

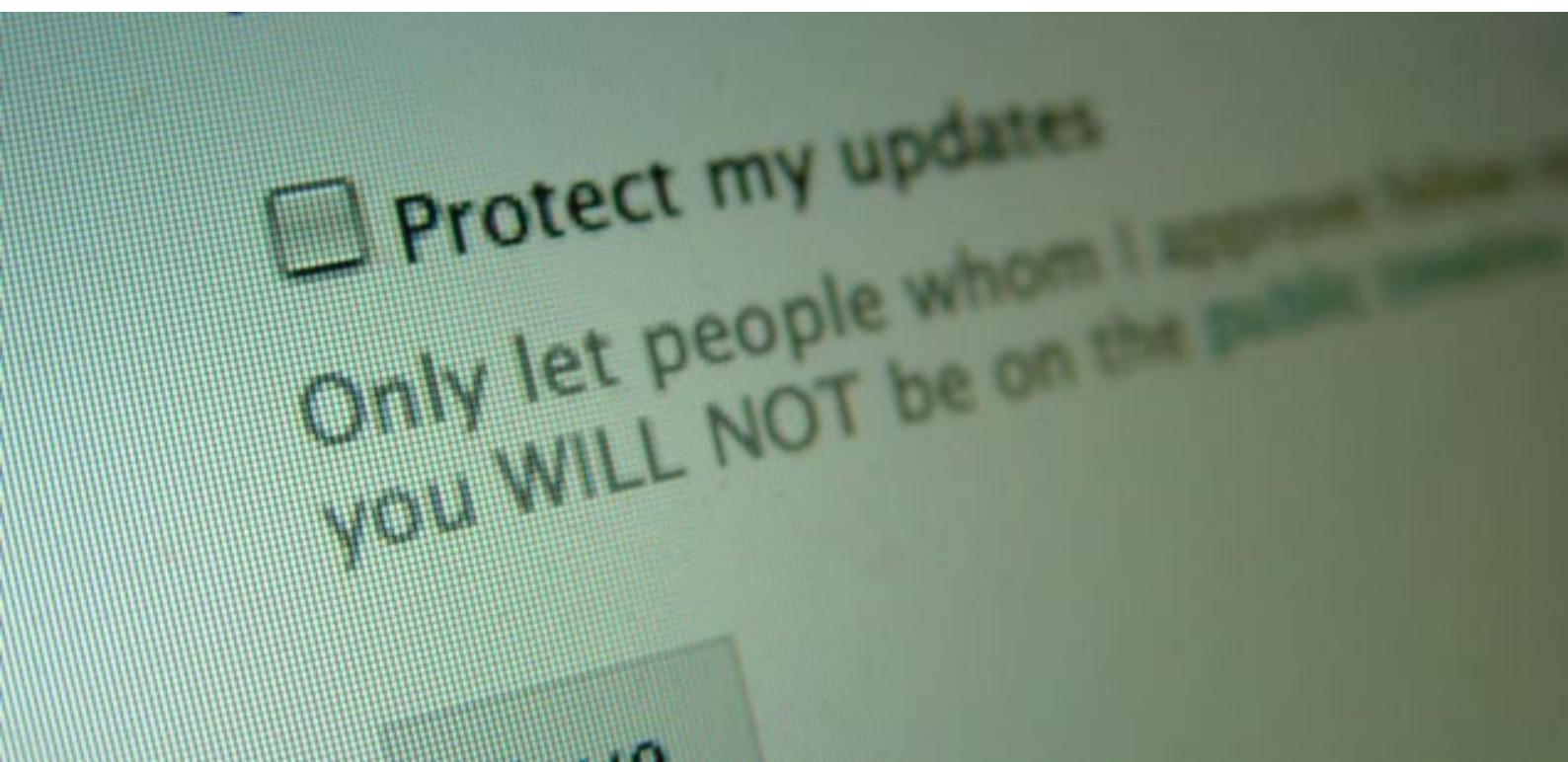
interventions in the field of digital self-exposure and physical privacy using the example of twitter

“default to public” is a project dealing with the discrepancy between people’s feeling of privacy on the web and the physical world. It consists of an ongoing series of objects and interventions linking the physical world to the online world in unexpected and narrative ways to create awareness for self-exposure.

