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etoy.HISTORY

1994/95 An architect, a lawyer, a media designer, two musicians, and two programmers from the United States, Switzerland, England, Italy, Los Angeles, Vienna, Zurich, Monza and Prague launched the digital art brand "etoy". The etoy.BRAND is intended to take the place of the individual artist. The aggressive marketing and corporate identity concept as well as the dress code of etoy.AGENTS emphasizes the fact that the company, in spite of its exaggerated consumer aesthetic, produces no tangible products. The internet domain "etoy.com" is the group's communications hub, studio, office, marketing platform, stage and archive.

1996/97 In the wake of marketing problems, the expected number of visitors to www.etoy.com was by far too low, etoy invested all available resources into researching the Internet traffic and developed its own code-based hype-machine. In the summer of 1996 etoy's "digital hijack" - the automated kidnapping of 1.5 million internet users - achieved a breakthrough on the web. With the playful abduction of 2% of the internet population of that time, and the website www.hijack.org which tells the story of the "hijack", etoy dramatized one of the most important phenomena of the information age: the search engines and their, until then, largely unknown methodology. The project garnered etoy the "Golden Nica" of the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz as well as other international prizes.

1998 etoy refused to adopt the image of internet pirates in order to develop in novel directions. In the context of their USA-expansion (Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco) etoy developed the following elements: etoy.TIMEZONE, etoy.SHARE and the etoy.TANKS. While etoy.TIMEZONE assumed the introduction of a surreal global internet-time in order to "harmonize" the interplay between etoy.USA and etoy.EUROPE, etoy.SHARE is the logical response to the rising costs of the internationally active art corporation. The etoy.CORPORATION began selling shares instead of artwork. Art collectors, institutions, and new members became etoy.SHARE-HOLDERS in the entire structure and enterprise of etoy, and thus made the expansion of the etoy.UNIVERSE possible. The bulk of the generated capital went into the realization of the first etoy.TANKS: 12 ton modified cargo containers. These modular office, studio, living, storage, and representation units were deployed to San Diego, San Francisco, Zürich, New York, Basel, Tokyo and Turin over the next few years. Thus, etoy remained faithful to its nomadic principles and is independent of fixed headquarters. The shipping container is not only a real-world manifestation of the internet datapacket (TCP/IP) metaphor, but an icon of globalization itself.

1999/2000 The internet boom and the American toy retailer eToys Inc.'s delusions of grandeur involved the etoy.CORPORATION in a number of absurd court cases and lead to a takeover bid worth the equivalent of over 500,000 Euro (the highest price ever offered for an internet-based artwork). The etoy.SHAREHOLDERS were not willing to give up etoy under these circumstances, and, after the unlawful blocking of the [etoy.com](http://www.etoy.com) domain, they declared the now legendary TOYWAR. 12 etoy.AGENTS, 10 lawyers, and more than 2000 activists, programmers, spies, negotiators, hackers, students, university professors and politicians took part in TOYWAR. etoy achieves its goal: in February 2000 - just before Nasdaq reached its historic all-time high, eToys Inc. capitulated after suffering stock market losses of 4.5 Billion. The TOYWAR-era concluded with a victory parade in the internet, a wild party, and a solo show at Postmasters Gallery in New York (April-May 2000). A little later, eToys Inc. declared bankruptcy.

2001/2002 After all its media intensive operations, etoy reoriented itself by restructuring personnel and strategy. The etoy.MANAGEMENT met in Ljubliana to develop plans for the future. The exhibition "CREDIT GAME" at the InterCommunication Center in Tokyo (November-December 2001) focused on Cultural Value and shadow markets. Over the course of 3 months, 8 etoy.AGENTS built the etoy.CORPORATION's first Asian base in Tokyo. etoy began to focus on education as a new theme, with which to expand the "Social Value" discussion. A central concern was the interaction of the next generation with various dimensions of the media and their definitions of truth and reality. The etoy.DAY-CARE-CAMP consisting of two etoy.TANKS at the Biennale Internazionale Arte Giovane in Turin/Italy (April-May 2002), was visited by 1000 kids between the ages of 6-11. In the context of the Biennale theme "BIG SOCIAL GAME", etoy investigated the role of children as producers and consumers in the art and media sector.

