

17:45:32 - 04/16/2008



SENTIENT CITY SURVIVAL KIT

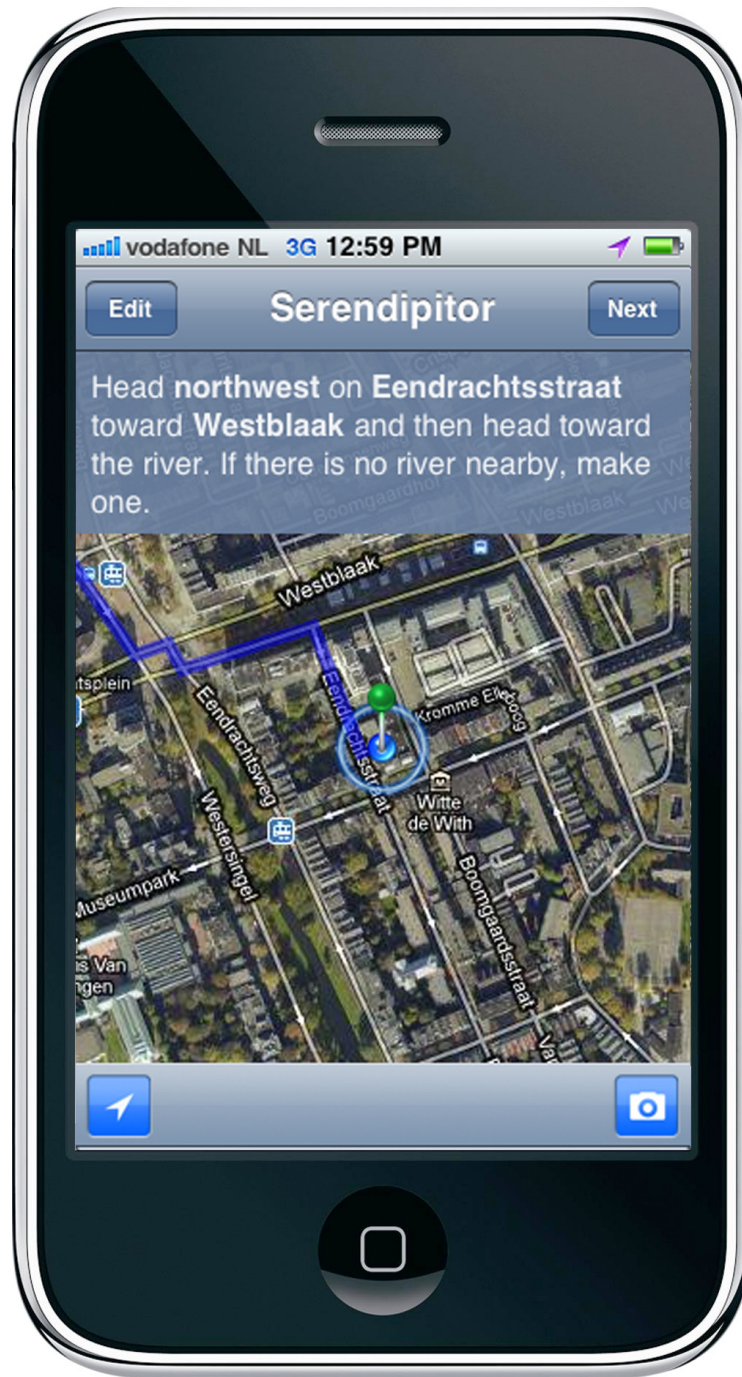
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