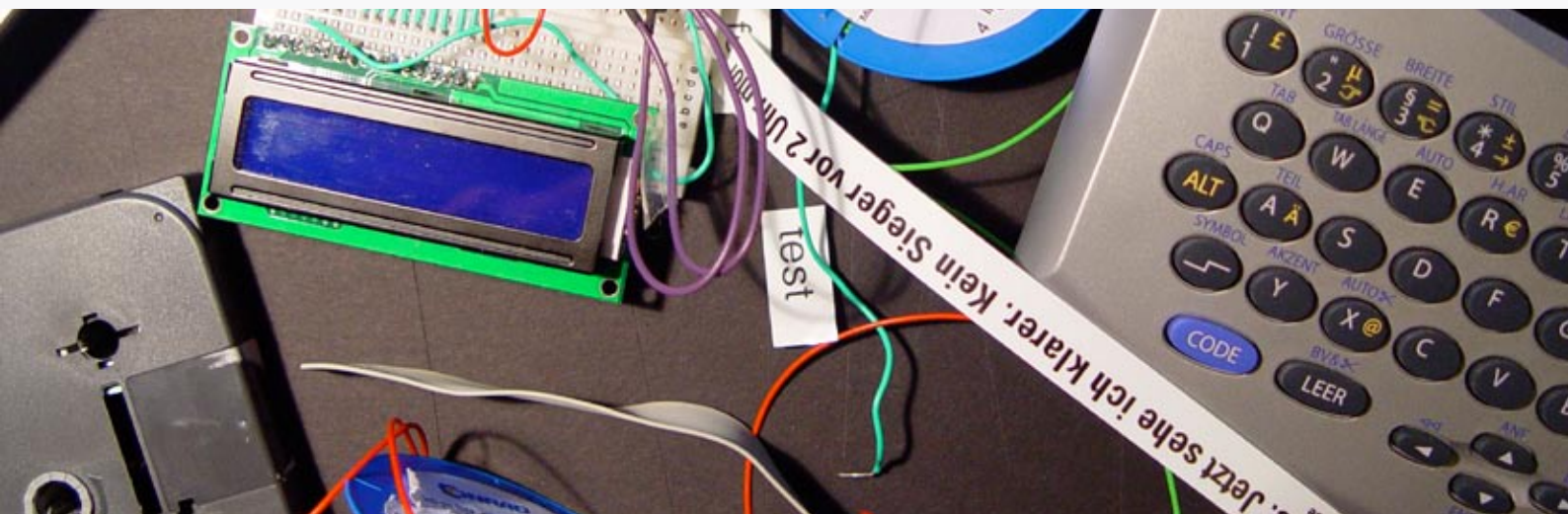
Twitter is a relatively new and rising service on the web, that enables its users to publish information using a microblog, meaning a series of entries no longer than 140 characters. This not only creates a new style of language, but due to its low-effort interface and cross-media integration it enables users to publish content everywhere, anytime through the web, mobile devices, even via SMS.

Since there is no preview and save functionality, the content can be published totally unreflected, with just a click of a button it is online. Unlike most of the social websites out there, like facebook for example, twitter doesn’t make use of a complicated set of privacy settings; the default setting is public, unless set otherwise, the microblog is visible not only to twitter users but any random person browsing the web and it is even indexable by search engines. Since most users usually do not change default settings, most twitter channels are out in the open.

For the project “default to public”, twitter serves as an example for a new culture of self-exposure on the web, representing all the services that encourage people to put their lives online, even intimate details, a behaviour which is often contradictory to their will to claim their right to privacy in the physical world.



