UNFIN'SHED

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Welcome back to the Unfinished newsletter, where we explore key issues at the intersection of tech, ethics, and society.

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What we're thinking about

It's been a very big week for thought-provoking work about the tech industry. We've collected seven notable stories below that address the complex interplay between content moderation and global affairs, new models for private web browsing, and much more.

💡 **As Kanye said, "No one man should have all that power" —** Elon Musk offered to buy Twitter for $43 billion this week. We're opting not to go too far down that rabbit hole, but thought **this perspective** from venture capitalist Fred Wilson, an early Twitter investor, was compelling: "Twitter is too important to be owned and controlled by a single person. The opposite should be happening. Twitter should be decentralized as a protocol that powers an ecosystem of communication products and services." On that note: the Unfinished Labs team is developing a Decentralized Social Networking Protocol (DSNP) that aims to reinvent social networking as a shared public resource — find out more by **visiting our Project Liberty page**.

💡 **Governing the tech industry's response to the crisis in Ukraine** — Companies like Inuit were swift to score PR wins by taking action against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. But the Ashoka fellow **Albert Fox Cahn argued in *Wired* this week** that indiscriminate bans only endanger Russian people's "health and livelihoods." He spoke to Olga Kitaina, the founder of Alter, a service that connects Russian psychotherapists with patients — who is now left without access to critical data. "Now, in the middle of a war, at a time

when her clients face untold mental health crises, Kitaina and surely countless others are cut off from their patients," Cahn wrote.

💡 **The role of digital ephemera in the historical record —** In *Foreign Policy,* the international human rights lawyer Flynn Coleman **makes the important case** that "digital proof" of war crimes must be gathered and protected — an effort that is complicated by inconsistent and automated moderation practices at companies like Meta. "Currently, there is no archive protocol nor is there a requirement for platforms to preserve possible evidence of war crimes," Coleman wrote.

💡 **Browsing that respects user privacy** — **DuckDuckGo spoke to *Wired UK*'s Matt Burgess** about the company's new "privacy browser," which is meant to compete with the data-hungry Google Chrome. One handy feature: "If you give it permission to do so, [the privacy browser] will use javascript to automatically set the cookie preferences on each site you visit and pick the options to 'maximize privacy.'"

