

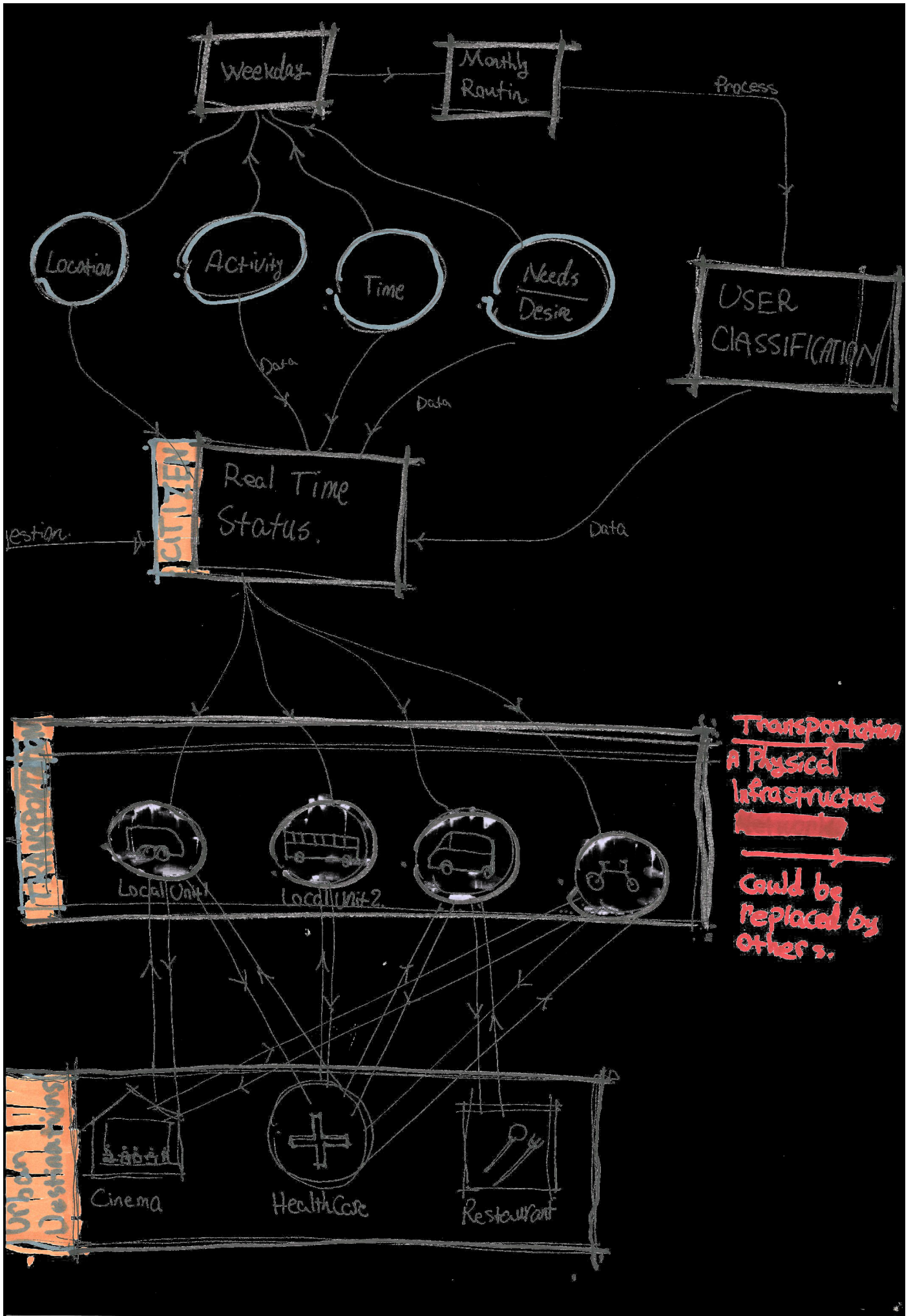
Experiments

This research started with joining specific social values with various technological concepts. The primary aim was to ask and imagine, how would that be possible, if the future technologies in cities work for social good? While humans are surrounded by artificial intelligence and big data, what do these offer to all people in cities? The first step was designing an abstract model to frame the question in a better way.

