

Hybrid Reality Games

Transforming gaming, sociability and urban spaces via mobile technologies



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Frequency 1550, Waag Society (Netherlands, 2005)

<http://www.waag.org/freq1550>



Location-based mobile game + educational content

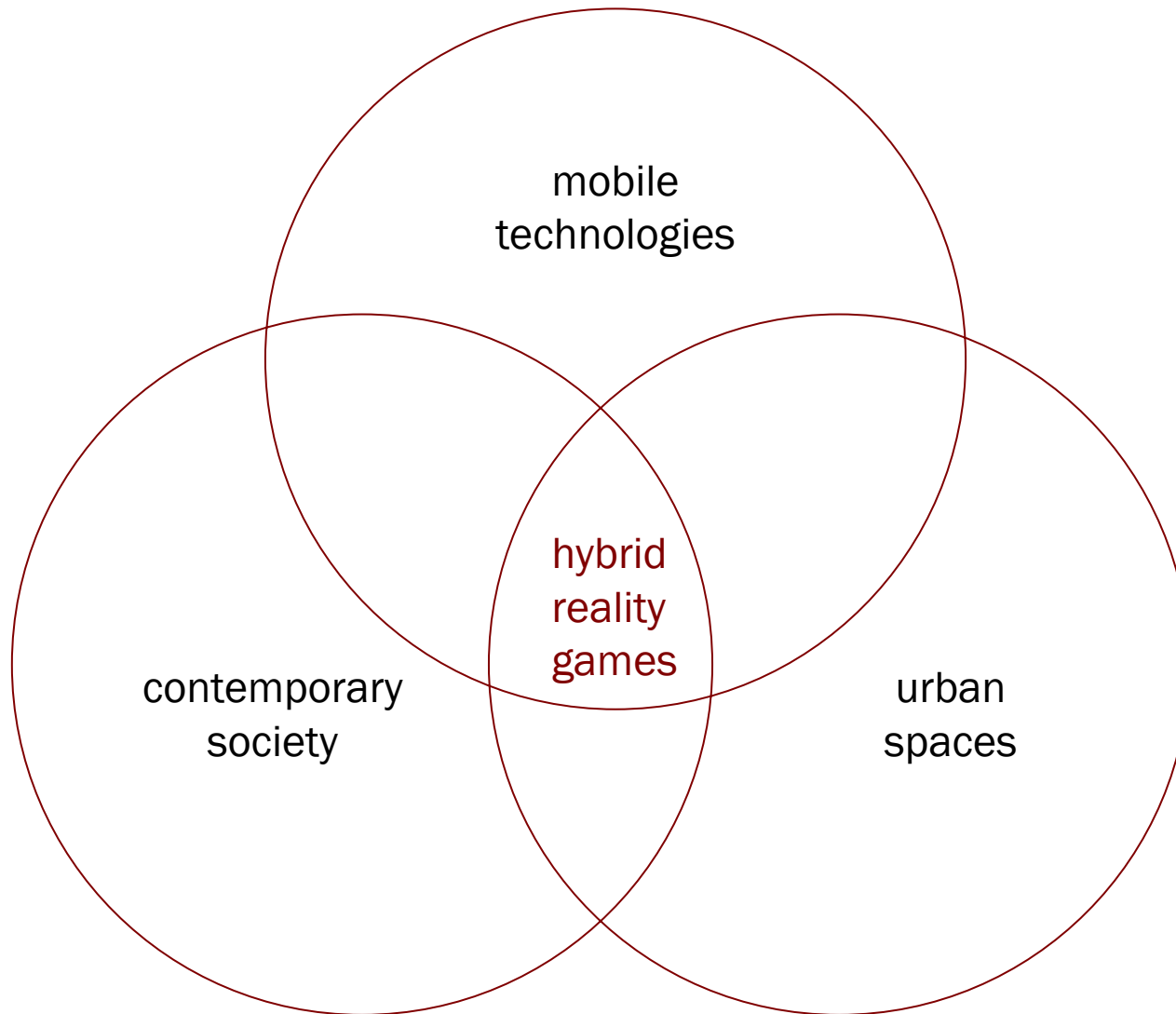
Test: February 7-9, 2005

Narrative to teach students the history of Medieval Amsterdam

“(...) games have been to the PC what NASA was to the mainframe – the thing that pushes forward innovation and experimentation.”

