IT University of Copenhagen :: School of Media and Public Affairs :: February 11, 2010

On the social implications of **Network Locality**:

Privacy, surveillance, control, exclusion

Adriana de Souza e Silva | Assistant Professor | North Carolina State University

Outline

1. Research framework
2. Theoretical framework: Network Locality
3. Social implications:
   surveillance, privacy, control, and exclusion

Research framework

Digital communication interfaces :: public spaces

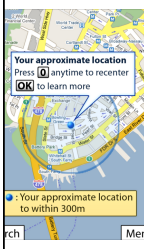
2 trends

Research framework

Mobile technology appropriation among low-income communities in Brazil

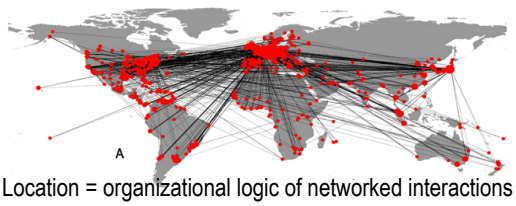
Research framework

Location aware mobile technologies: social / spatial implications



Network Locality

Shift in the way we understand the Internet



Location = organizational logic of networked interactions

Network paradigm (1990s)

Digital (networked) spaces used to be independent of physical spaces

Network paradigm (1990s)

Internet =
- non-place
- independent from place

work spaces

social spaces

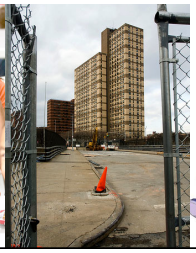
shopping spaces

The new mobilities paradigm (2000s)

Physical vs. "Virtual" mobilities (Kellerman, Urry)

The new mobilities paradigm (2000s)

Disconnection from public spaces (Puro, Plant, Geser)
Free from place (Wellmann)
Death of public spaces (Hampton)
"absent presence" (Gergen)



The Internet is becoming local

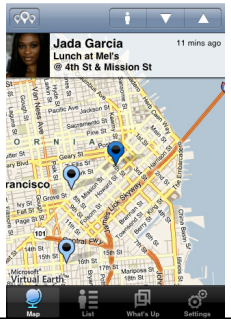
Network Locality

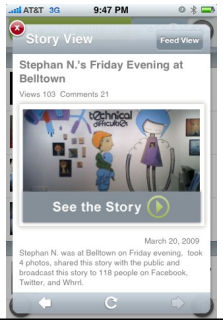
Eric Gordon & Adriana de Souza e Silva

Local = building block of the global (digital networks)
Places = intertwined with digital information
Digital + physical (logic of hybrid spaces)

Net-local interfaces

Mapping applications, location-based games, location-based services…
…locative mobile social networks (Loopt, Whrll, Brightkite)





Questions

How does network locality and the use of net-local mobile interfaces:

- Change our perception of public spaces?
- Shift the way we interact with each other in public spaces?

[surveillance] [privacy] [control] [exclusion]

Network Locality: Social Implications

Surveillance?

ADVERTISEMENT / MARKETING (LBS)
(top-down surveillance)

SOCIAL NETWORKING (LMSN)
(co-lateral surveillance)

Network Locality: Social Implications

Surveillance?

Are these applications normalizing a surveillance culture or making us more aware of the existing surveillance mechanisms exerted by government and corporations?

What kind of surveillance?
Societies of control (Deuleuze)? Kafka?

Network Locality: Social Implications

Privacy?

Are they challenging the borders between public and private spaces?

Are these technologies changing how we understand privacy?

Network Locality: Social Implications

Privacy?

Public character of location (Licoppe & Inada)

Private (location) → Public
Public → Private

Network Locality: Social Implications

Control and exclusion

Will certain groups be excluded from interacting with others in public spaces due to the location aware filter on mobile devices?

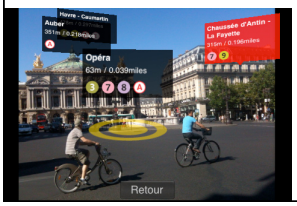
Network Locality: Net-local spaces

Simmel's (1903) blasé attitude = filter

Network Locality

Net-local spaces: composed of local + remote interactions

Mobile technologies re-connect us to the local



Instead of public space being lost to the network, we argue that the network is being pulled into public space.

Thank you!