

# The Manifesto of msx.gay

A page describing my thoughts on the modern internet, how I made my own space on the web, and why I like having control.

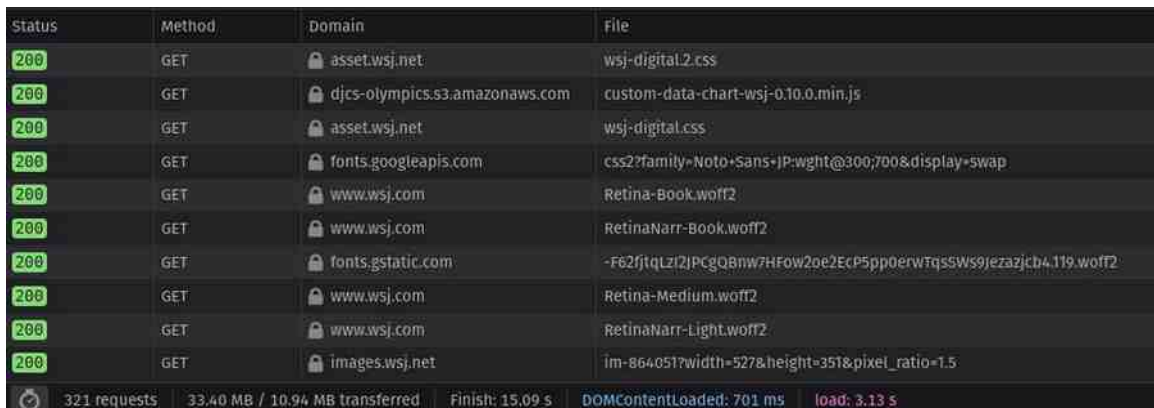
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## Part 1: The Modern Web

If you think about it, the average person's internet activity really isn't adventurous. The average person most likely visits a social media platform or two, clicks on articles linked to in social media posts, and *maybe* goes to their TV station's website to check up on local news. With how popular smartphones are, the only websites a person might visit is the webpage for an article they saw on a social media post. Throw in some extra pages for Google searching, although most people probably read the summary generated by Google and move on. Most people probably visit four or five websites that *aren't* Social Media platforms, and I'll admit that most of my activity on the internet is the same as well. Thanks to how centralized the internet is nowadays, the days of people going to dozens of websites per day is over.

As a result of this, just about every website looks the same. Tumblr's new<sup>(ish)</sup> interface, which was heavily criticized when it was rolled out, is an example of this. Twitter looks a lot like Tumblr, which looks a lot like Facebook, which looks a lot like YouTube, which looks a lot like every other social media platform. The same goes for read-only webpages. Flat designs, desaturated colors, an off-white background. Nothing that stands out, nothing that will make you remember the page.

Sure, that flat look is pretty unoffensive. However, something that is offensive is page load requests. I recently took a visit to Wall Street Journal's webpage, opened the network connections tab, and was shocked at what I saw.



Status	Method	Domain	File
200	GET	asset.wsj.net	wsj-digital2.css
200	GET	djcs-olympics.s3.amazonaws.com	custom-data-chart-wsj-0.10.0.min.js
200	GET	asset.wsj.net	wsj-digital.css
200	GET	fonts.googleapis.com	css2?family=Noto+Sans+JP:wght@300;700&display=swap
200	GET	www.wsj.com	Retina-Book.woff2
200	GET	www.wsj.com	RetinaNarr-Book.woff2
200	GET	fonts.gstatic.com	-F62f1qLzI2jPCgQBnw7HFow2oe2EcP5pp0erwTqssW59jezazjCb4.119.woff2
200	GET	www.wsj.com	Retina-Medium.woff2
200	GET	www.wsj.com	RetinaNarr-Light.woff2
200	GET	images.wsj.net	im-864051?width=527&height=351&pixel_ratio=1.5

321 requests | 33.40 MB / 10.94 MB transferred | Finish: 15.09 s | DOMContentLoaded: 701 ms | load: 3.13 s

Yes, you're seeing that right. Wall Street Journal, a **newspaper** site, wants to load 33 Megabytes of content. I'm pretty sure the picture of your food you took this morning is only

hogging up about 1 Megabyte on your phone. Naturally, over a third of it is blocked by uBlock Origin or by Firefox, which means that a lot of it was ads or trackers.

That's another good point to bring up. Everyone on the internet wants to know what you're doing so they can sell that information. Privacy concerns aside, have you ever taken a second to think about that? Companies are gathering your browsing habits, and using that information to sell you more crap. Plus, the data tracking industry itself is a [pretty shady one](#), although I'm sure you expected that.