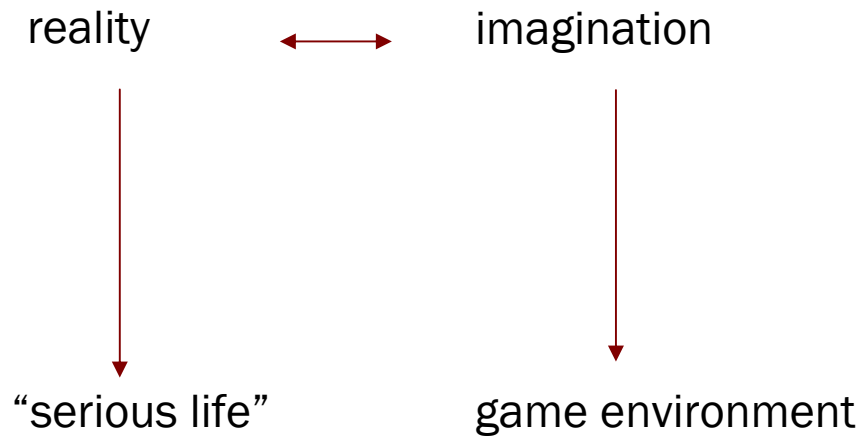
Henry Jenkins, “Games, the new lively art”, 2004

Ludic Activities :: Push forward the limits of technology
 :: Social activities

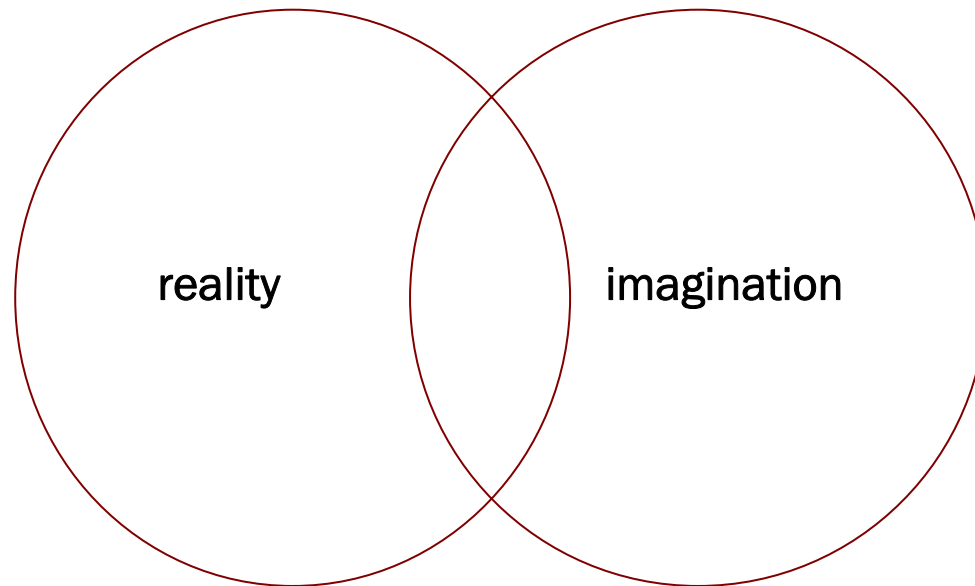


1. Defining hybrid reality games
2. Examples
3. Contextualize mobile games

Defining hybrid reality games



hybrid reality games:



Hybrid Reality Games:

