

**Beyond The Boundary of Text in a Mobile Space**

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MSP 4541: Mobile Media

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December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## **Beyond The Boundary of Text in a Mobile Space**

From texting a message to a friend, emailing a professor, or receiving a postcard from a family member, the mobility of text is quite normal in how we tend to communicate with each other. Ever since writing has been around, there have been writings for individual people, as well as writings for the masses. Now with such resources like cell phones and the internet, the direct retrieval of mobile texts expands our capabilities of communication. With such ease of use of such devices on contact, it has become nearly expected for everyone to communicate with each other almost instantaneously all of the time. This has restricted our concept of time into a much more methodological way of using our days. This structure of communication has greatly controlled how our society views connectivity, individuality, and the immediate world around us (Deibert, 1997).

The landscape of what mobile texts means has evolved tremendously within the past 50 years. As most mobile texts consisted of pen marks on a piece of paper, the electronic era has changed how we send these texts to out into the world. From physical books to e-books, there still tends to be the same essence when it comes to reading to oneself. What is different about text is the ability of interpretation from the reader. Under timed pressure, information is more likely to be retained through paper, rather than through a screen (Kong, 2018). Due to contextual clues that electronic media may often present that will disable one's ability to fully understand the reading. Readings can often be misinterpreted or create entire imaginative concepts within someone's mind, like novels. However, the mobility of it all enables that individual to experience these thoughts wherever. Other forms of text like posters or signs

often emphasize an association of where the item is located, where mobile text often attempts to reflect another area that they are currently not present in.

Involving one's thoughts within a text is a basic practice when reading, but the availability of interactivity with texts has continually increased throughout history. Postcards grant imaginative and rhetorical functions for the reader that help express "presence, intimacy, and identity" (Milne, 2010). This model of connectivity through the reader and the writer has tremendously expanded through the advancement of technology. Social media platforms today are filled with mobile texts that are publicly shared between the millions of users that are on these platforms. This has spread the concept of imagined communities that was initially popularized by the printing press (Deibert, 1997). Starting with the imagined community of the nation, the concept of imagined communities has since split into millions of separate factions due to the expansion and inclusivity of the internet. These factions have formed into their own imagined communities that serve the same initial purpose as postcards once have. They hold presence, invite intimacy, and share an identity.

In my Interactive Mobile Text Project, I created four postcards to help explore the core functions of the postcard and the bewilderment it had created. Each post card included a photo that was taken at that location. This photo triggers an augmented event created through Artivive. Artivive is an AR tool that helps artists expand the limits of art, adding a layer of immersion to captivate the viewers from an otherwise standard experience of artwork.

In my postcards, I included one photo for each area, triggering a collection of content from videos to photos, that help represent the experience of presence. My New Hope, PA

postcard consists of a compilation video of various views and activities done during my visit in New Hope with music by Leon Chang in the background. I included a mobile text by Leon Chang granting students the ability to use his music for projects, as well as a title text that floats above the video that is projected in the AR view. The video extrudes several inches forward from the photo scanned, forcing the viewer to move back to properly view the video. The image that I used for the trigger was a simple photo of a clock in the center of the town. This photo does not grant any hints to what it holds, leaving more of a surprise journey for the viewer as I recorded my day. The intended interpretation is to give a sense of wonder and appreciation, however there is no way to determine how a reader interprets the content (Milne, 2010). As a creator of the postcard, it is at our personal ability to influence of the viewer on how they may feel and the thoughts it may provoke, just as any form of text.

Poconos postcard includes a photo I took of my friend as the trigger image. This image opens up several different photos I had taken during our stay in the Poconos that all surround a video of a young deer that we met. I decided to take a different approach for this postcard where New Hope's focus was the compiled video, the Poconos postcard would be more simplistic and focus on admiring nature and the beautiful views that enticed me to take photos of during my trip. I include photos for the viewer to float around and admire as they all are angled towards the camera. This postcard glorifies the innocent observation of the world around us.

Since the initial project, two more postcards were added to further examine the essence of mobile text and how it may be interpreted. The third postcard acts as a Holiday greetings card from New York City. The use of Artivive reveals a great amount of skeuomorphs used to

create a sense of familiarity within a different city (Milne, 2010). From the snowflakes in front of the camera, to the blowup Grogu from *Star Wars* witnessed in the video, the New York City postcard shows an attempt to identify with an unfamiliar environment.

The final postcard contains photos and videos from a friend who is stationed in Abu Dhabi through the Air Force. This postcard focuses on intimacy, as well as privacy, as the written message contradicts what is presented through the AR software. There is a level of assumed privacy when constructing any form of letter even after the frightening thought of the loss of epistolary privacy that occurred during the introduction of the postcard (Milne, 2010). However, that doubt of privacy is inevitable in such a case that it must be embraced as postcard messages are carefully constructed. This postcard's physical text acts as a front for the true message that lies within the AR experience. This begs the question if even this presentation has any degree of privacy to it, as well.

With individualism as a powerful influencer on how we decide to interact with each other on a daily basis, this project is set as a reminder of what is beyond the screen to be explored. It is difficult to convince someone the positives of time spent off the phone while using a phone to send that message. It all depends on how the content is interacted with and the influence it may spark within the viewers. It is up to the users to decide the level of intimacy a postcard can have as it can be viewed by anyone. The inclusion of augmented reality software only enhances the sense of connectivity and presence that lies within a postcard.

The response of the receiver is unpredictable as Bretz states, "the human has potential for transcending his or her programming..." revealing that interactivity is not a controlled

process at all (Stormer-Galley, 2004). The fact that any can see the message you have placed on your post card is a simplified version of the power of online communication today. The accessibility of contacting anyone at any time, even influential political figures, grant a great amount of potential power into the people and the ability to communicate directly with anyone with the right information. This sense of interactivity shows that an interaction between a human and a machine can still inevitably turn into an interaction between two humans. The influence that the medium of the machine has on our communication capabilities is something that will continue to grow and require further study.

Directly focusing on the abilities of AR, we see the ability of determining a viewer's perception of an image through influence. The AR program works as a medium between what it shows us and what we actually see and feel from the imagery (Jackson, 2017). As the technology breaks down the visuals I had chosen to send with the postcard, the Abu Dhabi postcard shows a break between what we are presented and what is actually true. While the Poconos postcard presents us with a trigger photo and delivers an honest presentation that feels just as inclusive as a hidden message.

The interconnectivity of mobile media has expanded our sense of communication, creating multiple points of study, including how we now handle mobile text. While reading for entertainment is not vividly addressed through the project, the same essential piece is still discussed: influence. Mobile text carries a great amount of influence to any individual that reads it and can easily form a sense of interactivity between the reader and the writer or perhaps today it would be the blogger and the commenter.

## References

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