Prototyping With 7scenes

"What 7scenes does wonderfully is to promote the design and development of game narrative. Within the constraints of the 7scenes game genres, the designer is allowed–and required–to focus creativity towards narrative and immersive content production."

-Settlers of Manhattan team

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Introduction

Our approach in the workshop was to delve a little deeper into our idea of using 7scenes as a prototyping tool for the demonstration project.

7scenes was developed by the Waag Society after extensive experience with mobile games and activities. They broke down their observations into genres—styles of play that seemed to appear frequently. Think of them like design patterns.

We have identified a couple of genres that we think would work best for your project, plus ways of customizing those genres which we think are appropriate for your goals.

We need you to help us test our assumptions about these genres by helping us plug in your content. We did this in a theoretical way using text and photos during the demonstration.

This is just the beginning. In the coming weeks, if you'd like, you can send us some of the real content for the activities we showed you. *Or* feel free to author the scene yourself. We've given you full access to the creation tools. We will then work them into our prototypes and begin testing them both with paper and on the phones.

You are the experts and our partners in content design here so we wanted you to be able to get a feel for the content and narrative possibilities of 7scenes and to help us create a small, initial data set that we can put to use and test, as well as inform us on your thoughts on the tool.
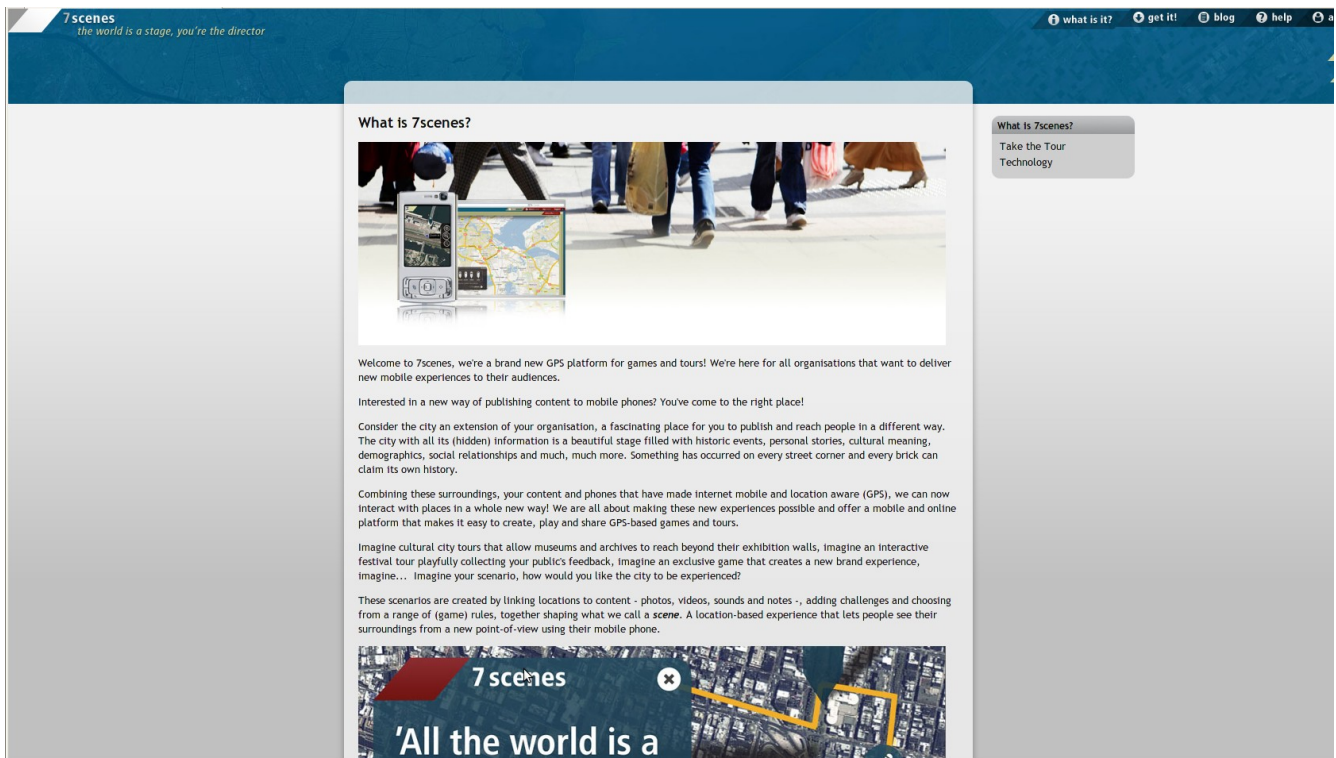
What is 7Scenes

Why is it important (potentially)?

