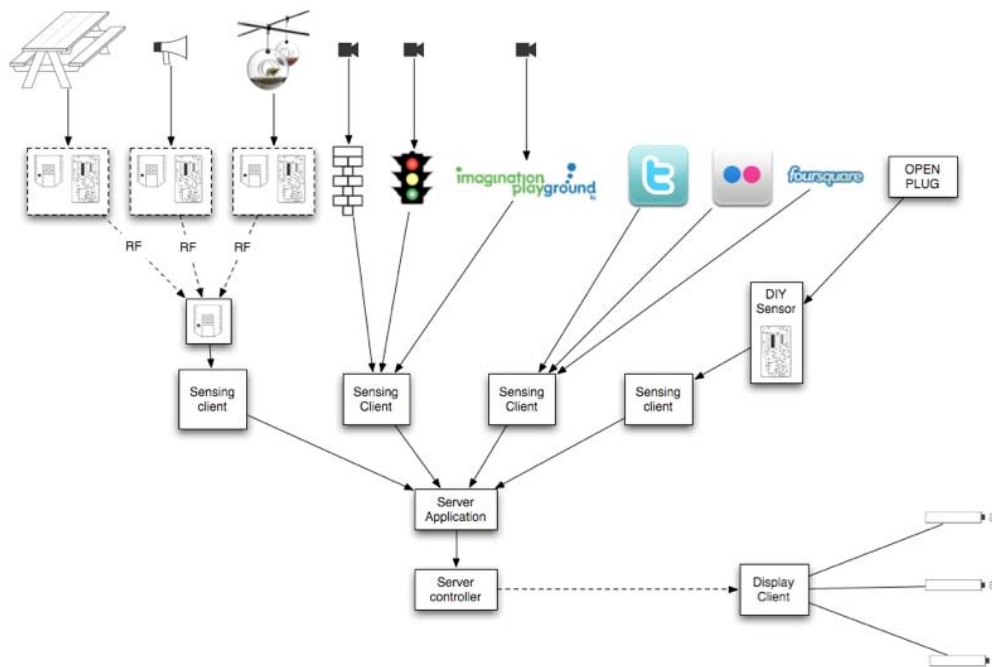


Plug-in-Play, 2010 The LAB at Rockwell Group



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Plug-in-Play represents a playground of ideas related to how we engage our urban environments. By connecting a number of existing and staged objects in San Jose City Hall Plaza to the building façade via oversized theatrical plugs, and by encouraging visitors to “check in” and connect to the physical site through social networking websites, we suggest a new type of environment wherein social interactions, citizenship, and personal activities are more dynamically reflected. Through the application of a projected environment on the façade of City Hall, the LAB at Rockwell Group is able to display both physical and virtual activity in the plaza. The resulting effect constitutes an attempt to create a more accurate representation of the vitality and complexity of our urban environments.

The conceptual origins for Plug-in-Play cover a broad span of architectural and technical innovation. The title of the piece is a direct reference to Peter Cook’s Plug-in-City (1964), a theoretical and all-encompassing urban framework that emphasized flexibility and impermanence through the application of a computer-directed “feedback loop.” Today, Cook’s emphasis on cybernetic exchange in cyberspace as a method of “plugging in” to the physical world to effect social change is reflected in computer encoding concepts such as the “Internet of Things,” wherein the networked connection of everyday objects allows urban inhabitants to connect to or even correct their physical surroundings. Plug-in-Play seeks to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the people and things through play, social media, and human interaction.

With respect to the CHI 2011 Workshop theme of “Politics and the City,” we see *Plug-in-Play* as forwarding ideals of individual and collective autonomy, coordinated social input and real-time response, and the re-definition of urban power structures. From the creation of a highly democratic software platform developed by the LAB as a result of this effort to the *Plug-in-Play* visitor’s act of physically manipulating objects in a civic forum, *Plug-in-Play* presents a new, highly democratic approach to human-computer interaction.

The LAB at Rockwell Group invites visitors to further engage in Plug-in-Play online:
<http://www.Plug-in-Play.com>.

For further images and documentation, please see:
<http://www.rockwellgroup.com/projects/entry/plug-in-play>.

FIRM AND TEAM BIOS

Dreaming is one of the primary missions at Rockwell Group. With enormous pleasure every day, Rockwell Group designers explore new territories and blur the boundaries between disciplines and ideas. The often eccentric and always lively results of this process reveal inspiration culled from cultural landscapes across the globe. Working within this creative framework, the ambition of the LAB at Rockwell Group is to explore and provide interactive experiences augmented with digital technology in objects, environments, and stories.

JAMES TICHENOR & JOSHUA WALTON are Co-Chiefs of the LAB at Rockwell Group. Trained as an architect at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, James received Masters degrees in Design and Computation from MIT and the Interaction Design Institute of Ivrea in Italy. Joshua Walton works primarily in reactive video, programmatic motion graphics, and interactive architecture. Joshua received his Masters degree from the Cranbrook Academy of Art where his work focused on non-linear narrative in new media.