2003 With its solo exhibition at Kunsthalle St.Gallen (Switzerland) and several contribution to group exhibitions, among others at Palais de Tokyo (Paris), etoy had the opportunity to establish its strategy in the art industry. At the moment, etoy is working on the expansion of its corporate empire, the strengthening of its CORE-TEAM (economists and biologists join the core), and the development of the etoy.CARGO-TANK-NETWORK (mobile etoy.TANK-PLANTS). Thus, in summer 2003, etoy.TANK-PLANT#3 was operational in Zürich forming a research station for social engineering, aggressive innovation and contemporary art.

2004 In early 2004, the etoy operated out of Madrid, Plaza de Colón, conducting the etoy.ART-INVASION at ARCO 2004. In summer, etoy.DAY-CARE injected youth in Amsterdam with a shot of experimental art and recruited baby-agents for etoy.CORPORATION. Back in Zurich at the MFO park, the etoy.TANK-PLANT opens for VIP events and for the first time features the painstation as the inaugural acquisition to the etoy.ART-COLLECTION. In late 2004, the etoy.MANAGEMENT started to draft the first proposal for MISSION ETERNITY. 2005 After winning support from sitemapping, the Swiss government's media art competition, the multi-year project MISSION ETERNITY was officially launched. In March 2005, etoy participated at a group exhibition organized by Les Complices in Zurich with an insight into our corporate information infrastructure and knowledge management system. During summer, etoy assumed a residency in Berlin which opened in June on top of the Platoon camp in Berlin Mitte. Building on the Platoon camp, etoy.CARGO-CONTAINER #17 was placed on top of the Platoon containers and quickly made operational as group headquarters: plug and play. During the Berlin residency, etoy contributed to the Product & Vision discourse at the Kunstfabrik am Flutgraben that preceded a group exhibition during September and October. The residency served both to work for Product & Vision and as a production period for MISSION ETERNITY. In August, two etoy.AGENTS traveled on MISSION ETERNITY to the Nevada desert to collect pilot user data at the Burning Man festival.

2006 The production and implementation of MISSION ETERNITY components started to absorb most of the resources of etoy.CORPORATION. The tank-plant at Kanonengasse / Walcheturm in Zurich opened the production to the public and displayed behind-the-scene decisions and processes that drive a long-term and large-scale media art project such as MISSION ETERNITY. The engineering, design, and construction of the MISSION ETERNITY MORTAL REMAINS TANKS was geared open in time for the ISEA 2006 festival in San Jose, California. In parallel, etoy.INVESTORS and the management founded

etoy.CORPORATION SA in Zug, Switzerland. The redesign of the etoy.SHARE-CERTIFICATES included the certification and authentication by means of the etoy.HOLOGRAM. etoy won the Switch Innovation Award for MISSION ETERNITY.

2007 The first mortal remains of a MISSION ETERNITY TEST PILOT were transferred to Switzerland: The ashes of Timothy Leary. etoy.SHAREHOLDERS voted to include Timothy Leary into MISSION ETERNITY. During a ceremony in Zurich, the first TERMINUS, a cement cube holding the ashes, has been integrated into the SARCOPHAGUS. During summer, the SARCOPHAGUS was on exhibit in the open air exhibition in Môtiers, NE, Switzerland.

A large interactive installation for children merges etoy.DAY-CARE with MISSION ETERNITY for a one-year show at Völklinger-Hütte, Germany. The construction involved months of planning and implementation by etoy.AGENTS in Germany and Switzerland and led to the integration of a new tank into the etoy.UNIVERSE. Thousands of children enter seed capsules by exploring a system of tubes and interactive devices, learning new symbols and creating art together with etoy.AGENTS. In November, etoy won the Telefonica Foundation VIDA award for MISSION ETERNITY.

2008 etoy agents travel to ARCO in Madrid by invitation of Telefonica Foundation and to Gent to present MISSION ETERNITY at the „Game is up!“ festival for media art.

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