

Digital Civics (COMPSCI 592C)

Introduction

Fall 2018



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Course Objectives

- ▶ Broadly cover the domain of digital civics, social computing, crowdsourcing, and collective intelligence
- ▶ Learn key concepts and background on HCI for digital civics
- ▶ Read and discuss key papers
- ▶ Propose new research in digital civics and get excited about the potential opportunities

My creds

- ▶ Co-taught a courses on [Civic Design](#) at UCSD in Fall 2017
- ▶ Projects: UD Co-Spaces, CommunityCrit, Design for San Diego (D4SD)
- ▶ Outstanding Paper Award, Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA), 2017
- ▶ Honorable Mention Award, Interactive Surfaces and Spaces (ISS), 2016

UD Co-Spaces: A Table-Centred Multi-Display Environment for Public Engagement in Urban Design Charrettes



N. Mahyar, K. J. Burke, J. Xiang, S. Meng, K. S. Booth, C. L. Girling, and R. W. Kellett, Interactive Surfaces and Spaces (ISS), 2016

[Honorable Mention Award], ISS 2016

[Outstanding Paper Award], CELA 2017

CommunityCrit: Inviting the Public to Improve and Evaluate Urban Design Ideas through Micro-Activities



Narges Mahyar, Michael R. James, Michelle M. Ng, Reginald A. Wu, Steven P. Dow, ACM Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2018).

<https://d4sd.org>

Design for San Diego's 2017 Civic Challenge

How do we create a San Diego where we all move freely?

GET INVOLVED

OR

LEARN MORE

What is digital civics?

- ▶ Digital Civics is an emerging cross-disciplinary area that explores new ways to utilize technology for promoting public participation in the design and delivery of civic services.
- ▶ Digital civics empowers the public to take a more active role in important civic decisions.

with much thanks to: Steven Dow's for sharing his course materials on Crowdsourcing. I've also borrowed some readings out of Chris Le Dantec's course on Designing Community Engagement.

Digital civics agenda

- ▶ Broadly, digital civics aims to support residents becoming agents of democracy with and through technologies and in dialogue with the institutions that can actualize public will.

Domains

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Policy
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Urban design, transportation, etc

What is wrong with conventional methods?

- ▶ Why we need digital civics in the first place?

