

## **From Art on Networks to Art on Platforms**

(Casestudies: Runme.org, Micromusic.net and Udaff.com)

Olga Goriunova, Alexei Shulgin

Web platform produced art or platform-based art of generation and development of cultural practices is neither very new nor very old. Mailing lists, wikis, web blogs all shook our understanding of how cultural sphere is produced and reproduced. Geert Lovink introducing his critical research into early days of internet culture writes:

“Lists (and weblogs) form the communication backbones of so many of today’s cultural movements and cultural/intellectual undercurrents”.

Shall we distinguish a specific genre among similar only partly technical methods of production and management of creative work, knowledge, education, exchange, - all in all, cultural practices on the net? Could we think of it as of the one coming after mailing lists euphoria and decline, neighbouring wikis and blogs, borrowing some of their features and introducing some new ones?

Such new method is something in-between a content management system, online web site, library and a club. Such new method is based on a networked platform, a center or one of the centers of a certain artistic trend the life of which we would like to depict here.

What is a platform?

A platform is a web site organized in a special way: as a relatively simple database with artefacts, or a more complex portal built around the database.

A platform differentiates itself from other websites by the relations of creative, social, instrumental, educational and historical character it establishes and is involved into. A platform is aimed at supporting and stimulating creative initiatives and work, and it provides a possibility for continuous exhibition of the artefacts, often accompanied by reactions to them, various discussions. Sometimes there is also a set of instruments for particular kind of creative work available. A platform often also puts efforts into translating digital creative processes into offline and more official cultural scenes, establishing connections between cultural movements of different times and orders. Most platforms organize (ir)regular “real-life” gatherings such as festivals, concerts, workshops or those of less formal nature.

Technically speaking, a platform should have an open database with a user-friendly interface anyone can download from/upload to, and instruments for contextualization and development of a practice it works with (blog, forum, chat, ranking, voting, featuring and others).

There are various examples of platform based cultural practices and artistic trends production, one of which is Runme.org, software art repository, which we have been working with over the last three years. Our practical experience with it will serve as the core example of platform art theory presented in this article.

Runme.org is a software art repository that appeared as a side project of software art festival Readme. In the year 2002 we were holding the first software art festival in Moscow. We were willing to produce a festival with logic different from the one of a “usual” art festival and that would fit better that mysterious software art. Software art appeared as a reaction to long-standing tradition of regarding software as culturally, aesthetically, socially neutral layer between human and a computer. It could be linked to the magic of computation and poetics of algorithms that were bothering humans from B.C. times and, in the recent past, to the formalism of conceptual art; software art is also closely linked to the living programmers’ and users’ cultures.

First Readme introduced an open database where all festival submissions would be entered, stored and could be viewed at any moment. After the event was over, it became clear that a new database needed to be open. So the decision came: to build a database according to the structure of software repositories – with categories and subcategories (also parodying the festivals’ categories structure). We decided to introduce big amount of categories – this would work on uncovering the field, but not directly, rather enlarging then reducing. The amount and variety of categories made unreasonable any attempt to name the only best software artist.

Runme.org has developed into an independent repository, working with different models of presentation, development and contextualization then an art festival.

Micromusic.net is the second example. Micromusic.net is a label and a community that is shaped by its members; it is focused on 8-bit music. 8-bit music is low tech music originating from early home computers of the 80-s: Atari, Commodore. Sound chips of early computers tried to simulate musical reality, - sounds of guitar, percussions, piano. Imperfect and restricted, the chips could only produce special funny and easy to recognize sounds far from the original prototypes. The scarcity has produced a special aesthetics: of coolness, romanticism and imperfectness, the aesthetics of low tech.

People making 8-bit music nowadays most likely had a computer in the 80-s when they were children and were playing games or creating music. Returning to the music of the past of computer technologies, they search for some qualities they cannot find in new technology; they come back to their childhoods’ favourite toys and memory shared by many people.

