Playing life and living play:

How hybrid reality games reconfigure space, play, and the ordinary

Adriana de Souza e Silva
Daniel M. Sutko
North Carolina State University
The Mobile Gaming Research Lab



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“It is said that the purpose of a man’s life is to strive arduously for knowledge, for excellence and virtue, for fame and honor, for power and prosperity. Play, on the other hand, is supposed to function as occasional interruption, as pause. According to this conception, play seems to occupy a legitimate, if limited, place in the rhythm of human life. Play is thought of .... as an escape from unyielding reality to a dream-utopia. As long as we continue naively using the popular antitheses of “work-play”, “frivolity-seriousness” and the like, we will never grasp the ontological meaning of play.”

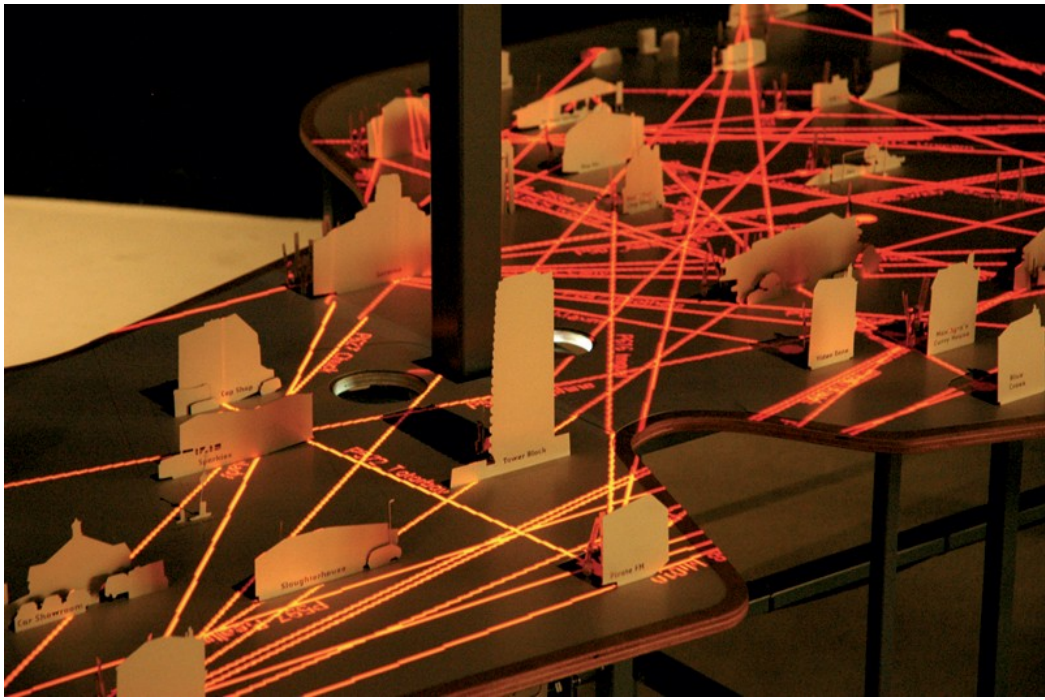
-- Fink, Saine & Saine, 1968, p. 19

Hybrid Reality Games (HRGs):

Games / Play + physical space / daily life

-- foreground playful nature of our lives

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1: HRGs merge play + ordinary life via 3 criteria:

