



You are
(Mostly)
Here

Digital Space & The Context Problem

Andrew Hinton / inkblurt.com / IDEA Conf 2008

Vegas

Everyone you know



Camera



Transcription



Your address book

2

Let's say you're in Vegas. And you go do stuff... you do the sort of stuff that a slogan like "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas" would indicate as appropriate to do in Vegas.

Well, let's say that Vegas, without telling you, decided to surprise you and all its visitors with a new service. The new service is: people will watch everything you spend money on in Vegas,

>> via the security cameras that are already there.

>> and they will transcribe everything you spend money on -- keep a nice, line-by-line record of everything that you do in the city. Products you buy ... shows you see ... services you acquire. Oh, but it gets better ... I mean, this service is *awesome* you're gonna love it.

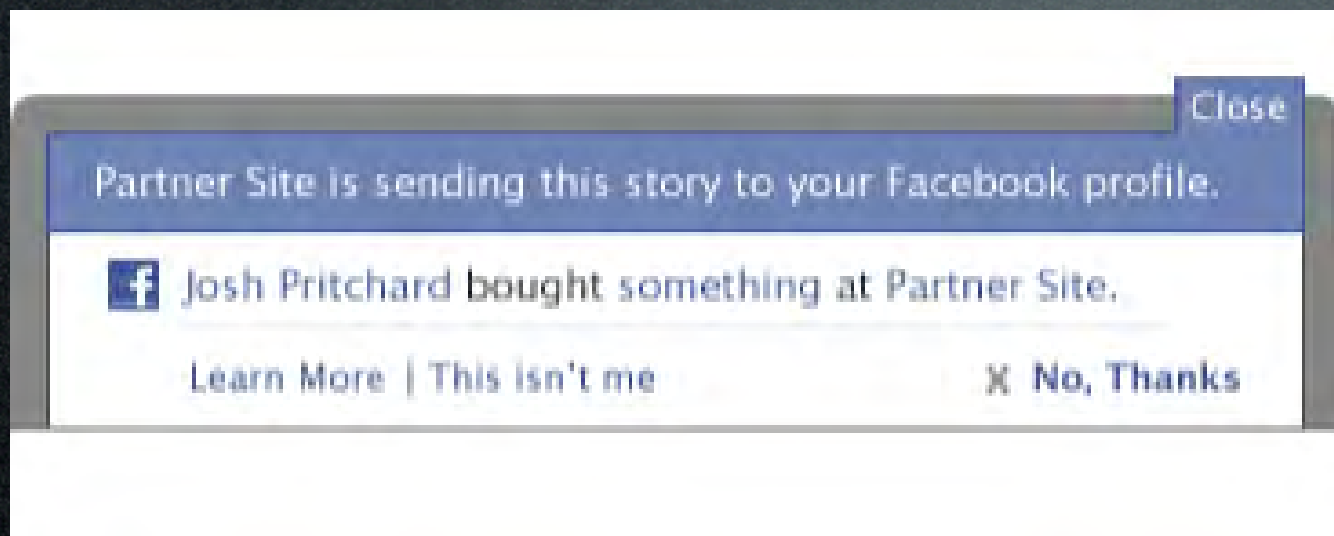
>> They then access your address book that's in your hotel room, and get all the contacts out of it, and

>> They send a notice to everyone you know, each time you do something in Vegas.

That's a great service, right? I mean ... right? Who wouldn't want that?

Well, of course, you wouldn't.

But that's what happened with Facebook Beacon.

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

Beacon

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

Stop invading
my privacy!



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Beacon was a service that Facebook launched with very little warning. Essentially, if you were logged into Facebook, it would track your activities at certain partner sites and announce them to your friends' list via their news feeds. So if you were at Amazon and bought a book or some music, your friends list would know about it.

Facebook assumed it was something people would just love -- essentially a recommendation engine that gave you an idea of what your friends were buying as a way of knowing what you might be interested in buying too.

It was awfully convenient for them to assume that users would love it, because it was potentially going to be terrific for their business model. But unlike Vegas, where it would've taken a major expense and work to create the infrastructure, not to mention a radical overhaul of Nevada privacy laws, there was relatively little inertia in the way for Facebook to implement this so-called "feature."

So what was the outcome?

>>It caused a huge user revolt and a lot of controversy. Why? Because Facebook didn't take the time to understand their users -- they designed only for themselves.



“Friend?”

They created a service that they *thought* was well-meaning and good, but it was ultimately just a selfish act. And it was perceived as a monster that misunderstood how people thought of their network of friends. If you've seen Frankenstein, you know this scene doesn't end well...

Language

Context



This is a urinal. It's also probably the most influential work of art in the 20th century. To be exact, it's a urinal that Marcel Duchamp submitted to an art show in 1917. He didn't just submit it, though. He scrawled R. Mutt, 1917 on the side, like an artist's signature, called it "Fountain" stuck it on a pedestal, and *then* submitted it. It was a splendid act of Dada. But it ended up being more than merely a joke.

>>By labeling it,
>>and putting it in a different context,
Duchamp changed the frame of reference for the object. It was a challenge against everything that had come before: every cultural assumption or taboo. It eventually affected how people thought about art, high and low culture, everything.

Image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Duchamp_Fontaine.jpg



These issues of language and context can have history-changing effects. Here's a graphic that was on boingboing.net not long ago: Notice the grainy satellite photo. The labels say there's a decontamination vehicle, a security post, and a large Chemical Munitions bunker. That's enough to convince anybody that there's trouble afoot.

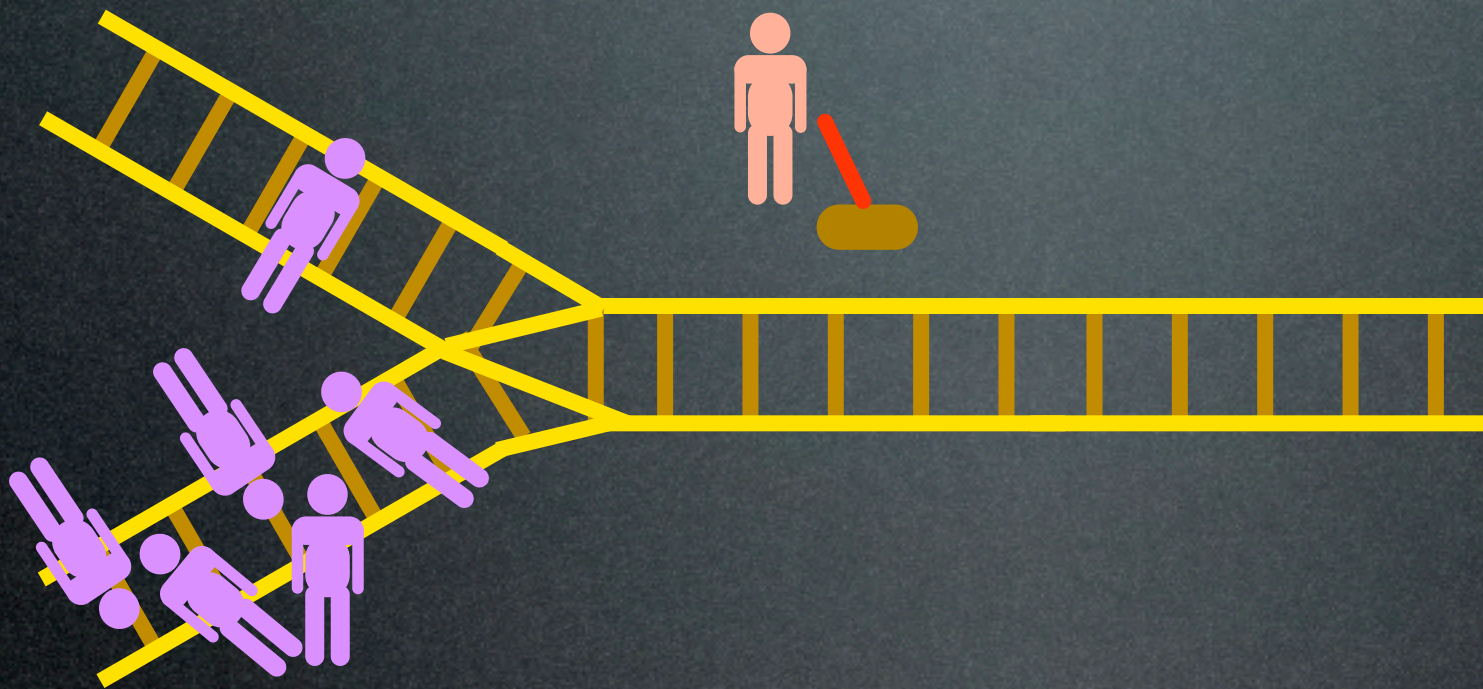
<http://www.boingboing.net/2008/08/12/errol-morris-on-phot.html>



But the real trouble that's afoot is the language. This can just as easily be a delivery truck, an SUV, and an IHOP.

<http://www.boingboing.net/2008/08/12/errol-morris-on-phot.html>

The trolley conundrum.



90% Say “Yeah, I’d pull the lever.”

8

This is the trolley conundrum.

Imagine there's a trolley, and it's going pretty fast, but its breaks are out.

>> And it's racing down the tracks.

>> You happen to be standing there by the tracks, and you can see that the trolley is hurtling toward a fork in the track.

>> On one side of the fork, there's someone lying on the track, unconscious.

>> On the other side of the fork, there are FIVE people lying on the track, unconscious.

Why they're unconscious, we don't know. Maybe there was a rave last night in the train yard.

Regardless, not only are you witness to this impending catastrophe -- you also happen to be the only person within reach of a lever that happens to control which way the trolley will go in the fork.

Right now, it's set to go down the side that will surely kill five innocent, unconscious ravers. If you pull the lever, you'll save those five people, but kill one.

Do you pull the lever?

In experiments where a huge sample of people were asked this question,

>> Nine out of Ten said: Yes... I'd pull the lever.

Fascinating. ... But that's not all!

<http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/%7Ejgreene/>

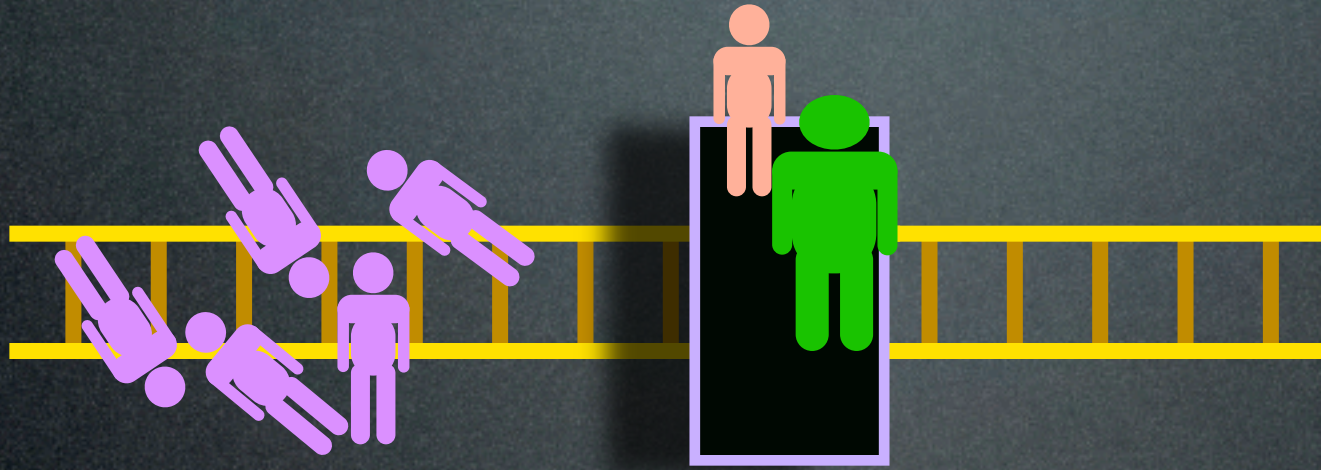
<http://mindfulhack.blogspot.com/2008/06/evolutionary-psychology-would-you-shove.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/31/health/psychology/31book.html>

(First proposed in Phillipa Foot in 1967, a paper called “Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect”)

<http://people.howstuffworks.com/trolley-problem.htm>

The trolley conundrum, Part Deux.



