

Ctrl-ZINE

Issue 24 — Vol. 2



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About ^Z

Ctrl-ZINE (^Z) is a Ctrl-c.club/Smol Web collaborative zine that celebrates tech and the Smol Web. Started in March 2023, Ctrl-ZINE publishes a monthly issue, where anyone can download a PDF version and a pre-folded PDF version for home printing. No digital format of the content is maintained on a Website whatsoever. Some of the topics within these issues range from Smol Web protocols and communities (ActivityPub, Tildeverse), Web-adjacent protocols (Gopher, Gemini), alternative forms of communication (HAM radio, LoRa, finger), snippets of code, artwork, and anything tech-related

Those who contribute to ^Z are passionate about what they share. They want what is best for Us, the citizens of the Web. With that, anyone with that same passion is welcome and encouraged to contribute to future issues. Further info can be found in the Editorial section of this issue. May the Smol Web live forever!

Editorial:

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ZINEHEAD Press

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Going to the Hygienist by fLaMEd fUry

What's going on, Internet? I turned up to my hygienist earlier this week. I do this every six months so I can pretend I've got my life together. Everything checked out pretty good and I got the clean and polish at the end, which is the real reason I'm there.

But before I could leave they bailed me up.

Are you flossing?
How many times a day are you flossing?
You need to floss.

I ain't got time for flossing. So I fired back.

Do you have your own domain?

Are you posting to your own server and syndicating everywhere?

Do you support webmentions?

Have you marked up everything with microformats2?

Are you keeping up with your favourite blogs over RSS in a feed reader?

Do you use a password generator?

Are you creating a unique login for every single service you sign up to?

Do you run your own server?

Do you self-host your photos?

Are you backing up off-site?

Are you off Big Tech?

Are you hand-coding your HTML and CSS?

Are you actually reading those feeds or just collecting them?

Are you? ARE YOU?

Talk to me about flossing my teeth. Geez.

Flossing is a personal responsibility. Running my own site is a personal choice. I can be better or worse at both and, at the end of the day, the consequences mostly land on me.

That's the difference I keep coming back to. We've started treating the independent web like a checklist. A running count of domains, self-hosted services, platforms we've quit, specs we've implemented. It's

very easy to look sideways at what everyone else is doing instead of asking a much simpler question, am I actually enjoying this?

The independent web isn't a competition. Whether you run your own server or use a shared hosting service like neocities or nekoweb, whether you hand-code everything or use a premade template to get you started, whether you implement every standard or just post some plain text. None of that makes one site more "independent" than another.

We're all doing this with different amounts of time, money, energy and interest.

For some people it's a static site and a domain.
For others it's just having a space that isn't inside a feed.
For some it's full self-hosting.
For others it's writing when they can and leaving it at that.

That doesn't make the web worse. That's what makes it a web.

The whole point was to get away from systems that turn everything into performance and optimisation. Just to have a place to exist online that works the way you want it to.

Make the web you want to make.

Take the parts that are fun. Leave the parts that feel like homework. Learn something new when you feel like it. Ignore it when you don't.

Be kind. Join in. Enjoy yourself.

That's enough.

My hygienist can keep the floss. I've flamedfury.com ;)

~fLaMEd

W3bk3rn3l radio outpost by wbknl-000004

KG-84 encrypted MIL-STD 188-110B

Message made on an ISB circuit

--> Croughton (AJE)

--> Sigonella (NSY)

```
{
Several theorists suggest that this is a secret communication station
for a secret
+society, agency, or government, to be used to communicate in an
unbreakable,
+bizarre cipher. Several major events and military exercises that have
taken place
+during intercepts of w3bk3rn3l's radio transmissions back the theory
}
```

1....<|.|>.....19.....35.....|*...\$!.....%":..:wg

==> BEGIN ENCRYPTION

MONOLIT MESSAGE RECEIVED

BOT

I've received a message. Wot? My old rig is working! I need now to
decipher its
+origin. It looks like some form of Anglo-Saxon language. I need to
install my
+translation module, but I can't find my soldering iron.

--> Begin Quote

We have received from QEC's relay 1 an odd message ciphered in what at
first sight
+looks like some form of Portuguese. Are the Angolan hackers playing
fun again? Or
+is it the New Azorean ultrarobotists dispersing encoded propaganda?
The open
+message seems too innocent to include cryptographic data lines.

--> End Quote

Exciting times arriving!

[#\$ --> noise]

EOT

==> END OF ENCRYPTION

General Rules (of the WWW) by ~loghead

This is no manifesto

No authentic diatribe

But..

As the mass exodii of social media continues (years on now), people are reclaiming more personal web spaces: self-maintained, individualized pages and blogs, updated with the frequency and format that best suits the author. The small web, consisting of personal home servers, simplified web design, blogrolls, community-driven services and a la carte platforms — the Web, as we know it, is OURS now

So let's address some housekeeping, shall we?

Blocking AI bots: a good thing, many pieces of software and tutorials on how to do this. Research.

GDPR compliance (cookie compliance pop-ups): call me a rebel, but negate implementing anything like this onto a site. I know, the British want/"demand" (on the Web, ha!) that people have this disclaimer. I say "chance it" and leave it out and let the royals hunt ya down!

Newsletters: if you got one, great. Add a link in the top nav bar or in a "signature" at the bottom of an entry, No need for interruptions of reading/watching material while scrolling. Small Web sites are very good on this, no newsletter "pop-ups" I've seen as of yet, I hope it stays this way

Advertising: skip it. Big advertisers want their money on the biggest platforms. Paid/sponsored posts can stick with YouTube and individuals on social media. A site/blog is to be read, not advertised on.

Growth/scaling: more readers, more traffic, more "etc etc etc", ok fine, but not if it comes via manipulation of the entries/content on the blog/service. Let people (if they choose), like and use a service because of what it IS and is INTENDING TO BE, not manipulating content and links to spur growth

Arbitrarily specified "rules" (re: "all generalizations are false, including this one"): a site or "reference" page may put out rules and guidelines for a "smol web" website — this is bullshit. HTML (but no CSS!), CSS (but no JavaScript!), shared links (but no search engine indexing!), whatever — do what the hell YOU want to do with a website. What is/isn't in the confines of a gatekeepers (completely pointless) standard, fuck em. The Web is ours, and one's decisions/expressions on their site, server, homelab, et al, are exactly what makes up the Web for what it is.

We're here. Now. Again. The better part of a decade with people wanting to ditch their phone number, itself with using Tweets as an SMS service, to the bellowing chorus of "RSS is dead" by every corporate

apologist journalist, the waning of bloggers and blog updates, in exchange for the glossed over scroll of a social feed — to this, Now, where an enormous Renaissance of personal sites, and Webrings, and blogrolls, and countless, countless, countless sites and services have materialized (seemingly) overnight — a small (and real) Web has manifested itself, again. May it always grow and prosper!