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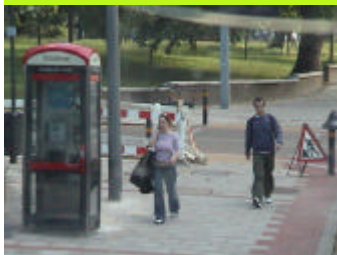
## Data images and data subjects:

between physical and virtual identities

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## RIS:OME Background



- The RIS:OME project at the University of Surrey is a 3 year research project, funded by Intel Research.
- It investigates the **social effects** of mass phone ownership are, and the **risks** it is likely to present.
- RIS:OME addresses barriers to the uptake of mobile devices: concerns over **privacy**, distrust of **security**, and perceptions of high **risk** in mobile information ownership, control and management.
- We examine **culturally specific patterns of informational privacy and trust in the UK.**

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# Executive Summary

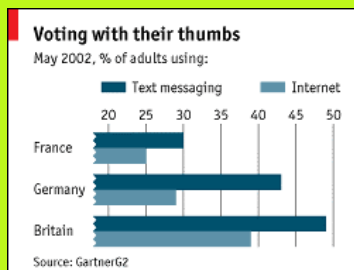


- Data subjects and data images
- Anonymised data + location = unique user
- The secret life of data: surveillance and data mining
- 'Because it was there': the unexpected uses of the data image.
- The data image as Frankenstein's monster.

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# Mobile use in the UK



- Mobile ownership stands at over 85% of population.
- Britons currently send over 30 txt messages per person per month.



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## Data subjects and data images



- Physical and virtual identities:  
**Data subject vs. data image**
  - Data image: accumulated information generated by surveillance
  - No axiomatic connection between a data subject and their data image
    - Information can be inaccurate, incorrect, out of context, etc
  - Data subject has no control over the data image: it is collected, processed and circulated independently of the data subject's agency or awareness.

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## Between physical and virtual identity

- Eg: the Home Office's ARC project
  - From physical identity: is John Smith valid?
  - To virtual identity: is John Smith's card valid?
- There is a presumed signification between data subject and their data image.
- Or rather, the relationship is irrelevant: only the data image matters.

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## Disjunctures of identity

- Function of surveillance is 'social sorting' based upon data image (Lyon 2002)
  - Social sorting: 'categorising people and populations ... in order to influence, manage or control them'.
- Thus, the data image (and its effects) can be more 'real' than the physical identity.
  - Eg: credit reference agencies, 'policing by profiling'
- That is, the data image is overdetermining: it becomes the criterion upon which decisions are made, unrelated to any actual agency of the data subject.

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## Mobile identities and surveillance



- Due to their technical capacities and the public spaces within which they are used, mobiles enable very direct forms of user surveillance.
- It's a question of information ownership and control: who has it, how is it negotiated, and how is it regulated?
- Traffic data, personal data, location tracking and collated SMS messages.

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## The problem of mobility

- Adding n to x: place to user



Respondent: the moment I as an infrastructure service provider, the moment my traffic starts to show not just the time a handset was on but where it was, my traffic data becomes 'hot'. You know, I start to treat this stuff with a completely different level of security.

The moment that I know that 0776805xxxx didn't just receive a message at 2.30 in the afternoon but was in London EC1, I get the creeps about that, I'm going to treat my information with a whole different level of security, you know, I will probably delete that information from my databases. ... I will get rid of it because it frightens me so much.

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## The problem of surveillance

- Asymmetric surveillance
  - Surveillance of users by the state or by corporations
    - Unequal + non-reciprocal = absence of trust
    - Do regulators defend users or manage markets?
    - The Panoptic sort: when users become data subjects
    - Does it make a difference if it's in the user's interest?
- Negative Trust Cycle
  - Lack of trust ? more security ? more identification ? more processing of personal data ? lack of trust

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## The problem of mobility redux

- Location based problems
  - the necessity of vast amounts of information to provide marginal service improvements

Interviewer: I've seen a lot of market business pitches for LBS...

Respondent: Oh, you're in front of Starbucks and you get the ting-ting? That's complete bullshit, that's ridiculous... That's ridiculous. That is not a consumer-friendly service. It is not good marketing, it will not happen, it will not take off. I'm the biggest Starbucks fan there is. I have ten a day yet when I'm walking in front of Starbucks, the last thing you want to do is beep me to get a coffee. Odds are, I've just been in where I've just had a latte. ... You cannot guess what's in someone's mind and location does not determine motivation. So the fact that I'm in a Starbucks is completely irrelevant to my desire for a coffee. And any good marketer sees that.



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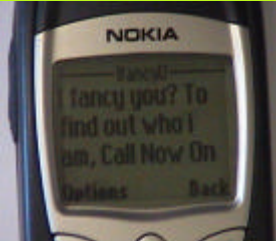
## Data image as Frankenstein's monster

- Does m-commerce - and digital communications more generally - generate a spectral user beyond the control of users - and how can we know?
- And what would users do about it?
- It is precisely the unexpected and unintended use of subject's data that is the most intrusive and least controllable.
  - Eg: RIPA, ATCSA, US air passenger manifest laws

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## Conclusions: Dr Livingston, I presume?



- The growth of m-commerce, especially the localised delivery of services to non spatially confined consumers – in general, a beneficial advance – has the effect of generating a new, mediated smooth space within which the user is always captured, and, more importantly, prefigured.
- This prefiguring can be unsettling, and overbearing.
- More importantly, it is experienced as invasive and overdetermining.

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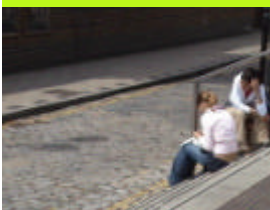
## Further Contacts

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RIS:OME

<http://risome.soc.surrey.ac.uk>



RIS:OME Conference addressing these themes: "The Life of Mobile Data", April 14-15, 2004, at the University of Surrey.

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