

GUERRILLOFFITI

An interactive art installation by
Han Gene Paik and **Dirk J. Platzek**
September 2001

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This work requires Internet connection and the specific back end system that we built. Due to the nature of the work, this package only includes this design document with reference images. For more detailed information about the project, please visit our web site at www.wunschfeld.net/labo You can also test the working system through the web site. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the artists at:

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New York, September 2001

As we were writing this document, tickling words like “guerrilla” and “bombing” on our computer screen, the World Trade Center started falling down in front of us. Thousands of people in the buildings were massacred. We felt guilty and burdened ourselves with this inexplicable coincidence as if our uttering of the word “bombing” was doomed to bring about the terrifying devastation. Even though we didn’t intend to relate our metaphors and semantics to this type of terrorism, we were afraid the words themselves might remind readers of the tragedy and lead them to a misunderstanding of our intention.

So here we are writing a justification, perhaps to ourselves, as if we just started writing the first word of this document. And this is, we believe, not to defend our idea, but to convince ourselves that the idea presented here could actually help the situation in a positive way.

All the hatred and curses in the world must be dissipated somehow before they cause a catastrophe. Setting up an outlet through which people can pour out all the misunderstandings and prejudices, will surely help supply the lack of mutual understanding and will eventually bring out some type of communicative rationality. And it is clear that there is a good possibility of realizing it in the recent technological advance and the society must grow mature enough to absorb the free expressions.

We all know that there are people who have been forced to choose terrorism as their weapon. We have to make sure that technologies of the present day can provide them with other ways to solve their problems than with terrorism.

We send our sincere condolences to the victims of the terrorist attack and hope in vain for an unexampled forgiveness from America. Only her forgiveness can undo this chain of endless hatred and vengeance.

Everything seems surreal here in New York City now.

September 14, 2001

Contents

o. Preamble	5
1. Overview	9
2. Introduction	10
3. Description	11
4. Social context	12
5. Form	13
6. Technology	14
7. Requirements	16
8. Artist Biographies	17
Appendix A. Reference Images	18
Appendix B. List of supported devices	24

With the arrival of electric technology, man extended, or set outside himself, a live model of the central nervous system itself...we wear all mankind as our skin.

Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man

Private "telematics": each person sees himself at the controls of a hypothetical machine, isolated in a position of perfect and remote sovereignty, at an infinite distance from his universe of origin.

Jean Baudrillard, The Ecstasy of Communication

1. Overview

Numbed by new technologies like Narcissus in the Greek myth, we tend to forget that it is the age of consciousness of the unconscious. Whether the numbness is a psychological self-protection or it is the same old hypnosis by the capitalist consumerism, the answer lies in the task of conscious awareness of the changes in our subliminal life, private and social, caused by the new technologies that constantly reshape our socio-political landscapes.

This project presents an alternative way of using wireless technology to express individual opinions toward the public. Using cell phones and other handheld devices that are meant to enhance “private” communications, participants instead publicize their opinions on a censor-free message board installed in a “public” space. This conversion of a “private-to-private” communication to a “private-to-public” and its unexpected exposure to a *physical* space, enable an anarchistic messaging, a noise, that somehow needs to be justified in the expanding public arena of the electronic age.

Guerrilloffiti draws messages in a graffiti-like way. With its metaphorical and aesthetic reference to the traditional urban graffiti, it solicits people to leave marks on the surface. Using a variety of available display devices from large projections to LED billboards to small flat panel monitors, the board is installed in a specific site and locates a target for users to send their messages to. Like guerillas situated in an urban environment, participants then ‘*bomb*’ on the target from virtually anywhere and at anytime through their small private gadgets.

The project provides a unique chance to see how the authorities will react to the situation and how differently they would react from a similar situation in the virtual public domain. As controversial as it might turn out, this happening, particularly with relation to the physicality of where it happens, will provide another perspective to the current discourses on the expanding public domain and its political possibilities and limits.

2. Introduction

People have embraced communication technologies throughout existence. From cave paintings to smoke signals, telegraphs to emails, human beings have created and developed new communication technologies for the manifestation of a basic human need: To communicate and express themselves.

