



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

4th November 2008 | Uncompleted

Global Quality Navigation System (GQS) participative enhancement of aesthetic discovery

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Summary of proposal

The value of a [Global Positioning System](#) (GPS) to determine physical location on the surface of the planet is now undisputed. A somewhat analogous system is proposed here to facilitate location within the qualitative "space" defined by possible aesthetic and sensual experience.

Prior to the existence of GPS, it was indeed possible to determine position and to navigate the surface of the planet from there. This depended primarily on familiarity with a local environment and the use of maps relating that environment to neighbouring environments and to the surface of the planet as a whole.

It is indeed possible to navigate the qualitative sensual worlds of taste, sound, colour and smell with the aid of a range of conventional tools. These are primarily dependent on word-of-mouth and personal experience -- facilitated and manipulated by advertising -- making it challenging (and possibly costly and disappointing) to explore beyond a habitual sensual environment.

The approach described in what follows makes use of well-established, participative, web-based, open source, information management techniques to collect and organize aesthetic options for any to explore. The emphasis is on enabling access to richer experience, possibly combining several sense experiences. It is believed that such qualitative patterns will offer insights into new approaches to knowledge organization -- potentially of great significance for psycho-social organization in the emerging knowledge-based society.

Challenge: enabling qualitative experience and exploration

In each case below, the challenge is to enable people to identify new qualitative experiences beyond those with which they are already familiar -- but in such a way that there is higher probability that these will be appreciated and a reduction in the level of risk (and cost) typical of arbitrary choices.

The facility is seen as enabling exploring qualitative experiences as varied as the following:

- **Beverages** (taste): Whether in the case of wines, beers, coffees, teas, or other beverages, the range of products potentially on offer is typically a major challenge to the uninitiated who are then constrained in their willingness to explore new tastes, however enthusiastic and persuasive may be those offering advice.
Marketing implications: Clearly empowering users to explore more widely is potentially of great interest to wine producers, beer producers, distributors of coffees or teas -- as well as those promoting alternative beverages
- **Odours** (smell): Potential purchasers of perfumes are faced with a real challenge in a typical commercial context, confronted by an array of counters and labels. Testing may be encouraged but this does not necessarily facilitate convergence on a preferred choice of product. As with wines or beers, advice is offered and sought using a vocabulary with which the potential purchaser may be unfamiliar, whether or not it is informative.
Marketing implications: Clearly empowering a wider range of purchasers to make more informed choices is likely to increase the potential sales of perfume products.
- **Music and song** (sound): The encounter of a potential purchaser of music with the vast array of products is typically guided by exposure to it elsewhere, to familiarity with labels and reputations, or by word-of-mouth. This focuses the process of choice considerably, confining it in ways that do not enable wider exploration -- whether or not the person explores other racks of products and listens to a few, or downloads samples from the internet.
Marketing implications: Again this may be understood as responding to the needs of an engaged market without seeking ways to open the possibilities of choice to a wider market that may not be willing to depend on conventional marketing promotion.