1. Smart Management

The design was based on computational urban networks such as Uber. The choice of studying Uber was because of its success and pervasiveness around the world as a private large scale urban infrastructure. Uber benefits from its innovative surge pricing technology in which rates are being determined not only based on distances but also based on weather condition, number of available drivers and passengers who seek a taxi. Subject of transportation was not an important factor, rather understanding the mechanism was important. This abstract design was based on a concept of manipulating surge pricing in order to offer a personalized pricing based on background of user's personal life activities and transportation patterns: whoever is less privileged, would receive better prices if they would accept the offers of the system. This system is self-initiative in finding destinations and activities for passengers. So it was not only a transportation system, but also a life supporter which cares about quality and quantity of user's activities. The model was attached to a scenario for particular imaginary users. This early experiment shaped to ask a question, «Is merely changing the goal of such systems enough to enhance their functionality for middle class?»

Using this abstract design lead to following contemporary city management models to have a better understanding of them. While the main raised problem regarding these models have been on their top down approach discussed in the last chapter, the research moved towards investigating bottom up approaches as a response to this debate.



2. Smart Communication Platform

The second design experiment, moves from «management» to «communication». Inspired by case studies and related critical literature review, this design frames some issues for further analysis and evaluation. The piece is a fictional newspaper which is called «Station Daily News». This newspaper which is automatically updating and generating content, specifically produces content related to daily activities and events of stations. However, there is another platform behind it, which let people to have an opportunity to individually appear on the news. The issues that it is framing are:

Close observation of events and activities which are not usually hot news
Accessibility of communication platforms
Remote communication

The fact that how this newspaper is generating its content has not been explored. The details of the design are intentionally left to be vague and abstract, since the goal has been merely visualizing some concerns. Even the medium-a text based news source-has been used just as a tool in this regard.

STATION DAILY NEWS

www.dailynews.com THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER .Since 2017

PARIS-BUFFALO



Lorem Ipsum In libris graecis appetere mea. At vim odio lorem omnes, pri id iuaret partiendo. Vivendo menandri et sed. Lorem volumus blandit cu has. Sit cu alia porro fuisse.

Ea pro natum invidunt repudiandae, his et facilis vituperatoribus. Mei eu ubique altera senserit, consul eripuit accusata has ne.

In libris graecis appetere mea. At vim odio lorem omnes, pri id iuaret partiendo. Vivendo menandri et sed.

Case Study - Alien Staff

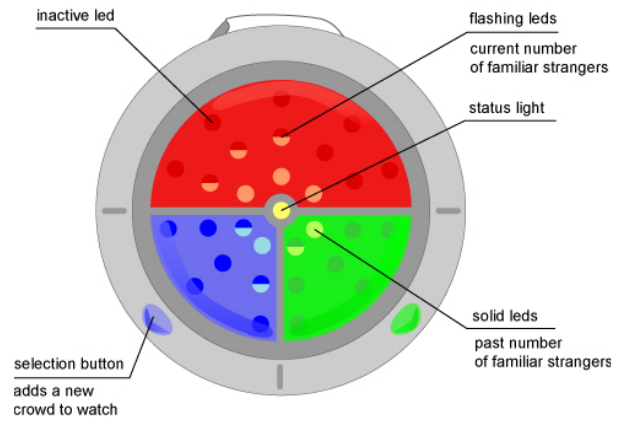
Moving on from top down approaches lead to focusing on local solutions, understanding people and focus on communication. The first case study in this area is «Alien Staff». In “Alien Stuff,” an art project by Krzysztof Wodiczko, the instrument is a story telling platform for immigrants who are separated from society. A prerecorded video at the top, with a loudspeaker and some objects in the middle of handheld device, together help its operators (immigrants) to broadcast their stories of difficulties to the others (Wodiczko 1992). The project criticizes the situation of segregated people and their inability to communicate with others. «Alien Staff» does not attempt to solve any solution but tries to turn the attentions towards a problem. This strategy stands as opposed to solutionist problem solving approaches discussed before.

While Alien Staff deals with a very close point of view to the current research (segregation of a specific group), finding the problem and introducing that through a tool, is one of the key reasons that this project's approach has been important.