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## Part 2: The History of This Page

Back in 2018, I was told about HTML. I decided to look for resources, and W3Schools was the first to pop up. I learned the bare-necessity tags like `<p>` and `<img>`, clobbered together a webpage, found a webhost, and published my first ever hand-written webpage. I had been playing around with Weebly in the years before, but this was the first webpage I had ever written 100% from scratch. Naturally, since it was my first website, it looked like absolute garbage.



If a tag wasn't absolutely necessary to render the page, it wasn't included. I omitted the `<!DOCTYPE>` tag, the `<html>` tag, the `</body>` tag, and all `</p>` tags. Of course, I was just starting out with HTML, so it's fair to say I would get better over the years.

My next massive page update was definitely better looking. I had figured out CSS a bit, and made a page I was proud of.



Compared to my previous page, this one was a lot better. While the header font choice definitely wasn't great, this page was one I liked. I'd figured out how to use meta tags, I figured out how to indent, and I figured out how to use HTML comments. Overall, it's definitely a better page.

At this point, 2020 happened. Thanks to the COVID lockdowns, I had a lot of spare time on my hands. Naturally, I used this to play around with HTML. During the summer, I discovered a service called Neocities. While I was too young to have remembered GeoCities, I found the idea of Neocities to be interesting. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, I made a Neocities account. At this time, I still had my GitHub Pages website, so this was meant to be experimental. I made a webpage using Seamonkey Composer on an EeePC 1011PC running Windows XP, and published it from that netbook. The layout was incredibly basic, consisting of a header image, two images of my cats, some 88x31 buttons, and some text. However, this basic layout would live on well into the future.



Within a couple of months, I decided to migrate to Neocities and abandon my GitHub Pages site. Most of the changes over the years consisted of cosmetic updates. A tile background was added within a couple months, the page source code would be re-written to make bulk edits easier, and some more pages were added. Within the past year, some larger updates happened. My page was put in a container, letting me have secondary backgrounds that could change varying with the seasons. The photography page was redone with pages for individual cameras, a page with radio resources would be added, and a webcam was set up in a spot where my cats chill.

Comparing my first page to my current page, it's a night and day difference. My current page is much more organized, and laid out in a way that looks nice. Instead of the photography page being a folder listing, it's a proper page with thumbnails. I have a much more descriptive front page, pride buttons that have been used by other pages, and a cat webcam that gives you a reason to come back. My website is definitely better now than it was in the past, and in the future, I only see it getting better.

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### Part 3: Having My Own Space

So, why did I even bother learning HTML? Why did I even bother writing my own page from scratch, when there's site builders like Wix that make it as easy as breathing to make your own site? At first, it was just because I found it cool. Now, there's one word as to why: **control**.

With my website, I want to control what's on it. I don't want to have ten trackers and ads inserted by the site builder. I want to have full control over what I put on the page you see. I also want to have full control over how it looks. I've found site builders to be limiting for creativity. They give you some presets, give you a few options to tweak, and that's about it. I want to be able to control how my page looks, no matter what I want it to look like. The only thing limiting me from making my page look the way I want it to look is my own skills, I'm not held back by a site builder that will only let me do specific things.

Having control is important to me. I want to be able to do what I want, put what I want on a page, and have it display how I want it to. I want to have a copy of my page, in case I have to move it to a different webhost. I want to have the freedom to throttle my page to dial-up speeds, serve it from a floppy disk, or let ancient browsers view my page. I want to be able to load as many resources as I want, or as little as I want. Control is incredibly important for me, and with a hand-written page, I have all of the control I desire.

With how centralized the internet is, it's nice having a page that looks nothing like other pages on the internet. While I'd describe modern webpages as the internet equivalent of modern interior design, where everything is white, gray, and cold, I'd describe my webpage as a living room with woodgrain paneling and a fireplace. While modern design is "trendier", the 1970's living room is cozy and inviting. Sure, it's dated looking, but you feel welcomed and at home.

As someone who uses my webpage to express myself, it's important for me to have full control over how my webpage looks. I want to have a webpage that visually describes myself as a person, rather than text describing me laid over a generic template. I want to have a place to host fun little web projects, like webcams that spy on my cats. I want to have a space separate from centralized services, a place where I have the ability to play around without worrying about being held back.

With all the limitations placed on expression by society, it's nice being able to be the person I want to be on the internet, and my website is definitely a massive part of that. It's a place where I don't have to worry about being shunned for being queer or gender non-conforming. It's a place where I don't have to worry about fitting in with society. It's a place for me to express myself the way I see fit, without being held back. This is my own independent space, and I'll make it what I want it to be.

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Written in 2023 by msx.gay · <https://msx.gay>

