INITIAL QUESTIONS

**Is the ideal Precipice project an expansion of the earlier PICA proposal?**

This should probably be a continuation of the RACC proposal. We will add up to 4 public phones and continue with the current ones. We should include an artist-designed feature in the project, interactive audio art developed with collaborators? “Auto-Longmont” “Communication With Those Beyond” “yet to be named puzzle involving making calls and pushing buttons”.

-Which services and options would be on the menu?

Existing menu plus up to two additional artistic features. I have a hard time describing the menu without it being boring. Here is the start of an outline, it covers the top menus and first submenus:

<https://github.com/kra/futel/blob/master/media/proposals/precipice/menu.txt>

-Which other artists would be collaborated with and how?

Jason Plumb

Alex Norman

Elijah St. Clair

Debbie Wager

Is there room to put names and bios? Cvs are here

<https://github.com/kra/futel/blob/master/media/proposals/houseguest/contributor-cv.txt>

my cv is here:

<https://github.com/kra/futel/blob/master/media/proposals/houseguest/cv.txt>

-Which community partnerships (if any) would be involved or deepened?

Right To Dream Too

We have had a phone installed here since early 2015.

Contact: Brad Gibson <gibsonbc@gmail.com>

Multnomah County Library

Being developed. We have met with library staff and are working out a proposal. We have toured prospected installation locations, guided by library staff, and identified two pilot locations.

Two future locations planned for 2017 in residental neighborhoods

Garth Upshaw, Hosford-Abernathy neighborhood

Chris Chen, Sellwood neighborhood

-What is an up to date estimate of the amount of community users it would reach? How is that determined?

20 to 90 outgoing calls made per day. Tens of voicemail users. 5 to 15 explorations of various menus per day. 23 successful operator calls in the first half of 2016. Tens of calls to the curated audio zine “Wildcard Line”.

We log which menu options are accessed and the paths users take to reach them, and collect statistics on usage patterns. Operators get phone calls which give access to admin menus when relevant events happen, such as operator calls. We do this to ensure service delivery, provide interactive features, and know what features of the phones are being used.

Summary (75 word max.)

Futel is a network of free phone booths installed in public and semi-public locations throughout Portland. Looking at first glance like any normal payphone, Futel phones connect callers for free and offer additional options for interactivity, community building, education, and creativity, all designed and implemented by local artists, with some features provided by live operators. Equal parts hacker art and grassroots community service, Futel phones introduce a touch of ordinary magic into the urban landscape.

Concept/Desc. (300)

A Futel phone is just a payphone on the outside, a rugged example of public street furniture, and can be used to make calls. However, Futel phones are free to use and offer creative services and amusements along with the familiar dialtone. A closer inspection will reveal visual differences between a Futel phone and an ordinary payphone, with iconography and text replacing the usual advertising copy, but it is through use that the deeper surprises are revealed.

A Futel phone is centered around connecting people and helping them communicate, which is reflected by the features we offer. Some of these are straightforward, including free calls, directories of social service numbers, and free voicemail. Some are interactive and creative, such as a periodically updated audio zine of curated user messages, featured artist contributions presenting poetry and audio art, and mysterious challenges solvable using only the phone. The most freeform service provided is the operator line, currently staffed by six volunteers, where a caller can be connected to a live operator who can answer questions, or just talk.

Futel phones currently exist in three locations, and have served the public since June 2014. With funding from the Precipice Fund this project will expand to include four new locations, establishing service in several of Portland’s quadrants, and allowing the expansion of two additional interactive features accessible from every Futel phone.

The technology behind Futel is based on reuse, recycling, and scrappy hacker practicality. Futel’s computing and communication hardware is made up almost exclusively of used and obsolete devices, including salvaged payphones and used twenty year old routers running open source firmware.

Public component/audience participation (150)

The function of Futel is inherently social and sneakily creative. By inviting anyone interested in or in need of our payphones, the project provides any passerby free communication with loved ones and resources, as well as a chance to engage with directories of information and fun activities.

Futel installations are discovered through word of mouth, media, and observing other users, until the mere existence of a popular payphone becomes its own advertisement.

Once a Futel phone is picked up, unexpected interactions will draw in the user. Some of these are passive, where audio and information are presented. Some are active, where the user can contribute with their own voice. And some are ongoing, where contributions from the user will change the experience of callers in the future. An incoming line will allow interaction to continue from other phones.