- Mobile
- Connect people: distant and close
- Expand the game environment outside the board / screen into the city
- Change our perception of urban spaces
- Create new uses for mobile technologies
- Cell phones behave like game platforms

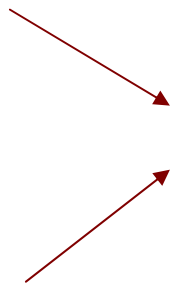


MMORPG played in physical space

cyberspace



physical space



hybrid space

Mediated spaces:
physical/virtual +
sociability +
mobility



Game

Established inside a set of rules

Based on winning and loosing



Play

Rules and margins are more loose or
inexistent (RPGs / MUDs / hybrid reality

games) Roger Calois, *Les Jeux and Les Homes*, 1958

MUDs challenge the traditional game definition!

No winners or losers | Mix into life

“More than 40% of the players in the massively multiplayer game (MMORPG) EverQuest play 20 to 40 hours a week.”

Boston Globe, 08/05/2002



Traditional RPGs

Outside the screen

Players share the same space

Most of the adventure is in the player's mind

Players are static

Online RPGs

In the digital domain

Players do not share the same space

Most of the adventure is in the player's mind

Players are static

Hybrid reality games

Outside the screen

Players do not share the same space

Most of the adventure is in the player's mind

Players are in movement (hybrid space)

Hybrid Reality Games

Examples

Botfighters, It's Alive (2001, Sweden) | <http://www.botfighters.com>



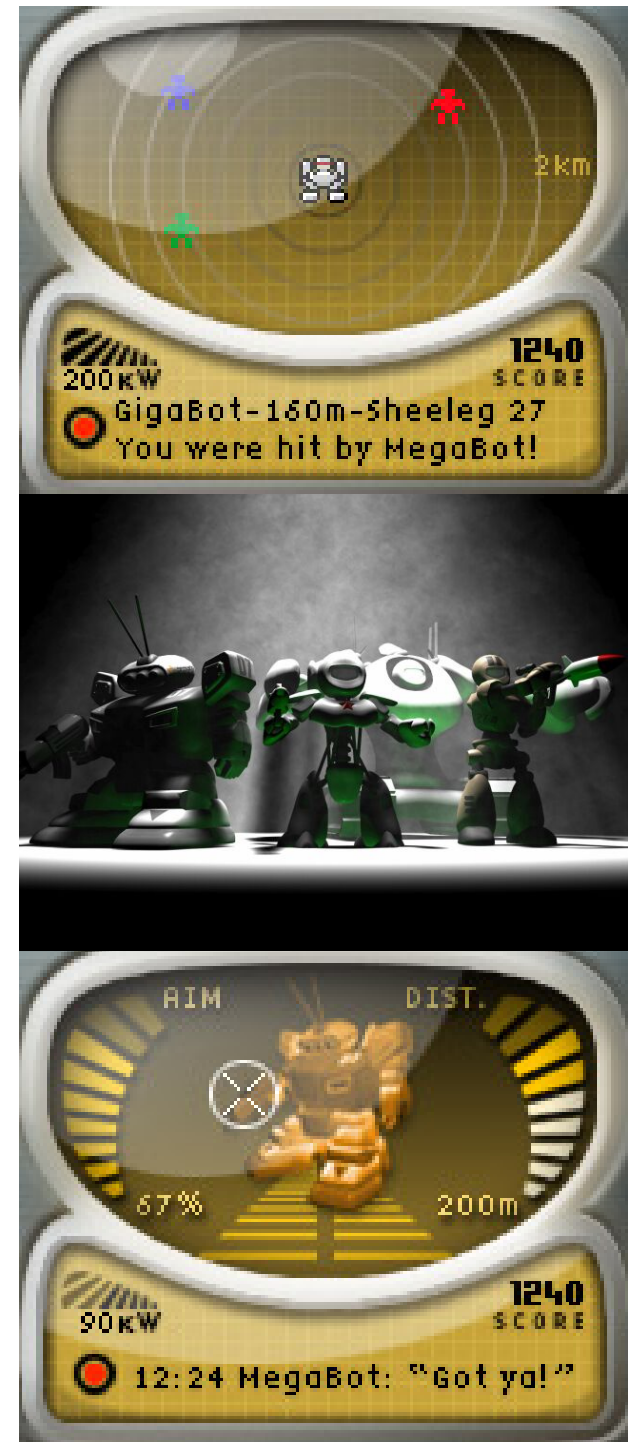
- Widen the game environment
- The player is the avatar
- Physical space becomes the game board
- No gameplay (in-between)