Conventional methods are counterproductive

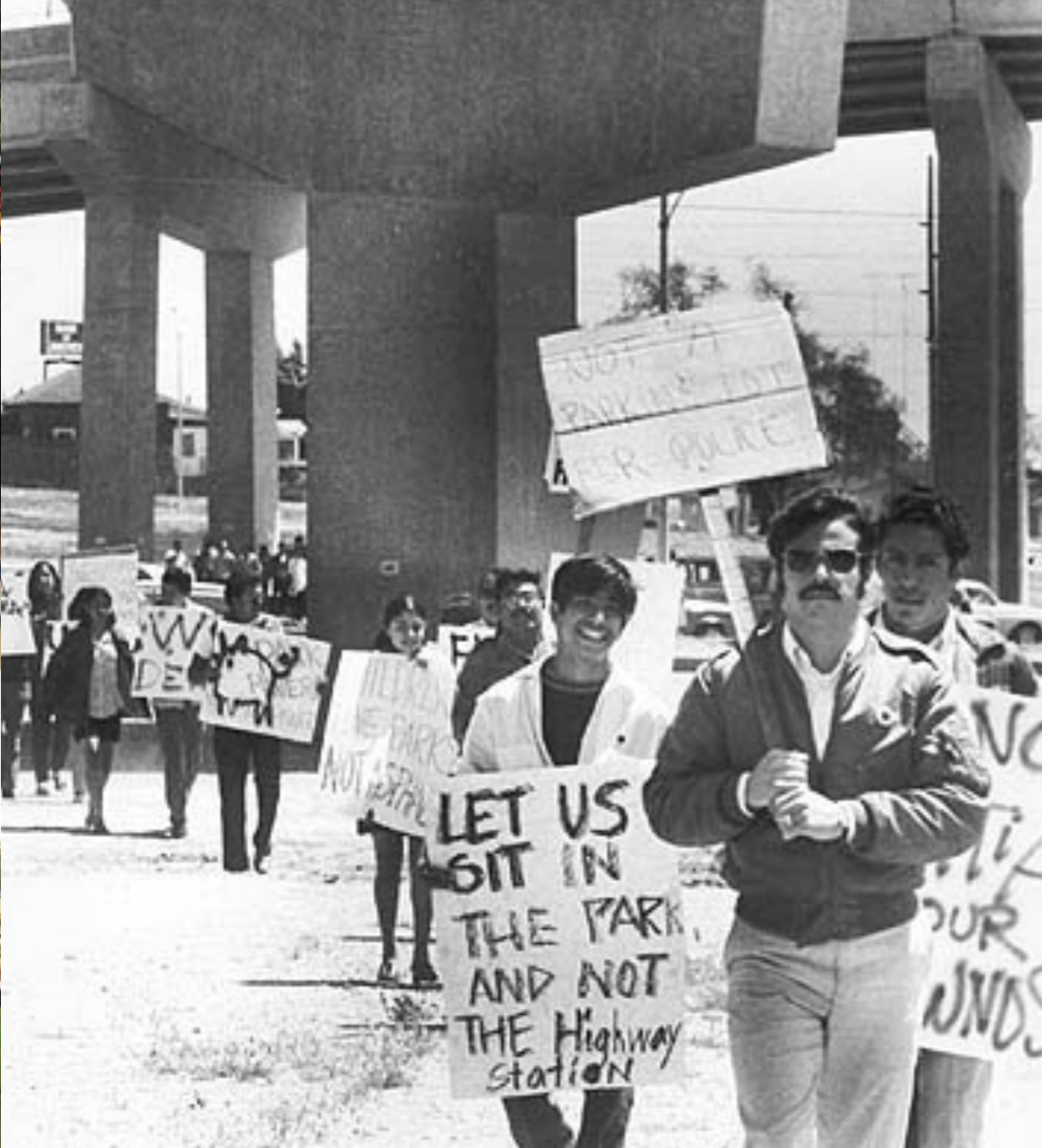


- ▶ Achieving genuine participation in planning
- ▶ Satisfying the public that they are being heard
- ▶ Improving the final decisions
- ▶ Incorporating a broad spectrum of the public

Coronado Bridge in San Diego



Chicano Park takeover, 35 years of struggle



Why is engaging the public important?

- ▶ Local knowledge
- ▶ Buy in
- ▶ Impact social good

Best practices are workshops and design charrettes



Face to face methods have many limitations

- ▶ Engaging representative stakeholders
- ▶ Hearing out people's comments
- ▶ Recording/disseminating comments



Understanding digital civics by Ethan Zuckerman


- ▶ A short summary?
- ▶ If we can figure out how to harness these internet-based forms of civic engagement, we might revitalize political participation.
- ▶ Evidences for what Internet can help with.

Concerns and skepticism

- ▶ Digital divide
- ▶ Dealing with complex socio-technical problems
- ▶ Political aspects

Using online power to complements offline power

- ▶ Crowdfunding to help sustaining projects
- ▶ Using offline civics to compensate online deliberation

An illustration of a busy city street scene. In the foreground, a person in a light blue uniform pushes a red cart filled with blue logs. To the right, several people are riding bicycles. In the background, various pedestrians are walking, some carrying bags or wearing backpacks. The scene is set on a grey street with white lines, and there are stylized trees and buildings in the background.

Event

City Robotics: \$10K Design•a•Hack•a•thon for People- Centric Mobility

Saturday — Monday
September 15, 2018 —
September 17, 2018
9:00am — 11:00pm

MIT Media Lab,
Cambridge, MA

Survey

Class mechanics

- ▶ Course website: <http://groups.cs.umass.edu/nmahyar/teaching/digital-civics/>
- ▶ Once per week for ~2 hours (we will take breaks)
- ▶ Readings distributed across the class
 - ▶ Present three times per semester
 - ▶ Read and ready to discuss 1-2 papers per week
 - ▶ Listen and take notes on every paper
- ▶ One awesome research project

Grading

- ▶ This class will involve a great amount of discussion with time devoted to lecture, in-class activities, student presentations, and research crits.
- ▶ Grades will reflect participation and performance on paper presentations, discussions, and projects.

Do you know how to read papers?

- ▶ Closely reading a paper
 - ▶ Highlight important parts of the text
 - ▶ Annotate the text with notes and comments
 - ▶ Re-read points that you don't understand
 - ▶ Start to summarize the argument
 - ▶ Notice if anything "jump out" at you as significant or surprising
- ▶ Critical reading for graduate students

Resources for HCI research

ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)
ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)
ACM Designing Interactive Systems (DIS)
ACM International Joint Conference on Pervasive and Ubiquitous Computing (UbiComp)
ACM Tangible, Embedded and Embodied Interaction (TEI)
Interaction Design and Children (IDC)
Participatory Design Conference (PDC)

ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI)
Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)
International Journal of Human-Computer Studies (IJHCS)
International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction
Interacting with Computers
Computers in Human Behaviour
Computer Supported Cooperative Work
CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts
Personal and Ubiquitous Computing
International Journal of Design
Design Studies
Design Issues

Next week

- ▶ Tools and application
 - ▶ Online tools
 - ▶ Large interactive surface for augmenting in person meetings
 - ▶ Mobile applications