Udaff.com is a Russian language based literary resource that will serve as the third example for our study. Udaff.com is focused on publishing short texts (“kreativ”) that could be submitted by any person; texts are written in a specific style. Both thematics and language of kreativs are non-normative and obscene (“mat”), spelling is wrong; texts are rather short, intensive and full of masculine mainstream cliches on many levels: themes, motives, figures, metaphors, etc. Udaff.com is an extremely popular resource that managed to establish a “literary trend” of its own, “literature for men”, both underground (as it is pornographic in thematics and non-normative in language, illegal or unthinkable in official culture) and mainstream (as it reproduces mainstream cliches).

There are other platforms that follow the model that is going to be described, among which VJ Central (vj culture) could be mentioned.

How does it happen? Economic conditions

There appears a web resource. It is usually built by enthusiasts and is almost never a result of any stipend, grant or salary. Its usage is free.

These platforms succeed only if they appear as vivid reactions, as outcomes of intuition and feeling that they are needed at a particular moment of time for a particular practice. Such premises demand quite fast response that is often not compatible with the procedure of applying and waiting for funding.

Another reason is that the initiators and managers of these platforms have to be devoted fanatics, because management of big resources demands commitment: a lot of time on a too regular basis. No budget plan can embrace and no funding can cover the enormous amount of work hours it turns out to consume.

However, different platforms find different models of supporting themselves on a micro level: combining different flows of (rather small) money, getting free hosting, getting prizes and funding for the particular purposes.

Technically speaking, modern technology allows for quick production of such systems by a few people. So the platforms are usually built over a short period of time by a few people, usually from two to five.

Platforms also need to be flexible, open to changes according to the needs and demands of a cultural practice it works with. Even the initiator and the main ideologist of the resource could rather unlikely be sure in advance what shape the platform would take.

Some platforms and practices they support do not self-identify as artistic and do not consider their “hobby” as a culturally valuable and recognized activity.

Runme.org was initiated by two people, conceptualized by eleven, developed by four and coded by one in three months time: from the first mail discussing a database structure till the discovery of the idea of the repository in the air, through discussing, designing, programming, testing and polishing. Runme was launched in January 2003 and has, till now, gathered over 300 software art projects. There is up to a thousand subscribers to Runme.org newsletter.

By now it is for three years Runme has demanded filtering upcoming projects, technical administration, taking decisions on the structural changes, arranging featuring, and so on. Readme software art festival (2002 Moscow; 2003 Helsinki; 2004 Aarhus), for which Runme has served as a project submission platform, was funded by various institutional bodies. It is through this indirect financial channels the Runme administrators and “experts” writing featuring texts were supported.

As for the flexibility, Runme database twofold structure - categories/subcategories and keyword cloud - was in constant change that will be discussed later in the text.

Web platform udaff.com visited by up to 50.000 people a day with 700.000 pages display and with a traffic of a terabyte per month was conceived and is administrated by only one person (Udav) with another one (Proforg) providing technical support for over 4 years (from spring 2001). At the moment one or few new kreativs and images are published daily, as well as reports, news, reviews, cooking recipes, and various declarations. The administrator Udav, through the mailbox of whom all the texts and images intended for publishing pass, works as a sound engineer at one of S.-Petersburg radio stations and gets no financial support for his resource. He had to buy a new laptop to administrate at any place and takes it on vacation to be connected non-stop. The advertisement banners on udaffcom can only cover expenses for hosting.

Back in the year 1999 Micromusic.net founding members counted five people; since then some joined the crew while others are not active anymore as Carl explains. Micromusic's "boss" is Carl. By now Micromusic.net community counts more than 13.000 registered members and has held tens of concerts world-wide.

Micromusic.net web site structure has also been changing over time. Microwarez (software tools for making micromusic) were introduced in June 2000, "microtext" – in December 2003. As Carl says he used to spend 10-20 hours a week administrating and working on Micromusic.net. He adds that at the moment it does not demand as much time.

Micromusic was initiated without financial aid but was receiving support from 2000 for three years from MIGROS Kulturprozent; the same institution has also supported the development of Microbuilder that won the prize for best design from BAK (Bundesamt fuer Kultur). Micromusic was and is also getting server support.

By now, as Carl says, they are also getting micro money from microshop and about 10-20 people were donating money (with microdonations).

What are these platforms for?

Usually such resources appear as experimental production and management systems focused at certain format of cultural practice: for instance, 8-bit music, obscene literature, software art, vj culture or others.

