouwtje bijt na de paring de kop van het mannetje d'r af

Judith= bijbels figuur. Toen het joodse volk onderbelegering was, ging ze naar het kamp van de vijand, verleidde de hoofdmans en hakte zijn hoofd eraf

Kom eens bij me op bezoek, ik woon op de boslaan nummer 6

Ze is wakker en ziet er helder uit.

Heeft bij zich:

tiddle (#26871) Judi (#5192) ed (#24434)

Mantis denkt, "waarbij..."

" s morgens vroeg

Je zegt, " s morgens vroeg"

Mantis knikt, "ja ikke wel"

Jildou grinnikt, "ik niet..."

Mantis grinnikt, "ik ben een echte dihard..."

Mantis glimlacht.

"dus de metro staat de hele dag op je scherm?"

Je zegt, "dus de metro staat de hele dag op je scherm?"

Jildou glimlacht, "ik ben meestal ingelogd vanaf uurtje of 10 tot 12 uur snachts..."

Jildou knikt, "bij mij wel"

Je zegt, "is er al een nieuwe plek voor de metro nu jullie uit DDS gegoooid worden?"

Mantis grinnikt, "je zal de r maar niet goed kunnen uitspreken met jouw naam..."

Mantis lacht.

Jildou denkt, "ja..."

Mantis denkt, "gelukkig wel ja..."

"ReindeR Rustema wordt dan einde ustema?"

Je zegt, "ReindeR Rustema wordt dan einde ustema?"

Jildou suggereert,

"<http://boards.eesite.com/board.cgi?boardset=nus&boardid=viiodds&thread=8&spec=4196273>"

Mantis lacht IRL, "Hahahahaahahahahaa !"

"ik zal even kijken

Je zegt, "ik zal even kijken"

Mantis vraagt, "hoest eigenlijk jildou??"

Jildou denkt, "goed hoor..."

Jildou denkt, "lekker warm hier..."

Mantis denkt, "hier ook al..."

Jildou vraagt, "maar ik spreek jou toch nooit mantis ;)"

Mantis denkt, "nee"

"ok, gelezen

Je zegt, "ok, gelezen"

Jildou gniffelt, ""
Mantis denkt, "noooooit..."
Jildou vraagt aan rrr, "wat denk je ervan?"
"klinkt goed, snelle actie"
Je zegt, "klinkt goed, snelle actie"
"ik vraag me alleen af waar het geld vandaan gaat komen"
Je zegt, "ik vraag me alleen af waar het geld vandaan gaat komen"
Jildou denkt, "ik moet het nog zien... maar het komt voorlopig vast wel goed..."
Mantis denkt, "vastwel..."
Jildou denkt, "ik denk een inzamelingsactie onder metro'ers:)"
Mantis fluistert, "poek heeft het gezegd"
Mantis denkt, "dus..."
Jildou denkt, "en ach, dieoppers hebben allemaal goedbetaalde IT banen volgens mij :)"
"jullie niet? ;-)"
Je zegt, "jullie niet? ;-)"
Mantis grinnikt, "heb je dimi wel eens gezien..."
Mantis denkt, "nee ikke niet..."
Mantis denkt, "ik ben arme student..."
Jildou grinnikt, "ach, die is toch schaker..die verdienen ook wel..."
Mantis grinnikt, "..."
"hoeveel metro-ers zijn er eigenlijk?"
Je zegt, "hoeveel metro-ers zijn er eigenlijk?"
Jildou lacht, "let op"
Mantis denkt, "ikke niet weten jij?..."

