

An aerial night view of the New York City skyline, featuring numerous illuminated skyscrapers and the city lights extending to the horizon. The sky is a deep blue, and the city lights are a mix of warm yellow and cool blue tones.

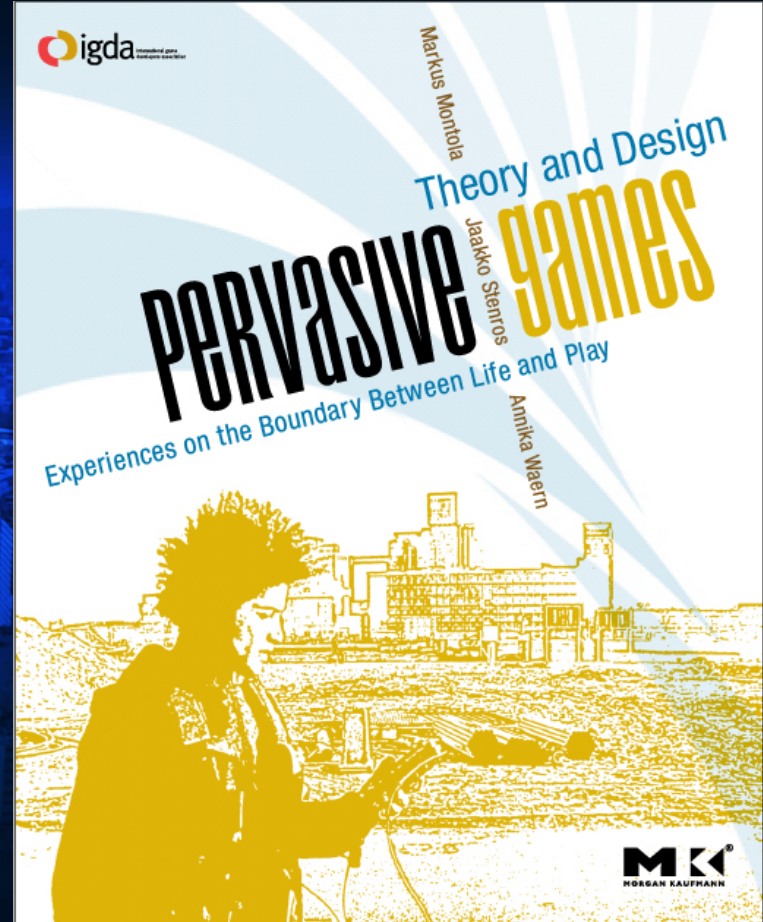
# Shadow Cities

And the Future of Location-Based Gaming

Markus Montola, Grey Area  
GDC 2012



# Designer Academic





SHADOW  CITIES

ONLINE INNOVATION





*"I have played the future of mobile gaming.  
It is called Shadow Cities.*

*[...]*

*Shadow Cities isn't just the future of mobile gaming.  
It may actually be the most interesting, innovative, provocative  
and far-reaching video game  
in the world right now,  
on any system."*

*-- The New York Times, July 2011*



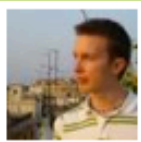








miksa said:




**Resigned from Ericsson and sold my car today.  
Here we go...**

2 years, 3 months ago. ✕ [Mark as spam](#)



# Location-Based MMORPG





**The Planet is our  
Playground**

# Here and Now





# Emergent Exploration





**Secret World**



The background image is a dark, blue-tinted aerial photograph of a city at night. The city's lights are visible as small, bright spots against the dark buildings. In the upper right portion of the image, there is a bright, glowing blue light source, possibly a fire or a large explosion, which casts a strong blue glow over the surrounding area. The overall mood is dramatic and intense.

# Not Just a Game A Global Game Layer

A blue robotic unicorn with orange gears and red lights on a yellow woven background. The unicorn has a white mane and tail, and its body is decorated with orange gears and red lights. The text "Lessons Learned" is overlaid on the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a blue outline.

