

Proposal title: The Geography of Information

Session Abstract:

Taking into account the brief existence of a robust mobile application environment, there exists a vast variety of location aware applications that rose quickly to prominence, only to fizzle and die out a few months later. Yet, amongst these have risen standout applications that have withstood the test of time. What factors led these apps to survive in an environment that value newness and intrigue?

To understand these factors and their implication for future applications and services, we begin first by looking into the history of location aware applications in general, geolocation and geographic information systems. By building upon knowledge gained, a more robust discussion will be had about the rise and fall of specific location aware applications, starting with some of the first such as Loopt, Dodgeball, FourSquare, and then moving toward more current applications such as Yelp and Color. An outcome of reviewing the rise and fall of these applications is a greater awareness of the implications these applications may have on library and information services. To what extent must libraries get involved with these mobile applications? This leads to further issues with the idea of the geography of information - how our information needs are affected by our location and our geography.

In reviewing both historical issues with location aware applications, and future opportunities for libraries to get involved, it becomes apparent that mobile technologies may help to bridge the gap present when attempting to obtain information.