The artefacts of a cultural practice should appear originally in a digital form (or should be easy to digitalize without loss of some essential qualities) and be homogenous and compatible in format: text, digital image, piece of software or mp3 file. Being a natural part of the digital realm such artifacts are easy to maintain in a database, upload and download, i.e. integrate in the content management systems.

Cultural or artistic practice the resource chooses to contribute to and represent usually exists prior to the web-site in some more or less developed form, sometimes at the borders of distinct areas of art and culture, in "gray" zones, in the form of folk practices. The platform aims at fostering creativity, detecting, discovering, defining, shaping the

field, contributing to its development, and, in sum, contributing to materialization of a particular artistic or maybe broader – cultural trend.

We at Runme.org are far from declaring that Runme has created software art but we believe that without Runme software art in its “official” representation would be a much narrower and more boring thing.

Micromusic.net also works with pre- and by-existing realm of 8-bit music. But with Micromusic.net 8-bit music has got a wide recognition as a cultural phenomenon. More than that, Micromusic platform has contributed to the development of 8-bit international community and has established higher standards for its cultural product.

Udaffcom managed to generate a completely new literary trend – “literature for men”, characterized by recognizable style, and a special genre of a short story with distinctive writing - kreativ.

Udaffcom manner of spelling already started to leak into official domains of the Russian language. In Moscow in April 2005 protesters against the arrest of a Newsweek journalist in Byelorussia were using posters with udaffcom turn of speech denoting critical attitude written in udaffcom manner: “Lukashenko, drink some poJson”.

The structure of the platform / Database structure

The structure of the platform can include various elements: a system for exchanging messages (microtalk) and an on-line radio (in the case of micromusic.net), comments threads (in the case of udaff.com), - but it is always centered on an administrated database with the artifacts, everyone is invited to upload to and download from. The structure of the database is shaped by the material it works with: music, literature, software art, photography or software, - and by the design decisions taken by the administrators.

Different platforms arrived to the database formula by various roads.

The initial list of Runme.org categories was conceived with a portion of irony. How can one classify art, especially following the classification principles strictly (for instance, each category should describe exhaustively a certain conceptual phenomenon constituting a closed integrity in itself, - so that, a piece can fall under only one category)? In Runme classification a project could fit a number of categories easily. Categories are not consistent: one relates to the form, another one - to the major theme of the work, a third – to the way it functions, et cetera.

Irony of the initial categories was washed out by their adaptation to the needs of the users: offensive, negative, impudent, humorous categories, categories nobody wanted to be identified with disappeared. Among the categories discussed initially there were: best software poseur, beautiful crash of the system, jodi plagiarism, competition for suggesting categories, best festival jury (for jury), hard to use software, best physiological reaction, best grant hoover, best classicist vomit, modem art, dead data, emulated modernism, pixel soup, trivial software and many others.

The classification was and still is constantly changing in accordance to the works submitted or the amount of works of a certain type collected. Sometimes a project submitted asks for a category / sometimes the amount of projects overweighs a category and demands a one of its own. Only with time there were introduced: installation based, institutional critique. A category such as code beauty had to disappear with only code poetry left.

If categories and subcategories were controlled, the keywords (irrational way of structuring or navigating through) were supposed to be unmoderated but are also filtered. Keywords turn to play the role of categories of the second choice. If a person prefers certain aspect of work she might choose it as an indicator for the category, while a secondary but important motif would be chosen as a keyword. The keywords reveal connections between seemingly disparate projects.

There is also a part of keywords that indicate a platform the project runs at, including software such as Windows, Mac, Linux, but also hardware such as Amiga, Atari, and Sinclair. "Java" and "on-line" are also treated as an OS in keyword list.

Udaffcom succeed to IRC channel #flex that was quickly turned into and remained flame wars base, and fuck.ru, where obscene stories were sent and got published. By the launch of udaffcom, fuck.ru was dead, but its literary experiment was not.

The database of udaffcom was made more complex as more and more texts were arriving. At the moment, one can browse the stories chronologically and via authors' names. There are also a thread of kreativs' comments, "trash bin" with texts that were not approved by the administrator but still available online, and "trash bin rules", where authorized members publish kreativs from the trash bin they decide to be worth to be "saved". There is also a section "shortly about the main" – reviews of kreativs.

