

Spatial Jewelry

An Experiment with Communicative Party Jewelry

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Abstract: In this paper we present an experiment we conducted with spatial jewelry. We call these pieces of jewelry Partydotcoms, since they are *party* jewelry which reflect a red *dot* to the ceiling, and they are made for *communication* in particular party space and setting. Partydotcoms are pieces of jewelry which are interactive, informative and decorative items to wear and to create party mood. Social interaction among wearers and viewers was experimented with Partydotcoms.

Key words: *Spatial jewelry, communication, interaction, co-experience*



Figure.1 Partydotcoms are worn as indicating hostesses' locations, creating party ambiance and as personal adornments.

1. Introduction

Nine female jewelry designers threw a Valentine's Day party for their friends and business associates. Ladies of the house wanted to indicate themselves with jewelry since all invited guests did not know all of the hostesses. They also wanted to be seen and located in the party space. Everyone was able to see the location and the movements of the hostesses by the red spots on the ceiling. Each hostess had an Alice band in which we built a LED light and power supply. The lights were pointed at the ceiling and the electrical parts were covered with dashing decoration. These pieces of jewelry worked not only for communication of nearby presence but also as decorative lights in the party space. With this experiment we wanted to observe people's reaction to the communicative spatial jewelry. The moving red spots on the ceiling made the atmosphere in the space changing constantly during the party. We combined spatial and personal decorative items which the celebrating crowd found cheerful and entertaining in this experiment.

2. Spatial jewelry

With this experiment we wanted to engage the whole space with personal adornments. Partydotcoms are interactive objects connecting people and space. With Partydotcoms we were able to observe social interaction in a co-experience [2] setting in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Partydotcom jewelry was designed for this particular venue for the guests to be able to locate the hostesses in the party space. As a term, spatial design is generally linked to the field of architecture, interior design, landscaping and to the art in public spaces. However, this experiment affiliated space and jewelry, by extending pieces of jewelry with the element of light. Spatial design is always linked to the particular space as are the Partydotcoms. However, Partydotcoms can be reused in new occasions whenever there are venues where information of e.g. hostesses' location is needed. Partydotcoms have a strong spatial dimension because they are interacting between people in the space. The lights work as identifiers of wearers' location and movements. Earlier we conducted an experiment with bracelets called Hello, for locating friends who are nearby each other. With Hellos the wearers were able to know from their personal bracelets if their friends were nearby before seeing them. [1] We expanded the idea of nearby presence with the Partydotcoms by considering the space as a display for sharing information about location.

3. Partydotcom jewelry

A commune of nine jewelry designers has a habit of organizing parties for their friends and business associates. For each party they have organized, they have worn indicative wearable items: the hostesses' jewelry. When friends and business associates of the hostesses gather, most of the people do not know each other. That is why organizers have found it not only easy and informative, but also fun to wear hostess' jewelry. Each time the jewelry has been unique, festive, met the theme of the party, and it has been a surprise for guests. The hostess' jewelry has developed during the years; it has been e.g. a blinking heart shape brooch, a t-shirt with prints of historical jewelry or fake eyelashes. Eyelashes, as being such a small item, were not a strong enough sign of hostesses. After wearing the fake eyelashes, we understood that the sign has to be clear and more visible, because it was difficult for the guests to find the hostesses from the party crowd. Sometimes, it has been challenging for the hostesses to find each other as well. After these two findings we decided to have a locating feature in the hostess' jewelry. Therefore we expanded the idea of jewelry from only bodily object to also spatial

object. As a result of that, on this year we designed head pieces: Alice bands with LED light and decoration. Controlling the spatial dimension with jewelry is a fresh approach in the field of jewelry design.

4. Communication

The communicative feature of Partydotcom is slightly different from communication of traditional jewelry. We want to consider Partydotcoms from three viewpoints: from wearers', viewers' and spatial. According to earlier studies, adornments have often been considered as communicative objects [e.g. 5]. With adornments people are revealing something personal about themselves, e.g. values and lifestyle. But also, people are expressing societal dimensions with jewelry, e.g. societal connections and social status. People tend to attach strong social, symbolic and personal values [6] in to their jewelry. Partydotcoms' practical social value is their ability to indicate the guests from the hostesses. As being dashing decorative objects they symbolize the party ambiance. Each hostess added personal value into the pieces by constructing decoration of the jewelry individually.