7scenes helps us:

- see what is good about the mobile experiences

- avoid activities that don't work in the field on a mobile device. For example, if the places are too close or too far away to keep the activity coherent, this will help us discover that.

- understand the technical limitations of mobile experiences in the city. For example, it would be difficult to place a lot of points near each other, if accuracy is a problem in a particular area.

What does it do?

7scenes:

- tracks player movements through an area

- allows players to encounter "places" on the map

- allows players to see and hear media in the places

- allows players to upload text and image data from the field

What are the constraints of 7 Scenes?

Not all genres cover all the possibilities in your demonstration project, but enough is there to test what it is like to send youth into the field finding and creating content. And it allows you to prototype the experience quickly.

The number of users you can assign to teams in 7scenes is limited to how many we have created. We can add more if you need them, though.

For now, using 7scenes Requires the Nokia phones, although iPhone and Android are coming. Let us know when you want to run a Scene for real, and we can work out the equipment and data plans.

In the genre we think would be best to work with, Collect and Trade, there are a limited number of objects and assignments (see below). It is important to remember, however, that this is a limitation in the software—you can and should feel free to augment the user experience prototype you make with maps, notebooks, scorecards, etc.

How does it relate to YOUR project?

Your demo project is a locative mobile experience focused on structured data submitted by users with complex user interactions, and a social network component.

The demo's focuses on:

- Biology
- Exploration
- Research

Because is has a task and reward and involves some degree of monitoring of the players actions and input via a web interface, we have analyzed and selected several ways of using 7scene that we feel are appropriate and useful for you. As always, however, feel free to explore the tools on your own—we'll be more than happy to help you adapt your demo to ways of using 7scenes.
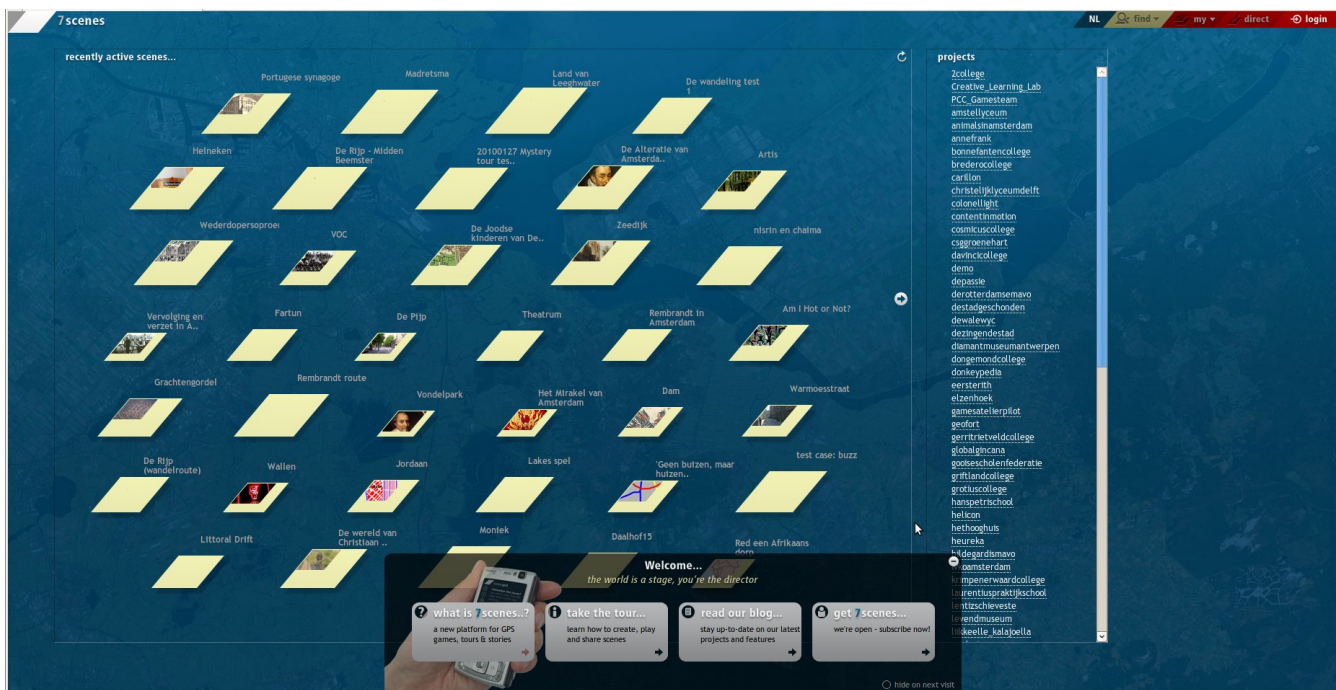
Working with 7scenes

