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Wiki City creates real-time maps

24 September 2007

Massachusetts, USA, September 22, 2007: The Wiki City project, run by MIT's SENSEable City Laboratory, aims to apply wiki technology to the map-making process. The project's ultimate product will permit anyone to upload content to a map and utilize Semantic Web principles to cross search multiple layers of information.



Wiki City Rome, an early incarnation of the project's user-generated maps, used GPS (Global Positioning System) and cell-phone data to produce a real-time map during an all-night festival held in the city on Sept. 8. A Web site featuring a satellite image of Rome displayed event locations and the position of buses and pedestrian traffic in real time. Buses equipped with GPS devices fed their locations to the project every minute while cell-phone data was constantly received to show how crowds were moving around the city. An image of the map was also projected in one of Rome's main squares.

"If people know about the state of their environment in real time (as opposed to a static map), they can make better informed decisions about how to move about in the city which in term increases efficiency," Kristian Kloeckl, one of Wiki City Rome's team leaders, wrote in an e-mail interview.

Wiki City Rome served as an initial step in the Wiki City project. Future projects involve introducing the wiki city concept to other cities that have partnered with the SENSEable City Laboratory. The list currently includes only European cities because their public

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transportation networks and outdoor spaces correspond with the project's aim of studying how people react and move about in public spaces, Kloeckl said. But the project is applicable to non-European cities, he said. He mentioned that a Boston area furniture company is interested in placing displays in their products that would show a wiki city map.

Wiki City researchers ultimately want to introduce full wiki concepts to the project and allow any person or business to upload information to a map, Kloeckl said. The wiki method of permitting anyone to add any information lends itself to fraudsters. One possible resolution involves introducing a ranking system similar to the one eBay Inc. uses with sellers.

Finally, the data layers need to be arranged in such a way that a search produces pertinent results. Solving this problem involves further developments in the Semantic Web, an evolving component of the Web being developed by the Worldwide Web Consortium. The Semantic Web aims to take data and apply standards that allow computers to play a greater role in locating, finding and presenting information. This will permit computers to understand the standards and produce more contextual search results.

Source : <http://www.pcworld.com>
, <http://web.mit.edu>

Comments

by Maneesh Prasad, India on 9/25/2007

Is there any overlap/similarity between the project mentioned above, Google Crowdsourcing and Studentsourcing to create map of a city/locality.

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by M. Shahjahan Bhatti, Pakistan on 10/3/2007

Perhaps I will have to wait for another hundred years to see my city and its environment in real time.

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