digital street game

location-based game as research probe

introduction

Digital Street Game reinterprets traditional street games as hybrid digital-physical play.

It explores players' relationships to their city and to other inhabitants. The city becomes a gameboard; networked communications roll the dice.

Traces of play create a prismatic portrait of urban places mediated through technology use and social relationships.

The game acts as methodological experiment in producing a rich environment for community engagement and social research.

Leveraging the qualities of games: technically lightweight, experientially exaggerated, competitively driven – we have a probe for investigating people's relationships to the complex concepts of privacy, capture & access, and location

motivation

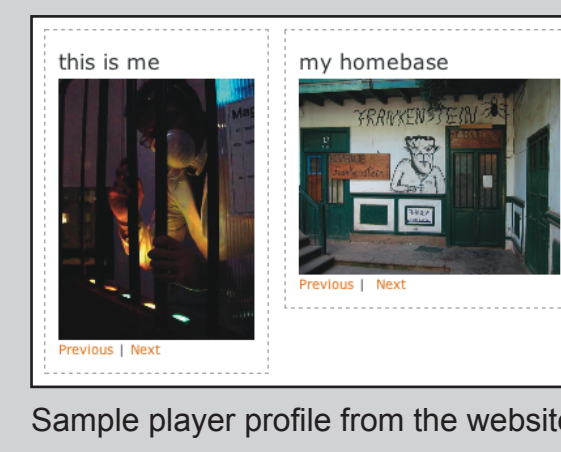|	
complexity	examine complex socio-technical practices
	focus on behaviors and attitudes rather than specific technologies
	game as proxy for discussion of wide-ranging concerns
difficulty of studying ubicomp 'in the wild'	novel technologies can be difficult and expensive to deploy for long periods
	usability concerns can derail social studies of new interfaces
	getting helpful observations requires moving past the short-term 'wow factor'
lightweight deployment	employ widely-used and familiar tools (digital cameras and websites)
	promote rapid and potentially far-reaching growth of player base
	examine overall patterns of technology use

how to play

1. Choose an intersection
2. Receive stunt elements
3. Organize your posse for support
4. Stage your stunt on the street
5. Upload photos to document
6. Defend your turf from other players

deployment

activity

Sample player profile from the website

80 registered players as of September 1, 2004

play will continue until January 2005

timeline

my posse

early June
friendly trials – six players
added 'posse' section to track player alliances

mid July
limited public release through posts to New York-centric email lists

September
'back to school' full public release

study

Ten in-person and telephone interviews

Two players shadowed from street to home

Analysis of website activity, comparing
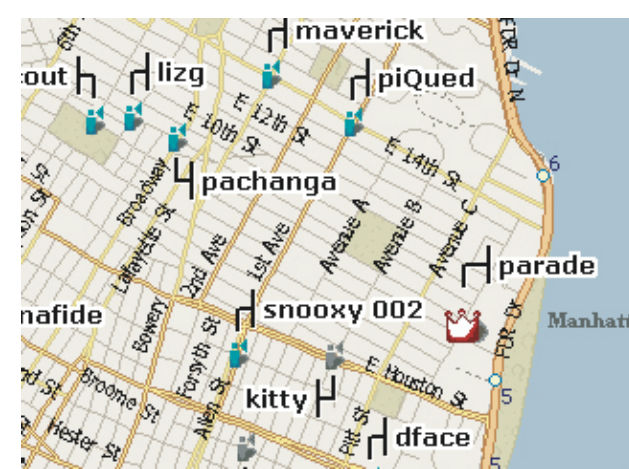players who simply browse the site
and those who initiate street game

surveillance/performance:
perceptions of audience in a hybrid environment

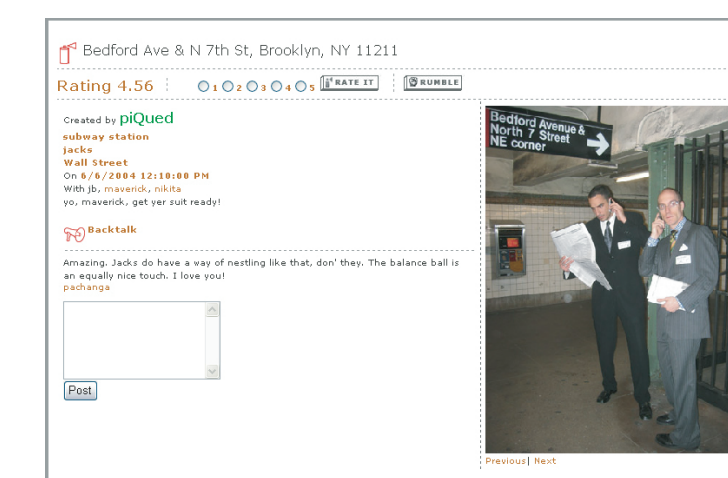|	**virtual visibility**	**physical visibility**
privacy and surveillance self-protection	**exposure** *Having my name plastered across the map doesn't appeal to me.* nikita **perceived audience** Existing on and offline social network / Strangers on the street and visiting the website **consequences** Player felt that name-based representation made her inappropriately visible online	**reputation** *I'll do it [the stunt] on the roof. That way no one I know will see me.* snooxey002 **perceived audience** Community members and clientele (player owns and runs a local bookstore) **consequences** Player feared endangering her professional standing within a small community
publicity and performance self-promotion	**applause** *I emailed a group of friends with it... I posted it on Friendster.* parade **perceived audience** Established and potential friends and contacts online **opportunities** Player used the game as a social excuse to broadcast her activities	**popularity** **perceived audience** Established friends and acquaintances **opportunities** Player used game as opportunity to create graphics for a party promotion

www.asphalt-games.net
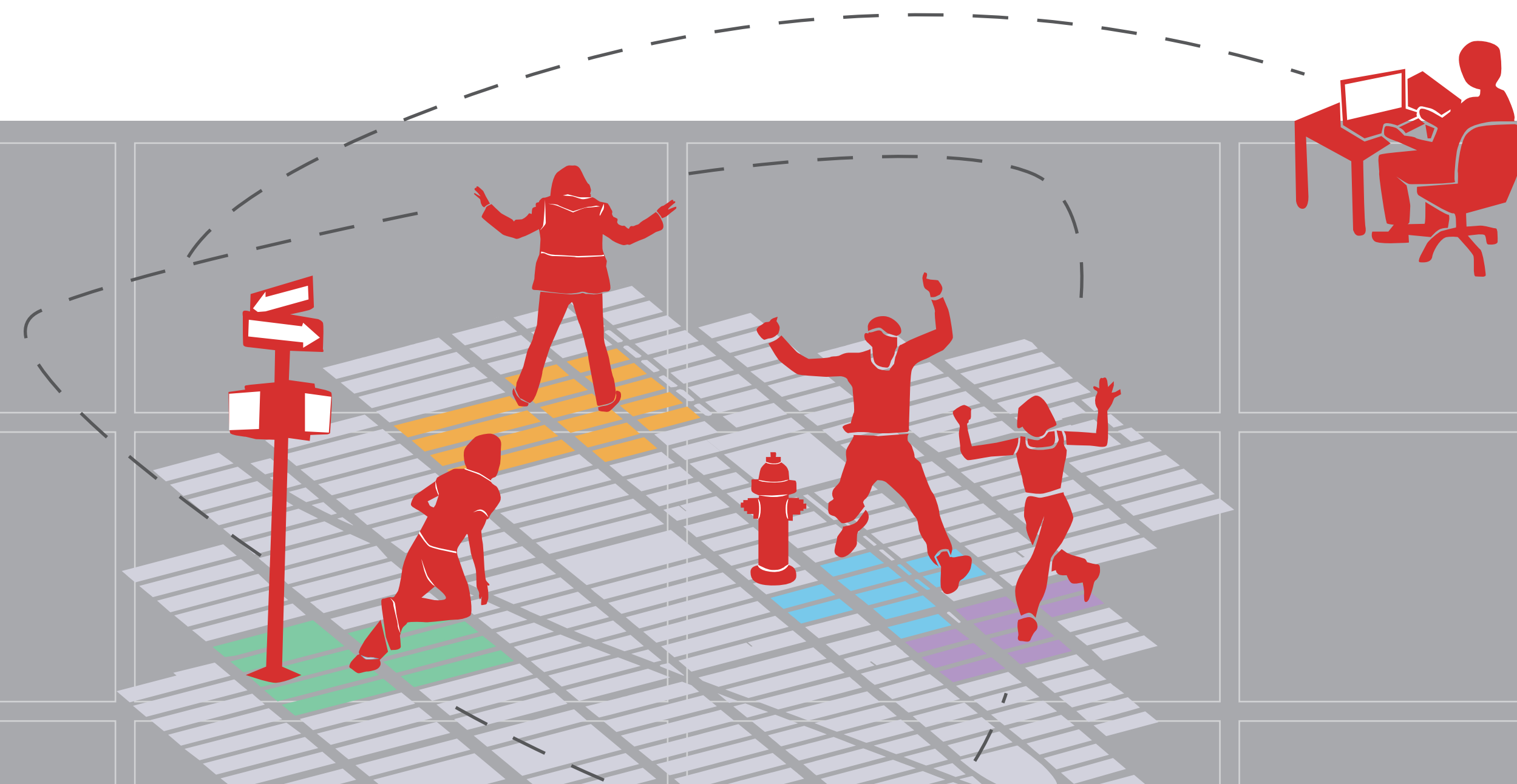
Michele Chang
Intel Research
michele.f.chang@intel.com

Elizabeth Goodman
confectious design
egoodman@confectious.net