Support of local artists/audiences (150)

Audience participation is fundimental to Futel. The project centers on both communication-oriented community service and an invitation to engage in unexpected experiences. The use of accessible, street-oriented technology allows community members to interact with art and information, even those who might otherwise feel alienated from the spaces where they are traditionally offered. Futel’s offerings of surprise, communication, and access can shift individuals’ perception of the surrounding community and the way they share creativity and connection within it.

Formally, local artists will be involved with Futel through the creation of two interactive audio pieces, *Auto-Longmont* and *Communication With Those Beyond,* as well as addittional works in development. Less formally, The *Wildcard Line*, an audio digest accessible from any Futel phone, allows callers to share their experiences with each other. The *Operator Line* provides a direct and unscripted connection between users and artists, with live operators available to talk to users directly.

Project Goals (150) - concrete and aspirational, bullet pointed

-Augment users' interaction with their built environment

-Provide creative and thoughtful interactions to a wide public audience

-Critique modern communication and device obsession

-Add a sense of wonder and surprise to common urban experiences

-Offer access to social services and tools for social mobility, including directory services, mental health advocacy, and utilities

-Produce and showcase interactive algorithmic art and creative technology

-Spread visibility of the communication issues facing disadvantaged individuals

-Educate users about the history of hacking, phreaking, and other creative and subversive uses of technology

-Offer free access to telephone services

-Produce and distribute the second issue of “Party Line”, containing a yearly review of Futel’s activity, historical hacker culture articles, and articles

-Produce two or more episodes of “The Wildcard Line”, an audio zine featuring contributions by users of Futel phones

-Continue to produce a blog, Twitter feed, and website to showcase Futel and inform the public

Project space/venue (75)

Futel will install phones at sites in Sellwood, Hosford-Abernathy, and other neighborhoods, and pending approval of a proposal being developed with library staff, at two Multnomah County Public Library sites. Futel will continue to operate existing sites at SE Clinton, NE Ainsworth, and Right To Dream Too at NW Burnside.

Our site selection prioritizes easy access from sidewalks and neighborhoods with diverse demographics. We aim to serve a wide range of communities and diverse usership.

*Timeline (150)*

Jan 1 – Dec 31 proposals continue to be submitted for new phone locations

Jan 1 – Dec 31 existing phones and incoming line continue to be operational

Feb 1 New installation installed in Sellwood

Mar 1 New installation installed in Hosford-Abernathy

Mar 1 New issue of “Party Line” published

Apr 1 Complete hardware for at least two new installations purchased

Apr 1 New edition of collaborative feature “Wildcard Line” produced

Jun 1 One or more new operators trained

Jul 1 New feature, “Communication With Those Beyond”, released

Oct 1 New installation installed, preferably at one of two Multnomah County Public Library locations

Nov 1 New edition of collaborative feature “Wildcard Line” produced

Dec 1 New feature, “Auto-Longmont”, released

Dec 31 New installation installed, preferably at one of two Multnomah County Public Library locations

*Anything else?*

In Futel, I am attempting to create a synthesis between the amazing and the banal, and to provide an opportunity for individuals and communities to discover and experience art in everyday locations. I am interested in public, urban settings over galleries, festivals, and other protected environments. I don't feel like Futel collaborators are providing the experience of art to the public, but instead providing an opportunity for the public to provide that experience for us and each other.

*Budget*

***An itemized list of costs for hardware, hosting, printing, upkeep, and* everything *else you’ll spend on the proposed project during the year.***

*Budget narrative (100)*

Our main expense is hardware for new installations – phones, enclosures, construction materials, wiring, IT and computing hardware, etc, and to a minor extent maintenanc of exisitng hardware, although that tends to be very durable. Our second greatest expense is services – virtual computer and phone service providers. Other expenses include zine and sticker printing and website hosting. We would like to provide stipends and wages to our all-volunteer staff of developers, artistic collaborators, designers, operators, and installers.

*Additional supportive material*

***[Past documentation. User data/feedback?]***

2016 issue of Party Line?

Operator log

<https://github.com/kra/futel/blob/master/log/operator>

*Matls List*

What is this? Payphones.

*Photos*

**[Renderings + IRL photo documentation]**

*Audio*

**[Examples of what users encounter]**