90% Say “No, I couldn’t push him to his death.”

There’s another part.
This is a similar problem, with just a few differences.

So, there’s a trolley hurtling down the track.
>>Only this time, there’s no fork in the track, and the five unconscious people are lying on it.

And, this time, you’re not on the side with a lever --
>>you’re standing on an overpass, above the track.
>> And a huge bodybuilder the size of Andre the Giant is leaning precariously over the side of the railing on the same platform, watching the trolley as it approaches.

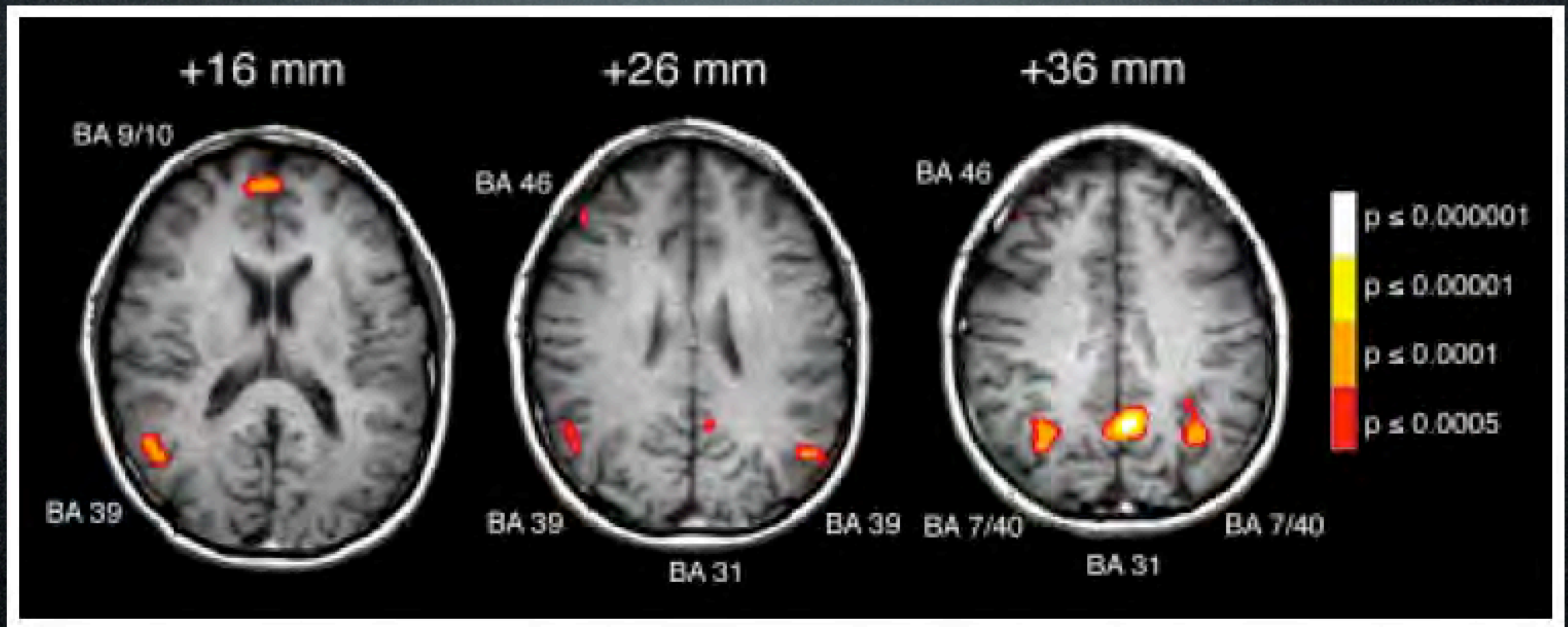
You know that the trolley will kill those five people. But you also know that this guy is definitely big enough -- and poorly balanced enough -- that, if you just barely pushed him, he’d fall off the platform, in front of the trolley, and would be killed ... but his bulk would stop the trolley.

Would you do it?

>>Nine out of Ten people said ... No. Even though, in terms of loss of life, it’s exactly the same.

This problem’s been around for at least forty years, and it’s been used to illustrate situational ethics all that time. But only recently are scientists starting to figure out what may be behind it.

Brains!



Some scientists have been working on why we do this, and they think they have some answers. It turns out that, when you ask trolley conundrum of people who are in an fMRI scan, you see that each version seems to engage the brain differently.



Frontal Lobe



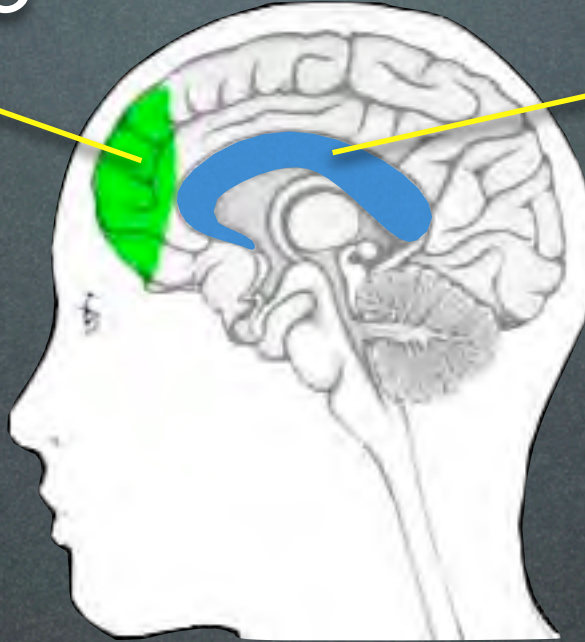
“I would pull the lever ...”



Limbic System



“I will not push the man...”



Morality

11

>> Our frontal lobes are more recently evolved, and house our more rational, logical processes. So this part tends to engage the version involving the lever, because it's a sort of cost-benefit analysis, and we're more physically removed from the results of our action -- pulling a lever isn't as visceral, or intimate an act as pushing another person.

>> Let's say this is sort of the Spock side.

>> Then there's the Limbic System, which is quite ancient. It handles a lot of stuff, like breathing and other bodily functions, but it also handles instinctive things like fear, revulsion, pleasure. An awful lot of our behavior really comes from here, and our frontal lobe tries to make sense of it, often immediately after the fact.

>> Just to keep the metaphor clear, I'll say this is more on the Captain Kirk side of things.

What these scientists contend is that, when we encounter a problem like this, we'd like to think that we're very rational, but in fact both of these parts of the brain are engaged -- but they have to fight it out to see which side wins. As illustrated here:

>>

The ultimate point is:

>> what we call Morality is the result of this fight between parts of our brains.

Now, why am I going into all this? Well, I think this is just fascinating stuff, for one thing. But the point I want to make here isn't so much about morality in particular ...

14 SEPTEMBER 2001 VOL 293 SCIENCE www.sciencemag.org
<http://www.wnyc.org/shows/radiolab/episodes/2006/04/28>

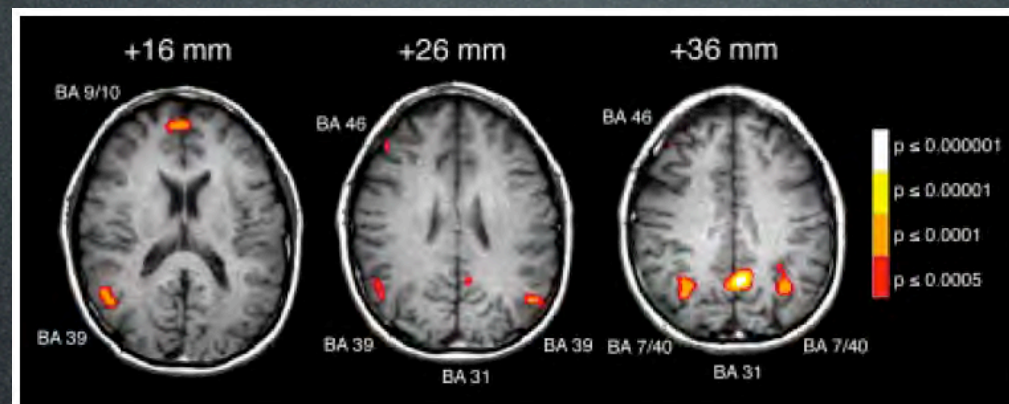
“Two findings from our most recent neuroimaging study support this interpretation. First, we have found that in response to difficult moral dilemmas such as this a brain region associated with response conflict (the anterior cingulate cortex, or ACC) exhibits increased activity, suggesting that the difficulty associated with dilemmas such as this results from response conflict and not just a need for extended computation. Second, we have found that in response to dilemmas such as this brain regions associated with cognitive control (dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, or DLPFC, and inferior parietal cortex) exhibit greater activity when people favor the promotion of the best overall consequences.”
<http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/%7Ejgreene/>

Image borrowed from: <http://www.wiredtowinthemovie.com/mindtrip.html>

“How (and where) does moral judgment work?”

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6VH9-47C8S3T-H&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=0bc29a2265d81ff634034aaf8d7ac5bd

Context



Language

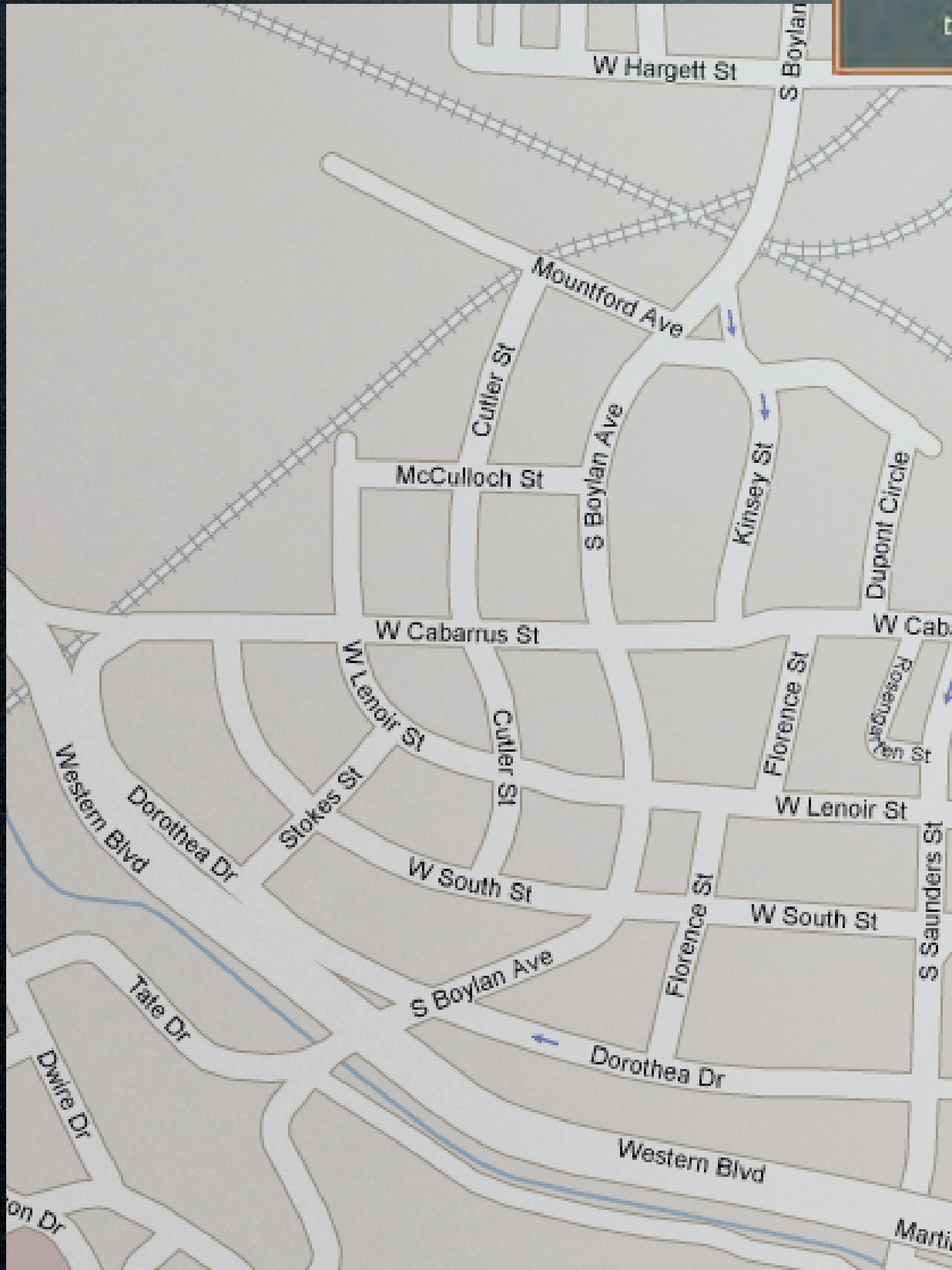
as what this tells us about the power of context and language.
>>The fact that context is, to some degree, biological for us, and that our brains respond that differently to just a few changes in context.
And then there's the fact that these trolley stories are not actual physical situations that people are in,
>> they're just STORIES. And yet, our brains still respond as if we were there, making the decision for real.
>>Language and Context are symbiotic -- they influence each other so deeply, there's no separating them.

