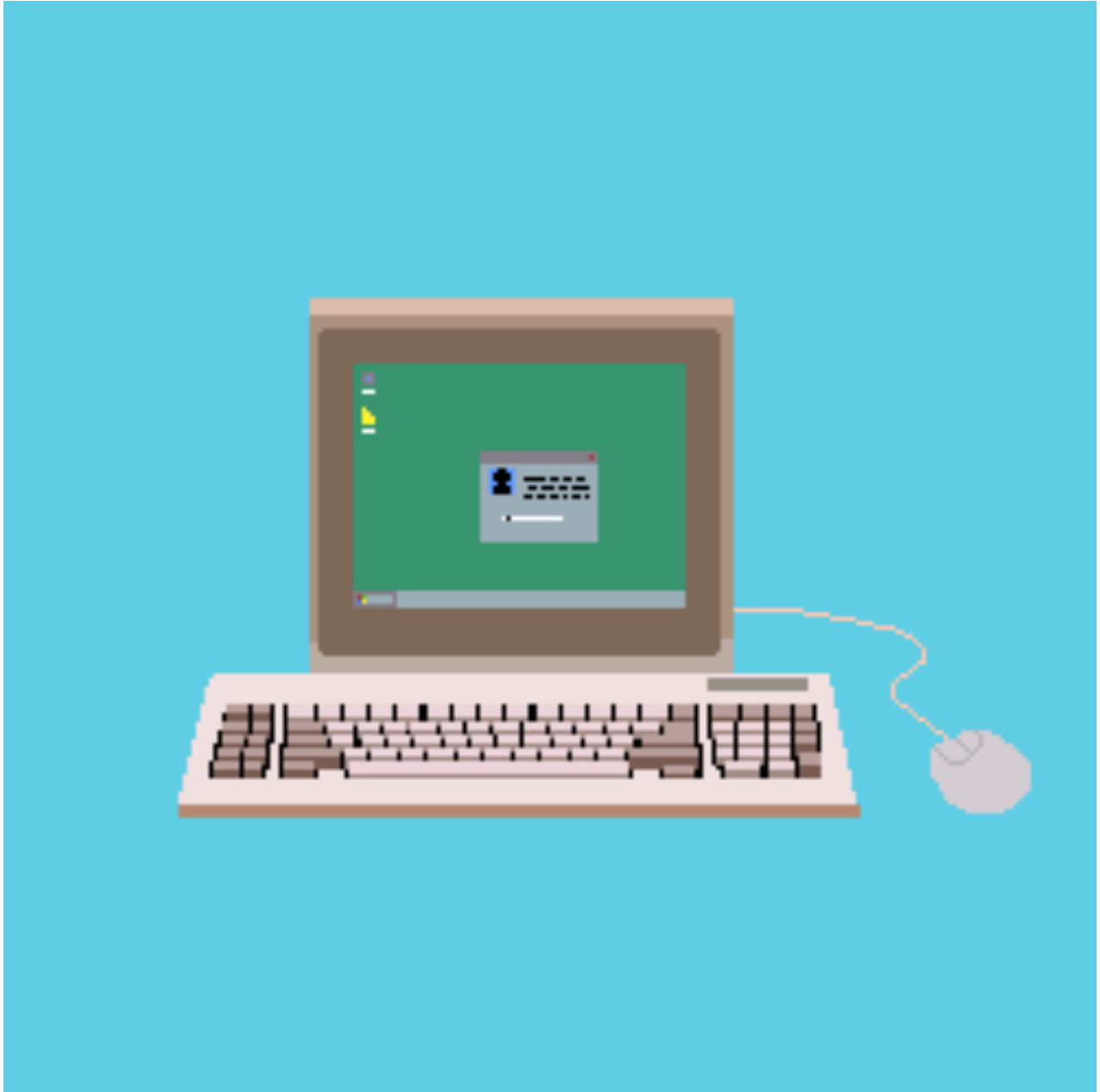# Alone in Cyberspace
by Michael Klamerus
A hack of Takuma Okada's *Alone Among the Stars*

During the 1990's there were many web hosting services, such as Geocities and Homestead, that allowed people to easily create their own personal web pages. People often made pages about their sports teams, politics, or tributes to loved ones, and these pages were often linked to others on the service. Before social media networks like MySpace and Facebook existed, these were places where people could create spaces to express themselves.

You are alone at your computer, exploring the archived pages of one of these defunct services from the late 90's. Each page is unique, a reflection of the person who created it. They are represented by cards from a standard deck, placed face down.

To find a new webpage, roll a six-sided die and place cards face down equal to the number rolled. If the result is the same as the previous roll, the new page was found in the same search, webring, or neighborhood as the previous page.

If the roll results in a new search, webring, or neighborhood, consider thinking about what internet community the user belonged in and their relationship to other communities on the web. If you like, you may refer to last page as an optional way of placing the user in a community.

On a **1-2** you see it listed in a search.
On a **3-4** you find it in a webring, a small group of websites that are connected in a circular structure and are based on a specific theme. A webring often connects pages made by friends.
On a **5-6** you spot it in a "neighborhood", a larger community of similar web pages.

The cards you draw represent parts of the website you discovered. Describe it using the tables on the following page. In your computer's notebook (a small journal or text file), record a short description and your reaction in a few sentences, and roll for the next card. Each time you complete a webpage, give it a name, and find a new page.

Play until you are tired and want to logoff. If you want to remember your discoveries, save the text file. If you don't, put it in the recycle bin.

Elements on the Page

Diamonds
Diamonds are personal: Reflections on their personal life, family, job, tragedies, hobbies, love life, etc.

Clubs
Clubs are objects valued by the page creator: Favorite television shows, video games, books, sports teams, drugs, bands, etc.

Hearts
Hearts are connections with other web users: Friendships, flame wars, crushes, trolling, etc.

Spades
Spades are about the world around them: Politics, religion, nature, monuments, thoughts about the end of the millennium, etc.

A: Webring button.

2: HTML Table.

3: Scrolling text.

4: Animated gif.

5: A paragraph of text.

6: List.

7: File download.

8: Blog posting.

9: Jpeg.

10: Guest book comment.

J: Auto playing music.

Q: Link to another page.

K: Compressed video.

Online Communities

If you would like help figuring out if the website creator belonged to a community before you start exploring, use the first card you draw and the table below as a possible community to place the user in.

A: Goth

2: Grunge

3: Gamer

4: Riot Grrl

5: Hip Hop

6: Anime Fan

7: Hipster

8: Spirituality

9: Anarchist

10: Conspiracy Theorist

J: Cyberpunk

Q: Heavy Metal

K: LGBTIQA+