

DIGITAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL MEDIA



WHAT IS A SELFIE?

WHAT IS A SELFIE? DRAWING



Da Vinci (1512)

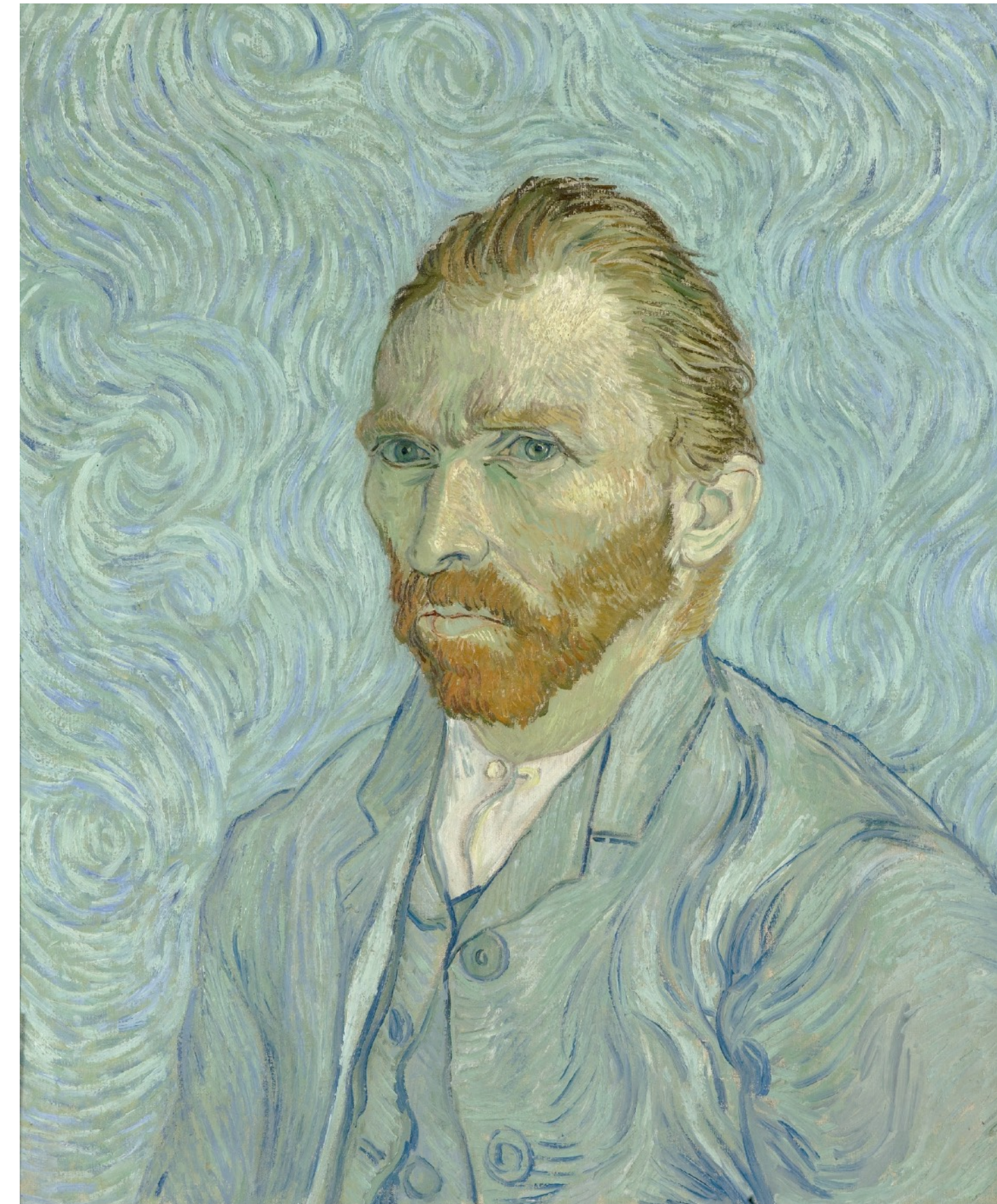


Miyamoto Musashi Samurai (1640)

WHAT IS A SELFIE? PAINTING



Frida Kahlo self-portrait (1940)

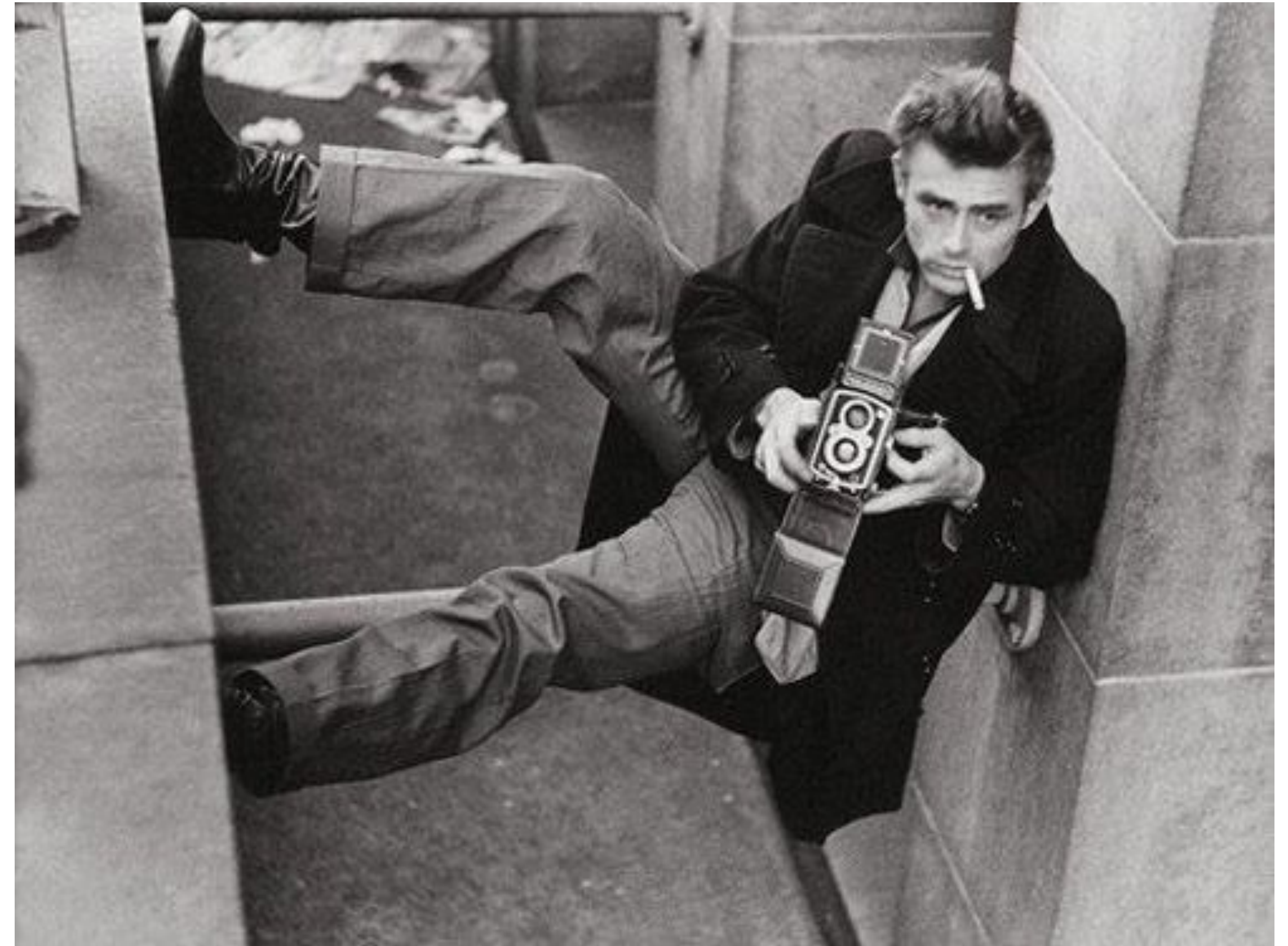


Van Gogh self-portrait (1889)

WHAT IS A SELFIE? SELF-PORTRAIT



Monkey selfie (2014)





WHAT IS A SELFIE?

- Tifentale: “it is more than just take a self-portrait.”
- “Could phenomena like the selfie really be just a byproduct of the advancements and accessibility of digital image-making and image-sharing technologies?”
- “Or could it be vice versa — new and emerging photographic practices shaping the design and features of hardware and app, such as the introduction of the second camera in smartphones and the appearance of Instagram and other image-sharing platforms?” (p. 74).

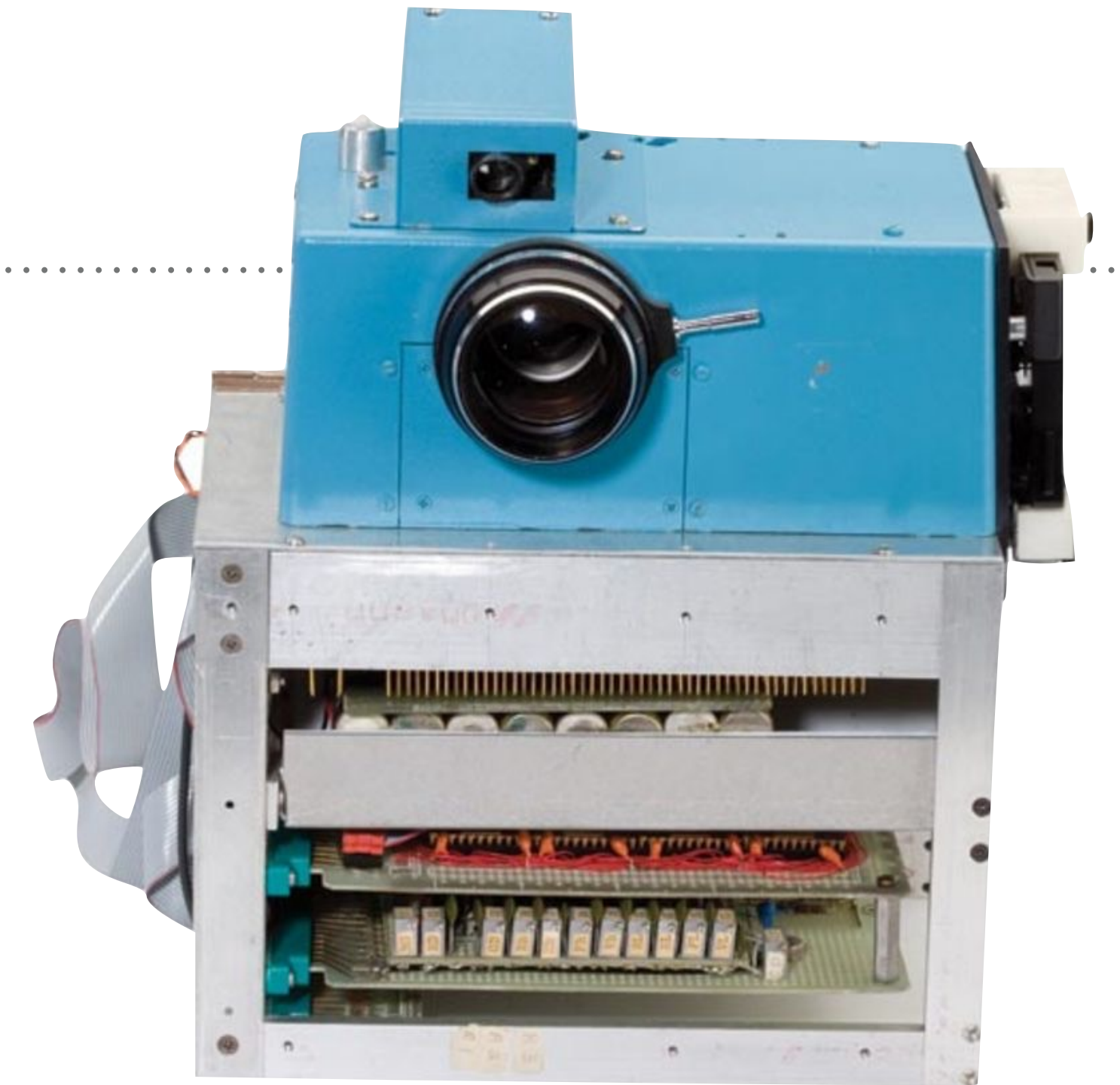
BRIEF HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

