A Call to the Future

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Our project calls attention the obsoleteness of technology by bringing visibility to a historical pay phone on UC Berkeley's Sproul Plaza. In our observations of the site, we recognized that the pay phone went unnoticed by passing students who were more attentive to their mobile phones. In its outdatedness and neglect, we developed an installation that refurbished and repurposed the payphone in order to disrupt the social space. The installation was purposed to engage students with the pay phone and enhance its functional communication abilities. Reversing its outdated narrative, our installation included features that allowed students to interact with the site's past, present, and future. These features gave students the incentive to learn about the phone's past, to use the payphone as a charging station for their smart phones, and to write a message to future students. Our mission was to get students to once again interact with the space and recognize the approaching and rapidly advancing obsoleteness of modern technology.

Project Video: *http://tinyurl.com/ACallToTheFutureVideo*

THE TEAM

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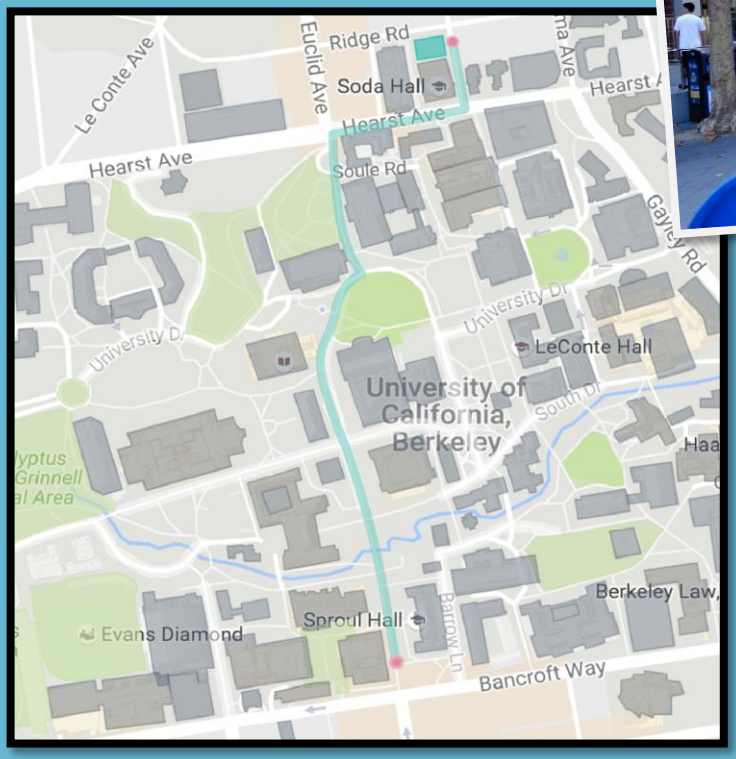
"An idea is only as great as the team that came up with it!"

OBSERVATIONAL DOCUMENTATION

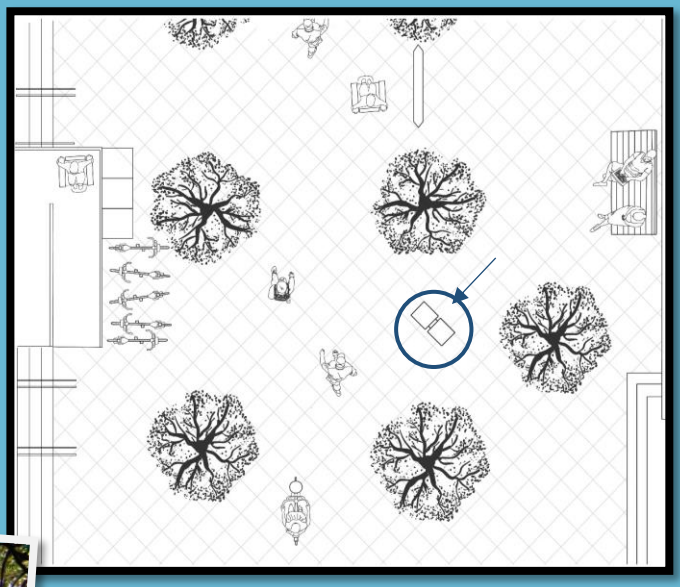
Name of Space: Sproul Plaza

Focus of Space: Pay Phone

Space relative to Jacobs Building



Map of Space – Plan View



Description of Significant Objects in Space

Defaced and largely unused payphone is enclosed in an area bordered by 5 Trees on the upper side of Sproul closer to Telegraph Avenue. On one side, the phone faces the Student Union, a bike rack, and the path with the most student traffic. On the other side, the phone faces a bench and the lawn of Sproul Hall. The payphone sits on the same row of trees where student clubs place their transitory tables.

