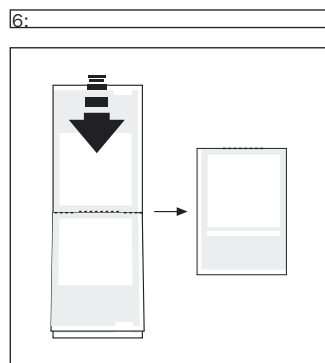
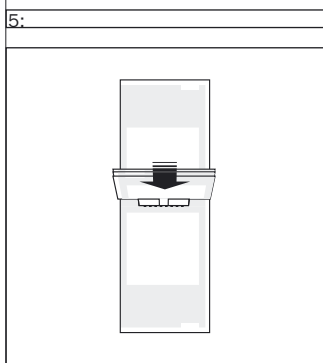
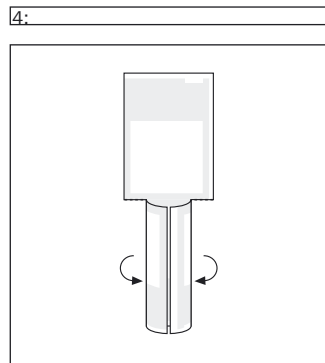
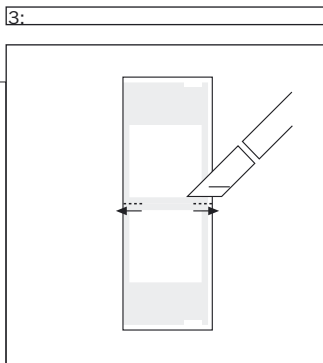
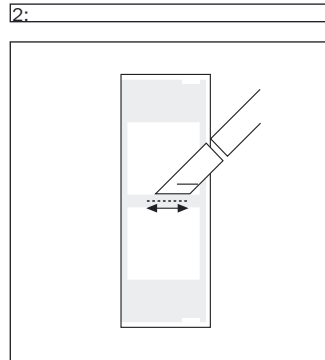
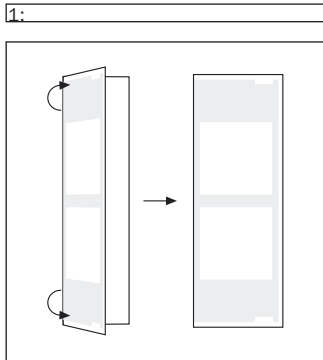


## Construction



- 1: First, fold each A4 sheet in half along the vertical axis.
- 2: Using a craft knife or scalpel, cut a horizontal slot along the centre dotted line of the first A4 sheet. (pages 1/2/13/14)
- 3: Then cut along the dotted lines on all the other sheets. Make sure to cut to the very edges of the paper.
- 4: Stack the folded sheets in ascending order with the even numbers at the top. Curl the bottom half of the second A4 page (pages 3/4/23/24).
- 5: Thread the curled page through the centre slot of the first A4 page. Repeat this process with the third (pages 5/6/21/22), fourth (pages 7/8/19/20), fifth (pages 9/10/17/18), and sixth A4 sheet (pages 11/12/15/16) with the even pages in ascending order.
- 6: When all the pages have been threaded through, check the pagination. Finally, fold the booklets in half along the horizontal axis.



The diversity of ethnic communities and nationalities may also mean that it is hard to find commonalities on which to instigate contact with those around you.

After a hard day at work, it is difficult to find the time and energy to take an active interest in the world outside of ones' front door. This is exacerbated by a lack of neutral public spaces in which people can congregate.

The perceived decline of neighbourliness in urban communities is salient and worrisome to many people. However, it is not so much that people do not want to be neighbourly, but that they lack the opportunities and the knowledge to do so.

At heart, it may be described simply as an interest and investment in the well-being of those around you.

Neighbourliness, like 'community', is an amorphous concept which can be characterised as much by the barriers preventing it as by the positive acts it inspires.

**Neighbourliness**

**URBAN TAPESTRIES**

**Bodystorming Experience  
Event Documentation**

**London School of Economics  
April 2004**

**DIFFUSION**





The event was facilitated by:  
 Alice Angus, Giles Lane, Sarah Thelwall & Nick West of  
 Proboscis with Victoria Peckett & Zoe Sujan (Media@LSE)

Will Davies, iSociety  
 Steve Dietz, Freelance Curator  
 Gordon Gow, Media@LSE  
 Kevin Harris, Community Development Foundation  
 Michelle Kent, Creative Partnerships Hull  
 Laurence Kovacocoy, France Telecom R&D  
 Joyce Majiski, artist, Canada  
 Graziano Milano, The Public  
 Sherrie-Lee Samuel, Ordnance Survey  
 Loz Wilson, Kingswood School, Hull

## Participants

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URBAN TAPESTRIES  
 Bodystorming Experience  
 Event Documentation  
 London School of Economics  
 April 2004  
 Documentation by Alice Angus, Giles Lane & Victoria Peckett  
 www.urbantapestries.net

## Introduction

Bodystorming events are part of Proboscis' ongoing research into the social and cultural uses of 'public authoring' via pervasive mobile technologies.

This event at the LSE explored issues of:

- \* neighbourliness
- \* social capital in the public commons
- \* community reportage

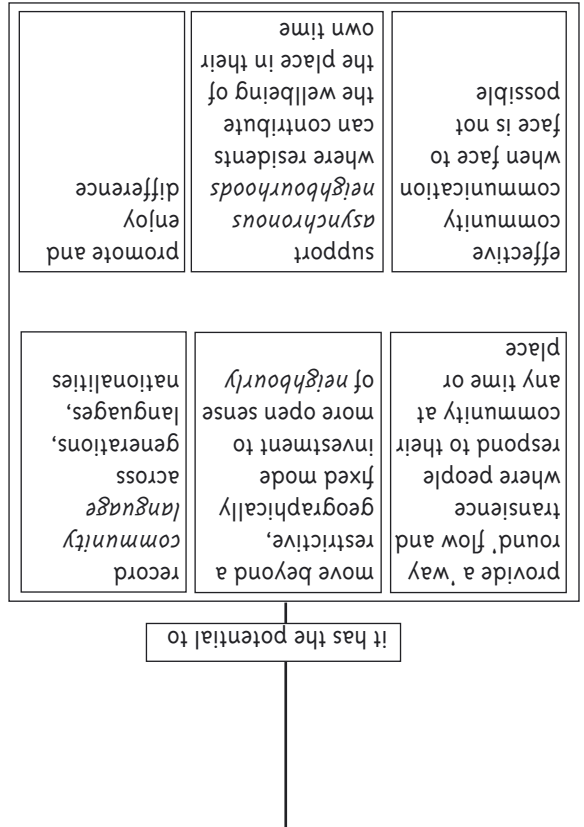
The participants came from civil society, technology research, creative, artistic and academic backgrounds — all interested in investigating the social and cultural potential of emerging mobile technologies in social situations.

This document captures a snapshot of the ideas, issues, problems and solutions raised during the event.

It maps how various boundaries, barriers and parameters of 'communities' were sketched out, and how participants began to imagine ways in which technologies like Urban Tapestries might be used to transcend boundaries and barriers within these contexts for social and cultural benefit.

The aim of the event was to begin to identify key issues with potential collaborators (as well as existing ones) and will feed into plans for the Social Tapestries research project.





**Parameters & Borders**

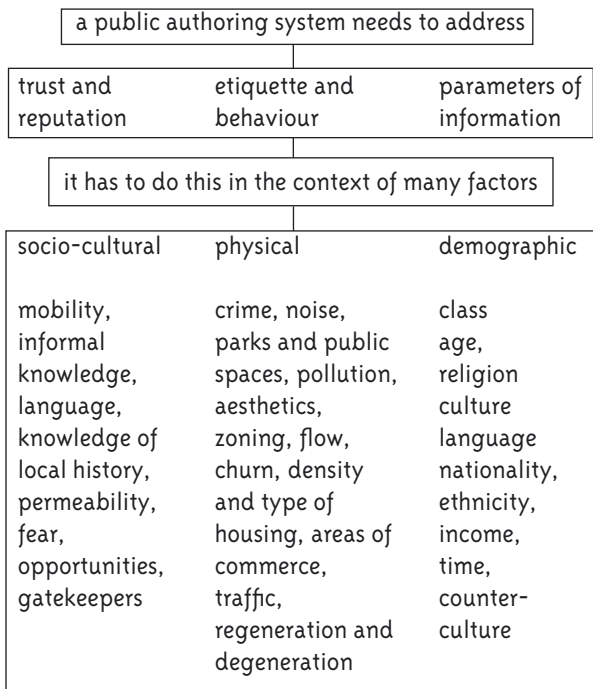
The idea of barriers creates a useful starting point from which to think about what it is that stops us from feeling part of a 'community' in an urban area.

Barriers can be both physical aspects of the geography of the area, and intangible factors such as age, nationality and income, that stop us from making contact with those around us.

However, 'barriers' can only take us so far: communities tend to define themselves as much by who they exclude as well as who they actively include. It is important to think within, between and across barriers in order to recognise that communities look inwards as well as outwards.

The most pervasive form of barrier to community in high density urban areas is that of their transience – the sense that the demographics of an area are constantly shifting. This, in turn, makes it hard to create durable forms of social capital around which people can coalesce.





**What does it mean to invest in a community?**  
 There are many different types and degrees of investment in a community, and Urban Tapestries is one way of moving beyond a restrictive, geographically-fixed mode of investment towards a more open sense of what it means to be 'neighbourly' or to possess social capital, centred around asynchronous contact.  
 The less this type of investment is downgraded in comparison to traditional, face-to-face contact, the more likely are urban residents to feel that they are included in a community, whether this means an area they live in, an area they pass through, or simply an area they enjoy spending time in.  
 What Urban Tapestries can offer is not neighbourliness, community or social capital in themselves, but the means and the opportunities for people to create their own conceptions of what these things might mean.

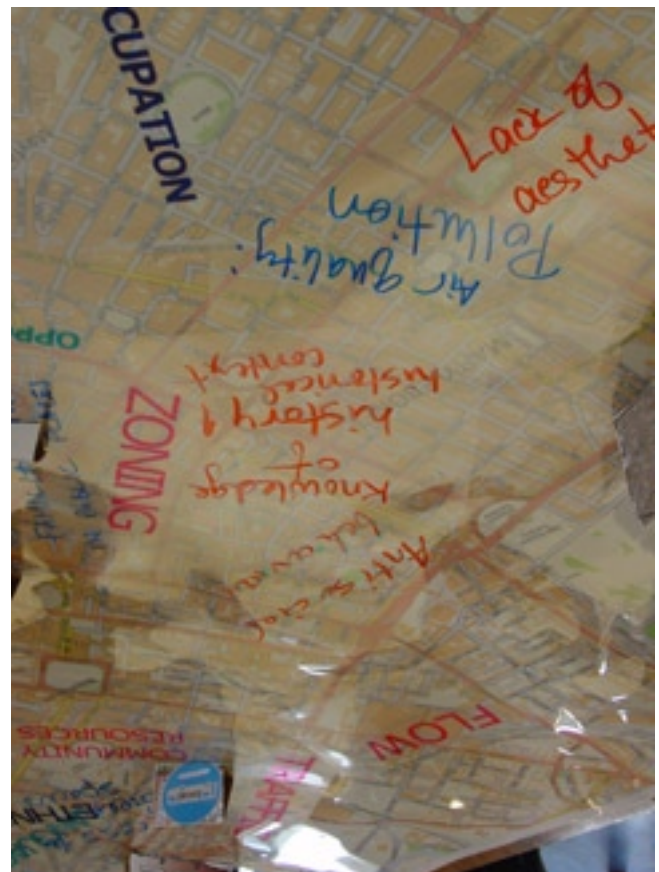
**Flow & Churn**

An important factor in feeling a rudimentary sense of 'community' is those familiar faces seen everyday in passing, who occasionally return our smile and lend a certain shape and routine to our travels through the city.

But how can we turn this passing familiarity into something more – into a sense of 'neighbourliness' – when faced with the high degree of transience and low incentive to invest in an area characteristic of many urban environments?

The asynchronicity of Urban Tapestries is one way round flow and transience because it gives people the chance to respond to the community in their own time, rather than making a demand on them which they are simply unable to meet in the course of a busy working day. It also allows them to put something back into an area in which they spend a lot of time but otherwise have little social investment in.

However, in some other areas it is not so much flow that is the problem but a lack of flow – in other words, a lack of permeability across very real, tangible barriers such as those that separate off rich 'gated' communities from the social housing on their doorstep, or the physical impassability of a major road like the Westway, which marks out an artificial boundary that limits possibilities for interaction in everyday life, what we are typifying as 'social knowledge'.





**What is a community?**

How does it hold together?

Does it need to hold together in a 'strong' sense or is a rudimentary sense of coming together around shared concerns enough?

The sense of community that Urban Tapestries can help to foster is built around the idea of effective communication. Without communication, it is difficult to discover what our common concerns are.

However, communication is not about allowing a single, unified social voice to dominate. It is, rather, about recognising and enjoying difference whilst enabling threads of connection to multiply.

Urban Tapestries would need to address the problem of multiple measures of authority and usefulness of the information by providing multiple layers on which people can communicate. The system would also need to be self-regulated to ensure that abuses were kept to a minimum - this is essential in order to preserve the anonymity of participants, which is necessary if they are to have the confidence to post information.

Each of these areas of reportage can enable a community to feel empowered - to define themselves rather than accept the definitions fostered upon them through 'official' channels such as the police and the media. This amounts to a recuperation of the community's image - both internally and externally - and a diffusion of the moral panics that often accompany urban life.

It should be broad enough to include storytelling, crime reporting, documentation of community concerns, communication between and across communities, and information about local events, services and history.

Community reportage can be considered as a form of news-gathering that is not dependent on mainstream media outlets.

**Community Reportage**

**Social Capital**

Social capital in the hands of urban planners and local councils is often an elite form of knowledge which is used to divide communities by displacing them and creating ghettos of activity.

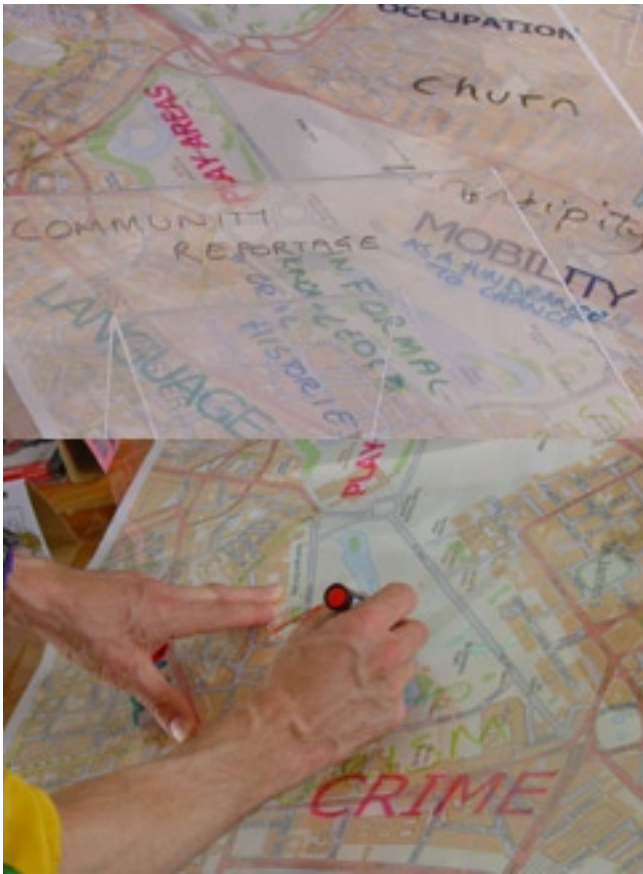
The concern of Urban Tapestries/Social Tapestries is to enable a community-wide dispersal of social capital, such that it is available as a force for binding people together across geographic, demographic and cultural barriers.

This dispersal is dependent upon the visibility and openness of forms of local knowledge and history. Providing residents of a community with access to a relevant, shared, informed database of local facilities is one part of this.

Equally, if not more, important, are those shared memories and experiences that tell of the character of an area, not just its structural makeup. Making these 'forgotten knowledges' available ensures that they are ready to be passed on to future generations and future residents.

Another aspect of social capital is a record of the 'community language', detailing the colloquialisms and idiosyncracies that emerge in the intersection of different generations, languages and nationalities.





**Neighbourliness (continued)**

Urban Tapestries cannot itself create the physical spaces needed to foster a sense of neighbourliness, but it can provide a useful tool for discovering shared interests and concerns. For those moving to a new area, it could provide an informal introduction service and a way of finding out about - or even setting up - community action schemes. Urban Tapestries also suggests the idea of 'asynchronous neighbourliness', whereby residents can contribute to the well-being of the neighbourhood in their own time.

**Social Capital (continued)**

During the course of the community's constant conversation with itself, this language will shift and evolve, as new participants come into the frame and others move on.

An acknowledgement of their contribution to the shape and character of the community may help to ward against feelings of exclusion and isolation among minority groups.

It is also important, however, to ward against new forms of exclusion arising from the dispersal of social capital itself, which, in its negative forms, could include accusatory gossip or derogatory stereotyping.

