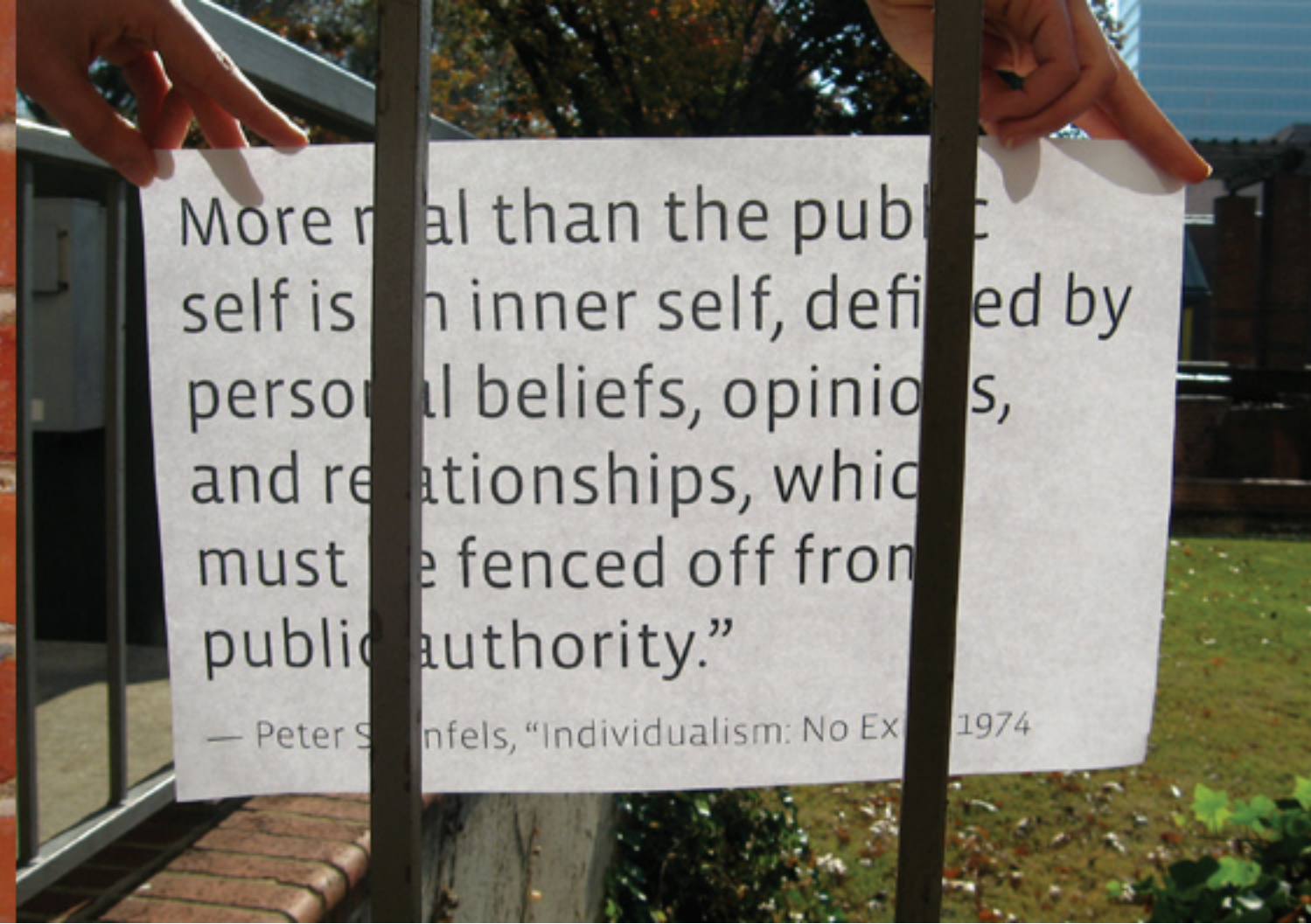