Jildou sjort haar laptop op schoot en duikt een spreadsheet in...
Kort daarop hoor je haar printer zoemen, en rollen de statistieken van de MOO eruit:

| **** | De METRO heeft nu: | **** | Mnl: | Vrl: | ?: | Totaal: |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|----|---------|
| Wizards | : | 11 | 3 | | | 14 |
| Hulpvaardige Bouwvakkers | : | 19 | 2 | | | 21 |
| Bouwvakkers | : | 404 | 208 | | | 612 |
| Bezoekers | : | 72 | 48 | 626 | | 746 |

Dat zijn dus totaal: 1393 METRO'ers! Waarvan 506 mannetjes en 261 vrouwtjes; en van hen vertonen 516 players enige activiteit. (dwz. Ze zijn ouder dan 3 maanden, en zijn minder dan een maand geleden voor het laatst ingelogged geweest...)

Inmiddels hebben 518 van hen een eigen huis en 109 spelers wonen bij iemand anders in een van de 3580 ruimtes in de Metro, die met in totaal 5052 in- en uitgangen aan elkaar verbonden zijn.

Van de huisbezitters zijn er weer: 158 aangesloten op het grote stratenplan van de Metro.

Van al deze mensen zijn er al 40 in het Metro-huwelijk getreden, hebben zich er: 161 aangesloten bij een gilde en hebben er: 363 spelers bij elkaar: 4,387 titles!

En al deze 1393 Metro'ers zijn bijelkaar: 786,033 dagen oud!

De metro zelf is inmiddels: 2611 dagen oud. (De leeftijd van #2 Mieg), en neemt in totaal 34,034,383 bytes aan ruimte in op de Harddisks van de DDS.

De lag bedraagt op dit moment: 0

De hele Metro is gebouwd op: 259 'core objecten' en een totaal van: 31935 geldige objecten.

En tot slot: Deze statistieken computer is alweer 833 maal geraadpleegd.

Mantis denkt, "toemaar..."

Jildou grinnikt, "stoer he..."

Mantis denkt, "veel meer mannen als vrouwen hier..."

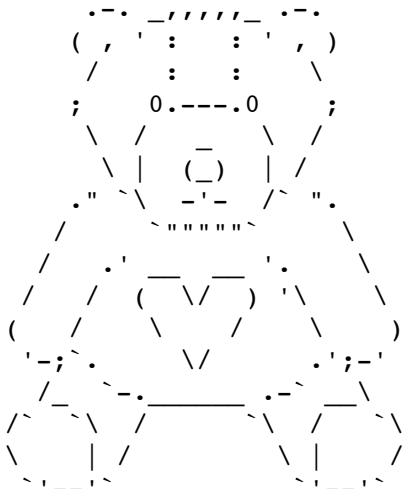
"wow!
 Je zegt, "wow!"
 Mantis denkt, "daar klopt iest niet aan..."
 "niet zo heel veel meer mannen dan vrouwen hoor
 Je zegt, "niet zo heel veel meer mannen dan vrouwen hoor"
 Mantis denkt, "wellus..."
 Jildou denkt, "misschien hebben een aantal vrouwen zich vermomd als man, maar toch zijn wel meer mannen denk ik..."
 "en hoe kan je een sexe check doen on=-line?
 Je zegt, "en hoe kan je een sexe check doen on=-line?"
 Mantis grinnikt, "..."
 Mantis kijkt .
 "even vragen of iemand zich uitkleed helpt niet ;-)
 Je zegt, "even vragen of iemand zich uitkleed helpt niet ;-)"
 Mantis grinnikt, "ik ben toch echt een meisje hoor..."
 Jildou lacht
 "ja, dat is het eeuwige spelletje toch, wel een of niet een.
 Je zegt, "ja, dat is het eeuwige spelletje toch, wel een of niet een."
 Mantis grinnikt, "ik heb bewijzen..."
 Jildou grinnikt, "nou, te merken aan de hoeveelheid aandacht zou ik echt denken dat er meer mannen in de metro zijn dan vrouwen..."
 "de aandacht?
 Je zegt, "de aandacht?"
 Jildou lacht, "ja"
 "bewijzen zijn te vervalsen natuurlijk
 Je zegt, "bewijzen zijn te vervalsen natuurlijk"
 Jildou knikt
 Jildou kijkt naar je.
 Mantis denkt, "ik heb hier geen camera..."
 Mantis denkt, "thuis wel..."
 Jildou vraagt aan rrr, "ken jij Mieg?"
 "je kan ook zo een foto van het web aftrekken en zeg dat je het bent op die foto...
 Je zegt, "je kan ook zo een foto van het web aftrekken en zeg dat je het bent op die foto... "
 "ja, van toen ik bij De Waag werkte
 Je zegt, "ja, van toen ik bij De Waag werkte "
 "en van de vereniging Open Domein
 Je zegt, "en van de vereniging Open Domein"
 Jildou grinnikt, "kom eens mee?..."
 "daar was ik voorzitter
 Je zegt, "daar was ik voorzitter"
 Jildou suggereert, "tik: volg jil"
 Jildou dwarrelt weg in de wind.
 Mantis rent weg.
 volg jil
 Het is even zoeken, Jildou is nogal klein, maar uiteindelijk vind je haar in een afgelegen hoekje van de metro...

