Urban Tapestries is a framework for understanding the social, cultural, economic and political implications of pervasive location-based mobile and wireless systems. To investigate these issues, we are building an experimental location-based working platform to allow people to access and author location-referenced content (text, audio and pictures). It is a forum for exploring and sharing experience and knowledge, for testing and generating experimental issues of public presence in the geography of the city.

Urban Tapestries allows people to author their own virtual extensions of the city, enabling a community's collective memory to grow organically, allowing ordinary citizens to embed social knowledge in the new world of pervasive location-based mobile and wireless systems. People will be able to add new locations, location content and the "threads" which link individual locations to local contexts, which are accessed via handheld devices such as pagers and mobile phones.

Urban Tapestries was conceived, initiated and is being developed by Proboscis. It is a partnership withNotEmpty and research labs, Orange and the London School of Economics in collaboration with France Telecom R&D, Locaweb and the Honourable Artillery Company. The project has been funded by the Department of Trade and Industry, Arts Council England and the Daniel Langlois Foundation for the Arts, Science and Technology.

In recent years the dominant metaphor for pervasive location-based services has been a commercial one which positions people merely as consumers of pre-authored content and not as co-creators of the information embedded within the wireless environment, not merely as consumers of pre-authored content.

Proboscis is an organization based on creative innovation – researching, developing and designing projects and research that cross boundaries and disciplines through our research programs. Take Social Authoring: Urban Tapestries seeks to produce projects for people to author their own virtual extensions of the city, making ordinary citizens the co-creators of the information embedded within the wireless environment, not merely as consumers of pre-authored content.

The project has an experimental nature and seeks to inform and influence the way people are able to embedded social knowledge within the wireless environment. The project also aims to develop a framework for testing our own assumptions and pre-conceptions about public authoring and social knowledge – about what happens when ideas become technologies, practices, and methodologies. Bodystorming allows us to open up an area of open and coercive experimentation, where all the participants are responsible for their experiments as much as for its results.

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