SITE INVESTIGATION & HISTORY

Investigation 1

Time: 11:00 - 11:20 am on a Thursday

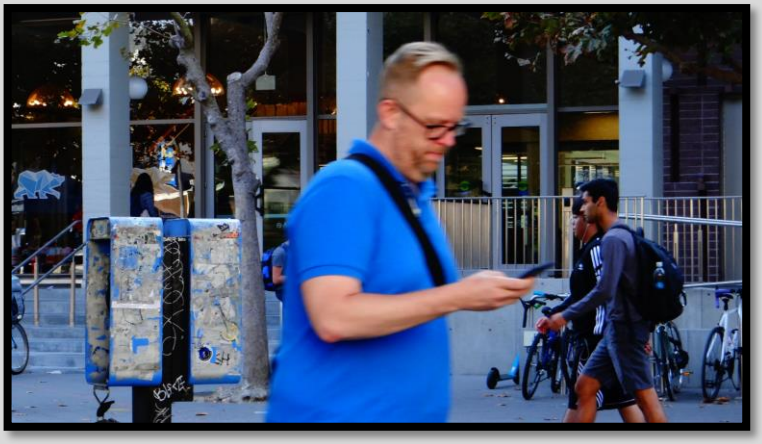
Observations & Traffic
Traffic decreases significantly once the 11-11:10 window has passed
People bike through the sides behind the tables
People walking in groups of 1-3 mostly
No one is looking at the telephone pole
I see one person dodge it without looking at it.

Items in the space
Two tables, one crammed on either side of the telephone pole
Student's backpacks and water bottles behind the tables
Cigarette butts and a single plastic pen cap in the gravel by the tree
A couple of amazon student fliers lodged in the telephone
Dried leaves on the ground

Sounds
Rustling of leaves
Student conversations
Cars going by on Telegraph
Doors opening and closing in MLK
Laughter from the tables
Bike wheels on the pavement
Bike wheels crunching on dry leaves
Feet crunching on dry leaves
Some music from a table further down Sproul

Smells
No strong smells. It's cold and cloudy today,
so there's a cold-air crispness that isn't quite a smell?
Someone's food as they walk by
— I think tater tots or fries

Descriptive Word: Forgotten



Investigation 2

Time: 8:52 - 9:12 am on Thursday

Observations & Traffic

Increase of foot traffic when the bell rings at 9:00am
People mostly walking - looking straight ahead, else looking down at the ground or at their phone

- Some with headphones in, and/or with food in hand (usually a breakfast pastry)
- Skateboarders, bikers
- Workers sweeping up the willow leaves
- Most people walking alone to campus until past 9am, when more people come to Sproul in groups
- A child drops her juicebox
- A lot of people walking past site on their phones
- Two girls began conversing near phone without noticing the phone
- One person noticed the phone as he tripped

Items in the Space

One Table with 1 girl
Leaves on the pavement
Bits of paper

Sounds

- Workers talking about a ketchup spill, and some event they want to attend later
- Wind rustling the leaves in the trees
- A few people talking on their cell phones while walking
- The Campanile bells
- Leaves being swept up by a cleaning lady
- Sound of a trash can being dragged across the pavement
- Skateboard wheels rolling across the pavement
- Cars beeping/honking in the distance

Smells

- Truck exhaust
- Coffee

Single Descriptive Word: Neglected

Investigation 3

Time: 9:00am - 9:20am on Friday

Observations & Traffic

- Busy at 9:00 am after 9:10, less traffic
- People riding their bikes
- Go cart passed by and stopped in front of me
- Students all hurrying to class, no time to look around.
- Friend sat down with us to talk, asked about what we were observing. Noted that he was staring into the same space but did not notice phone
- Phone was defaced with new stickers and flyers
- The phonebook was newly tagged “Excel”
- Someone came up to the pay phone with their own phone, only to use the payphone as a stand to hold their coffee cup

