



A feminist server

as digital atelier and art residency

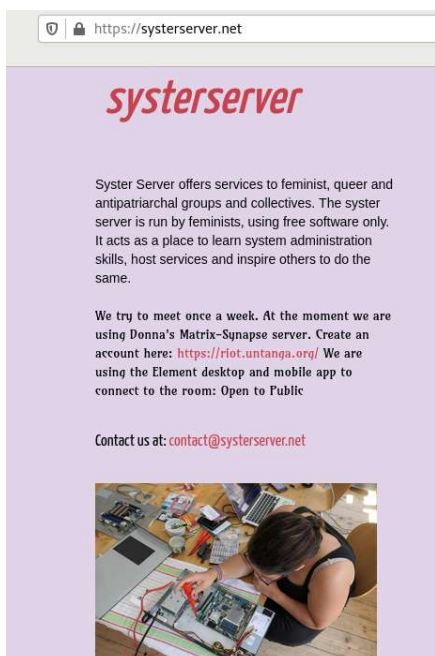
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:: Introduction ::

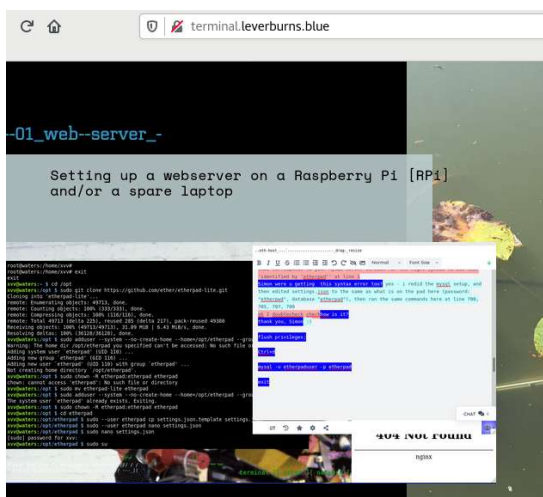
We are a collective of intersectional feminists based in different geolocations within Europe, who run their own autonomous servers, namely the **Systerserver***, **Anarchaserver*** and **Lever Burns***. Each server offers a different set of services from media cloud hosting, polls, online workshops to [version control software](#) and web hosting for archived cyber-feminist websites. We do this hard work to educate ourselves about web related technologies, nourish our fringed community of queer, trans and women identified persons by creating a space where we feel safe to share our art and activism, express our minds with no fear of being trolled, censored, or patronized by the privileged male majority that runs most of Internet's infrastructure. Moreover we choose to do this work only with free and open source software (FOSS) so that we can access tools with our minimum resources, study the code, and gender bend the established male dominant FOSS community.



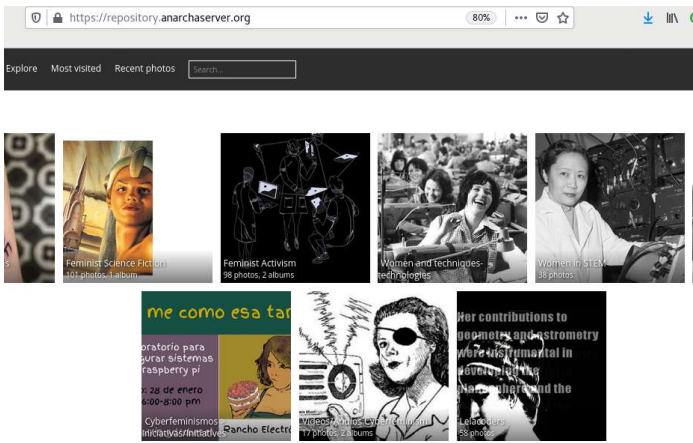
* [Systerserver](#) is a bare metal machine, built by us, and it is hosted at mur.at art space in Austria.

It serves the following projects:

- Three Public and two private [mailing lists](#)
- [Eclectic Tech Carnival](#) - an autonomous festival about a feminist approach to technology
- A [gitlab](#) instance where we host code of websites, documentation and a VPN related zine repo.
- A [nextcloud](#) instance
- A federated [mastodon](#) instance – social media



* [Lever Burns](#) -- [____- _] is a --no-camera&&--no-audio environment [we-txt--&--terminal] for monthly workshops / conversation sessions re:autonomous_practices for individuals and collectives][art cultural production]]



- * [Anarchaserver](#) is a virtual machine located in Iceland, hosted by the [Tachanka](#) collective. It serves the following projects:
 - A [collection](#) of images, and audiovisual footage on cyberfeminism
 - An encrypted [file-sharing](#) service
 - [Archival space](#) for media and feminist projects which are in hibernation
 - A [wiki](#) for the server's infrastructure

: Motivation ::

