Written response

A short statement

In the first week of my project, I used system error messages as an entry point to examine the unequal nature of human-computer dialogue. In the second week, I shifted my focus toward the system-imposed experience of waiting. My line of enquiry asks: when users are forced into states such as loading, error prompts, or system freezes, can they regain a sense of control over this time? Even small, humorous, or absurd interventions might reclaim these lost moments. To explore this, I developed four stages of iterative experiments: first, embedding instructional prompts to give users something to do; second, inserting meaningful public information that deserves visibility; third, inviting user feedback to create emotional engagement; and fourth, simulating a collective waiting space to foster a sense of shared experience. Through these micro-interventions, my project aims to reactivate the overlooked moments within system interfaces, transforming passive, imposed waiting into opportunities for reflection, agency, and subtle forms of collective expression.

Annotated bibliography

1. 【references drawn from the course reading list that situate your project in a broader discourse or conceptual domain】

DiSalvo, C. (2012). *Adversarial Design*. Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 115–125.

"Adversarial design introduces friction into systems to provoke political reflection."

Carl DiSalvo's *Adversarial Design* provides a critical framework that situates my project within broader discussions about the political potential of design. DiSalvo challenges the assumption that design should always aim for seamlessness and optimization, proposing instead that friction and disruption can serve as tools for critical engagement. Applying this lens, my project moves beyond surface-level interaction design and enters a conceptual field where system-imposed

structures—such as waiting periods—become opportunities for micro-political intervention. By inserting prompts, alternative actions, and reflective content into error windows and loading screens, I position my work as part of a design practice that questions the neutrality of digital environments. DiSalvo's arguments help frame my interventions not as mere enhancements, but as critical acts of resistance within broader technological and social systems.

2. 【references drawn from the course reading list that situate your project in a broader discourse or conceptual domain】

McLuhan, M., & Fiore, Q. (1967). *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. Berkeley: Gingko Press.

"The medium is the massage. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments."

Marshall McLuhan's exploration of media as active environments provides a conceptual foundation for situating my project within broader debates about how digital spaces shape human perception. In The Medium is the Massage, McLuhan argues that media are not passive transmitters of content but active forces that restructure experience, attention, and social behavior. This perspective moves my project beyond isolated design interventions and situates it within a theoretical discourse: a discourse that understands system interfaces (such as loading screens and error windows) as formative environments. By intervening in these overlooked moments, my project aligns with McLuhan's view that even the most minor media structures participate in the construction of reality. My work is therefore not only a redesign of a single interaction, but also a critical intervention into the wide-ranging cultural and psychological effects of the digital environment.

3. 【reference that is specifically related to your project in its topic】

Shulevitz, J. (2010). *The Sabbath World: Glimpses of a Different Order of Time*. Random House.

"The Sabbath is a revolutionary idea precisely because it dares to challenge the tyranny of time."

In *The Sabbath World,* Judith Shulevitz explores the importance of structured pauses in a modern society driven by acceleration and productivity. Through her study of the Sabbath tradition, she argues that intentional rest is not merely an interruption of activity, but a deliberate act of resistance against the tyranny of time. Shulevitz's framing of "waiting" as a meaningful and transformative practice directly informs my project. Instead of viewing system-imposed moments of waiting—such as loading screens and error messages—as wasted time, I began to reconsider these enforced pauses as potential sites for micro-intervention. Her analysis prompted me to explore how even involuntary interruptions in digital environments can be reclaimed as opportunities for reflection, agency, and subtle disruption.

4.【reference that is specifically related to your project in its topic】

JODI (Heemskerk, J., & Paesmans, D.). (2002). My%Desktop.

【Digital performance and video work】

In My%Desktop, the art collective JODI dismantles the seemingly rational structure of the Macintosh OS 9 interface by performing chaotic, real-time manipulations of the desktop in front of a live audience. Their work questions the illusion of system stability and draws attention to the ways digital environments can provoke irrational, unpredictable user behaviour. Instead of treating the interface as a neutral or orderly tool, JODI exposes it as a fragile zone where anxiety, play, and technological malfunction intersect. This critical approach directly informs my own investigation into system-imposed moments of waiting and error. Like JODI, I aim to subvert the expected user experience by treating passive moments—loading screens, frozen windows—not as dead time, but as openings for agency and quiet disruption. By surfacing the emotional and behavioural undercurrents hidden beneath system operations, My%Desktop offers a method for reimagining controlled digital spaces as sites of micro-intervention and critical reflection.

5. 【1 reference that demonstrates a critical position in context of your specific topic, medium, or method】

Suchman, L. (1987). *Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human-Machine Communication*. Cambridge University Press.

"Plans are resources for action, but they do not in any strong sense control action."

In Plans and Situated Actions, Lucy Suchman critically challenges the notion that human-machine communication can be effectively controlled through fixed, pre-determined plans. She demonstrates that human actions are context-dependent and inherently adaptive, whereas machines rigidly follow programmed sequences without the ability to respond flexibly. Suchman's critique is highly relevant to my project, which explores system-imposed waiting periods in digital environments. Her analysis reveals how default system designs often impose a one-way, non-negotiable experience on users, treating them as passive recipients rather than active agents. This critical perspective directly informs my medium and method: rather than accepting loading screens and error messages as empty technical delays, I intervene within these enforced pauses to insert micro-level expressions, instructions, or interactive prompts. Inspired by Suchman, I aim to disrupt the asymmetry between system and user, reclaiming waiting time as a dynamic space for agency and subtle resistance against standardized system behavior.

6.【wild card reference】

Holzer, J. (1977–1987). Truisms. Various urban installations.
【Public art series】

"Abuse of power comes as no surprise." — Jenny Holzer, Truisms

Jenny Holzer's Truisms intervenes in urban public spaces through short, impactful statements, inserting texts onto billboards, electronic screens, and posters that appear mundane but carry sharp social critiques. Although Holzer's practice does not operate within digital systems or human-computer interaction, her method of transforming visual public space into a temporary site of reflection offers a powerful inspiration drawn from public art. It reveals that space itself is not neutral, and that even seemingly insignificant moments can be activated to foster a sense of public awareness. Building on Holzer's redefinition of the cityscape, I reconsidered system error windows and loading screens, questioning whether these passive waiting spaces might also function as potential platforms for public expression. As a result, my project seeks to intervene during enforced waiting periods by embedding information or directive prompts, aiming to transform moments of technical suspension into micro-public opportunities for agency and reflection.