Getting Started

Go to this site

http://live.7scenes.com

On the main page, you will see a list of games (games and scenes mean the same thing here). You will also see, at the top right, a login area. To log in:

- Username: ubn
- Password: ubn!

There is a tour bar at the bottom in case you want to read more of the information provided by the Waag Society. You can also click the (-) icon on the top right of that box to remove it.

Your Project

- Scenes: As a director, you can make new scenes within the Parsons project
- Users: We can add other player users into your games later. Here, you will only be able to see who else is available
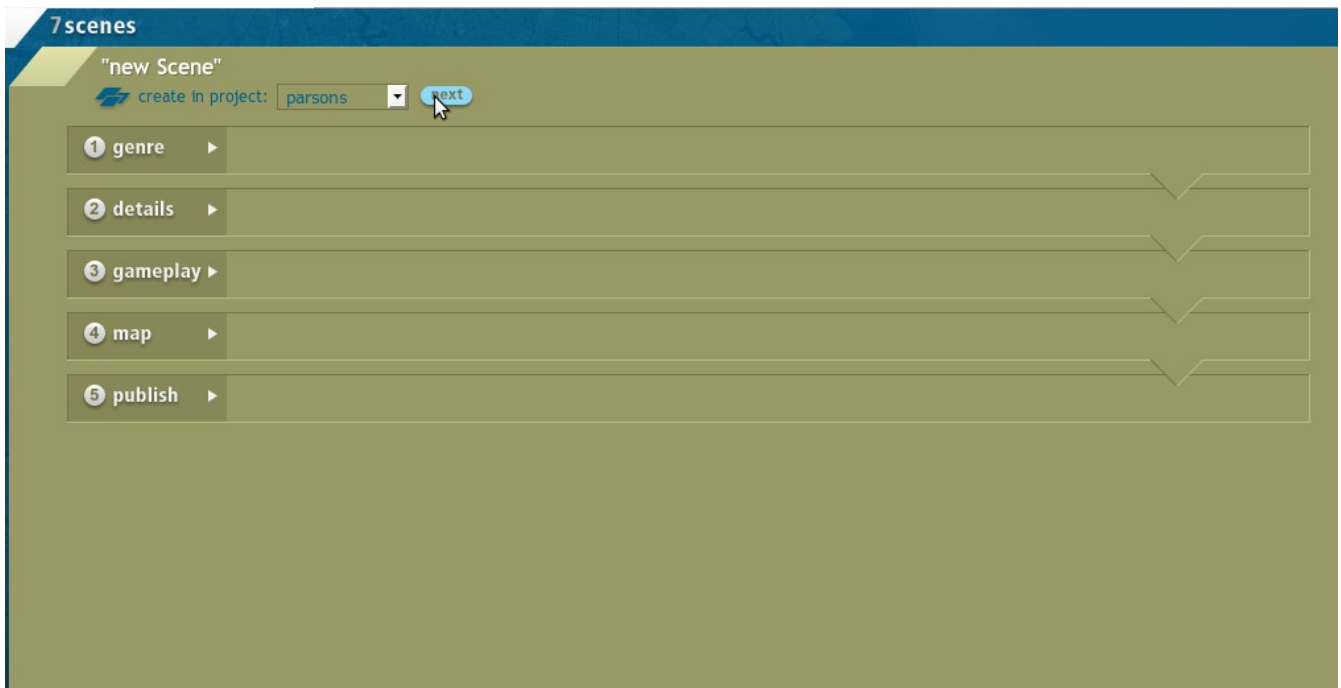
Create

