



Special Characteristics of cyberspace

Konstantina Vasiliki Iakovou, Architect,
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki,
Thessaloniki, Greece



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme





Physical space :

Source : http://www.photoatlas.com/pics02/pictures_of_panama_19.html
(19/11/2011)

From the beginning of the mankind, the physical space and the mental space are the background of human activities.

People form communities and also arrange the space they lived in creating villages and then cities (physical space).

On the other hand, they create a very personal image of the space they live in. This image is unique for every person and is related mainly to his/her own personality. A person's specific way of thinking and the traces of his/her personality can form the mental space.



Mental space :

Source : <http://jeffhurtblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Brain.jpg>
(19/11/2011)



After the invention of telephone and radio, the first electronic devices that extended the human activity field, the parameter of time entered the human daily life.

With the use of phone one could communicate with another no matter how close to each other they were. With the use of radio, informations were broadcasted simultaneously to various places and to a wider audience.

As soon as the electronic media were widespread, the distances were diminished and the time became relevant.



Source : www.google.com19/11/2011)

Because of the enormous development and use of electronic devices, the landscape of human activities has changed.

This phenomenon nowadays is more intense. The relativity of place and time have created a new temporal-spatial contexts, in which people act.



Source : www.google.com19/11/2011)

The new electronic media (smartphone, laptop, television etc) have eliminated space and distance. Nowadays human activity exists also in digital media – in datascares which belong to the space of networks.



The rise of a new temporal spatial context demands a new spatial division. Derrick de Kerckhove suggest a system of three spatial conditions: the physical space, the mental space and the space of networks (digital space, space of networks,virtual space).

The third spatial category consists of all the utilities that combine the physical and mental space with the digital space. Significant examples of these categories are social networking sites, online games, digital museums etc. These spatial objects are based on the shrink of space and time on a screen. The certain spatial boundaries are diminished, creating more fluid environments. In other words, the environment in which a person acts has changed. Nowadays, people live in a new land-scape, the datascape.



Datascape is :

- an information – containing scenery.
- the background for all the internet and www supported activities
- the information is emitted with different types of data: images, sounds, videos, texts etc.
- it is not a stable scenery – it is continually expanding and changing
- it is affected by its users and its surroundings – direct linkages
- it can never stand alone



The networked space can be the new field of activity for the new kind architecture that arises, the architecture of connectivity (Derrick de Kerckhove). Its alphabet is the dyadic system, its structure is textual and it consists of cyberspace, virtual reality and digital architectural environments.

Agger defines cyberspace as a mass of social relationships.
This mass functions as a meeting point:

of the self with the community,
of the personal with the public,
of the consciousness with the social identity.

It is a new kind of public space in which some features are always accessible to everybody. Simultaneously though, there is a space related wholly to a subject creating a totally personalized identity.

In other words, it is a public and private space at the same time.

When public and private spaces penetrate one another, all the boundaries between the subject and the world are liquefied.



Physical space and virtual space can be thought as urban/social forms of space because both contain the notion of interaction and forming of communities. In physical world people interact and form communities. This also happens in space of networks within certain frameworks.

Being enrolled into a community (whether it is in physical space or in space of networks) means that its members have some common interests, common elements of their identity.

One of the most interesting aspects of one's identity is his/her gender.

People interacting



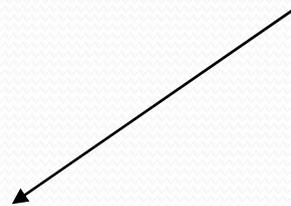
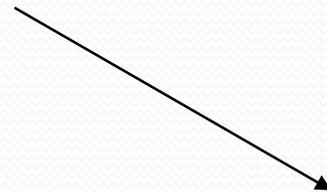
Community –
cluster



