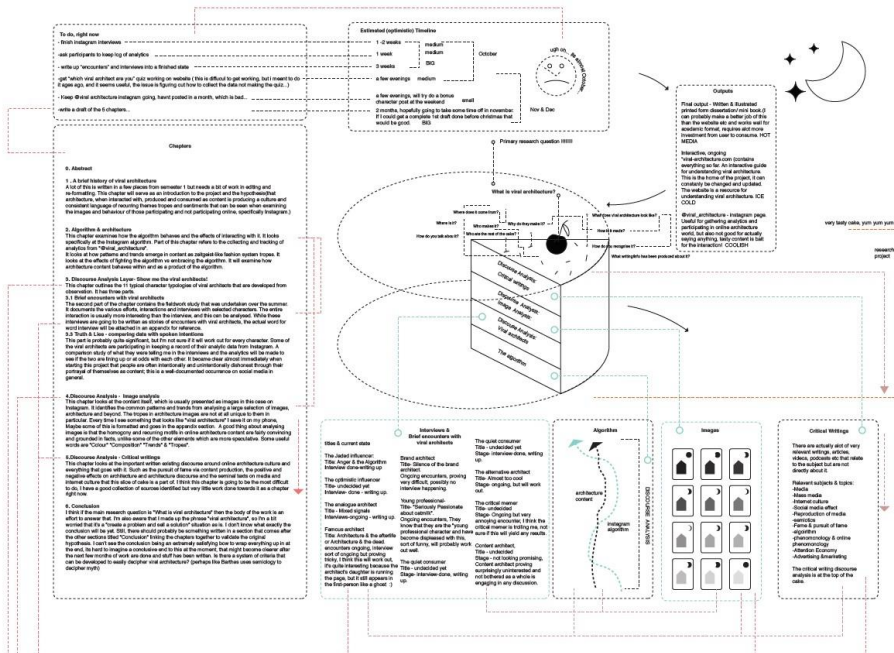


2020 Cillian McGrath **Viral Architecture**



This project idea came from noticing consistent trends in architecture content on Instagram that could also be seen manifesting in built work. The research project explored the hypothesis that architecture when interacted with, produced and consumed as content is creating a culture and consistent language of recurring themes, tropes and behaviours that can be seen when taking a top down look at architecture content on Instagram. Hopefully, the work might be useful as a way of understanding the process of this phenomenon in visual culture; this work takes architectural content as the focus.

The project was conducted and published through the Instagram page- @viral_architecture and the website- www.viral-architecture.com



show me the...
Viral Architect

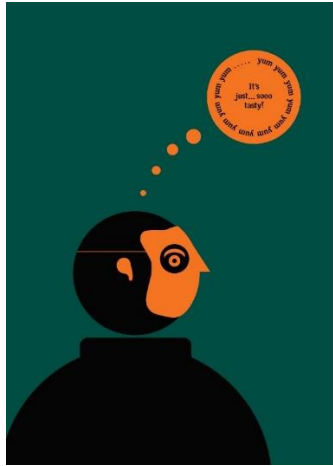
This case study experiment will be framed within the viral architecture thesis, where multiple architecture "characters" will be examined by their approach, feelings and philosophies around the topic and pursuit of sharing their work digitally as "content".

The terms "digital immigrant" and "digital native" are part of a concept that all digital users can be categorised by whether they grew up in a world where digital technology already existed or they were born before digital technology was popular and accessible to them. This date is approximately taken as 1980-85, the immigrant before, the native after then. The immigrant has had to learn and adapt; the native has a more naturally developed approach.*

The viral architect creates architecture as content for consumption. Sometimes this is independent of traditional architectural practices and sometimes it is an extension of them.

This concept of the digital native and digital immigrant helps to categorise viral architects. This study takes a deliberately diverse selection of viral architects and potential viral architects and casts them in roles as anonymous characters operating within and through digital media in 2020.

*The phrases of "digital immigrant" and "digital native" originate from "Dialectics of the Independence of Cyberspace" John Perry Barlow, 1994. And... The concept developed and popularised as is "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" Marc Prensky, 2001.



Language

When thinking about online architecture culture, content and behaviour, certain new language has developed in speech and image. Perhaps it is helpful to understand this new language by using existing criteria for analysing cultural texts from existing relevant literature to think about it, discuss it and develop appropriate means of describing this new language. This is a growing vocabulary of helpful words and concepts to form a toolkit to help analyse viral architecture.

- Context
- Fashion
- Sign
- Language
- Meaning
- Influence
- Attention
- Clout
- Followers
- Hot & Cold media
- Trend
- Trope
- Scenality

***NOTE: W.I.P DEFINITIONS TO BE ADDED



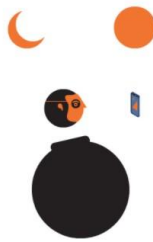
The Influencer

Oh yes, we all want to be the influencer. You can gain many many fans! The influencer can be either a digital immigrant or a digital native, but usually, they are a digital native. They know what's going on. They know the tools, they embrace the tropes, you have their drawings pinned, they are inseparable. The influencer is a powerful character, they are respected by younger architects and students but some are considered problematic by older generations.

They produce viral architecture mainly as drawings, their built work is indistinguishable from their drawings. **Is it real, is it a render? It doesn't matter.** They have large followings and tremendous influence as their name suggests.



6.



The bootlegger

The bootlegger presents their work on Instagram cleverly as viral architecture, and they have quite a following. They are a commercial practice.

The bootlegger is often an established practice with a social media presence that is run by one of our other characters.

Bootleggers: not definitively digital natives or immigrants. The analogue architect and the alternative architect can see right through the bootlegger but they are not always easy to see.

7.

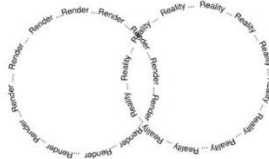


Fig. 6.



Fig. 6.
David Leach.
Architectural group.
Image on left is completed built house. Model in drawing from 10 years before completion.
Right is interior room with flexible phone screen proportions.

David Leach reveals about the house's most elegant detailing on his YouTube channel on May 1st 2022 @ 20:00. [Listen here.](#)

Fig. 7.



Fig. 7.
Microscopic.
Real house.
The image on the left being the render and the right being the finished product (photo taken and posted on Instagram).

Fig. 8.

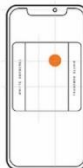


Fig. 8 & 9.
David Leach (left).
PWA (right).
Both images have been taken from the architect's Instagram.
Although when examined, David Leach and traditionally do not represent any necessary difference but they still incorporate similar compositional elements and motifs independently in their represented work.