*** chords; "starting bars" database initiative; birdsong; soundscapes (Belgian download mapping)

- **Foodstuffs** (tastes): There are of course vast arrays of foodstuffs on offer in stores, markets, restaurants and recipe books. These may be variously promoted and people may be tempted to experiment with new tastes on the basis of word-of-mouth recommendations, notably on broadcast cooking shows by chefs and food experts. Such offerings are a very small sample of what is on offer and call for a degree of attentive appreciation of what can seldom be tasted. The potential purchaser is highly dependent on visual cues for what is essentially a taste experience, and may require appropriate preparation and accompaniments. *Marketing implications:* There are considerable advantages for producers, especially smaller producers and distributors, to enable potential purchasers to make more informed choices with greater confidence.
- **Health products:** Any exposure to shops distributing (non-prescription) natural health products makes it clear that, as with foodstuffs, there is a vast array of alternatives that may be experienced as valuable. The challenge of choice is subject to similar constraints through the advice offered or other sources of information, whether in literature, by word-of-mouth, or on the web. *Marketing implications:* For distributors of such products, there is clearly a great advantage in enabling potential users to navigate with greater confidence to products with which they are unfamiliar, whatever their cost.
- **Flowers and herbs:** Whilst part of the pleasure of selecting plants for a garden, or to grow indoors, may be in visiting plant nurseries or display gardens, it is clearly the case that for some any such visits, or broadcast gardening shows) may constrain choice amongst a wider array which it may be difficult to encounter. This is notably true in the case of rarer plants species, notably fruits and vegetables. *Marketing implications:* Again, for distributors of such products, any means of enabling potential purchasers to have greater access to them would be appreciated.
- **Visual experiences:** There may take the form of painting, sculpture, architecture, interior decoration, extending to viewsapes (gardens, landscapes, etc). They may include the visual experiences offered by the scenarists of performing arts. The challenge is to enable those potentially interested to know whether exhibitions or other presentations are worth attending or travelling to (even virtually over the web) given the quality of the information offered on their content by conventional means. *Marketing implications:* There is a major challenge for new artists to make themselves known in a sophisticated, and possibly saturated market, when many potential purchasers or appreciators may have great difficulty in locating the works in question.
- **Textures** (felt sensations): In this case the focus is on materials that may take the form of cloth, wood, plastic, or stone -- variously used in clothing, decoration or construction. Again the challenge is enabling those unfamiliar with the market to discover such materials which may not be widely disseminated. *Marketing implications:* Clearly enabling access from a wider market is of significance to the producers of less familiar and new materials.
- **Arts (other):** The above arguments apply equally to drama, literature, poetry, illustrations, photography, opera -- especially when it is of an experimental nature. One example is provided by arts festivals where there may be hundreds of choices, possibly only available simultaneously -- thus constituting a real challenge for those who might be enchanted by one but wary of simply experimenting on the off-chance. *Marketing implications:* As with music, there is clearly great advantage in reducing the barrier experienced by those who might welcome the discovery of little known artists.
- **Places to be:** Whether considered as a feature of tourism, the location of a second home, or a place of retreat or retirement, there is a real challenge of enabling people to navigate the conventional information tools providing descriptions of such places, even whether they are offered in video form over the web. The challenge is how to provide a qualitative sense of such places independently of the verbal and visual descriptors whose potentially misleading nature is well-recognized. *Marketing implications:* There is clearly considerable advantage to those offering such services to provide more powerful tools to enable potential purchasers to navigate with greater confidence to qualitative experiences on which they may then be prepared to allocate greater resources -- if only in travel costs to get there.
- **Kinaesthetics** (movement sensations): speed, (extreme) sports, dance, skateboarding ***
- **Psychoactive experiences:** drugs, meditation ***
- **People and groups** (relationships); groups (religious orders), performers, gurus, Social contexts ***
- **Pets**
- **Insights, aphorisms**
- **Pain**

Creation of a web-based facility

Summarizing the points made above, the proposed facility would:

- enable people to identify, distinguish and explore the aesthetic landscape beyond the frameworks to which they are habituated or which lend themselves to easy description

- provide a powerful aesthetic metaphor in support of integration in other domains, possibly including:
 - group formation and team building
 - challenges to classification of aphorisms and wisdom
 - cross-cultural integration
- provide a viable focus for:
 - communication challenges of describing a very wide spectrum of subtle experiences
 - technical challenges of ordering aesthetic experiences
 - clarification of learning challenges in the traditional spirit of cultural education
- facilitate the tasks of those offering such experiences to others for whatever reason, including:
 - marketing
 - therapy
 - education
- enable
 - learning and development of sensitivity, especially through enhancement of mnemonic catalysts
 - participative development of insights into a much wider range of experiences through an open directory model
 - "registration" and positioning of less common aesthetic experiences, in relation to those more commonly known, especially by those strongly identified with them

Contrast to current web-based approaches

Precedents and possibilities of related approaches

- tagging / delicious
- psycho-geographical mapping
- Wiki
- open source
- semantic web
- Science -- Berners - Lee
- non-closure

Contrasts to related approaches :

- not on entities but on relationships
- 1977 paper
- pluckable
- Ordering models -- open source classification -- tagging