# Lessons Learned

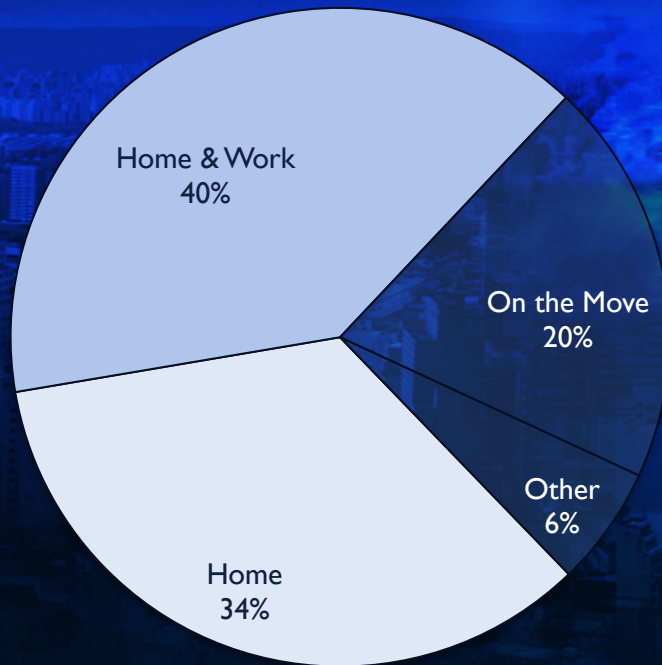


# Playing on the Sofa

Key Takeaway #1



# Where Do You Play Most Often?





An aerial photograph of a city at night, heavily filtered with a blue color. The city's lights are visible through the blue tint. In the upper right portion of the sky, there is a bright, glowing blue light source, possibly a fire or a flare, which casts a soft glow on the surrounding clouds and city. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

