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Introduction
Interaction design is increasingly situated beyond the desktop and demands new approaches, if it is made for Urban Space. Public and semi-public spaces add new challenges in terms of interaction theory, technology and sociology. SMSlingshot is an interactive urban installation (also named a Shared Encounter) and research vehicle that helps to explore these new challenges.

Theory
Orchestrating the elements of Shared Encounters needs special sensitivity.

Performer
active role. One or more performers may be in control of the content, ‘flow’ and ‘pace’.

Participant
a former performer with knowledge about the installation.

Observer / Spectator
engaged with content. Neither actively manipulating it nor interacting with performers.

Bystander
has no strong interest in the installation and its content.

Environment
often linked to the context. Many technologies work well in the lab, but don’t cope well with dynamics of urban space.

Context
social, cultural and conceptual placement. E.g. festival, travel, commuting context, temporal, historical, political aspects ...

Technology
built to shoot personal messages to media façades. Wooden case equipped with ultra-high frequency radio, microprocessor, laser and batteries, phone-sized wooden and leather keypad.

Informal Observations
Observers and bystanders can easily infer what is happening from cues: shape of the interaction device, visual appearance of the coloured splat, gesture of the performer, the affordance of the device, simulated physical behaviour.

Stepping in the performance space means pressure for the performer, but like Brignull & Rogers(4) also observed, composing a message in a semi-hidden way seems to take the pressure away.

Future Work
Currently it is unclear how the environment and context influences the installation’s meaning and if there are environmental or contextual patterns that can be designed upon.

My future work will investigate the role of the environment and context to find out how to integrate human computer interaction tightly to the urban space.

References:

Patrick Tobias Fischer