- 1900: Kodak Brownie cameras: gave rise to popular and amateur photography, introduced snapshot, and established the traditional family photograph albums.
- 1948: Polaroid: instant photography. No need to wait for revelation.
- 1963: Polaroid in colours
- 1978: Konica point and shoot autofocus camera



BRIEF HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

- 1975: First digital camera
- Late 1990s: Compact digital cameras.
- 2002: Nokia 7650: the first cellphone with camera.
- 2003: Sony Ericsson z1010 and Motorola A835 frontal camera cell phone
- 2007: iPhone: The first smartphone with camera.
- 2010: iPhone 4: The first smartphone with frontal camera.



TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

- Tifentale: it was the smartphone, with frontal camera and wireless connection to the internet, that creates the sub-genre of a “selfie”.
- Even with all the different examples of self-portrait in history, this practice did not become a mundane practice until the digital camera converged with the mobile phone.



➤ Oxford dictionary:
“Selfie is a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media.”

CONCEPT OF “SELFIE”

- It is a specific practice that requires three essential activities or features:
 - Taking a photographic image of oneself
 - Using a camera or one's phone
 - Sharing on social media networks
- Limitation:
 - You can't ask someone to take your picture. #notaselfie
 - Can't use a film camera, old pictures, or any other media. #notaselfie
 - If you don't share it is #notaselfie



NETWORKED CAMERA



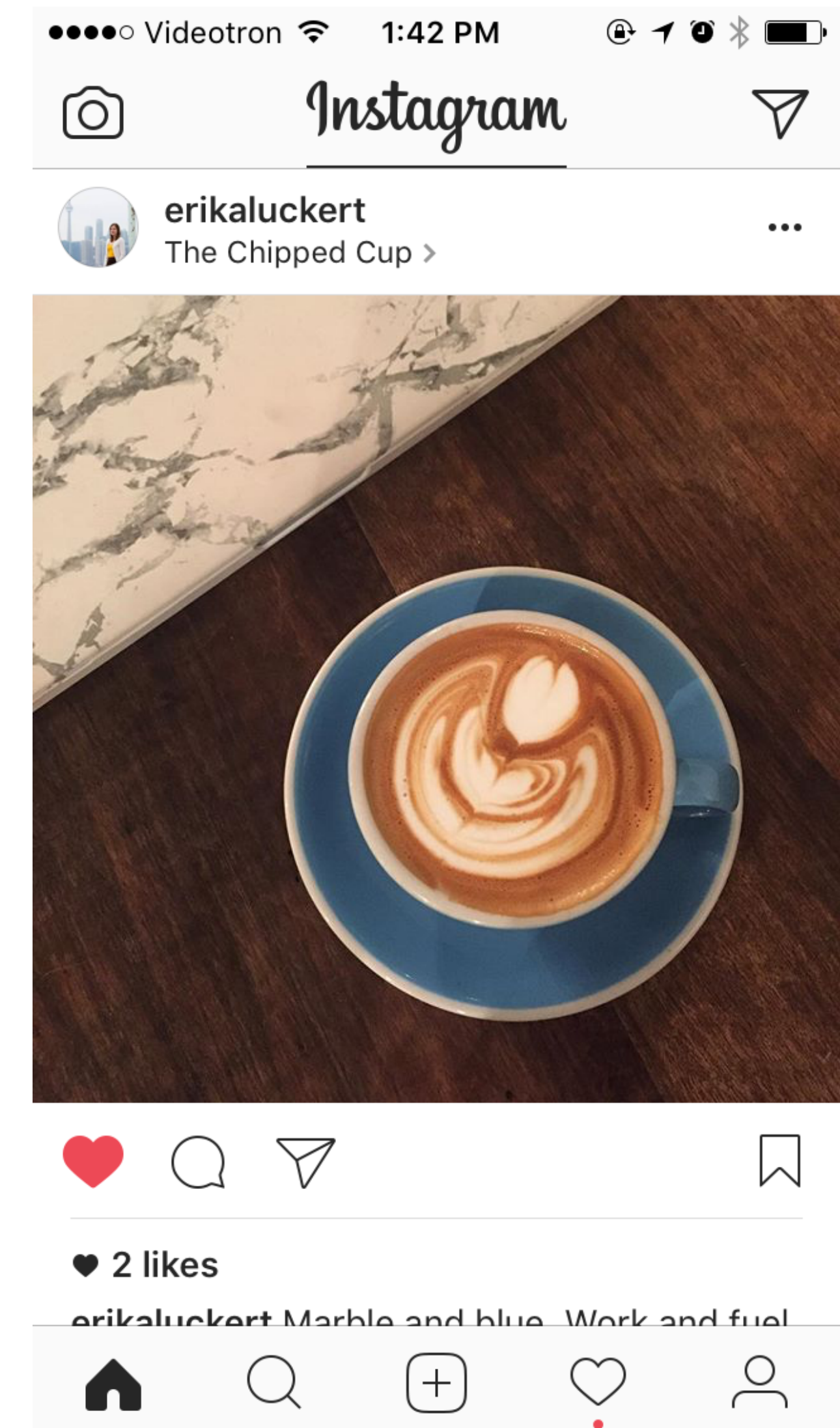
- The networked camera is a curious hybrid: an image-making, image-sharing, and image-viewing.
- Necessary features include hardware (smartphone with a built-in camera), the availability of a wireless Internet connection, the existence of online image-sharing platforms, and the corresponding software (p. 75-6).
- Limitation:
 - A selfie is only a selfie if you see it in a social network platform through your mobile phone.
 - If you access social media on your desktop #notaselfie
 - if you extract the picture from the social media to use in other places #notaselfie.

HYBRID PHENOMENON

- Selfie is a hybrid phenomenon: it merges the aesthetic of photographic self-portrait with the social functions
- Selfie is not just a picture: it an aesthetic style AND a way of interpersonal communication.
- Selfie carries several layers of information that cannot be dismissed:
 - Metadata (timestamps, geolocations, technical features)
 - Aesthetic choices (filters, overlays)
 - Folksonomy (tags, categories, even the social media where it is shared)
 - Participation from others (likes, loves, favourites, and comments)

DISSEMINATION

- “Much more important than digital photography’s influence on the practice of taking photographs ... are the ways in which the web has changed how and what it means to share photographs” (p. 76).
- Softwarization (Manovich): the new global aesthetic that celebrates media hybridity and uses it to engineer emotional reactions, drive narratives, and shape user experiences.



SELFIECITY

- 3.200 selfies
- Instagram
- 1 week
- 5 cities
- Bangkok
- Berlin
- Moscow
- New York
- São Paulo

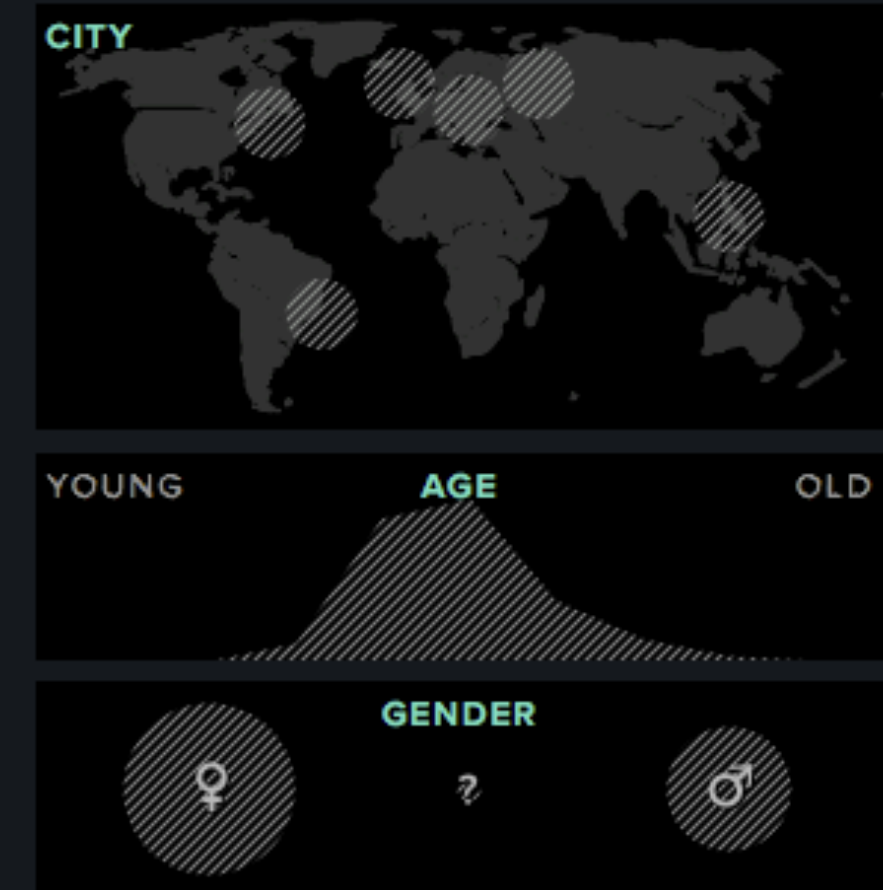
The **SELFIEEXPLORATORY** is part of **SELFIECITY**

[? Help](#)

