welcome to

DWEB FOR CREATORS

GRAY AREA

grayarea.org/dweb

DWEB FOR CREATORS

SESSION 4:
VALUES & PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF DWEB

Educator:
MAI ISHIKAWA SUTTON
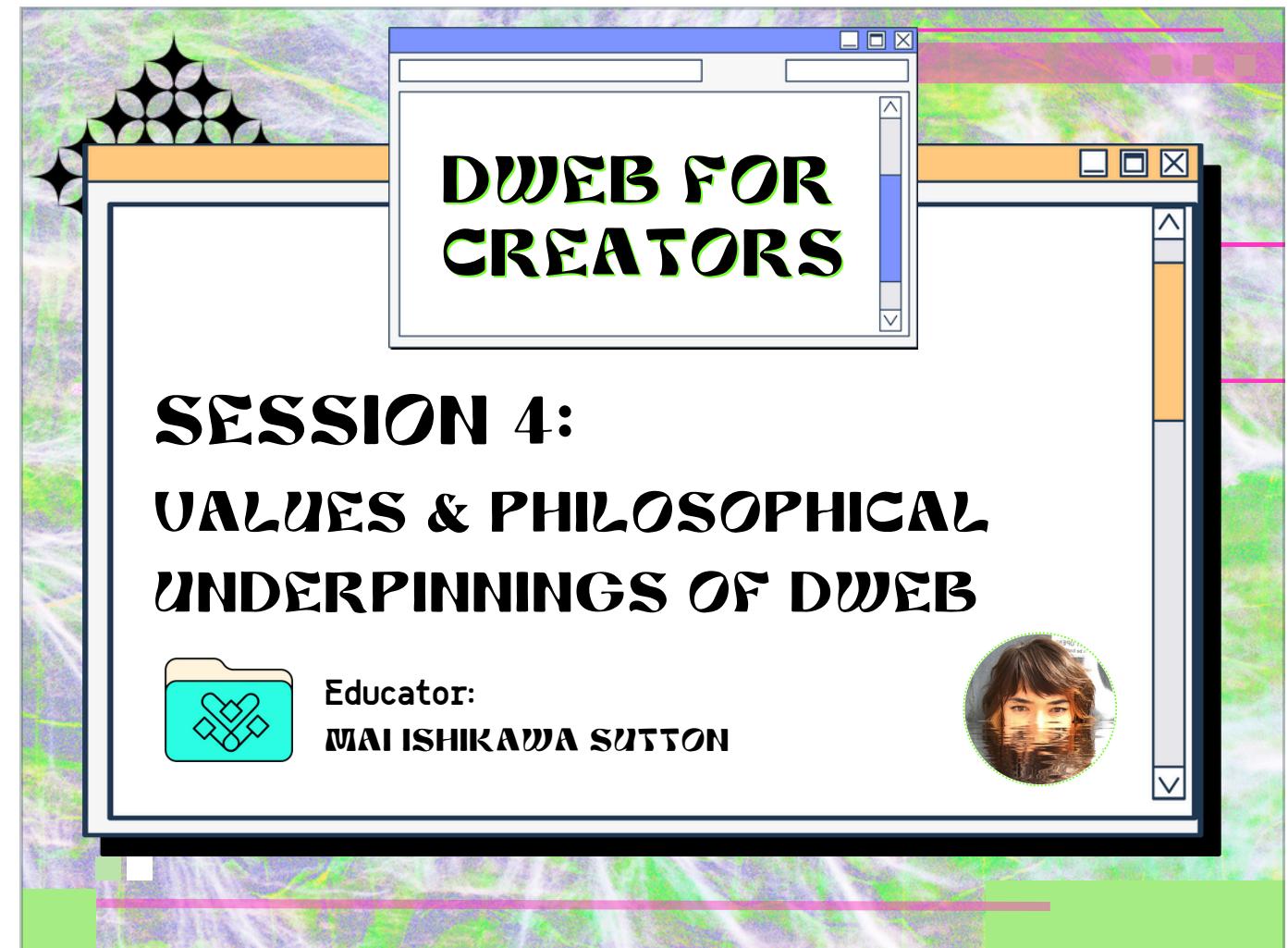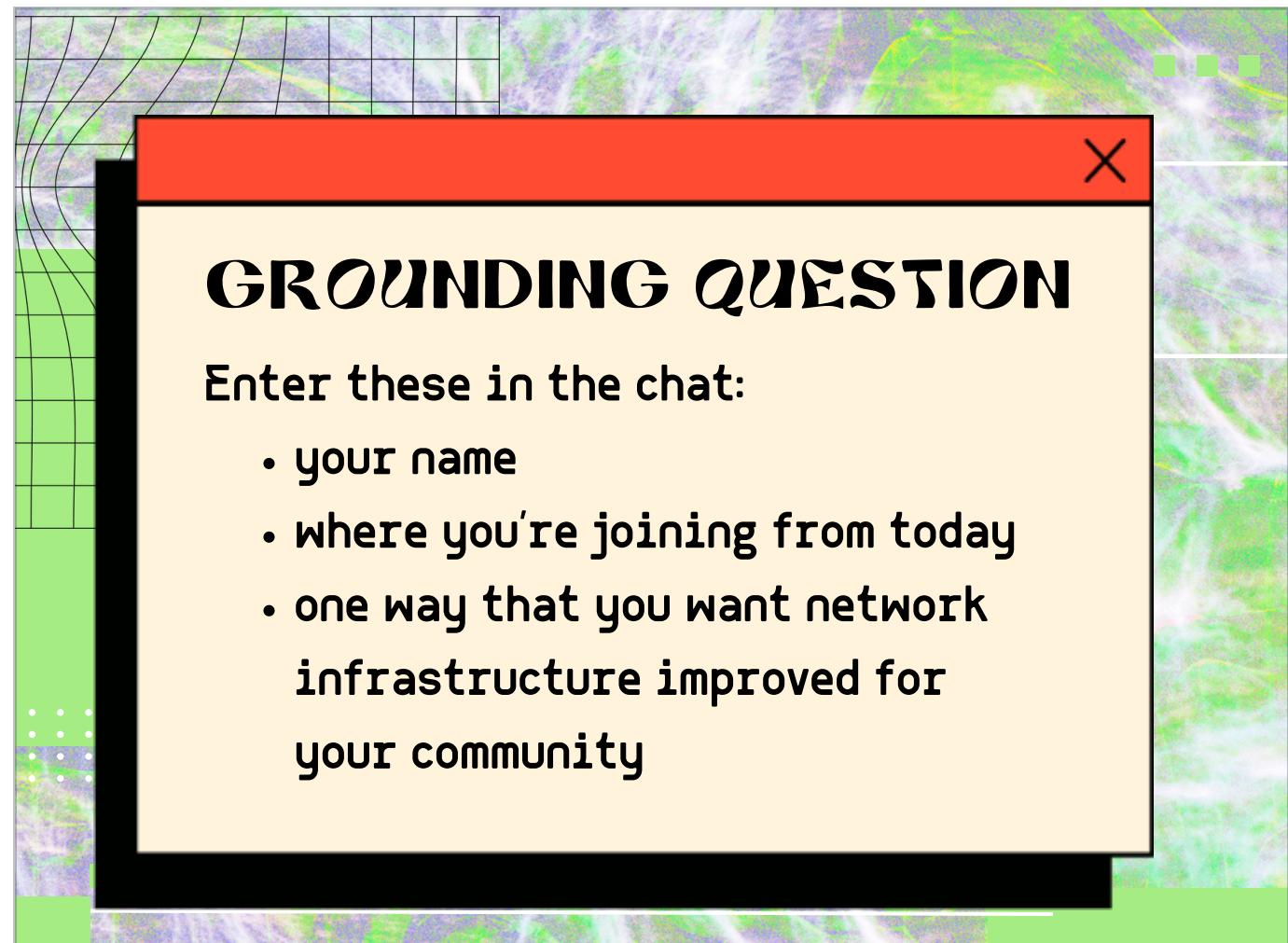
GROUNDING QUESTION

