

We Live in Public (2009)

"Everything is free except the video we take of you. That we own...and we're going to sell it back to you."

So says Josh Harris, the subject of *We Live in Public*, the latest documentary from *Dig!* director, Ondi Timoner, as he describes his latest experiment with the effects of being constantly recorded. For anyone who loves the Internet or reality television, this will be a very interesting documentary.

Josh Harris was one of the wunderkind's from the early days of the Internet. Long before broadband or television-like programming on the Internet, Harris had founded Pseudo.com, an all Internet TV channel. Harris gathered eccentric creatives for his various ventures in an almost Warholian fashion.

At the center of *We Live in Public* is Harris' Orwellian experiment with recording. About 100 people signed up to live in an underground bunker that had been rigged with many cameras that would record their every move. From the pods that participants lived in, they could watch anyone else in the bunker from their personal TV screen. Think one of those Japanese capsule hotels, but on crack. It's mesmerizing and disturbing to watch what being watched did to the participants and what the control did to Harris.

In some ways, *We Live in Public* plays as a cautionary tale to those of us all too readily handing over our privacy and identity to Youtube, Facebook, or whatever reality fame might come our way. It really makes you think about just what all this recording is doing to us, what it's turning us into. Maybe reality is not quite as dystopian as what Harris envisions, but it never hurts to be aware of the fact that we can, and maybe should, better protect our privacy online.

Check out *We Live in Public* in the library catalog [here](#) .!

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