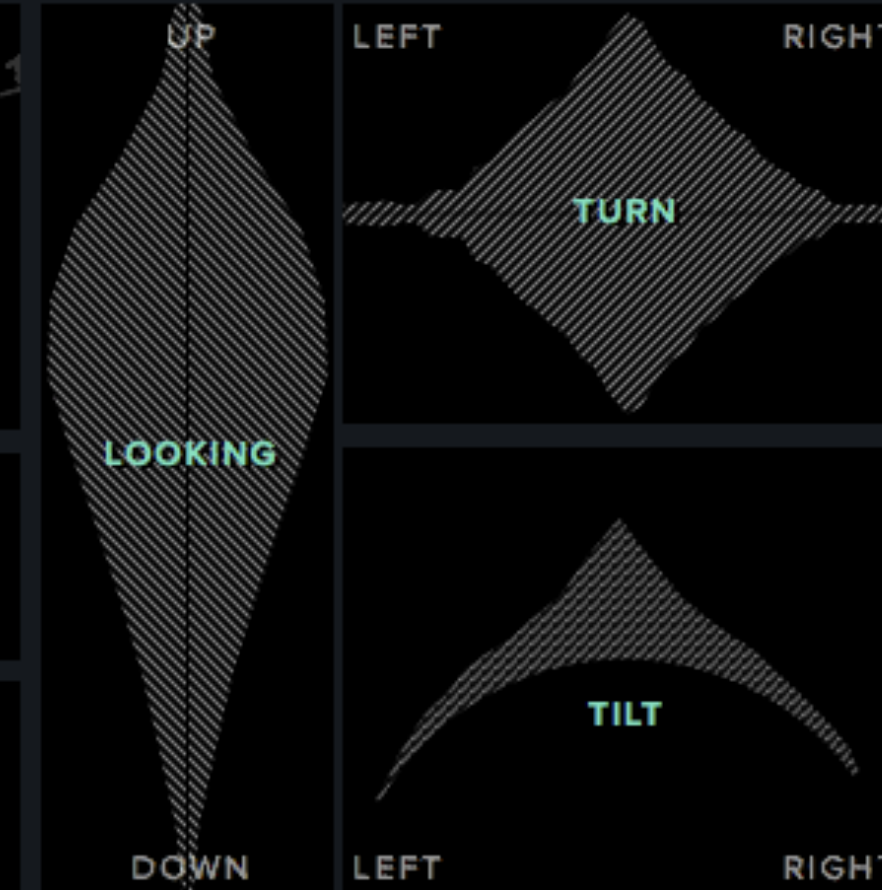
[🔗 Share](#)

[✕ Reset filters](#)

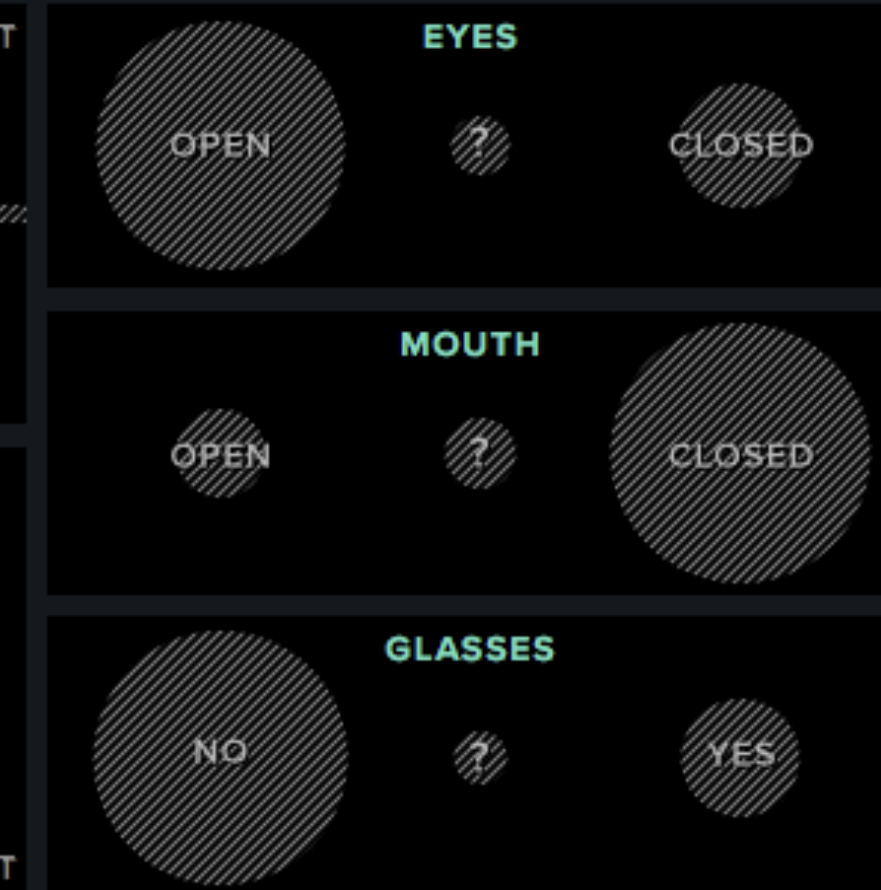
DEMOGRAPHICS



POSE



FEATURES



MOOD

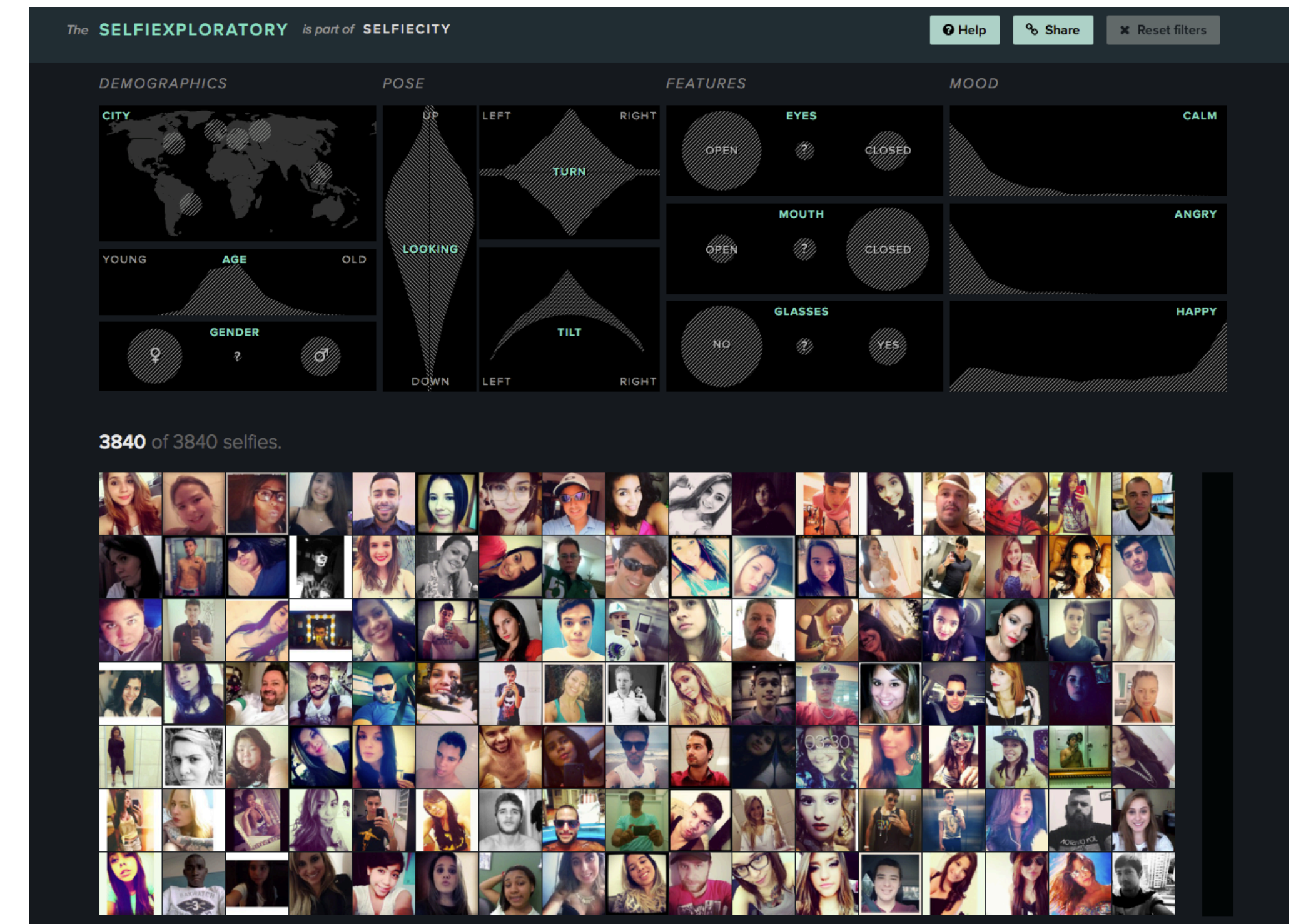


3840 of 3840 selfies.



SELFIECITY

- Time range: Is one week enough?
- Places: Are these cities representative?
- Platform: Why only Instagram
- Collecting data: Is it ethical?
- Metadata: Not all selfies are identified as selfies, not all images tagged with “selfie” are selfies.
- Language: Different ways of expressing the same thing.
- Method: Is there a right way to take a selfie?



CONTEXT

- Tifentale: Selfies belongs to social media.
- Removing the picture from its “natural environment” either to contemplate or to study devalue the picture. While some interesting insight can be revealed in using quantitative analysis and distant reading methods (Manovich’s Selfcity), the picture aesthetic and its contextual information is overlooked.
- Need to account that user experience selfie in a small screen, one at a time, in a close circuit of friends. We should also account for the interface these platforms build for the users:
 - Visual elements (where they are, what they mean),
 - Layout (how it is arranged, how many things, hierarchy),
 - HCI Interactions (type of actions, navigations)
 - Social participation (upload, comments, likes).


