


It's Mine, Don't Touch!: interactions at a large multi-touch display in a city centre

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 2008 Article



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Published in:



• Proceeding
[CHI '08](#) Proceedings of the twenty-sixth annual SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems
 Pages 1285-1294
 ACM New York, NY, USA ©2008
[table of contents](#) ISBN: 978-1-60558-011-1 doi> [10.1145/1357054.1357255](#)

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We present data from detailed observations of CityWall, a large multi-touch display installed in a central location in Helsinki, Finland. During eight days of installation, 1199 persons interacted with the system in various social configurations. Videos of these encounters were examined qualitatively as well as quantitatively based on human coding of events. The data convey phenomena that arise uniquely in public use: crowding, massively parallel interaction, teamwork, games, negotiations of transitions and handovers, conflict management, gestures and overt remarks to co-present people, and "marking" the display for others. We analyze how public availability is achieved through social learning and negotiation, why interaction becomes performative and, finally, how the display restructures the public space. The multi-touch feature, gesture-based interaction, and the physical display size contributed differentially to these uses. Our findings on the social organization of the use of public displays can be useful for designing such systems for urban environments.

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