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CTRRRL-ZINE

a PUNK GUIDE to creative coding

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Any coder will tell you that

they've probably copied and pasted a lot of code.

Or perhaps that was true before vibecoding came around. Now, it's commonplace to give instructions to an agent, do a quick skim of the code it churns out, and accept it if the output looks right.

But that creates a lot of knowledge gaps, and is no way to learn how to use a new tool. I think we can learn a thing or two from zines.

A zine, short for "fan magazine", is an underground, independent publication.

From the sci-fi fanzines of the '30s to the punk zines of the '70s to the riot grrrl zines of the '90s, zinesters have used this medium to express themselves, mobilize their communities, and (re-)write their own cultures. Zinesters reject the institution of traditional publishing and mainstream consumer culture by putting publication in their own hands.

So what counts as a zine? Check out a local zine fest or arts market and you'll see anything from professionally printed pamphlets to printer paper foldables like this zine. Some zinesters create and distribute their zines entirely digitally, while some get their hands dirty with Sharpie, Xacto blades, and Elmer's glue. It's really up to you to decide, though I think zines are defined by DIY.

Unlike a glossy magazine or your morning paper, zines scream, "ANYONE CAN MAKE THIS! YOU CAN TOO!" You don't need to be a professional designer or have a journalism degree. Anyone can make, distribute, or contribute to a zine.

Zinesters often assemble their spreads by collaging cutouts of existing publications: remixing what is already there. Cut and paste. Sound familiar? Yeah, that's how I learned how to code.

Not convinced? I get it - intellectual property and originality is complicated in the age of digital media and generative AI. But while anyone can use generative AI, what distinguishes DIY from slop (although we welcome sloppy paste jobs) is that we're doing it for the love of the process and not just the result. Because we want to make, not just to have made.

GETTING STARTED

1. Scan the QR Code on the back of this zine, or open the link on your computer (recommended).

2. Locate the Undo button, or keep your fingers on CTRL-Z.

3. Read through the code (and the instructions between the lines). See what you can understand; be curious about what you don't.

4. Change things. Copy things. Paste things. Delete things. Tear it up as much as you'd like as long as you remember how to undo.

5. Save your creation as an image for printing. (To save your code, create an account and "remix" this project. Print and assemble.

6. Voila! You've just coded a zine!



https://openprocessing.org/sketch/2145820

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