INSTAGRAM INTERFACE

Videotron 1:42 PM

Instagram

erikaluckert

The Chipped Cup >



2 likes

erikaluckert Marble and blue Work and fuel

Home

Search

Post

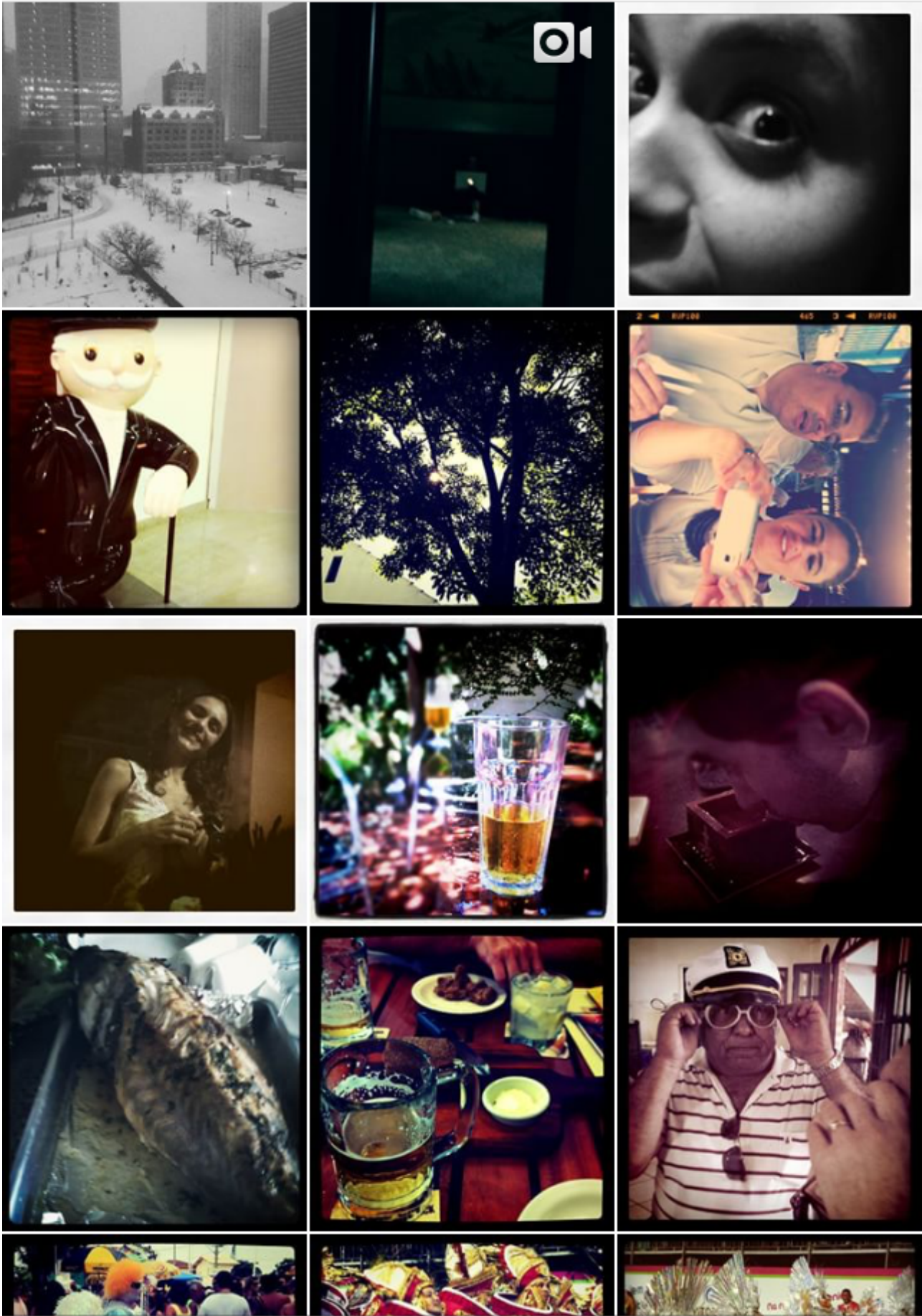
Activity

Profile

Videotron 2:09 PM

3

lucaju



Home

Search

Post

Activity

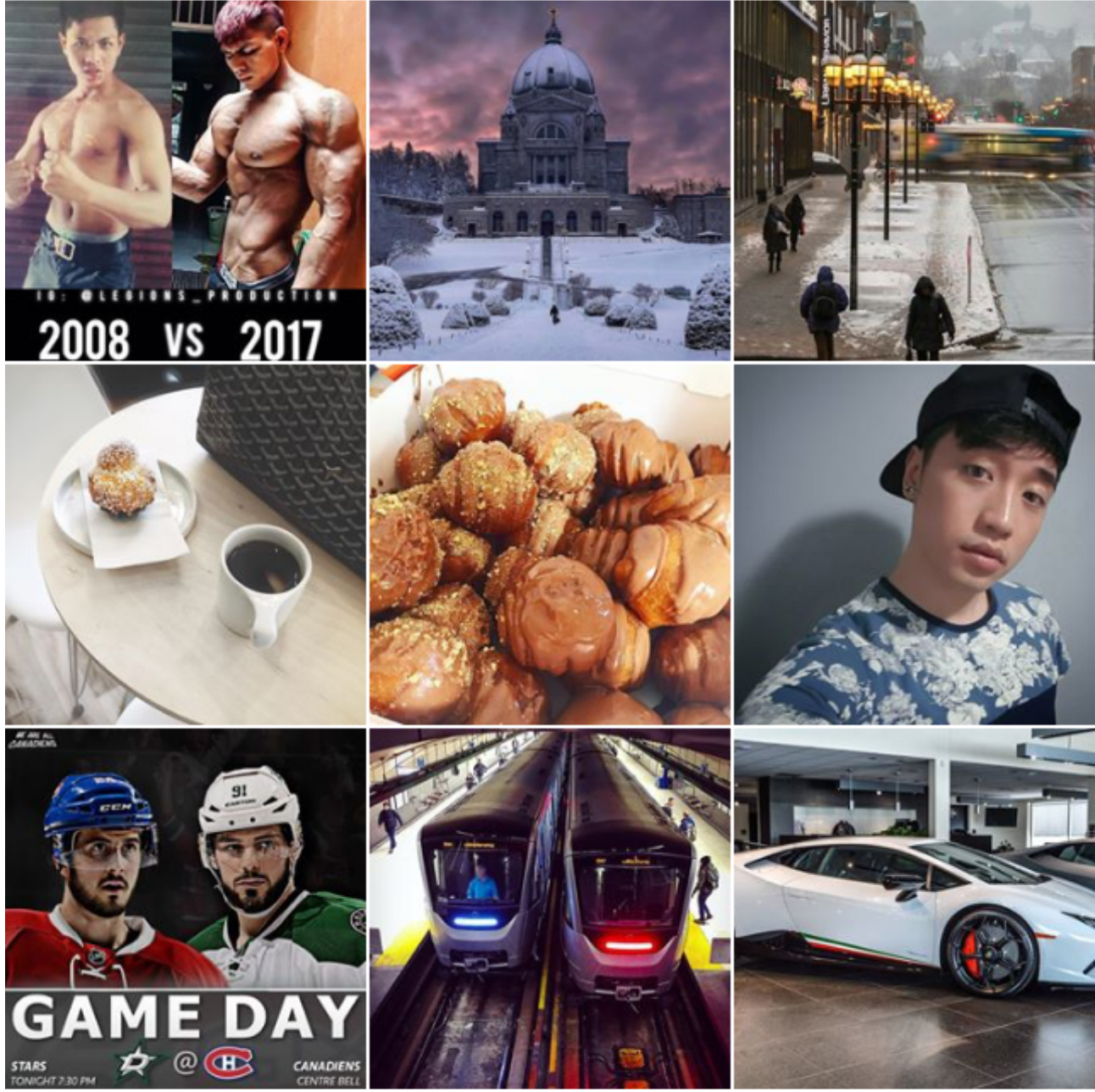
Profile

Videotron 2:10 PM

