AVANT GAME:
flexible structures / site-specific play

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SUPERHEROES!
SITE GAME:
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SITE-SPECIFIC
SUPERHEROES!

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SITE-SPECIFIC SUPERHEROES

• Who are the site-specific superheroes, and what are their superpowers?
**SITE-SPECIFIC SUPERHEROES**

- Who are the site-specific superheroes, and what are their superpowers?
- Where do they get their superpowers?
- Are they using them for good or for evil?

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SITE-SPECIFIC SUPERHEROES

• Who are the site-specific superheroes, and what are their superpowers?

• Where do they get their superpowers?

• Are they using them for good or for evil?

• And what is the structure of a Superhero Society?

HINT: Transformation and Play?...
HINT: Network-enabled play in public places

Pervasive Play:

The Big Urban Game (2003) by the Design Institute

Urban superhero gaming:

The Go Game (2001 - present) by Wink Back, Inc.
HINT: Network-enabled play in public places

Smart mobs:

Internet Guided Offline Recreation:
Geocaching (2003)
Michel de Certeau dedicates *The Practice of Everyday Life* to (20th century) heroes:

“To a **common hero**, a ubiquitous character walking in countless thousands on the streets. …”

“A multitude of quantified heroes who become the ciphered river of the streets, a mobile language of computations and rationalities that belong to no one.”
the *bricoleurs* and *flaneurs*:

- operate in everyday life
- are particularly visible on the urban landscape
- appropriate normative, built environments for personal ends
- create layers of stories and memories by traversing spaces

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interesting from a *play & games perspective*:

- “a challenging mobility that does not respect places is alternately playful and threatening…”
interesting from a play & games perspective:
   - “It makes room for a void. In that way, it opens up clearings; it ‘allows’ a certain play within a system of defined places. It authorizes the production of an area of free play.”

interesting from a network perspective:
   - heroes are highly “mobile” and constitute a “network”
   - create a “massive” and “pervasive” marginality
   - conduct an “exercise in ubiquity”
interesting from a network perspective:

→ mobile network technologies?
→ pervasive play and ubiquitous computing?
→ massively participatory events and interactions?

HEROES TO SUPERHEROES

super- pref.

• Above; over; upon: superimpose.
• Superior in size, quality, number, or degree: superfine.
• Exceeding a norm: supersaturate.
• Excessive in degree or intensity: supersubtle.

(www.dictionary.com)
In theory: *(de Certeau \(\rightarrow\) me)*

Linguistic \(\rightarrow\) Ludic

Power comes from seeing all \(\rightarrow\) Power comes from being seen by all

Space through stories \(\rightarrow\) Space through spectacle

In practice: *(hero culture \(\rightarrow\) superhero culture)*

Conspiracy theories \(\rightarrow\) conspiracies

Top secret intelligence \(\rightarrow\) collective intelligence

Massive strength \(\rightarrow\) massive parallelism
SITE-SPECIFIC SUPERHEROES

Who are the site-specific superheroes?

They are people who answer ringing payphones…

- alert and responsive to opportunities for (inter)action in their everyday environments
Who are the site-specific superheroes?

They are people who answer ringing payphones…

• alert and responsive to opportunities for (inter)action in their everyday environments

• favor location-specific, rather than mobile, engagement

… and then massively mobilize the data across space and time.
Who are the site-specific superheroes?

... and then massively mobilize the data across space and time.

- leave physical traces
- make cell phone calls
- send text messages
- blog
- upload files

... and what are their superpowers?
SITE-SPECIFIC SUPERHEROES

... and what are their superpowers?

• See through pre-determined structures
• Spontaneously generate more playful structures
... and what are their superpowers?

- See through pre-determined structures
- Spontaneously generate more playful structures
- Make the new structures clear and visible to others
- Create space for meaningful engagement with and within a physical environment
Where do they get their superpowers?

From the network.

(how *The Matrix*)
Where do they get their superpowers?

From the network.

(how *The Matrix*)

(but not really.)

• The power of social imagining
Where do they get their superpowers?

From the network.
(how *The Matrix*)
(but not really.)

• The power of social imagining

• Consensual reality, not consensual hallucination

Are they using their superpowers for good or for evil?

We need more data.
Are they using their superpowers for good or for evil?

We need more data.

• The Go Game
• Geocaching
• Flash Mob Supercomputing
AFTER THE GO GAME

BERKELEY GEOCACHE SUPERHERO

Berkeley Geocacher 2003
What is the structure of a Superhero Society?
What is the structure of a Superhero Society?

“Avant game”

before the game

The benefits of gaming:
(Clear objectives, methods for action and feedback)
What is the structure of a Superhero Society?

“Avant game”
before the game

The benefits of gaming:
(Clear objectives, methods for action and feedback)

With the flexibility of play:
(Subversive, spontaneous, collective)

WANTED: Partners in Crime

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