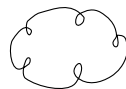# COMMUNITIES in the CLOUDS

Project Description

There is an opening for a three month internship for a PhD student at Microsoft Research, Cambridge, beginning April 2014. The internship will consist of a design-oriented ethnography of high-rise and high-density urban living, with a focus on the technologies used in this kind of communal living. There is a mismatch between the needs of a high rise community and the role that technology currently plays in meeting them. Typically residents (tenants and landlords) have re-appropriated social media tools such as Facebook and Yahoo Groups to ask questions or collaborate to resolve issues. Broadly, social media tools are designed with a notion of being sociable and the motives map poorly onto the concerns of high-density living. The placement will involve a combination of ethnography and design work to assess technology's role in supporting high-rise communities. The ethnographic work will focus on the current role of technology and how the place-based nature and political/sociological traits impinge upon its use and effectiveness. The design work will consider and assess technological solutions to the problems identified in the ethnographic work. This work will be instrumental in determining a set of technology probes to be deployed and evaluated within one or more high-rise residential communities. The internship forms a part of a six-month pilot project: "Communities in the Clouds" funded under the **IT as a Utility Network**+ subtheme of the **RCUK digital economy** programme. Further information on the project can be found at **http://upintheclouds.org**. The successful candidate will be working with Tom Lodge at the University of Nottingham and Alex Taylor at Microsoft Research, Cambridge.

Requirements

The ideal candidate will have a background in either one of: ethnography for technology design, the social studies of science and technology, the sociology of technology, human-centred design or social science. Prior experience of fieldwork and/or exploratory software prototyping would be a distinct advantage. Strong writing skills are essential; publications will be encouraged from work that emerges from this placement. A good technical background, whilst not essential, would be an advantage.

Application

Please send your cv to **thomas.lodge@nottingham.ac.uk**, along with one or two paragraphs on why this internship interests you, and what you could bring to it.