Artist's Statement, "microculture.net"

The microculture.net web site is my attempt to use my art to make the world that I want. Critique is all very well, but there are terribly strong limits to what cries of "hypocrisy!" can accomplish. I will not limit myself to actions that are so obviously art activities.

So, yes, we all know that American culture is killing the Earth. I think the problem, for Americans, is not good will, but information. How does one live in harmony with one's surroundings? No single answer will work for a continent-- this is a problem calling for internet-scale creativity, simultaneously global and customized for your street.

The microculture network will be a set of almanac tools. Users give their location, and they get descriptions of natural events in their neighborhood: when the flowers bloom, when the fruit is ripe.

A database of weather information, continuously updated, lets the site know what is going on. Weather, compared, links place to place in the most fundamental of ways (where is the weather the same?), and makes a network of climates that crisscrosses the globe.

A database of plants, combined with the weather information, lets us determine which plants and foods are in season, or about to be.

A database of recipes, combined with the other two, allows the site to suggest what to have for dinner.

A database of interest groups tie together bouquets of commonalities in climate, crops, regions, recipes—a representation of a culture's ties to its land.

Americans fight their climates like no other population. Air conditioning allows us to live in homes that are too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. Standardized food distribution systems allow us all to eat the same foods all year round, indifferent to regional specialties, the seasons, or shipping expense. Older cultures can fight less; they know how things were built, what was eaten, how people dressed before gasoline.

If Americans just had a way to find out how to live... well, this is the tool for that. This is a system for the spread of culture that is focused on the land. This is a tool to help you love the place you're in. This is a system for saving the Earth.

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