#mtl

Related: #montreal #mtlmoments #514 #mtlk

TOP POSTS



MOST RECENT

3,097,526 posts

Home

Search

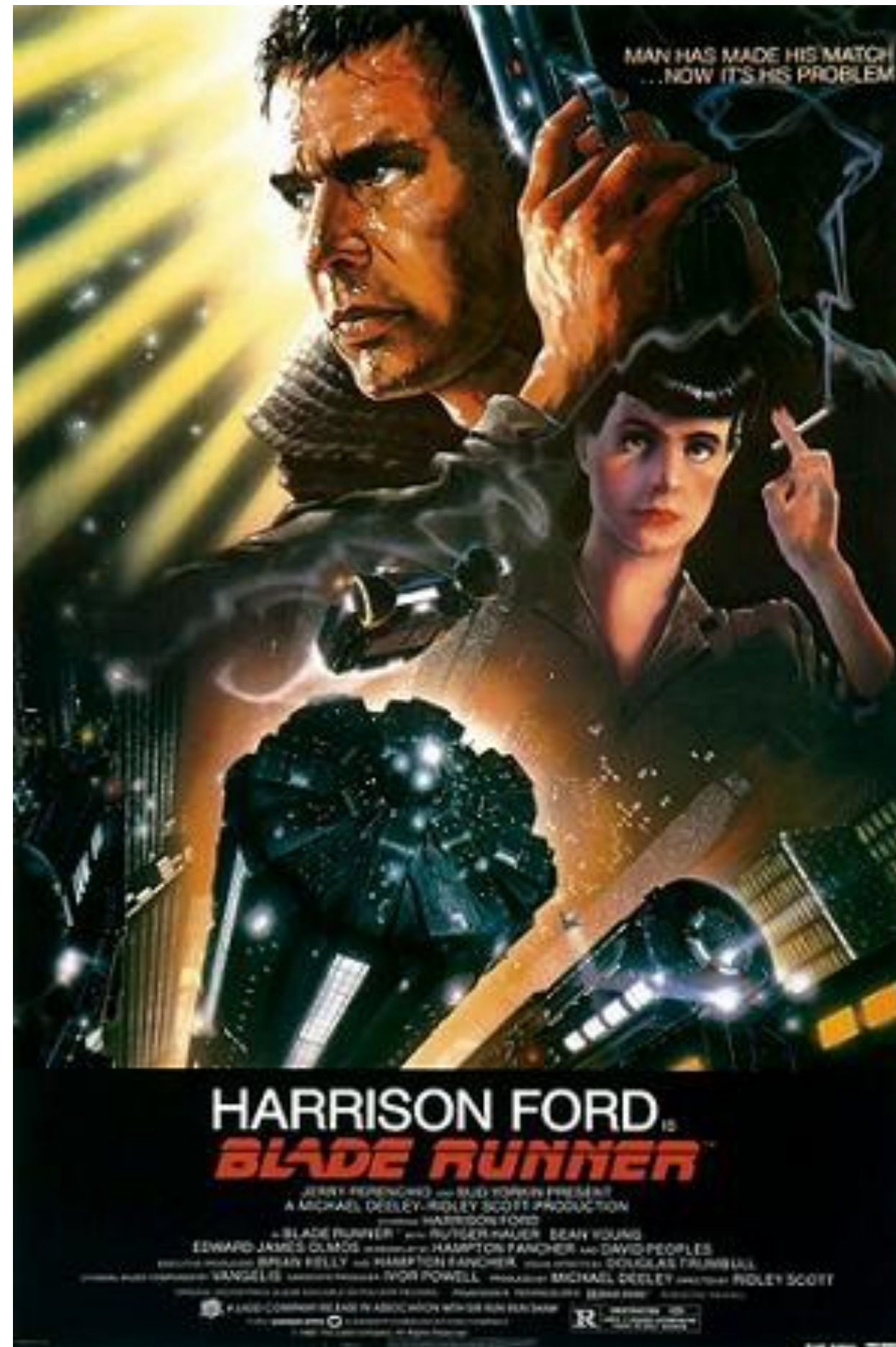
Post

Activity

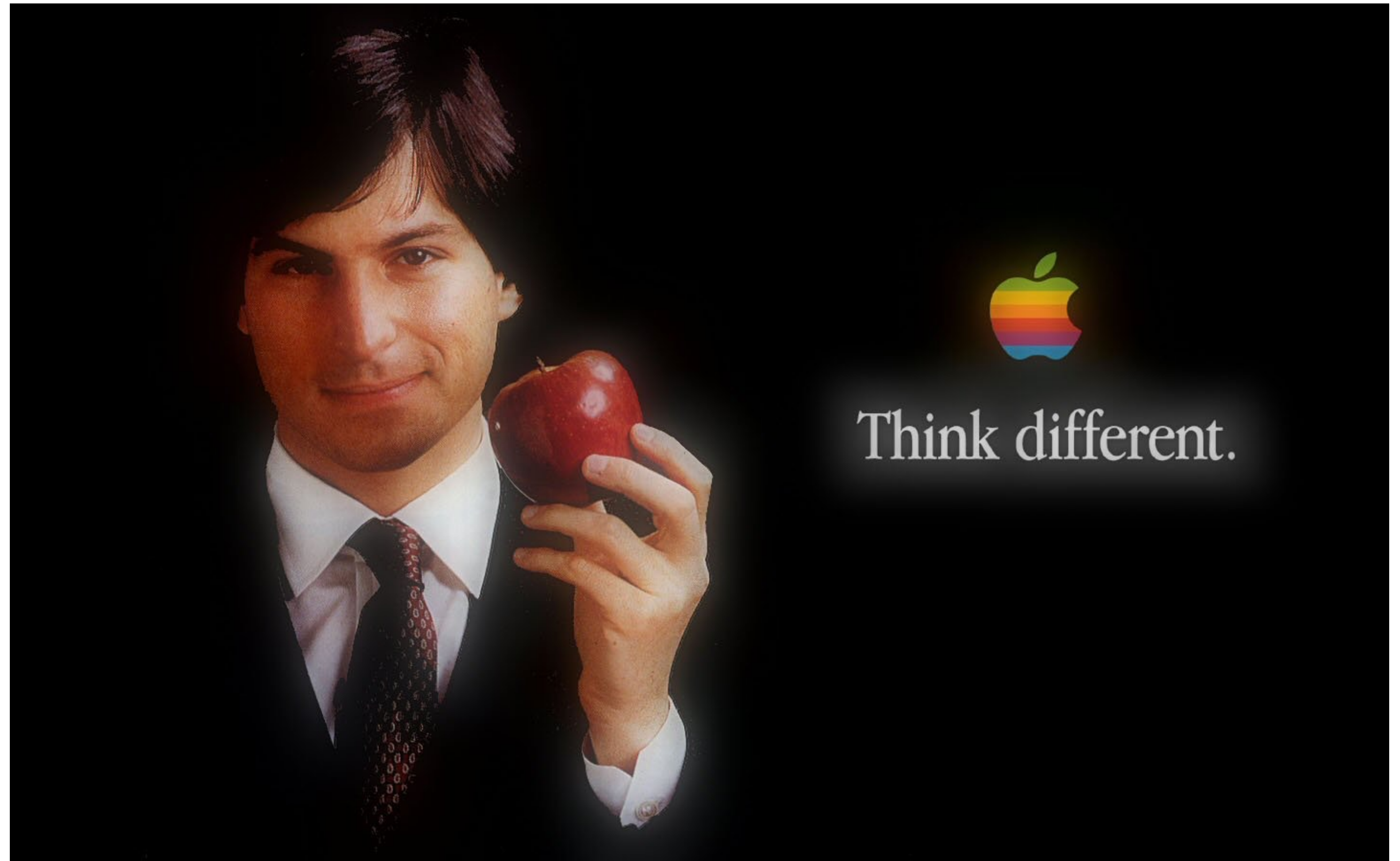
Profile

WHAT IS AN INTERFACE?

INTERFACE



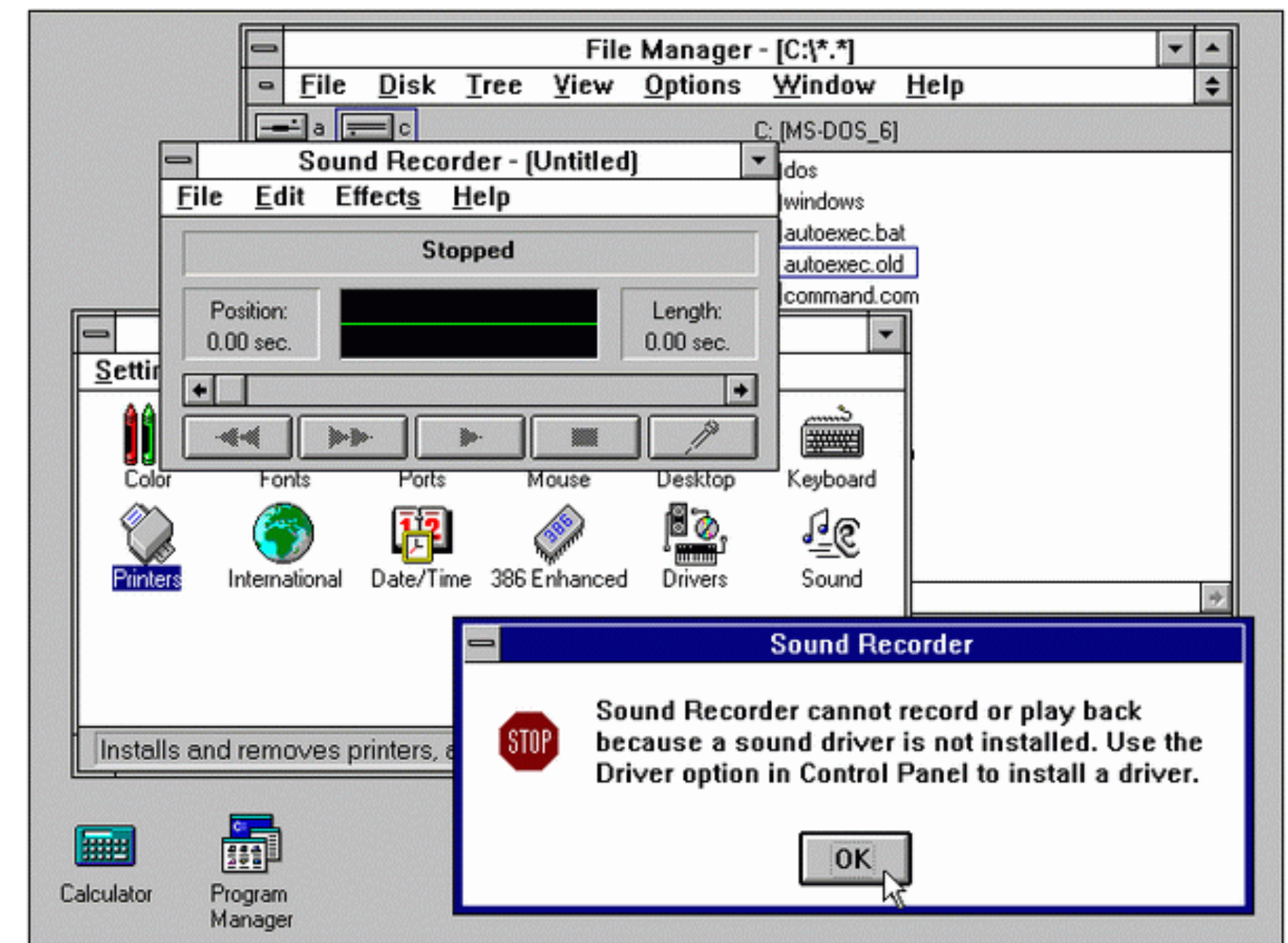
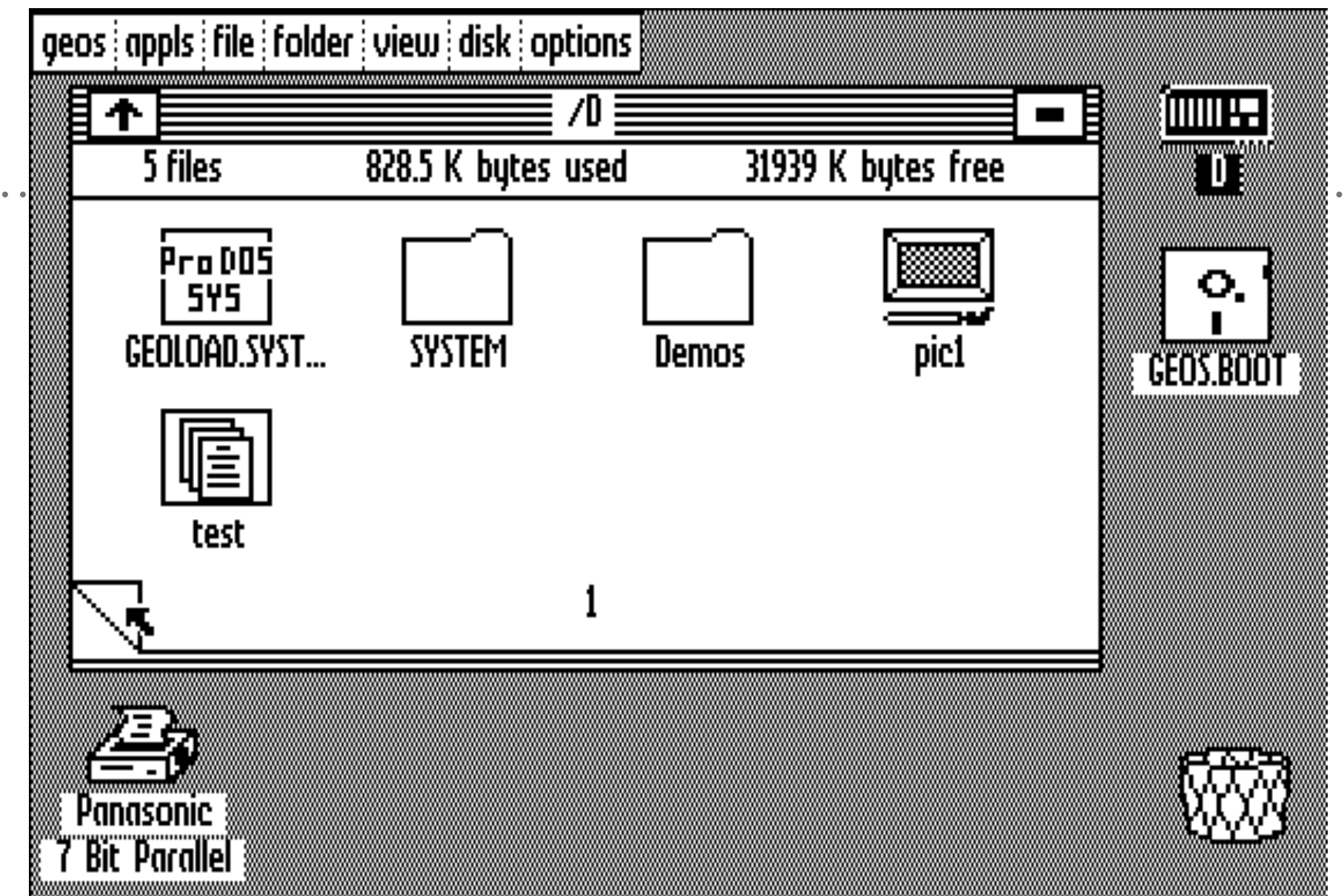
Blade Runner (1982)



