



CONNECT ANY MEDIA ANYWHERE: IT'S A MEMORY THING

TOTeM: Tales of Things and Electronic Memory: Launch Date April 2010

tales of things is an exciting new tool that allows users to attach memories to their objects in the form of video, text or audio. Users can quickly "tag" their objects by using QR codes or RFID with stories and connect to other people who share similar experiences. This will enable future generations to have a greater understanding of the object's past and offers a new way of preserving social history. tales of things will depend on real people's stories which can be geo-located through an on-line map of the world where participants can track their object even if they have passed it on. The object will also be able to update previous owners on its progress through a live Twitter feed which will be unique to each object entered into the system. The website (www.talesofthings.com) and iPhone application will be available April 2010.

The project will offer a new way for people to place more value on their own objects in an increasingly disposable economy. As more importance is placed on the objects that are already parts of people's lives it is hoped that family or friends may find new uses for old objects and encourage people to think twice before throwing something away.

tales of things will explore the implications of The Internet of Things (network of objects that are traceable at anytime) on objects that already exist in the world. This technology offers a range of possibilities for future development and will revolutionise the way we value objects in the future. Just think of walking into a charity shop in 20 years time where each object is able to offer its own history e.g. what sort of person owned the object before, where did they get it from and what memories are associated with it. Through the uploading of personal testimonies to the Tales of Things website a new form of social museum will arise and also enable people to comment on objects with their own interpretations of history.

Objects will be tagged using new technologies in the forms of RFID tags and QR Codes. Currently RFID and QR matrix codes are used in products such as the Oyster Card and on consumer goods. The tags are used to allow customers to link to the internet where they will be directed to commercially driven websites showing special offers and brand information. Rather than a corporation dictating what information is available on certain products it will be up to the general public to decide what information they would like to be displayed about their own objects.

The project is part of a research group run by TOTeM which is a collaboration between 5 UK Higher Education institutions (Edinburgh College of Art, Brunel University, University College

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London, University Of Dundee and University of Salford) with a wide variety of specialism's ranging from architecture, digital design, business, anthropology and computer science. TOTeM will carry out its research initially through case studies with different community groups who are not included in a written history of our time but their experiences and memories are just as valuable.

The project team envisage the social benefits to include: richer interpretation of diverse cultural communities, benefits to dementia and Alzheimer's patients, encouraging inter-generational understanding and the fostering of a networked museum of social history. In addition, the project offers enormous scope for how auction houses and online stores can identify, add-value and track (through a "geography of everything") objects that otherwise may be looked over because of a forgotten history.

The project's outputs will include a website database of people's memories, focussed workshops, talks and events. The first phase of Tales of Things will launch mid April 2010 follow details on Twitter@talesofthings.

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Notes to Editors:

- TOTeM is a 36-month £1.4m, Digital Economy Research Councils UK funded research project (Aug 2009- July 2012).
- TOTeM is a collaborative research project run with Brunel University, University College London (UCL), University of Dundee and the University of Salford with Edinburgh College of Art (eca) acting as the lead organisation. For more information on the research partners visit: www.eca.ac.uk/; www.brunel.ac.uk/; www.dundee.ac.uk/; www.ucl.ac.uk/; www.salford.ac.uk/
- The term 'The Internet of Things' is attributed to the Auto-ID research group at MIT from 1999. It refers to the technical and cultural shift that is anticipated as society moves towards a ubiquitous form of computing in which every device is 'on', and every device is connected in some way to the Internet. The specific reference to 'things' refers to the concept that every new object manufactured will also be able to part of this extended Internet, because they will have been tagged and indexed by the manufacturer during production.
- The project will be run through the website talesofthings.com where users can upload an image of the object and also a memory (in the form of a video, audio or text). Once the user has entered this information they will be given a unique form of a barcode which they can attach to their object. This code can be read by taking a photograph from a mobile phone/webcam where the user will be linked to the talesofthings.com and an image and memory of their object will be displayed. The project explores the possibility of linking every object in the world to the Internet, complete with last known geographic location and the ability to 'write' back to the printed tag through each object having its own Twitter account.
- RFID (Radio Frequency Identification): An RFID tag can be used to track an object and/or store information on an object using radio waves. This technology is used for a number of different applications such as the Oyster Card or by companies who want to track the location of their goods en route to a warehouse or shop and is the method used to "chip" pets.
- QR Code ("Quick Response" Code): A QR Code is a two-dimensional bar code (or matrix code). QR codes are used to identify objects and can link to information about the object e.g. by taking a photo of a QR code on your mobile phone you can be automatically linked to a website which would supply information such as where the product is made or links to other websites.