Enter these in the chat:
- your name
- where you're joining from today
- one way that you want network infrastructure improved for your community

1 - Name

2 - Where you're joining from

3 - One way you want network infrastructure improved for you / your community

>>> In Zoom chat

AGENDA

10:30–10:50 :: welcome + grounding question

10:50–11:20 :: presentation: principles and values, an overview

11:20–11:40 :: individual reflection + share out

11:40–11:50 :: break

11:50–12:05 :: presentation: dweb principles, a case study

12:05–12:40 :: role play: network project + manifest principles

12:40–12:55 :: share highlights

12:55–13:00 :: close

DWEB FOR CREATORS

March 6 – April 28, 2024

CODE OF CONDUCT

Gray Area is dedicated to providing a respectful, harassment-free community for everyone. We strive to create a safe space for learning and community to share new ideas. We do not tolerate harassment or bullying of any community member in any form. This does not only extend to staff members of Gray Area, but to anyone who chooses to become involved in the larger Gray Area community of artists, developers, and students through events or interactions.

We encourage everyone to share their preferred pronouns with us in their Zoom name or during introductions.

GRAY AREA

grayarea.org/dweb

Even more important to keep in mind and follow today.

There may be opinions here from other students you disagree with, but think about the difference between unsafe and uncomfortable.

Gray Area's Code of Conduct: https://grayarea.org/about/code-of-conduct/

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- Ask clarifying questions at any time; save open questions for the discussions
- Write your opinion freely on silent individual activities
- Say your opinion freely in group activities – try to speak 1/nth of the time
- Mute yourself during silent individual actions, and in general if you have background noise
- Write in the chat when you take a break (no need to announce it)
- We follow the Gray Area's Code of Conduct

PRINCIPLES & VALUES: AN OVERVIEW
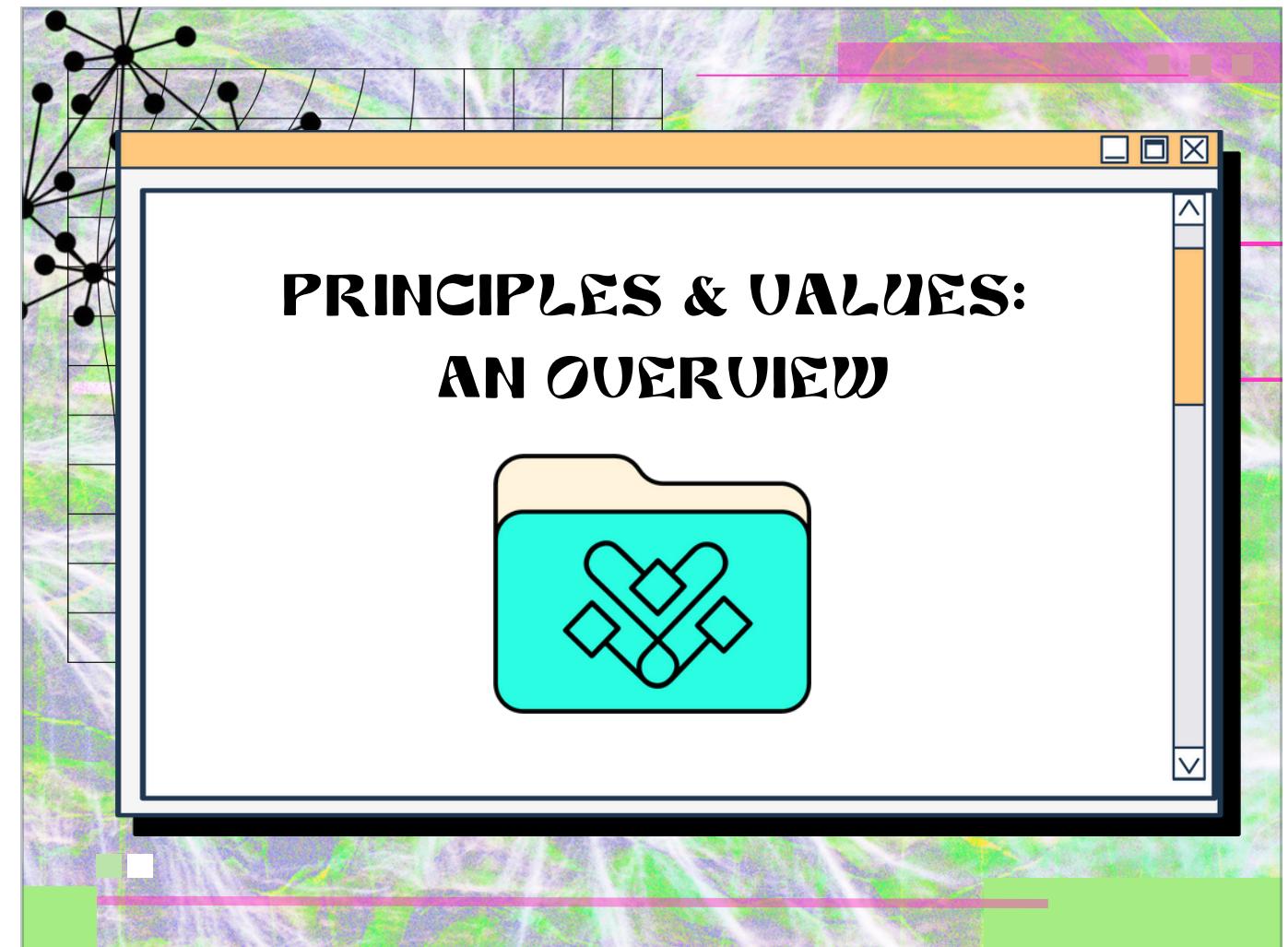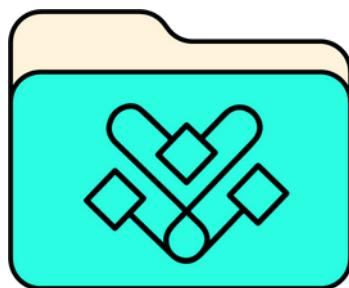
ALL TECH IS BIASED

- Technologies reflect the values of those who build, maintain, and participate in using them
- As we've learned so far, all network systems are designed and built by people and organizations
- All embed their belief systems and values into them (personally or are directed to do so)
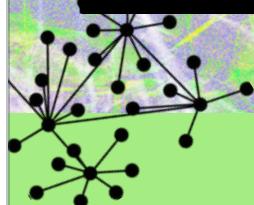
THE CENTRALIZED WEB

Network infrastructure reflects economic realities and priorities.

Dominant operating logic of most economies are capitalistic.

Most network infrastructure are built and controlled by corporations, whose primary concern is "shareholder value" (SV).

There was a major shift in thinking in business in the 1970's, which has continued to influence enterprises globally today.

Though "decentralization" is often referenced regarding network infrastructure, it's really about power

Control is concentrated among a tiny group of people relative to # people using them.

Wealth and capital
The dominant operating logic of the economy is capitalistic, as such, our networks are as well.

Private / public corporations with a fiduciary duty to maximize profit for their shareholders.