💡 **Regulation dustup** — Apple CEO Tim Cook took a swing at antitrust legislation that would undermine his company's tight control over how consumers interact with devices like the iPhone. "We are deeply concerned about regulations that would undermine privacy and security in service of some other aim," Cook said, **per *Washington Post* tech reporter Cat Zakrzewski**. Some contend **Apple runs an illegal monopoly** through its App Store policies. With **over 1 billion iPhones supposedly in use worldwide**, any change here would substantially reshape the consumer tech market.
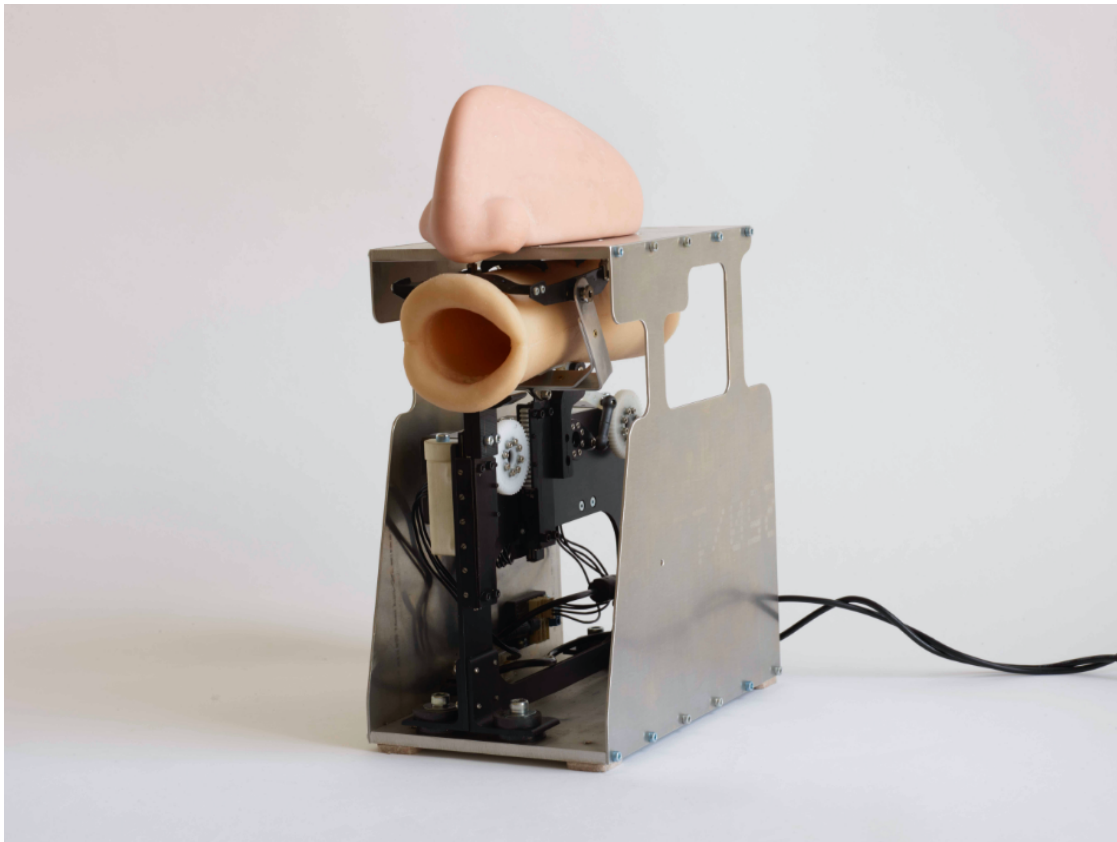
💡 **"A Web Renaissance"** — The technologist Anil Dash **argued in a new blog post** that "People should have ownership and control of their data online. Users should be able to connect to services and then move between them freely without having to ask permission from any big tech companies. Creators should be fairly compensated for their work. Communities and movements should easily be able to form groups and collaborate together to achieve their goals." We tend to agree!

> "Thanks to the mistrust of big tech, the creation of better tools for developers, and the weird and wonderful creativity of ordinary people, we're seeing an incredibly unlikely comeback: the web is thriving again."
>
> TECHNOLOGIST ANIL DASH

💡 **Healthy debate about the value of web3** — If you have some time, we highly recommend the **new *Decoder* podcast**. Noted VC Chris Dixon, of Andreessen-Horowitz, had a great conversation about the future of the internet with the *Verge*'s editor-in-chief Nilay Patel. "I do not think it is hyperbole to say the internet is the most important invention of the last 100 years, and very likely might be the most important invention of the next 100 years," Dixon said. "It is currently about to be controlled by five companies, and they make all the money and have all the power. I believe we need countervailing technologies that allow that power and money to be decentralized, to be sent out to the edges, to return to the first year of the web when a creator could go and build an audience and have a direct relationship with them."

🤯 **And just for fun… the weird future of religion** — MIT's Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Lab **tweeted footage of a robotic mouth** that "chants algorithmically generated prayers." Diemut Strebe, the project's designer, **describes it** as "n experimental setup to explore the possibilities of an approximation to celestial and numinous entities by performing a potentially never-ending chain of religious routines and devotional attempts for communication through a self-learning software."

✈️ Unfinished Goes to Venice

Next week, Unfinished will convene artists, technologists, social innovators, and curators from around the world at the Venice Biennale. Together, they'll imagine the future of ethical technology. It's just one part of our **Unfinished Camp program**, an ongoing effort to challenge the status quo of the Big Tech paradigm, which squeezes users into structures established by a dominant few corporations.

If you'll be in Venice, we invite you to attend our public programming. **RSVP here**. We'll also share stories and other content related to the event in this newsletter and on social media in the coming days — we can't wait for you to see it.

Thank you for reading.

Follow Unfinished (**@byUnfinished**) on Twitter for ongoing chitchat on the changing web.

Have a great, restful weekend.

The Unfinished team