

My Life on Discord

by stephen hastings-king

I'm on Discord but I don't know how to do anything.

I have a couple channels I sit around in, mostly German bitcoin start-ups pretending they're anarchists while looking for in-kind capital from donor/investors that may or may not be imaginary, congratulating themselves on how they're totally transforming capitalism by emulating it down to the last detail with their awesome new horizontal distributed organizational software solutions to whatever infrastructural needs your horizontal distributed organization might have or anticipate having in the glorious post-capitalist future that awaits just past this here corner that an angel investor could really help us get around. I admire their perky optimism and feel like a horrible old fart for thinking all the mean things I think about what they say whenever they say those things.

Not long ago from a chair upstairs I attended a conference in Berlin that was swarming with these people: their presentations were bids for funding; they asked questions in the form of elevator pitches repeated in a vocal style that required their voices to trail upward at the end of sentences so as to imply an asking, which in turn implied an interest in other people, 20-something bourgeois anarchists of the Clayton Christensen School for whom autonomy is A Problem for which their software is The Solution because of course it is.

So, anyway, yeah, I'm on Discord.

Every so often I say to myself, "Self, we should try to go somewhere else on this thing" & we try & we fail. But I don't mind. I hang around where I started with my Berliner anarcho-start up buddies. We sit in the same room and don't really talk. It's like growing up in New Hampshire. Whenever someone new comes in, Discord greets them with "I hope you brought pizza!" & the rest of us go: "Fucking hell. Not more pizza..." But, you know, silently. To ourselves. And that's the kind of community I'm part of there. What

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we have in common—being really fucking sick of pizza---far outweighs what separates us---our lives, interests, political projects. So, I stick around.

Discord's interface is strangely non-intuitive, like being non-intuitive is a design feature. But I'm unreliable. I'm still unable to figure out what relations might obtain between what I do with, say, an Xbox controller and what happens on screen. Every so often in the past one of my nephews would talk me into playing some ancient video fight game so they could beat the shit out of my avatar while he did arbitrary things and I complained about how none of this made sense. They would say "Don't worry, man" in a version of the voice Spaulding Grey used to impersonate Athol Fugard in "Swimming to Cambodia" which I'm pretty sure none of them had seen. "How do you know about that?" I would ask. "Know about what?" they would say before turning back to beating the shit out of my avatar in some ancient video fight game.