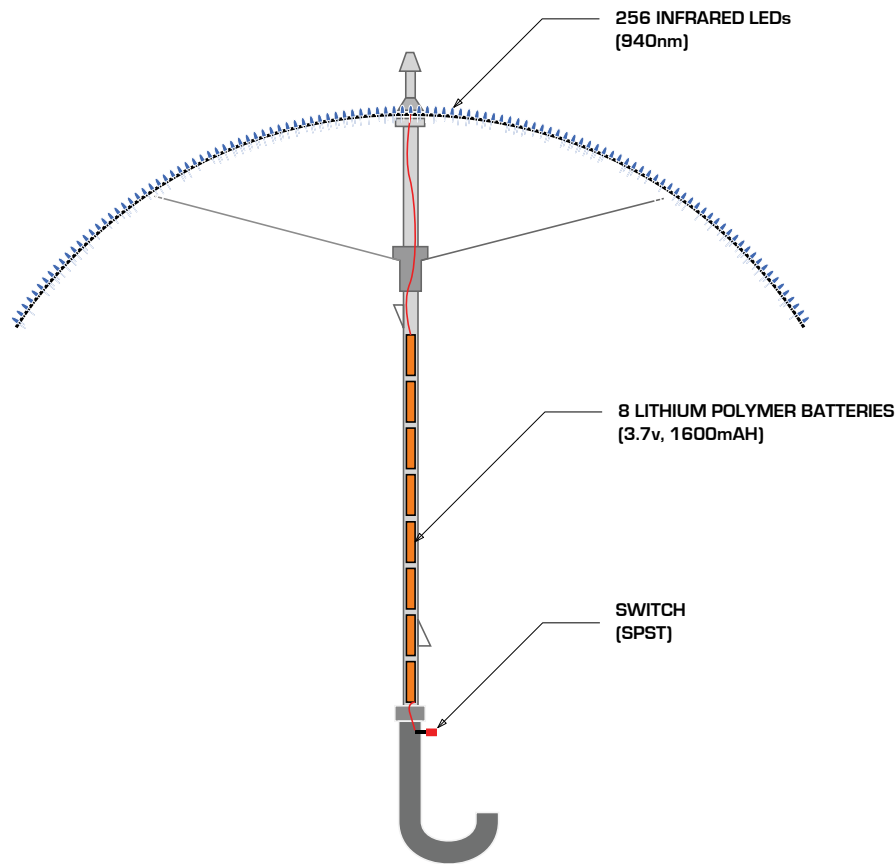
The Sentient City Survival Kit explores the social, cultural and political implications of ubiquitous computing for urban environments. The project consists of a collection of artifacts, spaces and media for “survival” in the near-future “sentient” city.

As computing leaves the desktop and spills out onto the sidewalks, streets and public spaces of the city, information processing becomes embedded in and distributed throughout the material fabric of everyday urban space. Pervasive/ubiquitous computing evangelists herald a coming age of urban information systems capable of sensing and responding to the events and activities transpiring around them. Imbued with the capacity to remember, correlate and anticipate, this “sentient” city is envisioned as being capable of reflexively monitoring our behavior within it and becoming an active agent in the organization of our daily lives.

Few may quibble about “smart” traffic light control systems that more efficiently manage the ebbs and flows of trucks, cars and busses on our city streets. Some may be irritated when discount coupons for their favorite espresso drink are beamed to their mobile phone as they pass by Starbucks. Many are likely to protest when they are denied passage through a subway turnstile because the system “senses” that their purchasing habits, mobility patterns and current galvanic skin response (GSR) reading happens to match the profile of a terrorist.

The project aims to raise awareness of the implications for privacy, autonomy, trust and serendipity in this highly observant, ever-more efficient and over-coded city. Conceived as an archaeology of the near-future, the project takes the practice of creating everyday artifacts as a vehicle for shaping tomorrow’s cities. The aim here is to attempt to instigate the process of imagining a future city and its inhabitants through fragments and traces of a society yet to exist. Ultimately the project is less invested in forecasting future trends in technology than focused on provoking public discussion in the present about just what kind of future we might want. This involves a process based on looking at current research in the fields of computer science and engineering and teasing out some of the tacit assumptions, latent biases and hidden agendas at play. The production of physical working prototypes for items in the Survival Kit subsequently involves playing out the implications these assumptions, biases and agendas.