When I say language, I mean it in the broad sense that includes not just written or spoke words, but signs, symbols, illustrations, and maps.
Maps in particular are archetypal examples of how language informs context.

Map (Language)

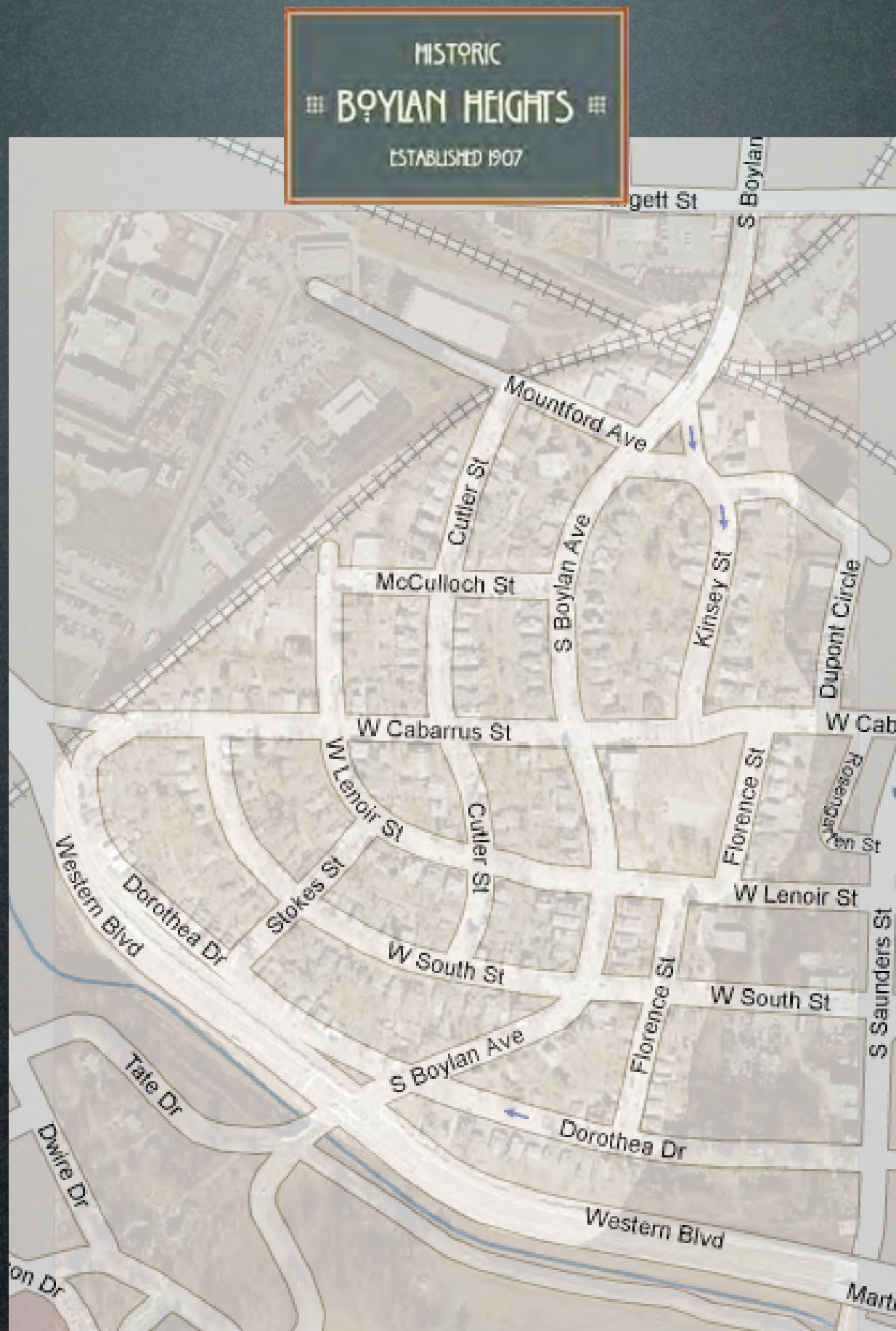


Territory (Context)



This is Boylan Heights, a historic neighborhood in Raleigh, North Carolina. On the left is the map, snapped from Google Maps. Maps are a very specialized form of language that we use to shape our understanding of geographic contexts. On the right is a satellite view, with the Boylan Heights area highlighted. Now, in the physical world, map and landscape are not the same thing. At least, not literally. But in every way *except* literally the same, the closer you look, the more the boundaries blur.

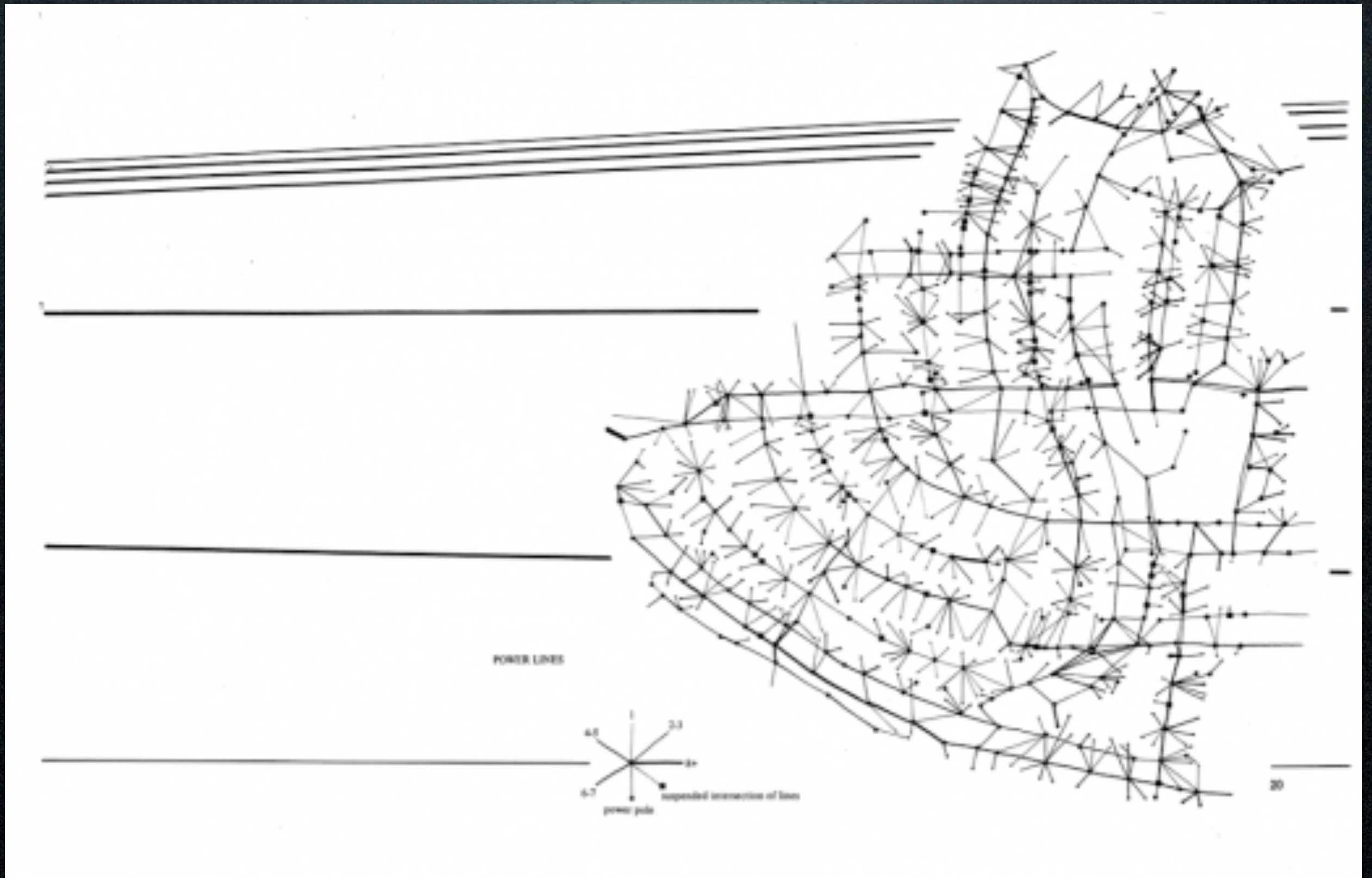
“A map is to help you navigate streets.”



