

Bulletin 1

MAIN DESIGN PROJECT: 'THE OPEN HAND'



- 1 **Brief** Design and prototype an 'open hand': an interactive service which allows strangers to a city to feel welcome. The service is accessed by mobile phones. Focus is on Venice.

For this project:

- 'Interactive' means that the user does not passively receive information but contributes to the constantly changing information available to other people through the system
- 'Strangers' means those who visit the city, or plan to visit, but do not intend to stay permanently. This class includes national and international tourists, of course, but also other guests – students, temporary workers, businesspeople, itinerant sellers of goods or services, conference attendees etc.
- 'Service' means a program installed on a mobile phone. It is not, for this project, accessed by a web browser
- 'Mobile phone' means a communicator that can be held in one hand, not a laptop. It may, if you wish, offer other communication, imaging and sensing facilities.
- 'Venice' means the historic centre, the Comune's territory, or the region.

- 2 **Informational hospitality** When we arrive in a strange city, even in our own country, we are suddenly information-poor. We no longer swim in the familiar data-stream which supported us in our own home territory.

This has objective effects: everyday life becomes more difficult and time-consuming. Equally important are the subjective effects of information poverty: we do not feel 'at home' and may even feel unwelcome, in enemy territory.

This project asks you to design a service which acts as an 'open hand', a traditional gesture of welcome, for visitors to Venice. You should not aim your service at all types of stranger (its main users may be hosts, incidentally, not just guests) nor try to satisfy all needs: it should have a certain simplicity.

Above all, it should, in its form and its content, offer strangers a sense of generosity, helpfulness and hospitality. It should make them feel welcome.

[Image: 'Open Hand' revolving sculpture, Chandigarh, by Le Corbusier.
Its form refers to a hand, a city, and the dove of peace.
Photo by Shubh M Singh, www.flickr.com/photos/shubh/818102256/]