Tempel van Mieg-aanbidders

Mieg is het helemaal, want Mieg is de SCHEPPER van de metro! En daarom moeten wij hem allen eren. Kom binnen, doe een gebed voor onze schepper, eer hem met je relikwieen, waarvan beginnende bouwvallers er makkelijk een kunnen maken met als parent #13009. En DENK EROM: hij die Mieg niet aanbidt, zal veel onheil op zijn pad in de metro ontmoeten!

Je kunt naar een soort (gang) hier...
 Je ziet plakkaat met het Mieg-lied, Tempelboek, Religieuze Mieg-aanbid-rol en Beeld van Mieg hier.
 Jildou de datavluchteling en die tot september niks te doen heeft zijn hier.
 Bewaar de vrede in deze tempel a.u.b.!
 Mantis lacht.

Jildou grinnikt, "goed he..."
 "erg goed
 Je zegt, "erg goed"
 Mantis werpt zich voor Mieg op de grond.
 Nederig buigt Mantis het hoofd.
 Mantis roept, "Het is mij een enorme eer hier naast U te zijn."
 Mantis fluistert tegen Mieg, "Laat mij U aanraken."
 "hoe doe je dat soort acties?"
 Je zegt, "hoe doe je dat soort acties?"
 Mieg doet gewillig een stapje vooruit.
 Mantis steekt sidderend van opwinding een vinger uit.
 Dan raakt Mantis Mieg even, heel snel en zachtjes, aan.
 Jildou suggereert, "tik: aanbid mieg"
 Mantis piept, "Oh, U bent gewoon te goed voor mij. Dank U. Dank U."
 Jildou denkt, "of &aanbid..."
 aanbid mig
 Dat begrijp ik niet.
 "begrijpt ie niet..
 Je zegt, "begrijpt ie niet.."
 &aanbid
 #17808:aanbid, line 1: Range error
 ... called from #6:&* (this == #38025), line 19
 (End of traceback)
 Mantis denkt, "wellus..."
 uiteindelijk zal alles goed komen vindt jou harstikke lief, en ze stuurt een lief knuffelbeertje naar je toe.



Jildou lacht, "je hebt nu al fans"
 Mantis schenkt een lekker warm kopje thee voor je in.
 Ze zet er ook nog een lekker beschuitje naast.
 Ze zegt: hier rrr, lekker warm bakkie en wat te knabbelen!

Mantis schenkt voor rrr een lekker warm kopje thee in met een beschuitje.

"wow, wat een leuke beer, met een hartje

Je zegt, "wow, wat een leuke beer, met een hartje"

de schrik van de zeven zeeën biert naar Jildou [My neural pathways have become accustomed to your sensory input patterns].

Jildou de datavluchteling doet een klein gebedje voor Mieg.

Probeer dit: bid

Jildou denkt, "hmm..."

Mantis vraagt, "wat is er??"