THE FRIEDMAN DOCTRINE ✕

AKA THE REIGN OF SHAREHOLDER VALUE

Milton Friedman's 1970 essay for The New York Times titled "A Friedman Doctrine: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits".

It argued that company has no social responsibility to the public or society: only responsibility is to its shareholders.
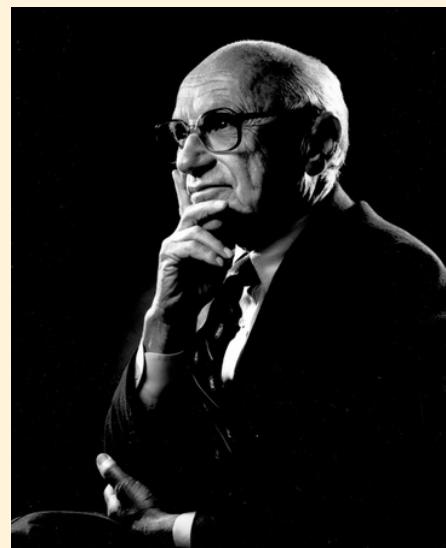
Milton Friedman (1912–2006)

Milton Friedman was an influential economist from the University of Chicago, who also went on to be an economic advisor to Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

THE FRIEDMAN DOCTRINE ✕

"In a free-enterprise, private-property system, a corporate executive is an employee of the owners of the business. He has direct responsibility to his employers.

That responsibility is to conduct the business in accordance with their desires ... the key point is that, in his capacity as a corporate executive, the manager is the agent of the individuals who own the corporation ... and his primary responsibility is to them."

~ Milton Friedman

He justified this view by considering to whom a company and its executives are beholden >>> Quote

THE FRIEDMAN DOCTRINE

The doctrine was amplified with the 1976 business paper by finance professors William Meckling and Michael C. Jensen, "Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure".

The Friedman Doctrine is credited with changing the course of business, where shareholders' interests are prioritized above all else.

Whereas before, employees, customers, partners, secondary communities were also stakeholders.

"Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure", provided a quantitative economic rationale for maximizing shareholder value.

>> Why is only ONE set of stakeholders' interests represented in business? Employees, customers, partners, secondary communities should also be stakeholders.

One of the most stark outcomes has been the disempowerment of workers

>> This had led to extreme concentration of wealth

WEALTH OF TECH CEOS
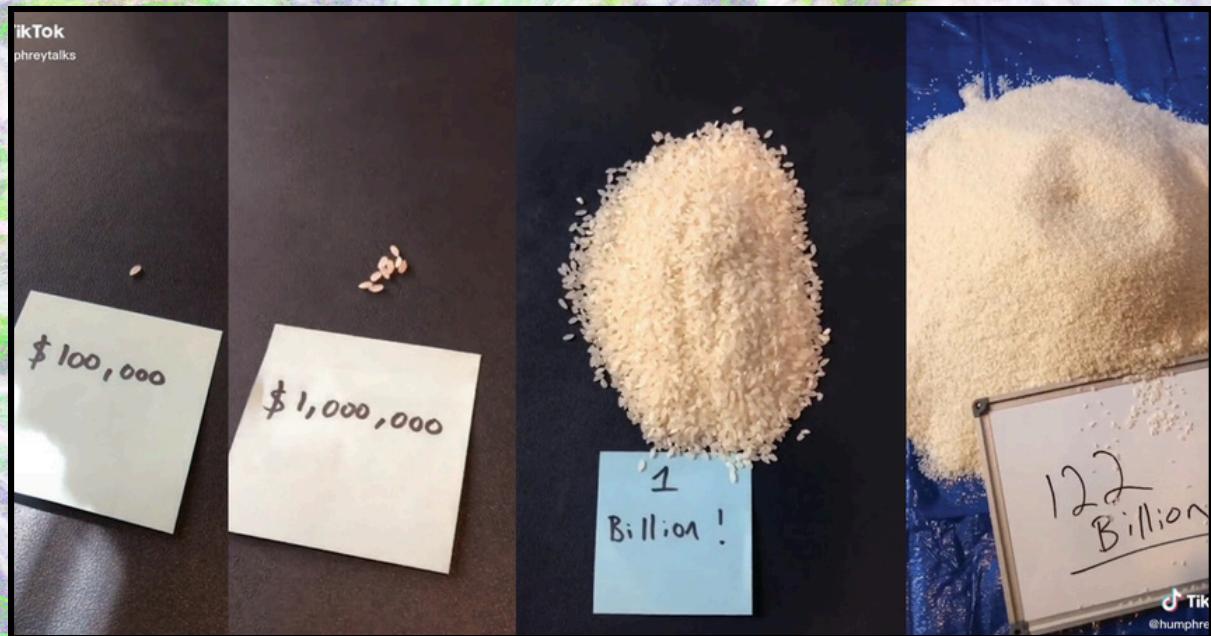
Jeff Bezos' wealth – $122 billion// Feb 2020 ^^^
Elon Musk's wealth – $363.6 billion // April 2025

7 out of the top 10 richest people in the world right now are tech industry moguls

Jeff Bezos' net worth is now $204B (more than 1.5x that big pile now) as of May 2025

Examples of centralized power and reign of shareholder value leading to worse, human rights-violating practices:

> "Net neutrality" — pay to play accessibility of media that prioritizes data over other, such as independently -made web content
> Social media networks censorship - Facebook censorship of marginalized groups: Palestinians, queer PDA as social moderation is expensive, and it is more profitable to cater to the interests of political majorities
> Hardware: rare earth minerals in the Congo relying on exploitative labor; companies not allowing their devices to be repairable so people forced to buy new devices all the time.

TECH INDUSTRY INFLUENCE
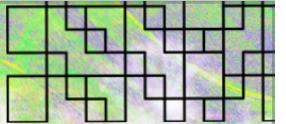
Tech industry heartily applies the Friedman Doctrine to concentrate wealth and power >>> extreme state influence.

<u>Dark Enlightenment</u> - neo-fascist movement that advocates for absolute monarchism and authoritarian capitalist city-states which compete for citizens. Also espouses scientific racism.

President Trump's inauguration 2025

How have tech CEOs/investors and their values re-shaped our societies and governments?

TECH INDUSTRY INFLUENCE

The tech industry has really succeeded in applying the Friedman Doctrine to their businesses, producing that many more billionaires and creating vastly more wealth disparity.

Tech industry has oversized influence on politics worldwide, particularly in the US.

ELINOR OSTROM ✕

- **Nobel Prize winner, 2009**
- **Economic governance of "common pool resources" (CPR) and the social norms/behaviors of their stewards**
- **Eight Principles for Managing Commons**
- **Alternative approach to building network infrastructure**

Elinor Ostrom (1933–2012)

...As opposed to the Friedman Doctrine.

A whole other way to approach to organizing economic activities

Following her studies of innumerable long-enduring Commons, Ostrom concluded that the following eight "design principles" were essential elements which were always to be found in the way these sustainable CPRs organize themselves:

1. Clearly-Defined Boundaries:
Individuals who have rights to appropriate resources must be clearly defined, as must the boundaries of the resource itself.

2. Appropriate Rules:
Rules are appropriately related to local conditions (including both regarding the appropriation of common resources — restricting time, place, technology, quantity, etc.; and rules related to provision of resources — requiring labor, materials, money, etc.)

3. Rule-making processes:

Collective-choice arrangements allow most resource appropriators to participate in the decision-making process.

4. Monitoring:
Effective monitoring by monitors who are part of, or accountable to, the appropriators.

5. Sanctions:
There is a scale of graduated sanctions for resource appropriators who violate community rules.

6. Conflict resolution mechanisms:
Appropriators and their officials have rapid access to low-cost local arenas to resolve conflicts among appropriators or between appropriators and officials.

