

March 17, 2022

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

Did someone forward you this email? [Sign up to receive your own copy here.](#)

Today, we're taking tabs (literally, so many tabs) on what's going on in the world — especially as it relates to technology and web3.

What we're thinking about

How the war is being broadcast online in ways that grab the world's attention — and meddle with it. Meta, Facebook's parent company, announced this week it had **removed a deepfake** of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky appearing to surrender to Putin and asking his people to "lay down arms." It's the latest in what has been a dizzying streak of information warfare, though it helps to look at it with the perspective of historical precedent: lies, propaganda, and elision are always tactics in war. It's just that now, these tactics take place on the world's most pervading digital stages. The video went viral online, Zelensky **rebuked it** on his official Instagram, Sky News **debunked it** on their site, and then Meta security policy lead **issued a Twitter thread** about its removal from the platform. Next, a deepfake of Russia President Vladimir Putin appearing to declare peace began traveling on Twitter. It was also **debunked**.

Look away for a moment and you risk missing the end of the story. We're grateful for such broad access to information — from individuals, from journalists — even if it's a lot of work to stay informed these days.

A few more quick notes at the intersection of technology and the war:

⚡ On Wednesday, Zelensky signed a bill [making crypto legal](#) in Ukraine, paving the way for [future regulation](#) and for the expansion of the domestic crypto economy (crypto is already huge there).

🌴 Have you been following the trend of people booking Airbnb vacations they don't intend to take in order to get money into the hands of Ukrainian citizens? So far, a [reported 400,000 nights](#) have been booked. It's a striking example of a creative way to help imperiled strangers. It also prompted thoughtful analysis, done through the lens of effective altruism, about [the best way for individuals to help Ukrainians](#), from Vox's Future Perfect writer Muizz Akhtar.

🏠 Relatedly: Airbnb is also stepping in to help house Ukrainian refugees. Politico has a [good write-up of some of the hurdles](#) of scaling such an effort *safely*, however.

And now onto web3:

😬 Thousands of people are reportedly signing up to be volunteer "cops" [arresting other people](#) in the metaverse, reports Jessica Lucas for *Input*. We aren't sure where to even begin with this one! Give it a read and see what you make of it.

😬 SXSW wraps this weekend and Platformer writer Casey Newton stopped by for a couple of days. He's written up a fun, voyeuristic summary of the vibe, which may not surprise you: the vibe is [NFT parties](#), some of which required (yes) an NFT ticket to ride.

👉 The Stanford Social Innovation Review has a good, thinky piece about ["Web3 and the Trap of 'For Good.'" Authors Scott Smith and Lina Srivastava](#) look at the popular tech trope of "X" technology being "for good," and argue that with web3, decentralization is not a panacea that makes power de facto distributed in an equitable way. They offer a lengthy exploration of the topic, complete with recommendations for how to build web3 products in a way that is inclusive in more than just name. "Those who are building over distributed technologies often claim it as a solution to a trust deficit, that 'trust' is inherent to the systems," they write. "Except that it isn't." See their solutions [here](#).

📍 On that note, there is a growing number of groups working on inclusion in web3. They have a steep hill to climb (*Wired* had a [good piece](#) about this). But how do you get there? You do the work :). So, from time to time in this newsletter, we'll point you to people or organizations bringing along people who might otherwise be left out. In our own camp, the tech teams working on Project Liberty announced [a challenge this week](#) in partnership with Unfinished Network partner La Plateforme, a tuition-free vocational school in Marseilles that aims to bring unlikely students into the tech sector. The challenge: envision, design, and then build prototypes for a better social network.

Thank you for reading.

Follow Unfinished ([@byUnfinished](#)) and Damon ([@dlberes](#)) — who, reminder, is out on 🙄 leave, and back in a bit — on Twitter.

Have a great, restful weekend.

The Unfinished team

Project Liberty, 888 Seventh Avenue, 16th Floor, New York, New York 10106

[Unsubscribe](#) [Manage preferences](#)