To create a new scene, hit direct in the upper right corner of the screen. Then hit "next" within the parsons project

"new Scene"

1 genre ▼

1 ○ Adventure *** ○ Collect and Trade ** ○ Free Play * ○ International Trade ** ○ Mystery Tour *
○ Secret Trail * ○ Sightseeing * ○ Storyline * ○ Extra Passenger *

Pick a genre for your scene. More stars (*)? More difficult! Select a genre to learn more about what the exact rules are

next

2 details ▶

3 gameplay ▶

4 map ▶

Genres

Now it is time to pick a *genre*. You can only do this one time! If you pick a genre, then decide you would rather use a different one, you will have to create a new scene.

A genre is like a group of game mechanics or rules. The genre you pick will automatically add a set of rules that you can modify in the gameplay section (see below).

What can genre each do?

Narrative Genres

Mystery Tour, Secret Trail, and *Storyline* all have a linear structure—players begin at one place and the map, then travel to succeeding places until the last place is reached. *Secret Trail* introduces the concept of points into the game, while *Storyline* allows the players to skip up to three points.

Because of the fairly rigid structure of the narrative genres, these are probably not going to be the most useful for your user-experience prototype.

Role–Playing

The *Adventure* role-playing genre shares certain elements with the *Collect and Trade* genre (see below). It also introduces pre-determined *roles* where specific types of players are allowed to engage in certain kinds of challenges. We have found this useful for other projects, but the format seems restrictive and unnecessarily complicated for the demonstration project you have proposed.

Extra Passenger

The *Extra Passenger* genre is a car-based audio tour. While interesting, there seems to be little to recommend it for your project.

Exploration

The exploration genres, *Sightseeing, Free Play,* and *Collect and Trade*, do not have a linear structure. Instead, participants are free to over around the place on a map in any order they wish.

Free Play introduces point scoring into the game.

Collect and Trade adds the ability to collect *items* as well as points. Teams can also receive *assignments*, which require them to collect a set number and type of objects.

There may be interesting uses of the this as far as creating a badging or incentive structure around the collection of objects. Unfortunately, the objects are limited to 4 different types, and the assignments can only accept up to eight objects to collect before they are complete.

Collect and Trade, as the name implies, also allows for trading, but this game mechanic seems less useful in the context of your demonstration project.

Let's use *Collect and Trade*!

Details

Fill in title, slogan, and tags text fields. None of these are important at this stage, and they all can easily be changed later.

You will see several areas in which you can add images. Click (+) in those areas to see the *Media Library* if it is not visible already.

The Media Library has all of the media that you have uploaded as a director *and* all the media that players in the field have uploaded for you. To upload new media, click the (+) button. You may also click (-) to delete media.

Media may be

- Photos
- Audio (music, sound files, etc.)
- Video (*keep these small! Video files can reach a large size very quickly and are difficult to download in the field.*)

Once media is uploaded, drag into the image boxes on the form (anywhere there is a (+) on the page). See *Illustration 1*.

The icon image will appear on the main page with all the other scenes, so it's a good place to establish the visual identity.

The backdrop can be generic or you own image. It will appear behind the description and other material on the scene's home page.

Multiple image and text blocks can be added by clicking (+) next to "add more story content" below the story editing box.
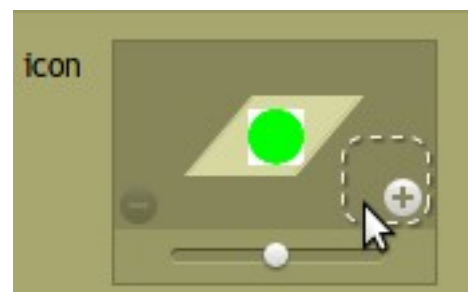

Illustration 1: A green circle image has been dragging into the image box for the icon.