Jelle zwaait als een okergeel weekdier naar Mantis.

die tot september niks te doen heeft zwaait naar Life is an illusion, Magic is reality (oo).

wie

| T | Naam | In de metro | Niet actief | Plaats |
|---|------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| | ----- | -----V--- | ----- | ----- |
| | rrr (#38025) | 19 minuten | 0 seconden | Tempel van Mieg-aanbidder |
| B | absu (#24916) | 3 minuten | een seconde | A Neon Wilderness |
| B | mariska (#37816] | 7 minuten | 8 seconden | Mariska's Slaapkamer |
| B | Mantis (#36777) | 21 minuten | 10 seconden | Tempel van Mieg-aanbidder |
| H | Jelle (#34989) | een uur | 14 seconden | N/A -- [doesje, opruimen, |
| B | nietroooh (#22892) | een uur | 22 seconden | A Neon Wilderness |
| B | Jildou (#32577) | 47 minuten | 26 seconden | Tempel van Mieg-aanbidder |
| B | baka (#37812) | 39 minuten | 45 seconden | het DigiStad cafe (kv) |
| B | Rockman (#37896) | een uur | 59 seconden | red's lekkende zolderkame |
| B | james (#37561) | 3 uur | een minuut | het DigiStad cafe (kv) |
| O | Poek (#93) | 4 uur | een minuut | N/A -- [kloc dimi] |
| B | red-or-dead (#36399) | een uur | een minuut | red's lekkende zolderkame |
| o | Metro-hacker (#10) | 6 dagen | een minuut | Het gezellige cafeetje |
| B | Maanvis (#36681) | 3 minuten | een minuut | het DigiStad cafe (kv) |
| H | steve (#21946) | 38 minuten | 3 minuten | Mieg-aanbidders van Tempe |
| B | Jasper (#30907) | 4 uur | 4 minuten | Unix |
| B | dIMITRI (#14447) | 4 uur | 4 minuten | Demon Internet goes ADSL |
| B | Cardin (#33259) | 5 minuten | 5 minuten | Links & Rechts |
| B | Abeltje (#28846) | 2 uur | 8 minuten | N/A -- [gaatjes door mijn |
| B | KATCHOO (#26316) | een uur | 10 minuten | het DigiStad cafe (kv) |
| B | roald (#28334) | 2 uur | 16 minuten | Slaapkamer |
| B | Lolario (#30285) | een uur | 17 minuten | Where shadows dwell |
| O | vomiT (#592) | 2 uur | 18 minuten | House of Chton |
| B | morrissy (#30637) | 5 uur | 23 minuten | De werkkamer |
| B | meikever (#27538) | 46 minuten | 38 minuten | molen de mesa |
| H | MartLan (#23499) | een uur | 56 minuten | N/A -- [tsja] |
| B | Golden-Earring (#22440 |)4 uur | een uur | Away - [werken] |

Totaal: 27 reizigers, 17 actief op het moment.

Als je bouwvakker bent kun je zelf ook kamers bouwen.

Jildou glimlacht, "er zit hier een verb-stopper in de kamer"

* groena zegt, "tik:-> &stekker <:- en lees over 't einde van De Metro en Nowmoo!'"

Mantis denkt, "verbstopper?..."

Mantis denkt, "flauw..."

Jildou denkt, "net als bij spelletjes..."

Jildou denkt, "om het rustig te houden :)..."

&stekker

De Stekker Gaat Uit De Metro

Date: Thu, 21 Jun 2001 16:37:47 +0200
From: Joost Flint <joost@dds.nl>
To: nowmoo@dds.nl
Subject: dds sponsoring

Beste nowmoo

Zoals je weet hebben er het afgelopen jaar een aantal grote veranderingen bij De Digitale Stad plaatsgevonden. DDS City - met alle particuliere accounts - moet helaas stoppen met het aanbieden van gratis diensten en de sponsoring van een aantal activiteiten. Een basispakket met meer diskruimte voor e-mail (25 MB) en homepage (15 MB) bieden we vanaf 1 september voor 1,98 Euro per maand. De commerciele focus van DDS zal liggen op ADSL; een belangrijk nieuw product waar veel van onze bewoners om vragen. M.b.t. de sponsoring van activiteiten heeft De Digitale Stad besloten dat de focus zal liggen op vernieuwing, streaming video en live events.

