SenseCityVity: mobile crowdsourcing, urban perception, and collective action

→ Mexico is a country of young people and cities: With 120 million inhabitants, statistics show that 90 Mexican cities have populations larger than Lausanne’s, and one third of people are under 18. Youth face challenges related to education, access to opportunities, security, and the quality of their physical and social environment.

In this context, the engagement of young people in local civic concerns is key, following Manuel Castells’ view of development: “the process by which people, individually and collectively, enhance their capacities to improve their lives according to their values and interests”. Growing up in cities, how do young people perceive their environment? How do they react to security or waste management problems? How can they appropriate technologies to document these issues, reflect, and contribute to community action?

SenseCityVity is a mobile crowdsourcing framework where young people help render visible urban issues that matter to them. Integrating photos and video, online perception experiments, data analysis, and media creation, the work enables a reflection process through which proposals to address such issues can emerge. The project was initiated by the Social Computing Group (Prof. D. Gatica-Perez, Idiap-EPFL) and the National Center for Supercomputing (Prof. S. Ruiz Correa, IPICYT), with a team spanning expertise in psychology, communication, and computer science, and engaging a public high-school (CECYTE) in Guanajuato, Mexico.

Activities develop around urban data challenges. These are co-designed experiences where youth and researchers set out goals to explore and collect geo-localized images, audio, and video, capturing specific aspects of the environment – accessibility or waste, but also beauty and landmarks. Data is collected with a smartphone app, and used in several ways. First, with an online platform, images are used as stimuli for perception experiments, where students provide impressions about the scenes they see. Statistical analyses help identify concrete issues that local youth are more sensitive to. Furthermore, non-local observers can also provide perceptions online, which allows comparisons across types of observers. Second, qualitative research like focus groups provides clues on why places are perceived in a certain way. As the ultimate goal, the full experience, data and analyses, can be appropriated by the community for self- and group reflection and artistic expression, through concrete activities like online video creation, a film festival, and interaction in online social networks.

The project has attracted the attention of the local government, with pilots implemented in other cities and engaging other population groups. With new support from Mexico’s National Council of Science and Technology, the perspectives to turn SenseCityVity into a platform for interaction among citizens and other actors are very positive.

The project was funded by the Seed Money Programme of CODEV, which provides grants through an annual call encouraging applied research that generates positive impact on sustainable development. By end 2015, the programme had funded 81 projects from EPFL researchers with partners in 35 different countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

MORE INFORMATION:
→ http://www.cooperation.epfl.ch/SeedMoneyEN

Orc’idée 2016 – errances orientales

→ La convention Orc’idée prend ses quartiers les samedis 2 et dimanche 3 avril prochains dans les salles de cours du bâtiment CM avec un ancrage à Satellite. C’est l’Extrême-Orient dans toutes ses expressions qui est cette année à l’honneur!

Orc’idée à l’Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, c’est le plus grand rassemblement de jeu de rôle de Suisse, près de 500 personnes et 70 parties à disposition avec à nouveau des invités du monde ludique qui s’exprimeront cette année sur les liens entre jeu de rôle et monde académique. Sont également prévus un tournoi du jeu de figurine Warhammer 40K et deux tournois du jeu de cartes Magic. Sans oublier les activités autour du jeu de rôle grandeur nature et la présence en force de l’association lausannoise Ch’pillar, spécialiste du jeu de société.

→ Toutes les informations pratiques sur: www.orcidee.ch