# Playing with Your Neighbors



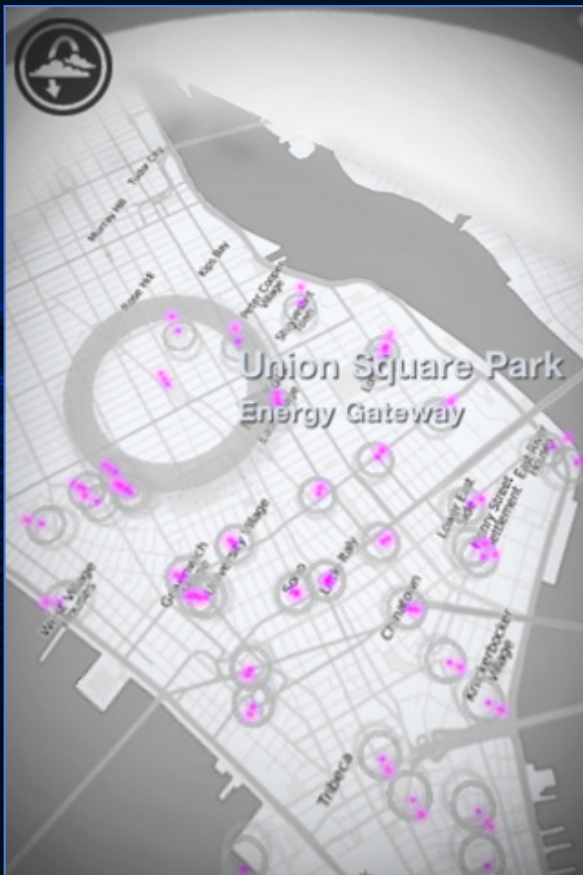
**Key Takeaway #2**

**The Real World is  
Not Fair**



Key Takeaway #3

# Critical Critical Mass



# Virtual vs Physical Movement



**Dormant  
Gameplay**

**Ambient  
Gameplay**

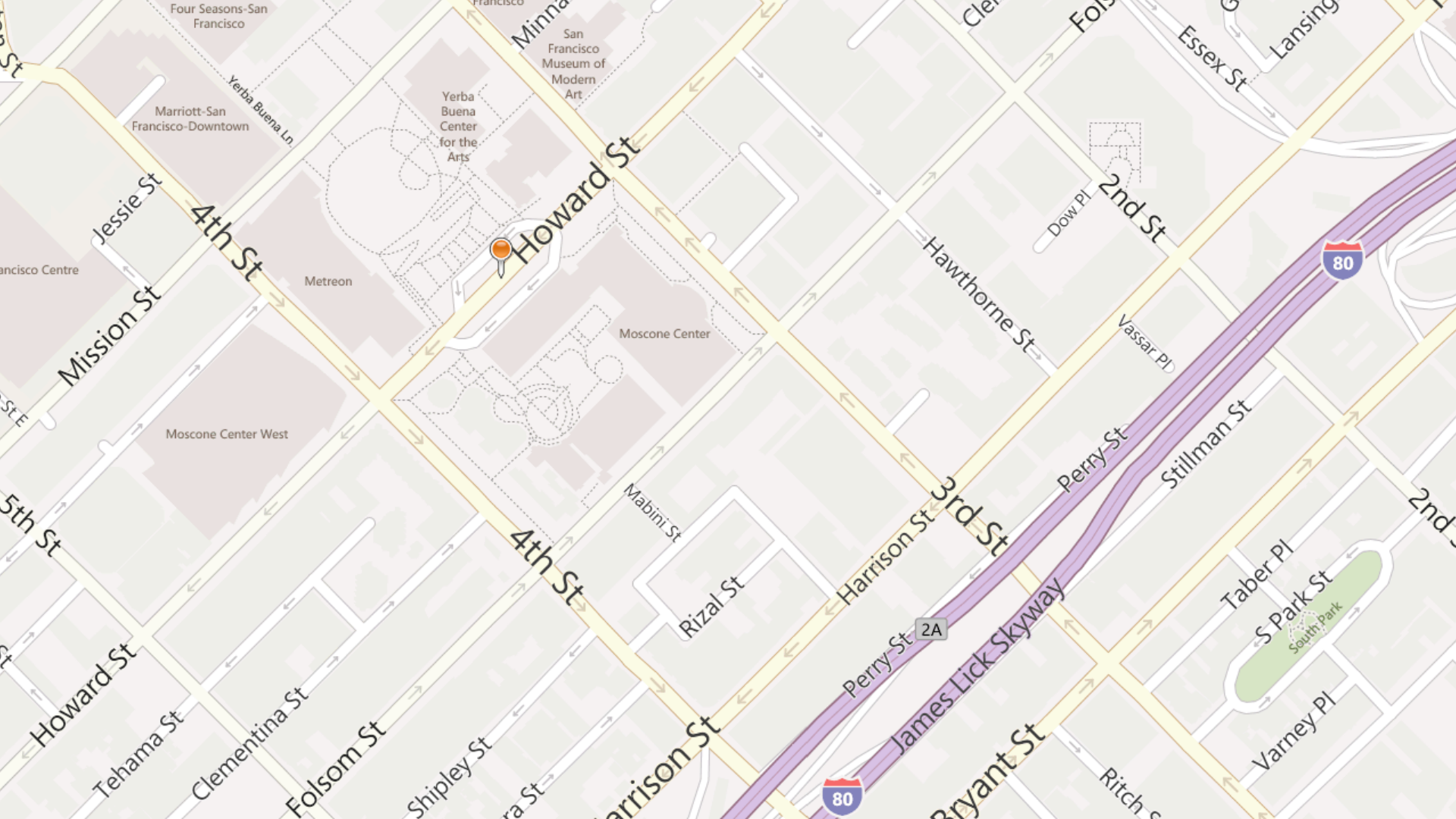


# Key Takeaway #4

## Challenges of Location Data







# Battery Life and Positioning





# Spiky


## Network Latency



# Expectation Management

Character Willpower Reset

Inner Fire powers your spells, both when healing and destroying.



0/75

You have 39 Attribute Points. Gain more with experience.

Buy Willpower: 1 AP



# Thematic Limitations



**Key Takeaway #5**

# **Unsolvable Problems**



An aerial, high-angle view of a city at night, bathed in a deep blue light. The city is densely packed with buildings of various heights. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a dark sky. A bright, glowing blue light source, possibly a fire or explosion, is visible on the right side of the city, casting a strong glow over the surrounding area. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and dramatic.