Udaffcom is a complex resource, - it includes "everyday images", movie, game, book and website reviews, stories about life abroad, political notes, sport and cooking discussions, a few associated projects: a forum, an on-line radio and flash animations website. Udaffcom holds competitions for the best design of T-shirts, postcards and stickers and sells them.

But despite all this richness, writing is the center of udaffcom creative processes. Relatively simple database structure could be explained through the lack of time and resources for complex developments. During first year of its existence the administrator held a survey asking whether some structural changes would be desirable. People voted for distinguishing between prose, poetry and journalistic pieces, introducing voting for the best kreativ, rating and creation of "favourites" with the best texts, the so called "incorruptible ones". However, neither of these options were implemented, - udaffcom functions perfectly being as simple as it is, but at the same time the lack of certain distillation and contextualization instruments define the niche udaffcom's literature has to stay within.

Micromusic.net's database - "up-/downloadz" is structured in a few ways: by time of uploading - "latest micromusic releases" (usually arrive in bunches when some of accumulated uploads pass through the admins) that are subject to voting (they get pointz) and by number of downloads "download\_chartz" (of all files within the last 7 days). Complete lists are also available. There is a "hall of fame" with the top 50 tracks. Micromusic.net's important elements are microtalk (a classic "who-is-online"-list displaying the logged-in users with an extra feature: a user can send messages to any user via the browser's pop-up-alert windows), microradio that is playing while you're chatting or up/downloading, microwarez with "music toolz recommended by the micromusic community", and microeventz with information on future and past concerts with photographs and commentaries. And, of course, there are many more sections to the website.

There is also microinfo on any author or track available to the registered users and a handful of cute little details, one of which was "microswopper" running for three months in autumn 2001 that was swapping words in a microtalk (war into sex, bye and cu into God Bless America, micro into lsd, and some other).

Micromusic organizes microcontests, microconcerts and releases Micromusic on CDs and vinyl. All that creates a special atmosphere characteristic of Micromusic.net, make the place "cool" and the community strong.

How does it work?

During quite short period of time the platform manages to attract people interested in the sphere, who upload theirs or others' works. The resource accumulates a significant number of artifacts representing the trend.

How it happens that people inhabit the platform and start to identify with it, using it to express themselves, is hard to fully explain. Whether the reputation is important, or the right self-presentation, or the website's design, the correct mode of working with arriving projects, right moment, right structure, and of course, lively and hot theme - a lot of factors contribute to the platform's coming-into-being.

Projects arrive and get presented. People start browsing, reacting to the accumulated works, providing new ones and participating in discussions, joint projects or offline meetings, concerts, festivals, releases and other forms artistic practice formation and the community life take. By active participation, users of the platform shape the practice and build a discourse around it. Conscious efforts of the platform originators and administrators aimed at the formation, distillation and contextualization of the practice also play an important role.

The platform changes according to the input, unites the work of many, works on its development and introduction into other (more open to wider audience or more official) domains of culture and finally start representing a cultural practice. Becoming a centre or one of the centers of the trend, the platform turns into the fertile soil on which the bud of artistic trend or cultural practice enters the full bloom stage, making a change on the cultural landscape.

In the case of Runme, it was important to take into account the nature and some essential qualities of software art.

Runme was planned to be a platform working with software art, a practice more or less exclusively dealing with software that more or less exclusively runs on a computer. Software is sold on the CDs and distributed via networks. A usual place for finding software on the net is or was software repositories. A familiar metaphor of software database was used on purpose when working on Runme.org: online database would be more relevant to the nature of software art and easier to be accepted and get active.

Software art drew lifeblood from folk cultures of programmers, and a number of its masterpieces was obtained as “objects trouvés”. The bringing in of found objects from the cultures of programmers was necessary for building a fuller understanding of software art, its roots and qualities. The usual curatorial system of “inviting” artists to contribute could never work with such projects. On Runme the policy was to upload or link projects available on the net without necessary permission of the author. If the author did not reply to an invitation to join, the project was uploaded or linked. No one so far in the history of Runme objected to this policy. Authors that do not reply, usually either do not update their web pages (unparented pages, old accounts), or their projects are half legal or illegal, or the authors are too busy in other circles to be interested in something they do not understand or find important (art context in our case).