Gameplay

Play Details

Users will receive the *intro* text on their phones when they begin the game and the *outro* when the game ends.

The *instructions* text will appear on the phone when you click on the info button on the phone during play.

Gameplay time

Game play may be restricted to a limited period. While this does not seem to be necessary for your demonstration project, it may be useful for running user-experience prototypes that have a limited run.

Download media

With the option checked, some media will be downloaded on the phone beforehand. This will make the initial installation of the application on the phone take longer, but won't require downloading during play. We have found that this is not necessarily true for video, so try to keep video files small regardless.

Web player

The developers of 7scenes had enabled an option where a player could participate in a game from a web interface. It has since been disabled as a feature, but may be re-enabled in the near future.

Items

A maximum of four different kinds of collectible items may be created. Each item may have an image, title, and descriptive text associated with it. Because of the limitation on the types of items, we have found it useful to think of them as kinds of currencies or classes of achievements rather than discrete specimen found in the environment.

Assignments

Assignments allow for up to eight items to be collected by a team in order to finish the game. Each team can be given the same or different assignments.
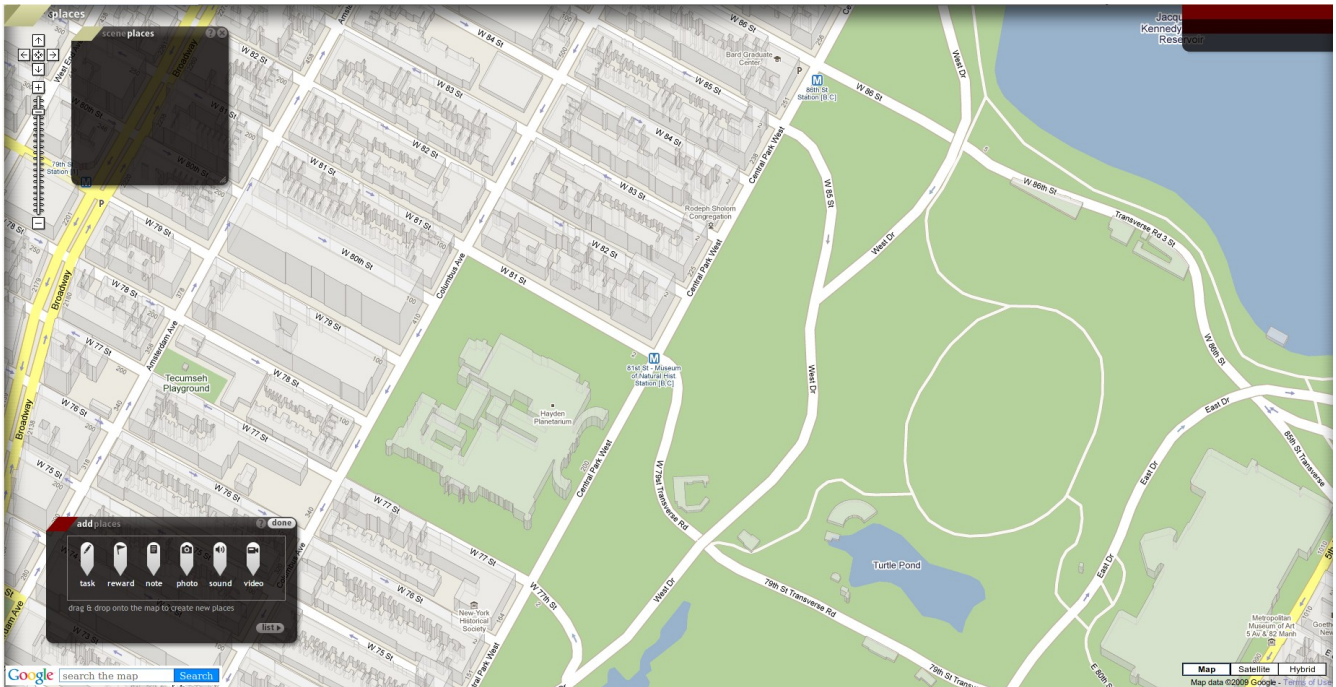
Map

Click "add places" to begin working with the map. This is the first place where you will start to do the serious design work.