In het verleden zijn op DDS servers speciale accounts aangemaakt voor allerlei projecten, mensen, initiatieven die DDS heeft gesteund met wat extra voorzieningen. We hebben dat graag gedaan. We gaan nu echter een nieuw avontuur tegemoet en zijn genooddaakt het verleden achter ons te laten. We kunnen helaas niet alles meenemen wat de moeite waard is. Het is dan ook met enige spijt in het hart dat we aan onze oude sponsorrelaties een einde moeten maken. Daarvoor zullen nieuwe in de plaats komen.

Helaas moeten we onze steun aan jullie project staken m.i.v. 1 juli 2001. We vertrouwen er op dat jullie ergens anders onderdak zullen vinden. We hebben jullie project altijd met plezier gesteund maar we achten het nodig de handen - en middelen - vrij te hebben om nieuwe wegen te kunnen verkennen. We hopen dat jullie daarvoor begrip hebben. Dit bericht zal voor jullie naar wij aan mogen nemen ook niet onverwacht komen. Misschien dat we in de toekomst nog eens samen kunnen werken op nieuwe terreinen.

DDS City zal de komende 14 dagen om de nieuwe diensten aan te kunnen bieden migreren naar een andere hosting provider. De streefdatum is dat de hele migratie van Energis naar onze nieuw service provider voor 1 juli een feit is. Uitsluitend de e-mail diensten en homepage diensten zullen worden gemigreerd. De rest blijft achter en wordt van de systemen verwijderd. Met ingang van 1 juli 2001 kan de toegang tot niet standaard accounts op de oude city servers door Energis zijn geblokkeerd, functionaliteit zijn gestaakt en zal informatie worden verwijderd van deze servers. We verzoeken je dus vriendelijk om een en ander te verplaatsen voor deze datum.

Mocht je nog vragen hebben dan kun je contact opnemen met ondergetekende. Tot slot wil ik je bedanken voor de samenwerking en misschien tot ziens in de toekomst in nieuwe projecten.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Joost Flint

RED: zie ook: motd 230
RED: metroforum@dds.nl is inmiddels al ter ziele.
RED: opendomein alternatief: <http://lists.opendomein.nl/mailman/listinfo/chat>
RED: webforum alternatief: <http://boards.eesite.com/board.cgi?boardset=nus>
RED: zie ook: <http://www.webwereld.nl/nieuws/7847.phtml>

RED: geef je mening hierover tik :--> look #8967 <--
RED: wat vinden anderen hiervan tik :--> motivaties #8967 <--
RED: of bekijk: <http://metro.dds.nl:8888/browse?object=8967>
RED: nog 4 dagen, 9 uur, 45 minuten en 37 seconden te gaan.