Technical issues

- Amazon algorithm -- questions, people have bought
- Belgian mapping
- Social networking
- associated with

Viability

Specific marketing implications: With respect to the cost of such exploration, it is assumed that people may be more prepared to explore more costly possibilities if the risk associated with arbitrary choices is reduced. On the other hand, people may value the possibility of identifying less costly qualitative experiences, especially when the possibilities normally presented to them through conventional marketing

- enable better informed choices
- enable potential clients to shift to higher quality products with great confidence in their qualitative satisfaction
- sponsor maps and brochures -- exemplified by the metabolic pathways chart produced by Biochemical ****
- extra sensory branding

Users: The development would be driven and rendered viable by:

- those identified with particular interests (as demonstrated by open directory models)
- those industries with strong reason to improve their marketing and contact with people challenged to communicate their tastes in the face of a multiplicity of commodity and service offerings -- from specific products to qualitative experiences offered to tourists
- those cultures (or countries) seeking to promote those parts of the spectrum of qualities with which their identity is significantly associated
- those interested (primarily academically) in the epistemological and related issues, notably with respect to the implications of synaesthesia

- those with technical interests in the development of interactive software to facilitate taste development
- those interested in the integrative implications of the enhancement of qualitative experience, whether from a psychotherapeutic,

Qualitative learning and development

Personalization

- own framework
- lens to reframe average

Learning implications / Learning / Developmental pathways

- **Individual:** all the things I know nothing about; internal decoration, able to educate oneself, composing a life
- **Collective:** identification and cultivation of cultural memes

Design (multi-sensual) / Sense configuration / Gestalts: integrative, multi-domain experiences

Single sense composites

Multi-sensual composites

Recipes; five tastes -- wine going with food

Creating atmosphere (natural magic):

- extra sensory branding
- complexity / richness:
 - triangular,, quad,, penta, limit -- deca?
 - 3 sense, 4 sense, 5 sense situations -- vs binary, monosensual (one and the others)
- magic
- confusion of synaesthesia understandings
 - wine, textures, taste, etc
 - vocabulary
- du Sautoy quote
- Ficino: natural magic
- atmospheres

Conceptual issues

- Appealing to different intelligences (Gardner)
- context for qualitative exploration
- Subtle connectivity
 - patterns of connectivity
 - synaesthesia
 - elven connectivity
- no longer adequately nourished by text
- mnemonics
- integration modes -- non-hierarchical
- epistemology
- more obviously a question of taste preferences and pheromones
- 2d >> 3D -- geodesic synaesthetic domes?
 - "orientation"
 - Euler >> 2?
 - polyhedra - stella
 - dual
 - topology of valuing
- colours/tastes
 - notes they are sounding
 - people are bearing

Example: Potential contribution of symmetry and the mathematics of group theory

Symmetry and group theory, as explored by mathematics, derive initially from visual observations -- namely using the sense of vision. This has led to the recognition of the symmetry associated with forms such as the triangle, the square, the pentagon, the hexagon, etc. This understanding of symmetry in 2 dimensions has been extended into 3 dimensions through combining such forms into the tetrahedron, the cube, the octahedron, the icosahedron and the dodecahedron, to name only the Platonic polyhedra. Through group theory forms of symmetry have been explored in 4 dimensions and many more.

Whilst such forms are basic to patterns appreciated for their aesthetic qualities, most notably in architecture, they seem to be irrelevant to qualities that are appreciated in terms of the sense of sound, taste, smell, and touch. The point to be made in what follows can however be introduced through an aspect of vision, namely colour, through which the aesthetics of patterns may be distinguished.

Clearly it is possible to position 3 colours at the vertices of a triangle, or 4 at the vertices of a square, etc. Well chosen these may be appreciated as complementary, offering an aesthetic effect. The question is whether selections of colours offering an aesthetic benefit through their distribution onto more complex symmetrical forms in 2 dimensions or 3.

