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**Level:** C

**Status:** Employed

**Function:** Teaching and Research

# Exurban Noir, Research Workshop, UbiComp 2006

## Orange County, California

### Background

In 2006, Anthony Burke, with Eric Paulos (Intel) Ken Anderson (Intel) and Amanda Williams (UC Irvine) developed a research workshop on the exurban conditions of Orange county as a field within which to explore locative and new media tactics as part of UbiComp 2006. Papers were accepted, however the nature of the workshop was as a unique exploration in the field research and rapid design prototyping.

### Contribution

25% Co-director events, concept, design, coordination and management. This workshop was published as part of the UbiComp 2006 proceedings.

### Significance

The research goal of this ubiquitous computing workshop was to explore techniques for considering *not* general-purpose holistic solutions to problems within the complex social, cultural, political, and economic ecology of urban life, typically aimed at technology users in a hip 20 something demographic. The aim of our research was to expand the vocabulary of potential urban technologies, enabling a wider range of choices as we form our future urban lifestyles. Combining highly specific field trips with final designs from the workshop were intended to provoke open ended discussions around urban technologies rather than present "killer apps" or final solutions. Our research aims included the elaboration of new multidisciplinary methods and models in design practice, for technology designers, to grapple cognitively and experientially with the exopolis as an urban form and to extend the discourse of locative media and technologies and their relationship to urban space and practices as a maturing dialogue, raising issues that are reflective of this.

## **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Ex-urban Noir Website

<http://drzaius.ics.uci.edu/meta/exurban-noir/index.html>

Full Proceedings

<http://drzaius.ics.uci.edu/meta/exurban-noir/ExurbanNoirProceedings.pdf>



# Exurban Noir

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September 17&18, Ubicomp 2006

Orange County, California

<http://drzaius.ics.uci.edu/meta/exurban-noir/>





# Exurban Noir

September 17&18, Ubicomp 2006

Orange County, California

ken anderson, Anthony Burke, Eric Paulos, Amanda Williams

## Table of Contents

### Workshop Proposal Materials:

04 **Call for Papers**

06 **Exurban Noir**

ken anderson, Anthony Burke, Eric Paulos, Amanda Williams

### Accepted papers:

10 **Brothers, Think of What You Were: Exploring Inclusion in Religious Exurbia**

Paul M. Aoki (Intel Research), Rebecca E. Grinter (Georgia Institute of Technology)

14 **The Third Way of Empowering Urban Social Systems**

Jeff Axup (University of Queensland, Australia)

17 **Exploring In-between-ness: The Experience of Riding the London Tube**

Arianna Bassoli (The London School of Economics), Karen Martin (Bartlett School of Graduate Studies)

22 **Alternative Mobilities in Orange County**

Johanna Brewer (UC Irvine)

27 **Supporting the Autobiographical Experience of Place**

Scott Carter (UC Berkeley)

30 **The Digital City: Sex, Cams and Scams**

Alan Chamberlain and Leif Oppermann (University of Nottingham)

33 **Dissonance-Lead Design**

Scott Doorley (Stanford University)

- 37 **Aquapolis Now**  
Jordan Geiger
- 40 **Project 'Where Are You'**  
Saranont Limpananont (New York University)
- 44 **We Have Never Been Mainstream (but we will be!)**  
Marcela Musgrove-Chávez (Eindhoven University of Technology)
- 46 **SafetyNet: Safety in the city at what cost?**  
Lisa P. Nathan, Jessica K. Miller, Batya Friedman (University of Washington)
- 50 **Exurban Sublime: The Crystal Cathedral of Orange County**  
Erica Robles (Stanford University)
- 53 **Ad hO.C.: The O.C. Fun Palace**  
Molly Wright Steenson (Yale University)



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Contrary to the visions of the technology futurists, we claim that beneath and between a “happily-ever-after” veneer of technologies lurks a dark and strange world driven by very different human needs, values and desires. Diverse populations not served by “everyman” designs. Places filled with conflict, struggles, mystery, worry, doubt, and deceit – exurban noir. We invite submissions that tackle these issues.

Selection of Workshop participants and presentations will be based on refereed submissions. Selected participants will be invited to present a short position statement, and should come prepared for a physically active two-day workshop in, around, under and through “The O.C.”

Submissions are encouraged to focus on provocative but concrete ideas around specific themes and places rather than vague visions that would fit any urban, suburban, exurban or small town. Authors can focus on mobile communications, wireless sensor technology, proactive computing, personal portable devices, smart environments, and other components of ubicomp as key enabling platforms for in the exurban environment. They should take a position with respect to the possible dark effects that ubicomp technologies created for and deployed in exurban environments may entail. A few ideas we might like to see:

- Specific critiques of ubicomp or “City Beautiful”-type designs.
- Critical reflections on designs you’ve done.
- Ethnographic work from exurban environments, or focusing on marginalized populations.
- Unusual designs
- Disruptive urban art or activism

We are open to a variety of forms for submissions. Because we want to be able to provide participants with printed proceedings, we request a 2-4 page written statement and biographical statement from all participants, in PDF format. However, if your work will be better represented by a video, a web site, an interactive game, or a paper mâché sculpture, by all means, send us a URL where we can view your work along with the required written description.

Multidisciplinary submissions crossing computer science, electrical engineering, the humanities, arts and social sciences are strongly encouraged. Participants should be interested in the exurban, the critical, in multiple marginalized perspectives on technology, but they do not have to be experts. In the interests of interdisciplinarity, we are happy to take submissions with multiple authors, but due to limited space can only accommodate two authors per paper attending.

Send all submissions to [exurbannoir@gmail.com](mailto:exurbannoir@gmail.com).





Submissions should address one of the themes of the workshop:

## Spatial power geometries.

Polarization between rich and poor, powerful and exploited, can no longer be adequately understood as something that happens in the dark underbelly of the city, but rather at different times of day at the mall, on the bus routes between Santa Ana and Mission Viejo, in the relationship of Orange County to far-flung but connected regions in Mexico, Taiwan, Vietnam. The exurban is a hyperlinked system of people with different perspectives, opportunities, life styles, and points of view. What is the interplay of technology with the economically, ethnically, physically, gendered, life styled or otherwise disenfranchised? How do we/have you designed for the heteroglossia of the exurban?

## The personal and emotional.

Film and design noir highlight making something a personal and emotional experience. Most technology design highlights neither the “personal” nor “emotional” experience of and with technology. Provide examples of how complex emotions, desires and needs are played out through the misuse and abuse of electronic products and systems.



## Networks of sprawl.

While urban technology discussions have assumed densely populated areas with shared pedestrian and public mass transit, the exurban environment is more obviously geographically dispersed interconnections of people with plenty of spaces in-between. We seek papers that have attempted to address issues of daily life in the sprawl of exurbaness, like those focusing on issues of in-betweenness, movement and transition.

## Suburban theme park

In 1955 Disneyland opened in Anaheim, then an Orange County suburb of Los Angeles. By the 1990's, travel brochures describe all of Orange County as “a seven-hundred-and-eighty-six-square-mile theme park – and the theme is ‘you can have anything you want.’”. What have you done or propose to do to create or subvert Suburbs 2.0?





## IMAGES OF EXHIBITION / WORK



View of workshop mode



Ex-urban Noir group participants .