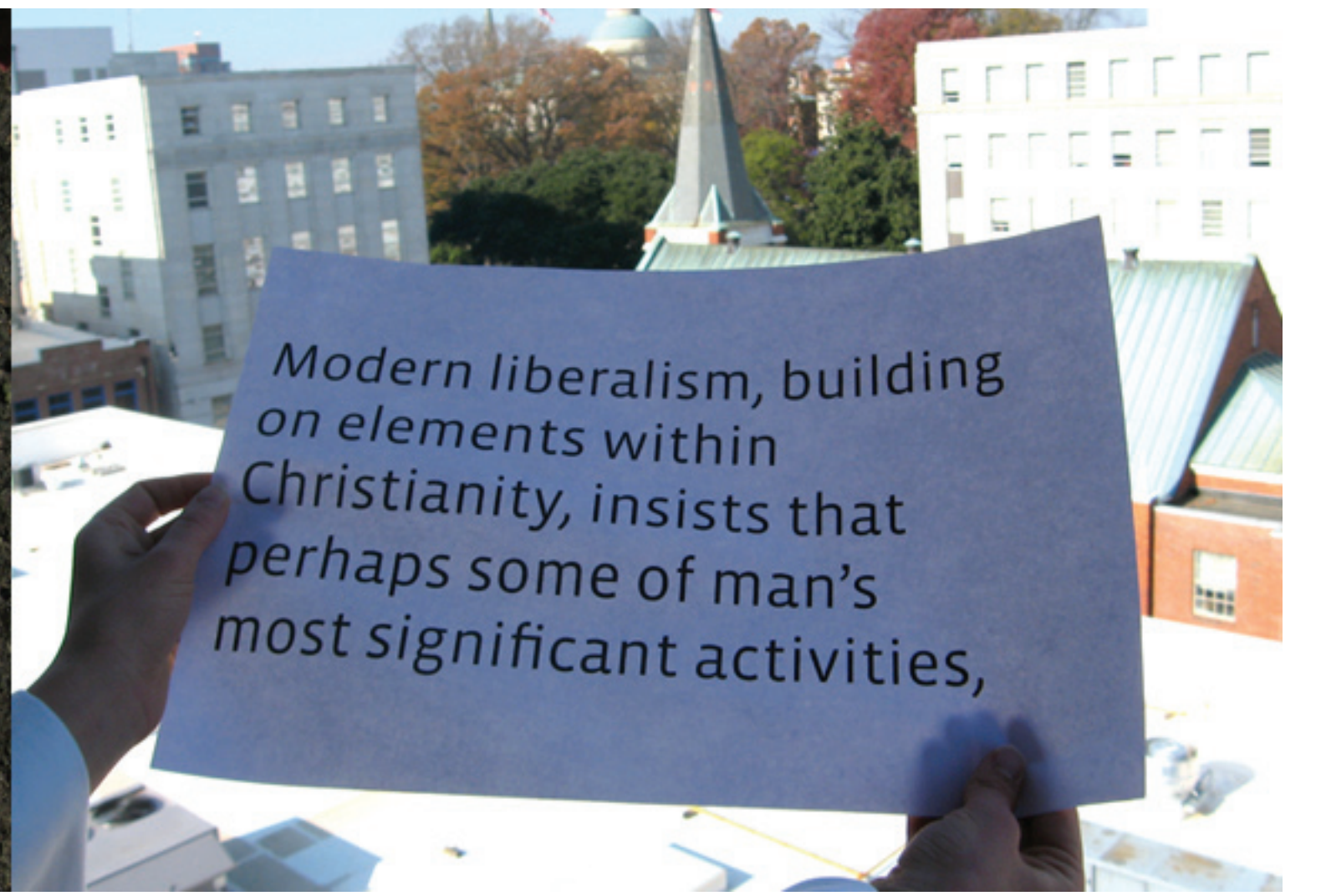