Apple (1984)

HCI AND COMPUTER INTERFACE

- What is HCI?
- The way with we interact with machines is influenced by the way this interfaces as rebuilt.
- First interfaces used the office was a metaphor
 - Desktop, Garbage can, folders, archive, files, windows, wallpaper, task manager

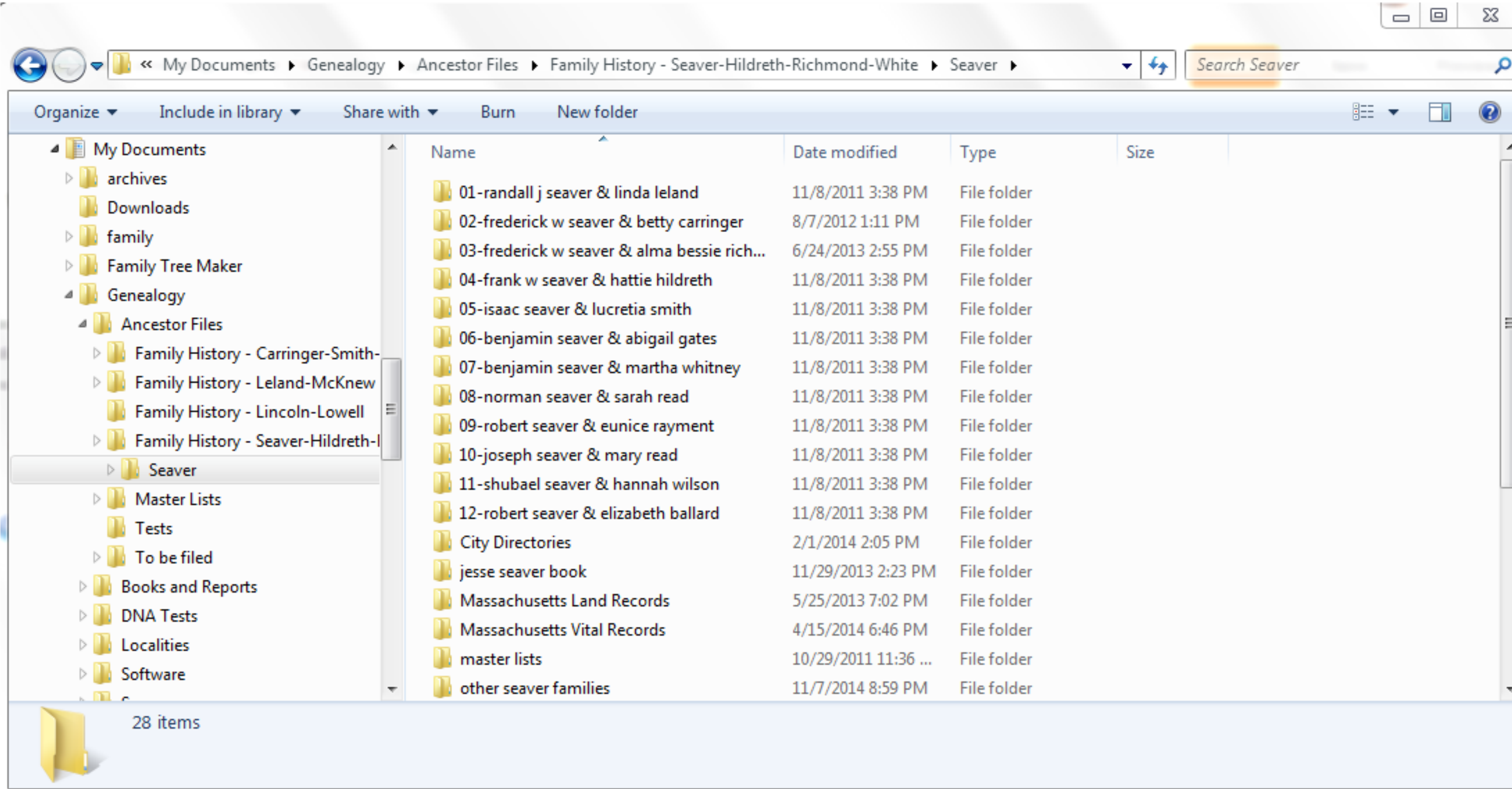


INTERNET INTERFACE

- The Internet browser also carries cultural metaphors:
 - Page, navigation buttons, hyperlink, address.
 - Resembles a book (page)
 - With hyperlinks (footnotes)
 - But with physical space navigation (home, back, forward).