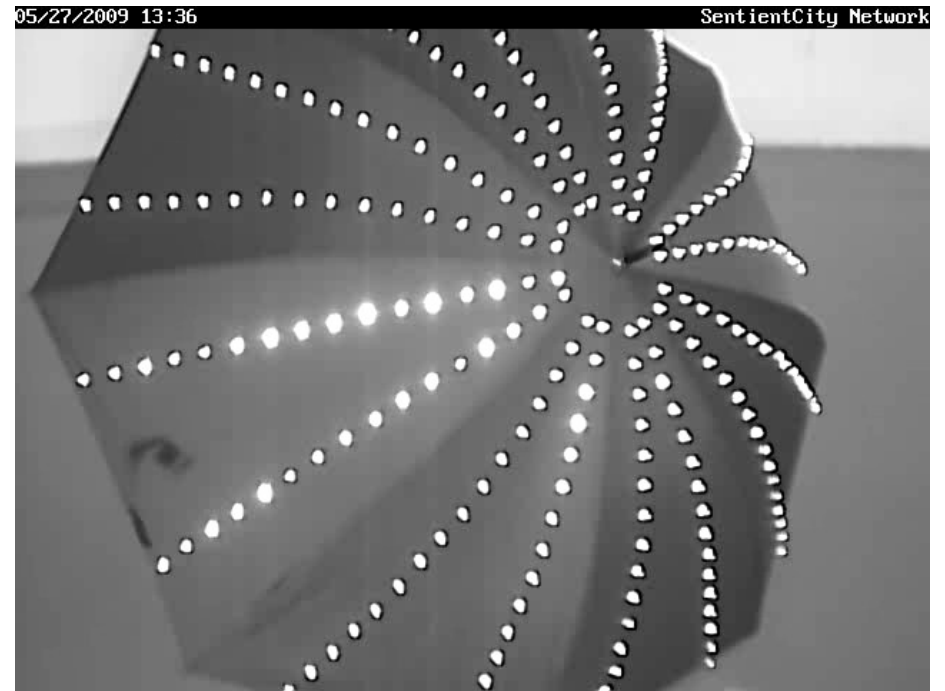
CCD-me-not Umbrella

When human vision is no longer the only game in town, don't leave home without this unique umbrella studded with infrared LEDs, designed to flirt with computer vision algorithms of advanced surveillance systems. The umbrella consists of 256 infrared LEDs inserted into its canopy powered by lithium polymer batteries concealed in its stalk. These LEDs are visible only to CCD surveillance systems set to night-vision mode. These systems commonly track figures using a sophisticated algorithm to distinguish moving objects in the foreground of an image from a static background. By turning the umbrella on and off, you can alter the registration of foreground and background pixels stored in system memory, thereby frustrating attempts by the algorithm to track moving objects in the image.



08/05/2010 04:49

SentientCity Network



05/27/2009 13:36

SentientCity Network



threshold: 10



threshold: 10

Images clockwise from top left: umbrella w/ Infrared LEDs; umbrella as seen by a CCD surveillance camera; person with umbrella as viewed by CCD surveillance camera (umbrella on); person with umbrella as viewed by CCD surveillance camera (umbrella off)

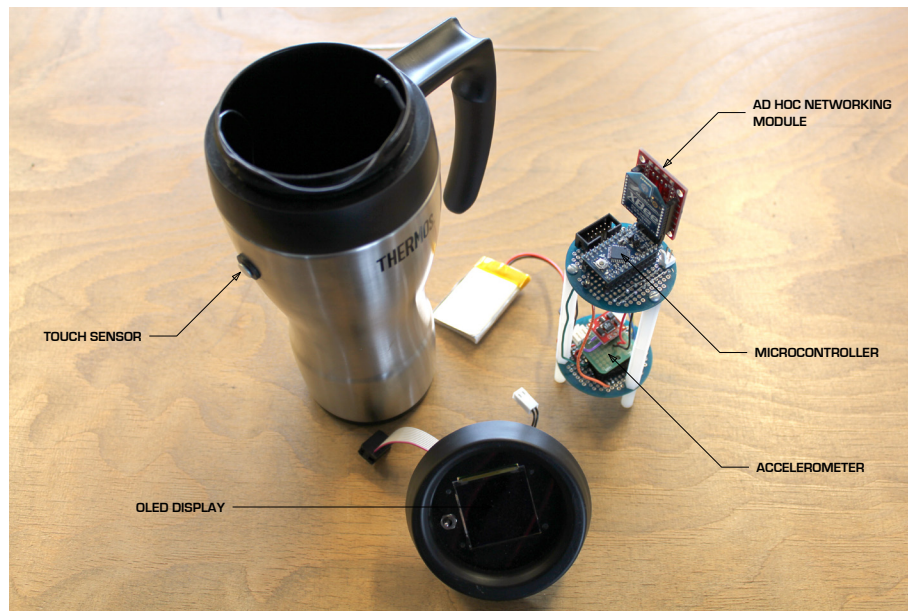
Ad Hoc Dark (roast) Network Travel Mug

In a near-future world where all network traffic is monitored via smart filters, where access privileges are dynamically granted and denied on the fly based on your credit card transaction history, and where bandwidth is a function of your market capitalization, standard commuter gear includes this travel mug designed for creating ad hoc dark networks for communication along a morning commute.

The mug incorporates a mobile phone screen embedded in its lid, together with a small wireless mesh-networking radio and microcontroller. Caffeine fueled commuters share short messages between them throughout the ride. Create your message by tapping the metal dot on the side of the mug and then make a drinking gesture to broadcast it to other mugs on the network. Others receive your message instantly, and can respond in turn. The more mugs the merrier, as each extends the network. Half a dozen mugs is enough to create a network along an entire train under normal conditions.



