

KEIN

KEIN

[Florian Schneider](#) [1] 8 February 2011

Have we had enough of all sorts of fabricated fiction that reduce and limit complex realities towards more or less paranoid plots and universally exchangeable narratives? Then let's escape

In German the article KEIN is used as a negation of a preceding noun. As an indefinite pronoun it translates to english as "none", but in different contexts it may also mean just "no" or "barely".

KEIN.ORG implies no organization: No shared agenda, no common ground, no identity and no feedback. But rather than a negation KEIN marks the moment of withdrawal, an escape, an indefinite line of flight out of the overcoded structures of networks as formed-matter, of networked economies and user generated content, of a standardized and controlled production of networked subjectivity.

[KEIN.ORG](#) [2] is a collaborative working environment that hosts a wide range of internet [projects](#) [3] by [artists](#) [4] and activists, freelance professionals, non-profit institutions, temporary or ad hoc networking initiatives. The idea of KEIN.ORG is to discuss and develop concepts of self-supply and self-sufficiency when it comes to networking technologies - on both, a radically practical and a rather theoretical level and by trying to undo at least the most obvious contradictions of what would need to be considered 'manual' and 'intellectual' labor in the age of digital production.



Over almost 15 years, KEIN.ORG has appeared as an autonomous and non-institutional platform that generated a series of independent collaborations based on a notion of self-authorization that seems constitutive for contemporary activism.

It can be traced back to the launch of the "no one is illegal" campaign in summer 1997 at "[Hybrid Workspace](#) [5]' of [documenta X](#) [6] in Kassel, when the immaterial infrastructure of a network of artists, activists and migrant self-organizations was developed by the means of technologies that back then were still 'new' in the true sense of the word.



As an environment based on open source technology KEIN.ORG soon began to facilitate [collaborations](#) [7] across cultural, disciplinary and geographical contexts. In most of the activities there is a specific focus on the role borders play, what restricted and unrestricted notions of mobility and freedom of movement may mean.

KEIN spread out into many transnational and transdisciplinary networks like the "noborder networks" and the "noborder camps", it culminated in the '[Make World](#) [8]' festival in 2001, and it diffused into a variety of digital initiatives like the activist video files sharing network '[V2V](#) [9]' or the '[NEURO-networking europe](#) [10]' festival in 2004, the borderline academy in 2005, or a "Summit of non-aligned initiatives in education culture" in 2007.



In ten editions during the past five years the '[Dictionary of War](#) [11]' has set out to create, to reevaluate and to present more than 200 concepts on the topic of 'war' in all sorts of formats, genre, media and conceptual approaches. Rather than defining consensus and limiting meaning, 'Dictionary of War' is about a non-uniform, many-voiced, asymmetric, and deregulated production of concepts as the tools with which to attain new ideas.

KEIN projects are driven by the urgent need to develop experimental formats in order to trigger processes of "self-valorization" of practical and theoretical knowledge that refuse the compulsions to permanent self-evaluation and self-monitoring.

KEIN is certainly not just about "doing-it-yourself", but finding new ways of working together. It is refusing a notion of co-operation, since it is based on manifold experiences that the only thing we have in common might be the fact that we have nothing in common.

KEIN aims to bring people together who would not meet otherwise or under regular circumstances. Instead of a common ground or shared agenda KEIN is about illegitimate links, unlikely encounters, unexpected collaborations.

Rather than indulging in techno-utopianism, rather than promoting the hypocritical pragmatism of social networking, rather than proclaiming a purified notion of the common or a community, that would exist a-priori to or beyond the hostile conditions of the postmodern workplace, a political project of today might have to risk a look back at successful forms of organizing and un-organizing of the workers' movements of the past.



The outlines of such a project are beginning to show themselves albeit in still very rudimentary forms. It will need to be capable of resisting the new social division of labour in postindustrial production and the slide rules of a [neo-Taylorism](#) [12] in the creative industries.

It has to reflect how exactly one mode of production is superseded by another, how divisions of labour are altered, and therefore an understanding of what constitutes fulfilling self-activity needs to be redefined.

The concept of proletarian solidarity came into existence against the fragmentation and segmentation of workers' subjectivity at the assembly line as well as against the expropriation of production-specific knowledge in engineering science.

What is at stake today is the very capacity to make an image. Today's crisis appears as a crisis of imagination as the labour force of an economy that is based on imaginary property. Ultimately it poses the question of property: Whose images? Whose fictions? Who is producing them and who is owning them? What does it mean to own an image?

Radical hospitality

The potential of an open source approach towards collective intelligence and collective imagination lies in the research and development of technologies of a self that are constituted by a radical hospitality. It relates to the challenges of how to re-connect actors who operate in fields that are characterized by an indispensable 'non-alignment' towards both the privatization of knowledge as well as the fading power of public institutions.

More or less paradoxically, such potential appears today as resistance against communication. It is resistance against the sharing of opinions, the exchange of everything that is made exchangeable and the communication of communicability. It is resistance against the estheticisation of participatory politics and the user-generated fabrication of fiction.

"We remember nothing, we only rewrite memory in the same way as we rewrite history", as Chris Marker stated in his [film](#) [13] '[Sans Soleil](#)' [14]. What technologies of the self would be capable of rewriting memory, since we finally might have had enough of all sorts of fabricated fiction that reduce and limit complex realities towards more or less paranoid plots and universally exchangeable narratives?

Technologies of a self that aim towards a production of reality, an augmentation of reality through the production of vision of a different kind: a making of world as a transformation of how we see, rather than what we see?

<http://kein.org> [15]

<http://noborder.org> [16]

<http://v2v.cc> [17]

<http://neuro.kein.org> [18]

<http://summit.kein.org> [7]

<http://dictionaryofwar.org> [19]

Topics: Civil society

Conflict

Culture

Ideas

International politics

Internet

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$(document).ready(function () { $("div#contentgrid").removeClass('grid-8');  
$("div#contentgrid").addClass('grid-6'); });
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 About the author

Florian Schneider is a filmmaker, media artist and activist based in Munich and Brussels. As a curator, he is concerned with film, documentary formats, and the potential of networked environments – all always in a political context. His central interest lies in [transgressing boundaries](#) [20] – between mainstream and independent media, art and activism, theory and open-source technology. Most recently, he has initiated and co-curated the multimedia performance project "[Dictionary of War](#) [11]" (2005-now). In 2010 he was one of the co-curators of the first edition of the Berlin Documentary Forum at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. He teaches theory at the Art Academy at the NTNU Trondheim and he is an advising researcher at the Jan van Eyck Academie Maastricht. At Goldsmiths College in London, he is working on a doctoral project on the subject “Imaginary Property”.

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