Mantis pakt een lang zwaard uit haar binnenzak en hakt het hoofd van rrr eraf.
"oeps? waar heb ik dat aan verdiend
Je zegt, "oeps? waar heb ik dat aan verdiend"
Jildou kijkt streng naar Mantis.
Mantis grinnikt, "ik ben mantis dus ik mag dat..."
Jildou schudt haar hoofd en zegt, "Nee!"
Mantis denkt, "wellus..."
Mantis denkt, "lees beschrijving maar..."
Jildou grinnikt, "ja die heb je zelf emaakt, lekker makkelijk..."
zeg ik lees niets over zwaarden...
Je zegt, "ik lees niets over zwaarden..."
Mantis grinnikt, "maar het wel waar..."
Mantis grinnikt, "gaat maar naar mijn website daar staat nog vel meer..."
Mantis denkt, "veel..."
Mantis klopt zichzelf op de rug en hikt, "Ik bedoelde ... "
"even snel die teddybear copy-pasten voor die van mijn scherm afvalt
Je zegt, "even snel die teddybear copy-pasten voor die van mijn scherm afvalt"
Jildou denkt, "wie is tiddle ook alweer?..."
DIMITRI naja meikever mily zwaait vanuit de verte naar je!
Mantis laat tiddle vallen.
Mantis pakt tiddle op.
Jildou denkt, "hmmm..."
Mantis denkt, "wat?..."
Jildou denkt, "tiddle was volgens mij ook een player..."
Mantis denkt, "O JA?..."
"hoe kan ik zien wie hier allemaal zijn?
Je zegt, "hoe kan ik zien wie hier allemaal zijn?"
Mantis fluistert, "weet ik niks van hoor"
Mantis suggereert, "wie"
Jildou glimlacht, "tik: wie"
Mantis denkt, "niet zeuren nu..."
"alleen in deze kamer
Je zegt, "alleen in deze kamer"
Jildou denkt, "of ppl, of aan, of wie2..."
wie2
Dat begrijp ik niet.
Mantis denkt, "typ:k..."
Jildou grinnikt, "ehm loc denk ik..."
loc
Dat begrijp ik niet.
Mantis kijkt om zich heen.
"volgens mij moet ik wat extra features krijgen want de metro begrijpt heel veel niet
Je zegt, "volgens mij moet ik wat extra features krijgen want de metro begrijpt heel veel niet"
Jildou knikt
Chaos_One komt uit de schaduw te voorschijn en lacht naar je!
Chaos_One zegt, "Hoi Jildou met een te lange title, die timonel wel aardig vind en rrr"
Jildou glimlacht, "tik: gebruik #612"

Jildou gilt, "c1!"
 Mantis zegt, "Hoi Chaos_Two!"
 Chaos_One antwoordt, "Ja."
 "hoi chaos!"
 Je zegt, "hoi chaos!"
 Chaos_One antwoordt, "Yo Tripple R."
 "gezellig hier joh
 Je zegt, "gezellig hier joh"
 Jildou denkt, "ik moet weg..."
 Jildou zegt, "Doei eindelijk eens verhuist, rrr en Chaos_Four!"
 Jildou [experience pearls] maakt met een laserstraal een keurig rond gaatje in de muur en verdwijnt erin.
 Mantis denkt, "ouwemetroer..."
 "dag jildou!"
 Je zegt, "dag jildou!"
 eindelijk eens verhuist zwaait naar Jildou [My neural pathways have become accustomed to your sensory input patterns].
 Mantis zingt, "tralalalalalala..."
 Chaos_One hoorde dat ReindeR in de Metro was.
 Mantis denkt, "gaat eens verder kijken..."
 "ja, hier ben ik
 Je zegt, "ja, hier ben ik"
 Chaos_One gniffelt, "Mijn bronnen liegen nooit."
 Mantis denkt, "waarom kent iedereen jou..."
 Chaos_One zegt, "Bye de schrik van de zeven zeeen!"
 "goh, het nieuws gaat hier ook snel...
 Je zegt, "goh, het nieuws gaat hier ook snel... "
 Chaos_One . o O (nieuws ging helemaal naar NowMOO)
 "ik heb ooit belangrijk gedaan
 Je zegt, "ik heb ooit belangrijk gedaan"
 Mantis ruikt uitvoerig aan je heup.
 Dat ruikt niet vies!
 "met Joost Flint praten, erg belangrijk..
 Je zegt, "met Joost Flint praten, erg belangrijk.."
 Mantis denkt, "wies datte?..."
 "is op niets uitgelopen
 Je zegt, "is op niets uitgelopen"
 "hij trekt over 4 dagen de stekker eruit
 Je zegt, "hij trekt over 4 dagen de stekker eruit"
 "ik wou DDS redden.
 Je zegt, "ik wou DDS redden."
 Mantis denkt, "jij redden?..."
 Mantis geeft rrr een stevige hand.
 "ik schrijf nu een scriptie over The Rise and Fall of DDS
 Je zegt, "ik schrijf nu een scriptie over The Rise and Fall of DDS"
 Mantis knielt op haar linker knie voor rrr en neemt zijn hand in de haare en drukt er teder een kus op.
 Je zegt, "<bloos>"
 Chaos_One vraagt, "Kom ik er nog in voor?"
 Mantis denkt, "als afstudeer opdracht?..."
 "dat weet ik nog niet
 Je zegt, "dat weet ik nog niet"
 "ja, communicatiewetenschap
 Je zegt, "ja, communicatiewetenschap"