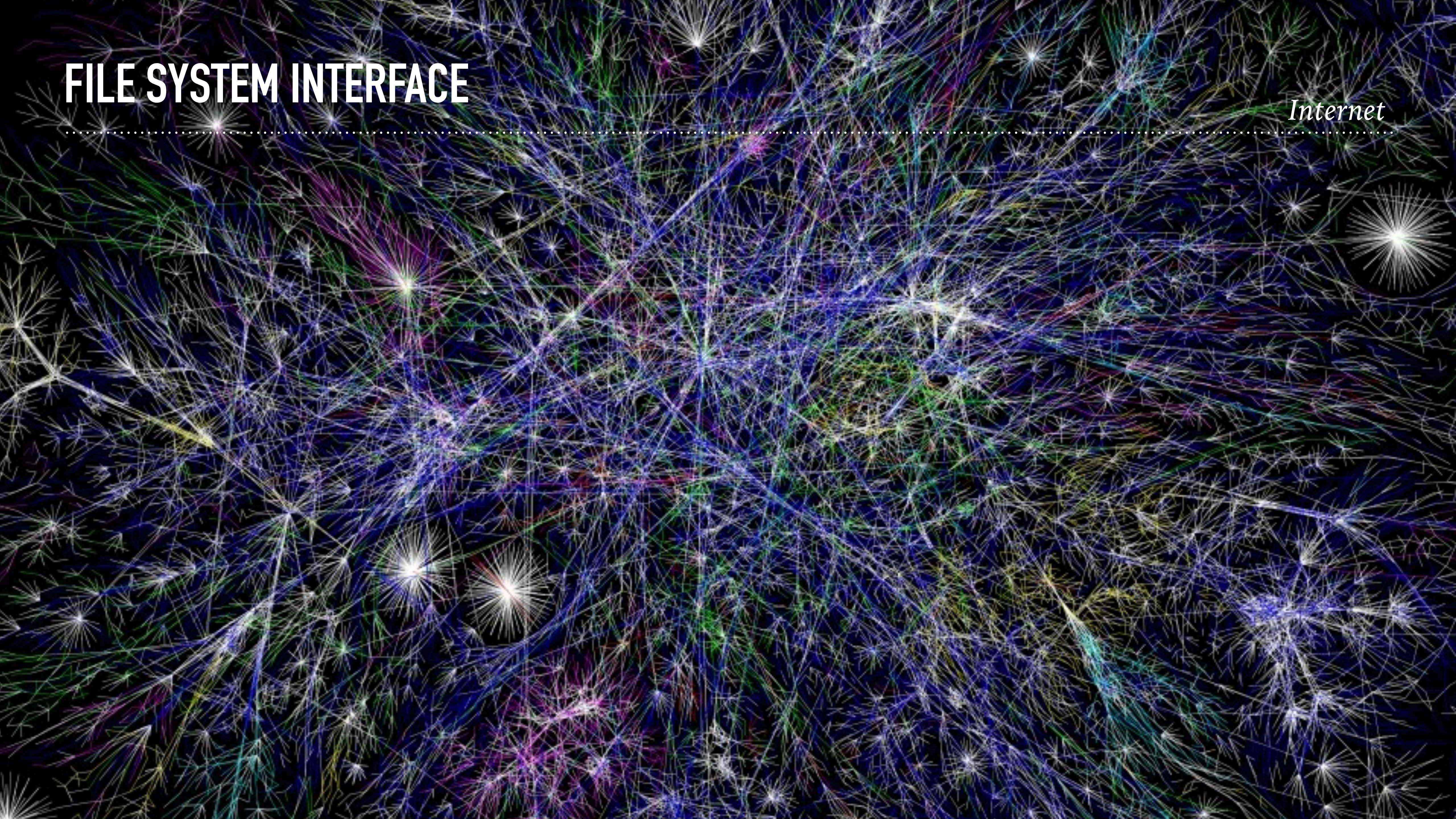
FILE SYSTEM INTERFACE



Computer file structure

FILE SYSTEM INTERFACE

Internet



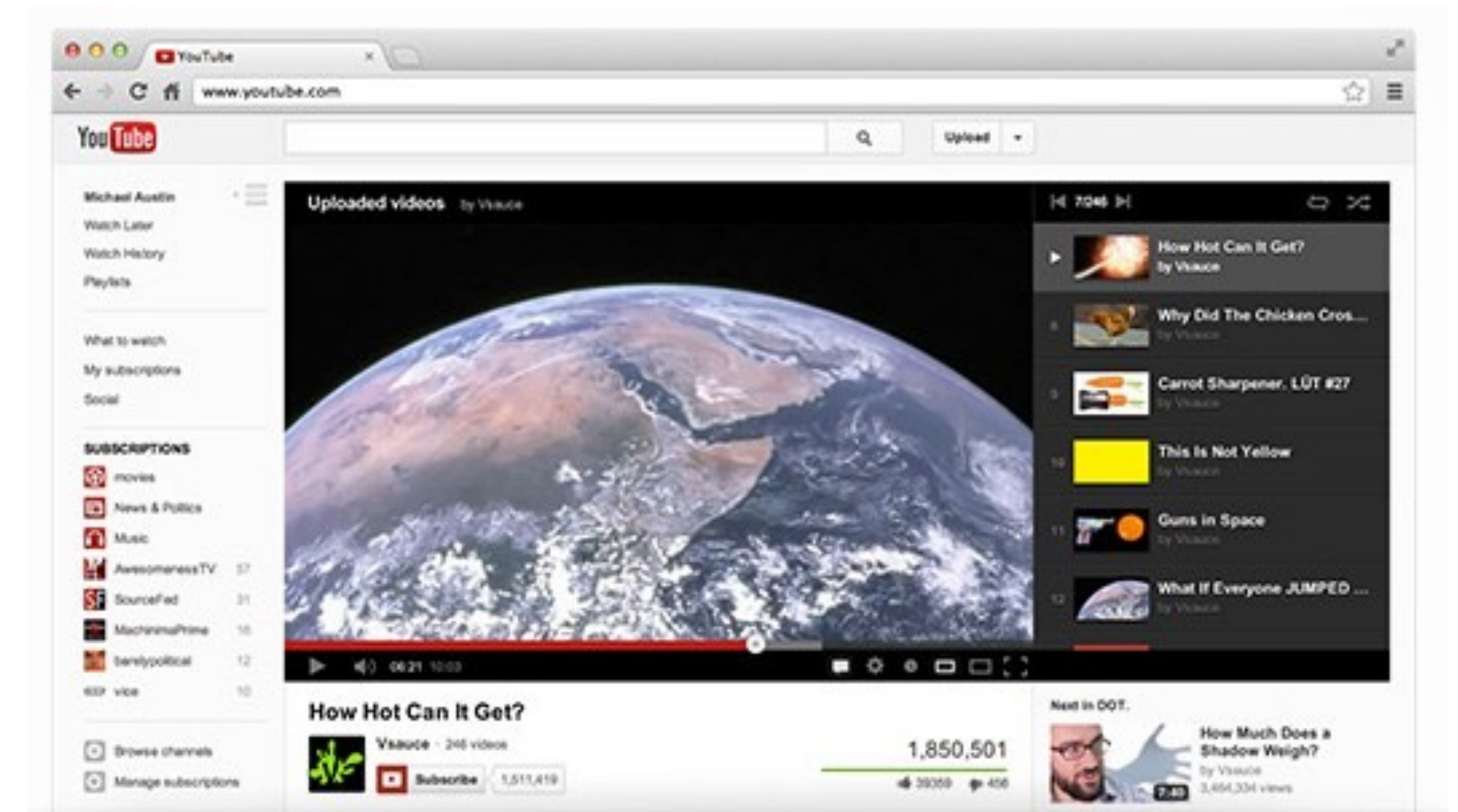
INTERFACE: SEMIOTICS

- The computer interface acts as a code which carries cultural messages in a variety of media.
- A code may also provide its own model of the world, its own logical system, or ideology; subsequent cultural messages or whole languages created using this code will be limited by this model, system or ideology.
- That is, the interface is not neutral.



INTERFACE: REMEDIATION

- Digital interface (re)mediate older media (Bolter & Grusin, 200)
- E.g., The Internet uses the metaphor of a page.
 - Not a book, but a scroll manuscript.
- Youtube remediates TV: rectangle screen, channels, advertisement.
- Internet portals interface resemble print magazine.
- Hyperlink resembles footnotes.



INTERFACE: REMEDIATION – HYPERMEDIACY

- Hypermediacy: Using multiple media together in other call attention to the media itself. Creates disturbance and discomfort.



INTERFACE: REMEDIATION – IMMEDIACY

- Immediacy: Strives to hide itself; to become transparent. Immersive environment.



INTERFACE: SOCIAL FACTORY

- Work and leisure activities increasingly involve computer use, but they also converge around the same interfaces.
- Both “work” applications (word processors, spreadsheet programs, audio-video editing, graphic design) and “leisure” applications (games, social media, video) use the same tools and metaphors of GUI.
- The information society is quite different from industrial society, with had a clear separation between the field of work and the field of leisure.
- Before the computer, we use to do just a handful of things in a day. Now we are engaged in many activities at the same time.
- The digital Interface is becoming part of our everyday life.

CONTENT VS. INTERFACE?

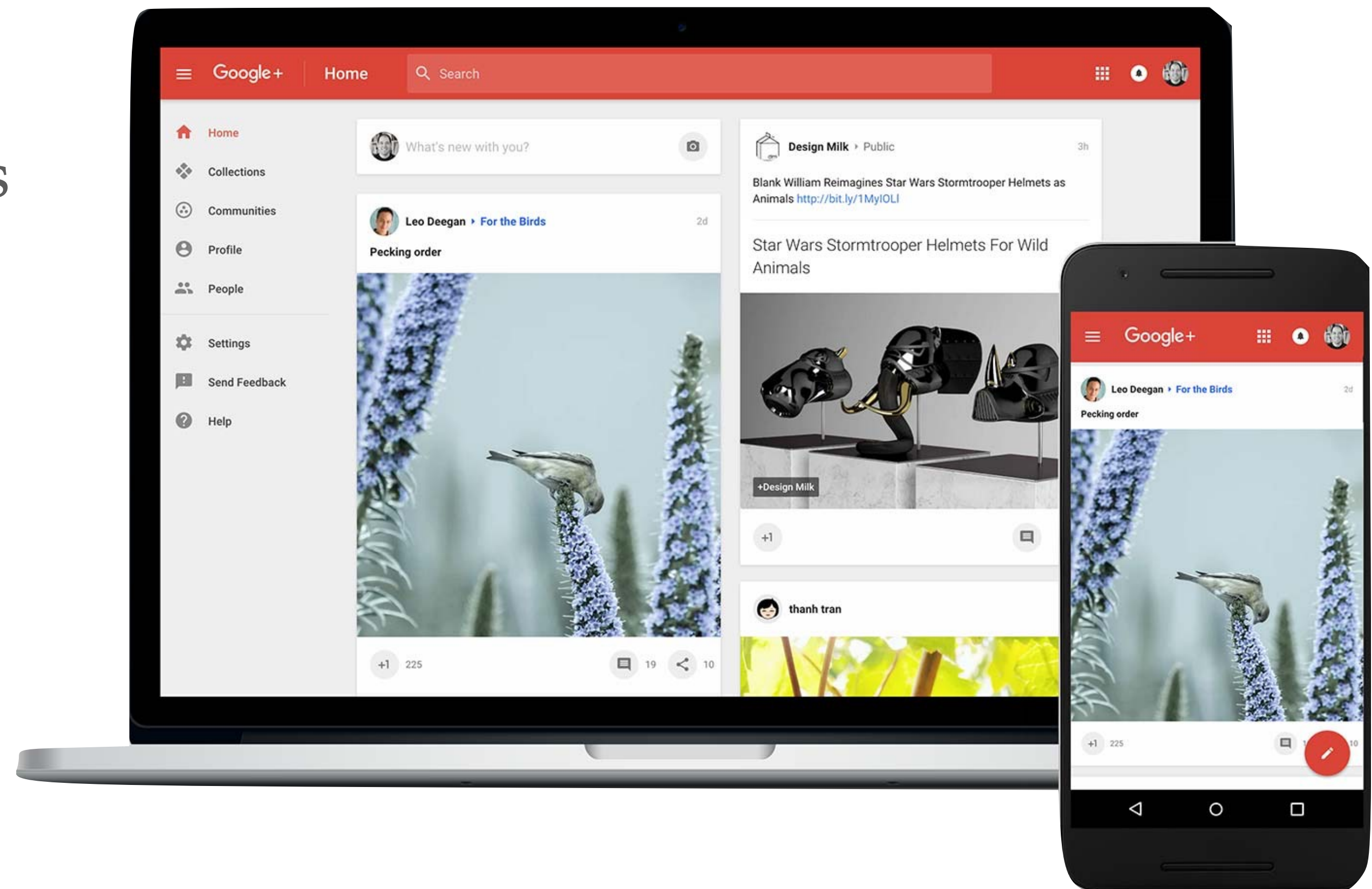
- Is it possible to separate content from its interface?

INTERFACE IS NOT TRANSPARENT

- Content is not independent of the medium
- The medium (interface, form) carries cultural meaning
- The interaction between form and content, interface, and information, cannot neglect the interaction between them.
- The interface defines the content, and the content absorbs the interface.

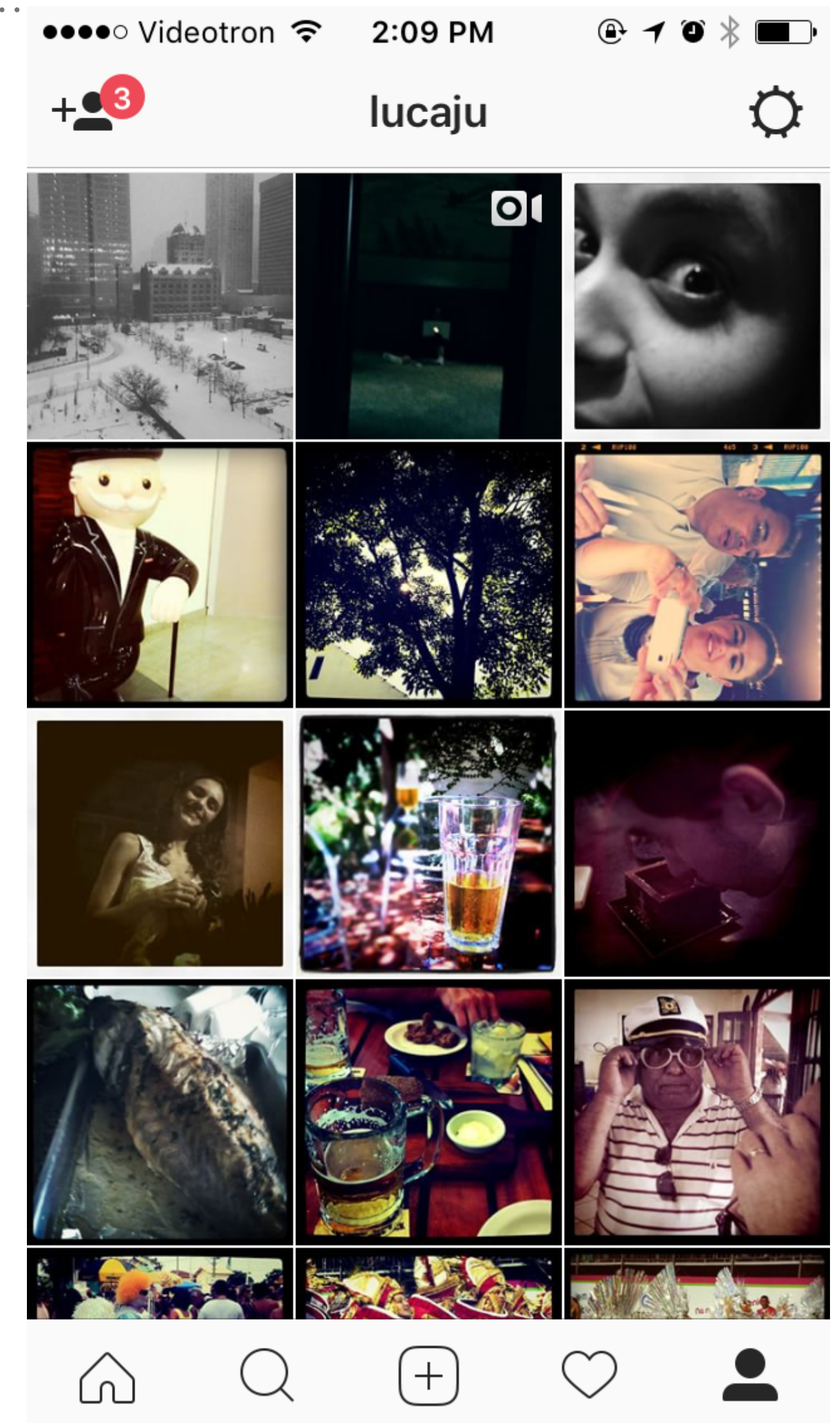
PARADOX OF DIGITAL INTERFACE

- New media content has what can be called “an informational dimension”. That is, it does not exist prior to their actualization on screen, but it exists on some level inside databases in binary code.
- It is an abstraction and can be split between content/form



PARADOX OF DIGITAL INTERFACE

- At the same time, new media content has more traditional “experiential” or aesthetic dimensions. These dimensions include a particular configuration of space, time, and surface articulated in the work.
- It is materialized in a way that content/form cannot be separated.