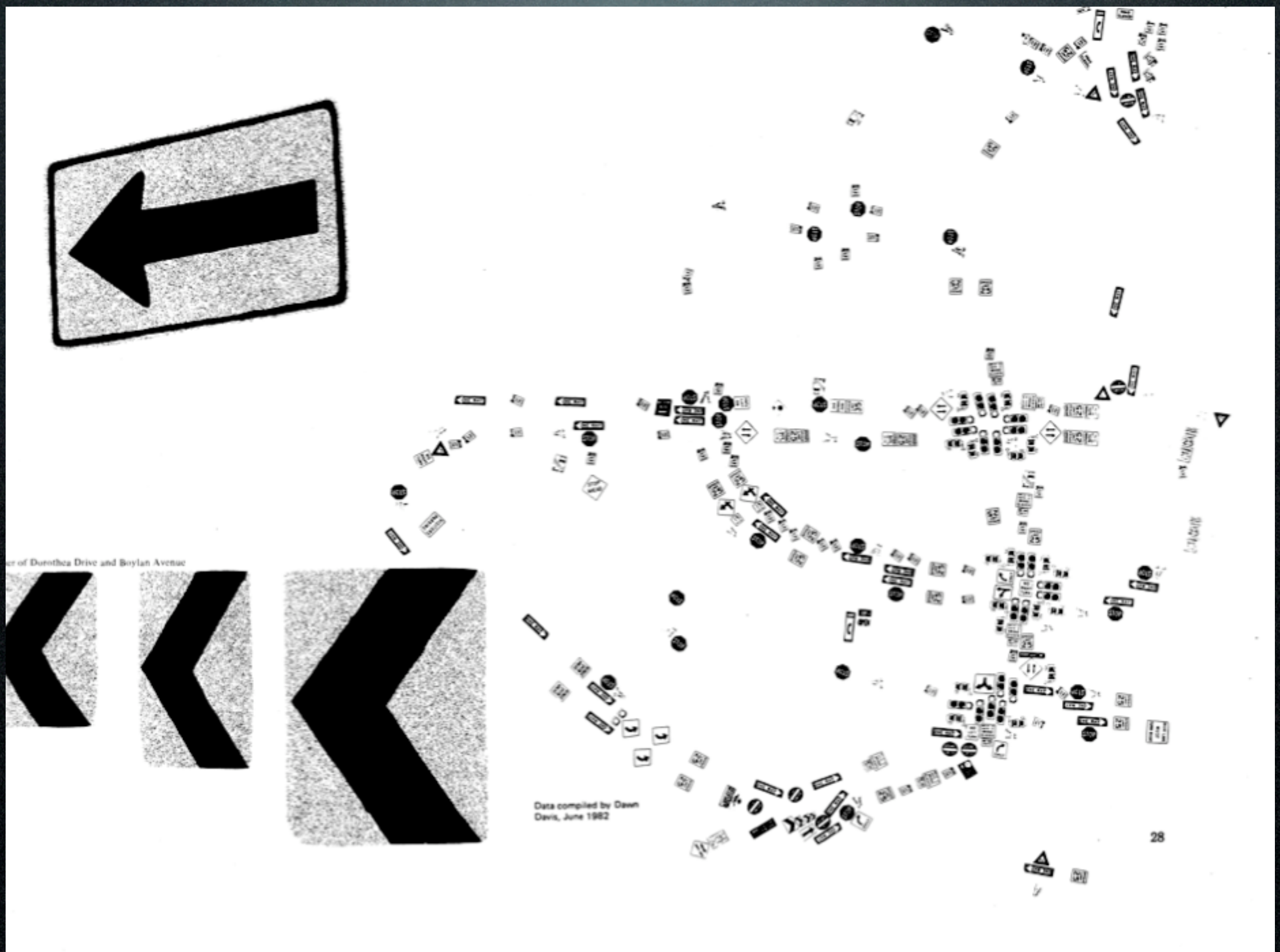
“This neighborhood is made of streets with names, and other stuff without names.”

When you look at this photograph of Boylan Heights, you already have a filter with which you comprehend the physical reality you see. We're so used to seeing neighborhoods mapped with street maps, we automatically narrow our comprehension of the reality: "I'm looking at a series of streets, with a bunch of anonymous houses, trees and stuff mixed in." The map narrows the your focus to one very thin slice of this neighborhood's reality.

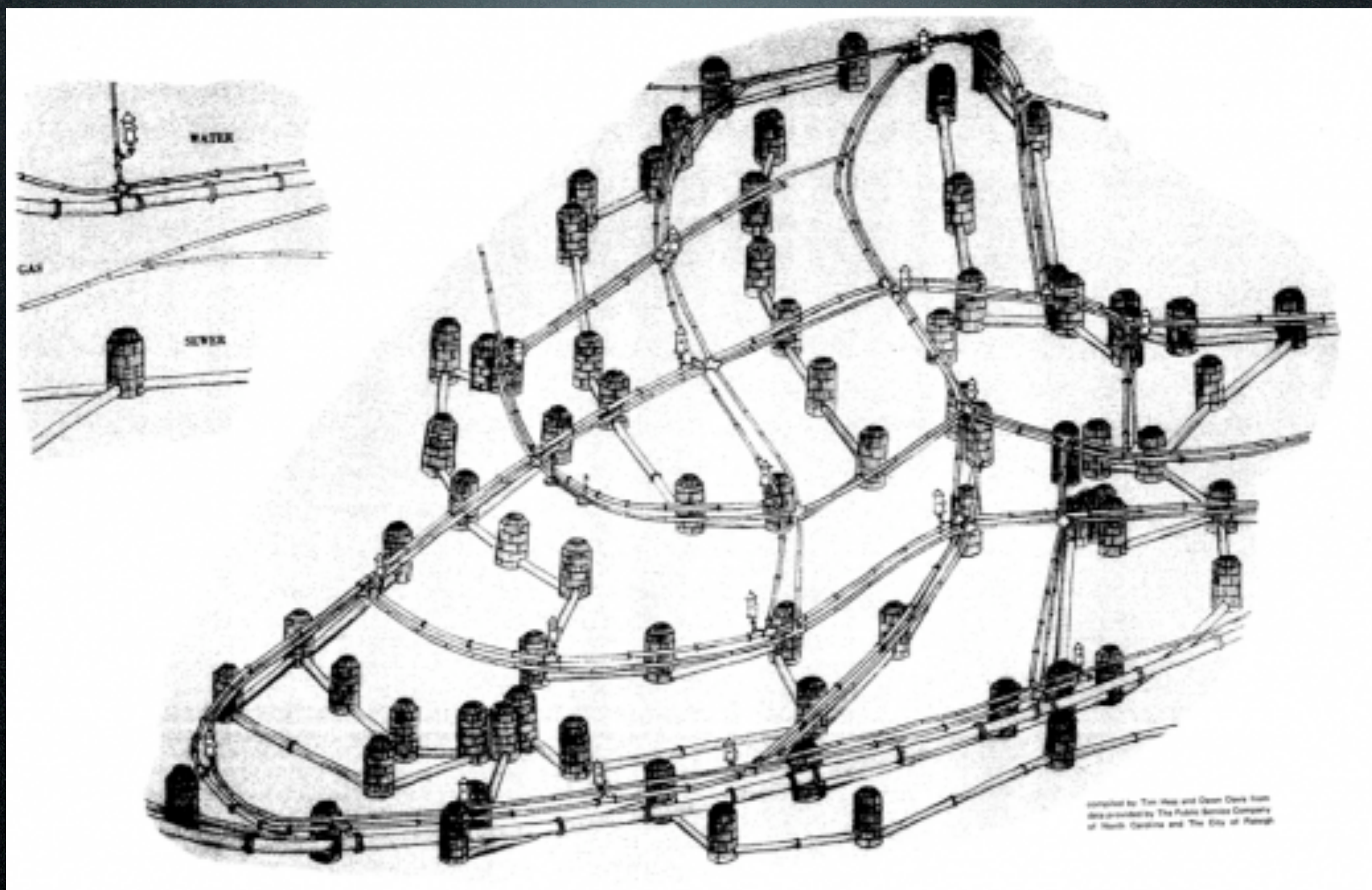
Well there's something special about Boylan Heights. It was the subject of a sort of obsession of a writer, artist & professor of geography named Denis Wood. It was where he lived when he was teaching at North Carolina State University. Some of you may have heard about this if you listen to the radio show This American Life on NPR. Wood is something of an artist-philosopher, and for a while he had a project going where he mapped his neighborhood in some unconventional ways.



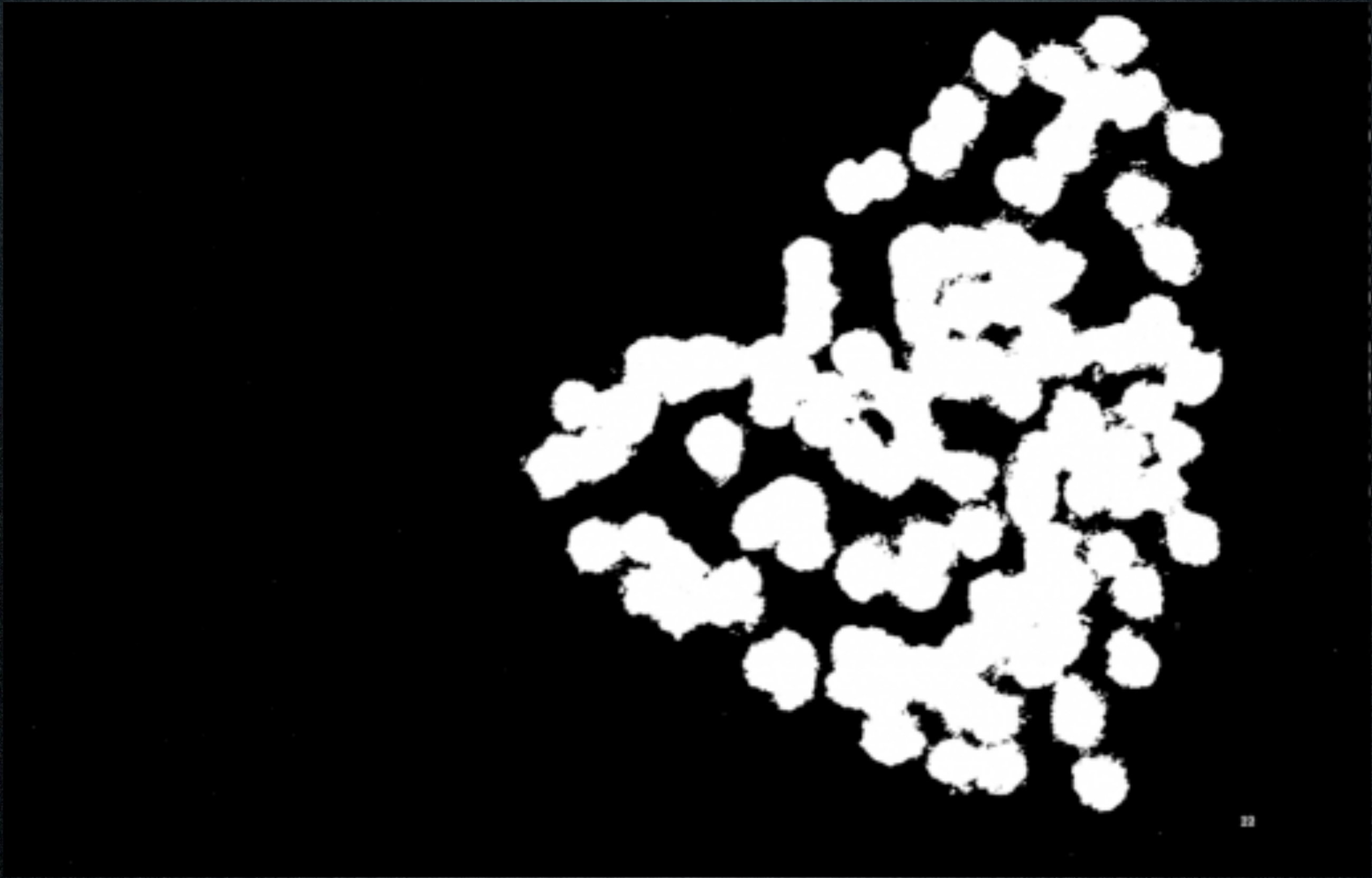
There's the map of Overhead Lines map ... tracking the various phone & power lines throughout the neighborhood.



The street signs map.



There's the underground map, showing sewer & water lines and cisterns.

