THE GEOGRAPHY OF INFORMATION
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What it is?

The relationship between spatial knowledge and actual knowledge - how our spatial relationships affect our knowledge of the environment and our information needs

This is a constant conversation between two components: geography and knowledge. Our geography affects our information needs and our knowledge of the surrounding landscape, and our information needs and knowledge of the surrounding landscape affects our view of the geography. Through this conversation, we develop a better understanding of our information needs.

Photo by Tim Caynes

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Outside of librarianship, this was heavily researched by tourism scholars as it affects how people get the information they need about specific locations and how tourism experts can get that information to these people.

I'm almost reminded of an article I read on my flight over here, in which a native of London readily admits to being a terrible source of information for tourists because they often don't know/understand what is around tourist locations. They've never been in that context of tourist in London and thus have no knowledge to share

MOBILE DEVICES AND LOCATION SERVICES

Having mobile devices allows us to satisfy this need much more easily and with location services, there is no need to worry about having to search for information - services can provide information before we even need it (Googles predictive results, Yahoo location awareness results)

Mobile Devices work towards expediting this information behavior - app ask to have permission to view your location and then serve up results based on your location, often with you having to think about it (FourSquare's recommendation services)

Photo by Garry Knight

LOCATION SERVICES

- Geolocation
- GIS
- Location Awareness
- Geosocial Networking

LOCATION AWARE TERMINOLOGY
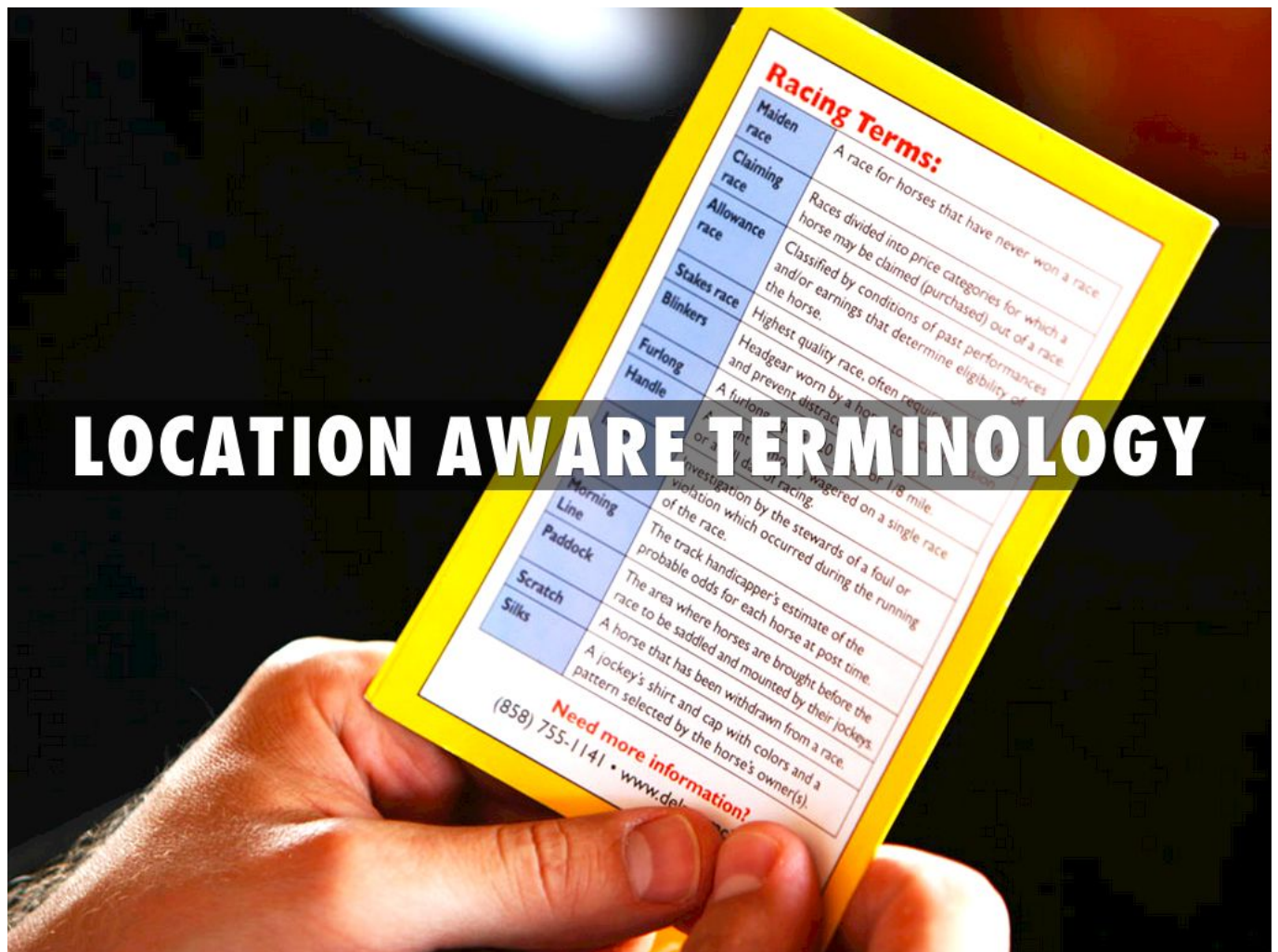
Ambient Proximity - one of the newer terms, used by Facebook and Foursquare to discuss the sharing of users locations with others. It's meant to be imprecise, with just enough detail to know if your friends or others are nearby without knowing their specific location.