4.1 Wearer

For the wearer Partydotcom is a festive piece of jewelry. Each hostess designed decoration for her own partydotcom piece to meet her personal style and to fit with her party outfit. Partydotcoms were hostesses' individual statements about their personal styles alike Simmel discusses about jewelry in his article Adornment [5]. Additionally (for hostesses) Partydotcoms were signs of their own group as party organizers, colleagues, and friends. With Partydotcoms hostesses could feel group cohesion [4]. Therefore Partydotcoms acted similarly as Durkheim discusses about totemic items, as distinguishing persons being parts of particular kinships [3]. With Partydotcoms hostesses were able to identify themselves as a group from the rest of the party crowd.

4.2 Viewer

Once the crowd grows as large as in the Valentine's Day party, it is obvious that everyone does not know each other. As the party protocol has always been informal, where guests come and go as they wish, the organizers do not have a chance to greet guests in a formal way. Therefore, hostesses' jewelry as informative indicators is an important part of the party. Partydotcoms were not only personal adornments but they also acted as indicators of hostesses for guests, as Simmel also discusses about adornments as objects identifying a particular group [5,4]. In such big parties finding hostesses may become a problem. We wanted to solve this problem by giving information for guests about location of the hostesses. Following red dots on the ceiling everyone was able to follow the movements of the hostesses. Guests found hostesses easily when they wanted to greet them, or when they needed some information about the happenings during the party. Furthermore the red dots on the ceiling were also entertaining and fun features for guests to follow and see.

4.3 The space

The party space is the studio where the nine jewelry designers work. The space is rectangular shaped, about 100 square meters large, goldsmiths' workshop. For the parties it is modified as a party space, by decorations, changing the electric light to candle light and by hooking a disco ball to the roof. This time, the party was on Valentine's Day and hostesses wanted use sparkling decoration and red color. With the partydotcom experiment we were able to combine the space decoration and hostesses' jewelry. The red dots on the ceiling were

constantly moving which made the space continually changing. Most of the time during the party single red dots were rolling around the ceiling until the hostesses decided to encourage guests to start dancing. Then all the dots went under the disco ball, in order to give a welcome sign for the guests to start dancing.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Jewelry with a spatial dimension is a novel approach in the field of jewelry design. The experiment with Partydotcom proved that jewelry can be used as a mediator for communication between people in a certain space. Partydotcom and its modifications can be used in different venues where particular people should be indicated as specific groups. The slowly rolling red dots on the ceiling created unique and constantly changing party ambiance. The red dots on the ceiling created a beautiful Valentine's Day party setting for people to socialize, eat, drink, dance and have fun. Partydotcoms created interaction between the wearer and the space. The hostesses were creating the party atmosphere by their party activities. Whenever they walked, danced or had any sort of head gestures, they knew that the lighting in the space was varying. It was a special and new feeling for hostesses, to be able to change the atmosphere by bodily movements. However, besides the ambiance creating feature of partydotcoms, they also had an informative feature: everyone at the party could follow from the ceiling the movements of hostesses. Even if the spatial dimension of the partydotcoms is a fresh approach in jewelry design, they still also acted as traditional pieces of jewelry. They were objects which expressed the unity of a particular group of people like Durkheim states in his study of totemic items [3]. At the same token, Partydotcoms still were personal adornments, like Simmel describes adornments revealing hints of wearers' personality to the viewers [5]. All the partydotcoms were similar to each other technically, but still, completely different by their looks, since each hostess designed her own adornment. With this experiment we found out that partydotcom is an entertaining, fun and informative jewelry concept. The partydotcom was a successful experiment in this particular venue, and since this was the first experiment with partydotcoms, we are looking forward to experiment with the concept on future occasions.

6. References

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