Design for Mobile Devices, DM3430A, fall 2011
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Location + context

ASSIGNMENT SHEET 31 OCT. 2011

Context, for mobile computing, is unpredictable. A person might use a smartphone while walking in the park, sitting at a desk, visiting a construction site, or sitting on a boat far from cell service. Context offers more than a design challenge, though: location and environment can become part of how a person interacts with the device.

Imagine a mobile website or smartphone application that aims to achive some small, well-defined end. You might tell a story; lead a user along a tour; share a point of view; relate statistical data to the physical world; or alter a person's perception of time.

This project, though, should use location, device orientation, acceleration, live audio/video/images, or other environmental cues as inputs. The user's world should be part of the interface.

Design that website or application. Build a PDF or paper prototype of your project, along with the documentation (wireframes and flowcharts) that you need to explain how the project works.

Objectives   Examine the ways in which real-world context, interactive media, and a user's background come together to create an experience. Experiment with media that change depending on their position in space. Consider ways of using prototyping to develop and present a more complex idea.

Specifications   Design for a hypothetical smartphone, of roughly the size and capabilities of the iPhone. Plan on a 320 × 480 px screen. You may use touch inputs, as well as audio in/out, video in/out, geolocation, acceleration, and orientation.

You may conceive of this as an application or a mobile-specific website – your preference. The project may include a map, but the map should not be the central part of the user experience.

Schedule
31 Oct.	Assign project
7 Nov.	Present design concepts
14 Nov.	Present revisions
21 Nov.	Present final version

Evaluation

CRITERION	SCORE
Concept	30%
Usability and navigation	30%
Visual design and screen typography	10%
Quality of documentation	30%

DELIVERABLES

Deliverables vary depending on the nature of the project. Your materials should adequately explain your idea.

As a guideline, you should probably bring 2–3 hi-fi wireframes, lo-fi wireframes for other key screens, and a flowchart that explains how users move around. If your project is small enough, set up the wireframes so that they can work as an on-screen PDF prototype.

If you find yourself making more than a dozen screens, you have probably chosen too large a task.

ABOUT DESIGN PROCESS

You should explore more than one design direction for the first critique, and possibly for the second. Bring variations to class.