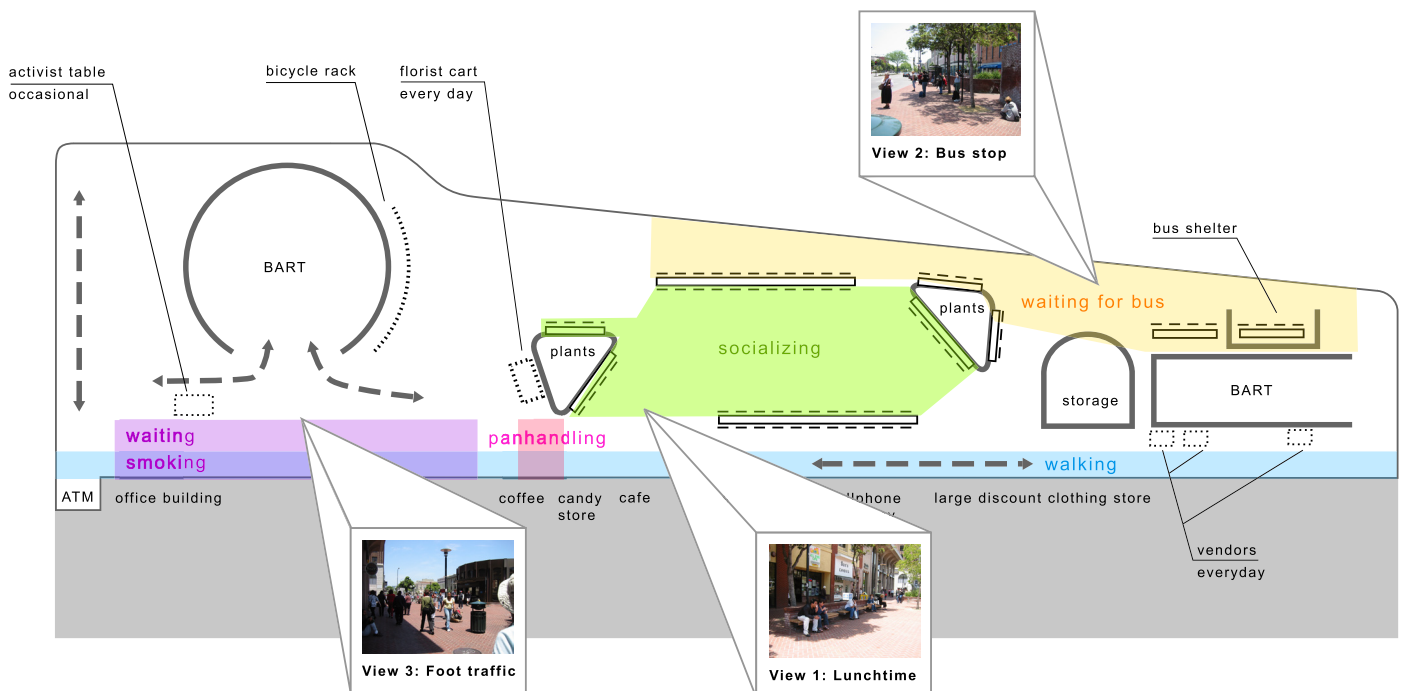
Case Study - Familiar Stranger

«Familiar Stranger» is a combination of several research and experiments which lead to a communication device based on exploring a particular plaza. This method of development for a concept which is not local, is the most important aspect of their research. The study is local and based on close observation but the result could be applied elsewhere. «Familiar Stranger» is based on studies of the earlier research of familiar stranger notion. The researchers of this project argue that «it is the people with which we share urban spaces that dominate our perception of place.» Sometimes these people are friends, family and colleagues. In public urban spaces we, these people, «the individuals who affect us are ones that we repeatedly observe and yet do not directly interact with – our Familiar Strangers.»



Two main methods are used in this research: Site observation and survey. Site observation have produced a map of activities in the urban plaza.

Surveys have been designed to firstly ask people if they know any «familiar stranger» in that public space and secondly to evaluate people's quality of experience.



Case Study: Familiar Stranger	Point	Implications / Differences or similarities with the current research
"It is people with which we share such spaces that dominate our perception of place."	People at the center of the research	People vs. Space: People as the primary subject of the research
Studying "Familiar Stranger"	Based on a previous study	Main method based on site observation
Scenario Planning	A practical tool with practical scenarios	Narrative
"Emerging mobile communication systems are fundamentally reshaping the spatial and temporal constraints of all aspects of human communications in both work and play."	Focus on mobile communications systems	Understanding people not according to their relation to constructed physical space
"We lack mobile devices to explore and play our subtle, yet important, connections to strangers and the unknown."	Target Group	Looking at people who are not usually visible in a great extent
"While massive physical changes are still rare in urban settings, a new social landscape is emerging."	Use of personal wireless communication	Use of public communication platforms: monitoring practices in physical and digital urban life
"We hope that our exploration of Familiar Strangers will promote discussion around tools that strive to improve community solidarity and a sense of belonging in urban spaces."	Improving communication	Informing the city



This is an optional survey designed to let us know a little more about how you feel about public places. Answer as many questions as you feel comfortable with, and if you want to tell us anything more about how you or other people use public space, please feel free to use the back of the page.