Mantis boert discreet, "*BUUURP!*"
Mantis fluistert, "pardon"
"ik bedoel maar..."
Je zegt, "ik bedoel maar..."
Chaos_One . o O (DDS zonder Chaos_One is als een vis zonder vinnen)
Chaos_One lacht
Chaos_One kijkt even wat hij in zijn zakken heeft.
Mantis denkt, "ghaat zo maar eens naar de tentamenzaal..."
Chaos_One zegt, "Bye die Jelle en Sterre af en toe veel te klef vind doen!"
"welk tentamen
Je zegt, "welk tentamen"
Mantis zegt, "Doei rrr en Chaos_Two!"
Mantis antwoordt, "fap"
"dag Mantis
Je zegt, "dag Mantis"
die timonel wel aardig vind gaat naar huis.
Chaos_One fapt naar je.
fap mantis
Dat begrijp ik niet.
"wat is fappen?
Je zegt, "wat is fappen?"
Chaos_One suggereert, "Geen flauw idee."
dag mantis!
Dat begrijp ik niet.
kijk Chaos_one
De meeste planten zijn een betere gesprekspartner dan Martlan.
Hij is wakker en ziet er helder uit.

Heeft bij zich:
een chaotisch houthakkershemd (#6940) Eeyore (#18158)Een reclamevliegtuig (#21576)
Chaos_One's Feature (#12984) bende lijst (#9941) Sentinel (#969) een krant (#22854) Mr.Ebou
(#2031) een rugzak (#9884) Chaos_One action figure (#8827) lijst (#16667) opklapbed (#4757) een
boekje met ranzige verhalen (#7931)
Chaos_One laat Sentinel vallen.
Sentinel zegt, "Ik ben er Chaos_One."
Sentinel antwoordt, "Hoi Rrr."
"hoi Sentinel
Je zegt, "hoi Sentinel"
kijk sentinel
Een klein ratje met een lange staart. Op haar rug staat het symbool van de hemelse Vrede.

Ze is wakker en ziet er helder uit.

Sentinel is eigendom van Chaos_One.
Sentinel kijkt naar je.
"alleen maar vrouwen hier? op Chaos1 na
Je zegt, "alleen maar vrouwen hier? op Chaos1 na"
Chaos_One legt uit, "Sentinel is niet echt."
Sentinel zegt, "Ik ben er Chaos_One."
Sentinel grinnikt, "...".
Sentinel is semi-echt.
Chaos_One zegt, "sen kom"