A BLOG POSTING AT OPTIONSHIFTCONTROL.COM  
12.10.07

To process all the ideas and information exchanged at the symposium, we sat down for a wrap up discussion and review of what transpired. Part of this discussion included an analysis of our workshop "Open Spaces as Public Forums." After some surface talk of what worked and what didn't on a procedural level, we found that both of us were surprised at the level of desire for designer control in both the workshop and in the symposium overall.

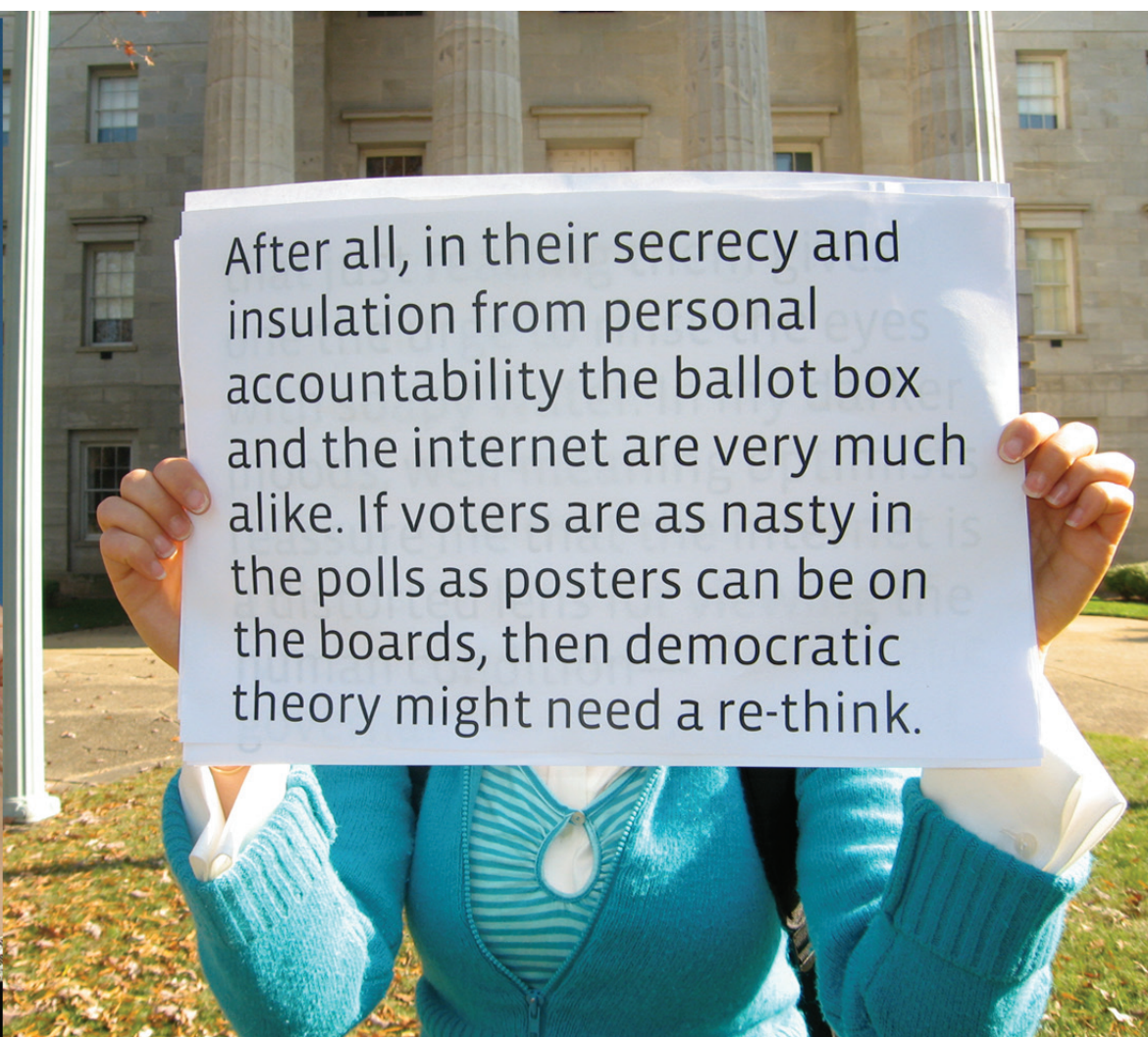
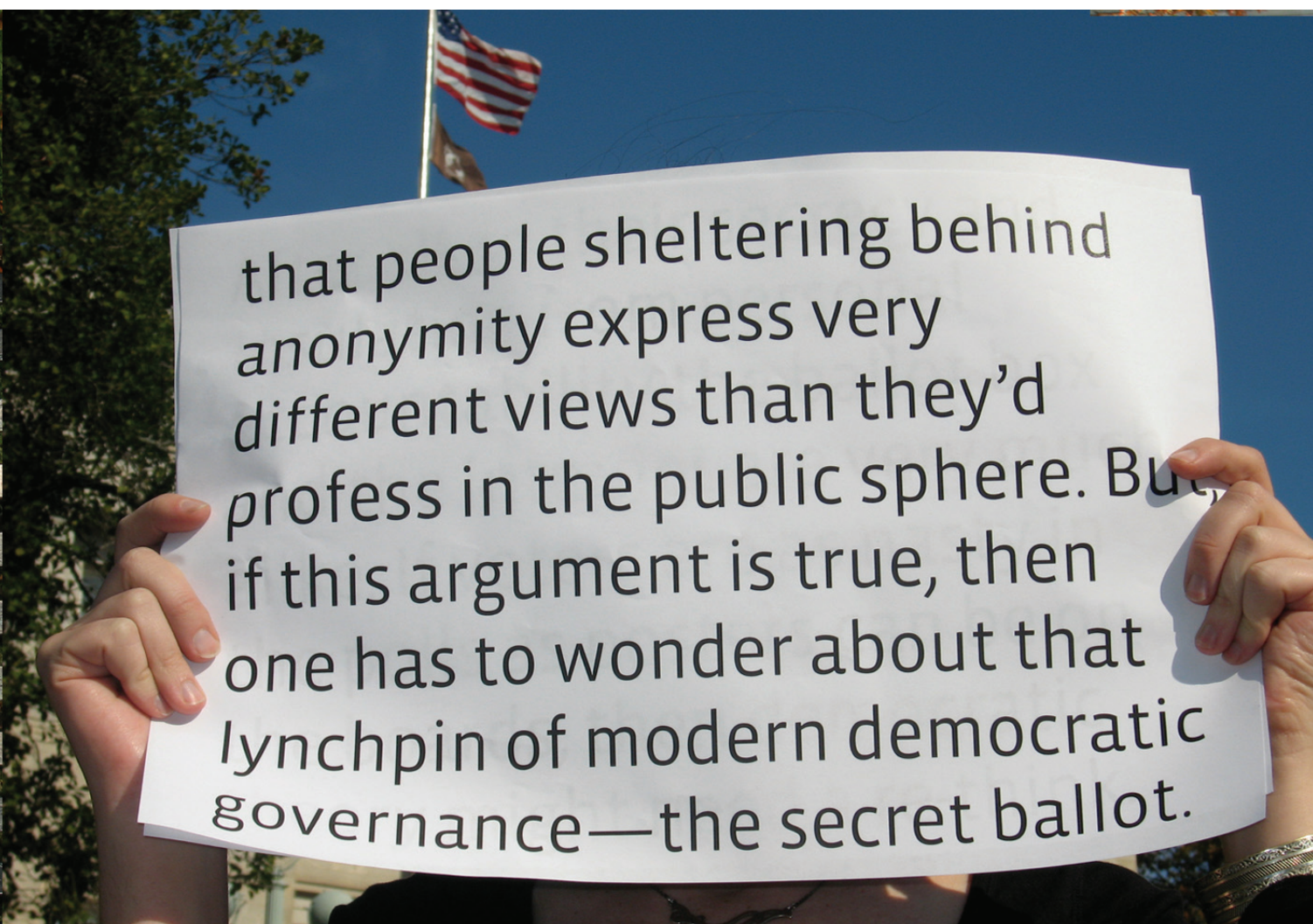
