MANI STATION
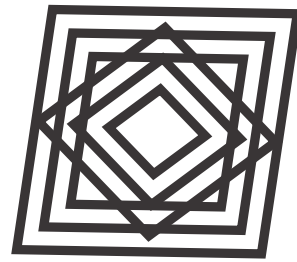
a calm and complete
personal computing situation
reconceptualized for human well-being

conceived & realized by

CIRCUIT
integration
AGENCY

and

A F
K O
M P
U T
E R
S

We are still not in the reality of thought.

The real nature of thought might show itself however at that very point where it once withdrew, if only we will pay heed to this withdrawal, if only we will not insist, confused by logic, that we already know perfectly well what thinking is.

The real nature of thought might reveal itself to us *if* we remain underway.

We are underway.

What does that mean?

We are still *inter vias*, between divergent ways.

Nothing has been decided yet about which is the one inevitable, and hence perhaps the only, way.

Underway, then—

we must give particularly close attention
to that stretch of way on which we are putting our feet.

𝔚𝔞𝔰 𝔥𝔢𝔦𝔰𝔰𝔱 𝔇𝔢𝔫𝔨𝔢𝔫?

The 摩尼 reflects the five colors as they appear before it,
yet the ignorant see the 摩尼 as actually possessing the five colors.

大方廣圓覺修多羅了義經

The computers have been running for a while.

They run ever faster with more & more power.

They appear in more & more places:
On our desks; in our pockets; wrapped around our wrists.

A common refrain at the advent of personal computing was
"Don't spend so much time on the computer!"

Now, with the computers running so much & so seamlesslessly
across the interstices of our lives,
there seems to be no distinction between "on" & "off."

Things are getting out of hand.

Everyone already knows
that the computers are making us insane.

You can see it everywhere:
on the bus, going to work;
at the office, trying to leave;
at home, desperate to be anywhere else.

The computers are waking us up in the morning
& putting us to bed at night
& holding our hands all the day through.

Perpetually screened & mediated, we want to scream,
to throw up our hands in incredulity and scoff:
"Is this all there is?"

Instead we try to plunge deeper,
passionately scrolling & refreshing,
desperate for something to happen.

"This must be the place;
this is where it's happening,"
we feel & find ourselves searching constantly,
as real sense of place falls away.

A phantasm reaches towards us,
asking for one more flick of the thumb,
futile in its promises of redemption.

Just around the corner, we come to feel,
will be the justification,
the score that makes the game worthwhile.

Our browsers used to have a homepage;
do we ever start our browsers and log on anymore?
Aren't they always already running ahead of us?

Or are we not always already there,
already online and plugged in,
continually soaked by datastreams
that have become a firehose?

Have we fallen away from ourselves?

Have the computers run away with us?

Can we in time establish a free relationship to the computers?

MANI STATION

—a collaborative project of CIA & AFK—

asks whether we are not only not too late,
but, perhaps, instead,

just in time.

摩尼

Personal computing power has become functionally unbound;
software design has been accomplished.

The dreams of Felsenstein & Nelson & Weizenbaum
are at our fingertips,
if only we take a moment and recognize them.

We have taken the accomplishments
of hardware, software, system, & network development
back to first principles; we have built the machine the inventors
of tools for thinking would have wanted.

We have done so with grace and style,
with overwhelming 喜 towards the user,
with the idea that children & their grandparents
should enjoy computing together, throughout their lives.

In the following pages you will find:

I.   A technical overview of the entire system;

II.   A detailed description of the human interface hardware prepared by **CIA**;

III. A detailed description of the human interface software prepared by **AFK**; &

IV.   Some next steps for those intrigued by the **MANI STATION**.

I. TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

We pay attention to our metaphors.

When you pay attention, for example,
your storehouse is depleted.

It follows one should be economical:
on one side of the ledger comes the increase in capacity;
on the other, austerity measures—decreases, at least,
in our growing deficit.

We see people today
paying so much attention to their computer,
but the computers have become predatory.

With graphics and gamification and notifications
our attentional systems are quite easily hacked and hijacked.

Some unscrupulous designers even study such phenomena
and weaponize their findings algorithmically.

A generation is coming to age within their poison garden.

We do away with all that.

Our computer does not run on attention.

Our computer waits patiently
for your decision and calmly responds.

Not only does it not contribute to the deficit;
no, it even will (used rightly) grow the supply.

This is accomplished simultaneously and synergistically
 at the levels of software and hardware.

II. HARDWARE

We built, slowly and by hand,
a beautiful object of contemplation.

At the same time it is a complete computer.

Wood paneled—need we specify that this is real wood?—
and equipped with a solid, mechanical, quiet, keyboard,
it rests patiently and responsive for your touch.

There's no mouse, no sound, no color.
Only a beautiful eInk display and a linguistic interface.

"Ok, computer, " some used to recite;
our users strike a chord
and the terminal is ready for commands,
signaling its readiness silently, expectantly, patiently.

We're fading now into the realm of the software,
but not inappropriately.

It's a contemporary Sol-20 with an ink display,
a better keyboard with custom function keys;
it's quet and ready and beautiful like a private jet.

III. SOFTWARE

Experts have been using emacs as an OS for 40 years.
We use a Rust frontend with an emacs backend
to make room for rookies.

On an Intel chip we run a stripped-down version of Arch,
defaulting to emacs, presented through Rust.

We consider ourselves the Antichrist.
Every time their neural net rejiggers its algorithm,
we take another step back to ask how much less can we do.

It's not a fetishism for minimalism,
which plagues most tastes for design still alive today;
it's a passion borne of a sense of responsibility,
galvanized from our own sensations of diminution of attention.

Less is now more; I don't care how impossible it sounds.

Each page has an input, a simple output of that page,
and a context within which some part of the page appears.

At start our OS only waits for one question: "What's happening?"

The user begins:

"Show me my emails"

"Show me the emails I put off"

"Diary"

"Let's gather my thoughts"

Software so far
gathers thoughts only in order to weaponize them.

We gather your thoughts;
we use the best technology to analyze them;
we present them at any level of schematization.

But we never read them; we would never repeat them.
Your thoughts are your own.
Your computer should exist to help you think them.

Sometimes it is helpful to start from scratch.

Sometimes it is helpful to start where you left off.

Sometimes it is helpful to begin again,
unburdened by history or memory—
only a computer could do that.

Our software puts every time before you;
on demand, subtle, sudden, silent,
it responds at command.

But it never suggests, nudges,
or slyly whispers into the back of your eyes.

What you see is what you get:

Remember: Less is more;

Be given less;

get less;

see less;

think more.

IV. NEXT STEPS

If what we have said here speaks to you
and you wish to contribute or to follow along
email us at INFO@MANI.COMPUTER