

Digital Monism: Our Mode of Being At The Nexus of Life, Digital Media and Art

Neal Stimler & Stéphane Vial

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[#TtW14](#) [#c4](#)

What is the origin of this talk?

- @svial's concern w/ our "feeling-in-the-world" is so important to reflect upon for our value judgments of the museum experience. #Ttw13 #d2
— @nealstimler, [6:58 PM - 2 Mar 2013](#).
- @svial: "We take what is on the screen as real. We have extend our sense of the real. Welcome to #digitalmonism." #Ttw13 #d2 #museweb
— @nealstimler, [7:04 PM - 2 Mar 2013](#).

What is the goal of this talk?

- *Theorizing the Web* is about Theory.
- The theoretical heart of any theory is Metaphysics.
- Metaphysics hides in everyday life.
- We want you to *feel* the metaphysics.

1. Principles

Stéphane Vial

[@svial](#)

What is the origin of Digital Monism?

- Digital Monism is the antithesis of Digital Dualism.
- Digital Dualism is *'the belief that online and offline are largely distinct and independent realities'* (N.Jurgenson).
- Digital Monism considers that Digital Dualism is a fallacious mainstream metaphysics which comes from the ancient Platonic division of the real in two (duo).
- In opp., Digital Monism is an open scholar metaphysics revealing the truth about our lived experiences.

What is Digital Monism?

- Digital Monism is the metaphysical postulate that our human world is inseparably digital and non-digital, online and offline or, in obsolete terms, virtual and real.
- In a digital monist view, you cannot remove the online side of your relationships from the offline side of it.
- In Digital Monism, the human world is a digital-centered hybrid environment that tends to form a single (mono) continuous substance, whose name is simply 'Reality'.

How does Digital Monism relate to the notion of 'Augmented Reality'?

- Digital Monism considers that the phrase 'Augmented Reality' is a tautology or a pleonasm.
- Reality cannot be on the increase or on the decline. Diminished Reality does not exist. Neither does Augmented.
- The online and the offline are parts of the same Digital-Monistic Reality.

How is Digital Monism positioned in relation to post- or transhumanism?

- Digital Monism considers that Transhumanism movement is also based on a tautology or pleonasm.
- Technology has always been involved in the construction of the Human Reality and of the Human capacities.
- Humans have always existed with Technology and Technology has not existed without Humans.
- We have always been Cyborgs ([Cyborgology](#)).

How does Digital Monism relate to the Digital Humanities? (1)

- Digital Humanities (DH) is about digitally engaged knowledge production, teaching and publishing.
 - > DH = matter of *Knowledge* (epistemology).
- Digital Monism (DM) is about digitally engaged lived experience of reality in all its dimensions.
 - > DM = matter of *Reality* (ontology).
- DM is more holistic than DH or DH is within DM.

How does Digital Monism relate to the Digital Humanities? (2)

- Digital-Monistic lived experiences include globally all kinds of experiences in human life.
- Digital-Humanistic scholarly experiences (such as researching, teaching, publishing) are a component of global Digital-Monistic lived experiences.
- Digital-Monistic museums experiences are another component of global Digital-Monistic lived experiences (can be related to Digital Humanities as well).

What is the past, the present and the future of Digital Monism?

- Digital Monism has been slowly emerging as a new paradigm for the last 10 years.
- We are slowly awakening to Digital Monism since we stopped believing in Digital Dualism.
- We must help people to recognize Digital Monism; being aware of it will help us to build new innovative lived experiences in concordance with the Digital Natives needs and ideas.

2. Scenarios of Practice

Neal Stimler

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Scenarios of Practice Are...

- Constructive processes that design Digital-Monistic Reality.
- Include actions, platforms, applications and roles utilized in multimodal Digital-Monistic experiences.
- Identified in one's performative and social uses of digital technologies (especially mobile and wearable).
- Emerge especially when engaged with museums.

Scenarios of Practice - Components

- Actions: processes of design = making.
- Platforms: unified grounds of cultural, digital, intellectual and physical on which we practice.
- Applications: program/s with an interface used as tools to implement the practice.
- Roles: researcher, designer, learner and community member are positions we take on at different stages of practice.

Scenarios of Practice - Aspects

- Performative: transformative progression towards points of enlightened resonance - reflexive not exhaustive.
- Social: happenings with shared norms/behaviors or occurrences that lead us across perceived boundaries.
- Individual: done by each one of us through personal daily interactions and motions of living.
- Communal: peer to peer and group interactions both synchronous/asynchronous and digital/physical.

The designer...

Becomes conscious of a need to communicate

Selects a messaging application

Selects a message recipient

Types/Speaks message text

Deletes/Cancel autocorrect from text/voice recognition software

Retypes/Speaks message text

Reviews intention - recipient/text/context/meaning

Sends message

Awaits reply

Awaits reply

Awaits reply

Responds

Scenario 1 - Text Design

scenario constructed by Neal Stimler

#TtW14 #c4 #dm

The designer...

Observes a scene

Selects a media making application

Captures an image (still/moving) w/ a mobile/wearable device

Edits/"Filters" the image (still/moving)

Selects a Social Network

Describes the image (still/moving) w/ text and tag(s)

Publishes the image (still/moving)

Scenario 2 - Image Design (still/moving)

scenario constructed by Neal Stimler

The designer...

Becomes conscious of a need to query

Decides upon a term or set of keywords to search

Types/Speaks search terms into a search engine w/ a mobile/wearable device

The search engine returns results

Researcher deciphers results

Selects a result

Reviews content and context of result

Adds link to social bookmarking application

Scenario 3 - Knowledge Design

scenario constructed by Neal Stimler

The designer...
Needs to travel from point A to point B
Selects a map application
Types/Speaks a departure
Types/Speaks a destination
Selects Route
Selects Mode of Transportation
Views Photogrammetry and 3d Models of Departure/Destination
Scrolls to explore surroundings and points of reference
Begins movement
Continues movement
...may alter course
Arrives
Be-g-in(s) again...

Scenario 4 - Journey Design

scenario constructed by Neal Stimler

Museum as Digital-Monistic Toolkit

- Museums are critical sites for identifying Digital-Monistic experiences in our lives.
- The museum as a design toolkit encompasses the range of expressions and forms that made culture in the past.
- This is an understanding of the museum, art and culture as tools for contemporary creation and living of a Digital-Monistic Reality.

3. Conclusions

Neal Stimler & Stéphane Vial

- Performed Scenarios of Practice are the processes by which we design a Digital-Monistic Reality.
- This is how we live each day, designing the present and tomorrow - *feeling* the metaphysics.
- Our cultural, economic, environmental, political, ethical and social concerns are informed as well by understanding Digital-Monistic Reality.
- Museums are key sites for awakening to Digital Monism, and therefore for helping people recognize the true metaphysics of our Age.

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Thanks!

Slides here: <http://goo.gl/J0gThb>



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