

Digital interventions: from the design to the ludic experience of spaces via geo-tags

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In this course we aim to develop our critical thinking in relation to urban spaces, when transformed by digital interventions. The debates will focus in urban galleries accessed only via location-based mobile apps. In this project, we will debate particularly the augmented realities with a musical intent, that here we call: location-based album app.

OBJECTIVES

- KNOWLEDGE
 - In the context of mobile apps we will present and debate the practices of embodiment of spaces, when consequent of the design of realities via GPS-tags.
- SKILLS
 - We aim to develop a human-centred critique on new digital products related to music listening, in this course the location-based musical app (musical albums existent only in pre-design geographic areas). To do so we should grasp how to meet the specific needs to each project, aligning them to the anticipations of its audience and speculating about future realities.
- ATTITUDE:
 - We aim that these debates, resultant of the design and experience of the product, serve as a case for future projects in site-specific, Internet of Things and intervention(actions) in the public space realm.

METHODOLOGY

It comprises our methodology the assimilation of theory and state of the art in location aware apps; passing through the design process to the experimental practice of the digital product.

The debates are going to be held in four different stages:

1. Theoretical module: we will develop a critical thinking, discussing a selection of the existent literature. That will be applied further during the design phase.

2. Design and re-design: we will apply concepts discussed in the theoretical and experimental modules, in order to grasp the main issues and successful points of each project. The digital intervention in urban public spaces will take place in two contrasting contexts designed by the teams.

3. Experimental module: time to experience the album app in its pre-designed coordinates. In this phase the main objective is to experience and collect impressions on this ludic experience.

4. Final considerations: development and presentation of each team's report, which should not necessarily be formatted as a written document. It will present the material documented in phase 3 (photo, video, audio recording, notes, sketches) and the group conclusions regarding their projects.

PROGRAM

Day 1

1. Theoretical module

1.1.1 Presenting the course program, the teacher and participants' background, discussing the groups expectations and previous experiences related to the topic.

1.1.2 Discussion associating the concept of tangible products appropriated in the digital realm. Considering a brief analysis of smartphone apps, relating them to designs existent previously to the mobile digital media époque.

1.1.3 Presenting the state of the art of mobile apps within the geo-location category. Discussion on its pros and cons, e.g.: changes occurred on people's interactions within urban public spaces; safety on private data; isolation issues.

1.1.4 Recommending the selected literature; Homework: research on objects that served the act of listening to music in different eras.

Day 2

1. Theoretical Module

1.2.1 Check the results by each participant on their task (last homework). Developing the critique on the context of each product (digital or not). Presenting a timeline of musical album designs.

1.2.2 Reading selected articles in class. Discussion: What does interface mean? Is there a demand (or opportunity) for a transition from screen-based apps to more actively efficient audio interfaces?

1.2.3 Debate on the term "Embodiment of Space" (Farman 2012) and "Walking as remixing" (Behrendt 2012) under the light of design of interactions of location-based apps. Recommendation of articles for further reading.

1.2.4 Interventions in spaces: in which ways do we alter perceptions of spaces utilising sonic artefacts? Debate including social and individual situations. Introduction to the topic of location-based musical album (LBMA). Considerations on how does this album format innovate, and if it does actually impact on previous habits of listening to music.

Day 3

2.1 Design Module

2.3.1 Presenting the platform (Appfurnace), which will be utilised for the album app design. Basic tutorial on how to use the main functions, specifically within the geo-location premises.

2.3.2 Speculations on the possibilities for the prototype phase. The group will be rearranged as two teams and each will design a different musical album. Discussion on design possibilities, suggestions on locations, time frame and musical styles will be considered in order to set up the first design steps.

Day 4

2.1 Design Module

2.4.1 Presenting artistic projects exploring geo-tags.

2.4.2 Practical project: design of the LBMA prototype.

2.4.3 A brief debate on the choices made regarding music and locations selected. The teams should contrast their choices of spaces but apply the same musical selection. E.g.: contrasting leisure spaces versus industrial areas.

Day 5

3.1 Experience Module - Exploring the City

3.5.1 Experience of album apps in loco. The participants should experience both their own designs and the other team's. The first day will be reserved to their own project's experiment.

3.5.2 Documentation: filming, recording, photographing, noting the main points of the album experience to the re-design phase.

Day 6

3.1 Experiential Module - Exploring the City

3.5.1 Experience of album apps in loco. The participants should experience both their own designs and the other team's. The second day will be reserved to the other team project's experiment.

3.5.2 Documentation: filming, recording, photographing, noting the main points of the album experience to the re-design phase.

Day 7

2.2 Re-design Module

2.7.1 Presentation of the documented material and discussion of the experiment with a few conclusions regarding the re-design that the teams want to perform.

2.7.2 Re-design and pre-test via desktop platform.

Day 8

2.2 Re-design Module

2.8.1 Re-design and pre-test via desktop platform.

Day 9

3.2 Experiential Module – Back to the city

3.9.1 Experience of your own team's album app, after re-design.

3.9.2 Documentation: filming, recording, photographing. Focusing on the main points of the re-design.

Day 10

3.2 Experiential Module – Back to the city

3.10.1 Experience of the other team's album app, after re-design.

3.10.2 Documentation: filming, recording, photographing. Focusing on the main points of the re-design.

Day 11

4. Conclusion Module

4.11.1 Time dedicated to the final reports design and team orientation.

Day 12

4. Conclusion Module

4.12.1 Time dedicated to the final reports design and team orientation.

4.12.2 Brief revision of the presentations.

Day 13

4. Conclusion Module

4.13.1 Event presenting the final reports which may be available in the format of a temporary exhibition at a cultural centre or in the university.

COURSE DURATION: 3h per class = ~40h

(it may vary depending on new proposes and number of students)

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

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McLuhan, M. (2004) Visual and Acoustic Space. In C. Cox & D. Warner (eds.) *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*. New York: Continuum, p.71

SIMILAR PROJECTS

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Bluebrain (2011) The Making of Listen to the Light Vimeo [On line]. See Online video at: <https://vimeo.com/31024982> [Accessed January 25th 2011]

John Moose album (2015) [On line]. See Online video at: <http://popupcity.net/a-music-album-you-can-only-listen-to-in-a-forest/> <http://johnmoosemusic.com/prerelease/> [Accessed June 12th 2015]

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