Ironically, however, expression, a basic human need as vital as oxygen, is many times absent from contemporary life. Despite the economic efficiencies that the technologies might have brought about, the ubiquitous mass media and technologies of the present day seem to lead us to a rather schizophrenic experience, something far from the communicative rationality that we have expected.

Embraced by the industry, the latest technology, Wireless Computing, has been pervasive throughout the global community. While mobile gadgets are getting smaller, wireless technologies seem to turn the notion of “Personal Computer” into that of “Private Computer.” It is *private* in the sense that it is now possible for devices not only to be used personally, but also to be completely possessed and concealed by the owner, as a part of his or her body. Besides the freedom of movement, do we take such a liking to these new private devices because they seem to amplify our sense of secrecy? Is it this amplified secrecy and its encapsulation of one’s psyche that throws us so much into “the ecstasy of communication” that brings billions of dollars to phone companies each year?

Attached to the body, yet still connected to public networks, these devices, in the palm or on the ear, suggest a constant oscillation between the public and private domain. A blurring of traditional boundaries that separate the two realms, along with a high frequency of oscillation, brings us a sense of uncertainty as to whether or not we are in “public” or “private”, both physically and psychologically. Besides the emerging concerns with privacy issues, it is apparent that it will fundamentally affect our psyche and alter the whole socio-political landscape, as TV and the Internet have done in past decades.

One phenomenon is “SMS” (Short Messaging Services), a system that allows people to send short text messages to each other via cell phones. The text message lends itself perfectly to the idea of anonymity and secrecy because of its lack of personal signature, unlike audible voices. SMS has become prevalent throughout Europe and Asia: Business Week, June 4, 2000 “Short messaging- SMS- has yet to catch on in the U.S. But Europeans should zap 200 billion notes this year, yielding \$10.6 billion for carriers. By 2003, expect 1 trillion messages...10% of (the) messages may have ads or paid contents.”

3. Description

This project explores the new wireless networked environment in the realm of public art and advertising. People access to the project’s WAP site using their Internet enabled wireless gadgets -such as cellular phones, Palm Pilot or Pocket PC - to submit text messages onto an electronic message board installed in a public place. The board can be any type of display device only if it supports a computer connection. Then the computer connected to the board interacts with the server system via Internet to display the messages on the board. Without any censoring or filtering process, they will be able to post any message they choose to an anonymous public, using devices that are meant to enhance their private communication.

Two psychic spaces, public and private, are juxtaposed, creating an arena where freedom of speech can be manifested in a *truly* democratic manner, embracing even malicious and destructive postings of vandalism. The experience of participating in this phenomenon becomes one of excitement and even simulated danger, as anarchistic sentiments are sure to arise. The enjoyment for the user comes from the knowledge that he or she has expressed his or her thoughts both instantaneously and freely on a highly visual billboard installed in a public space, while remaining anonymous. The fact that the message was left spontaneously while

walking through the city, riding the subway or other location, will heighten the sense of pleasure and provide a magical sense of “power,” which has long been longed for by individuals.

4. Social context

The project is basically an experiment in a public domain. Since the advent of tele-technologies like telegraph, telephone and television, and recently the Internet, there has long been hope that the technologies can somehow realize the democratic ideal. The project intends to re-examine the very ideology of that “democratic ideal”, the First Amendment, in an infinitely expanding public domain, with the Internet and other communication technologies.

Some questions may arise during the realization of the project. 1) How will the public interact on a completely censor-free message board in a public space, which they can access from virtually any place in the world? 2) How will authority figures react to the possible criticism that may be made public on the board? 3) How will the realization of this project be different than that of chat rooms and the BBS on the Internet?

For the entire spectrum of online communication, people feel more comfortable and even playful with the idea of anonymous screen names; since gender, age and appearance remain unknown. For this project, people will have to find their own way of leaving a “signature.” Much like graffiti artists, they might decide to “sign” their messages, so they can develop a history on the board and a way of talking to specific participants. However, it must be emphasized that the elimination of any censoring or filtering mechanism from the system is necessary, not solely because we advocate freedom of speech, but also because we want to examine the ideology behind the First Amendment in a hypothetical environment, an absolutely free and public realm.

