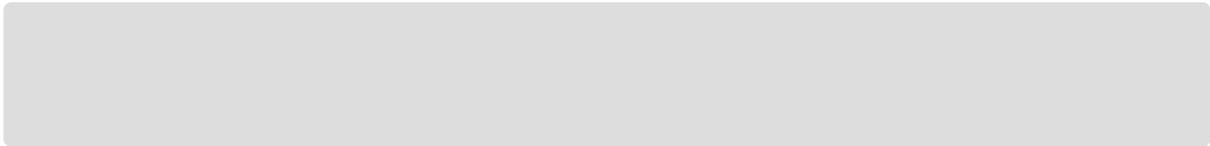# Smart Learning really is a thing

10/12/2020

I'm following up again on my continuing academic assertion that situated digitally mediated creativity, perhaps especially writing (aka writing the smart city, hyperlocal publishing, ambient literature, twitterature …) is a real opportunity for learning and engaging with place and the city. Using stuff like Twitter, other social media or new GPS and AR apps for interacting with *places* is not only useful and fun for engaging people in their surroundings, but is a fantastic opportunity for learning. And not only formal learning, but the every day "I didn't think I was learning" sort of learning. So periodically I do some googling to see what's lurking in the cybersphere. Lo and behold, today was filled with joy as using my more defined ways of searching I uncover more of what people are doing in this area. Very happy I was to find that alongside ambient literature there are now all manner of story writing, poetry trails, street art location finding, more discovery activities, museum interactions, scavenging, caching, creating, more map making and so forth going on.

In my current journal paper and chapter writing I like to use examples of events, happenings and activities to show why what I'm doing has actual relevance in the real world, not just to academics, not even just to educationalists or tutors. The relevance of the work extends out into the community at all levels, in my view. From the What3Words learning activities for children listed on their website to the heavily funded Apple/New York New museum collaboration for the civic [AR]T experience, people are really getting what kind of fully pervasive computing environments we now have available. Even Wired are talking about the future of learning with museum collaborations and Google Lens.

Some of these ideas, especially ambient literature, have been going on for years, since 2010 or even earlier. But they have suddenly made a big resurgence, and this may well be because new apps have come on the scene, or new people have become interested in this work. Academics feature strongly, Bath Spa University deserve a shout out for supporting ambient literature research for a long time. Recently their website had a big revamp and maybe that's because they've secured new research funding, who knows, but there are new projects and a strong online presence to these ideas. When I was putting together my paper for the HCII2020 conference last year, I had to really search around for good writing in place and other activity material to use as case study examples. Same a year previously when I gave a lecture on urban learning initiatives using digital interactions with the city to RCA masters students, and even good examples to use in relevant sections in my thesis (currently awaiting viva). But suddenly there seems to be a rush of new blood into this scene, and I'm very happy about that.

[img 'ART-Walk-Nick-Cave_073019_big', from https://www.archpaper.com/2019/08/apple-new-museum-choreographed-urban-art-tours/]