Location Sharing - either in the background or on demand, an application or device will share your location with your social network. The Yelp Check-In, FourSquare check-in

WELL KNOWN LOCATION AWARE APPLICATIONS

1. Yelp

2. Loopt

3. FourSquare

4. SCVNGR

5. Color

Created with Haiku Deck, presentation software that's simple, beautiful and fun.
By Andrew Carlos

Some of these applications have survived, some have fallen by the wayside

A variety of factors can influence their success, such as popularity, functionality, fun, utility, etc.

Yelp survived due to providing a mobile component to an already successful and popular desktop site

Loopt neither failed nor succeeded - the company was acquihired by another company.

FourSquare is still around - they have managed to tap into some motivation among users to become mayor, check in, etc. However, they've developed an offshoot app - the two apps provide the same function as one app did, but is meant for ease of use. Time will tell if this was a smart idea

Scvngr is still around(sorta) - by giving the end-users the ability to create challenges, they are providing enough utility to survive. Branched out to another function - mobile payments.

Color - despite providing a cool function, there just was not enough utility to this app. Not only that, but it required that there be other users nearby to really experience the functionality.

Participatory GIS
Working with spatial data to resolve issues within their community. Libraries can be the providers of this spatial data or provided services to help understand the data

Knowledge Production
The creation of geospatial data through lived experience. Libraries are the places to create this knowledge/provide the tools for creation.

Grounded Visualization
Based on grounded theory (basing theories on the everyday lived experiences of people, libraries can provide the facilities to create theses visualizations, as well as provide the contextual materials to ground the visualizations.