80 / 20

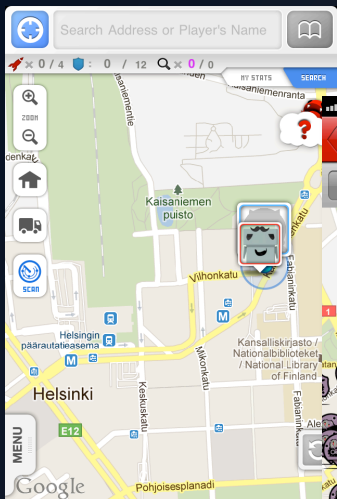


**Future of Location**

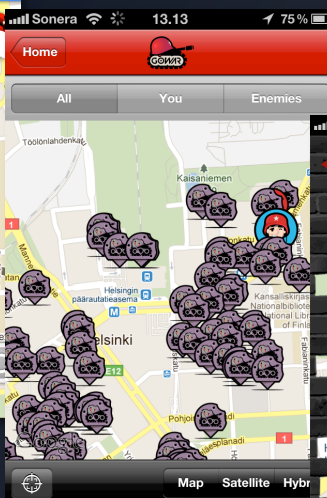


An aerial, high-angle view of a city at night, bathed in a deep blue light. The city is densely packed with buildings of various heights. In the background, a range of hills or mountains is visible under a dark sky. A bright, glowing blue light source, possibly a fire or explosion, is visible on the right side of the city, casting a strong glow over the surrounding area. The overall mood is dramatic and mysterious.

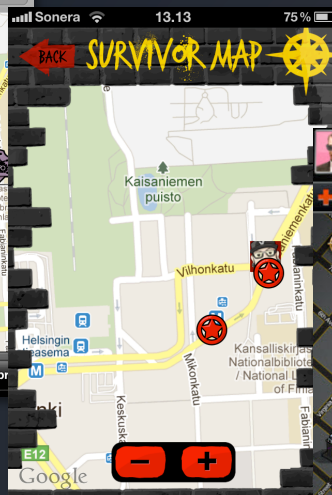
**Sweet  
Spot Now**



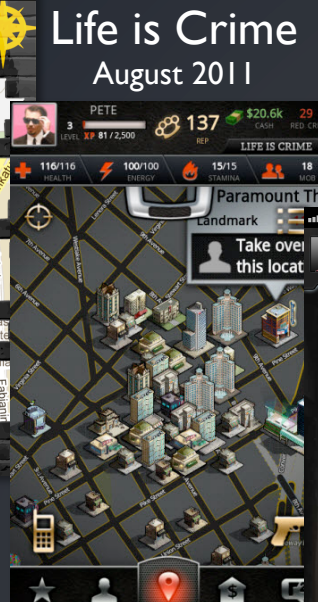
Stinktopia  
March 2011



Gowar  
May 2011



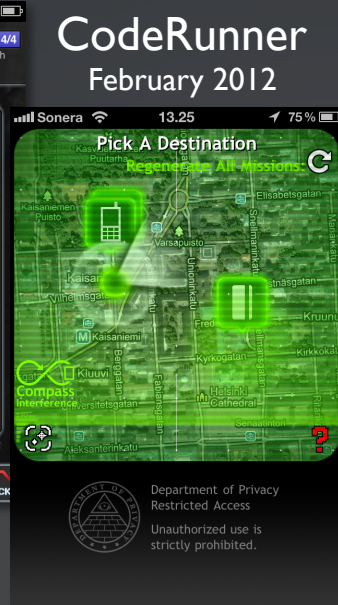
Zombie Hood  
August 2011



Life is Crime  
August 2011



Please Stay Calm  
September 2011



CodeRunner  
February 2012

Department of Privacy  
Restricted Access  
Unauthorized use is  
strictly prohibited.





