

Indieweb - decentralize the web while centralizing ourselves

Pull your content together from the shards: decentralize the social networks and centralize ourselves!

During the past month I've dived deeper and deeper into the IndieWeb^[1] movement, especially after realizing these guys are doing the same what I've been trying for years now - but they are doing it better.

I've made my first website in 1999 and always had one I fully controlled since then. The address of the page has changed, it changed a lot, but those who wanted to find me and kept in touch at least a bit could always catch up with the current site's domain. This is my home on the World Wide Web and it's probably just as important emotionally to me as my physical home.

A few years ago social networks started to appear out from nowhere. Well, not really from nowhere, there were signs and ideas around the same principles of getting in touch with long-lost friends again - *which does not always fulfil the expectations though*^[2]. We had website building tools and blog options before that already, but MySpace, the first giant, was different: setting up a profile was a matter of minutes and keeping it alive did not require any knowledge, any learning, any coding. So obviously everyone started to use it without realizing what we're getting into. MySpace did not live long but a lot of other services with more specific target audience appeared. Design? Pinterest. Selfie? Instagram. Various things from my life? Tumblr. Profession? LinkedIn. General social network? Facebook. Communication? Snapchat. The list is becoming endless, and we started posting to many of them, using each for a specific purpose, giving away ourselves inch by inch, piece by piece.

My sister lives in Canada so we don't see each other too much and even though we talk regularly I'd like to know what's going on with her. In order to see the news of her life I'd need to follow her at least on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, and a few, smaller networks in addition. I'd need to register to every single one of them I'm not there already. In case I'd want to do this with slightly more people this becomes impossible to do so: I'd be constantly switching between apps websites just to see the

alerts and the new posts, trying not to miss a single one, because who knows what I might not see.

10 years ago when someone had a blog, a website, a place: that was all. You subscribed to the newsletter, to the RSS feed^[^3], and that's it, all the important notes from that person landed with your aggregator, like Google Reader^[^4]. No hunting on closed silos^[^5] with registrations that need to be signed with your blood and all your descendants blood.

These sites did not contain the discussions, the likes, the comments; we had forums for that, thematic, nicely constructed systems designed for opinion and knowledge exchange, with search functionality and archives going back years; and guestbooks to leave a thought on the whole site. Yes, it was limited and feels very distant now.

I know likes and responses became vital for the everyday life and fortunately, there's a way to have them properly: webmentions^[^6]; or the original, older utilities, pingbacks and trackbacks^[^7]. These pieces of technology make websites talk to each other.

You want to "like" a post? Make a like on your own site about the entry somewhere else and the entry will get pinged, displaying the like from your site — you might even be able to look back on your own likes and have a (searchable) history for yourself! Same for replies, comments: reply on your own site^[^8] mentioning (linking) the other site in a specific way, and let the internet handle the rest.

This is already happening. It's not a proposal, a standard, a protocol but a living, growing thing. Join indiewebcamp^[^9] and make the web to what it should be.

It's time to get your content back together from the shards all around: to make it accessible for all who actually want to follow *you* and *what you share online*.

Decentralize the social networks and centralize yourselves!

Links

1. <http://indiewebcamp.com/>
2. <http://thoughtcatalog.com/stephanie-georgopoulos/2011/08/a-love-letter-to-the-unsearchable/>
3. <http://www.whatisrss.com/>
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Reader
5. <http://indiewebcamp.com/silo>
6. <http://indiewebcamp.com/webmention>
7. http://codex.wordpress.org/Introduction_to_Blogging#Pingbacks
8. <https://github.com/converspace/webmention/blob/master/README.md>
9. http://indiewebcamp.com/Getting_Started

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