Critical reflections on the oligopoly of online platforms for artists and activists, which are governed by obscure ranking and filtering algorithms, obsessively monetized by advertisements, has shaped our inspiration for this proposal. The mainstream platforms are built to promote specific trends and consumerist lifestyles, establish star systems, and are not in favor of nuanced artistic aesthetics and ideas. As part of a community of media art practitioners, who consider the medium, materiality and infrastructure as a component of their overall praxis, **we want to share the process of configuring and the interest in developing our own infrastructure, with other artists, performers and curators.**

Some of us are based in the Flanders and Brussels area, and some have been in this region for art residencies, symposiums and festivals. We have taken part in discussions with different collectives, artists, and performers who are **in need for decentralized, autonomous platforms to share culture**, mobilize and promote their work and ideas. **Due to the pandemic condition**, these debates intensified and **there is now a higher awareness** of privacy issues and hidden agendas imposed by the 'GAFAM' tools (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft). We would like to consolidate these debates in a shared online and digital environment, and spread the existence of alternative platforms, which offer transparency, human interaction and in general contribute to a versatile online ecosystem. For instance, the desire of text based interfaces and channels of communication that accommodate a larger spectrum of online socializing, among other, more common audio/visual media tools. **As other AFNI applicants expressed in their proposal, there is an urgency to exit the default mainstream digital platforms and find services more aligned to artistic social practices.**

With this project we aspire to **strengthen the position of Brussels and Flanders artistic communities** within an international **decentralized non-commercial online network.**

:: Project proposal ::

Our proposal is to open up our services to possible allies, and make our presence more visible as a method of empowerment and encouragement for other projects. Therefore we would like to **expand our networks by offering a video streaming and archiving platform built with FOSS, as a community-based stage for other feminist and queer artists/ activists.**

We are aware of the difficulty to introduce new platforms, especially within smaller scale initiatives and with scarce resources, so we propose to offer hosting and facilitate web based residencies to artists and curators, who engage with identity politics through their work. They will be invited to curate a monthly long residency per season: **video based art works, performances, seminars with a socially aware agenda, which needs to include persons and collectives from marginalized groups** (BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+, crip) in the field of arts. Besides the seasonal residencies, we would like to host self-initiated events such as workshops, VJ, sound and text based performances to artists from within our networks of feminist queer bodies who share, record and connect art and social knowledge. **Our methodology of realizing our proposal is a fee reimbursement to the guest curators, artists, and our community based volunteers of sysadmins** who devote time in keeping our servers up and running. In doing so, our services become less precarious and more sustainable and reliable.

Among the other applicants, we find close to our identity politics and hence we would be interested to invite and host as curated web residencies, the following projects:

RECONNAISSANCE : a workshop series for decolonizing image datasets through healing contexts
Trans Futures Archive*: foregrounding, archiving & presenting work of Trans* artists, voices,& perspectives <https://afairnewidea.be/en/topics/873/entries/11013>

ACCESS SERVER: digital arts tool that disrupts systematically ableist institutions

Is This Art?: performance artist and programmer who makes work in digital space

POP-fi: Data feminism; strategies to think about data informed by direct experience, intersectionality

We would also like to approach other artists, institutions and collectives active in Brussels and Flanders:

Curatorship

Mothers and Daughters - A bar, An art space, A safer, Inclusive, Feminist, Queer, Lesbian and trans place. Run by and for lesbians & trans folks and their friends

naast moniek - Queer arts and community

Strangelove Festival - Queer time-based Media Festival

[Not found on](#) - A non public wiki co-created through workshops by and for feminist queer bodies
[Bye bye binary](#) - a Belgian-French collective that experiments with inclusive language and writing
External networks of distribution for open calls and invitations

[Kunstenpunt](#)

Self organized artist initiatives

[ooooo](#) - a trans-universal constellation that initiates, mediates and facilitates projects, abducting thought and reflection on relevant issues

[State of the Arts](#) (SOTA) - an open platform to reimagine the conditions that shape the art world today

Non profit organizations

[Privacy salon](#) - aims at sensibilising and critically informing the broader public, policy makers and industry about privacy, data protection and other social and ethical issues that are raised with the introduction of new technologies in society,

Institutions

[KASK](#) - Media art department, Social design course

For the video platform we propose to implement a peertube instance, which is:

a free, decentralized and federated video platform developed as an alternative to other platforms that centralize our data and attention, such as YouTube, Dailymotion or Vimeo. which has seen increased interest in the last two years, however

