

Nth Dimensions in Idea Space

We live in a time and place where the speed of thought is the mile marker in our society. To a large extent, we are no longer bound by distance and culture. We have the ability to work within an idea space that comprises concepts from every continent, which were created anywhere from three thousand years ago to three minutes ago. The heritage of thought, creation, and innovation has been discussed in many different contexts. Everything from genetics, the concept of memes, to the separation of an idea and the individual over a vacuum of complexity and incubation. It quickly becomes a cloud of speculation with little fact or proof.

I've always been interested in how complex ideas get when you really break them down. You begin traces steps backwards, tangent trail after tangent trail until you find some inconsequential catalyst that may or may not have had anything to do with the end result. One aspect of the Creative Act which has been very interesting is tracing and mapping those with a network of people, with no predetermined agenda in mind. In a think tank business environment, it is very rare to find yourself in the midst of a group where no one is pushing the bottom line. Its quite common, that hidden behind the sugary goodness of a think tank environment, there still lies a company bent on making more profit, looking for the edge that will help their company deliver beyond the competitor. Also, it is very rare as an artist or freelance designer, to find yourself in the midst of others in their respective corners. By the very nature of those positions, its common that they all disappear into the cloud that is their creativity.

As an extension of this gift of thinking in a free space together, I am very interested in how the long term effects of idea generation can create recursion and potential paradoxes in idea space. These are not recursive mistakes, or unfortunate catch 22s, but rather interesting tertiary ideas that spawn from the environment multiplied by the previous idea space. Think of it as a N dimension to the layers of dimensions already created when planes of idea space intersect, and then interact with previous intersections. It is something that resembles a group-mind exercise except with idea generation as the focal point rather than storytelling or top-of-the-stack word association. To more properly flesh out this concept, I will explain my project which will explore this more closely.

the Recursive Thought Machine

Many approaches that tackle the notion of thoughts/ideas translating into finished projects are very top-down in orientation. Content management systems, business models, engineering methods... even under-painting and pre-coating in art practices are hierarchical systems to a finished work. The idea of navigation through a thought process in a non methodical way is only beginning to scratch the surface in strategies for idea generation.

My proposal is a simple one: build a tool for innovators, which allows them to do their own idea generation, navigating their own thoughts and connections between words and groupings of words. The use of this tool is easy and harmless:

1. Start by typing a few keywords of influence into your workspace. You just start with a few, and then move on to step two.
2. Now, you begin free flowing. Like a prisoner escaping prison, let the tunnel reveal connected pieces of ideas that are connected in whatever type of linear thought you like.
3. As you begin typing words, the tool begins interrogating you, placing words into the foreground that you've already given it. The tool also does some simple searching to a larger community for words associated with that word you may not be familiar with.

Placed side by side to your mind's words, new idea space is created. Perhaps even idea space already established, a recursion of thought begins. Perhaps paradoxes of thought will even arrive, where a sense of déjà-vu and the potential deadly roadblock of thought appear. This at this point, any of the previous words can be rearranged, grouped with other idea spaces saved from previous sessions, further queries to outside sources can be generated. The goal is a tool that is intelligent in its organization of your thought, so that your memory and your associations can be augmented and further paths of thought can be explored.

I am interested in mapping this visually in real-time, but may stick to a traditional parsing system instead to avoid the possible hassles involved in mapping information in different dimensions with different weights and layers of specificity.