7. Right to self-governance:
The rights of a community to devise and govern its own institutions is recognized by external authorities.

8. Nestedness:
Appropriation, provision, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution, and governance activities are organized in multiple layers of nested enterprises.

SURFACE / DEEP / DARK WEBS
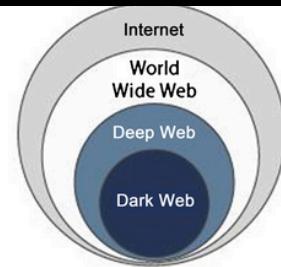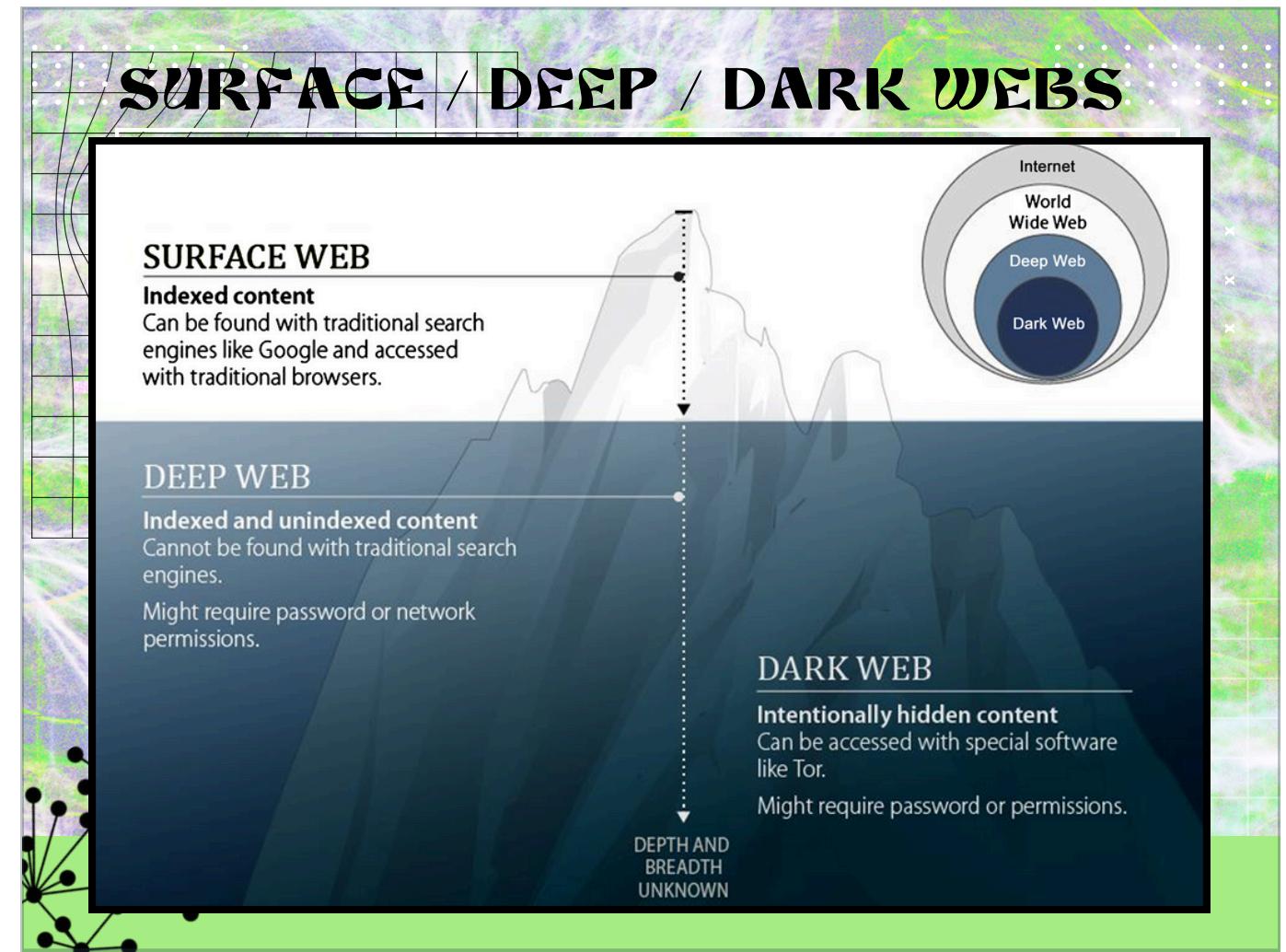
This is graphic showing the different layers of the web (not to be confused with layers of network infrastructure), that organized by how *visible* the web content is by the public.

If it's search indexed and publicly available to all, it's on the Surface web. If it's password protected or not indexed for search, it's in the Deep web. If the web content requires specific tools or password to access, then it's considered to be part of the Dark web.

We'll look at these different components and how they reflect the values and needs of the people building and using them.

SURFACE WEB

AKA the Visible Web, Indexed Web, Indexable Web or Lightnet

The portion of the World Wide Web that is readily available to the general public through standard web browsers and indexed/searchable through web search engines.

Examples:

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

INTERNET ARCHIVE

news sites

commerce sites

blogs

AKA the Visible Web, Indexed Web, Indexable Web or Lightnet

The portion of the World Wide Web that is readily available to the general public and searchable with standard web search engines

Examples
Wikipedia, Internet Archive, blogs, etc.

DEEP WEB

AKA the invisible web, or hidden web.

Parts of the World Wide Web whose contents are not indexed by standard web search engines and does not require specialized software.

Examples:
- Private or pay walled websites accessible by password, such as medical platforms, email inboxes, academic databases.
- Unlinked content: Pages not linked to by other pages, which prevents web crawling programs from accessing it

Surface web and some aspects of the deep web are regulated, esp regarding privacy. Nations and regions have laws that dictate what services can or cannot do.

Another example:
* Contextual web: Content accessible based on IP address or previous navigation

DARK WEB / DARKNET

- Web content that exists on darknets: overlay networks that use the Internet but require specific software.
- Considered part of the Deep Web.

DWeb technologies and darknets:

- The Onion Router (TOR)
- Invisible Internet Project (I2P)
- Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)
- Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies to make untraceable transactions

Invisible Internet Project (I2P): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I2P — an anonymous network layer (implemented as a mix network) that allows for censorship-resistant, peer-to-peer communication, by 55K volunteer nodes.

Often to access or interact, cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin are required to make untraceable transactions.

DARK WEB ✕

SOME DATA

- "Illicit" crypto addresses received more than $40 billion in 2024 – likely an underestimate
- In 2023 much as 80% of darkweb traffic is related to accessing CSAM

DARKNET MARKETPLACES

Online platforms that facilitate trade among millions of users, such as drugs, firearms, credit cards dumps, fake IDs, CSAM, and other "illicit" materials.

Examples: Silk Road (2011-2013), AlphaBay (2014-2023)
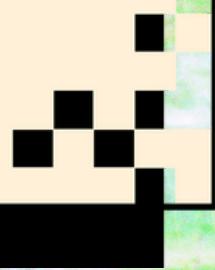
Darknet marketplaces existed from the advent of the World Wide Web.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darknet_market

Ex. In the 1970's Stanford + MIT students used Arpanet to buy marijuana.

DARK WEB ✕

WHAT IS ALSO "ILLICIT"
- Life saving drugs inaccessible in some regions
- Hormone replacement therapy medications
- Censored material that is banned by local laws
- Whistleblower sites

CREATIVE USES
- Dark Web Bake Sale (2015)
- Aphex Twin's Syro album, info was only available through using TOR

What is considered "illicit" is also subjective and up to debate about whether people find things moral or immoral

Ask WHY there is a Dark Web – who are they needing to hide from? What are the power dynamics at play?