The three core elements of default to public cause irritating moments that neither condemn nor approve of the self-exposure; they are as neutral as twitter itself is, yet they make strong statements regarding the perception of private and public on the web and are intended to create reflection and communication on that topic. In times of rapid change concerning communication behaviour, media access and -competence, the project “default to public” tries to raise awareness for the possible effects on our lives and our privacy.



Status Panel - Enhancing a classical Interface

Tweetleak - Tweets getting lost in the physical World

Tweetscreen - A networked Projection in public Space

Status Panel

default to public

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Status panel, a classic awareness design piece, is enhancing the functionality of a well-known interface: the doorbell.

While a usual doorbell just serves as an interface connecting the public sphere with the private sphere, the status panel adds a channel in the opposite direction: it displays one's twitter status along with one's name.



Additionally, the status panel has its own twitter account, and when the button is pressed, it “re-tweets” (copies the tweet in its own account while setting a reference to) one’s current tweet.

Would anyone want to actually use this object? Is it a wanted side-effect of twittering that neighbours and strangers as well know what one is up to?

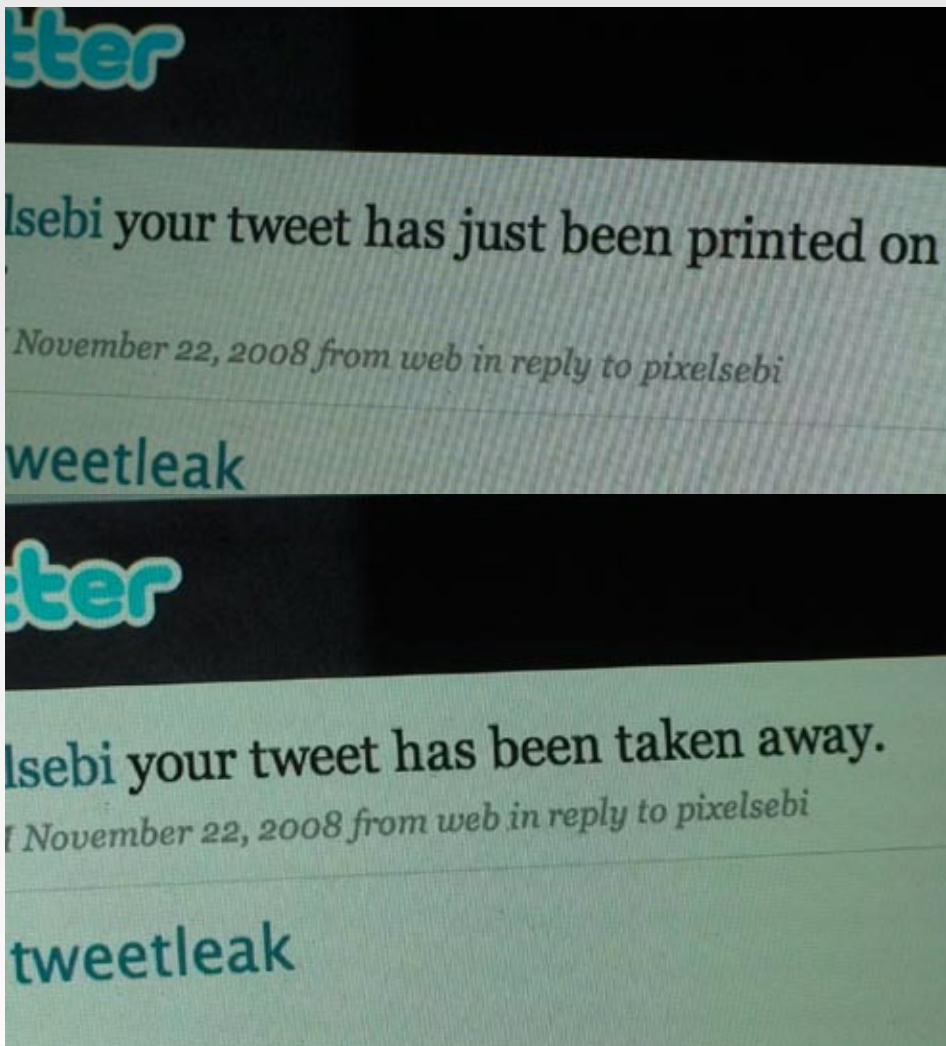


tweets getting lost in the physical world



Tweetleak, a monolithic anthracite-colored pole, which is placed in a public place, aggregates tweets from nearby and “materializes” them. The collected fragments from people’s lives on the web leave the digital public space on adhesive paper strips. being taken away by other individuals, they are distributed in physical space, eventually being placed in another context in another environment.





