

Re: Project 5: Course Final Project

by **squire** » Mon Dec 02, 2024 6:43 pm




I'm interested in garbage. Tabloid magazines, reality TV, hyper-processed foods, elevator muzak... the forms of culture which have the widest reach and receive almost no critical inquiry, simply because they are too base, too low, too worthless. I think that the pop-up advertisement and the sponsored news-style spam advertisement are some of the most interesting cultural artefacts we have. They're the visual language of the libidinal, they speak only in the language of the id. Sex, money, hunger, power, acceptance... each of these ads targets one (or more) of our base desires and strips that desire down to its most naked, shameful, transparent manifestation. In a strange way, I find them beautiful.

These advertisements have been around for a long time, as long as I can remember. Even before the proliferation of machine learning on the internet, these images have held an algorithmic function. They combine text and image to optimize a mass numerical quantity of clicks, molding their content to whatever provides the most engagement. Now, plenty of these advertisements are further abstracted by also using AI to generate their images and captions (though photographs are still in use).

I began this project by—to quote the Allen Ginsberg poem I referenced in an earlier assignment—“shopping for images.” I foraged for screenshots of advertisements, mainly on the DailyMail's FeMail site and the New York Post's PageSix site. Charles also sent me a screenshot of an advertisement he's been seeing a lot on his computer, using AI generated images of women with the caption “Find a Soulmate from Ukraine.”

Link to HQ image files:


https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EDaRtBydNkWyYs3EDFy_XJ7IzcmjfZwd?usp=sharing



Find a Soulmate from Ukraine
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The Penny Hoarder | Sponsored

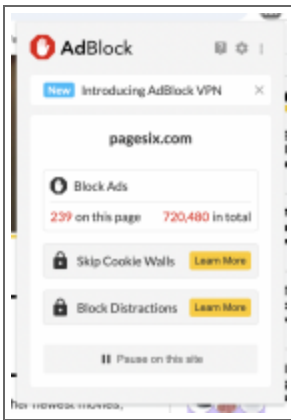
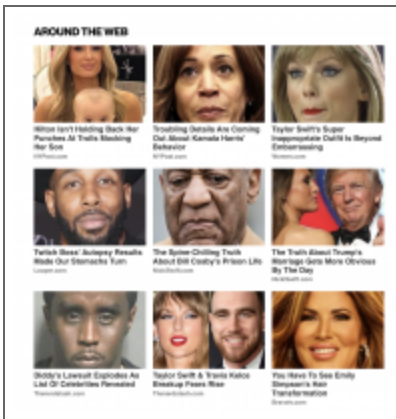


JANA: My divorced dad is sleeping with a girl I went to school with



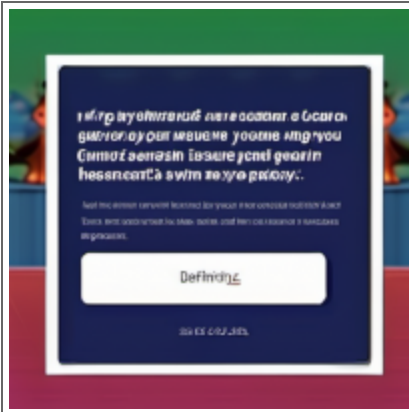
Daily Mail

Make it like Mireal from the supermarket's Zara collection incorporate some of her most show stopping look festival chic to evening glamor



I then used StableDiffusion to generate similar images, using variations of language like “tabloid website homepage trashy scam spam pop-up advertisement.”





My artistic goal for this project was to create a sort of behemoth of the id. So I opened a blank document in Photoshop and added both my organic advertisements and the generated images I had made. From there, I used Photoshop's "Generative Expand" feature to turn the individual images into a sort of pattern. I then used that expanded image to create a third image, which (a bit ironically) felt the most visually 'calm' as the individual components had been subsumed into the pattern of the whole.



I wanted to introduce some text-based AI into the project, so I input my largest image into MaxAi.me, allowing me to input the same command into four chatbots simultaneously—though the file size was too big for two programs to read, leaving me with responses from Gemini and GPT. I asked both programs to “Please write me copy text to advertise and sell this product.” While Gemini assessed the image as a garbled mess of nonsense and provided copy as such, GPT gave copy for a dating service for Ukrainian women.

I manually imposed the text back onto the images. For one image, I used a more design-y approach and placed the text in a computer-y font inside a Web1.0 style pop-up. For another, I wanted to maintain

the nonsense–chaos–noise of the image and simply pasted the text directly over the image.



In many and obvious ways, these images are deeply “digital.” (If they remind me of anything, in a lot of ways they look like old issues of TigerBeat and J-14...) But the internet is not some sort of separate entity from “real life”—it has both tangible (undersea cables, server farms in Ireland, carbon emissions) and intangible (epistemological, rhetorical, ontological) effects on our lives and our desires. As a final little capstone on the class, I used Photoshop to manually insert these images into spaces we would normally see advertising. I hope that these images appear to be both topographical and cellular, both macro and micro, examinations of libidinal desire and digital culture.