ref <https://docs.joinpeertube.org/>

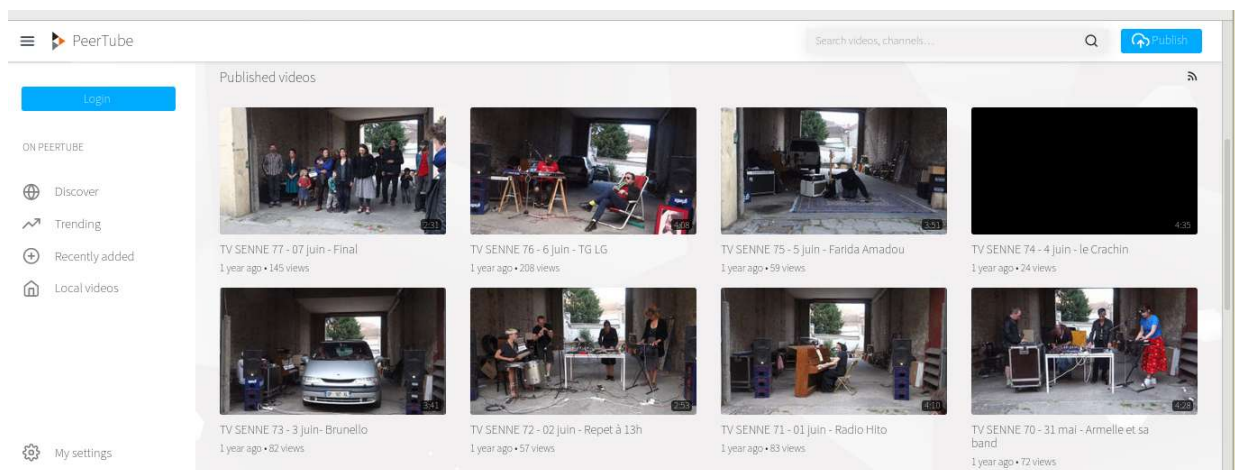
The platform has benefited from an increased community interest and it is actively developed and maintained. However, to our knowledge, **peertube as a new medium, has no feminist and queer artistic communities providing and organizing around it.** Our proposition will try to fill this gap.



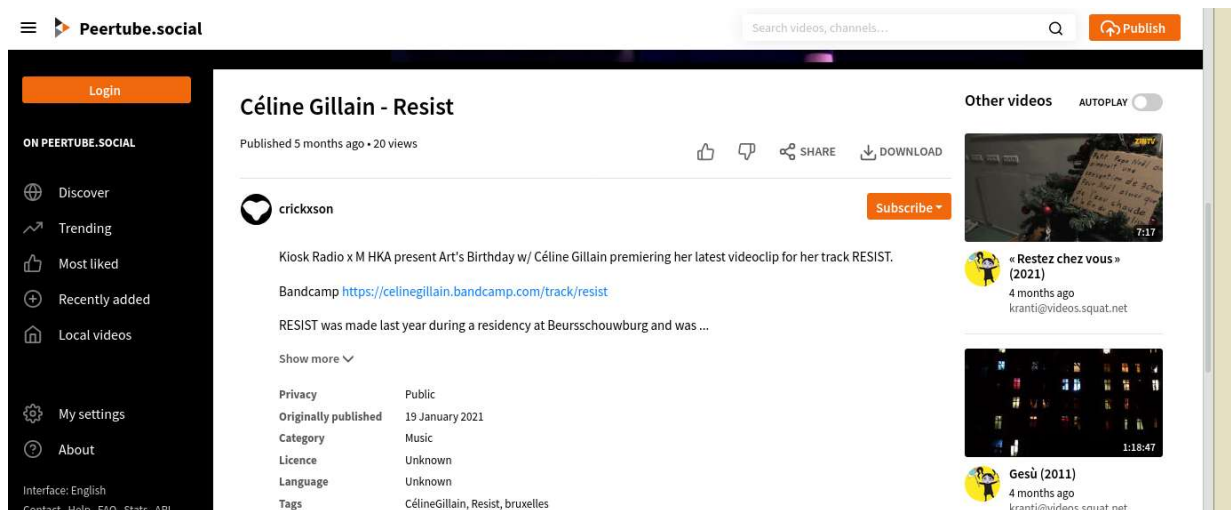
:: Development and implementation ::

For the art residencies we propose a [peertube](#) installation for video streaming, uploading and watching on Syservers. Peertube instances are part of a network of multiple small, federated and interoperable video hosting providers. For video archiving, we propose Anarchaserver's repository of collective memories.

The peertube instance on Syservers, will use Lever Burns server as a main backup repository. It will activate the redundancy built-in feature, which allows an instance to duplicate and serve videos of another instance. If an instance duplicates a video, the web browser will randomly download segments of this video on the origin instance and on the secondary instance, relieving origin instance bandwidth. We are in contact with two self-hosted peertube projects for possible collaboration on duplicating each other instances, namely [Filmnode9](#) and [Scanlines](#). Another great feature of peertube, is the implementation of [webTorrent](#), which, during streaming enables downloading content via browsers in place of the original video host.