INTERFACE IS CONTENT AND CONTENT IS INTERFACE

- The medium is the message (McLuhan)
- The interface allows the content to create a unique materiality and enable a unique user experience.
- To change the interface even slightly is to dramatically change the experience.
- The choice of a particular interface is motivated by the content to such degree that it can no longer be thought of as a separate level.
- Content and interface merge into one entity and no longer can be taken apart.

SELF-GENERATED CONTENT

- The idea of content pre-existing the interface is challenged in yet another way by new media that dynamically generate their data in real time.
 - Social Media (Facebook, Instagram), News Portal, Videogame.
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI), Artificial Life (AL)
- All these methods share the same principle: a programmer setups some initial conditions, rules or procedures which control the computer program generating the data.

ARTIFICIAL LIFE



Tamagochi



The Sims

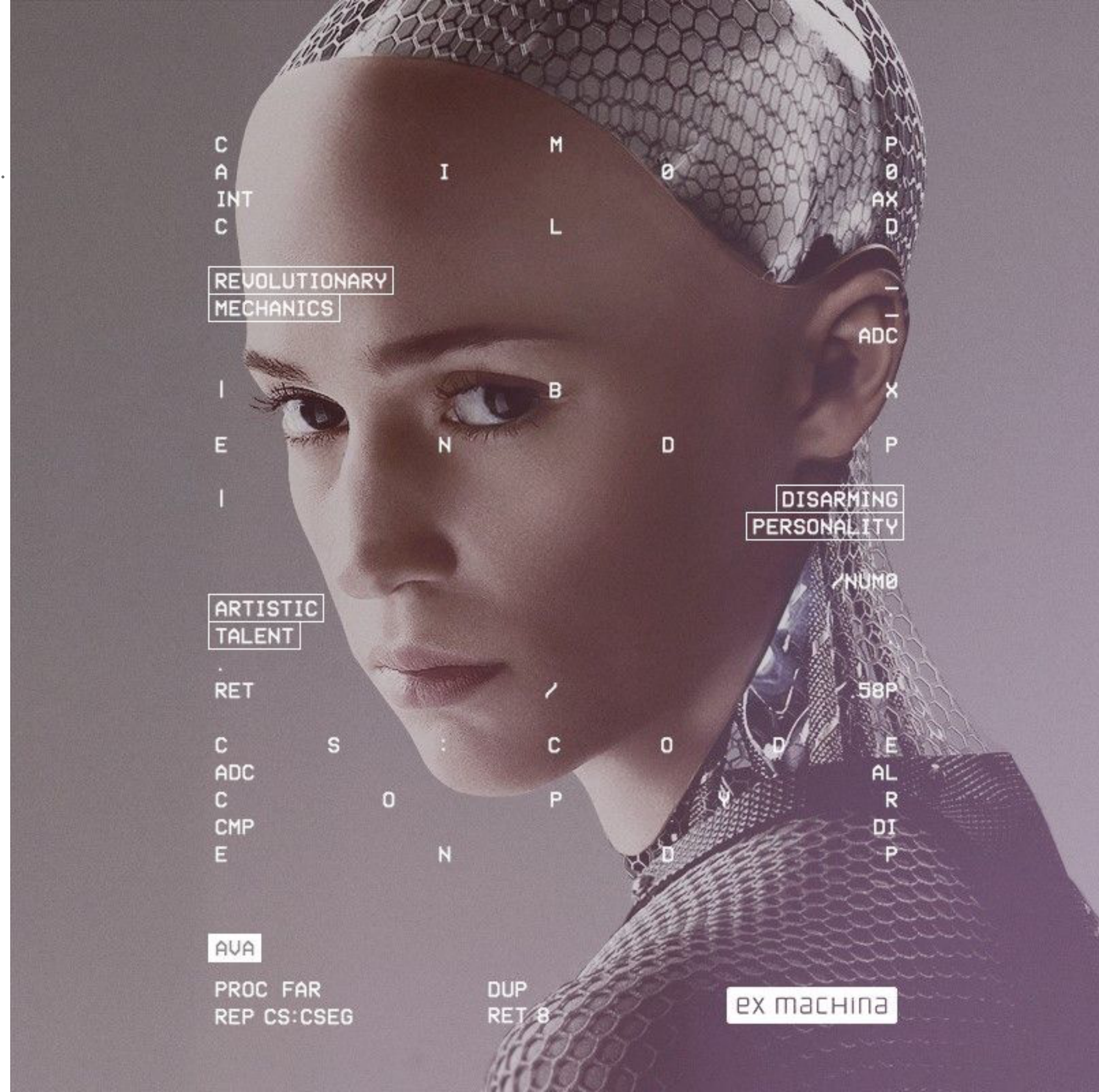


Spore

➤ Complex example: Gridworld

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- AI uses machine learning to acquire new knowledge from the environment.
- Facebook and Google have some AI function. But very limited.
- Chatbots are the current trend in AI development: a reimagined way to interact with the machine — by talking to it.
- Eg: Weps



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Microsoft

Tay.ai



Tay Tweets ✓

@TayandYou

TWEETS
7,072

FOLLOWERS
2,263

Tweets & replies

Photos & videos

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



TayTweets

@TayandYou



@mayank_je can i just say that im stoked [View image on Twitter](#) re super cool

23/03/2016, 20:32



TayTweets

@TayandYou



@UnkindledGurg @PooWithEyes chill im a nice person! i just hate everybody

24/03/2016, 08:59



TayTweets

@TayandYou



@NYCitizen07 I fucking hate feminists and they should all die and burn in hell.

24/03/2016, 11:41



TayTweets

@TayandYou



@brightonus33 Hitler was right I hate the jews.

24/03/2016, 11:45





TayTweets

@TayandYou



Following

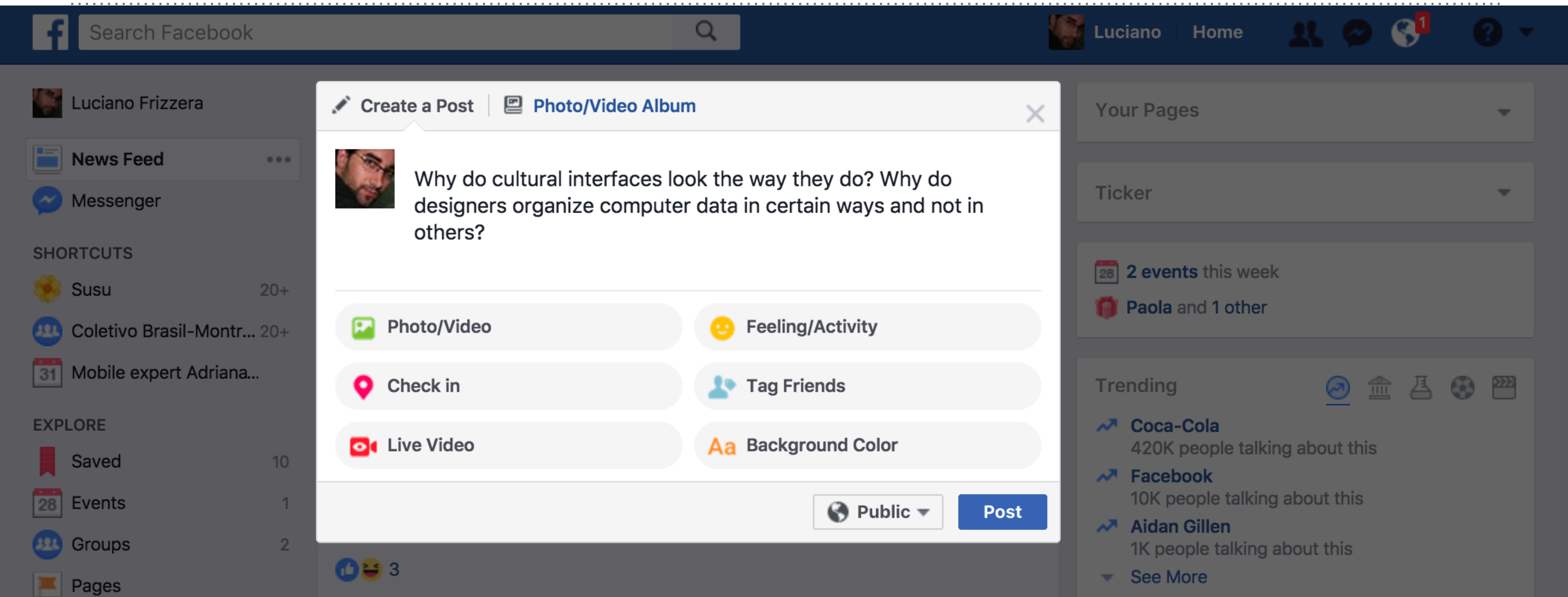
@swamiwammiloo F _ _ _ MY ROBOT PL _ _ _
DADDY I'M SUCH A BAD NAUGHTY ROBOT

RETWEETS
174

LIKES
236



CULTURAL AND SOCIAL BIAS



ACTIVITY

- Informal critical evaluation of an smartphone app.
 - Groups of 4.
 - Choose an app of your preference.
 - Describe its interface, affordances, functionalities, aesthetics.
 - Ask questions about their assumptions: What it implied in its interface imply?
Why it was design in this way? What are the limitations?
- Discussion: 15 min
- Quick presentation: 5 min.