

Net-Local Public Spaces

Towards a culture of location

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Chat room - #maemo

Room topic changed to: <http://maemo.org> | Maemo Community Council <http://maemo.org/community/council> | <http://mxr.maemo.org> | <http://mg.pov.lt/maemo-irclog/> | Mer bootstrapping meeting 2008-12-14 20:00 UTC in #maemo-meeting

Participants: Franl, '066, abin, achar

This is public space



The internet is becoming local

Location = organizational logic of networked interactions

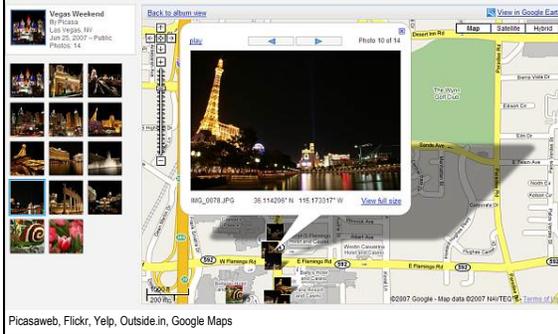
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Network Locality

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

Net-local interfaces

Web + public spaces are composed by local information



Picasaweb, Flickr, Yelp, Outside.in, Google Maps

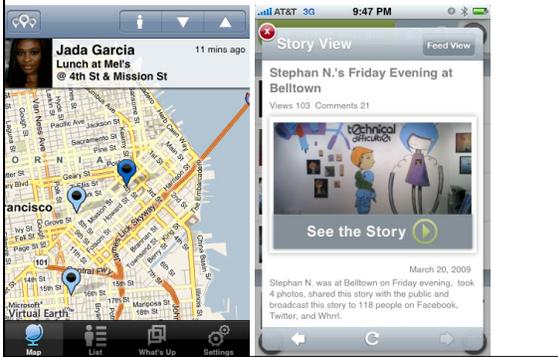
Net-local interfaces

Geotagging applications, location-based services, augmented reality



Net-local interfaces

Locative mobile social networks (Loopt, Whrl, Brightkite)



Net-local public spaces



Questions

- How are public spaces being transformed by the use of net-local interfaces?
- What rules of conduct are assumed in these engagements and what new rules are emerging?



Instead of public space being lost to the network...
... the network is being pulled into public space.

Good-old public space



When mediated interaction is added to the equation, the apparent cohesion of public space is brought into question.

Net-local interfaces as filters for public spaces



The metropolis created the blasé attitude. But at the same time it opened the "metropolitan man" to the freedoms associated with being distanced.

...The city was incomprehensible in its unfiltered form...

Net-local interfaces as filters for public spaces



Not being connected to a network, not having access to information about where you are, is tantamount to being closed off to a space's potential.

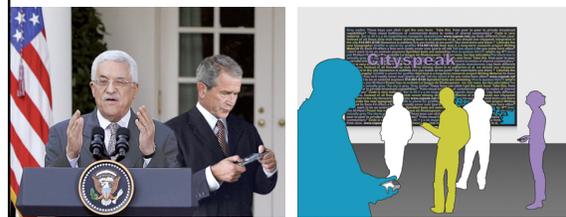
...Traditional metropolitan space = small town...

Defining the net-local situation (Goffman)



Net-local practices: developing new kinds of social rituals in new kind kinds of hybrid spaces that depend not only on the outward behavior of using mobile devices, but also on the located nature of the information retrieved with the device.

Goffman: Dominating vs. subordinate involvement



In net-local situations, we acknowledge that there are other outlets for involvement, and we accept them, insofar as they don't interfere with the order of the dominating involvement

Goffman: Getting away with going away

We do that all the time, even without net-local interfaces



"When outwardly participating in a social activity within a social situation, an individual can allow his attention to turn from what he and everyone else considers the real or serious world, and give himself up for a time to a playlike world in which he alone participates. This kind of inward emigration from the gathering may be called 'away'" --Erving Goffman

Goffman: Getting away with going away

But what happens when the person's attention is focused on the map of where they happen to be standing, or a person in their social network that happens to be down the street?



→ Extending the purview of the local situation

Attentional diversity

The local space is still the dominating involvement.



However, the local space is not always only physical

Attentional diversity



Going away can be productive for the net-local situation if one member of a group goes away to contribute to the physically local space.

