

# About DNA: A Networked Fiction and Digital Literacies Project

[www.dnanovel.com](http://www.dnanovel.com)

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[DNA](#) is a networked fiction and digital literacies project set in the year 2075, in a dystopic future where genetic clones are commonplace and the unique identity of any individual is protected only by tacit consent. Made up of five separate but interconnected storyworlds, DNA's main narrative depicts a year in the life of a clone who begins plotting to take on the identity of one of his "[code partners](#)" and includes a series of hyperlinks to [real](#) and [fictional](#) Wikipedia entries that provide a peek into the dystopic future of [economic](#), [agricultural](#), [cultural](#), [social](#), and [political](#) systems. Introduced by a frame narrative explaining how the messages were discovered, [DNA](#) asks readers to construct their own unique reading path through digital artifacts both inside and outside of the project and through that process raises numerous questions about the relationships between real and fictional constructions of reality and the boundaries between fact(s) and fiction(s). Narrative layers encountered by the reader include:

1/ the frame narrative, which is made up of the research findings of a Ph.D. candidate in the field of Cybersecurity Systems in the year 2106

2/ the main epistolary narrative depicting the events of year 2076, during which a clone begins plotting to take on the identity of one of his "[code partners](#)";

3/ the narratives assembled by the reader via hyperlinks to fictional Wikipedia entries that provide a peek into the dystopic future of [economic](#), [agricultural](#), [cultural](#), [social](#), and [political](#) systems;

4/ the narratives constructed by the reader via hyperlinks to actual Wikipedia entries;

5/ the narratives constructed by the reader via whatever sites/applications s/he/it visits when s/he gets distracted in the narrative construction process.

Developed using freely available open access tools, the project also invites readers to reverse engineer the project and the digital assets that make up the project in order to learn more about how html, web sites, and web-based informational resources function.

Influenced by a range of electronic and experimental literary works published

over the last thirty years, DNA is an interactive, multimedia art project with pedagogic aims. By interacting with the project, readers must assess the veracity and reliability of each digital artifact presented and consider the constructed nature of meaning in general, but particularly in networked environments. Overlapping, relating to, and informing one another, the various narrative worlds created inside and outside of the project's narrative frame draw attention to the dynamic and generative nature of networked narratives, as well as to their ability to challenge traditional notions and definitions of authorial intention, the role of the reader, and narrative point of view. Additional interactive features enabling readers to contribute their own texts and links to the project are currently being developed.

Conceived as a project that will appeal to readers of literary and dystopic fiction, as well as to a new generation of readers who access texts and information exclusively via the World Wide Web, DNA is informed by both electronic and print literature, including Yevgeny Zemyatin's [We](#), Aldous Huxley's [Brave New World](#), George Orwell's [1984](#), and Julio Cortazar's [Hopscotch](#) to name but a few\*. Fiction writers have been experimenting with digital hypertext and multimedia projects since the late-1960s, and several important works were published in the 1990s, including [afternoon, a story](#) (1990) by Michael Joyce, [Hegeirascope](#) (1995; [revised 1997](#)) by Stuart Moulthrop, [Patchwork Girl](#) (1995) by Shelley Jackson, and [253 or tube theater](#) by Geoff Ryman (1996). More recent hypertext and multimedia projects have been collected in the [Electronic Literature Collection, Volume 1](#) (2006), [Volume 2](#) (2011), and [Volume 3](#) (2016). For those interested in reading more about electronic literature, there is an excellent [overview by N. Katherine Hayles](#) available on the [eliterature.org](#) web site, as well as a very helpful [introduction by Joseph Tabbi](#) published on the same site. Reviews of electronic literary works, as well as articles about electronic literature are available at the [Electronic Book Review](#).

You can access Version 2.0 of the project [here](#).

Excerpts from Version 3.0 were published in [The Arsonist](#) in September, 2018.

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