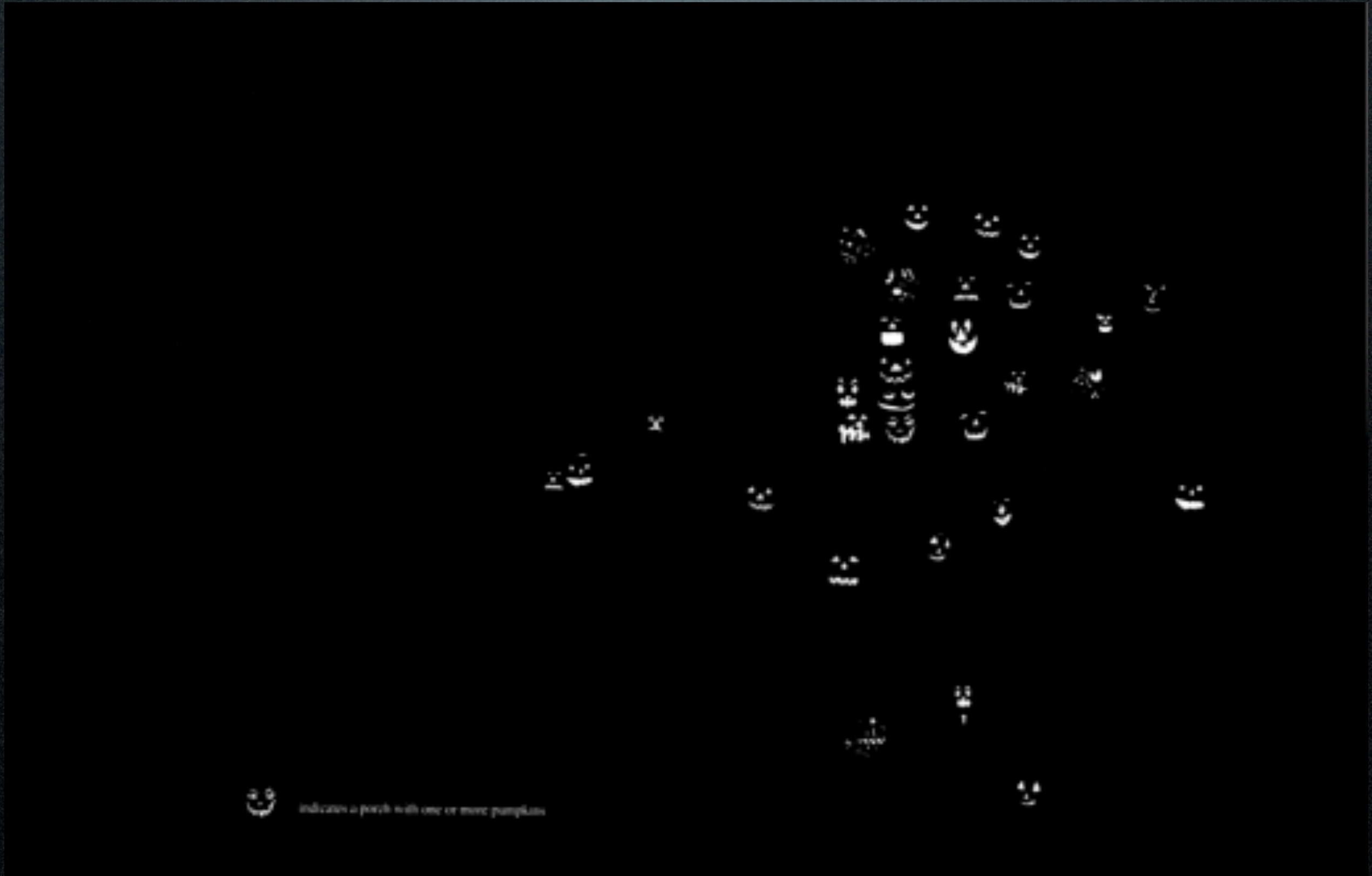


There's the streetlights map, showing where light divides darkness after sundown.



This is the “Mentions in the Newsletter” Map that tracked mentions of certain addresses in the neighborhood newsletter over the years. Interestingly, no matter who lived in the homes during that time, the same homes tended to have more mentions than others. Does this mean certain homes just command more attention? Does it mean particular homes attract certain kinds of owners?

(From “You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination” by Katherine Harmon)



This is my favorite, of course. It represents the porches in the neighborhood where you find one or more jack-o-lanterns.

Interestingly, it corresponds highly to the “mentions in the newsletter” map.



The territory was there first,
and the map came later.

But the map has a lot of power over how we
understand the territory.

Taken together, these maps are incredibly enlightening.

After all, a neighborhood is made of *neighbors* --the streets are just one very thin slice of what the place means to human beings.

What these maps remind us of is that we often receive messages about contexts without really thinking, and without questioning what other experience or wisdom might be hidden from us because we haven't looked or asked.

It's not the map's fault -- the map is just doing the work that the maker assumed it needed to do. If it did everything, it would cease to be a useful, working map.

>> The territory was there first, and the map came later.

>> But the map has a lot of power over how we understand the territory.

“The map’s effectiveness
is a consequence
of the selectivity, or interest,
with which it brings the past
to bear on the present...
maps work by serving interests.”

-- Denis Wood
The Power of Maps

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Maps work by serving specific interests. That’s not bad, it’s just what makes a map a map.
Every time we shape language with context, it’s serving some interest. Whether consciously or explicitly, or not.
I suspect that more often than not, when we describe context with language, we don’t consider the options because they haven’t occurred to us.

So, now you may be wondering when we’re going to get to the “digital” part of this talk.

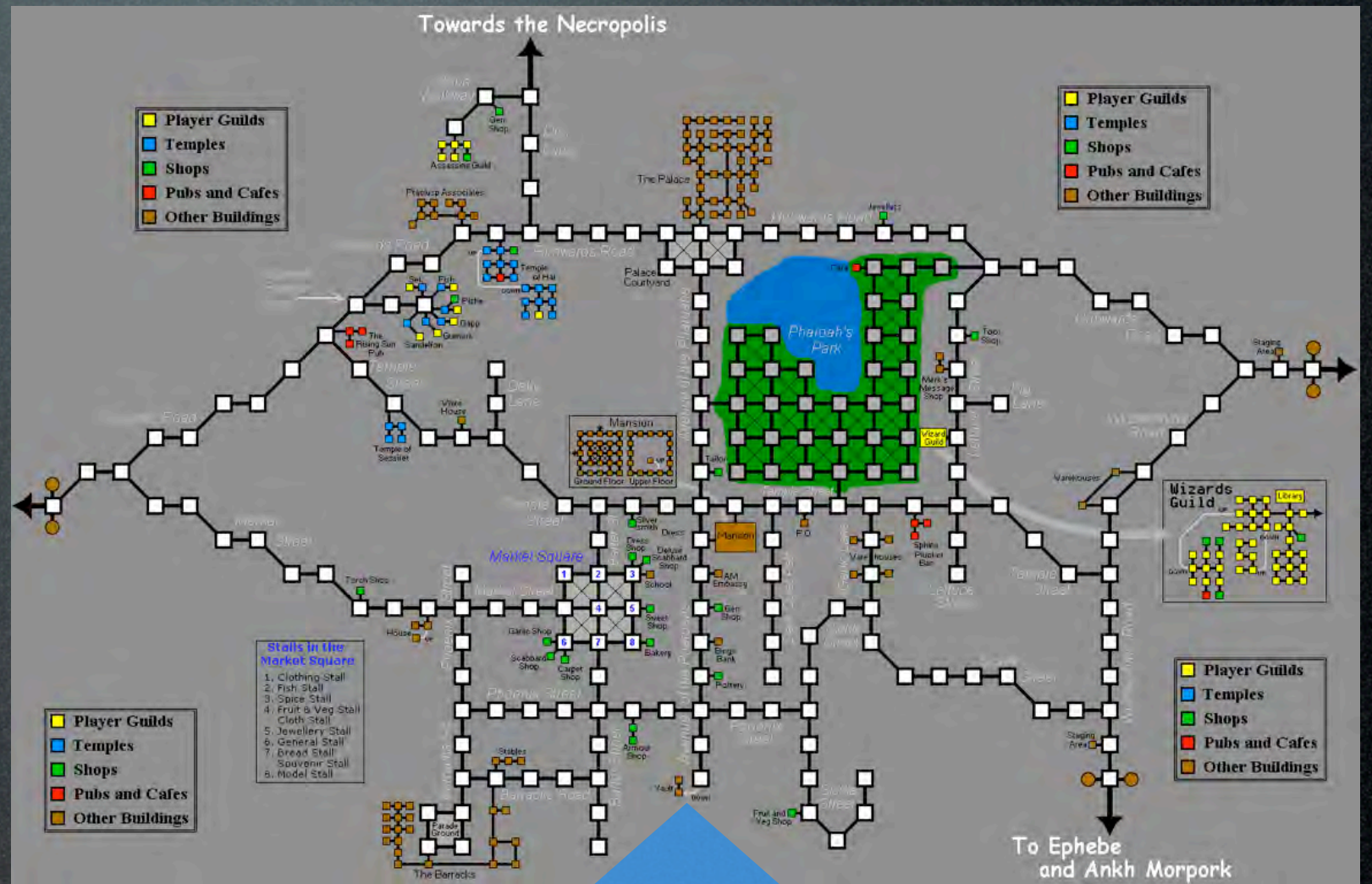
Well, online, we have lots of maps that shape how we understand the things they describe. But online, there’s a further wrinkle.

(quote slightly edited, from page 1 of The Power of Maps, Denis Wood)

MUD (Multi-User Domain)

@dig

```
@@ Start here!  
@dig/teleport  
meetingroom=meetingroom;meetingroom;me;m,  
lobby;lobby;lo;l;Out;ou;o  
@desc here=The meeting room is ornate,  
and is large enough for about 200 people.  
&OOC here=0  
@desc lobby=The exit has two doors and  
leads into the lobby.  
@succ lobby=You have left the meeting  
room.  
@osucc lobby=has entered.  
@odrop lobby=has left.  
move out  
@desc meetingroom=The meeting room  
entrance has two doors.  
@succ meetingroom=Now in the Meeting Room  
@osucc meetingroom=has left for the  
meeting room.  
@odrop meetingroom=has entered the  
meeting room.  
move meetingroom
```