Personality: a complex
system of interests



Member in more than one
communities according to individual
interests

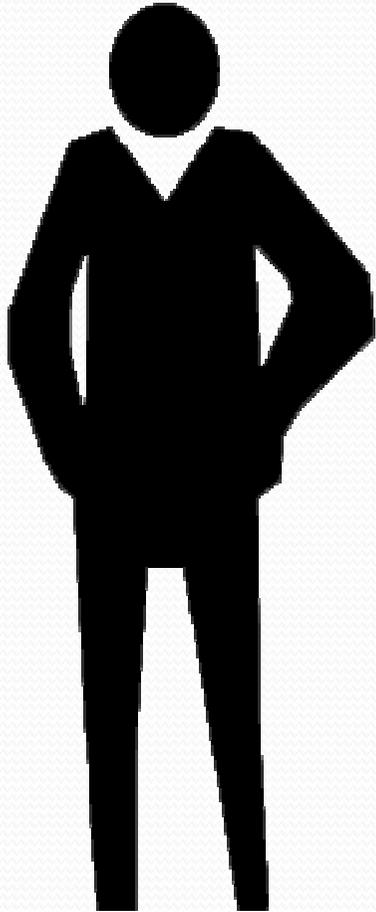


Interconnection of existing communities -
clusters

Communities - clusters
interacting



Social networks

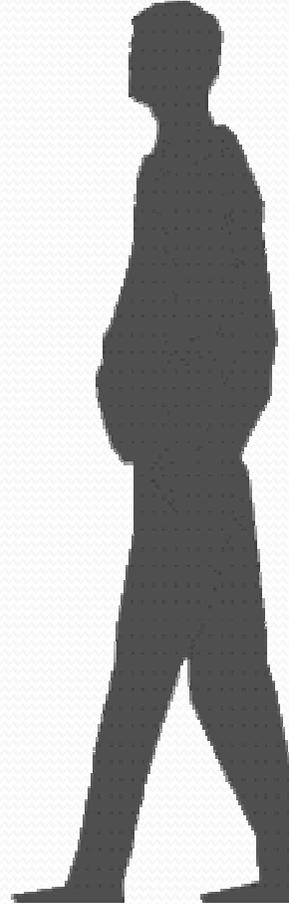


I
d
e
n
t
i
t
y

i
n

a

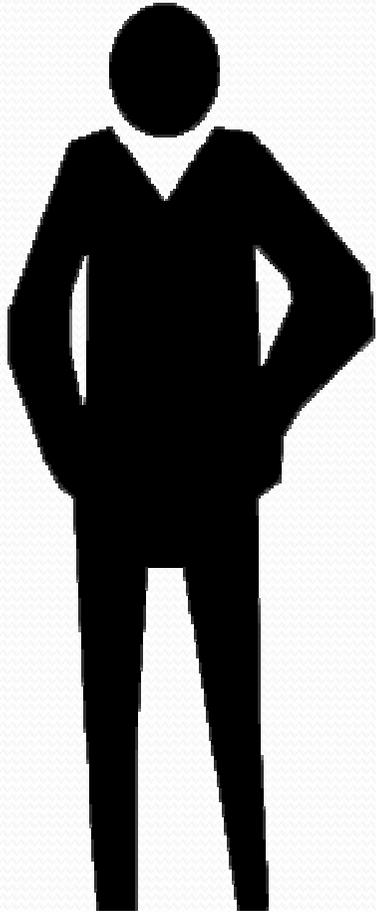
d
a
t
a
s
c
a
p
e



In order to enter a certain community one should accept and behave according to certain rules. The code is the law.

Identity: specific characteristics of oneself.

Profile: a summary or collection of information, especially about a person

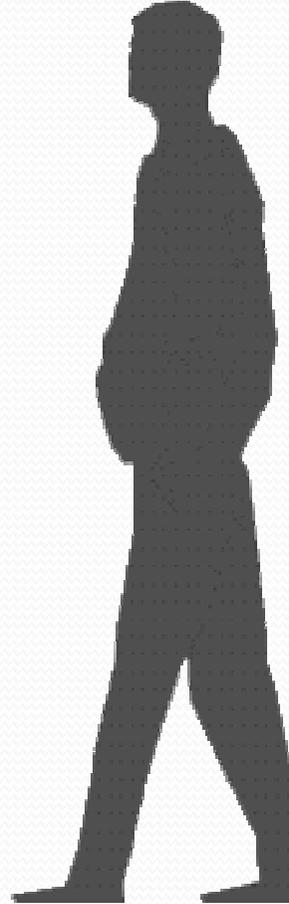


I
d
e
n
t
i
t
y

i
n

a

d
a
t
a
s
c
a
p
e



- In a form of a profile, a side view representation. Datascape communities are strongly developed around a specific area of interest.
- Maybe true data maybe not – use of nicknames or false country or name are same ways of retaining anonymity in a datascape. Not an objective projection of somebody's self. Everyone wants to see but not to be seen.
- Negative aspects of somebody's identity can easily be hidden by presenting the most interesting aspects, a kind of controlled projection is arranged.
- Open to a restricted group of users or many times to everybody.
- Not a static projection, can be altered easily in any case.
- To become a member of a specific community different info are sometimes required.

Textual creation of ones identity

Experiences inside and outside body

Decentralization of personality



Multiple character

Complex nature



Bibliography

- Derrick de Kerckhove, *The architecture of intelligence*, Birkhauser, 2001, Switzerland
- Maria Luisa Palumbo, *New wombs electronic bodies and architectural disorders*, Birkhauser, 2000, Switzerland
- Neil Leach, *Designing for a digital world*, Willey academy, West Sussex, 2002
- Paola Gregory, *Newscapes – territories of complexity*, Birkhauser, Switzerland 2003
- Borries, Friedrich von, *Space, time, play – computer games architecture and urbanism*
- Allen, Stan, *Points + lines, diagrams and projects for the city*
- Hayles K., *Chaos Bound*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1999
- Mitchell W., “*The city of bits*”, MIT Press (eds), MIT, 1996
- Barzon F., “*The charter of Zurich, Eisenman, De Kerckhove, Saggio*”, Birkhauser (eds) , Switzerland, 2003

(Some of the work presented is part of work done during the lesson SUDS in Technical University of Berlin at the summer semester of 2008)