The Walk
exploring the technical
and social margins

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http://alandix.com/alanwalkswales/

about me
and what I do
About Tiree

750 residents
20,000 summer visitors

traditional agriculture
common grazing

poor mobile phone coverage
today I am not talking about ...

- intelligent internet interfaces
- visualisation and sampling
- situated displays, eCampus, small device – large display interactions
- fun and games, virtual crackers, artistic performance, slow time
- creativity and Bad Ideas
- modelling dreams and regret
- Tiree: mobile heritage & youth communication

... or even lots of lights

[Image link: http://www.hcibook.com/alan/projects/firefly/]
... let alone

http://hcicourse.com/

except ...

version soon to be launched on interaction-design.org

use it in your own teaching

do you want to share too?
I am talking about ...

a walk

1058 miles (1700 km) around the margins of Wales
Welsh Coast Path

opened May 2012
linking existing paths
a single way marked route
with Offa’s Dyke encircles Wales
three full traversals in 2012 (one running)

walking for war

Roman Legions

Napoleon in Russia

The Long March
walking as political activism

Salt March (India)  Jarrow March (UK)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March


walking as pilgrimage

Camino  Char Dham


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrimage
walking in the humanities

poetry & Romanticism (19th century)  psychogeography

all method?

http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/b/british-watercolours-developing-landscape-subjects/

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychogeography
walking Wales

vision

personal
  encircling, encompassing, pilgrimage, homecoming,
practical
  IT for the walker & IT for local communities
philosophical
  reflections on walking and space, locality and identity
research
  personal agenda and living lab
no hard boundaries

research – practice
personal – philosophical

19th century science or Mediaeval?

walking as research

slow! ... and hurts :-/
imposed time frame ... for good & ill
waving banners

using technology
  Q. “what technology do you use?”
  A. “a map”
  keeping moving, in the wet, ..
the best technology!

voice recorder
real buttons!!
use it while moving

data

location
  GPX ... batteries ... sporadic signals ....

bio-sensing
  ECG (heart), EDA (skin) and accelerometers

audio and images
  in the moment

text
  after the event

}\ implicit

explicit
at the margins
at the margins

social marginality:
poor, old, rural

information marginality:
poor connectivity, old devices

IT deepens the divide
... but can IT help in the margins?

IT in the margins

lessons from each other
Harris Tweed
hole in the wall
simple SMS

an old dream ...
the electronic village shop
what now?

www.hole-in-the-wall.com
community and identity
borderlands

collision and boundaries:
Offa’s Dyke, Norman Castles, Caerleon

contested territory
how many counties in Wales?

divided yet joined

an interstitial community

caravan site (nearly) in centre of town
but behind, in the gaps
semi-permanent residents

locality? parallel communities in same place
community and cohesion

abandonment and dissolution:
  Rhyl – dustbin of Liverpool
  Dee estuary – even the pubs closed

internal strength
  Penmaenmawr – in the face of adversity
  community enterprise: shops, pubs, arts

language and culture

intimately linked
  even for the non-Welsh speaker!

changed in my lifetime
  but under threat again

technological implications
  not just translations ... media choice etc.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capel_Celyn
maps

reclaiming the local map within technological space

mapping never easier ... so long as it is ‘standard’

“Post-Renaissance maps cover the surface of the world with an homogeneous Cartesian grip”

Barbara Bender

local maps – local concerns
health and well being

walking and health

logistics and transport:
  constant stress!!  ... and I was just visiting

from mountain goat to geriatric and back

health and wealth
connectivity

I expected it to be bad ...

but it was worse
... not a recent issue ...

Cooperation without (reliable) Communication: Interfaces for Mobile Applications

Alan Dix
http://www.books.com/dix/topics/mobile/

Abstract
The design of effective collaborative applications on mobile platforms has many issues and is constrained by the variety of devices and their capabilities. This paper addresses the need for a robust and reliable communication system for mobile devices. It presents a model for the design of user interfaces for mobile devices, and suggests some guidelines for the development of mobile applications.

1. Introduction
Both mobile communications and portable computers are now commonplace. The ubiquitous mobile phone has become a common tool, able to communicate with other mobile phones, and to be available to your colleagues wherever you happen to be. However, in contrast, the typical mobile computer is a luxury, and can only be used in remote locations.

always connected?

mobile signal absent or weak
broadband ... not so broad
masts point to sea not land ...
yachts = money

1994 maybe first HCI & mobile journal paper

EE NETWORK
https://explore.ee.co.uk/coverage-checker
infrastructure or privilege?

what is the greatest British invention?

19th century – Penny Post
   the amazing invention
   revolutionised communication

Today – Internet
   50% of Welsh schools say
   poor connectivity hampers education

http://www.victorianweb.org/history/pennypost.html
not just jerky movies ...

Software Update 2.3Gb
security patch

software makes it worse ...

Twitter 140 chars ...
but unusable with poor signal ✔
heavy XML API ✗

email slow but works – 1970s technology ✔

Flickr uploader freezes on poor connections ✗
... even in Paris!
‘localisation’

not just language and culture

software embodies context:
  technological and economic assumptions

making a difference?

public policy – improving infrastructure

design – connectivity-aware software
  e.g. mobile apps
  distributed system not thin client

OS – APIs to reveal connectivity

local webs
research looking out

living lab

others outcomes
others

data curation
please use it :-(

exhibition at Lampeter
take aways and you ...

HCI course materials – talk/email me!
methodological boundaries of academia ... ?
design for low connectivity
dimensions of connectivity?
sharing research data

1058 miles done
what next ...

more:
w: alandix.com/alanwalkswales
t: @alanwalkswales
f: facebook.com/alanwalkswales