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Tweetleak has its own Twitter account, which is used as a back channel:

After a tweet has been printed out the author is notified. There is also a notification via twitter when the printed tweet has been taken away. The loss of control over one's data is illustrated: after a short period of time, the user won't be able to track his tweet.



Tweetscreen

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Tweetscreen is a networked projection/installation in public space, showing “tweets”, which have been written near its own physical location on a large projection screen, transferring them to a medium, widely received als “public”

tweetscreen projection on kastanienallee, berlin, nov. 2008



The twitter users, whose tweets have been chosen, receive a reply message, along with a photo taken by a webcam, saying that their tweet has been shown “in public”, which causes a repercussion of communication on the topic in the online world. The users wonder why they – or their tweets – have been displayed: a physical link to their whereabouts is created.



webcam photo,
uploaded automatically

All three objects follow a simple, yet powerful principle:

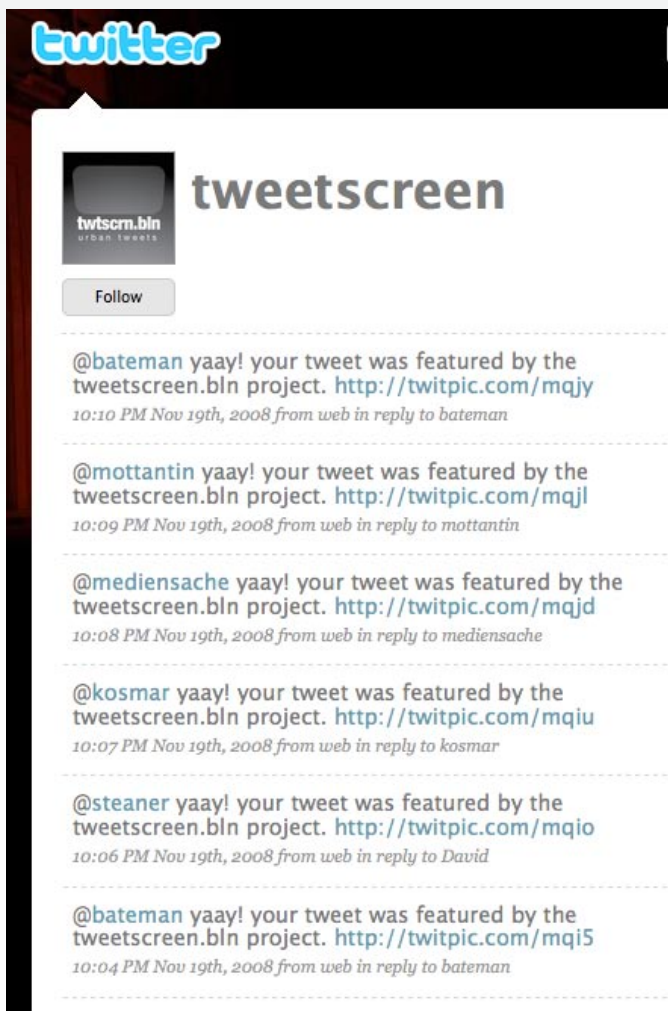
Information from the twitter network (standing for information on the web) are displayed in another public environment, the documentation of this process is fed back into the digital public sphere and the authors of the information are notified of that abduction. Two public spheres are temporarily linked, creating repercussions of communication in the digital public sphere, which seems to be regarded as less public than the physical world, although it has a far wider reach than classic media, plus it never expires or is written over.