About Constitution Plaza

How often do you visit Constitution Plaza?

- every day a few times a week
 every weekday only on the weekends
 rarely

How much time do you typically spend there?

- walk through 5 minutes
 15 minutes 30 minutes or more

How do you use the plaza? (check all that apply)

- just passing through
 work nearby
 lunch
 public transportation
 shopping
 hanging out
 meeting up with friends
 other _____

What are three words that describe this plaza?

Your neighborhood

What is your zip code?

How well do you know your neighbors?

- avoid them close friends

What are three words that describe your neighborhood?

Which public space (like a park, plaza, restaurant, street) do you feel **most** comfortable in?

Which public space (like a park, plaza, restaurant, street) do you feel **least** comfortable in?

Thanks again for your help! We're looking for participants to interview further. If you think you'd be interested, please write down your contact information below. Intel Research respects your privacy and will not disclose, sell, or distribute your submitted information to any other individual or group at any time. People who do provide contact information for follow-up will be entered into a raffle for a \$100 gift certificate at Barnes and Noble bookstore.

Name _____

Age _____

email _____

other way to contact you _____

Questions?
 Contact us at (510) 495-3093 or
 elizabeth.s.goodman@intel.com

FAMILIAR
STRANGER
PROJECT

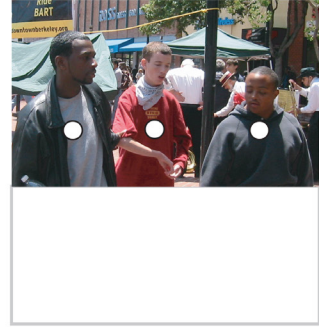
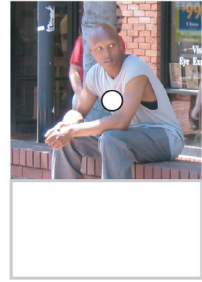
Intel Research

Instructions

If you recognize any of these people but do not know their names, please write an "R" in the corresponding blank circle and use the connected box to tell us why you recognize them or anything else you want to tell us about them.

If you know the names of any of these people, please write a "K" in the blank circle and use the connected box to tell us how you know them or anything else you want to tell us about them. Questions? Contact us at (510) 495-3093 or elizabeth.s.goodman@intel.com

Example



FAMILIAR
STRANGER
PROJECT

Intel Research

Instructions

If you recognize any of these people but do not know their names, please write an "R" in the corresponding blank circle and use the connected box to tell us why you recognize them or anything else you want to tell us about them.

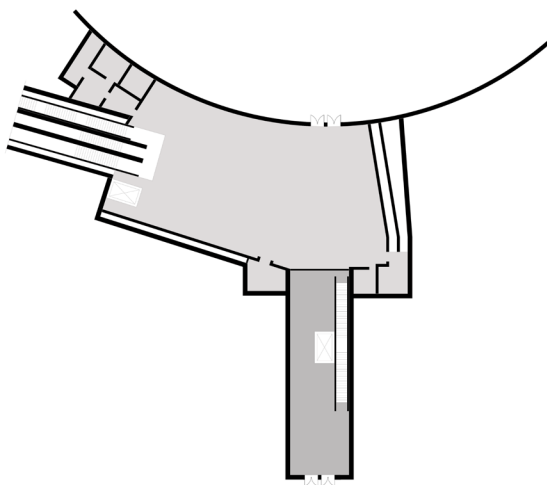
If you know the names of any of these people, please write a "K" in the blank circle and use the connected box to tell us how you know them or anything else you want to tell us about them. Questions? Contact us at (510) 495-3093 or elizabeth.s.goodman@intel.com

Example



Situation

University Station is the intersection of many different flows: Bus stops, train station, shuttle and cab stops. As an important and relatively busy station in Buffalo, it gathers people from different social levels and neighborhoods at different times of the day and night. It is also next to South Campus of University at Buffalo. Architecturally, three different levels of the space sometimes gather people and in some cases divide them without leaving any chance of forming a connection.



