

Algae Cloud

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Project Information (EN)

Concept description

DNA data storage technologies make it possible to safely store digital data files in the DNA of living organisms. Algae cloud imagines the weightless and ethereal “cloud” as a breathing, living culture that requires and provides care. In a world where humans are increasingly disconnected from other living things, but also to how digital data hoarding takes its physical toll on the planet, what relationships could we have with living organisms if we were dependent on them for data storage, and how would we treat data storage if it lives, grows and eventually dies?

About the project

We started with the intention of making something that combined digital technologies and living organisms to give people a sense of interspecies empathy. It became apparent that people's relations to living organisms and ecosystems around them are deeply connected to everyday practices. We looked at practices that could instil a sense of dependency between people and living organisms through emerging biotechnologies, and DNA data storage in living organisms was further investigated. A new concern arose by making speculations meant to help people imagine opportunities for care with DNA data storage in trees. However, people also started talking about how they relate to data storage. We therefore addressed current anthropocentric relationships with data storage as a ‘careless’ practice. After choosing spirulina and iterating on a speculative scenario, we developed Algae Cloud as a speculative research artefact to inspire new opportunities around mutualistic care between people, algae and data. Algae Cloud aims to spark reflection on human-non-human relationships with living organisms and data storage. On the one hand, how might a human-centric motivation, like storing data, influence how we care for and pay attention to living organisms like algae? And how might treating data storage as something that’s alive and needing care challenge the anthropocentric notion of data storage as weightless, immortal and safe - up there in a cloud?

Projectinformatie (NL)

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Image List

Filename	Caption	Credit
4_1698046961.jpg	Care kit	Neva Linn Rustad
8_1698046976.jpg	Uploading files	Neva Linn Rustad
9_1696181452.jpg	Care routine - microscope	Neva Linn Rustad

The images above are included in the ZIP under /images.