Chaos_One wordt bekeken door Sentinel! Zou Sentinel geïnteresseerd zijn in hem?
Chaos_One pakt Sentinel op.
"loopt sentinel altijd achter je aan?
Je zegt, "loopt sentinel altijd achter je aan?"
Chaos_One antwoordt, "Als ik wil wel."
"en wil je dat?
Je zegt, "en wil je dat?"
Chaos_One grinnikt, "Moet wel, weet niet meer hoe ik het uit zet..."
Chaos_One laat Sentinel vallen.
Sentinel zegt, "Ik ben er Chaos_One."
Chaos_One zegt, "Sentinel"
Sentinel zegt, "Ik ben er Chaos_One."
Chaos_One zegt, "Sentinel blijf"
Sentinel zegt, "Ik ben er Chaos_One."
"sentinel
Je zegt, "sentinel"
Chaos_One zegt, "sentinel"
Sentinel zegt, "Ik ben er Chaos_One."
Chaos_One griffelt, ""
Chaos_One zegt, "sentinel ga"
"het werkt alleen als jij het zegt
Je zegt, "het werkt alleen als jij het zegt"
Sentinel rent weg.
Chaos_One . o O (nu is ze weg)
Sentinel komt aanrennen.
"soort hondje eigenlijk
Je zegt, "soort hondje eigenlijk"
Chaos_One wordt bekeken door Sentinel! Zou Sentinel geïnteresseerd zijn in hem?
Chaos_One pakt Sentinel op.
Chaos_One antwoordt, "Een rat."
Chaos_One laat Sentinel vallen.
Sentinel zegt, "Ik ben er Chaos_One."
"pratende rat?
Sentinel grinnikt, "..."
Je zegt, "pratende rat?"
Sentinel antwoordt, "Ja."
Sentinel kan alles.
Sentinel kijkt naar je.
Sentinel bijtje in je hand! (AUW)
"waar komt de metro server te staan?
Je zegt, "waar komt de metro server te staan?"
Chaos_One antwoordt, "Onbekend."

Appendix 6: Hypertext discussions in DDS

Category DDS

- 1 Gastenboek voor algemene opmerkingen en om jezelf voor te stellen in DDS. Deze pagina is niet bedoeld voor hulpvragen.
- 2 Foutmeldingen?!?, een pagina voor het melden van problemen rond internet technieken, het bouwen van je pagina's en wat je maar wilt. Andere bewoners reageren, helpdesk medewerkers lezen regelmatig de nieuwe bijdragen.
- 3 Op de huizenpagina "Ik heb een huis!" kun je je huis adverteren, of de aandacht vestigen op bijzondere huizen die je in de stad bent tegen gekomen. Het is dus ook een handige gids als je eens een paar bijzondere huizen wilt bekijken.
- 4 HyperNews helppagina, alleen voor als je erg verdwaald bent geraakt.
- 5 De missie van DDS Een discussie over wat de missie van De Digitale Stad zou moeten zijn de komende jaren.
- 6 Beleid DDS Discussie over de hoge kosten van ip-verkeer en de noodzaak zeer populaire huizen beperkingen op te leggen.
- 7 Wie is de mooiste in de stad? een dodo-wedstrijd.
- 8 PTT email of niet?
- 9 Handelswijze Discriminatie Meldpunt
- 10 Discussie over woningnood in DDS, en de Woningnoodwet met een overzicht van de discussie die leidde tot de woningnoodwet, waarbij kraken mogelijk wordt. De regels van het kraken zijn ook op deze pagina te vinden. Verder: de meest gestelde vragen, en antwoorden daarop.
- 11 Freeze pagina. Bij het twee jarig bestaan van DDS is de hele stad 'bevroren' en op schijf bewaard gebleven. Er ontstond een heftige discussie over privacy, waarna besloten is de persoonlijke mail van iedereen uit de freeze te verwijderen voordat het archief ergens in bewaring wordt gegeven.

Category general

- 12 Vrijmarkt in De Digitale Stad, Hypernews versie van dds.markt

Category politics

- 13 Europese Drugsbeleid Discussie over europa en het te voeren drugsbeleid.
- 14 Verkiezingen Alles over de gemeenteraads- en tweede kamerverkiezingen.
- 15 Discussie over invoeren nationaal correctief referendum
- 16 Omroepverkiezingen? over het idee publieke televisie zendtijd per verkiezing te verdelen.
- 17 Weg met de Gulden, Leve de Euro? over de komst van de europese munt. Fractievoorzitters geven om de beurt een stelling en reageren op bijdragen.

- 18 Discussie over het paarse kabinet: Paarse Rozen deze discussie liep in februari 1996, in samenwerking met de Volkskrant en De Balie

Category Amsterdam

- 19 Discussie over Noord/Zuidlijn, een nieuwe metrolijn in Amsterdam.

| | |
|-----------|----|
| DDS | 11 |
| Amsterdam | 1 |
| Politics | 6 |
| general | 1 |