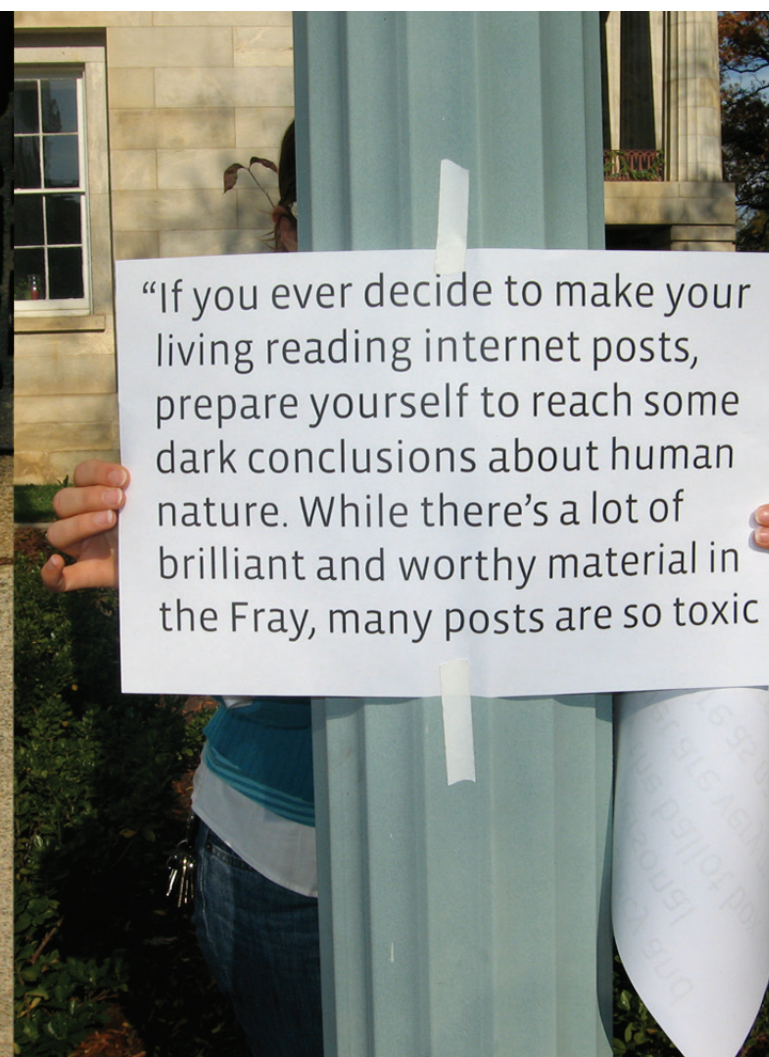
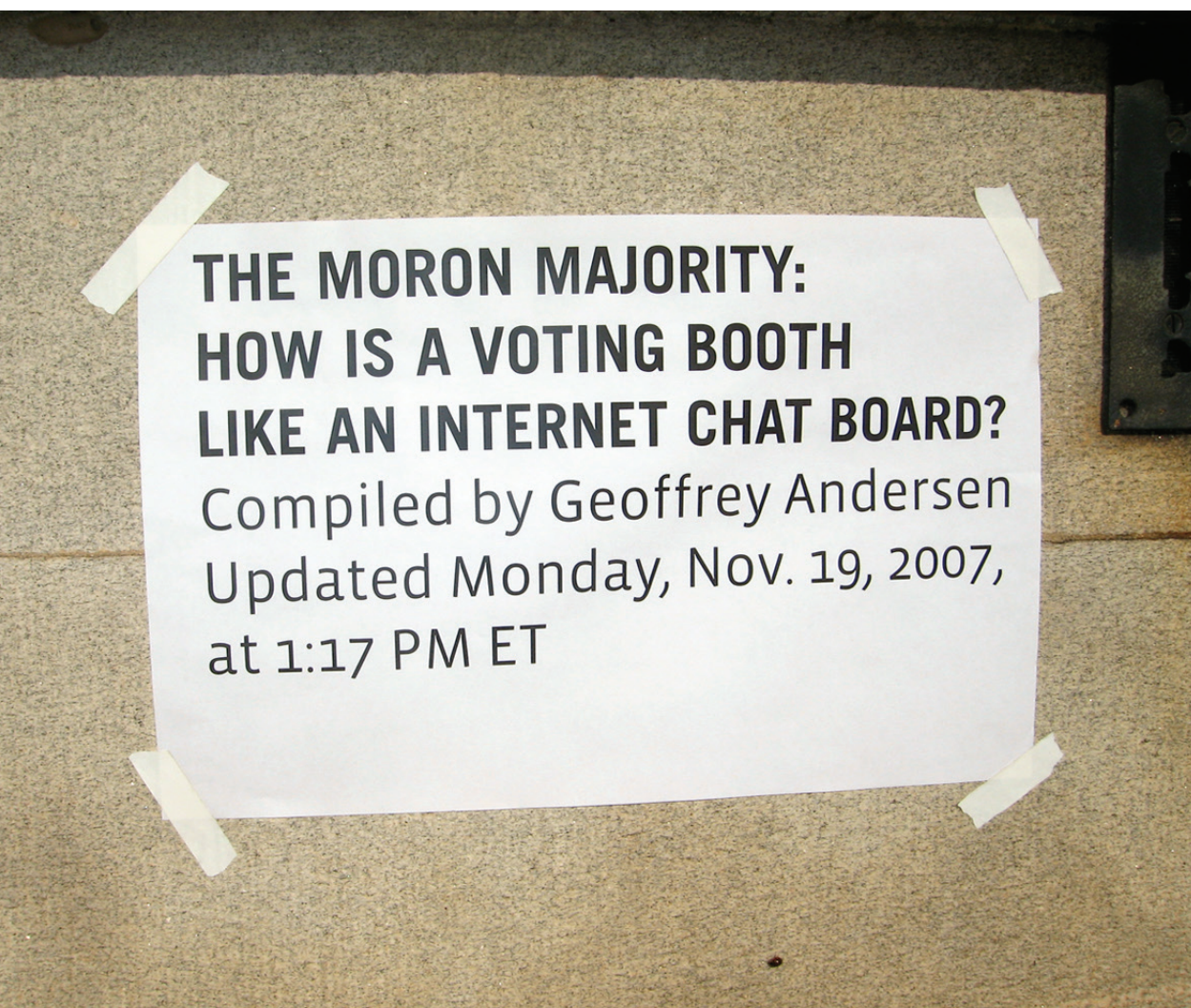
While reviewing our resources for posting to the blog for public consumption, Kelly Murdoch-Kitt noted that in "Individualism: No Exit" there is a passage that is now somewhat contradicted by the prevalence of the Internet:



Though this view may have been the status quo in the mid-1970s when Steinfels' article was published, 21<sup>st</sup> century technology jumps this metaphorical fence. The Internet, with its proliferation of social networks, media communities and blogs has quickly reversed the meaning of "public" and "private" for a technology-savvy generation.

Ancient society made these spaces public, modern society made them private, and the internet—for a specific generation of people—is making them somewhat public again, for those who choose to participate in that way.

Although the internet in terms of access behavior is primarily an individualist act, proposals for communal access points hold the potential to open it up to collectivist consumption through public interactive nodes. However, this notion is somewhat idealized. The following excerpt from a post on Slate exposes the potential for the dark side of public human behavior to surface in such formats:



As the age of access to information charges forward, we have to consider that democracy is not always the kindest form of expression. And you know what ... maybe it's time to relinquish control of every image and every potentially offensive utterance and let dialog emerged unfettered. Heaven forbid a political candidate practice this freedom in the upcoming election!

Perhaps somewhere in between "screw the user, I'm designing the system and I'm in control here" and "freedom to do whatever we want to do including things that benefit no one but my own amusement" there is a line of demarcation where the two groups can shake hands and both be pleased. However, in a post-post-modern society still recovering from modernist idealism, a louder voice and a little less kid-gloved restriction on the user voice may serve us well. Whoever "us" is ... back to you, individualist reader.

To close, we believe collectivism and individualism are two words that we believe designers who create systems or objects for human interaction should know.



Term with a general and a variety of specific applications. In the most common usage it refers to any political or socio-economic theory or practice which encourages communal or

state ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. Particular applications vary greatly since there are numerous examples of collectivist organizations. —A Dictionary of Sociology, 1998, Gordon Marshall



"Political and social philosophy that emphasizes individual freedom. Modern individualism emerged in Britain with the ideas of

Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham, and the concept was described by Alexis de Tocqueville as fundamental to the American temper.

Individualism encompasses a value system, a theory of human nature, and a belief in certain political, economic, social, & religious arrangements

**Authorized**  
According to the individualist, all values are human-centred, the individual is of supreme importance, and all individuals are morally equal.

Individualism places great value on self-reliance, on privacy, and on mutual respect. —Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, 2007