LIBRARY INTERVENTIONS

By Chris DeLeon

Ecological System: Georgia Tech Library, in the tables area on the first floor, by where there used to be a coffee shop, on the side opposite the vending machines. The computer cluster adjacent is not counted, including the 3 chairs and two tables associated with those two systems, as that's part of another ecological system which exists in parallel to this one.

Actors/Entities:

- Students that have enough work to do (or work that requires enough concentration) that they feel the need to be in the library, coming and going on unrelated timings, either with groups or alone
    - Mostly male (~75%), average age ~21 (mostly undergrads, a few older)
- Laptops, turned on, most presumably with internet connection
- Security camera pointed at the big screen+speakers presentation system

Nonentities:

- 13 tables
- Outlets all along the wall and hanging from the ceiling in 4 places
- About 3 dozen chairs
- Vending machine drinks, snacks
- Pens, pencils, paper
- Presentation screen with large screen and speakers (I've never seen it used)
    - Electronic system embedded in wall with various control knobs and front of a computer exposed for inserting various media formats
- 5 overhead hanging speakers, may or may not be connected to the presentation set up

Notable Conditions:

- Consistently chilly air
- Consistently bright fluorescent tube lighting
- A looming sense of focus and/or despair

Performance Interventions:

1. The aim of this intervention is to affect relations between entities, by getting strangers to sit at the same table, treating the table space more like common bar seating instead of like separate table seating. It involves creating 6 buttons/switches with an Arduino and an additional wifi board to transmit signal, e-mail, or text message to the performer. Typically the tables and chairs are randomly scattered, half along the outer edge and the other half in the middle with no particular orientation, but enough space to walk or sit comfortably on any side of any table. This causes groups to separate. Instead, arrange the 6 scattered tables into a large pod in the center of the room, with chairs around the outside. Attach the Arduino under the center table, and tape the switches between tables so that they're pressed while the tables are in position. A small program on the Arduino would notify the performer remotely if the tables were separated. The performer would then be free to roam elsewhere in the library. If anyone pulled a table away from the pod, the performer would return and sit nearby until they or their group left, after which the performer would get up return the table to the pod configuration. The tables along the edge would be left alone for groups, as an outlet to reduce the odds of library security getting called on the performer (if a group or individual really wants their own table, they'll still have several options besides the pod).

2. The aim of this intervention is to confirm that the ecological system's strength in asserting its identity as an entity having its own PRA. The performer's task in this case is to see whether he or she will be rejected by the space, rather than accepted by the people in it, by doing something that the people there would not object to if it were not being done in this ecological system. The recommended method is by bringing a laptop with a visible 2-player game (ex. classic Street Fighter 2) plus 2 USB gamepads. Volume turned off (blaring audio annoyance would be too obviously a violation), the performer plays the game in single player, until A New Challenger Approaches. They play a round or a few, but when that person leaves to work, the person continues playing, with controller 2 just laying out as bait. If someone asks the performer to leave, the space has asserted its identity as separate from that of its individual entities.

3. The aim of this intervention is to extend the ecological system by scattering its entities into alternative contexts. As set up, the performer creates a php file that will recommend another specific study location on campus (ex. rooftop of Clough, 6th floor of library), selected randomly, that's open at that time (and for at least 90 more minutes) to all students. Ideally, some navigation information or map should be provided as well. Below that should be links to these articles from LifeHacker and Lawyerist, which suggest that changing study/work location yields improved results: http://lifehacker.com/5631680/change-up-your-study-spaces-for-better-recall and http://lawyerist.com/increase-productivity-by-varying-work-locations/ A QR code directing to this URL can then be printed and taped to the corner of each table in the room. The assumption being made is that most people present frequently rely on that setting, and if people get curious to check the QR Code, they may be persuaded to try studying at one of the other recommended locations. The performers role in this case is to hang out working at the table, periodically taking pictures of the QR code then leaving for a bit, followed by returning and repeating, to entice people to try it themselves and spread out a bit. If this proves effective, it may help those students discover a new favorite study location to alternate, and it also makes this otherwise popular section less crowded, creating a partial vacuum which may inspire more students to wander over and try it (first studying there, then being coaxed into trying some other location as well).