In a culture that is consumed and essentially manipulated by sensationalist media, this project is a way back to the

individual's opinion, based solely on the freedom of expression, even if it goes against the mainstream or commercial interests. The process of putting otherwise private information into the public arena, also mirrors the adjusted use of wireless private devices by extending the technology to publish private opinions and information in public spaces.

5. Form

Multiple installation sites, indoor and/or outdoor, are selected based on their historical context as well as the current social-political issues in concern. In New York City, for example, the wall of New York Stock Exchange could be one of the installation sites, if we consider the recent economic recession as a possible turn-on for participation. These sites can be extended to other countries as well. It would be phenomenal to see that the boards installed at the stock markets in Seoul, Berlin and New York City display the same messages from three different locations in three different languages concurrently. In addition to the outdoor installations, boards can be installed inside public spaces as well. Placed inside subway stations, corporate and government buildings or even traditional galleries, the boards will provide a more secretive experience similar to the scribbles in a public lavatory.

The board itself takes various forms in its size and shape depending on the display device it employs. From large projections to LED billboards to relatively small screens of flat panel LCD monitors, the decision on the display method relies on the specific installation site as well as the time of its actual operation.

Since it is inevitable that the boards are confused with other adjacent advertising billboards, it is intended all the more that the animation of the text messages rendered on the board also resembles that of advertising in its typography and movement, suggesting metaphorically a camouflage in the urban environment.

6. Technology

The system consists of Client-tier, Middle-tier, Database and Presentation-tier. Client devices such as cell phones and Palm Pilot interact with a Flash application through the middle-tier applications and database system.

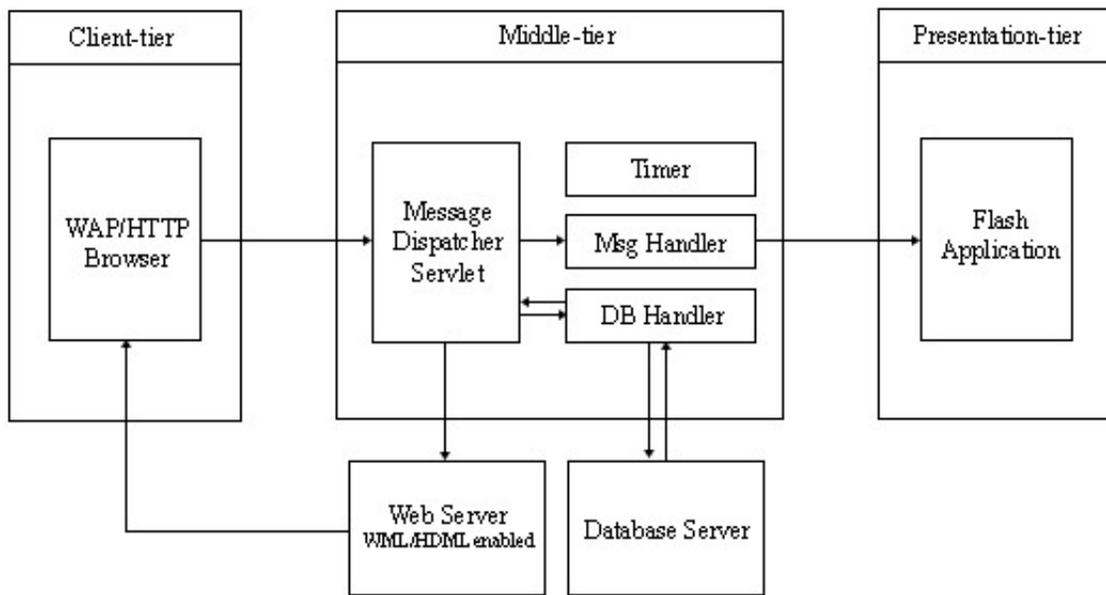


Figure 1. Guerrilloffiti System Diagram

1) Client-tier

Any Internet-enabled devices equipped with HTTP or WAP browser (WML 1.1 or HDML 2.0+ compliant) can be used to send messages to the board. (For a full list of supported devices and browsers, see *Appendix B. List of supported devices*) Since most of the handheld devices are limited in their resources, the user interface for these devices are optimized for a simple submit form and a confirm message.