What is on the Surface Web that SHOULD be illegal?

Dark Web Bake Sale (2015), kickstarter to raise funds which went to training backers on using Tor, PGP, and Bitcoin. Then went live and sold 95 "rosewater cardamom cookies" on the Dark Web.
https://cybertwee.net/cybertwee-dark-web-bake-sale/

Aphex Twin's Syro Album
https://pitchfork.com/news/56341-aphex-twin-announces-new-album-syro-via-the-deep-web/

DICHOTOMIES OF THE WEB

Private vs. Public
(Surface, deep, dark)

Competitive vs. Collaborative

Centralized vs. Decentralized

All different lenses to examine power and motivations

Businesses and government organizations have been successful in building out much of the Internet, the Web, and other digital networks, because they have the resources.

Coordination and collaboration to build systems that people want to have.

Centralized, hierarchical systems are less complex – they require less decision making, less feedback and coordination.

But really, digital networks can be emergent - anyone, anywhere, with the right hardware and a network connection can connect with others.

To build systems that are interoperable, composable, and free, open source, you need coordination and collaboration.
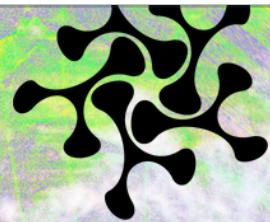
# DEFINITIONS
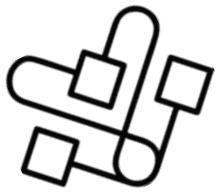
- Principles
- Values
- Codes of Conducts
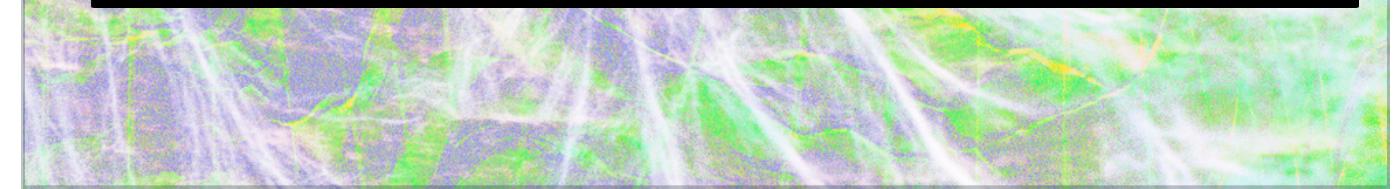
PRINCIPLES ✕

- Rules or laws that are permanent, unchanging, and timeless in nature.
- Concern human behavior and govern interactions between people.
- A compass and a timeless sense of purpose, to shape the mission
- Drives your values and goals
- Example: The Organization for Ethical Source Principles

Example: ORGANIZATION FOR ETHICAL SOURCE PRINCIPLES

1. Our work benefits the commons: We grant permission to modify, create derivative works, use and reuse it, in the spirit of openness and bounded by ethical constraints.

2. Our work is done in the open: We make our source publicly available, develop and maintain it in public view, and welcome public contributions.

3. Our community strives to be welcoming and just: We practice transparent and just governance, and we consistently and fairly enforce a comprehensive code of conduct that codifies our values.

4. Our work respects accessibility as a human right: We ensure that the full value of our work is available to everyone, regardless of ability.

5. Our work prioritizes the safety of people: We design safeguards to minimize the risk of abuse or harm to others through its use or misuse.

6. Our work protects privacy: It stores as little personal data as necessary and incorporates

reasonable security measures for its protection. All personal data it collects can be deleted on request, and all such data can be delivered to its originator in an open and human-readable format .

7. Our work deserves support: We believe in the dignity of our work. When it is used for commercial gain, we rightfully expect those who profit from it to contribute back to its source and support our community in other tangible ways.

VALUES ✕

- Internal and subjective beliefs and opinions that may change over time.
- Internal, subjective, and malleable.
- If a given belief or opinion is something that might be altered if the conditions are right, then it's a value.
- Examples: Open Source Licenses, such as the Hippocratic License

Specific issues or ideas that are internal, subjective, and malleable. They may change as demands or needs change. If a given belief or opinion is something that might be altered if the conditions are right, then it's a value.

Values reflect or determine the current but potentially alterable goals that we have in our professional, family, and personal life.

Examples:
Open Source Licenses, the Hippocratic License by Org for Ethical Source, human rights-centered

CODES OF CONDUCTS ✕

- **A set of rules outlining the norms, rules, and responsibilities or proper practices of an individual party or an organization.**
- **Manifests principles and values of a community, appropriate or inappropriate behavior + sets the culture of space**
- **Examples: Contributor Covenant + Geek Feminism**

Codes of Conducts help set the culture of a space.

CoCs
— Specific descriptions of common but unacceptable behavior (sexist jokes, etc.).
— Reporting instructions with contact information.
— Information about how it may be enforced.

Example:
Contributor Covenant: https://www.contributor-covenant.org/version/2/1/code_of_conduct/
- Adopted by 100's of projects

PURPOSE OF STATING VALUES

In general, it helps to:

- **Explicitly state what you are about, what you stand for and strive for**
- **Attract people you want to communicate and build with**
- **Repel those that do not resonate or align**
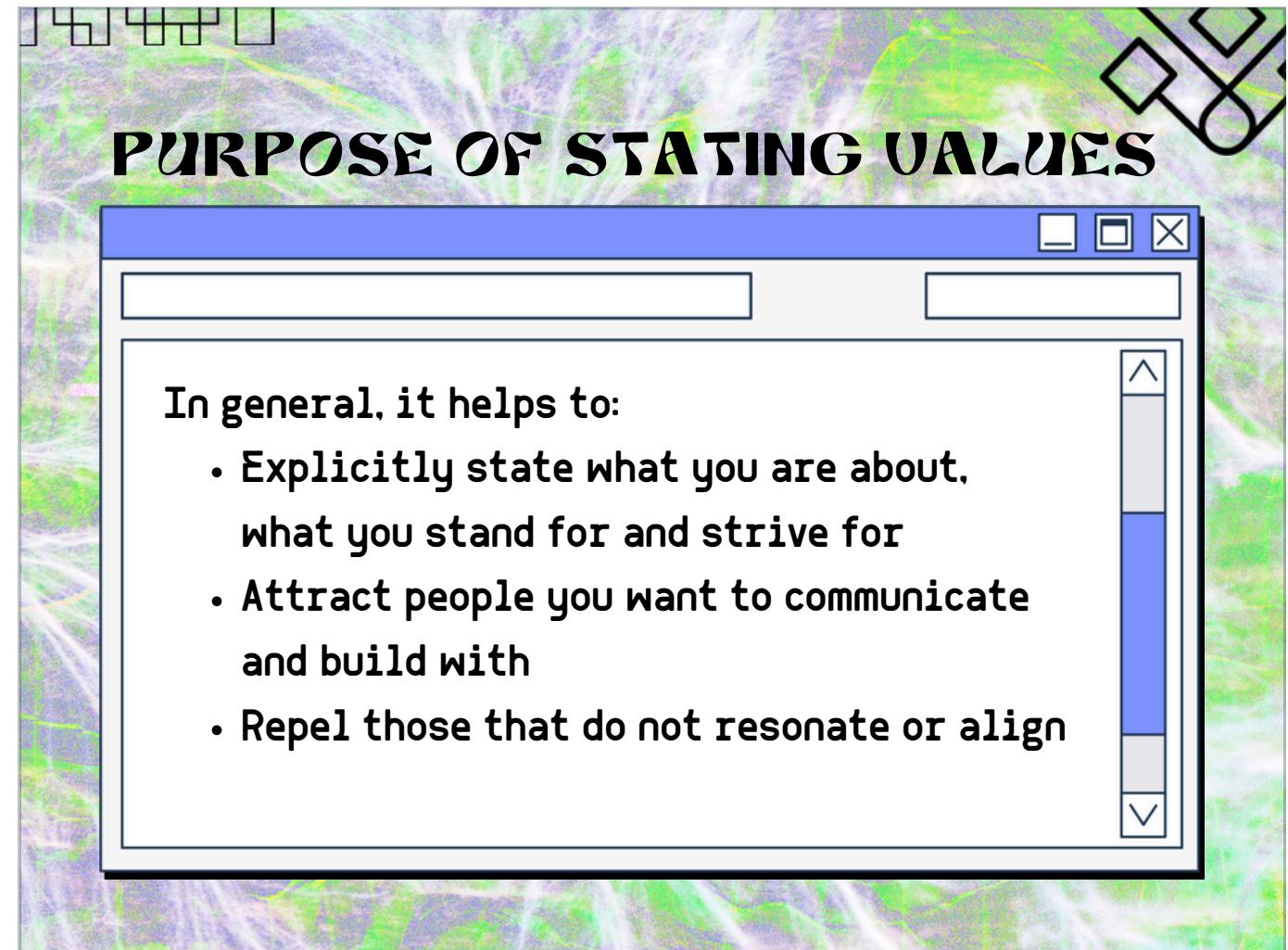
PRINCIPLES + VALUES IN TECH
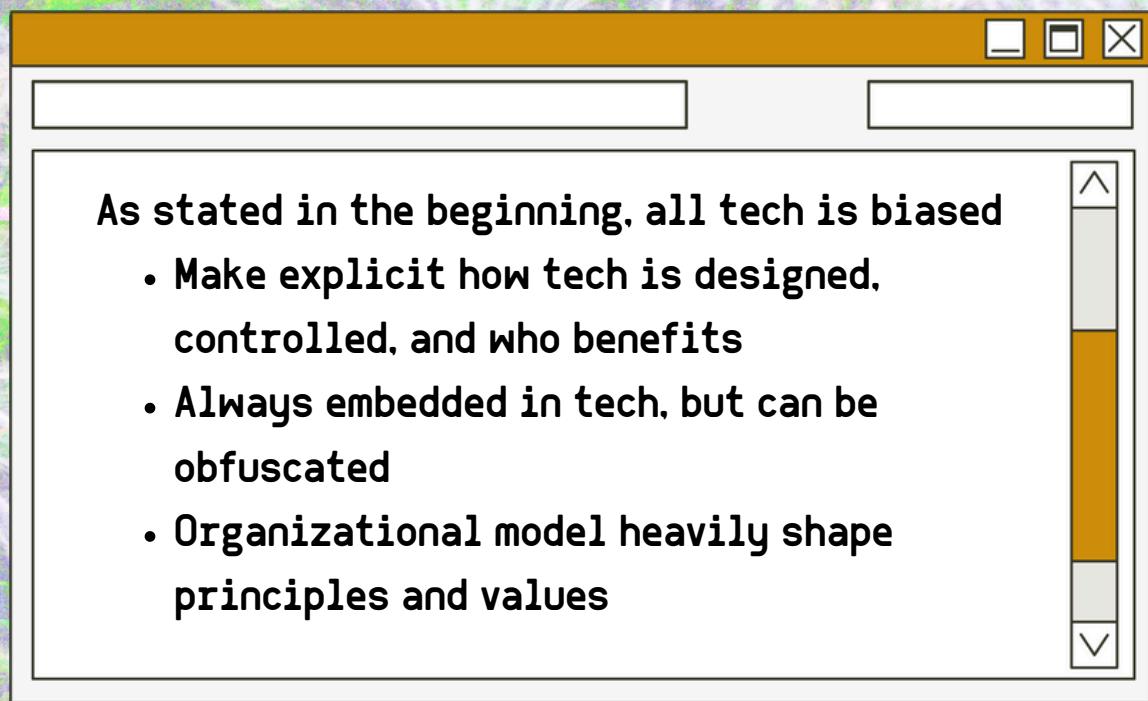
As stated in the beginning, all tech is biased
- Make explicit how tech is designed, controlled, and who benefits
- Always embedded in tech, but can be obfuscated
- Organizational model heavily shape principles and values

Explicitly acknowledge who designs, controls, and benefits from technology.

There are ALWAYS P&V embedded in technologies, but they are obfuscated .

Examples:
Is it shareholders? CEOs? Is it a state or states? Workers? Users?

Acknowledging implicit and explicit biases embedded in approaches to build and maintain network infrastructure

ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS ✕

- **For-profit corporation**
- **B-Corp**
- **Cooperative**
  - **Worker owned, user-owned, business/retail**
- **Non-profit**
- **Government entity**
  - **Local, state, federal**
- **Unincorporated collective**

One major way to reflect your values, is through the governance and ownership of your organization.

Individual reflection (20 min)

What are universal, unchanging principles that you hold?

What are the values that you now hold?

>>> How do you practice your principles and values with others on the internet?
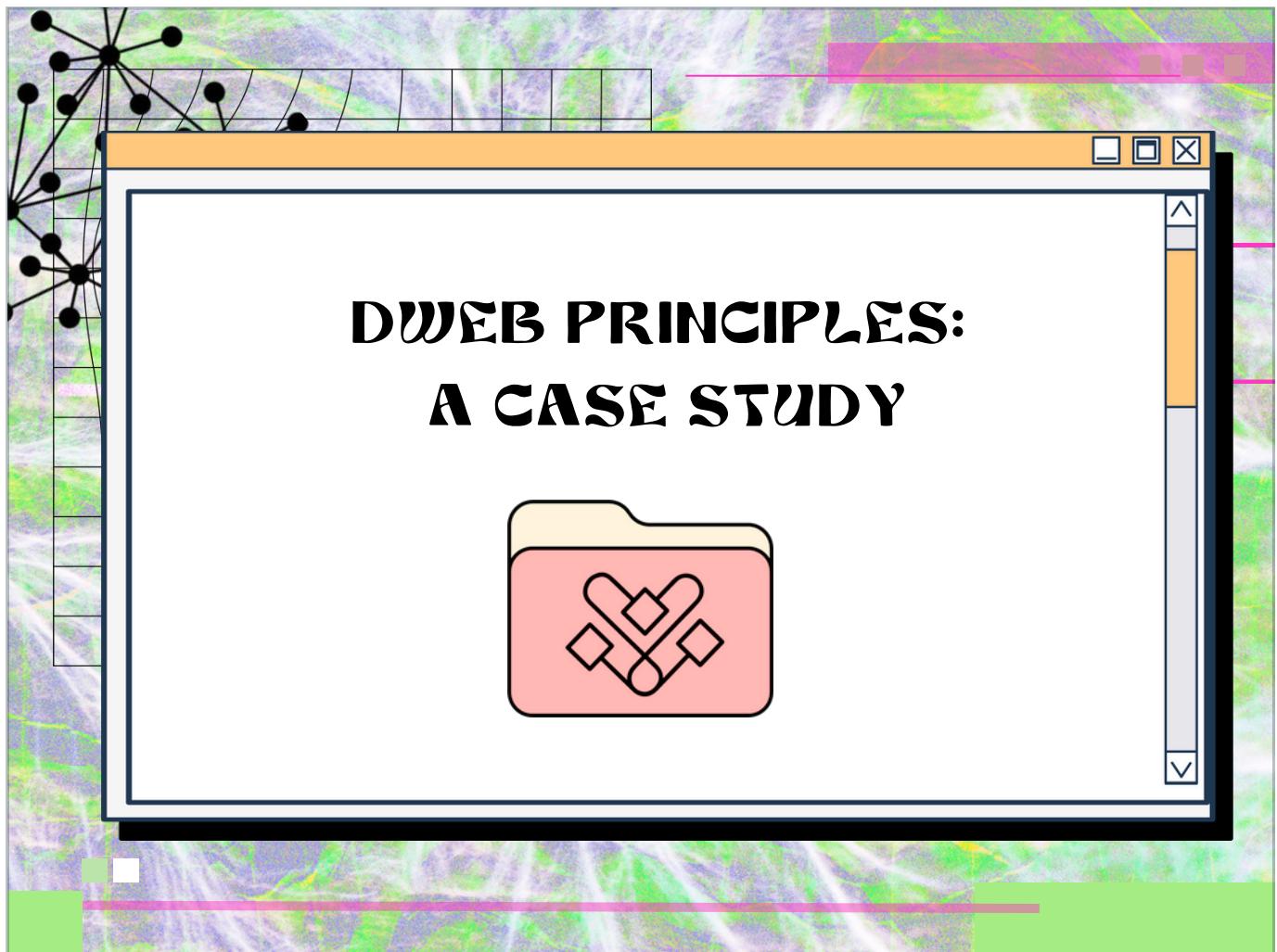
DWEB PRINCIPLES:
A CASE STUDY