Analysis of Current Physical Status

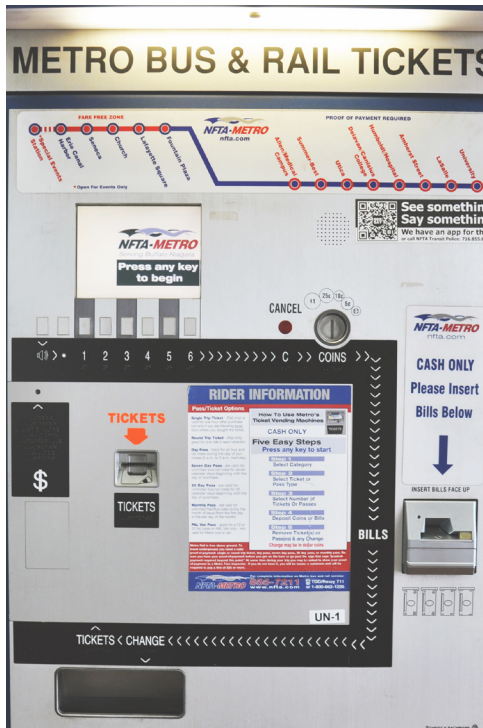
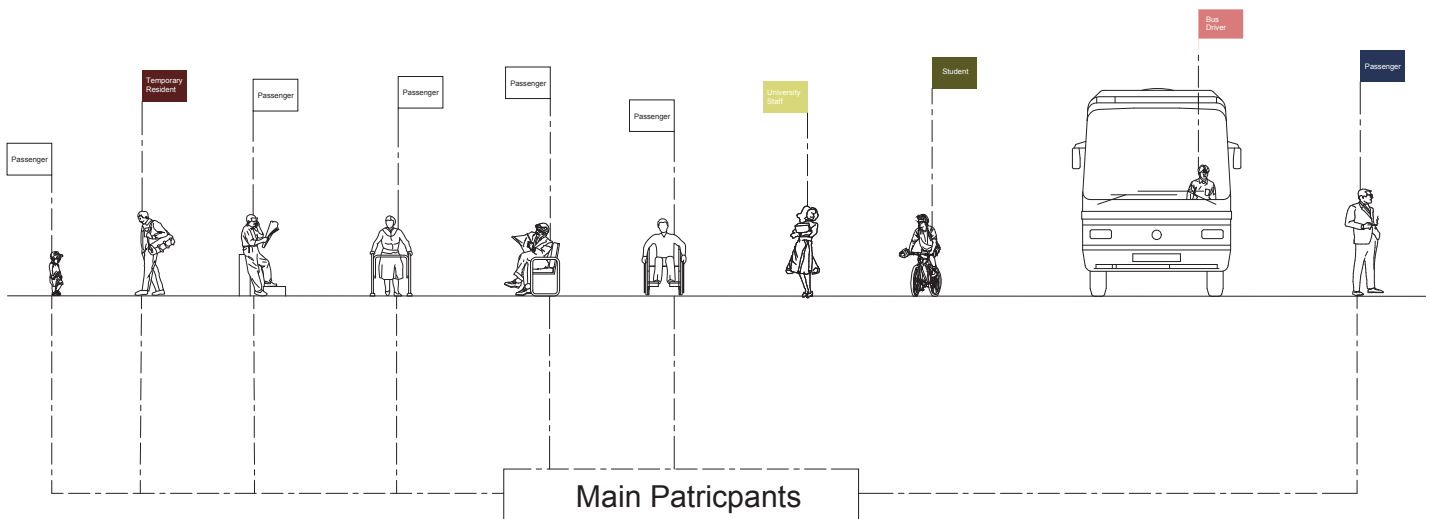


Photo documentation shows how various facilities exist in the station, if they are working or not, and how popular they are.

