MOBILE MEDIA 2015 – THINKING DESIGN THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY



When the graves of ancient Macedonians crossed with the Dodge Charger …

Back in 2005 my lab ran a collaborative project of research and consultation with RTNA (Research and Technology North America) – the research division of DaimlerChrysler.

What will be the media experiences of the car of 2015? How can we assess what people will want? How will this involve new media devices, services, experiences?

This project brought archaeological method and insight to bear upon these questions.

We built a road map for this future of mobile media using interviews, literature survey, social trends analysis and foresight modeling. Our results were delivered using narrative sketches and scenarios.

What was fascinating was the intersection of the corporate world of America's car

industry and classical archaeology in an anthropological or ethnographic mode – a partnership that did indeed help both sides see outside the box.

In particular we were concerned to explore something that was not fully appreciated by DCX. Their marketing people typically put customers – drivers – into demographic categories – according to social class, income, location, occupation etc. Then they connect these categories with types of vehicle and use surveys to find better matches between customer and product. But our research showed that it works the other way round – it's not who you are that makes you like and buy a certain type of car – it's what you do with your car that makes you who you are. People make themselves who they are, even if they aren't aware of this, and even if it's under circumstances over which they have little control – people are the creative force, *they* make society what it is.

We looked closely at car enthusiasts too – those who aren't like the majority – because we think that it such outlier users who set the frames for understanding where people may take their use of cars in the future. With the accelerating convergence of media we might well see the car become a mobile media device in its own right – a space of sociality, a third "other" space between home and work, for a new kind of distributed self. Think of a facebook on wheels.

More information – [Link]

We reported our project to Chrysler HQ in Auburn Hills and moved on.

Anyway today Peter Wolff, the Principal Investigator with Chrysler, reported from the Detroit Motor Show that our project has indeed begun to make an impact.

Here is the new Chrysler concept vehicle offering a "seamless, harmonious link between the vehicle and the home or your office" – social software and beyond -this is straight from our research report and recommendations.





[Link]

Another blog, with press release – [Link]