

PROJECT 3

This project constitutes one of four major research thrusts in a multi-year funded research project titled "Center for Intelligent Spatial Technologies "

Research Task 4: Privacy

Personal Information Privacy Protection within Intelligent Spatial Technology Domains

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Project Summary

- Subtask 3.1: Vignette selection and construction
- Subtask 3.2: Privacy assessment of vignettes
- Subtask 3.3: Conceptual approach for privacy in intelligent spatial technologies

Spatial technologies are in daily use throughout all major sectors of society and the extent and breadth of use is increasing dramatically with each passing month. The data from new tracking systems are becoming universally available for commercial, government, educational, scientific and non-profit purposes. The further commercialization and availability in the private sector of adaptive orientation, smart identification, in situ modeling and similar intelligent spatial technologies will significantly increase the already heightened location information privacy concerns of citizens.

Because of the current amassing of data by location, combined with the potential for detailing the mobile activities of large segments of the population, exposure to potential misuse of location information about individuals is substantial. In some instances, such as in a personal emergency or in a military operation, the external visibility of location information may be very beneficial to the individual. In other instances, external surveillance may be a severe privacy intrusion violating basic rights and freedoms assumed by individuals in democratic societies. In order that new methods and capabilities developed through this research may be more readily adaptable to use in e-commerce and in society in general, privacy considerations need to be accounted for from the outset in the design and coding of intelligent spatial technologies.

Research under this task will start with focus groups generating a series of hypothetical uses of intelligent spatial technologies (Task 4.1). From the large set of potential applications, a series of selected, detailed vignettes will be constructed, which together will cover the primary categories of uses suggested. Under Task 4.2, each vignette will be assessed against current privacy, intellectual property, and liability laws to determine whether and to what extent such laws are likely to constrain or support the emerging technologies. Further, we will elaborate a conceptual approach for dealing with privacy in intelligent spatial technologies (Task 4.3). The Platform for Privacy Preferences (<http://www.privacyalliance.org>) provides an initial conceptual approach for addressing personal information privacy protection within intelligent spatial technology domains.

Although not yet fully developed, it will enable web sites to automatically inform users of any web site's consistency with preset privacy preferences of the user. If inconsistent, the user has the option of changing preferences for the specific application desired in order to gain the benefits of that application. In a similar manner, intelligent spatial technologies should use a standard method for declaring personal information and location information needed or desired for specific applications and provide a system upon which users may depend to respect their privacy preference choices. Through a Specialist Meeting-a 3-day invited workshop of approximately fifteen experts on privacy, selected from the technical to the legal and ethics domain, we will work towards a consensus model.