Change the perception of the city

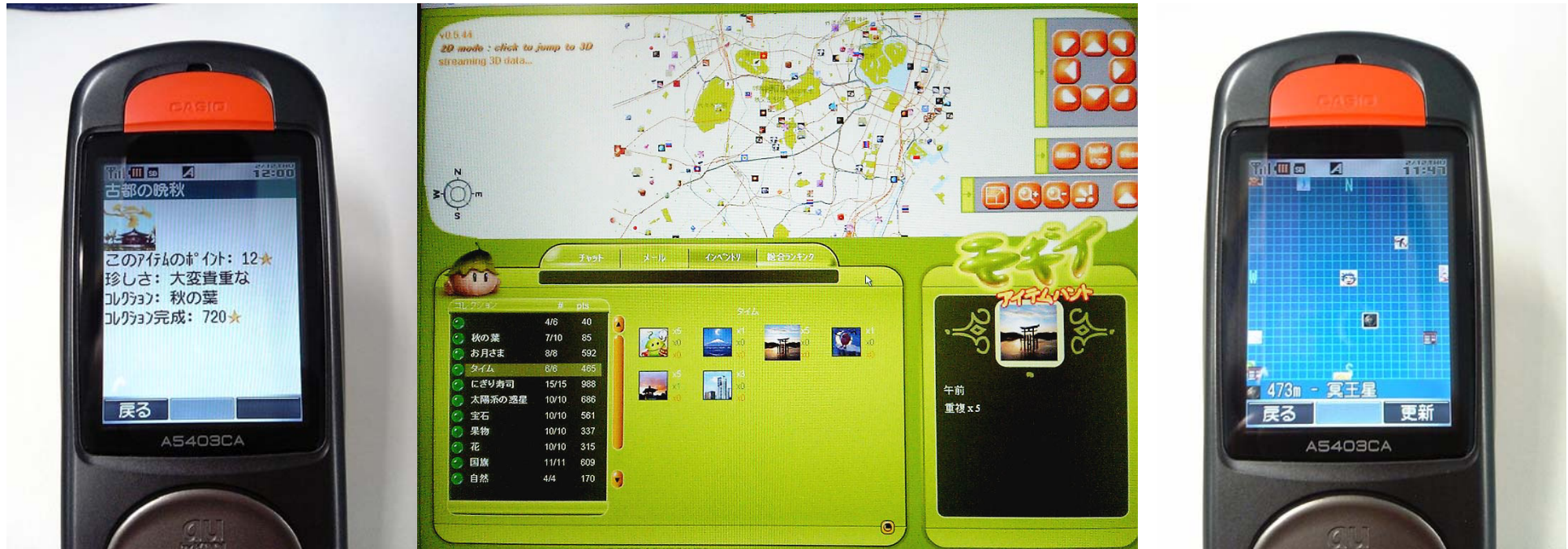
Taxi 31: has four phones, bills ups to \$4,000, and brags on the website that he's driven 30 kilometers outside the city to get in battles. *Wired News*, 02.08.2002

