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Feast of Listen

Spring 2013

## Colophon

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## Contributors

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Alexander Goodson lives with
the suspicion that he is moving
more than he realises, and is
a writer at the moment.

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#### AMY PETTIFER

Amy Pettifer is a writer and librarian based in Hackney. She recently completed the MA Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths where her work focused on Beckett, the sounding of non verbal languages and contemporary notions of apocalypse. She is behind the blog Good Grey Day and the zine Tappa Tappa Tappa.

(goodgreyday.tumblr.com)

#### AND-OR

AND-OR is a media art and gameart collective specializing in artgames. The collective consists of René Bauer, Beat Suter and Mirjam Weder. The group has existed since 2001 and operates from Zurich, Switzerland. Over the years the collective has been able to show its media art and artgames worldwide in locations like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Rio de Janeiro, Toronto, Vienna, Berlin, Stuttgart and Zurich. And-or's origin is the media art scene. Some of the collective's projects like Wardive and Sniff\_jazzbox, are a mix of game projects and media art projects created for mobile devices. They capture and transpose communication waves between humans and machines into adaptive and locative games, music or poetry. René Bauer and Beat Suter are teaching Game Design at the University of the Arts Zurich, Switzerland. René Bauer is an independent game developer and

software engineer. Beat Suter is a writer, concepter and publisher. (and-or.ch)

#### AUDUN MORTENSEN

Audun Mortensen (1985) is the author of four poetry books, a novel, and The Collected Jokes of Slavoj Žižek.

(audunmortensen.com)

#### BRIAN ROETTINGER

Brian Roettinger is a Los Angelesbased artist and graphic designer. The majority of his work is in the form of printed media for cultural institutions and record album covers, most notably for No Age, Liars, and recently Beach House. His diverse works bridge the divide between art, music, design and concept. As a designer, he was chosen as Rolling Stone's Album Designer of the Year (2009) and was nominated for a Grammy for No Age, Nouns (2010), and held the position of design director at the Southern California Institute of Architecture (2004-2009). His work has been exhibited at Colette in Paris, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Moravian Gallery in the Czech Republic, and at the now defunct Hope Gallery in Los Angeles.

#### CHANDLER MCWILLIAMS

Chandler McWilliams is an artist and writer living in Los Angeles. He has studied film, photography, and political science; and completed graduate work in philosophy at The New School For Social Research in New York City. He has taught at schools and workshops around the world, and most recently in the Design Media Arts program at UCLA. McWilliams is the co-author of Form + Code in Design,

# Hear the technical subconscious... hear the digital waves...

not as sms or smart phones but as music, as a tune near you, a tune that is there all the time.

## Make the inaudible audible!

As you make the invisible visible, make the inaudible audible!

The Audible City

by AND-OR

René Bauer, Beat Suter and Mirjam Weder AND-OR 53

#### Strings of Zeroes and Ones

Zeroes and ones. The world is full of them. They're invisible and visible at the same time. They become dazzling brilliant and pitch-dark. They become loud and silent, highpitched or deep, fast or slow, short or tall, melodious or monotone.

If you are in an urban area there are strings of zeroes and ones constantly whirring through the air as signals: from building to building, from router to router, from cell phone to cell phone, from laptop to laptop, from tablet to tablet.

There is Reality and then there is this big Data Space. A second layer of reality.

It is the materialization of Maxwell's partial differential equations of electrodynamics. A city of electromagnetic waves.

This second layer creates a different map of the world. A map that is less standardized grants the individual an opportunity to mark his territory. An invisible and inaudible social project. A contextual mapping of social structures. With Heidi, Freud, Little Prince, Doomsayer and Iskender Kebap as protagonists. With every street and every square developing its own melody from its individual data space.

Even, if there are practically no more unprotected hotspots today, there is enough data out there that may be easily captured. Capturing basic data from communicating routers is possible at any time (in the vicinity of the router). Collecting and analyzing this data however is not legal. So they say.



#### Narrative Space

The interplay of real urban space and transmitted data is made physically tangible for the player.

Simple textual descriptions of hotspots are the foundations. They are extracted by the Android ArtApp Sniff\_jazzbox and separated from their individual context.

These names get a narrative interpretation and become set in relation to each other and/or the context of the area and/or the user.

The music app thus receives its own narrative space.

And the listener and player in turn gets the chance of an own experience of space in the urban environment.

#### The Audible City

You listen to an area in town, it has a distinct melody, a distinct sound pattern transposed from the data whirring through the air.

You recognize the technical subconscious of a town. You hear it, you start seeing it.

As you walk, the melody changes

gradually, adapts to the new area. As you walk further, it changes more.

Sniff\_jazzbox is a musical application based on an algorithm that turns the captured hotspot names into musical notes.

It creates an audible city. The captured wireless waves are converted into sound. The immediate vicinity is rendered into a melody.

The captured stream of zeroes and ones can be understood as an expression of the existing communication nets. The transmitted data remain largely invisible and are not consciously perceived as steadily flowing streams.

Sniff\_jazzbox makes private information visible and translates them into audible melodies of yearning for contact and exchange.

Urban space is extended into a narrative musical space. A place is given a distinctive melody.

The tune that the user hears changes with each change in position.

#### Maxwell's City

In 1864, James Clark Maxwell's equations described the behaviour of both electric and magnetic fields, and their interaction with matter.

Maxwell also predicted waves of oscillating electric and magnetic fields that move through empty space.

Radio and television took advantage of these physical laws.

And today we live in a world that is filled with electromagnetic waves that carry data to and from our mobile and stationary devices.

Maxwell's City in this sense would be a city with a second layer, consisting solely of electromagnetic waves.



Sniff\_jazzbox is an ArtApp developed by the Swiss art group AND-OR (www.and-or.ch). Documentation is available at: http://www.and-or.ch/sniff\_jazzbox/.

An Android version is available at: https://play.google. com/store/apps/details?id=com.andor.sniff\_jazzbox.