Teo Tsivranidis – Thesis

My thesis is inspired by my experience of writing and teaching code since 2016, authoring content on the internet since 2018, and consuming content on the internet since forever. I feel like there is a mental shift in how we think about the longevity of software today. I am inspired by the emergence of ‘disposable software’ or code that is written to be executed a handful of times and then forgotten. I am interested in documenting how the internet is changing, and speculating devices we may use to distinguish how ‘stepped on’ a website is, or a certain type of patina on the web.

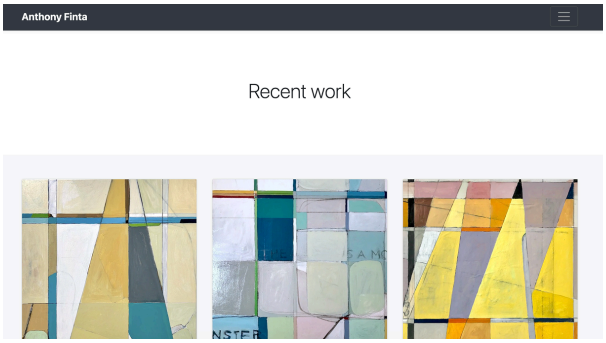
The project is split into an investigative and a speculative part. The investigative part is a form of web archeology. I have written a python script that queries the Internet Archive to explore when the first and last snapshots of certain urls have been observed, and how the content of those sites has changed over time. As an example, consider four snapshots over the past twenty years for finta.com to see it evolve from family website, to family blog, to personal portfolio, to AI accounting software.

URL: https://www.finta.com/ First snapshot: 1999-10-01T20:22:40 Last snapshot: 2025-09-29T01:03:09
Age span: ~26.0 years (9494 days)

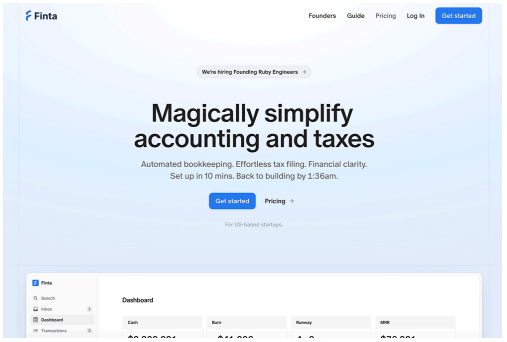
2003

2011

2021



2025



The goal of the investigative part of the project is to answer:

1. logistical questions such as: How long has a website been around? How often does it get revamped? How often does its ownership change?

2. social questions such as: How does the website's energy evolve over time? How does the community it serves change? How many visitors does it have?
3. technical questions such as: How has its code changed over time? How has its byte size changed over time? What remains when we pull the javascript out of a webpage?

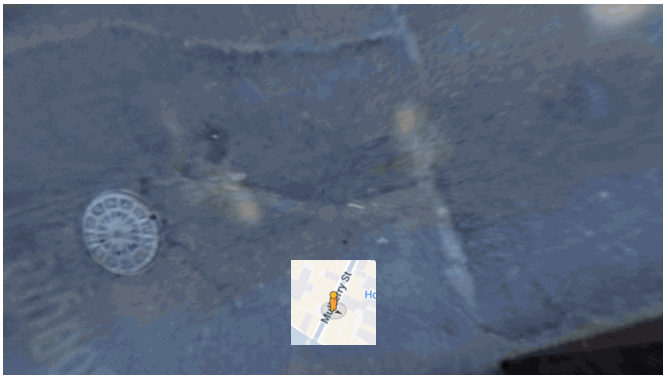
I want to improve the script to be able to answer the questions above reliably and at scale.

In the speculative aspect of the project I will try to think of ways on the web that we may experience aging, disposability, depth of websites.

a. If we think of a website as a person, what are its bones? What other websites are its friends, or want to be its friends?
b. If we think of a website as a building, what material is it made of? How many times has it been renovated or rebuilt from the ground up?
c. How can we visualize patina on the web? Should we be able to tell how long a website has been around and how big of a community it has served?

A couple visualizations I did this semester that may prove relevant are:
Using css to display images on top of each other and cut out parts of them so reader can see through layers

A python / js 'city walker' script that walks through google maps street view and creates a screenshot timelapse of the journey.



annotated bibliography