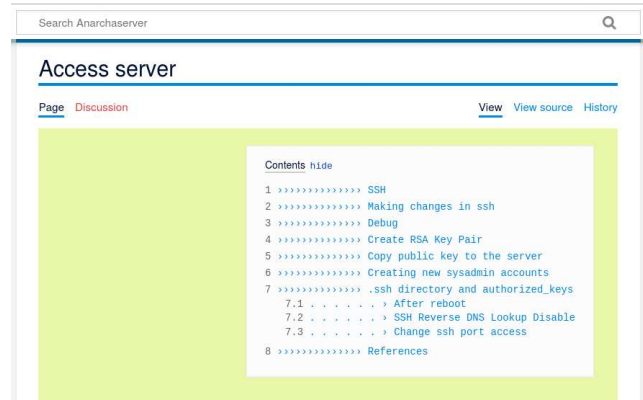
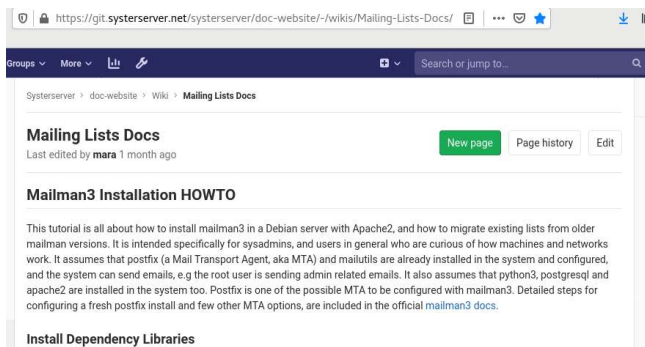


[TV - Senne Peertube](#): Video archive of 5 minute long concert during confinement hosted by Domain Public



[Resist](#) - pop track : Céline Gillain - Resist pop song hosted on <https://peertube.social>

For the installation and configuration of peertube, two sysadmins from our community will lead the task, and other internal admins will join to learn and assist. The process is estimated to take up to two months, and it will include initial research, installation, configuration, documentation and a backup mechanism. It will be planned for September 2021 and will mark the beginning of this proposal. For documenting our processes, we already have a wiki, etherpad and gitlab pages of which we make extensive use, and which we will use for the documentation of this project proposal's residencies, technicalities and workshops. E.g these are some recent documentation of our software installations:



<https://git.systemserver.net/systemserver/doc-website/-/wikis/Mailing-Lists-Docs/>

https://alexandria.anarchaserver.org/index.php/Access_server

We will document the peertube installation, which will be used for a workshop session later during the project implementation, and shared within our feminist distribution channels of communication, that is mailing lists and federated social media such as our mastodon instance systemserver.town. **The guest artists and curators will be invited to document their work** with these tools as well, in order to publish and share further our activity and outcomes.

We plan to host per season, a month-long web based residencies, one for each season of **fall, winter and spring** - see details in Planning section. And at least two self-initiated events by inviting directly artists from our extended networks. If extra funds would be available, we will host more events accordingly. During the project's implementation from September to May, sysadmins will be responsible for the servers maintenance and availability on a rolling basis.

:: Planning ::
September 2021 to May 2022

Residency & Events

Mid October selection of the first residency

November to mid December - autumn residency

Mid January to February - winter residency

March to mid April - spring residency

April to May

Minimum two self-initiated events in a video streaming format

A workshop about how-to self-host a peertube instance

June

Evaluation of the project, and decision-making about how to proceed based on the project's outcome and possible future resources.

In case further resources would be available, we can sustain the peertube instance, in terms of infrastructure and admin work or if we would need to close down the peertube service and archive existing content as a video gallery.

Technical development

September - end of October

Installation and configuration of peertube and backup system.

Initiating an open call and actively contact possible collaborators from A Fair New Idea applicants and our suggested list of interesting partners.

End of October

Peertube platform ready

September - May

Every 2 or 3 months, a sysadmin is delegated from our internal feminist community as responsible for software maintenance and server availability

:: Budget ::

Infrastructure Costs, total 800euro

Systerserver hosting, domain names => 180euro

Anarchaserver hosting, domain names => 220euro

hardware for upgrading self-hosted Lever Burns server 400euro

Season based residencies, total 3000euro

Each residency will be granted 1000euro, total three residencies

Self curated events, total 1000euro

Each event will be granted 500euro, total two events

Workshop how to setup peertube, total 500euro

Peertube installation, configuration and backup 800euro

Two sysadmins, each 400euro

Sysadmin work total 3600

Monthly fee of 400euro for 9 months, September to May, tasks include:

software monitoring and updates, system updates and upgrades, server availability

helpdesk and reports to our mailing list and gitlab pages.

Project management, total 1800euro

Three people responsible on a rotating schedule for 9 months, September to May, for the following:

community communication (open call - curatorial communication)

adminsitration (fees/payments)

moderation and content consultancy

Unexpected contingencies ~5% of the total budget => 500euro