2) Middle-tier

This tier consists of a Java servlet and other Java applications running on a Java Application Server.

Message Dispatcher Servlet first detects client device types and returns appropriate files for the particular device. When it receives a message from a client, then it interacts with other applications in order to relay and store the message.

Message Relaying Server handles socket connections to the presentation-tier and relays messages from the servlet to the presentation.

Database Handler interacts with SQL database system to store and retrieve messages upon requests.

Timer checks the status of system regularly at a certain interval. If the system has been idle for a certain amount of time, it triggers a mechanism to replay the old messages stored in the database on the presentation.

Device Property File holds device and browser information such as device type, manufacturer and accepted MIME types for each device supported by the system. This file is used by the servlet to detect client device types.

3) Database

A SQL relational database system stores messages from users. And optionally, the database can be configured to hold user information such as device and browser type, IP address and access time so as to keep track of users participations.

4) Presentation-tier

This is a Macromedia Flash application that runs either on any traditional web browsers with Flash player plug-in, or as a standalone application. It connects to the Message Relaying Server via TCP/IP and draws messages on a display device in a particular way.

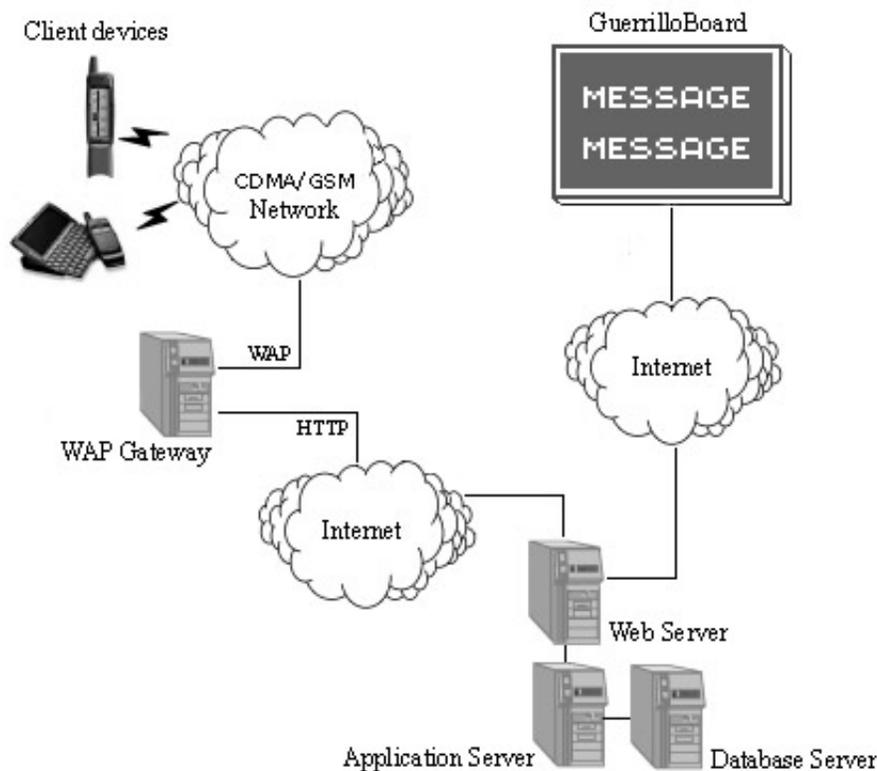


Figure 2. GuerrilloBoard System Architecture

7. Requirements

1) A dedicated server

- Operating system: Unix or MS NT/2000
- Web server: Apache HTTP Server 2.0* or MS IIS 5.0
- J2EE-compatible application server: Apache Tomcat 3.2.2**
- Java Runtime Environment (JRE) 1.1*** with JDBC driver
- SQL database server: MySQL 3.2****