Site Observation Method

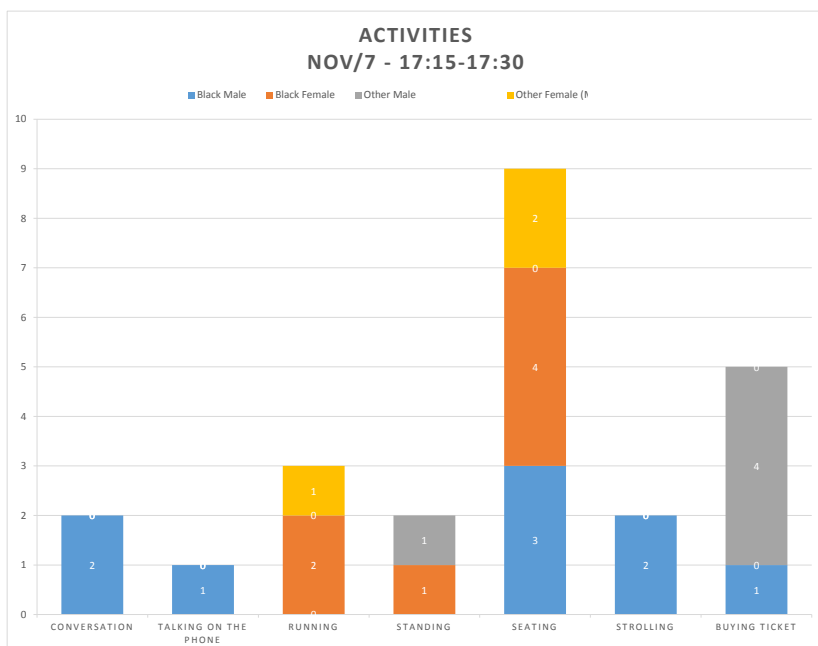
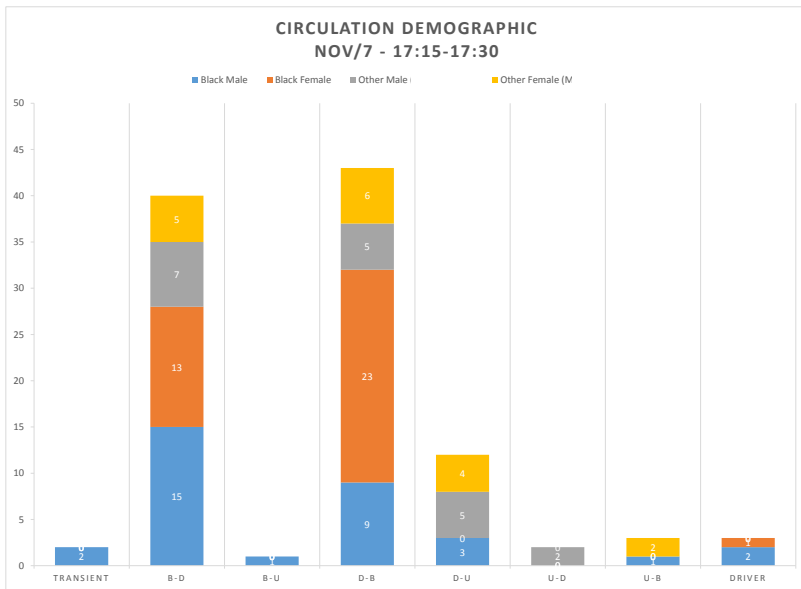
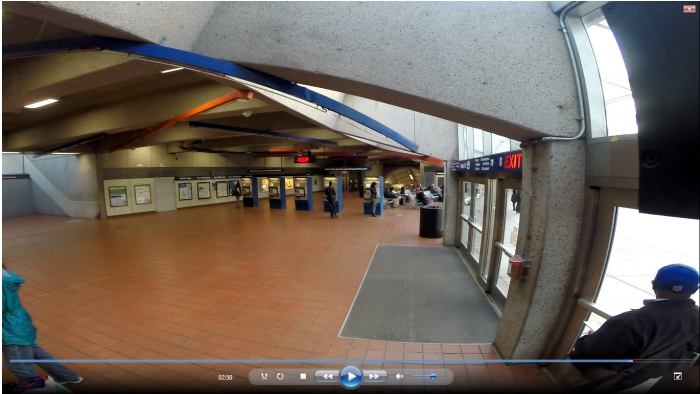


