



The invisible internet

- ① Illusia ② Driftland ③ Umbra ④ Stacka
⑤ Nebulea ⑥ Echos ⑦ Porthura ⑧ Entropia
⑨ Miragea ⑩ Solitaris ⑪ Voidis ⑫ Circular
⑬ Bargainea ⑭ Transitoria ⑮ Observela
⑯ Desirea ⑰ Fissura ⑱ Lostalia —————

1. Illusia

Illusia is a city perpetually shrouded in mist, where all buildings are made of light projections. They appear tangible yet vanish upon touch. Residents believe their city is real until someone walks through a wall and finds themselves in another illusionary space. Illusia represents the deceptive allure of the internet, blurring the lines between truth and fabric.

2. Driftland

Driftland is a floating city where buildings and streets drift with the wind. Residents can never settle in one place for long; over time, they lose all sense of direction. Driftland reflects the nonlinear and dynamic nature of the internet, where constant change leaves people unanchor.

3. Umbra

Umbra is overshadowed by a colossal black tower whose "eyes" surveil every movement. Residents are aware of the constant monitoring but cannot escape. Over time, they begin to self-regulate and conform. Umbra symbolizes the culture of surveillance on the internet, revealing how invisible control shapes behavior.

4. Stacka

Stacka is a city of towering layers, each storing the memories and data of its residents. Over time, the lower layers decay, forcing residents to climb to newer levels, leaving the past to be forgotten. Stacka reflects the infinite accumulation of data on the internet, raising the question: who owns and controls these records?

5. Nebulea

Nebulea floats on massive clouds where all knowledge and resources are stored. Residents can access these clouds at will, but unseen masters control the clouds. When the clouds dissipate, the city's foundation collapses. Nebulea critiques the dependence on "cloud computing" and the vulnerabilities of centralized digital infrastructure.

6. Echos

Echos is a city filled with reverberations of past conversations. Residents hear their own words repeated days or years later but altered and out of context. The more these echoes overlap, the less intelligible they become. Echos represents the distortion of information through online repetition and the erosion of meaning over time.

7. Porthura

Porthura is a city with countless gates, each leading to different possibilities. Residents can step through any gate but can never return. They endlessly pursue the promise of something better, never appreciating the ground beneath them. Porthura symbolizes the infinite choices of the internet and how they lead to perpetual dissatisfaction.

8. Entropia

Entropia is a crumbling city, its streets and buildings disintegrating like grains of sand. Residents rebuild each day, only to watch their work fall apart again. Entropia embodies the chaotic nature of the internet, where information overload leads to fragmentation and decay.

9. Miragea

Miragea is a city of light and reflections, appearing vibrant and bustling. Yet, as residents approach, the buildings and streets dissolve into nothingness. Eventually, they accept these illusions, making the pursuit of mirages their way of life. Miragea reflects the ephemeral and illusory nature of virtual identities and connections online.

10. Solitaris

Solitaris is a city teeming with people, but residents only interact through screens. Algorithmic recommendations govern their lives, and relationships are reduced to likes and comments. Despite being surrounded by activity, they feel deeply alone. Solitaris critiques the performative and isolating aspects of social networks.

11. Voidis

At the heart of Voidis lies a bottomless abyss, pulling in anyone who ventures too close. While the abyss terrifies residents, it also fascinates them, compelling them to gaze into it. Voidis represents the infinite consumption of internet content and the existential void it often leaves behind.

12. Circular

Circula's streets loop endlessly; no matter where residents go, they always return to the same starting point. Every action is recorded and replayed in perfect sequence, trapping them in a predictable cycle. Circular reflects internet algorithms' circular nature, where data-driven feedback loops shape and confine human behavior.

13. Bargainea

In Bargainer, residents trade their time and privacy for convenience. The city's central marketplace facilitates these transactions, offering shiny goods at the cost of their autonomy. Over time, residents acquire more possessions but lose their sense of self. Bargain critiques the internet's commodification of personal data and its hidden costs.

14. Transitoria

Transistor is a fleeting city where streets and buildings shift daily, constantly erasing and redrawing themselves. Residents struggle to remember its form, but nothing ever lasts. Transitory symbolizes the transience of digital spaces, where permanence is increasingly rare.

15. Observela

Observela's streets are lined with giant, unblinking eyes that monitor every action. Initially, residents resist, but eventually, they embrace the attention, turning their lives into performances. Observela reflects the surveillance culture and attention economy of the internet, where being watched becomes a form of validation.

16. Desirea

Desirea is an unfinished city where residents constantly tear down old structures to build taller, more elaborate towers. None are ever completed, and the cycle repeats endlessly. Desirea symbolizes the internet's endless stimulation of desires and the algorithms that perpetuate insatiable consumption.

17. Fissura

Fissura is crisscrossed by deep cracks in the earth, each promising to reveal hidden truths. However, residents who explore them find only emptiness. These fissures divide the city and its people. Fissura represents the fragmentation of trust in the internet and the risks lurking beneath its surface.

18. Lostalia

Lostalia is a city submerged in an encroaching sea. Every night, the waves wash away its structures, forcing residents to rebuild from scratch. They work tirelessly, yet nothing remains. Lostalia symbolizes the erasure of history on the internet and the relentless pursuit of novelty.



About Invisible Cities

The book has no definitive ending

Kublai Khan has conquered the world despite possessing the entire world

But he has never truly seen it

Kublai Khan needs Marco Polo to describe what the world he owns is like

Marco Polo tells him about dozens of cities

But these cities are fictional

Creations of Calvino's own ideology and imagination

Kublai Khan says to Marco Polo

"You've told me about every city in the world "

"But except for one that you never speak of."

Marco Polo: "Which city have I not spoken of?"

Kublai Khan: "You've never spoken about your hometown-Venice."

Marco Polo: "You're mistaken. "

"Every city I've told you about has been Venice."

