

David Cotterrell *Polyphonic*

Summary:

A soundscape made tangible by the participants who choose to contribute to a massive spatially accurate distributed speaker array.

As the number of participants increase the detail, depth and texture of the soundscape is revealed.

Animated in space and time, an alternate data driven landscape is revealed, like torches in the darkness, by the tiny speakers of a vast array of participants' domestic mobile phones. Linked through software, network and location this temporary transitory orchestra exists while it is within range of the geo-stationary triggers and fades away as the participants migrate on to other parts of the city.

Project Description:

Through the simultaneous free distribution of Windows Mobile, Android and iOS applications, this project proposes using the audience to create a massive distributed spatial speaker system. The project would be staged in a public area with comprehensive wifi – (either temporarily installed or temporarily administered) and effective GPS coverage. The combination of strong wifi signals and gps tracking enable effective and accurate spatial positioning to be used to trigger and control the streaming and/or playback of audio content.

Abstract:

As governments and private corporations enhance their monitoring and analyses of public online activity, individuals are responding with increasingly sophisticated methods for editing (and fabricating) their digital footprints. The societal shift from direct interaction to technologically mediated relationships makes it timely and appropriate to consider ways in which new hierarchies might emerge within the disembodied online environment.

This project considers whether the shift towards social interaction between virtual projections of self, whether game-based characters, Facebook profiles or search engine trails, may be altering the historical value of individual physical attributes and cognitive skills; whether physical augmentation may become less important when our virtual presence develops a greater influence on our position within new social hierarchies; and whether growing user awareness of the tools and limitations of contemporary communication will render our public virtual presence unreliable as a method by which we may be understood or assessed by others.

The project will seek to explore some of the uncertainty that is embodied within the tangible but partial dataset, which we knowingly or inadvertently provide as

a representation of ourselves to each other, to strangers, to corporations and to government.

In *Polyphonic*, each participant contributes a fragment of an audio narrative. Their choice of location and movement controls the interaction, their active election to participate is required to download the app, their donation of personal data, battery life and temporary focus is an altruistic gift to strangers, but the nature of the sound that is created as they become a mobile speaker is dictated by the landscape that is invisibly referenced, by the scripting of the spatial score and the coding of the software.

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Technical Description:

A free distribution of an app simultaneously on the Windows Mobile, Android and iOS platform. Social media advertising of the downloadable software, and access to an effective public WLAN network.

Collaborators:

Potential collaboration with mobile app developers. Proficiency with Unity-based 3d coding in C#, experience within iOS, Windows Mobile and Android deployment. Contact has already been made with a software development studio and support in the realisation of this project has been offered. Collaborative inks with local University departments and private companies would explored.

Potential Schedule:

Stage 1 : Prototyping: Development of off-line prototype, functional Spec, and identification of key technical challenges. Consideration of potential sites for project realisation.

Stage 2 : Residency: Realisation and testing of non-distributed closed network prototype (iOS only). Confirmation of potential sites, scope and scale of final project.

Stage 3 : Presentation of working multi-platform installation. Potentially staged as a complementary public component to other exhibited works within contemporary art venue(s).