WHAT IS "DWEB"?

getdweb.net

DWeb Summits 2016 and 2018, much more Web3

DWeb Camps in 2019, 2022, 2023, and 2024

https://getdweb.net/

First camp in 2019 at the Mushroom Farm near Pescadero, California on the coast one hour south of San Francisco.

This is a photo of one of the meeting spaces at the first DWeb Camp.

Now we've had four camps, with ones in Canada and Brazil this summer and fall.

People who have attended have organized local "DWeb Nodes" where they live. This is a photo from 2023 of people living in Europe who were interested in starting nodes.

DWeb Camp in 2022, 2023, 2024: spending a week in redwood forest in Mendocino, about 2.5 hours north of San Francisco with 100's of others who are involved in some way to build a more decentralized web.

In 2019, we wanted to define what we stood for as a community.

Process of formulating the DWeb Principles is documented in this blog post: https://blog.archive.org/2021/02/18/behind-the-scenes-of-the-decentralized-web-principles/

Photo of attendees articulating what they sought to achieve with the DWeb Community.

https://getdweb.net/principles

Overarching categories:
1 - Technology for human agency
2 - Distributed Benefits
3 - Mutual Respect
4 - Humanity / Empower People
5 - Ecological Imperative
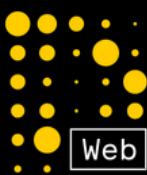
01. Technology for Human Agency

1. We stand for technology that enables the primacy of people as beneficiaries of the technology, by upholding their security, privacy and self-determination.

2. We urge coexistence and interoperability, and discourage walled gardens.

3. We value open source code as a fundamental building block of an open and inclusive Web.

4. We aim for peer-to-peer relationships, rather than hierarchical control and power imbalance.

5. Our technologies must minimize surveillance and manipulation of people's behavior, and optimize for social benefits and empower individuals to determine how and why their data is used.

6. We believe that multiple technical means will be more effective than a single technical solution to achieve ethical and people-centric outcomes.

DWeb principles

02.
# Distributed benefits
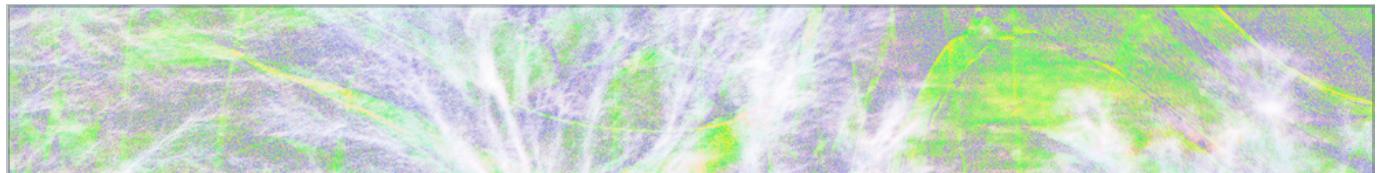
02. Distributed Benefits

1. We believe that decentralized technologies will be most beneficial to society when the rewards and recognition of their success, monetary or otherwise, are distributed among those who contributed to that success.

2. If that is infeasible, proportionate benefit should flow to the community at large.

3. High concentration of organizational control is antithetical to the decentralized web.
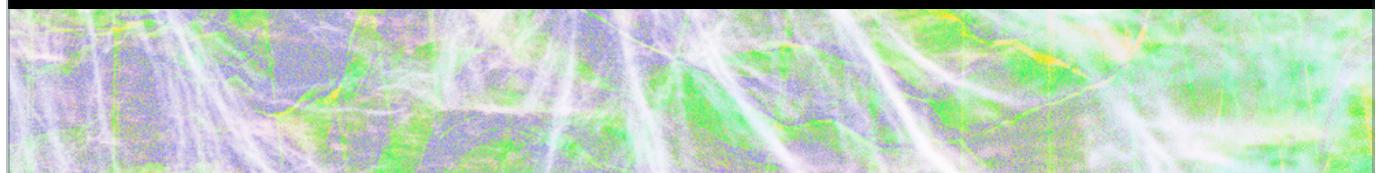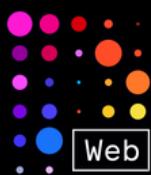
DWeb principles

03.
Mutual
respect
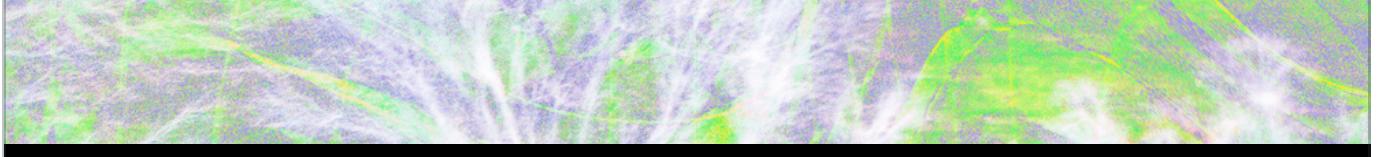
03. Mutual Respect

1. We support and encourage clear codes of conduct to ensure respectful behavior and accountability.

2. We expect participants to remain mindful of, and take responsibility for, their speech and behavior, by acting out of respect for others and respecting physical and emotional boundaries.

3. We stand for open and transparent organizational practices, motivations, and governance, in a manner that actively pursues equity, mutual trust, and respect.
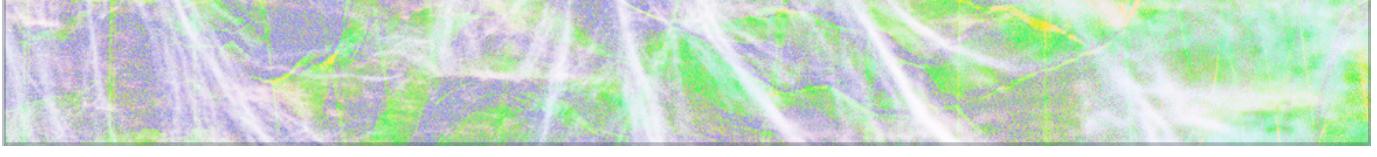
DWeb principles

# 04.
Empower people

AKA Humanity

04. Humanity

1. The objective of building a decentralized web is to protect human rights and empower people, especially those who experience systemic inequity and prejudice.