Items in the Space

- Wheelchair
- Cars
- Airplane
- Trees
- Benches
- People
- Bikes

Sounds

- Birds chirping
- Cars engine sounds/ beeping
- Keys jiggling
- Doors closing
- Laughing
- Students talking with one another while walking

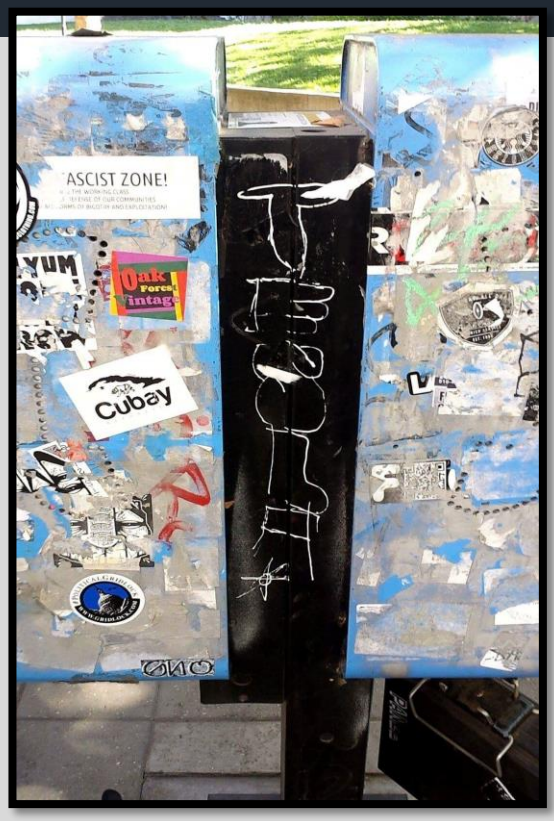
Smells

- No particular smell. It was a nice fresh morning.

Single Descriptive Word: Bustling

Time Lapse Video

https://youtu.be/Kff1UCv4cJ0



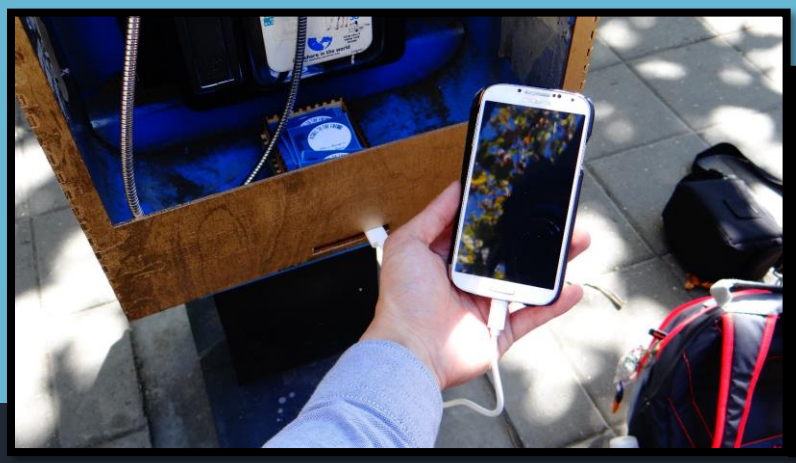
OUR INSTALLATION AND NEW FEATURES

Current Function and Form:

The payphone has two sides facing in opposite directions and is mounted to the ground by cement. Each side has a blue box-shaped case with phone on the inside. Each phone component includes a dial pad, a coin slot, a place to receive change, information on the telecommunication company, a list of emergency numbers, and lastly the phone itself. Each phone is connected to the box by a cord and is operational. It was created with the intention to be used for long distance communication and calling after the user deposits money to use its service. The payphone we observed was also a site for vandalism and advertisement. We noticed that companies and student organizations placed their promotional and marketing content such as stickers and flyers onto the case. However, other existing payphones are in public areas are sometimes spot clean. The model we observed was the Protel 7000.

Added New Features:

-Gold box-shaped case modeling current smart phone designs (placed on one side)
-2 descriptive plaques with payphone history and facts (placed on other side)
-Phone Charging Station (Enclosed box with portable battery and USB connectors)
-Colored Adhesive Stickers with text: “Write a message to a future student!”
-Paper cutout of speech bubble
-Instructions for use



DESIGN PROCESS

1. RESEARCH

We first searched library archives and contacted the telecommunications company that owned the phone to learn more about its history. This helped us estimate when the phone was placed on Sproul. We then did web research on payphones in general. This research influenced what we wanted to showcase on the plaques describing the payphones history.