default to public

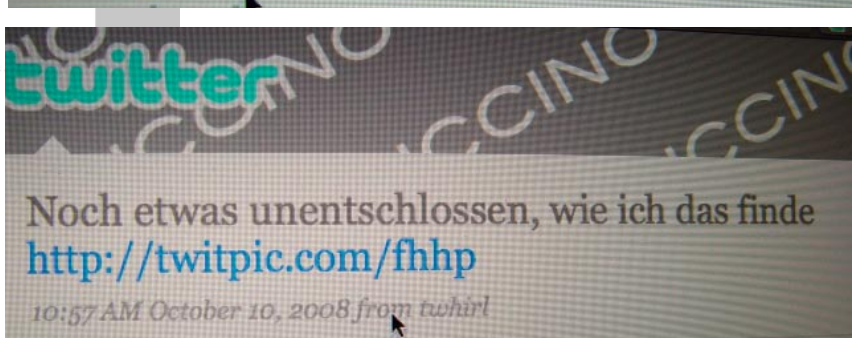
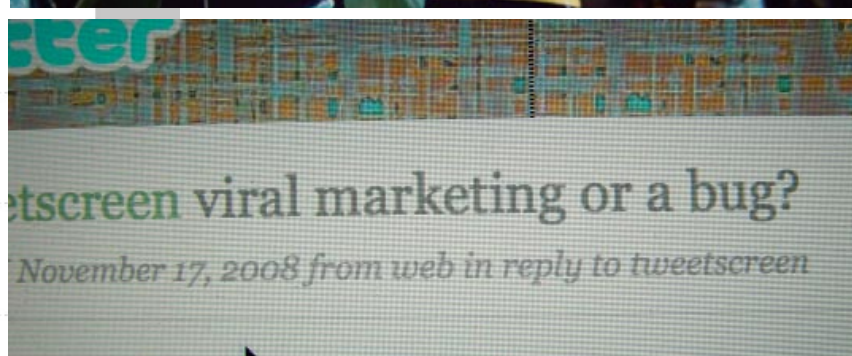
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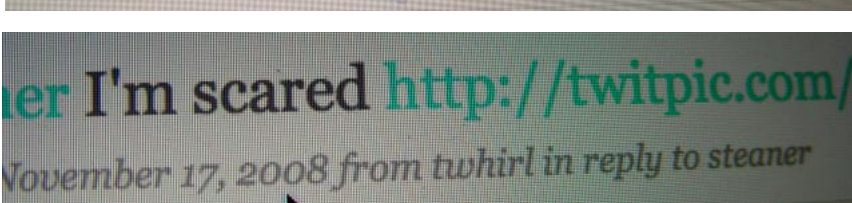
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tweetscreen's twitter account



reactions in the twitter network



default to public

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context

default to public was created as a graduation project in digital media at the University of fine Arts, Berlin by Jens Wunderling in 2008;

The project was accompanied by Profs. Joachim Sauter and Jussi Ängeslevä

technology

default to public was realized using several technologies; custom hardware and software based on the opensource platforms arduino and processing

setup

for all parts of default to public, a stable internet connection and power supply are vital;

status panel is mounted on a wooden board for display, it measures 200cm*30cm

tweetscreen needs a projector, a computer and a webcam, it can be set up in various configurations, locations and sizes.

tweetleak is a self-contained system, just a power plug is needed, it measures 1m*30cm*30cm

tweetleak and tweetscreen are intended rather for public spaces of everyday life rather than gallery spaces.

weblinks

<http://www.defaulttopublic.net>

<http://www.digital.udk-berlin.de>

<http://www.sport4minus.de>