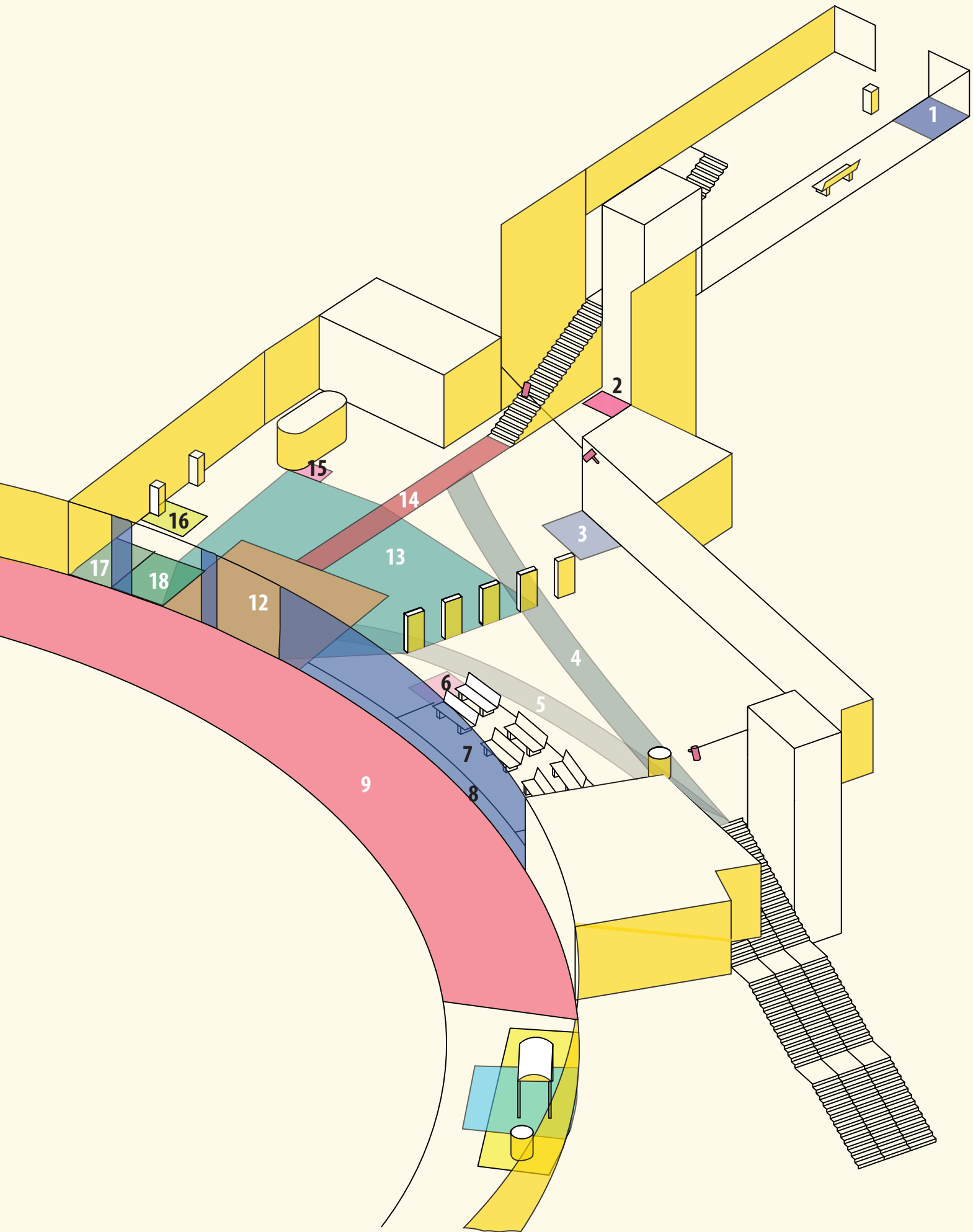
«Familiar Stranger» project emphasizes on the significance of site observation. «The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces» by William H. Whyte is a rich source of observation techniques. Main aim of this long study has been to evaluate qualities of urban spaces through observing activities of people in them. However, their observation method has been used in the current research to mainly discover characters and their relation with the space.



Zoom Out Observation: Zoning of Activities in the Space

Two GoPro camera installed in University Station, record circulation of the people. Then, the information of the video have been imported to prepared tables. Table sections include destination of people, race, gender, age, and different kinds of activities.





1. Students wait for shuttle or a car

2. People wait for the elevator, happens once in a while!

3. Religious Volunteers, sit there from 7am to 5pm, sometimes walk around their stand to catch people

4. Again not busy!

From university to train: Students, this path is for people who usually buy ticket.

From train to university: Think about events, after hockey game, fans come back to pick up their car from "park and ride", that's an injection of white people.