Angie Avilla <AngieA@jaroth-pts.com> Sep 13 (13 days ago)
to me, PTS

Hi Krystal,

PTS took over the pay phones from ATT in 2008 and they were already existing so I'm sure they have been there for many years. The phones do not allow incoming calls and please feel free to clean it up J

Thanks!

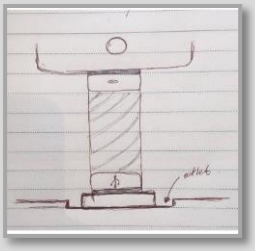
From: Krystal Ching [mailto:krystalching@berkeley.edu]
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2016 11:20 PM
To: PTS CS Emails
Subject: Berkeley Payphone origin

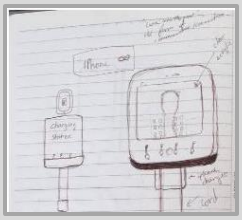
2. MEASUREMENTS

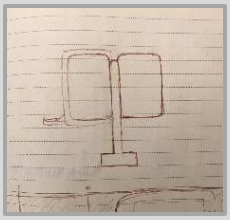
We then took physical measurements of the payphone to determine what designs would be feasible for our installation.

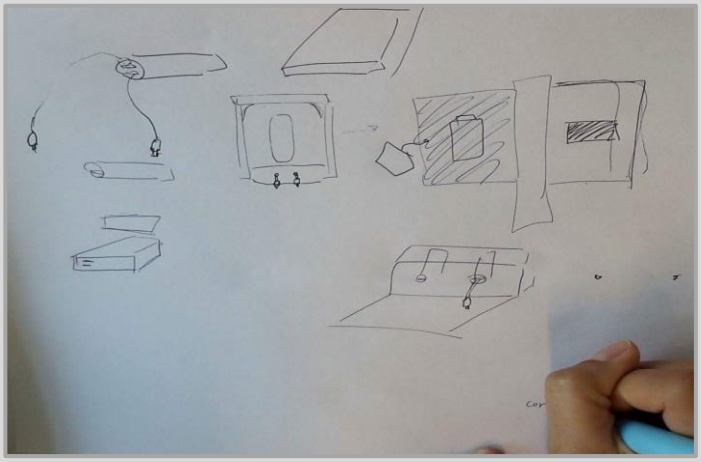
3. IDEATION & SKETCHING

We brainstormed ideas for our installation and made several sketches to determine the look of the design and how we would implement the different functions we wanted.



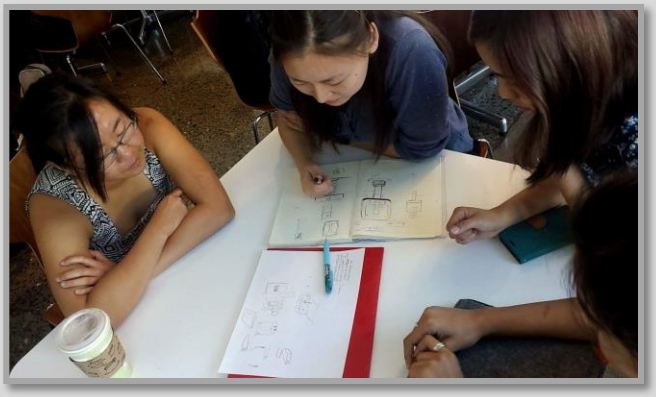






4. CONCEPT DESIGN AND MODELING

After choosing an idea and rendering our sketches, we flushed out some more designs on Adobe Illustrator based on the initial measurements we took. These designs would be used to construct our first prototype.

