Guillotines' Tomorrow, Today: A Top-Down Approach to Bringing About Our Post-Capitalist Future

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Abstract

The design of the guillotine has not progressed since its popular use during the period of social upheaval known as the French Revolution [1]. And why would it? Efficient and humane, the guillotine has long been the preferred method for separating a powerful person's head from their body. However, in this age of applications ("apps") and iPhones, we can't help but notice a staggering lack of innovation in the field of guillotine design. In order to help bring about our post-capitalist future, we propose several ideas involving current technology to promote innovation in the field of HGI (Human Guillotine Interaction).

Author Keywords

Guillotine; Post-capitalism; Community-oriented design; accessibility

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous

"Guillotine Classic": The Original Guillotine

Historically, Human Guillotine Interaction (HGI) has focused around design tenets of efficiency and humane execution while providing an engaging spectator

Figure 1. "Guillotine Classic", used for efficient decapitation.

Figure 2. A Democratized Guillotine, utilizing 3D printing technology.

Figure 3. SEVR: A social media application ("app") for crowd-curation of guillotine participants.

experience. Joseph-Ignace Guillotin, responsible for popularizing the guillotine's use in France, had a dream: that all enforcements of the death penalty "shall be the same: decapitation, effected by means of a simple mechanism" [2]. This simple mechanism essentially amounts to a technologically-primitive gravity-assisted decapitation framework (see Figure 1). Uncomplicated and elegant, but to be frank, a little dated. No offense to Guillotin, but it's 2018, and it's time for a new guillotine.

Design of the New Guillotine

In order to facilitate a shift towards a post-capitalist society, we feel the design of a new guillotine (Guillotine 2nd Generation ["G2G"]) should adhere to the basic premise of Guillotin's proposal: Simple, and efficient. However, we propose that the design of G2G incorporate both modern and near-future technology, as well as the philosophical ethos of our post-capitalist future. We propose two possible designs for G2G, as well as a "framework" for collaborative, community-oriented guillotine design.

A Democratized Guillotine

An essential element of a post-capitalist guillotine is that the means of producing that guillotine be democratized. The advent of 3D printing has brought the means of producing many objects out of the factories, and into the household. A guillotine design which could be simply reproduced using commonly available 3D printers, focusing on ease-of-use and accessibility would truly bring guillotine production into the hands of the masses (see Figure 2).

SEVR

The widespread use of social media applications ("apps") is a trend that is here to stay. Every day, millions of people all around the world create a constant and unending stream of culture and content. Utilizing this existing infrastructure for the purposes of rapid, vote-based guillotine execution is a possible next-step in the field of HGI. We propose a phone-based application ("app") called SEVR, a platform that enables crowd-curation of guillotine participants. Think Tinder, but for the betterment of society (see Figure 3).

A Crowdsourced Guillotine

The design process of a post-capitalist guillotine should ultimately not be → → **top-down** ← ←. The proliferation of crowdsourcing as a collaborative design tool opens up opportunities for community-oriented design spaces for guillotines. The design of a guillotine should match the values and needs of the community which it serves [3]. We propose that, although we may have very good ideas for the future of the guillotine, the true form of G2G will be left to the needs and desires of the proletariat.

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