To add a place into the scene drag the different places markers from the palette on to the map in the locations near which you want the players to find them.

Use your creativity and your goals to shape the activity. This is by far the most customizable (and fun) part of 7scenes. Also bear in mind that, while the *Collect and Trade* genre may have a specific set of rules that can be helpful to employ, you are in no way restricted to setting down tasks and rewards to collect objects.

Types of places

By default, you have access to four different types of places:

- Note: Notes are text data that appear on the player's phone. Enter in your text in the dialog when it appears on the map.

- Photo: An image, plus a textual description. Images should be dragged in from the media library.

- Audio: A sound, plus a textual description. Sounds should be dragged in from the media library.

- Video: A video, plus a textual description. Videos should be dragged in from the media library. Remember to keep these small!

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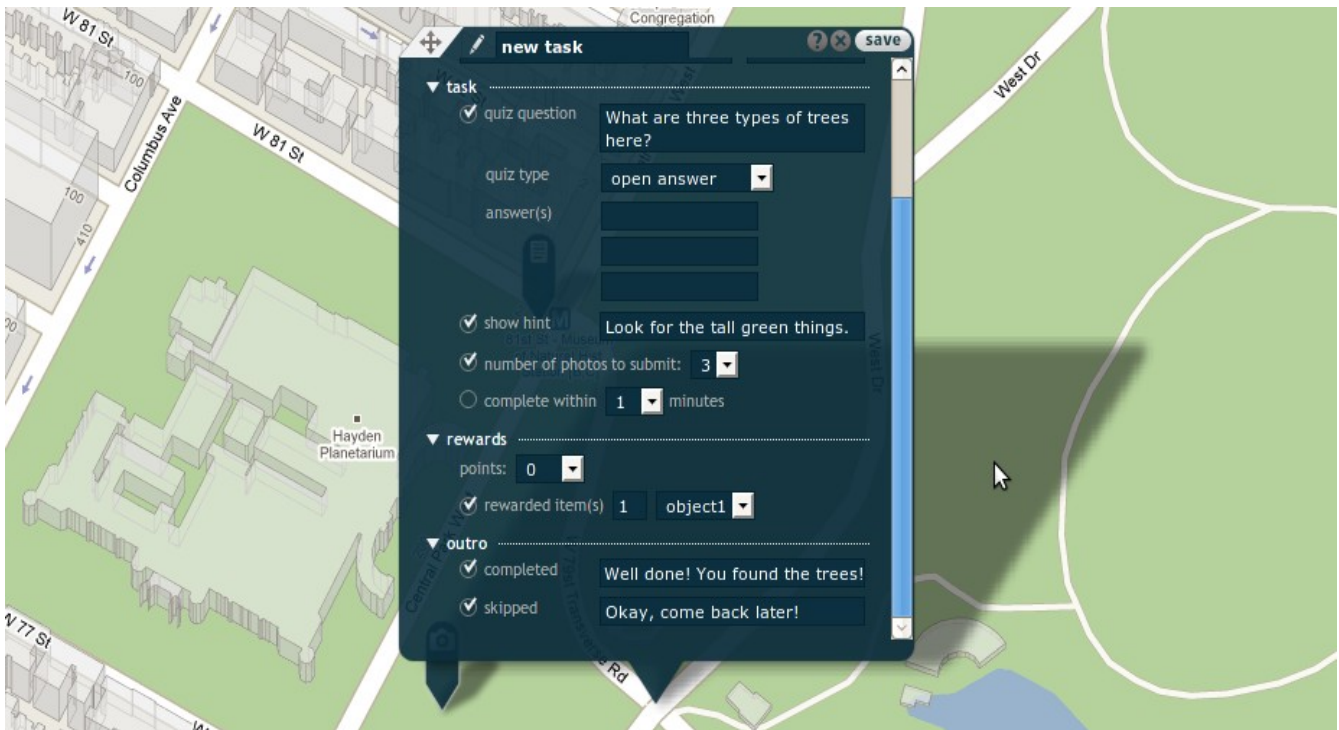
More Types of Places

- Task: There are several options for tasks.