5. Busiest path! All kinds of people, in the morning and afternoon: full of school students in groups

6. Standing and waiting next to the chairs!

7. Chairs! the most occupied place. People stare at the window, play with their phone and listen to music, sometimes old men read news paper. Conversation rarely happens

8. The row between chairs and the window: Bus drivers go to the bathroom.

9. Smoking, walking, getting on and off the bus, standing and staring

10. Sitting, standing, waiting for the bus, eating (is not allowed inside), talking on the phone, conversation happens here!

11. Smoking and walking

12. People play with their phone, stare at the window, wait for their bus. Sometimes hang out in small groups, more in the evening

13. That's the transient's area, close to the door, easy for smoking, talking to people and asking money, next to the ticket machines

14. Mostly students, going to buy something and go back to university, not busy at all!

15. This closed ticket kiosk is a secure place to stand nearby

16. Who uses ATM machine? the best looking people. Sometimes people stop here to pick a bus schedule.

17. The door in the corner: not a busy entrance. A waiting area for someone who likes to stand and look outside.

18. This entrance is used more than the one in the corner, but not as much as the main door.

Close-Up Observation: Character Prototypes through Narrative

Alongside understanding how space and people work together, people themselves and their characters are important part of this research. Their significance in this research is considered as small data as opposed to big data. An aspect which is less important in today's computational methods of urban development. How different from objective data gatherings, do these narratives change our perception of the cities?



He is curious. Cannot avoid asking questions, presents his drugs. He has a small backpack, asks change from everyone and he is successful when he asks from people who are buying ticket. Smokes inside, says that people are selfish, he needs to smoke but NFTA prefers him to catch a cold, while they can make a smoking area. He is smart but not completely conscious. Has two characters, sees devil and is afraid. Escapes from shelters but he is worried of people stilling his sneakers at night where he sleeps. Other transients pass and say hi to him.

Conclusion

The final outcome-A story telling platform in university station-will be the direct result of applied methodologies. Using the knowledge gained from «zoom out observations» helps to connect pieces of stories to various situations. Based on the narrations and characters produced in «Close Up Observation», which reflect realities, the story teller machine generates its own narratives in a fictional approach. The platform is there to reflect stories back to the city, while stressing the irony and complementary mode of two kinds of method of observation.

Appendix



Runs upstairs with 20 other fans. The come like a wave, noisy, happy, with friends and family. Uses station to go drinking in the weekend.



Stays in station for one hour. Listens to music the whole time.



A volunteer for inviting people to the church. Very kind, very committed but doesn't seem successful in contacting with people.



Appears suddenly and once in a while. He knows people, transients know him. His job is to keep everything as it is.



Performs a show from outside for people who are inside, lasts seconds but repeats again and again. Talks with himself and laughs. Disappears and appears after an hour.



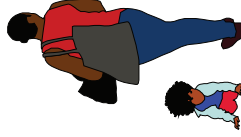
He is around 40, doesn't look like a homeless, when two other homeless people appear, he knows them and spends time with them. He looks into all trash bins to find plastic bottles. He has a smart phone., keeps asking for change. Wants to sell his daypass. Opens the door for a group of new passengers getting off the bus and heading to the train, no one pays him.



It's difficult for her to move around with all of her stuff. She is too tired.



Has a bike and one of those small backpacks (many other transients have one) besides him on the stairs. Shows what he has and plays with that for five minutes, then feels comfortable to roll for himself on the stairs.



She looks relax but doesn't sit, finally sits and then stands again. Waits a long time for a bus.

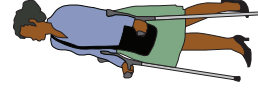
The kid is the only source of human noise at noon. He plays around and gets excited when sees other kids.



Gets bus and train with other friends to go home from school. But travels alone in the evening. Plays with his smart phone all the time.



They are confused. Don't know what to do and where to go.



Looks confident.



He is curious. Cannot avoid asking questions, presents his drugs. He has a small backpack, asks change from everyone and he is successful when he asks from people who are buying ticket. Smokes inside, says that people are selfish, he needs to smoke but NFTA, prefers him to catch a cold, while they can make a smoking area. He is smart but not completely conscious. Has two characters, sees devil and is afraid. Escapes from shelters but he is worried or people stilling his sneakers at night where he sleeps. Other transients pass and say hi to him.