* Apache HTTP server is free downloadable from www.apache.org

** Apache Tomcat is free downloadable from jakarta.apache.org

*** JDK 2.0 is free downloadable from java.sun.com

**** MySQL is free downloadable from www.mysql.com

2) PCs for presentation

(Minimum requirements)

- Pentium III 800 MHz+
- 150 MB+ RAM
- 10MB+ VRAM
- Always-on Internet connection
- MS Internet Explorer with Flash player

3) Display devices*

- LCD flat panel monitors
- LED (Light-emitting-diode) billboards
- Multimedia projectors with SVGA or XGA support

* Display devices will be determined later based on the condition of actual installation sites.

8. Artist Biographies

Han Gene Paik is an artist who resides and works in New York City. He completed his MFA degree in Design and Technology at Parsons School of Design, New York in 2000. When making artifacts, Han Gene still hopes to retain the “classical scorns” of the artists toward the present society. He is currently working on an archetype of computing machines. His work was recently shown at the Aronson Gallery in New York City.

Dirk J. Platzek was born and raised in Germany and moved to New York City in 1987 to further pursue his career as a modern dancer. For the past 5 years he has created new media content and digital art. He received an MFA from the Parsons School of Design in May of 2000. His thesis work investigated the force of wishmaking and desire upon the universe and culminated in the digital urban wishing well “Wunschfeld”. Wunschfeld is also the name of a team of artist collaborators, which includes Johanne Fiebelkorn, Germany.

Appendix A. Reference Images



Figure 3. A still from *Guerrilla*

Figure 4. A still from *Guerrilla*





Figure 5. A still from *Guerrilloffiti*

Figure 6. A still from *Guerrilloffiti*

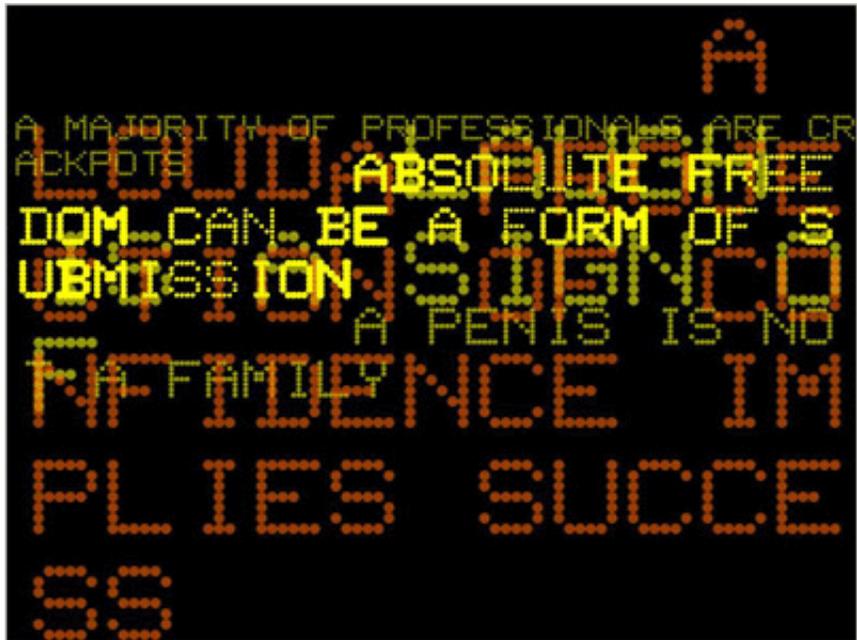




Figure 7. A still from cell phone screen



Figure 8. A still from cell phone screen



Figure 9. A still from cell phone screen



Figure 10. A still from cell phone screen



Figure 11. Testing *Guerrillofiti* with LCD screens

Figure 12. Testing *Guerrillofiti* with LCD screens





Figure 13. Testing *GuerrilloBoard* with LCD screens (detail)

Figure 14. Testing *GuerrilloBoard* with LCD screens (detail)





Figure 15. A composite image of *Guerrilloffiti* installed outdoor (Canal Street, NYC)

Figure 16. A composite image of *Guerrilloffiti* installed outdoor (Sixth Ave., NYC)



Appendix B.

