

Sens-Us: Imagining a Citizen-led, Dynamic, and Localized Census

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ABSTRACT

Sens-Us is an interactive installation that aims to rethink the UK census and explore how collecting census data can be more dynamic and localized. It explores how the census can become more integrated in our everyday lives and more citizen-led, and it starts to imagine how this can change the relationship between citizens and the state.

Sens-Us consists of a set of five interactive physical input stations, which ask questions in five different themes that are relevant to civic lives: demographics, health, belonging, place, and trust. For each theme we explore what data people are willing to disclose and with whom, and what information they feel should be available to them. We also aim to give people insight into how sharing their data can be beneficial for the common good, and explore how this changes their views on data sharing.

Participants are first given a smart card which they insert in each station to register their answers to a specific card ID and subsequently answer questions using physical sliders and buttons. There is further a visualization station in which people can insert their card to view how their data compares to an aggregate of the collected data from all participants.

Sens-Us was created in partnership with the Civic Workshop and the British Council and has been deployed in Somerset House in London throughout January and February 2015 as part of a Civic Bureau exhibition. We feel this installation fits very well in the HCI 2015 conference theme as it explores how interactive technology can mediate our civic lives.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

Human computer interaction (HCI): Interaction devices, Interactive systems and tools. Interaction design: Empirical studies in interaction design.

Keywords

Physical survey, opinion gathering in-situ, public opinion, civic engagement, interactive systems.



Figure 1. Sens-Us input stations for Demographics, Health and Belonging questions.

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Figure 2. Sens-Us input stations for Trust and Place questions.



Figure 3. Sens-Us visualization station.



Figure 4. User interacting with a Sens-Us station.