

## Urban/Sound/Interface

### Summary of the experience

The participants worked together in two small groups during the registration of urban sounds in the city of Aarhus. Each participant registered and mapped the city using different methods. Each participant had the choice of registering the surrounding sounds using a sound recorder, while listening to iPod during the walk through the city, or experiencing and recording different places through the iPhone application RjDj. Group members had the possibility to try out all these methods. Before beginning the registration the group discussed expectations and previous experiences regarding sonic registration, audio walks and other associated activities.

#### The assignment:

The workshop groups were assigned two different areas of Aarhus. The registration started with the groups walking to their destinations. One group was assigned the centre of the city and the other group spend time registering their experience of the university park. Each participant wrote down their experience and perception of the surroundings. After a couple of hours the groups returned to the conference site to discuss their experiences and reflections. The participants using the iPhone application and the sound recorder chose different spots that were interesting to them and registered these. Then they noted the time and place of the registration and took a picture of the site.

The participants wearing the iPod registered how they interacted with this during the walk. The iPod listener was aware of his or her reaction to the different kinds of music. What genres felt natural, disturbing, boring, or the like? The same listeners chose at least three characteristic registrations and wrote down what was heard, where the registrations was carried out, what characterises the experience and so forth.

When the groups returned to the university everyone had time to reflect on the experience before discussing it with the rest of the workshop group.

During the joint discussion it became obvious that the sounds very much affected our experience of public space – whether it being the park of the centre of Aarhus. The music guided some of the participants in certain directions. Furthermore carrying the recorder affected the listening mode of participant. Not surprisingly he or she became more aware of the urban soundscape. For the participants wearing iPod it became clear that not all music was suitable for a Friday afternoon in the middle of a city. The music that worked the best was the music that triggered a certain confidence and created a well known, and secure atmosphere through which the city was experienced.

These reflections are preliminary and further examination, discussion and reflection is needed to explore the implication of the urban experience through different auditory interfaces.

The participants were given the assignment below:

Assignment on location:

- Return with three characteristic registrations of the area using the appointed technology.
- NB! Note the time, place and object of each registration
- Consider the following when making your registration:
  - What do I hear?
  - What do I see?
  - Why did I choose this sound spot?
  - What is my impression of the city from this spot