

Situating Games in the Real World

(Uncle Roy All Around You)

Playing in public

- The spread of pervasive games into public settings raises new opportunities
 - The physical world is a rich source of content
 - The frisson of conducting secret missions in public
- But at the cost of introducing new risks
 - To the players as they act conspicuously, carry desirable technology, and do not attend to the world around them
 - To other people who may be confused, annoyed or even inadvertently become involved

BBC NEWS

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Last updated: Thursday, 12 May, 2005, 13:05 GMT 14:05 UK

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Does 'happy slapping' exist?

By Alexis Akeagviram
BBC News

Reports suggest a new craze in which young people slap strangers and film the assault on mobile phones is on the increase. But does this trend actually exist or is it the product of media hype?

A new breed of violence is sweeping the nation, if media reports are to be believed.

"Happy slapping" is thought to have originated as a craze in south London six months ago, before becoming a nationwide phenomenon, police and anti-bullying organisations have claimed.



It is thought the craze originated in south London.

Videos of the slaps are reportedly sent to other mobile phones and posted on the internet.

Uncle Roy All Around You



Uncle Roy's tactics

- The ritualistic briefing

"The bit of anxiety that accrued during the hour-long wait for my turn was minor compared to the state I found myself in next: stripped of all belongings, on my own in central London, with 45 minutes and counting to complete a task whose magnitude I could only imagine."

- Ambiguous clues that implicate the public

"Not knowing who at first was a performer and who was not a performer – everyone is a performer"

- Use of physical locations, props and actors

*"Loved seeing someone approach the car."
"Enjoyed going into the building"*

- Crossing the boundaries of public behaviour

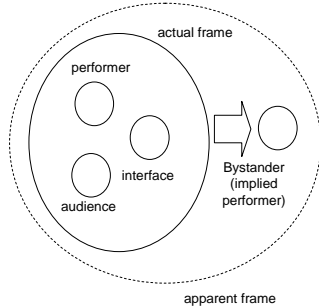
"At one point near the end you were directed to get into a car. I felt uneasy about this because you 'never get in a car with a stranger' but you assume it must be part of the game because of the sequence of events that lead you to that point"

- These tactics work because the players trust the artists and the venue:

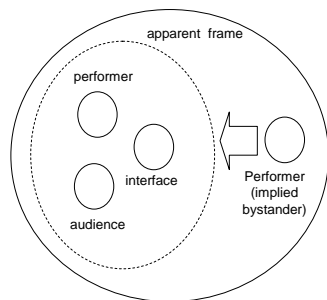
"The last bit was very odd – but u didn't feel too uncomfortable. The set up is lightly connected - it is not blind trust as I have some institutional trust in Blast Theory and the Institute of Contemporary Arts."

Blurring the Frame

- **Strategy 1:** appear to extend the frame
 - draw on the external world as content
 - imply that bystanders are involved
 - heighten the feeling of being scrutinised by bystanders



- **Strategy 2:** appear to shrink the frame
 - imply that actors are bystanders
 - imply that props and controlled spaces are in fact external objects and spaces



Implications

- Designers need to consider how to frame an experience
 - Blurring the frame can provide exciting new opportunities
 - However, it can also introduce new risks
- Uncle Roy exploits the opportunities while carefully managing the risks
- Are there other strategies?