    - Quizzes

        - Open answer

        - Multiple choice

    - Tasks allow can show a hint

    - Tasks allow for photo challenges. Players can be required to upload a number of photos that you specify.

    - Players can earn points for correct answers and/or uploaded photos

    - They can also earn objects.

- Reward: A reward adds an object to the players collections when they are in proximity.

Places In General

Players tend to "hit" places within 5-10 meters of them, although this is more accurate in open spaces and sometimes much less so among tall buildings.

To move places on the map once they have already been positioned, open them up and drag using the four-arrows icon.

users

ronald	jonah	parsons-pr..	parsons1
mobilequest	mercurious	simeon	kelly
yoon	colleen	jklein	ubn
c3	neighborho..		

① genre ▶ ✓ Collect and Trade

② details ▶ The demoing of the UBN activity begins...

③ gameplay ▶ no maximum playtime, 4 collectable items & 4 assignments

④ map ▶ places: 4 (1 task, 1 note, 1 photo, 1 reward)

⑤ publish ▼ ⓘ Change the state of your scene below, this will affect the editablity as well as the visibilty to others

scene is draft

ⓘ Add events to invite players to your scene. For game genres this is required, as they can only be played in teams

name * [new event] ✖ (save)
starts 29 ▾ Jan ▾ '10 ▾ at 10 ▾ 15 ▾   ends 29 ▾ Apr ▾ '10 ▾ at 10 ▾ 15 ▾

⊕ add a team

⊖ team [Team1] color [■] assignment [assignment1 ▾]

invited players
⊕

Publish

Draft

This allows you to keep editing your scene

If you want to play the game publicly, it must be set to "Public". This is probably unnecessary for the moment, though.

Public

Selecting this make the scene publicly viewable.

Closed

Once you wish to "retire" the game, set it to be closed.

Events

With the event, you can choose a set of times during which an invited team player may being the game. Each event will specify a set of teams and team members. While, there can be multiple events over time, it is probably best for now to just set one event with the generic user accounts we will provide as team members and with a range of dates spanning a month of so.

Teams

Each event will need to have teams assigned to it. Teams will have colors assigned to them, an assignment, and will need to have players assigned to it.

To add players, drag the user into the team box. We will have a list of generic players created for each project as soon as you are ready to begin. We will send you the usernames and passwords of the users well in advance of the event.
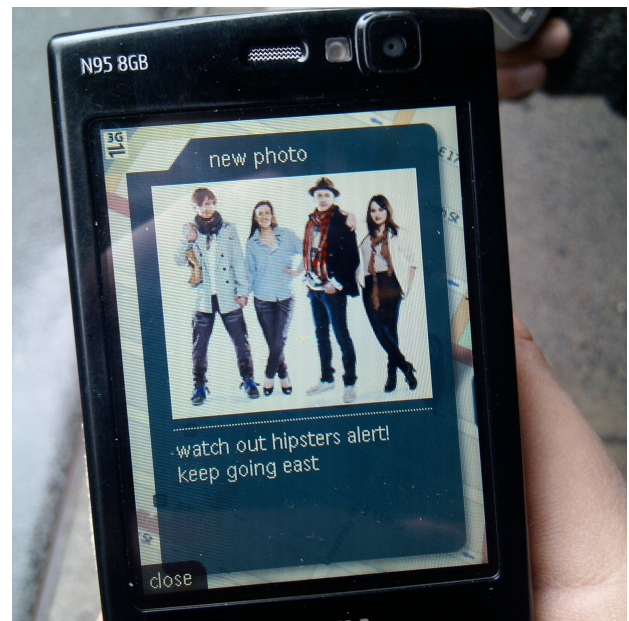
Editing

To edit any section, click on the red area to the top right of that section.

Play

We will be there to help get the game up and running, so there is not much you need to do to prepare for that as far as the phones' software is concerned.

Where to go from here?

Try logging in as a director and making you own scenes. Work a lot with the map and places, since this is the heart of your experience in the neighborhood.

Contact us as soon as you feel you can try out the experience in your neighborhood.

Have fun!

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