The two described policies: structure metaphor and important aspect of uploading policy allowed for building wide and open, not necessary institutional context for software art that in turn has led to raising interest and popularity of the phenomenon more people could relate themselves to.

Micromusic.net is an example of a resource that became popular due to extremely friendly, welcoming, warm and relaxed atmosphere it exhales. Apart of the right moment, hard fanatic work, cool topic, and other reasons, Micromusic’s design decisions are the model of the atmosphere production: online radio, messaging tool, bright funny colors, animated figures make the user feel she is in a cool club enjoying a beer, talking to some friends and listening to nice music.

Imagine a children’s room in bright yellow and blue... always pretty tidy... dozens of kidz are hanging out here. u wanna know what they’re doing? well, what all kidz do: make friendz! play! talk! quarrel! disappear 2 have a snack! These kidz come whenever and stay as long as they want.

Micromusic core team itself is a faithful bearer of this culture: when giving a public talk, they go to sauna first, to get relaxed enough to be able to relax the audience; and when giving a concert, they ask for a sofa on stage as for an important part of performance equipment.

The openness of micromusic platform is another answer. Anyone can become a member of micromusic community, any track that is good enough (in the eyes of qfs – quality filter system) gets published and can allow the author to become microfamous. Power struggles and fame thirst are substantial traits of any community, aren’t they?

All in all, micromusic is cool, and it's cool to be micromusic.

Tracing the roots of udaffcom success, it should be noted, that the platform managed to invent or form a new literary trend, "literature for men". These are "love-novels for men" of kind, analogues to those belonging to the "love-novels for women". This niche of Russian literary production is not covered, and could not be covered due to its non-normative vocabulary and obscene thematic.

Ideology of udaffcom and its literature, shared by large groups of contemporary Russian men of socially active age is partly mainstream and partly countercultural, as it was mentioned earlier in the text. For some users udaffcom becomes an initiation into "adult life", for others – a place to relax, for the third party it gives a possibility to resist. Many users report that they visit udaffcom at work where they have to "be professional", functioning in almost totalitarian conditions of the office environment. Swearing and being sworn at on udaffcom helps them to survive a working day.

Far from being an obscene flame environment, udaffcom fosters creativity, it asks for and promotes creative literary production and allows for "creative swearing" in the literary forms admired by many fans. Since non-normative vocabulary - "mat" udaffcom adepts use is not a part of official Russian language and could never become (similar to this, the taboo against open publishing of the image of phallus in the public domain would, most likely, never be broken), using this non-normative vocabulary in the literary creation has something of the act of a rebellion. Such technique is present in Russian literature in the works of Eduard Limonov, Victor Pelevin, Vladimir Sorokin, and some others.

Succeeding the techniques of acknowledged masters, udaffcom users self-identify as "counter-cultural writers".

The possibility to join the club of countercultural writers and readers is the answer to the question of udaffcom success.

The answer is filtering

Every platform has a filtering mechanism. Filtering works invisibly at the back-end but it is always present. Right filtering is a key to success: it can make the resource desirable to be a part of, and then it is accepted by the users.

Filtering is carried out in a quite strict manner by a few people with consistent judgements of taste and decisions. The way filtering is organized decides the destiny of the project: filtering is usually quite absolutist to keep up the quality of the resource, and also quite democratic to allow for a variety of works and approaches.

Runme is filtered by four people. It would be very hard to formulate the real criteria, apart from the formal ones (these are usually expressed in FAQ), the project have to fit to get in. It is most likely the case for all platforms' filtering procedures. At Runme the per cent of non-accepted projects rise to 33% (more than 150 projects rejected over three years), that is a surprise taking into account the administrators' feeling of serving as generally quite "mild" filters.

Udaff texts are filtered by only one person over 4 years, and it is his own taste that is the only reason he takes into account.

Micromusic's qfs (quality filter system) is formed from two board members and two invited members of the community. They listen to uploaded tracks and decide which ones get released on the web-site. Usually tracks get marks according to which they pass or not, but sometimes there is a need to discuss a piece. At Runme there were cases when not only administrators in the course of the discussion arrived at decisions opposite to the initial ones of the majority but also authors of rejected works engaging into mail conversations with the administrators managed to convince the crew to include their piece.