Language

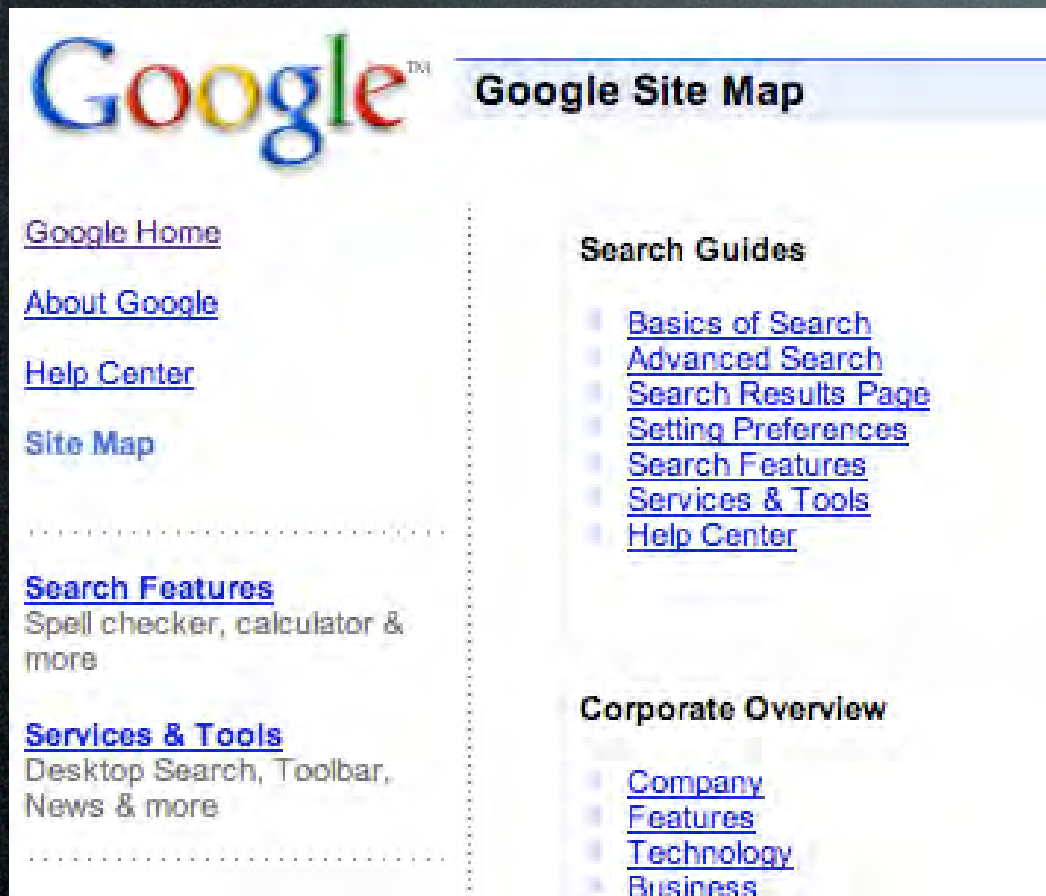
Context

MUDs are “multi-user domains.” They’re precursors to things like World of Warcraft and Second Life, but experienced in text only, and navigated or played via command line. You move around in them by typing “north” or “forward” or other commands; you also type commands to look around, to interact with objects, and to interact with other people who are simultaneously in the same MUD. This is all done using typed, textual language. I bring them up because they illustrate something very important about digital space. To make a MUD (or a MUSH or MOO or any other variation), you start by making “rooms.” And to make a room, you use a command, >>such as “dig” -- followed by a lot of parameters. >>MUDs and their kin have their own script language for their creation. >>And what you create ends up being experienced like a series of connected rooms -- sub-contexts all making up the larger context of the MUD. This is a map of just part of a long-time MUD based on Discworld. >> So, even though I’m showing you a map here, which is just another language artifact, the visual is meant to evoke the fact that there’s a *context* being created with this language. **But unlike Boylan Heights, there’s no physical context with which to compare this map.**

In digital space, the Map creates the Territory.

In digital space, the Map creates the Territory. Literally.
Now, I know most of you don't use MUDS, MUSHs & MOOs. At least, probably not in a while.
But the Web is really no different.

Representation



Instantiation



[[20 MIN MARK!!]]

On the Web, we make the territories, the contexts, by mapping them. And the map becomes its own territory, and vice versa.

At Google, there's a site map ...

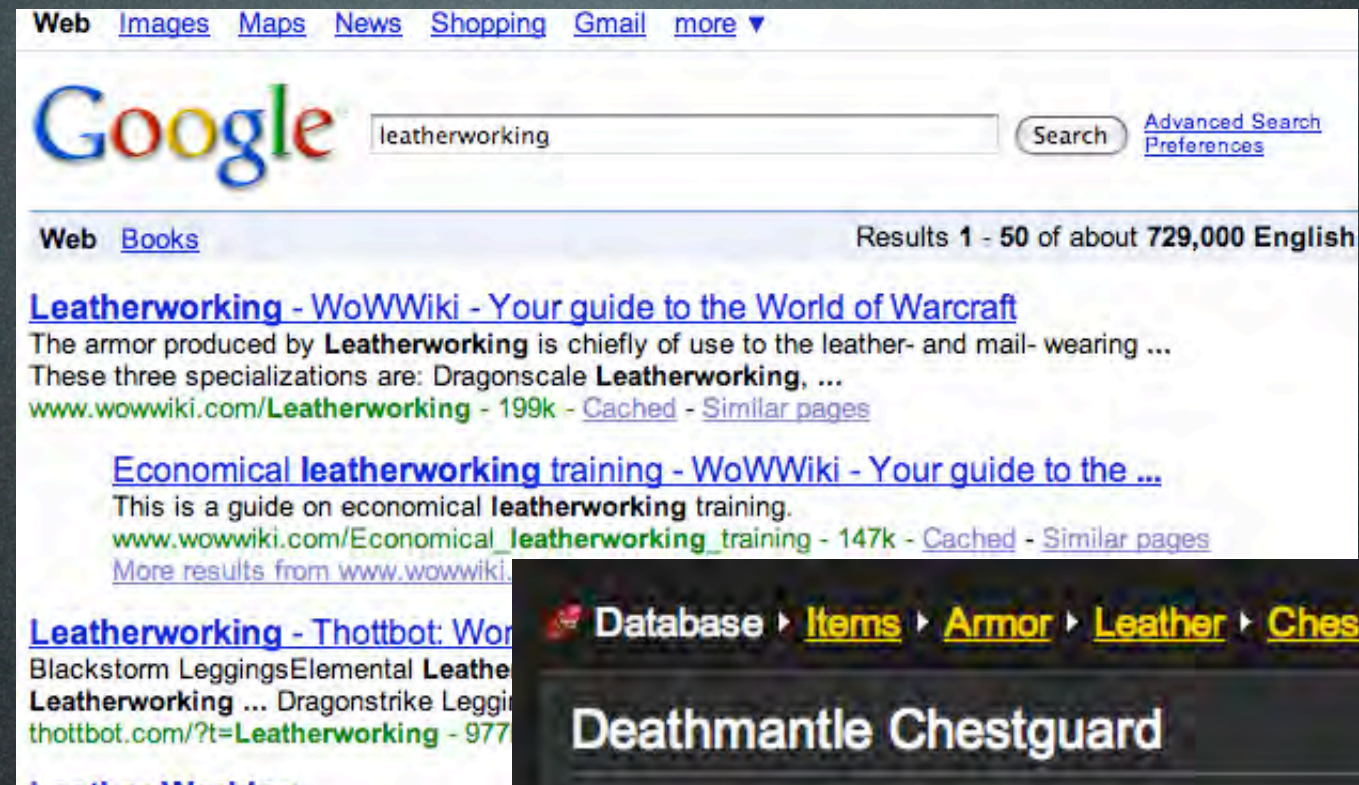
A site map represents the structure of the space you're in ... like a map at a shopping Mall.

In a Mall, it would just tell you where to walk in the separate, external space. Like how to get from the Apple store to the Food court.

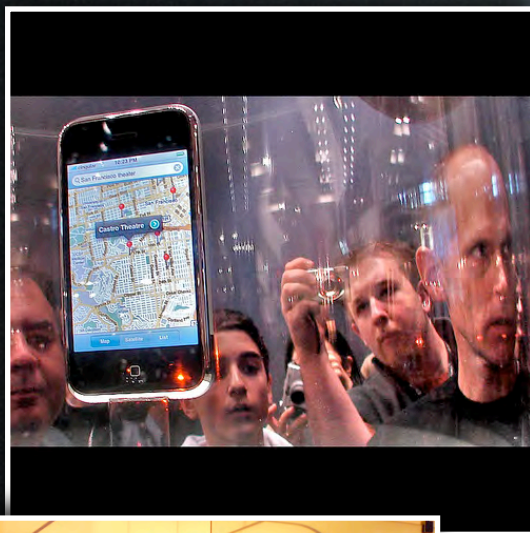
>>

Except that, *this* map is the place itself ... when you use it, you move through the space it instantiates. On the Web, representation and instantiation merge.
Weirdly, this is starting to trickle over into the physical world. If we think of Google as a sort of map to not only things we do online but things we do offline as well, it can get strange.

Fuzzy boundaries between real & virtual.



For example, let's say you were
>>interested in how saddles are made, and
>>you searched for "leatherworking" on Google.
As you can see, the first items to come up will be about how to make leather goods in the land of Azeroth -- that is, the multiplayer game World of Warcraft. Why? you may ask ... well, there are over 8 million people playing the game, and a lot of of them want to know
>> how to make a Deathmantle Chestguard.
Remember, as Denis Wood told us earlier, Maps work by serving Interests.
If this makes you feel a little dizzy, it should. It's the sort of vertigo you get when you realize we're living in more than one place, simultaneously.



The space we live in is less and less exclusively
“physical.”

The world we live in is less and less exclusively physical.

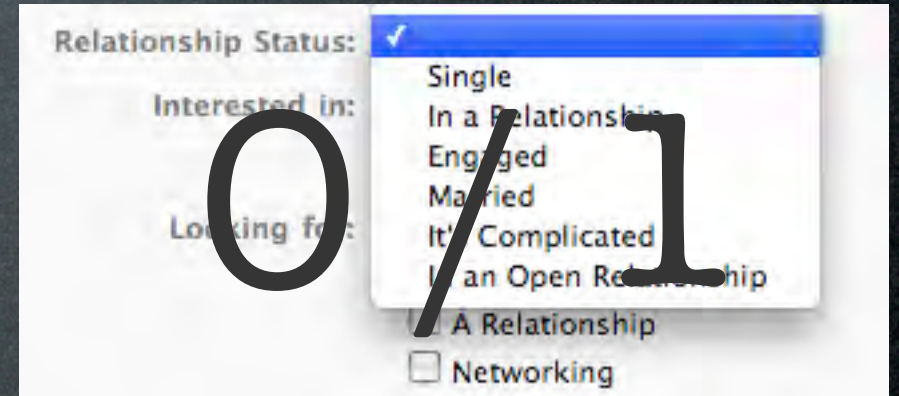
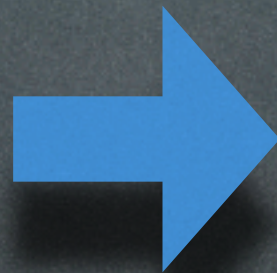
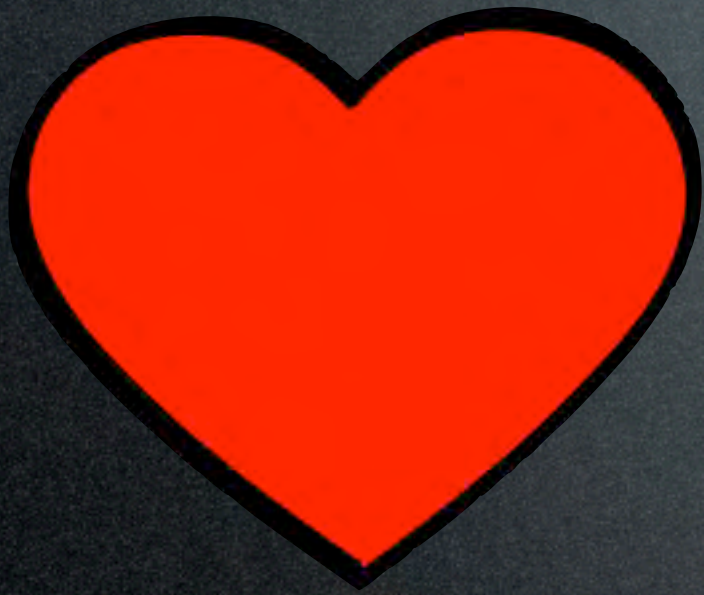
Just as I’ve been speaking, quite a few of you have undoubtedly used text messaging, or a blog, or email.

Increasingly, we’re walking around in many contexts at once, to the point where we have to start re-thinking what “HERE” means.

This dimension -- this “information dimension” -- does not behave like the world we evolved in. It’s entirely made of language, and can change what we mean by “HERE” with a single sentence. A single word ... even a single character.

 iphone photo: CC <http://flickr.com/photos/shapeshift/707543617/>
 upc: wikipedia
 vid chat: <http://flickr.com/photos/superamit/2130646515/>
 hula gps: <http://flickr.com/photos/joc67/774419510/>
 nintendo store: andrew hinton
 teens & phones: corbis 42-15617230
 nintendo ds: andrew hinton

Fuzzy Human Stuff Made Into Data



Our ambiguities rendered
into binary attributes.