Generalizing from this case, consider use of the same approach to select and distribute:

- **separately**: sounds, tastes, smells or textures to offer aesthetic experiences in each case. Clearly it is no longer a question of distributing them onto a visual form (a triangle, a square, etc) but rather to have three sounds (for example) together -- namely a chord. Or three tastes, etc.
- **together**: a sound, a taste, a smell or a texture to form a complementary set (of 3 or 4, or more) -- namely engaging the different senses together

The example given in each case are simple and rely to some degree on familiarity with the visual example by which they were introduced to give a sense of their complementarity through that symmetry. However, there is no reason why the argument should be limited to these simple cases. The qualitative descriptors used in the appreciation of wines (tastes) or perfumes (smells) are far more complex.

Group theory enables much more complex patterns of symmetry to be explored and distinguished by a suitable notation system -- beyond the capacity for them to be visualized, for example. The questions to be explored are:

- whether such a pattern description tool can be used to distinguish patterns of taste, etc -- or combinations of taste, smell, etc
- whether the patterns so distinguished lend themselves to recognition as aesthetic experiences through the other senses, even though the pattern denoted cannot be visualized -- accepting that odour receptors are, for example, capable of distinguishing an extremely wide variety of odours
- whether even more complex patterns, engaging the different senses, can be recognized aesthetically

Following from the preoccupations of group theory, associated questions (of possibly quite different degrees of significance) might include:

- the nature of any cognitive relationship between the simple numbers (1 through 5) basic to the simplest polygons (and polyhedra), the similarly limited number of senses (1 through 5), and constraints of human memory (** rep
- the types of structure emerging beyond the simple binary relationship, and its potential cognitive and qualitative analogues -- hot-cold, light-dark, etc, although fundamental to distinctions, are not especially interesting qualitatively in themselves
- any special qualitative significance to the triangulation of qualities (namely beyond the binary) and the role of such triangulation in more complex polyhedra (of qualities)
- degrees of symmetry in relation to asymmetry, notably from an aesthetic perspective (as illustrated by music) in which many forms of pure symmetry are uninteresting (or do not hold the attention); how does the complexity of design (Alexander) overcome such constraints through appropriate balance
- the association of symmetry with a degree of "robustness" of structure that may well have its qualitative analogue (network symmetry***)
- the qualitative implications of symmetries in the most challenging mathematical objects, as extolled with respect to the visual form of the Mandelbrot fractal (***) and potentially implied by the Monster of group theory (***)
- what insight is offered into the possibilities and implications of multi-media experiences and synaesthesia

These questions aside, to what degree can group theory contribute to qualitative experience of subtler aesthetic experiences, notably in a web environment?

Undigested notes:

Name possibilities

- WikiSyn?
- WikiVino?
- WikiTaste?
- WikiQual?
- enabling participative sensual exploration and discovery
- open source enhancement of psychosocial harmony ?
- Enabling modality for qualitative navigation

GQS vs GPS

- uncertainty principle
- position vs relationships

- Marcus du Sautoy
- isomorphism
- patenting

Aesthetics

- Ficino -- what would he have done with current technical possibilities?

- design configuration (of qualities)
- design concept
- synaesthesia

not a question of whether it is "right" in a logical consequential sense but whether it is "right" in an aesthetic sense -- engaging, mnemonic, recalling, remembering

References

David Abram. *The Spell of the Sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world*. Vintage, 1997 [[review](#)] [[review](#)]

Marsilio Ficino.

S. Harnad. Categorical Perception. *Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science* [[text](#)]

Hermann Hesse. *The Glass Bead Game*. 1947

Anthony Judge:

- Aesthetics of
- Authentic Grokking
- Embodiment

Catherine McCormack. Extra Sensory Branding. *Voyeur*, October 2008, pp. 55-60 (describes sensory branding as a somewhat recent phenomenon in the world of marketing -- transcending traditional models of advertising in order to deliver multi-sensory, multi-dimensional experiences that communicate brand values on an experiential level, namely beyond sight and sound. Understood as a form of "[neuromarketing](#)", marketing specialists like Martin Lindstrom (*Brand Sense: build powerful brands through touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound*, 2005) argue that sensory experiences are real, difficult to fake, and therefore recognized as authentic. Simply defining a brand visually is seen as outdated. Sensory branding is about activating all the senses).



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