# Educate Players Define Genre

# Context-Based Beyond Location-Based





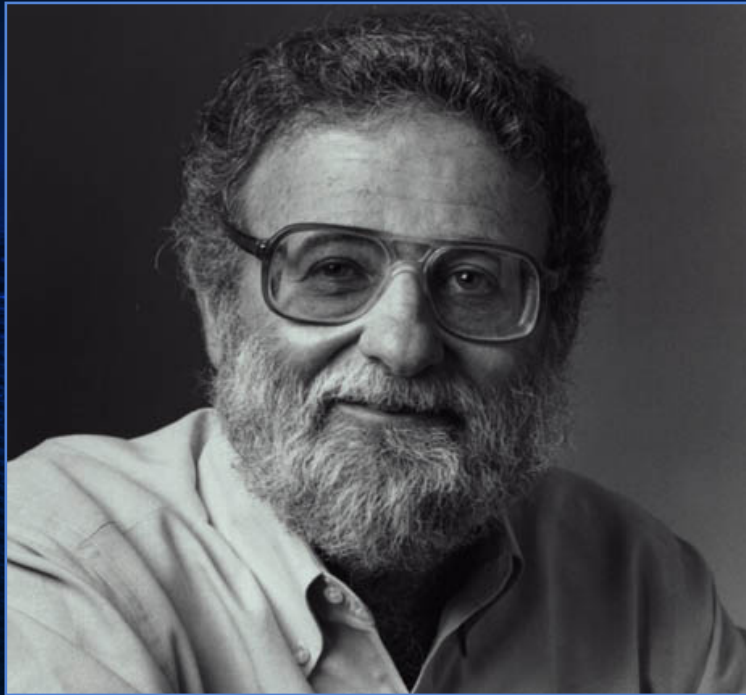
An aerial photograph of a city at night, with a strong blue color overlay. The city lights are visible, and the sky is dark. The text "Map-Based or Location-Based" is centered over the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

# Map-Based or Location-Based



Every year NYC does a Tower of Light memorial for the Twin Towers. It is a little-known fact that the Towers of Light are not actually located in the Towers' footprints. This photo, taken from the water off the west of Manhattan, clearly shows that the lights are south of the site.





*“We grow to love the objects that  
connect us to other people,  
create meaning,  
and remind us that we’re alive.”*

*-- Donald A. Norman*

An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, taken from a high vantage point. The city is densely packed with buildings, and the sun is setting over the water, creating a bright, glowing horizon. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The text "Your City is a Game" is overlaid in a large, white, sans-serif font across the lower half of the image.

**Your City is a Game**





Questions,  
Comments?

1. **Playing on the Sofa**
2. **Critical Critical Mass**
3. **The Real World is not Fair**
4. **Challenges of Location Data**
5. **Unsolvable Problems?**







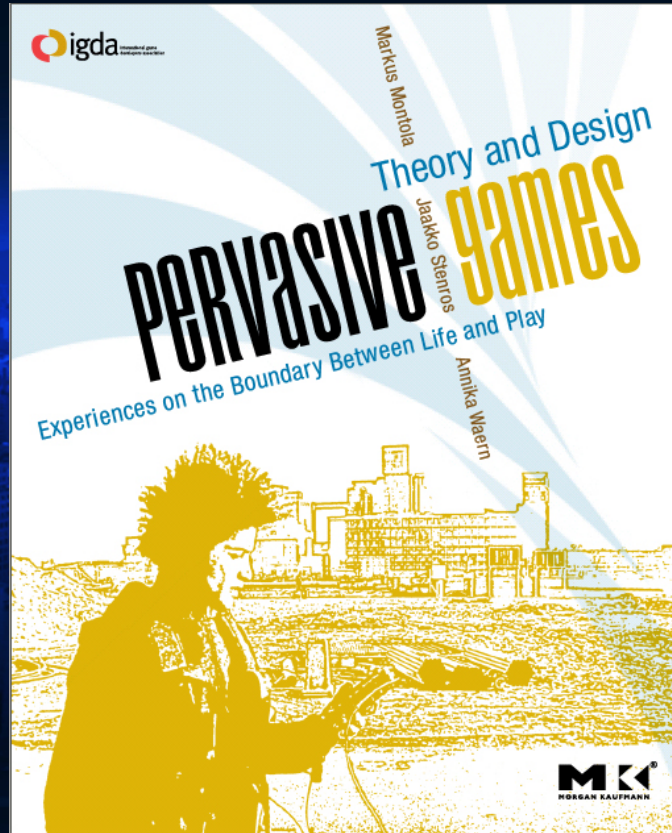
# Thank You

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