#### Distinction and reward

The ideology of platforms producing art is often expressed through technical means. It becomes especially clear with the system of distinction and reward.

Such systems are important mechanisms of shaping and developing the cultural practice. By building systems of voting, for instance, it becomes possible to rank projects and distill the most popular with subsequent public presentations, releases and promotion of the latter.

This is the case with micromusic: the hall of fame, for instance, consists of top 50 downloaded tracks. To become a microstar is a dream of the community member:

Having a charting track on micromusic is a big ego boost I can tell you, and if course I wanted to make another hit, and even get to number 1!

Other platforms refuse from ranking by the users and develop their own mechanisms of distinction and reward – such as we have done on runme.org.

Runme continuously served as a submission platform for Readme software art festival. Readme decided to abandon the system of winners and losers, and to fight the idea of the first, second and third prize, which we have found ridiculous and harmful as applied to arts.

Readme experts would select works they like most from the Runme database and write small texts – features on them. Featured woks appear in the “featured” section.

Each year the experts would use the same Runme database with the new projects uploaded after the previous edition and the projects that went through selection process already. This would give the jury and the artists the second possibility.

For the first time 47 projects were selected and featured (the second time the number was 32). 47 “winners” is a radical concept for the festival, but usual for a platform.

Udaffcom does not have any reward system at all. At the beginning different options were thought of: voting for the best story and rating. They remained on paper and were never implemented due, probably, to the lack of time or motivation. Certain hierarchy of authors is still built, of course, but it is invisible and distributed as a “word of mouth”.

The absence of any system of distinction is still an obstacle in the way of introduction of udaffcom literature into other domains of culture. Possibly, system of distinction could also help to increase quality of udaffcom creations. Best texts could be united into paper publication.

But anyway, udaffcom finds a way to influence both offline and online cultures, though by atoms, small moments of adoption, rather than through wide establishment and promotion of its own trend as an integral and unique artistic phenomenon.

“Folk practices”

Folk in the age of digital technologies widely available to people has entered into a revival phase. Digital folk being a wide layer of culture below the radar inspires many artistic practices and informs academic research into customization and mundane life of digital objects.

Pit Schultz writes about digital folk:

“Folk ... is more about structural simplicity without getting into formalisms. And even those formalisms, fractals, ... html, become a signature of a certain 'rural' culture, insofar as it is not established but ubiquitous, not fully commercially organized but productive. It is the small form, the stupid dialogue, which then suddenly gets put into the spotlight as pulp, trash, etc. (Folk) as a strategy to refresh authoritarian regimes of quality control, which just represent social structures (economical, political). ...

Folk also has to do ... with low threshold of entering an ecology of micro-production, which can lead to new patterns again. ... The unimportance of a specific folk work, it's similarity to countless other works, is a feature. Naivety is not, because it is as hard to be informed as to keep uninformed today... The element of innocence is rather the absence or resistance to put itself into a certain set of quality control mechanisms. (Folk) shows a richness of a certain kind, which can be only called cultural.

The aspect of watching some tribal, authentic somehow less alienated type of digital culture is not taking in account, that most of more elaborated work comes out of such backgrounds or is informed by it, that there is no other, and trails of these folkloristic myths are defining not the backbone but the background of digital culture.”

Folk practices put into quality control and contextualization mechanisms are partly transformed into or help to initiate and foster more established fields of cultural production. Here platform-based art become one of these mechanisms.

Runme's one aim was to bring recognition to the folk cultures of programmers and users that inspire software art. Gathered with inevitable errors of translation, found objects of digital culture present an incomplete layer in the mass of artefacts gathered on Runme.org. It is more of techniques and approaches, themes and motifs that are presented than histories or trends. Still since Runme works with different cultural scenes and domains, it is important to have those approaches exhibited. Runme could succeed in enriching, marking the context but could not build a natural environment for the life of those practices, as it would mean a different aim, policy and outcomes.

Udaffcom literature is in its heart a folklore literary trend that in its present form is found in between the folk and more official cultural production. Udaffcom serves as a platform for transferring information and artefacts in both ways: from established art into folk production and vice versa. The newcomers self-educate through discussing quality standards and following the admired stories models. The environment provides a supportive atmosphere for discussion and research into themes and techniques that are considered central to udaffcom ideology. The community reproduces building the trend over years.