List of devices currently supported by Guerrillofiti

(Last updated on 09/11/2001)

I. Openwave UP.Browser (v3.2+)

Manufacturer	Model Name
Acer	100
Acer	C200
Acer	D2000
Acer	Pro80
Alcatel	301/501/701
Alcatel	OneTouch
Alcatel	OneTouch DB
Alcatel	OneTouch Pocket
Audiovox	CDM9000/9100
Casio	C303CA
Compal	(Trinity) T39
Denso	C202DE
Denso	C402DE
Denso	Eagle 10/12/21(v3.1)/33(v3.1)
Denso	TouchPoint TP120/2100/2200
Ericsson	A12288
Ericsson	A1228C
Ericsson	R278/280
Hanwha	F110
Hanwha	S71/87
Hitachi	C201H
Hitachi	C302H
Hitachi	C309H
Hitachi	HI12
Hyundai	D-3
Hyundai	HGC-R201
Hyundai	P-21
JVC	GD-328
Kyocera	702G
Kyocera	703G
Kyocera	C307K
Kyocera	D303K
Kyocera	D304K
Kyocera	QCP2035/2037/3035
Kyocera	TK01/02/03/05

LG	D512/520/611
LG	DB520
LG	DM110/120/510
LG	LGC-875f/84of
LG	LGI-2100
LG	LGP-680of/730of/780of
LG	P-100 (I-Sound)
LG	P510/520
LG	SD-500
LG	TM510
LG	Touchpoint TP1100/TP3000
Motorola	Timeport 250/260/P7389/P816x
Motorola	Talkabout V2267/V2288/V8162
Motorola	Talkabout T2288/T816x
Motorola	Accompli 6188
Motorola	V50/100/8088
Motorola	Startac-raven
Motorola	StarTac-ST786x
Motorola	Synergy
Motorola	i500+/i700+/i1000+
Mitsubishi	T250
Mitsubishi	MA120
Nokia	6180/6185
NeoPoint	NP1000/1660/2000
Philips	Xenium9@9
Philips	Az@lis 238
Philips	Ozeo
Philes	Z10
Panasonic	D2
Panasonic	P-PAT
Panasonic	TP01
Panasonic	C308P
Panasonic	C408P
Panasonic	D305P
Panasonic	704G
Qualcomm	QCP860/1900/1960/2700/2760
Sagem	MW-959
Samsung	N100/188
Samsung	A110
Samsung	Q100
Samsung	SCH-3500/6100/8500
Samsung	SGH-A300
Samsung	SGH-800
Samsung	SGH-N100
Samsung	Uproar M100
Samsung	SCH-N105

Samsung	SCH-U02/03
Sanyo	B17
Sanyo	C304SA
Sanyo	C304A
Sanyo	D301SA
Sanyo	SCP-4000/4500/5000
Sanyo	TS01/02
Sanyo	C405SA
Sanyo	C406S
Sanyo	C403ST
Sanyo	C401SA
Sharp	TQCX1
Siemens	S25/35/40/42
Siemens	SL45
Siemens	C35/M35
Sony	705G
Sony	D306S
Sony	C404S
Sony	C305SN
Telit	GM832/910
Toshiba	C301T
Toshiba	D302T
Toshiba	701G
Toshiba	TT01/02/03

2. Non- UP.Browser

Nokia	3330/5555/6210/6250
Nokia	7110/7160/7190/9110/9210
3Coms	Palm
Compaq	Aero
Ericsson	MC218
Ericsson	R320/380
Ericsson	A2618/628
Ericsson	T20
Siemens	IC35
Misubishi	Trium
Panasonic	GD93
Psion	CPW
Sony	CMD Z5
Sony	CMD J5

3. Desktop WAP Browser

WinWAP
Wapalizer
WAPMan
WAPPER
Yospace
WAPSILON
Firehunter
Klondike

4. HTML Browser

Microsoft Internet Explorer
Netscape Navigator
Opera Browser
W3C HTML Library
Java Environment