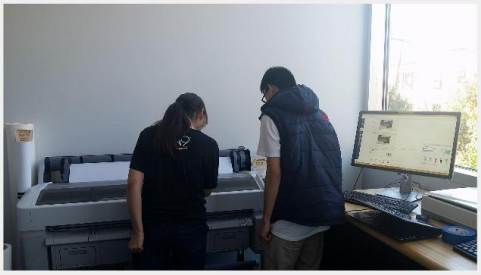


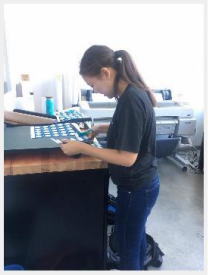
5. PROTOTYPING & FABRICATION

We used the laser cutter to create the first iteration of our box which we tested on cardboard. After testing the prototype to see if it fit the payphone case, we iterated the design onto plywood.
We also laser cut our charging station box and printed stickers using the Epson printer.

Cardboard prototype for payphone.

Putting wooden parts together.



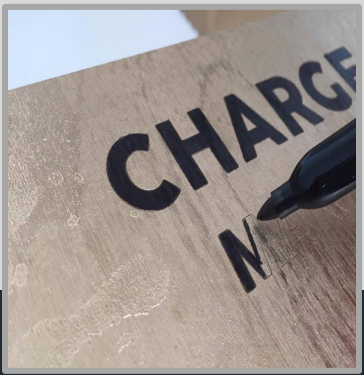


Printer struggles

5. INSTALLATION, FEEDBACK, AND ITERATION

After putting together our design which included assembling our wood pieces by gluing their finger joints, installed our new box onto the payphone.

After a first round of observations, we recorded interactions and user feedback to influence our next iteration.



Iterations of our installation.

6. FINAL INSTALLMENT AND OBSERVATION

To improve our design, user feedback informed us that we needed to make the installation more visible and intuitive.

We painted the box gold, made it appear more like a phone, added instructions, and placed a noticeable speech bubble to catch people's attention. We installed this final piece and then observed people's interactions with the phone.

RESULTS & FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

In our final installation, we found that more people were beginning to notice the phone. In fact, we discovered an individual that came up to the phone and made a call using it for its initial functional purpose. Though students engaged with the installation by reading the plaque, charging their phones, and writing messages on our stickers, we noticed that there were several risks and barriers associated with the space that prevented increased interactions that would have met our anticipated expectations.

We recognized that some individuals may have felt hesitant to approach the phone if they noticed our team assembling the installation or documenting observations. However, our team felt obligated to stay at the site during the installation in order to ensure that the design, specifically the charging ports, would not get stolen. Additionally, many observers avoided the area due to its proximity to student organization tables, which are known for excessive advertising. In future iterations, we hope to develop a design that can remain secure at the site and reserve the area to distance the payphone from student tablers.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INSTALLMENT

1. Measure all dimensions of the payphone. Use these measurements to design a box to your liking.
2. Purchase a portable battery pack and USB connectors and list down measurements for each.
3. Draft the box casing for the payphone and the charging station in Adobe Illustrator.
   -Example: Our payphone box required 3 pieces of 18x32 1/8" plywood
   -Our files: *http://tinyurl.com/ACallToTheFuturePhoneCase* & *http://tinyurl.com/ACallToTheFutureBattery*
4. Draft a plaque in Adobe Illustrator with facts you want to feature.
   -Our file: *http://tinyurl.com/ACallToTheFuturePlaque*
5. Laser cut the box files and the plaque files using either cardboard, plywood, or your material preference.
6. Construct both boxes by using wood glue onto the edges of each cut piece and assemble the box by connecting finger joints.
7. Use clamps to secure the boxes during gluing. Wait for glue to dry and check for sturdiness of both boxes
8. Decorate the boxes to your liking
   -Example: We spray painted our payphone box using a Montana Black Can of Gold Acrylic
   Added 3 stickers and labeling to imitate the look of an iPhone (We called it the iPhone ∞)
   Drew a speech bubble and labeled it with Adele's iconic lyrics "Hello from the other side!"
   Attached this speech bubble to cardboard and superglued it to our box
   Etched "Charge Your Phone – Make a Call to the Future" using pen and markers
9. Create a sticker design and save the file in PDF format.
   -Our file: *http://tinyurl.com/ACallToTheFutureStickers*
10. Use an EPSON printer and adhesive printer paper to print the sticker PDF file. Then cut the stickers.
11. Create or find a container for the stickers.
12. Assemble the payphone case onto the payphone by placing it over one side like a hat.
13. Place the charging station on the interior of the phone, but extend the wires outside of the case
14. Add all additional decorations and instructions to the case