kthxbye #2

One year ago I stopped posting to social networks, or at least minimized it as much as possible. Nearly a year passed so it's time for a summary, and while I mostly resisted posting, it doesn't feel like success.

Meanwhile, out there on the internets

Tino Kremer[^1]

> Facebook has become an ever more annoying stream of crap (...) Occasionally
> there is a nice personal update of someone I know and I actually do like to see,
> but it has become harder and harder to find those in the pile of garbage that is
> presented to me. I still have my account on Facebook and it's still accessible to
> my friends, but I have given up public posts and I do not syndicate everything to
> my Facebook account anymore, only a few highlights I know my family would be
> interested in. Due to Facebook's algorithms most of the interested persons like
> direct family and close friends do not see my content, but ok. - *[235 Days on the
> Indieweb; something changed]*[^2]

Timo seems to have similar feelings about all of the "social web" - if that helps, you're
not alone, Timo.

Tantek Çelik[^3]

> It's now 2016, and just as 2010 felt like the right time to develop and show
> POSSE (and outdo silos at & with it), now feels like the right time for those of us
> with our own indieweb sites to take steps with those sites to pioneer, develop,
> document, and show how the independent web can do better at private accounts
> & posts, improving upon silos both technically, and more importantly, with better
> user experiences. - *Going Silo-Private to Prefer the IndieWeb, Leave Silo
> Publics, and Pioneer Privacy on the Independent Web*[^4]

Tantek is approaching from another vector, which may be a better way. Time will tell,
but this way it'd be possible to keep current relationships, so I'm waiting for updates,
conclusions and outcomes from him.

The price of going indie: losing and illusion

In that post - *and by sending out messages and mails* - I asked my friends that in case they are interested in my "stream" - in the things I post, write, photograph and create - please subscribe to my personal website.

Apparently there are not too many friends willing to move away from the commodity of social networks - which I find disheartening and quite sad.

However, this way I'm only getting rid of the illusion of being listened to. For someone who started "analytics" with remote images as visitor counters, this is just returning to the origins.

The unexpected problem: communication

I didn't realize how many had forgotten to use anything but Facebook to communicate. ICQ has faded away, MSN is dead, Skype is pretty sick[^5], and many of my friends are either exchanging messages via Facebook or not at all. For some of them even emails are to much of a hassle and in Europe, phone calls between countries can still cost a surprising amount. I've tried convincing them to (re)turn to IRC, I've failed miserably with that.

So I ended up with bitlbee & znc[^6] to handle instant messaging for Facebook and Google, because it looks like I need to.

I've signed up for new things because of the same reasons, but strictly no social networking there: Wechat[^7], QQ[^8] and Telegram. *Only because Cyanogenmod has App Ops[^9] and I can remove their access to anything else on my device.* I like the approach of Telegram and I might be able to convince some to use it instead of the generic ones; Wechat and QQ are for those areas of the world where they are relevant and the others are banned - China, for example.

Closures...

Instagram

I deleted my Instagram account: it's not for me. I never really posted there, and though I tried to follow my friends but it didn't work either. I know some who managed to use it in a meaningful way, but it takes comparable effort to running my site and I prefer the latter.

500px

I tried out and closed my 500px account. They are not fair and I seriously disagree with the photography trends emerging there[^10].

Tumblr

I had set up a Tumblr as a copy of my site once, but no one ever looked at it, I deleted it after a while. Later I tried again, with different content, only to realize that it's just too far from my idea of sharing, interacting and posting.

...near closures...

Twitter

For the past two years I kept bumping into articles on how toxic Twitter had become, but for a long time, I never felt it. Probably because I never really posted anything there and never had a voice. But recently I started getting drops of the quality of communication there and even when I was in my brightest troll mood years ago this would have been a bright, red sign to walk away. I haven't yet deleted my account, but cleaned up all my tweets and stopped syndicating. *And 12 hours later I wrote this down I had to point at a useful indieweb URL for someone. This won't go away, will it?*

Facebook

I'm still registered on Facebook. I really want to leave it behind, and in order to do so, I'm refusing to visit it. *Turns out that if you do this for a few weeks you'll stop missing it and in case you log back in, you'll run away fast from the lurking crap that was waiting for you.* For the past year, I've posted 4 times to Facebook and even those got deleted after no one was leaving comments any more. However, I do feel like losing a few friends with this move.

LinkedIn

To be honest, I nearly forgot Linkedin. I barely ever log in, that is mostly to delete unneeded connections from recruiters *(they don't need me as a connection and they are supposed to use the paid search option)*, so it's nearly as close to deletion as Twitter. On the other hand, if I don't use it as a social thing and restrict it to the bare minimum CV functionalities... eh, it's still messy, but for now, it stays.

...and continuities

Flickr

I still have my Flickr account, and I'm still posting my photos there. I'm disappointed that instead of reaching out for the professionals who a few years ago fled to 500px they want to compete with Instagram with their shiny app and with the *we'll upload everything for you! by default!* attitude. For sharing photography, I don't know of any other, reasonable places or alternatives, but if they make their interface even slower, I'm out. It's already a pain that there is no navigation without Javascript, so I'm just a few steps from leaving it behind for good. Although I have no idea how to follow and find photographers if I was to leave Flickr.

Last.fm

I'm still on Last.fm, but this is my exception service: I never used it for social interactions, ever. I've tried to run my own audiosink endpoint[^11], but most of the clients are hardcoded to scrobble to last.fm only. Unlike many of the lifelogging[^12] ideas I do like to keep a log of what I listened to; otherwise I couldn't find music I liked but forgot to take a note about.

Footnotes

Does it worth it? Am I happier, lighter, had I gained anything by fighting for this?

I think I did, even with parts left behind. Facebook goes against nearly everything I'm trying to stand for, but communication is indeed a pain right now.

Links

1. https://tinokremer.nl/
2. https://tinokremer.nl/2016/235-days-on-the-indieweb-something-changed
3. http://tantek.com/
4. http://tantek.com/2016/048/b1/going-silo-private-prefer-indieweb
5. http://nickforall.nl/skype/
6. https://petermolnar.net/the-horror-of-chat-logs/
7. http://wechat.com/
8. https://en.mail.qq.com/
9. https://www.julianevansblog.com/2014/06/how-to-use-android-privacy-guard-on-cyanogenmod-11.html
10. http://www.naturephotoguides.com/blog/photo-consumption-conformity
11. https://github.com/petermolnar/wordpress-playlistlog
12. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelog