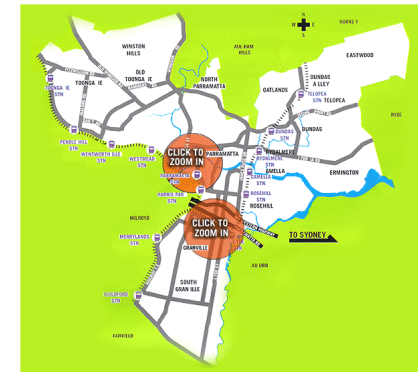


# Urban Space + Technology + Community +

**Linda Carroli**

This presentation is developed for educational purposes only. Much of the content about specific projects and organisations is sourced from the web.

Brisbane 2007



**Cultural organisations, urbanists and artists globally are investigating how communities can impact on and transform urban spaces and design through an engagement with new technologies.**

**The prevailing orthodoxy of planning and design, including creative city propositions, does not acknowledge technology as a factor in urban life and space. We live across mixed realities.**

**When we talk about typologies of public or youth space, we might want to consider the notions associated with information and communications technology – virtuality, mixed reality, locative ...**

**The presentation looks at only a few approaches, ideas and processes which have evolved through artistic engagements with technology and community. Some are founded on CCD.**

“through the development of new technologies, we are, indeed, more and more open to experience of de-realisation and de-localisation. But we continue to have physical and localised existences. We must consider our state of suspension between these conditions. In other words, the contemporary city, while housing vast arrays of telematic ‘entry points’ into the burgeoning worlds of electronic spaces, is still a meaningful place economically, socially and culturally.”

- Kevin Robins

What sort of planning and design practice can evolve?

What is the contribution of planning and design in the landscape of speed and light?

What are the new spaces?

### **Second Life**



### **Federation Square**



### **GE Flythrough Berlin**



**an idea to think about ...**

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realising the dream

**:: Proboscis (UK)**

**<http://www.proboscis.org.uk>**



**proboscis**

researching, developing and  
facilitating creative innovation

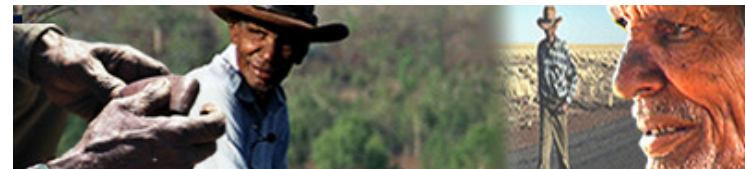
**:: The Container Project (Jamaica)**

**<http://www.container-project.net>**



**:: Feral Arts (Brisbane, Australia)**

**<http://www.feralarts.com.au>**



**:: Pixel Play (Adelaide, Australia)**

**<http://www.anat.org.au>**



**:: ICE (Sydney, Australia)**

**<http://http://www.ice.org.au>**



## :: Proboscis (UK)

**<http://www.proboscis.org.uk>**

Proboscis is an artist-led studio which combines artistic practice with commissioning, curatorial projects, design and consultancy. Collaboration is at the core of our creative practice and ethic: Proboscis works across disciplines and practices, working with associate artists, writers, curators, critics, designers, technologists, filmmakers, scientists and theorists to explore social, cultural and creative issues.

One of their key concepts is 'public authoring' – the everyday mapping and sharing of knowledge and experience by people about the places and spaces they live, work and play in. Proboscis develops tools, games and publications in both analogue and digital formats. Their work includes wearables, GPS and electronics.

Their work emphasises narrative and storytelling as “a living, everyday process that underpins how people co-create and inhabit culture and society”.

[http://socialtapestries.net/outcomes/Social\\_Tapestries\\_2006.mov](http://socialtapestries.net/outcomes/Social_Tapestries_2006.mov)



## Urban Tapestries

<http://urbantapestries.net/>

Urban Tapestries is an experimental software platform for knowledge mapping and sharing – *public authoring*. It combines mobile and internet technologies with geographic information systems to allow people to build relationships between places and to associate stories, information, pictures, sounds and videos with them. The platform has been redeveloped for the Social Tapestries project.



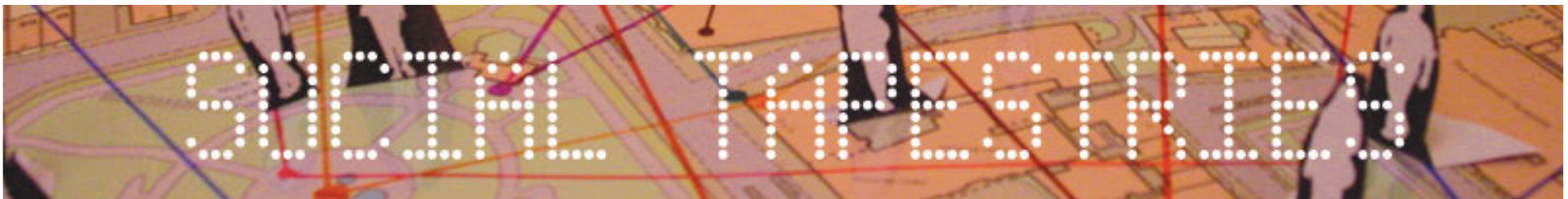


## Social Tapestries

<http://socialtapestries.net/>

Social Tapestries is a research program exploring the potential benefits and costs of local knowledge mapping and sharing, what we have termed the *public authoring of social knowledge*.

Proboscis is running a series of projects investigating the social and cultural benefits of public authoring (knowledge mapping and sharing). These playful and challenging experiments build upon the Urban Tapestries framework and software platform developed by Proboscis and its partners.



## Feral Robots

<http://socialtapestries.net/feralrobots/index.html>

Robotic Feral Public Authoring links together two branches of research for community fun and action. Hobbyist robotics and public authoring (knowledge mapping and sharing) both enable people to use emerging technologies in dynamic and exciting new ways. Brought together they open up whole vistas of possibilities for exploring our local environments with electronic sensors to detect all kinds of phenomena and map them using online tools.

**Technical specifications are available online. Please remember to read and respect the license for use.**

## Everyday Archaeology

Electronic sensors are now cheaply available for detecting a wide range of phenomena such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, solvent vapours, electro-magnetic emissions (mobile phone masts, electricity generators etc), light and noise pollution. These can be combined with other cheap electronics (such as toy robots) that engage people in evidence collecting in a fun and tactile way.

Adding the sensor readings to online mapping tools, such as Urban Tapestries, suddenly brings the relationships between environment and home vividly to life. It enables people to feel they can learn about their environment and have the evidence to do something about it. By linking robot building and mapping workshops into traditional community events (village fetes and local festivals etc) a wide range of people can become involved in gathering and sharing knowledge about their environment.

## **Scavenging**

Proboscis is now stepping away from higher end technologies like mobile phones. From their experience, these tools and platforms are not accessible and usually appeal to the higher end user. In this regard, there is a need to consider appropriate technologies.

Scavenging is providing a means of addressing this issue. For their Snout project they are “scavenging free online mapping and sharing technologies as forms of guerilla public authoring”.

This means they are accessing and using existing tools in order to develop their projects and work within the broader frame of ‘user-generated content’, social networking and content sharing.

We’ll return to this with some resources ...

## **The Container Project**

**<http://www.container-project.net>**

The Container Project is located in Jamaica. It is a project run in conjunction with the UK group Mongrel via mervin Jarman.

Mongrel is an internationally recognised artists group specialising in digital media. We have an international reputation for our pioneering arts projects, including the first on-line commission from the Tate Gallery London and work in the permanent collections of the Pompidou Centre Paris and the Centre for Media Arts in Karlsruhe (ZKM). Combined with this we usually work with marginalised peoples who are on low incomes, socially excluded and cultural minorities. We do this by helping people to do things for themselves, creating community software and digital arts based projects that we then promote to a state of high visibility through our international network of arts connections. The groups gain a visible voice, self reliance, self confidence and informal training allowing them to get a foot hold into mainstream training, education, culture and the economic life most of us take for granted. We currently have projects running with the Congolese community in London, the Container Project in Jamaica and have helped many groups in South African Townships, the Sarai Centre in New Delhi, the Suriname community of Amsterdam and many others.

<http://www.mongrelx.org>

# Meanwhile in Jamaica ... a community without borders

Index Document - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Address <http://www.container-project.net/> Go Norton AntiVirus







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**The Big Tree is DEAD  
Let Us Save The Pond  
Preserving our Environment  
Keeping Jamaica Beautiful**



**The Container Project is a Not For Profit Community Access Space to Computers and Emerging Technology**



*If You Would Like to Visit the Container Contact Us* | POWERED BY

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**Cross Wired**  
whats on in Cross  
A quick Look  
@ Where to Go  
& What to Do  
in Palmer's Cross



WALK, RIDE AND DRIVE WITH CARE

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## **The Container**

### **DIY, Media Workshops, Digital Storytelling & more ...**

The Container is a mobile workstation existing primarily to provide simplified access to information technology about topics that are distributed over a number of different applications. Some fifteen plus computers and other equipment in the specially converted container will form the core of a roving multimedia center.

The Container will work with local and international collaborators and artists to produce a series of multimedia workshops. At the most basic level the Container will function as a link to new media resources; at a more advanced level it will provide considerable added value and training to the existing workforce and a resource for information and communication source information.

The project will also be collecting donated computers to set up a series of multimedia workshops in communities that the Container will be visiting across Jamaica extending the prospect of free access and continuous connectivity with the project and facilitation groups around the world. The main objectives of these workshops are to facilitate the idea of alternative networking between the Caribbean islands and the rest of the world. Creating a Do-It-Yourself medium through the use of computers and new technology.

Artist Camille Turner is an artist in residence who works on digital storytelling projects. Some of these are available online. Follow the links ...

## **Feral Arts**

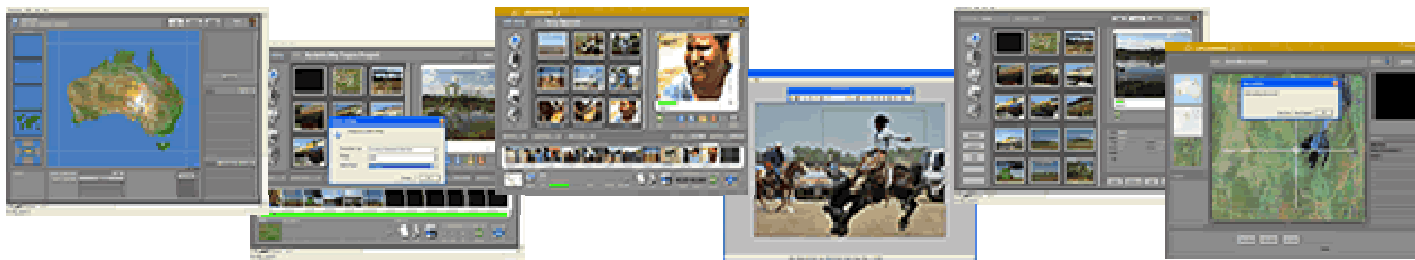
**<http://www.feralarts.com.au>**

Feral Arts is a cultural development organisation based in Brisbane. Founded on CCD, Feral Arts has developed practice, research and collaboration intended to engage community, media and ideas.

For Feral Arts community cultural development is about putting cultural development into community hands. Our programs help to build inclusive, sustainable and creative communities. Our approach combines long-term local partnerships with a focus on research, innovation and new technologies. We act as go-betweens - linking the cultural interests and experiences of people on a local level with key government decision makers and business stakeholders.

Feral Arts has a history and folio of projects focused on young people, urban space, rural and regional communities, natural resources, Indigenous communities and intercultural dialogue.

One of their ongoing projects is PlaceWorks, software designed for databasing digital storytelling integrating maps.



## **Current Project Q150 – Place Stories**

<http://www.q150.qld.gov.au/concepts/feralarts.shtm>

Interactive web stories of Queensland people and places will form a jigsaw puzzle comprising tessellations featuring landscapes, stories, traditions and cultural milestones of individual communities. A program called digital place stories which has been engineered by Feral Arts will be used. This program will be released mid 2008.

Place Stories is a software program and online database being developed by Brisbane community cultural development and media group, Feral Arts.

This site hosts some sample stories and projects created with the PlaceStories software in demonstration projects in Brisbane and Dalrymple Shire, north Queensland. The focus in these projects is on involving schools, local government, natural resource management and traditional owner groups in the development of a shared online community history database.

Place Stories is a tool for managing digital media, creating lightweight digital stories and publishing to the internet. The software uses a digital map server such as google maps to interface an online database of stories and projects.

Work in progress online at <http://www.placestories.com/>



Place Stories - Project View Page - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Refresh Print Mail Stop

Address [http://www.placestories.com/app/project\\_view\\_5.php?id=500](http://www.placestories.com/app/project_view_5.php?id=500) Go Norton AntiVirus

**placestories** Demonstration Site Get macromedia FLASH PLAYER This site requires Flash Player 8 or higher

Place Stories About Contact

**Stories**

Water Testing on Glen Lofty

**Globe > Australia > Queensland > Dalrymple Shire > On Common Country**

On Common Country Project

Map Satellite Hybrid

Undara Volcanic Nat'l Park

POWERED BY Google Map data ©2007 MapData Sciences Pty Ltd, PSMA - Terms of Use

**Project Info** Stories Attachments Members

**'On Common Country'**

Gugu Badhun are one of the Aboriginal traditional owner groups with ties to the Dalrymple region....

**Region:** Dalrymple Shire  
**Created:** 11/12/2006 00:00  
**Created By:** Developer

Gugu Badhun are one of the Aboriginal traditional owner groups with ties to the Dalrymple region. In recent years some Gugu Badhun people have made the move from coastal centres to visit, live and work back on country. On Common Country explores some of these experiences, and the common connections different people have with places. Some have gained employment in the mining industry. The work is based on the belief that many different people have significant histories tying them the same places, and everyone of them now share the responsibility of looking after the land and the environment. Place Stories aims to enable each of the various layers to be recorded and shared.

Done Internet

start Microsoft Word Place Stories - Projec... Microsoft PowerPoint ... Adobe Photoshop EN 3:50 PM

## **Pixel Play**

**<http://www.anat.org.au>**

Pixel Play is initiated by the Australian Network for Art & Technology. Pixel Play is a digital arts education program that engages young artists in creative practice through the use of everyday technologies to make creative screen content for the mobile phone screen.

Over the past 18 months the program has delivered workshops and mentoring to over 200 young artists (13 -22 years old) from over 200 schools in both metropolitan and regional SA with major programs have been running in Whyalla, Port Lincoln and Adelaide.

Pixel Play Producer is Sasha Grbich, an emerging artist, writer and producer, who engages installation and screen based work. Sasha loves bluetooth and has been known to send mobile artwork to random strangers on trains and buses.

Go the ANAT website, click on Projects and find the Pixel Play blog.



## **Information & Cultural Exchange**

**<http://www.ice.org.au>**

Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) is a dynamic community, cultural, information technology and arts organisation working across the Greater Western Sydney region in New South Wales, Australia.

ICE manages SWITCH, Western Sydney's state-of-the-art multimedia and digital arts access centre. ICE produces the critical publication and online resource *Artfiles, the Arts Directory for Western Sydney*. ICE has expertise and success in developing new media, Community Cultural Development, professional development and arts programs that access thousands of individuals, artists and communities annually. ICE also works with community groups, governments and local infrastructures such as libraries on innovative programs aimed at broadening community access and capacity in information and communications technology (ICT) in order to bridge the digital divide.

## Parramappa

<http://www.ice.org.au/parramappa>

Phase II of Parramappa—an online photo-map of Parramatta created by young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds during Youth Week 2005—went online in November 2005.

As part of the update to the Parramappa site, the young digital content creators visited places of interest around Granville and Harris Park, took pictures, wrote about their connection to those places and returned to Switch to add their new content to the site. Parramappa is an initiative of the Engaging Communities Project at ICE.

Also look at ICE's projects and programs. They work within the community to develop media and ICT capacity as well as intercultural dialogue and cultural forms:

Emerge Media Initiative

Connect Out

Shifa: Agents of Change

Originate



## **Scavenging ... A whole lot of possibilities**

Increasingly the networks of the internet and mobile technology are weaving an open authoring environment. We know and experience urban space with technology in tow – it is on us, with us and around us. We mark out old and new territories and social spaces with this technology.

The Open Source and Free Media network is thriving and prolific. Never before has media been so accessible and content so immediate. However, remember, the bigger content sharing sites (eg YouTube) do impose restrictions on your content while taking liberties for themselves – just check the terms.

Some options include:

Bloggging, videobloggging, mobloggging, wiki, mobzine

YouTube, Google video, video sharing

Flickr, photo sharing

Google Maps, GIS, GPS, Google Earth, Frappr, community/social mapping, fly through

Syndication, podcasting, mobcasting

Mobs, locative media, wireless, cross platforms

Mash ups, digital storytelling, social bookmarking

## DIY

There are other technologies that interact with the city. Hobby electronics can produce interesting and engaging results, as Proboscis' work with hacked toys and sensors demonstrates.

Find out more at Instructables at <http://www.instructables.com>. Search toy hack. Potentially interesting projects to undertake as part of events management and development.

An example of 'electronic graffiti' is the Throwie. LED Throwies are an inexpensive way to add color to any ferromagnetic surface in your neighborhood. A Throwie consists of a lithium battery, a 10mm diffused LED and a rare-earth magnet taped together. Throw it up high and in quantity to impress your friends and city officials.

See video online at: [http://graffitiresearchlab.com/?page\\_id=6](http://graffitiresearchlab.com/?page_id=6)



**You will find most of the specs, instructions and other info you need online.**

“The role that architects, landscape architects, and urbanists can play in [the] ongoing material/virtual infrastructural transformation is an important one. By understanding that the process of urban renewal spawned by this relationship, certain new strategies can be developed. For instance, by understanding that consumer activity on the internet is going to increase ten-fold over the next several years, architects could develop new typologies to reutilize the large retail behemoths on the edges of our cities that are going to be outdated or superceded within the next decade. Retail centers (malls) that may be designed to accommodate both actual customers and the shipping/storage needs of on-line retailers could replace the outdated structures allowing them to be turned into housing, community centers, schools, etc. for underprivileged groups. Likewise, many railway yards in important urban centers around the globe are under-utilized at present, and their role in the city needs to be rethought. What new landscapes could emerge in their place? It may still be possible yet to fulfil the promise of actually decreasing the gap between the rich and the poor by reclaiming the landscapes for the needs of our lower classes. However, designers must understand how and why these changes are taking place as well as how to re-envision their usage within the ever-changing modern urban realm. In other words, ask the questions surrounding the potential of transforming urban space through the reuse of those infrastructural parts that technology has made redundant. It is in this way, that innovative urban forms can be visualized that react to actions in virtual space while reinvigorating forgotten ones in the material realm.”

- Michael Jenson

**THANK YOU!**



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Cultural writer, editor, researcher and consultant. Current interests include creative industries and urbanism. Currently Chair of Australian Network for Art and Technology and representative on the Ministerial Regional Community Forum for Greater Brisbane. Previous work has involved the following:

- Consulting - community consultation as well as strategic and business planning applying futures thinking, design thinking, non-linear thinking and systems thinking
- Management, governance, business development and administration
- Cultural program development and delivery including new media art, public art/space and CCD
- Cultural writing, criticism and publishing
- Marketing, market research and communications
- Research and Editing across print and digital media
- Project Design, Planning and Management
- ICT planning and development including digital content management and production
- Training, mentoring and tutoring
- Intercultural communication and awareness
- Specialised interests in visual art and craft, new media art, writing, heritage, public space and social history
- Past & Current involvements in the housing, planning and community development field