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Research & Development Methods

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Urban Observation, Data Digging



Credit: <http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-2e2xCycOrIE/T-PDEQIEqKI/AAAAAAAABZ0/BunlnbfYZr8/s1600/FlatironArea.jpg>



❖ **Location:** Flatiron Area (23rd street & 5th avenue and Broadway)

❖ **Time:**

- Feb 8, 2015 from 4:00pm-5:00pm
- Feb 11, 2015 from 3:30pm-4:30pm

❖ **What is there:** sitting chairs, ilili Box, flat rocks, tables, flowers around the block

❖ **Size of people:** 15-25 people

❖ **Description:** a three-way tie; Midtown; Madison Square Park, Flatiron Building

Site diagram with mapped site use



**Taxonomy of Users:** taking pictures, talking, standing, observing, texting, talking on the phone, visiting (tourists)

**Taxonomy of Use Patterns:**

- a. people standing on the rock and taking pictures/ people just taking pictures
- b. people coming from the east side/ people coming from the Union Square area/ people coming from the upper side
- c. people passing the area to cross the streets (6 pedestrian crossings)
- d. people just standing and waiting for someone else

**Type B&C: People passing the area to cross the streets:** they are usually with someone else, and they don't stop to take pictures or to talk. They either walk and talk at the same time or not talk at all. The girl on the left, she was coming from the east side by herself with groceries. She went towards the west side, passing Eataly.



**Type D: People on their phones while waiting for someone:** this guy was actually standing there for about 5 minutes. He didn't cross the street; it seemed like he was waiting for his friend. He was texting for and looking for his friend for the whole time.



**Type A: People taking pictures:** I couldn't tell if they were tourists or not, but they were either standing on the rock or just standing there, to take pictures of the Flatiron Building. They didn't take pictures of anything else. Just the Flatiron Building.



There were some people who were filming and recording as well. They brought professional cameras and recorders. I saw them as I was leaving the area, so I don't know how long they were there, but they came around 4:45pm.



**Intended Affordances:** since there are tables and chairs, it attracts people for resting area, eating area, a form of socialization. Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership also offers installations on the site. For instance, there was a public art installation composed of 12 marble snow monsters about a week ago.

**Unintended Affordances:** I don't think the site is for filming/recording. Maybe the Flatiron Building is popular and people want to get a good view of it, and that's why people film/record at this site.

## Data Digging:

- The Flatiron Building was actually called the Fuller Building, but it became the Flatiron Building because it looked like a flat iron.
- When women wearing skirts walked by or stood at this area, their skirts would fly up because of the wind created by the way the Flatiron Building was located. Men would try to watch that happening to see women's legs or underwear, so the police officers had to stop them.
- More than 44 million people: total MTA riders for 23rd Street and 28th Street stations
- 11,000 taxi drop offs per weekday
- <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/video?autoStart=true&topVideoCatNo=default&clipId=11132849>
- There was a free Kanye West concert for All Star game on Feb 12, Thursday. A lot of the residents in the area complained about the noise and the bad traffic because of the concert.
  - Installation to concert space



## Bibliographies

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<<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2015/02/12/flatiron-plaza-ready-for-tonights-free-kanye-west-concert/>>.