a. Spatial,

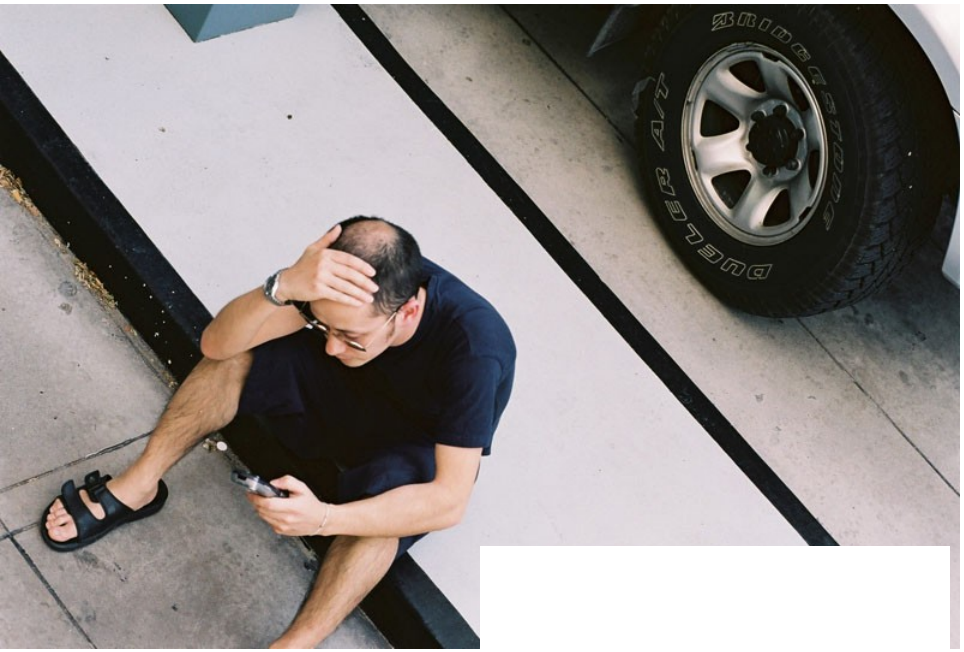
b. Community (trust / rules),

c. Identity (anonymity / surveillance)

2: How these games reconfigure connections between game space and urban spaces, and between players themselves.

3: Broader **spatial / social implications** of playing HRGs / locative media.

I Like Frank (2004)



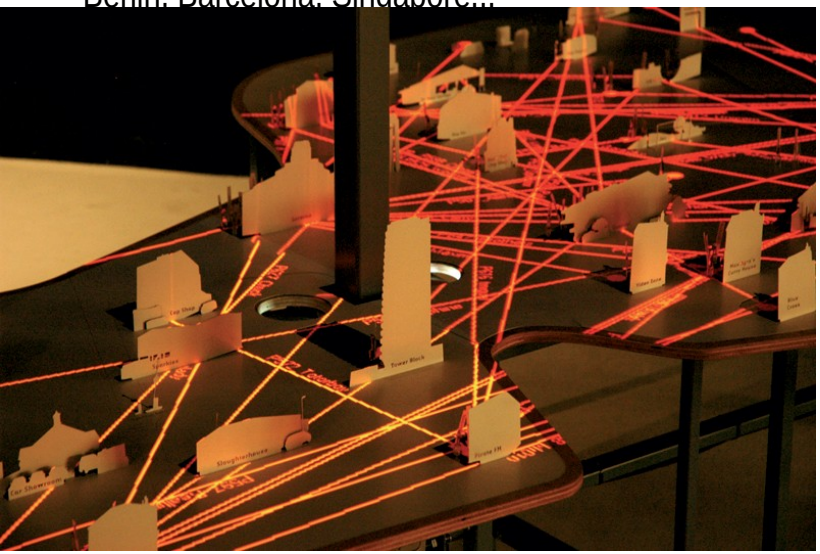
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Adelaide (Australia)

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Day of the Figurines (2006)

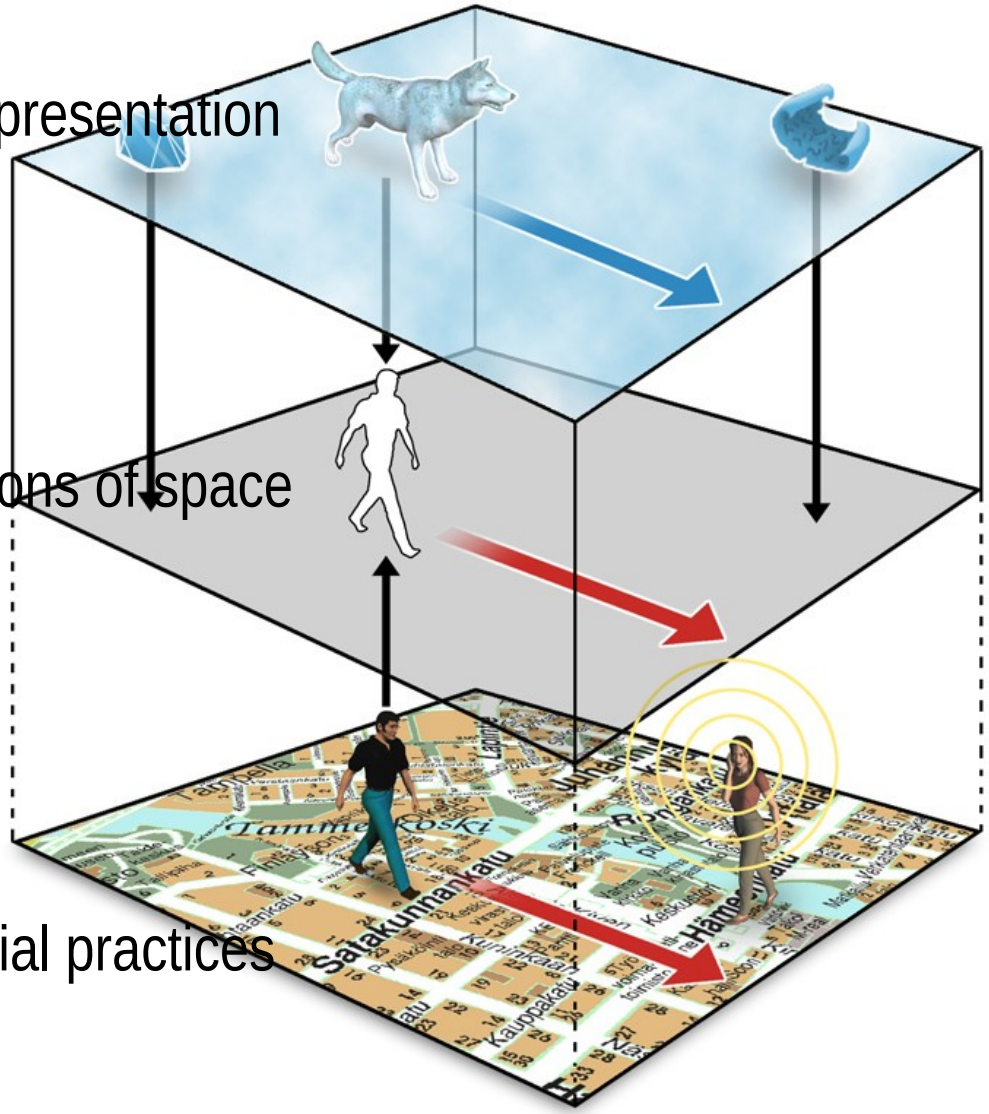
Berlin, Barcelona, Singapore...