Mobilities scholarship

A field of study that focuses on movement and the implications of this movement. By being aware of this field of study, librarians should consider how they can provide their services.
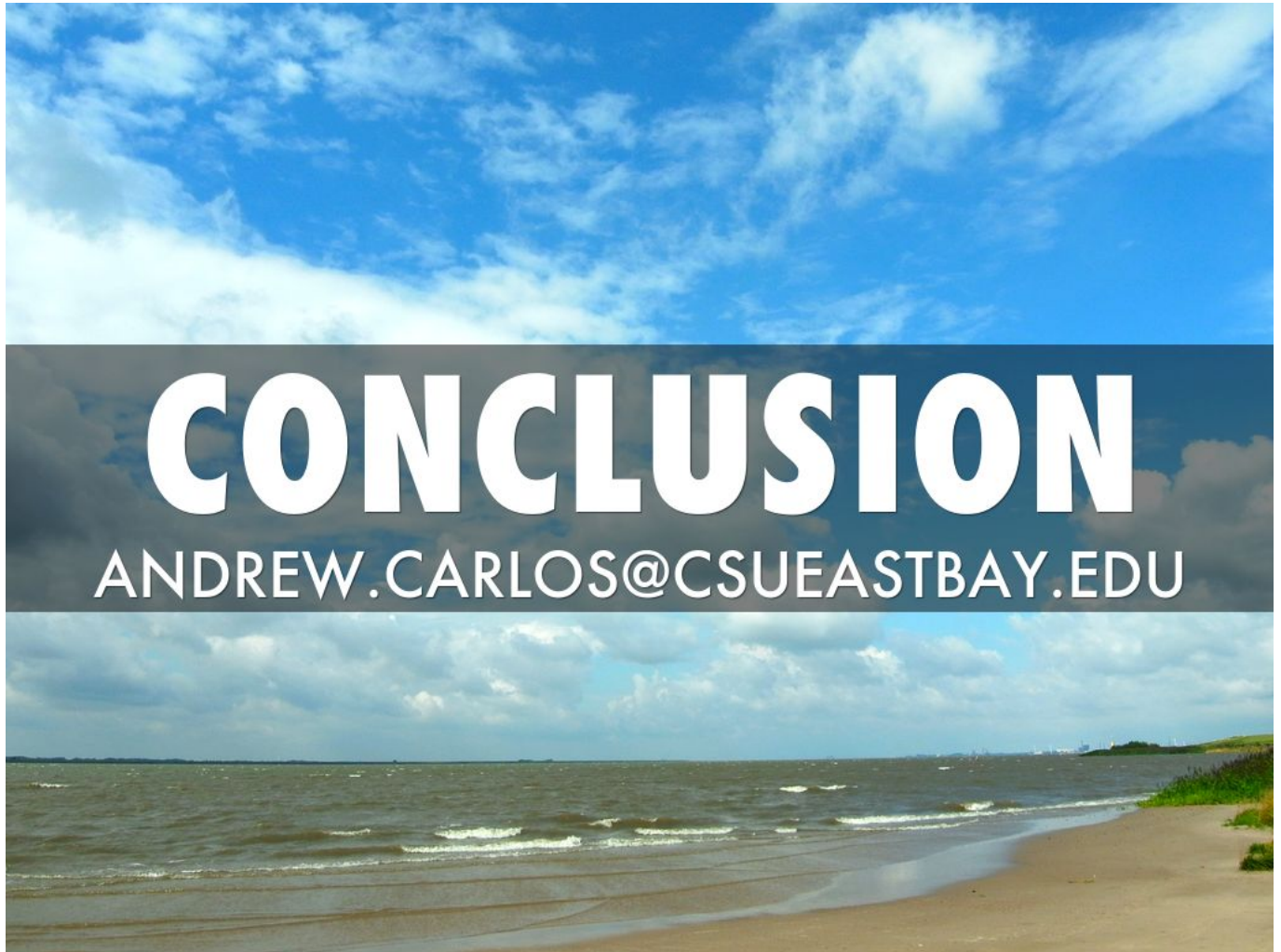
Scvngr for library orientation and instruction

FourSquare for checking in/marketing purposes

Yelp for Reviews and marketing

What can libraries do to better serve patrons and their geography of information-based needs?

Study the information needs/behaviors of their patrons

Curate resources that are more narrowly focused

And, most importantly, Provide a better mobile experience

With more technology integration in our lives, it becomes necessary for us to be more conscious of our own information needs and how these new technologies affect these needs

As librarians, we should be always looking into how to improve services and answer these needs.

This is a shortcut to my References page, which will be fleshed out in the next few weeks.