8-bit music, low tech music is another example of the area of folklore cultural production of today. It has conservative and restricted set of instruments, almost no star system, and it is rarely produced for wider audiences than certain defined circles that are aware of the context. Nevertheless, these circles are rather large, and methods of the work are passed from one to another, which yields a variative character of the produced. Functioning according to the laws alternative to those of the official music domains consolidates folk characteristics of 8-bit music scene.

Micromusic could embody, enrich and work with all these parameters at the same moment contributing to the transfer of the artefacts onto another artistic levels. Being an open platform, it builds a system of recognition based on people's opinions. Discussing methods of work and quality of tracks, it provides the models and patterns to follow. Being outside of show business system, micromusic manages to enter official scenes with their releases and concerts without losing its openness, intent for inclusion and dialogue.

#### Community and Offline Meetings

There could be built various types of communities around platforms, from more vivid, present, socially supportive, with the time-consuming participation model to the ones with more occasional splashes of activities. There could be established relations within members of communities, which are performed and reproduced on the platform with the help of its instruments (chats, commentary) and at off-line meetings, or could be no connections between the people recruited in the platforms' social network whatsoever.

Despite of the degree of the distinctness of the community, it is the people who built the platform and make it work whether by only contributing with products or by discussing, evaluating and participating otherwise.

Most platforms have offline meetings in bars or at cultural events. Offline meetings that take the form of festivals or concerts provide the way of the platforms' cultural products into wider cultural domains and contribute to establishing interaction with cultural institutes, which is often desirable for the producers who work with marginal cultural forms. By joint offline (or online) performance they establish their cultural significance and power and share their ideologies, inspiration, and concerns.

Readme festival has regarded Runme projects as entries and has been responsible for providing featuring, initiating formal writing, publishing, establishing connections to different levels of cultural life and institutes. However, the festival did not aim at and

could never become a real offline meeting of the Runme community. Still, one attempt was made: Runme Dorkbot city camp in Aarhus, Denmark in August 2004 that united more than 50 presenters. It was an interesting event both in format (everybody had to present their works during 5-20 minutes, - thus, there was no separation between the audience and the presenters) and in outcomes.

Udaffcom occasionally organizes offline meetings in bars. The meetings are intended for the regular circle of visitors to meet in person and identify the face with a nickname (there is no registration and nicknames of users are not protected by passwords). Since the audience of udaffcom is enormous, the number of participants is limited to the core groups of users; besides, the entrance is usually not free. There are no public performances or readings, so the main functions of the meetings are acquaintance and entertainment.

Any member of micromusic can post a suggestion to the micromusic HQ (headquarters) to present her coming gig as a micromusic concert. If the HQ agrees, it is added to the list of microeventz. Members of micromusic travel to microeventz around the world, staying in each other homes, performing, and having a drink together.

There are many music websites where people can chat and share their music, but events allow everyone to gather and meet the people they have been chatting with and one can experience the joy of live performance and hear more from the artists and have a dance together. ... This is all dependent on trust and I love when it all works out well. ... I think offline events give substance to the site.

### Conclusion

As 1990-s were dominated by art on networks and celebration of communication via internet, 2000-s are marked by the development of platform-based art trends and cultural currents. If we recognize a new system of production of cultural practices in a number of initiatives that are well known, a lot of issues looked at from a different angle begin to sparkle.

Web platforms that generate and develop art trends:

are built by a small number of enthusiasts that are active participants of the scene they work with; working with digital artefacts, correspond better to the nature of the digital work, to the digital environment itself, developing the practice; are done in a way that allows for quick reaction and adjustments to the cultural agenda; can have quite complex structures build around a database that is open and strictly controlled at the same time – a heart of the resource; suggest new modes of education, knowledge building, creative work and supportive social environment as well as models for contextualization and development of a cultural practice; have resources to function and change over time that allows for wide and collaborative construction of a trend; work with “gray” zones of cultural production, with grass-root practices.

And there is always something else, something escaping from any formulas that makes out of the resource - a platform, a successful system for production and management of an artistic trend.