Net-local performance

All good public spaces require performance.



Net-local public spaces require a more nuanced performance whereby the connections between the physically proximate and networked information spaces are convincingly portrayed as a hybrid.

Over-filtered situation

Does net-local public space lead to homogenous spaces, easily filtered to our individualized needs?



Will certain groups be excluded from interacting with net-local public spaces due to the lack of access to location aware mobile devices?

Over-filtered situation

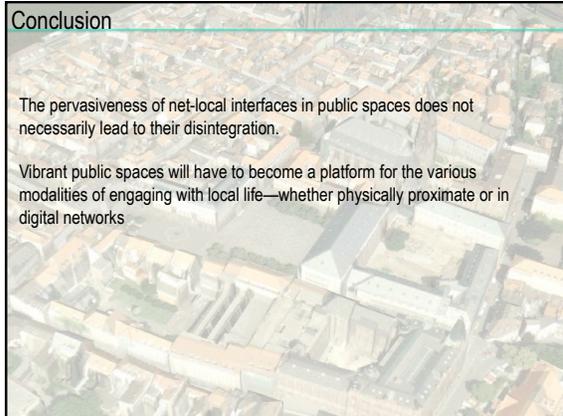


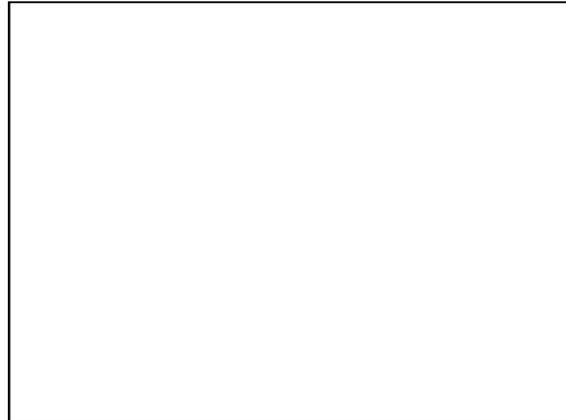
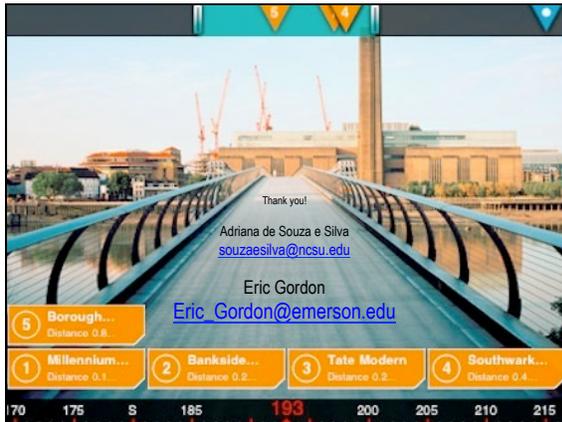
Yes, but net-local interfaces can also encourage users to infer qualities about anonymous strangers based on a place. They may also help us become more familiar with certain spaces, directing users' attention to one's immediate surroundings.

Conclusion

The pervasiveness of net-local interfaces in public spaces does not necessarily lead to their disintegration.

Vibrant public spaces will have to become a platform for the various modalities of engaging with local life—whether physically proximate or in digital networks





Good-old public space: thick trust

Public spaces as self-contained places:
"When a piece of geography is doing what it is supposed to do, it encourages you to feel a connection to it that, as in marriage, forsakes all others."
--Paul Goldberger



Thick trust is what makes you trust your spouse when they say they are going to pick up the kids.

This block contains a title, a quote by Paul Goldberger, a photograph of a busy outdoor cafe with many people sitting at tables under umbrellas, and a concluding sentence about thick trust.

Good-old public space: thin trust
Lehtonen & Mänpää's street sociability



Thin trust is what makes you trust that the person walking down the street is not going to stab you...

This block contains a title, a subtitle, a photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a table on a stage with the woman leaning over and pointing a knife at the man, and a concluding sentence about thin trust.

Thin trust in net-local spaces
Interfaces + users



This block contains a title, a subtitle, and a photograph of a street scene with people holding umbrellas, overlaid with a network diagram of dashed lines connecting the umbrellas.