1. Play + Ordinary LiveSpatial



-- Lefebvre, 1991

1. Play + Ordinary LiveSpatial

Spaces of representation

Representations of space

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Material spatial practices

e, 1991

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Spaces of representation

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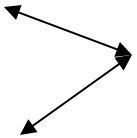
Spaces of representation = fictional game world

Representations of space

Material spatial practices

-- Lefebvre, 1991

1. Play + Ordinary LiveSpatial

1. Game space / narrative
   ordinary city space
   
   players

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1. Play + Ordinary LiveSpatial

1. Game space / narrative
   ordinary city space

2. No primary play space
   (co-dependance / interconnection of spaces)

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1. Play + Ordinary LiveSpatial

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- Differential access to information
- Mutual influence on each other spaces

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1. Play + Ordinary LiveSpatial

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- Differential access to information
- Mutual influence on each other spaces

DOF

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2. Game Community

Space --> People

Community:

1. Interaction between people (**trust**)
2. **Rules** of play (Hughes; Salen & Zimmerman)

2. Game Community

ILF (assumes cooperation / trust - Lehtonen & Mänpää, 1997)

- SP / OP
- SP / bystanders

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ILF / URAAY

2. Game Community

DOF

+ “abstracted” trust?

+ unpredictability

- rules

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3. Identity

ILF: **Surveillance**

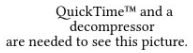
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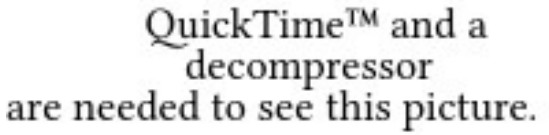
DOF: **Anonymity**

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A new framework for games, game spaces and ordinary life?

Spatial / Social





Mogi (Japan, 2003-2006)

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Spatial / Social

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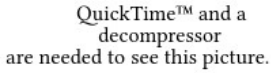
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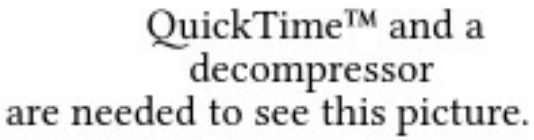
Loopt (2008-)

A new framework for games, game spaces and ordinary life?

Spatial

- Encourage new ways of navigating city spaces
- See “familiar” places with unfamiliar eyes





A new framework for games, game spaces and ordinary life?

Spatial

"How do we relate to people around us as we go into kinds of 'hertzian spaces' for our social networks?"

-- Matt Adams (Blast Theory)

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A new framework for games, game spaces and ordinary life?

Spatial

Public + private

Leisure + work

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A new framework for games, game spaces and ordinary life?

Social

Brightkite (2008)

How do you know when to **trust** a stranger?

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A new framework for games, game spaces and ordinary life?

Social

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

Or are they changing how we understand surveillance?

- top-down
- Sousveillance (Mann, 1997)
- Co-lateral

Hybrid reality games / locative social network media applications

- merge play + life
- Challenge traditional concept of games
- Influence the way we navigate urban spaces
- Re-define social interactions in public spaces (trust, anonymity and surveillance)