2. We stand for people having agency over their own data and relationships, rights to free expression, privacy, and knowledge, as these are essential to human empowerment and dignity.

3. We condemn the use of distributed tools for activities antithetical to human rights, such as human trafficking; sexual, mental, or physical abuse; and arms trading.

4. We encourage building with harm-reduction in mind, and support the adoption of mechanisms that mitigate the potential for abuse, and consideration of those 'not at the table' — not connected, not users, and the disadvantaged.

5. We encourage the development of tools and applications in many languages and forms, with a high degree of accessibility.

DWeb principles

05.
Ecological imperatives
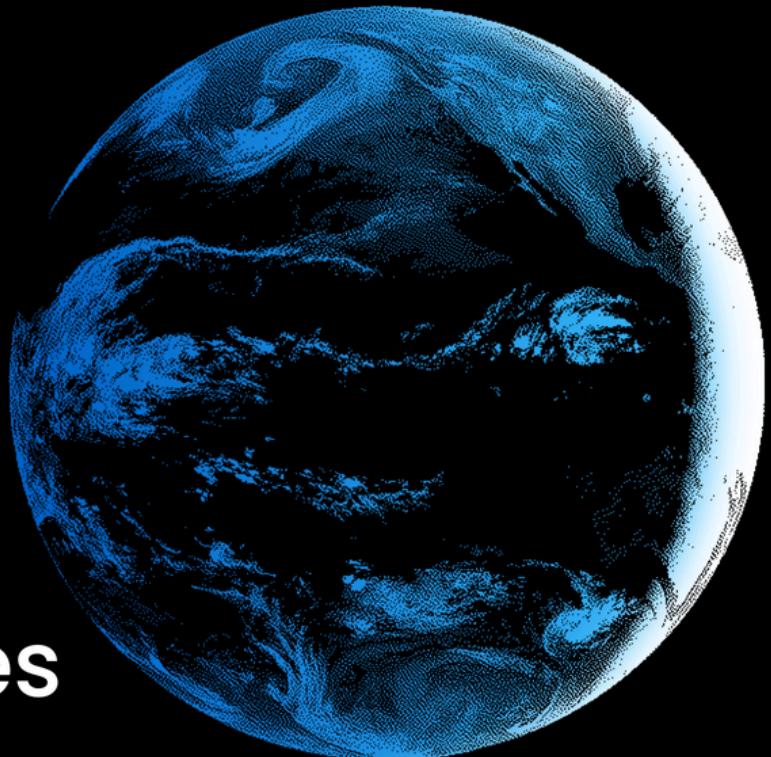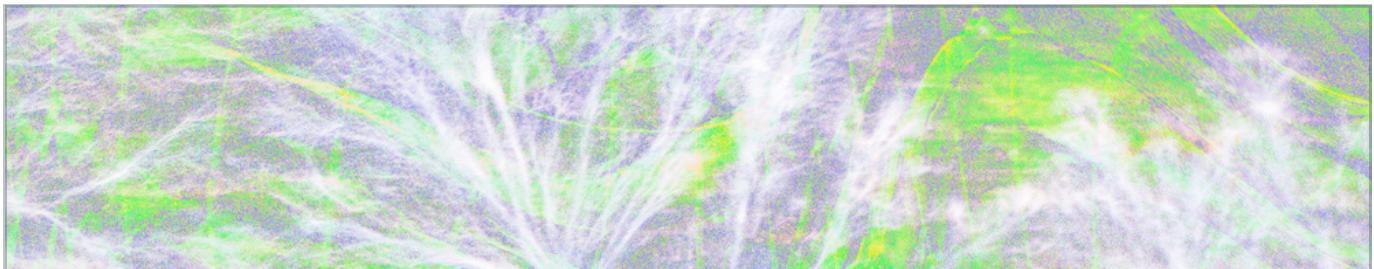
05. Ecological Awareness

1. We believe projects should aim to minimize ecological harm and avoid technologies that worsen environmental health.

2. We value systems that work towards reducing energy consumption and device resource requirements, while increasing device lifespan by allowing repair, recycling, and recovery.
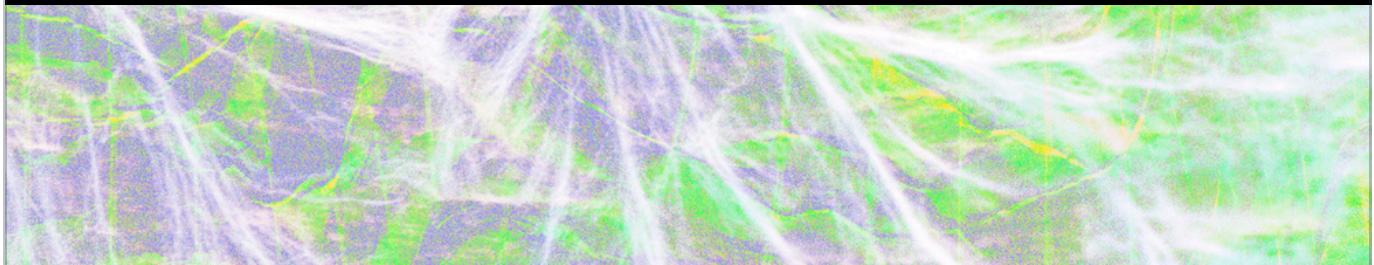
Related Principles

CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance

Center for Humane Technology's Policy Principles

Contract for the Web

Decentralization Off The Shelf

Design Justice Principles

Detroit Digital Justice Coalition Principles

Elinor Ostrom's Principles for Governing the Commons

The Ethical Source Principles

Feminist Data Manifest-No

Feminist Principles of the Internet

Internet Research Task Force Research into Human Rights Protocol Considerations

PLAN Systems Technology Design Principles

A Shared Digital Europe

We were explicit from the beginning that the DWeb Principles stand in solidarity with other efforts to define societal principles to create a build a better world, with or without technological means.

A SPECIFIC "DWEB"

- A particular group of people, largely from the Global North
- A particular moment in time

Questions we're grappling with:
- How is it enforceable? Should it be?
- How can we help network projects manifest these principles?
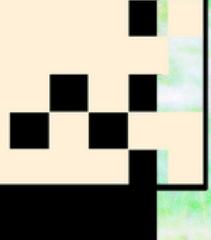
We are explicit that "DWeb" is used by many to point to an aspirational "decentralization" of the web that more recently was widely used by the cryptocurrency community.

* However, our "DWeb" specifically refers to the convenings by Internet Archive since 2016.

* There was a shift for our project as well, where much of the early summits were mostly about Web3/crypto approaches. Now we are really about addressing power and technologies as it relates to the full network stack.

* This community is now expressly defined by the DWeb Principles.

NETWORK PROJECT ROLE PLAY

Let's go back to Miro!

Network Project Role Play (30 min)

Projects
* Internet Service Provider (ISP)
* Social Network
* Research Archive
* Blockchain
* Hardware Manufacturer

What type of organization are you?
* For-profit corporation
* B-Corp
* Cooperative
Worker owned, user-owned, business/retail co-op
* Non-profit
* Government entity: local, state, federal
* Unincorporated collective

What are 2~3 principles your organization has?

How do you manifest them?
Through user policy, CoC, business practice, governance, etc.