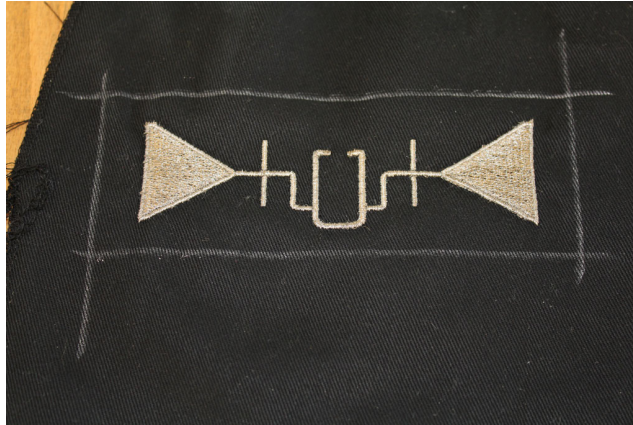
Mugs with mobile phone screens displaying messages sent between them.



Technical anatomy of a mug.

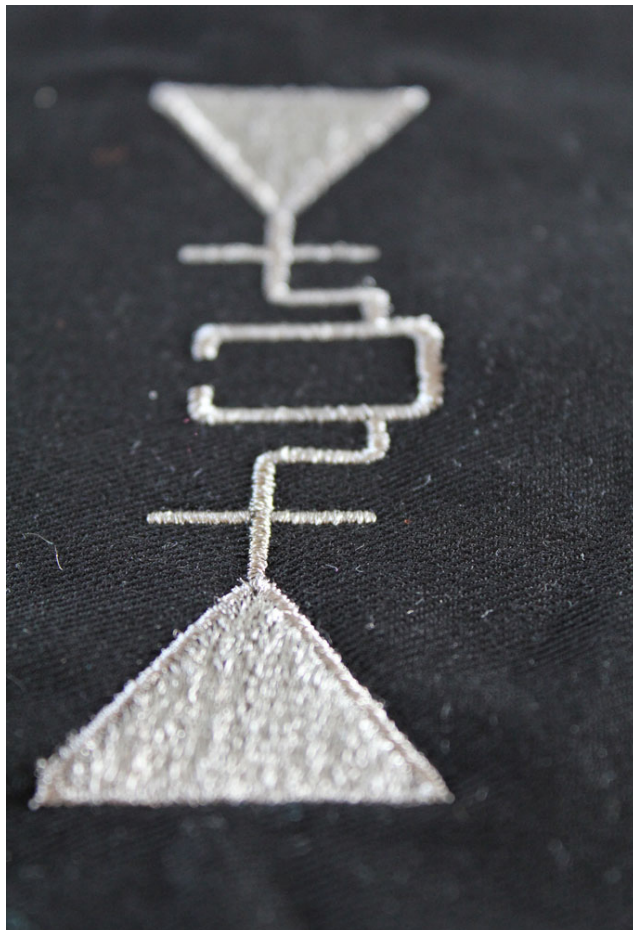


PLAN VIEW OF AD HOC NETWORK FORMATION IN SUBWAY CARS



RFID under(a)ware

In the near-future sentient shopping center, item level tagging and discrete data-sniffing will become both pervasive corporate culture and a common criminal pastime. This popular product line consists of his and hers underwear designed to sense hidden Radio Frequency Identification Tag readers, and alert the wearer to their presence. Small vibrating motors sewn into strategic locations on the garments are activated when the RFID antenna detects the presence of a reader nearby. Wear these garments while you are out and about to ensure that shopping remains a stimulating - if no longer secure - experience.







Installation view, ISEA 2010 RHUR, Dortmund, Germany.

Exhibition History

2011

Enter: Datapolis - art|tech biennale
Prague, Czech Republic

2010

Arte.Mov Festival for Mobile Media Art
São Paulo, Brazil

Smart Mistakes, Share Festival 2010
Turin, Italy

Borderless: Arts, Media and Humanities program,
ISMAR 2010, Art Center Nabi,
Seoul, Korea

Alternating Currents
2010 Beyond/In Western New York Biennial
Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY

ISEA 2010 RHUR
International Symposium on Electronic Art
Dortmund, Germany

Habitar: Bending the Urban Frame
LABoral Center for Art and Industrial Creation
Gijon, Spain

2009

Open City: Designing Coexistence
2009 International Architecture Biennial Rotterdam
Netherlands Architecture Institute
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Global Polis: Interactive Infrastructures
Center for Architecture
New York, NY