Players: 25 – 35

Sweden / Finland / Ireland / Russia



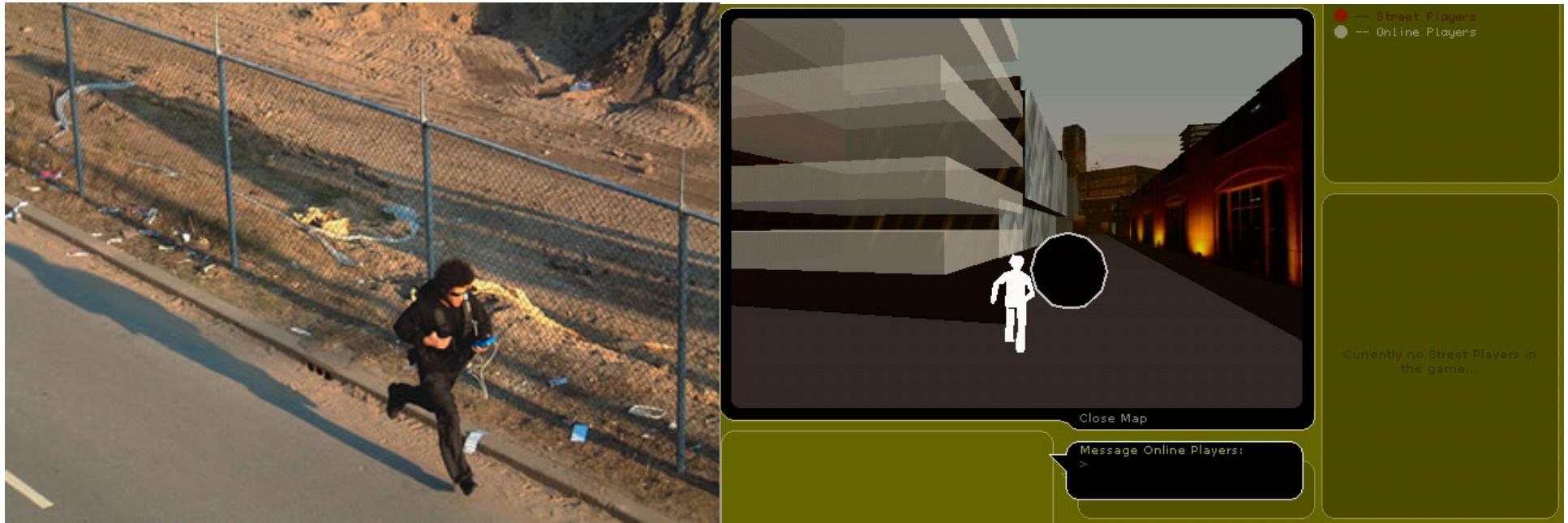
Mogi, Newt Games (2004, Japan) | <http://www.mogimogi.com>



Photos: Paul Baron

“The game provides a data-layer over the city of Tokyo. As you move through the city, if you check a map on your mobile phone screen, you'll see nearby items you can pick up and nearby players you can meet or trade with.” The Feature, 2004

Blast Theory + Mixed Reality Lab



Uncle Roy All Around You

<http://www.uncleroyallaroundyou.co.uk/>

Westminster, London (UK), 2003

Manchester (UK), 04.28 - 5.08.2004

West Bromwich (UK), 05.27 - 06.05.2004

Contextualizing mobile games

Mobile games vs. Hybrid Reality games

- Mobile phones are always with the user
- Ubiquitous interfaces
- Transferring PC games to mobile phones?
- Use of location awareness and multiuser features

Internet:

space for projection of the imagination (1990s) - MUDs



mobility



Urban spaces:

new spaces for the projection of the imagination (games)

Digital Graffiti (Germany, Siemens + Ars Electronica Center, 2007)



Virtual post-its: attaching SMS messages to geographical points in space.

Importance of mobile technologies:

- Changing our perception of space
- Re-defining social networks
- Changing the definition of games

Create content for location-based games:

- Community formation
- New forms of narrative
- New applications: education, knowledge, creativity