Making fuzzy human stuff into data tends to screen out the ambiguities in a way that works very well for the logical grid of databases and taxonomies, but loses a lot of meaning along the way.

>>Unlike physical life, where our language comes with a lot of contextual nuance like tone of voice or the subject of the conversation,

>>digital space tends to be very narrow in its definitions.

>>It takes words that have a lot of richness and truncates their meanings into logical absolutes.

heart: <http://www.turbosquid.com/FullPreview/Index.cfm/ID/223689>

Eats Shoots and Leaves



Eats, Shoots and Leaves



Digital space is pretty ruthless about interpreting our ambiguities. And that can be a problem because our lives, and our language, are full of ambiguity!

There's the classic example from the book "Eats Shoots & Leaves" -- a phrase that can be understood in two radically different ways.

>> It can be something as cute as a Panda having lunch.
>> Or, if you just add a comma,
>> It can turn surreal, and a little violent.

Now, just one little typo written in a letter or email to someone isn't a big deal. People can usually understand, based on the context of the conversation and what they know about you, that you aren't talking about fleeing from a food-related homicide.

But digital space is more literal than that. It will happily take your typo as a real command, and execute it, no matter how absurd it might be. UNLESS the design prevents you from making such an error.

What I'm getting at here is that, whereas something as small as a comma can radically change the meaning of language on a page, in digital space, something that small can radically change the meaning of the SPACE.

eating by: <http://flickr.com/photos/clintjcl/2421838198/>
shooting by: <http://flickr.com/photos/ebolasmallpox/2738790934/>
exit by: <http://flickr.com/photos/peasandcornbread/1636576202/>
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VS



Obvious difference.

For example, in physical space, there's an obvious difference between a little nook in the corner of a room where you can whisper to someone, and a stage in front of thousands of people where a microphone will announce what you say to all of them.

Whisper image CC <http://flickr.com/photos/shimonkey/447924817/>
Crowd image CC <http://flickr.com/photos/anirudhkoul/2046282436/>
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>



d vs @



Not so obvious.

On Twitter, you have both options --

>> a hidden nook where you can whisper to another user privately, which you access by prefacing your message with the letter "d".

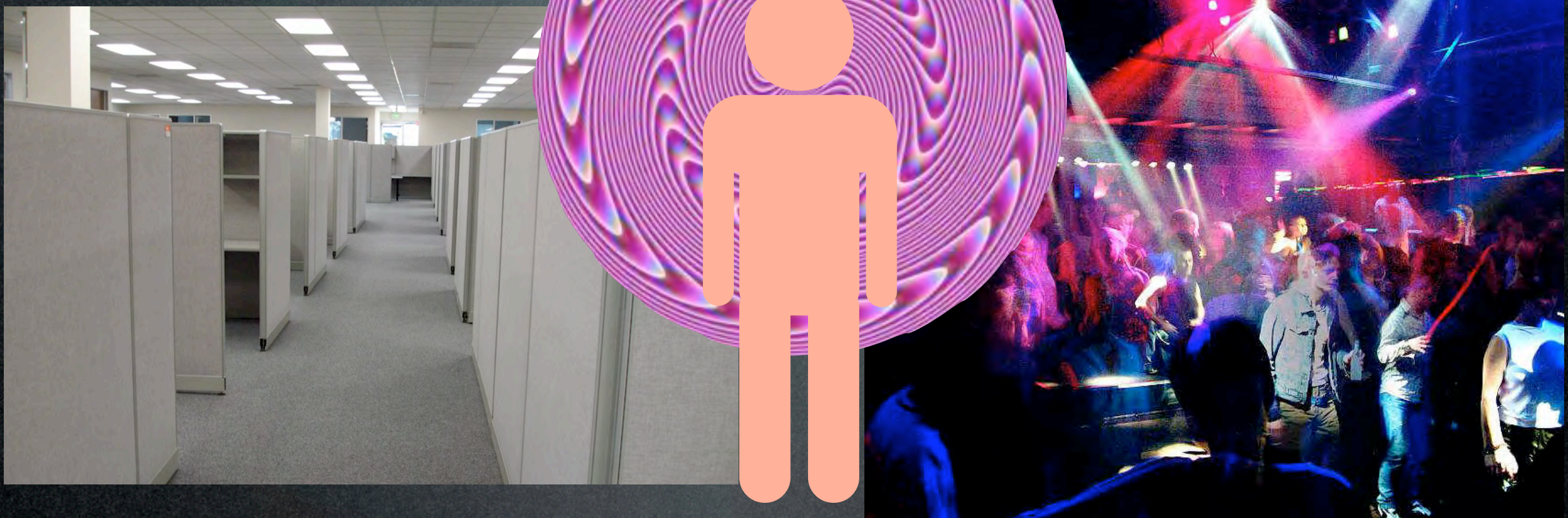
>> Or you can direct a message to another user in full view of everyone who follows you, by using the at-sign (@).

>> In the physical world, it's hard to mistake one for the other, or do one over the other in haste. About the only way is if you're wearing a mic and forget that it's on... a rare situation for most of us to be in.

>> But on Twitter, it's incredibly easy to make that mistake.

I'm sure everybody here has, at least once, accidentally hit "reply all" on email -- which is pretty much the same thing.

This sort of thing can be incredibly disorienting -- and it's the result of the fact that we're living in this other dimension that we don't fully understand yet -- a place that can radically affect not only where we are, but WHO we are.



Office

Nightclub

Context shapes identity.

33

The spaces we inhabit are powerful shapers of our identities, especially when we're inhabiting them.

>> Take for example, the garden-variety office building. An office typically has a particular architecture, with specific design choices that limit what you can do there -- or at least, it only affords certain activities easily. If you've ever tried having a social event in a cube farm, you know how annoying it can be.

>> But in a nightclub, there's a bar, the bathrooms are situated differently, there's a dancefloor, and lots of other affordances for a particular sort of activity. But most of us could get precious little **work** done in a nightclub.

>> Now, when you're at the office, you're wearing your "office" hat -- you're playing that role. It's not fake, it's just a side of your personality. When you're at a nightclub (or whatever social fun atmosphere you prefer in your off hours), you wear a different hat, emphasizing different parts of your personality.

It can be a little awkward to be partying hard when you're out, and running into somebody from the office.

>> It gives you that sense of vertigo you get when you're in two places at once. That's the feeling of two parts of your identity rubbing against each other.



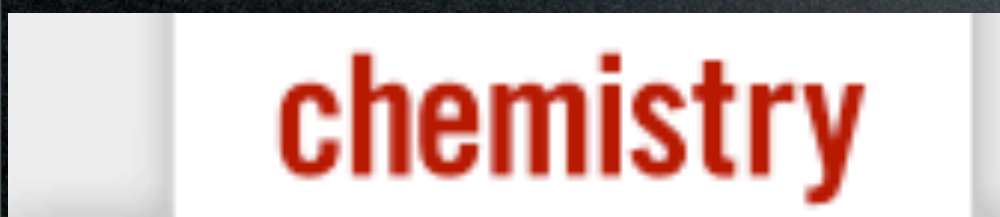
School-me.



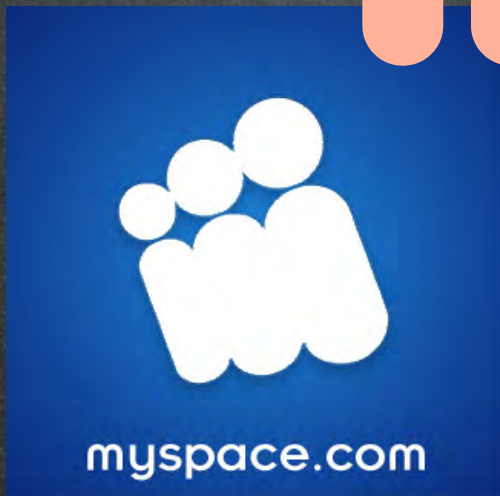
Private-
thoughts-me



Working-me.



Dating-me



Crafty-me

Party & Music-me

34

Well, now we're offered a plethora of choices for extending and refining the facets of our identities. And each has its own architecture that shapes who you are when you're there.

A profile at LinkedIn has vastly different choices than one at Chemistry. LinkedIn will ask about your job history, but not about what you like to do on a date (or with a date; or to a date).

Chemistry will want you to say a lot about dating, as well as sexual preferences, and other very personal matters. But it won't ask you for an extensive job history.

All of these have architectures that afford certain sorts of identities -- facets of ourselves. This brings us a lot of challenges when it comes to cross-over of contexts. We might not want our office mates to know what nightclubs we frequent -- and we might not want people on Linked In to know what we like to do on a date.

But unlike an office, or a nightclub, or a church, or Vegas, these are not the physical places we're used to. These can cross-over, or change at a moment's notice.

facebook®

Everything-Me!

LinkedIn™

Working-me.



Private-
thoughts-me

chemistry

Dating-me



myspace.com

Etsy

Crafty-me

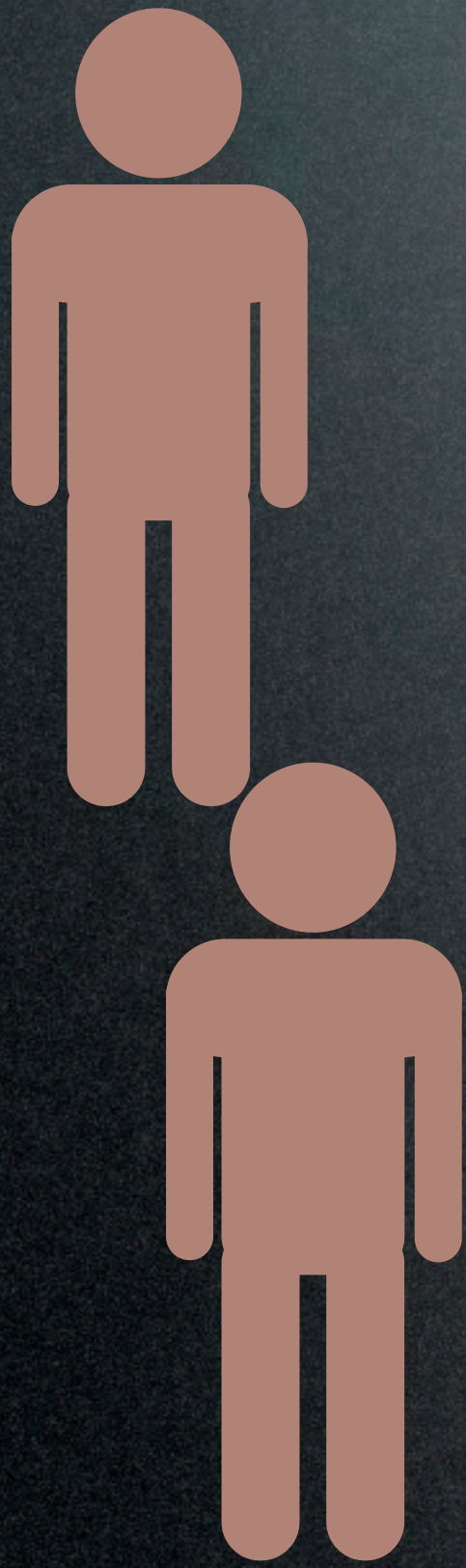
Party & Music-me

I know a lot of people who started out using Facebook when they were in school, and the strong implication was: nobody is going to be here except your classmates. The very structure of the site's security made an implicit promise about the nature of the space.

>> But then Facebook changed almost overnight, and people found themselves in the uncomfortable position of having sides of themselves that they mean to present only to people their age, from their background, in a wholly new *place*. Where in the physical world has something that radical ever happened?

>> And again, you get that weird identity vertigo.

We'd like to think that our identities aren't so dependent upon the context we're in, or the people we're around ... we'd like to believe that we're more independent and "solid" than that.



But science & philosophy have been telling us for a generation now that, objectively speaking, we're not like that.
>>We're constructed from the interactions, memories, and stories around us.
>>The "self" is a useful illusion of sorts -- a reification -- that we depend upon for getting along in the world.
Here's another Duchamp creation -- "Nude Descending a Staircase."
It prefigures this weird, time-space-displaced dimension we've created for ourselves, where our identities are sliced and frozen in time, and spread across space.
Our identities are inextricably bound up in the spaces and systems we make for ourselves.

“The self as a multiple, distributed system ... a decentered self that exists in many worlds and plays many roles at the same time....

Real Life as ‘Just one more window.’”

(“Life on the Screen” -- 1995)



Sherry Turkle

Sherry Turkle, a professor and writer at MIT, has been exploring this issue for a long time. Way back in 1995, in “Life on the Screen” she explained how the Internet had brought us to a sort of literal culmination of what people like Lacan, Foucault and Levi-Strauss had been saying about us all along.
>> She described the self as a multiple, distributed system ... a decentered self that exists in many worlds and plays many roles at the same time... a world in which so-called “real life” is “Just one more window.”

Implications are everywhere ...

Learning



Money



News



Family



Entertainment



I've focused a lot on identity and privacy here, and that's mostly in the interest of time ...
... but I want to be sure to mention that the context problem is bigger than that.
>> it affects the way we earn, spend and lend money -- part of what made the mortgage crisis possible is that it's easier to approve a bad loan when the damage is going to be far away from you in the contextual system -- just like it's easier to pull a lever than it is to push somebody in front of a train.
>> It also affects the way we learn, how we think of family, how we're informed about the world, and even how we play.
The context problem exists everywhere we or anything about us can be "online".
That's an important distinction -- there are many millions of people who are not "online" on our planet, but information about them still is ...

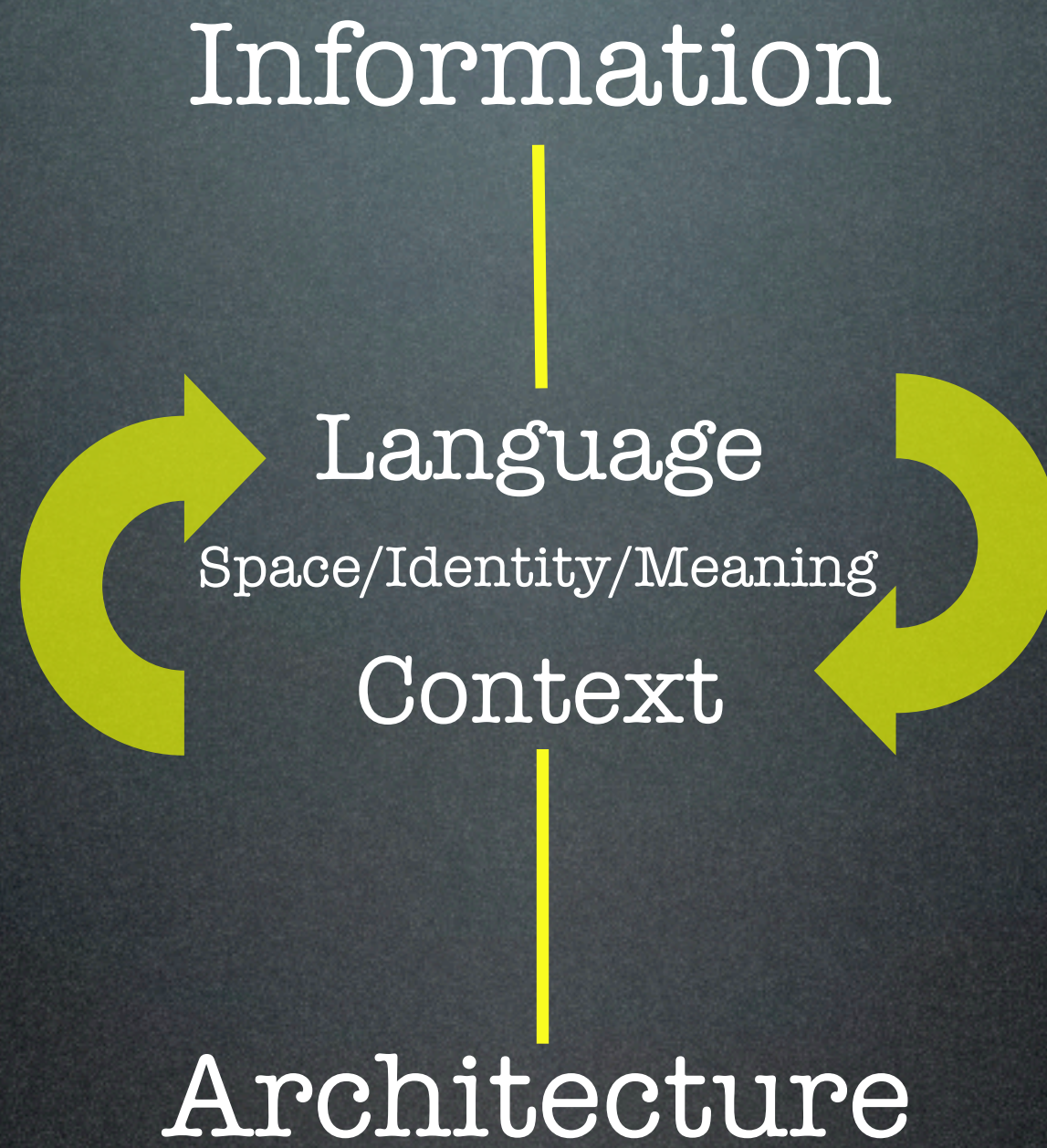


You’ve probably heard of the Google Earth project that has been tracking the destruction of people’s lives in Darfur.

It’s an astonishing, powerful example of how radically context has been disrupted for our species.

Implicitly, it raises a question of what the human limits are to comprehend context -- at what point, no matter how much information we receive, is another context only an abstraction if we can’t then reach into it and affect it the way it affects us.

http://earth.google.com/outreach/images/case_study/ushmm_fig1_lg.jpg



So, as we've established:

>>Language and Context shape one another, especially online where everything is made of language.

>> And the more of our lives exist online, the more our living space, identity and meaning are affected by this relationship.

The relationship between

>>Language -- which online is essentially Information, and the context that's formed from this information, and

>>the Architecture: the structures, places, experiences through which we move, converse, and live.

What I'm getting at here is that this is an extremely important role of the practice of information architecture; what I am *NOT* saying is that it is the exclusive domain of "Information Architects".

We lack a suitable language for contextual systems.

tools
methods
patterns
heuristics
etc...

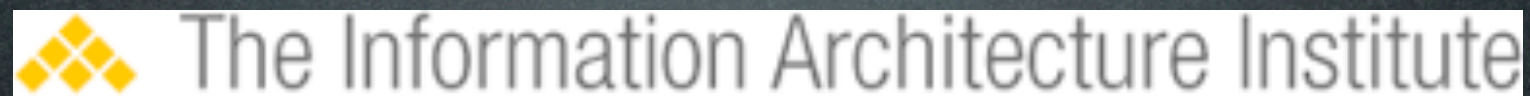
I believe we lack a suitable language for this new dimension of contextual systems.

As a result, we lack suitable

>> tools, methods, patterns, and heuristics and the rest of what we need for discovering, clearly understanding, and solving the problems that these new contextual systems present to us.

Who's going to figure this out?

A role ...



Opportunities

+

Theoretical Framework

+

Practical Resources

But that's only part of the answer ...

so who's responsible for figuring this out?

Well, since we're here at a conference created by the

>>IAInstitute, I'll mention that I do believe an organization like this has an important role in this work. Not an exclusive role, of course, but I'd like to see it provide leadership and opportunities for our various communities to have these conversations.

We especially need a coherent theoretical framework; but we also need practical resources and tools we need.

But that's just part of the answer ...

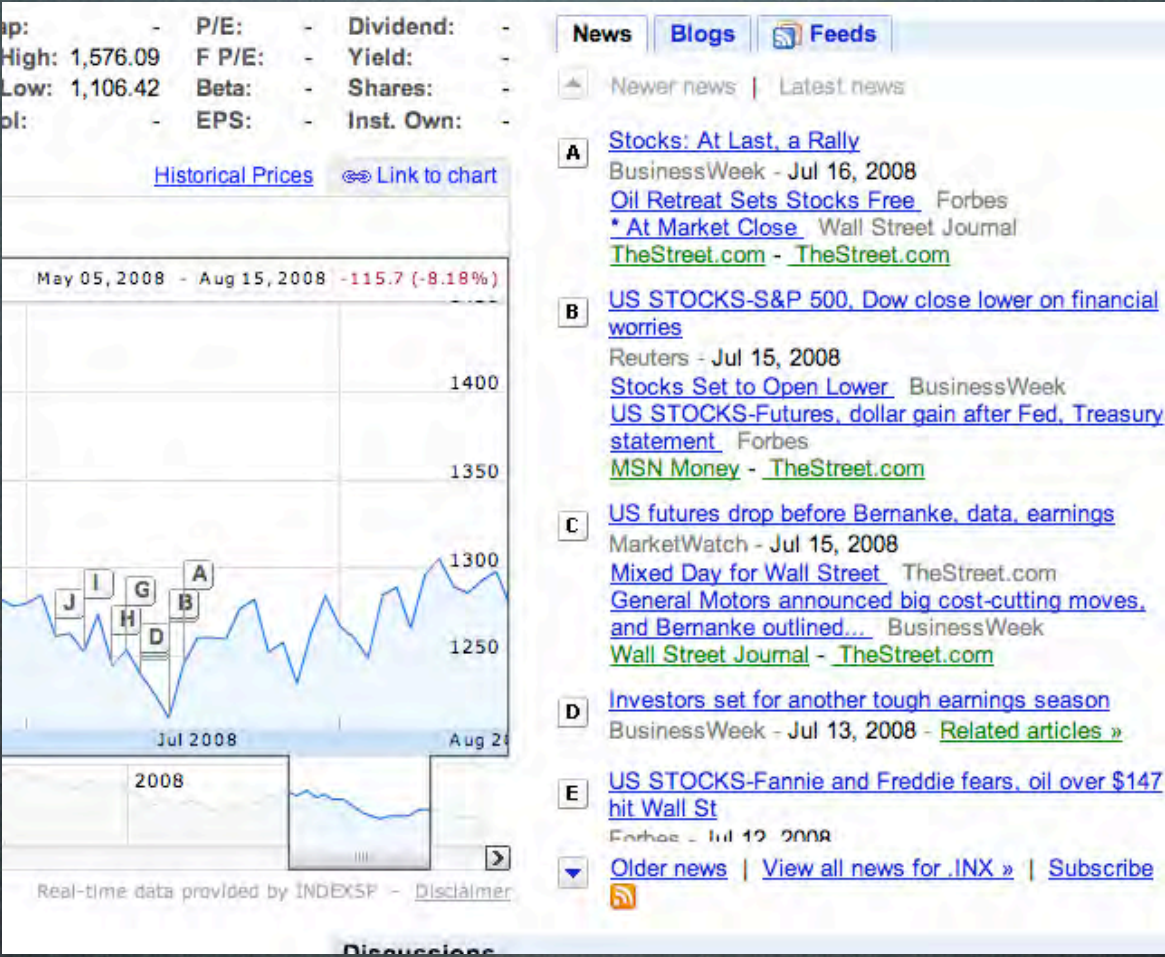
Who's going to figure this out?



Now, let's get to work.


thanks






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