Impractical Community

Zixin Xiong
Impractical Community

by Zixin Xiong
Impractical Community

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Industrial Design in the department of Industrial Design of the Rhode Island School of Design.

By Zixin Xiong

2017

Approved by Master's Examination Committee

Khipra Nichols, Department of Industrial Design

Amy Leidtke, Department of Industrial Design

Joy Ko, Department of Architecture
This book is dedicated to Amber.
I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my thesis advisers and professors: (Name in alphabetical order)

Amy Leidtke
Andy Law
Ayako Takase
Emily Rothschild
Ingrid Burrington
Joy Ko
Khipra Nichols
Scott Geiger
Tim Maly
Thomas Weis

This project would not have been possible without the kindly support of yours.
I also want to express my very profound gratitude to those people whoever inspire me of the life directions and attitudes:

Charles Cannon
Ayako Takase
Ijlal Muzaffar
Nicholas Palermo
Michael Scimeca

Thanks for everything and for being there.

Thank you all my classmates:
A bosom friend afar brings a distant land near
Abstract
Zixin lost her phone and she went on a journey with a girl to find it. During the journey, they collected cellphones to let these machines get a good rest; they explored a sandwich city and took a risk to follow an insect who ate people’s profiles. They were trapped in a forest of lies and heard about lots of silly questions, etc. After experiencing these weird adventures, Zixin found a new friend underground and dove into a magic river to live with her.

The Impractical Community is a magic realist fiction that reveals the disadvantages of our technology in modern communication. The story is based on the real experiments. All the observatories from this project are transformed to fantasies. In the real world, the project started off satisfied with our technology revolutions, but changed direction because of my concern about the changing of our life habits and personalities. It then continued exploring to find our true satisfaction by being connected. The project offers people two experimental designs in the end. They suggest people sit down and spend their time, effort and courage to be physically “connected”. In the future, physical communication should benefit people in collaboration with urban planning, space design, activity design, and advertising.
Modern communication is a collaboration of the internet, digital devices, and different virtual tools. Technology makes our communication significantly different than 20 years ago. We created the technology because we wanted to have better communication. However, with these new developments, we are facing numerous dazzling methods to talk.

We now have social media to contact anyone in the world. We have more exposure but less privacy. We are more intent to share and we are forced to share. We choose a name and profile for ourselves. We can speak to someone in one second. We have more efficiency across long distances.

We create a dream world for our previous selves and we start questioning our shallow satisfaction. With these pretty and cheap gratifications, I am much more afraid of real life communication.

In 2011, the time I went to the college, I got my first cellphone and I became free to use the internet everyday at any time. I was crazy about social media and spent all my data on posting and reading other people’s posts. Four years later, I started feeling tired of the “posting” and become a lurker. Two years after becoming a lurker, I started to try to escape from social media and virtual communication. At this time, I suddenly found myself much more afraid of real life communication. I thought I could live without technology and go back to the old days that I talked to people in person. But the fact is, I can never do that again. My mom is using cellphones and social medias to talk to me, my friends as well. During the time I am offline, I am abandoned by the world. The worst thing is, when I meet with people in person, I find I don’t know how to talk or how to behave at all. I was too reliant on the internet.
On the other hand, I totally understand where my fear comes from and how normal it is. I admit the great advantages of the technology and I appreciate its influence on our generations. It raised me up and it is too weird for me to say I want nothing to do with it. Thus, I choose to write my ideas into an absurd fiction. The fiction is a mirror—a reflection of our real life. The information and my design work are transferred into a dream-like story with explanatory narratives in the marginalia. The more absurd the story is, the more normal the situation is in our life.

Maybe this book can take people on a journey that looks into our modern communication from another perspective, and take away my naïveté, imagination, honesty, and suspicion.
Starting the journey
I’m sitting quietly in my room. After a while I stand up to get a cup of water. In the water, I see my mom’s face and she’s saying something. I look at her for a while, and finally understand that she is asking me to call her. She is angry that I haven’t contacted her for the entire week. I can feel that my phone is screaming somewhere and I need it right now.

But it’s gone. I cannot remember about where I lost it.

I leave the house and wander around the little park nearby.
Suddenly, the trees begin to tremble. A girl in a green coat jumps out of the bushes and walks to me.

She sits down by my side, “Sorry for letting you wait so long, but I can’t find Nechesa.” I can hear a slight noise that comes from the deep woods.

“Do you know where my phone is?”

“Let’s go find Nechesa and then you can get your phone back.”

She holds my hands and laughs, “I know you are willing to come.”

I am pulled into the woods. There’s a train waiting for its passengers.
1.1 Cellphone Bedroom
A train attendant comes to us and gives us two white boxes called “cellphone bedroom”.

There’s a hole on the top of the box and I get very confused about the function of it. “Why should we have bedrooms for cellphones. Whose cellphones are we collecting?”

“Did you know that cellphone rest at night? If there is no one collecting cellphones and have them rest a little bit, the cellphones would die.” She says.

While I am wondering what the function is, the train stops at the entrance to a forest. I get off the train with the girl and walk into the forest.
It is very dark here. However, I can see many people walking, and it looks like they are all daydreaming. I see other passengers start putting out their boxes and trying to come to those people asking them to put their cellphones into the boxes.

“Whenever we collect enough cellphones and let them get a good rest, we get a free ticket for the next trip.”

I see her walking to a little boy who is daydreaming, and gently asks him: “Can you put your phone into the box to let it get a good rest? It’s bedtime.” The little boy puts his cellphone into the box reluctantly. He looks so upset. The girl then pulls out a cellphone-shaped post-it and gives it to the boy: “Please take this and use this paper when your phone is sleeping.” After the boy gets the paper, he disappears. I suddenly realize that the forest is much emptier than before. Whenever people in the forest give out their phones, they will disappear.

I start asking people who are daydreaming to allow me to have their phones and put them in the “bedroom.” After a while, my box is full.
Gradually, the daydreaming people all disappear from the forest.

People lead me to a path and we walk toward a hill. Not long after, we all arrive at the top of the hill and there is a white tower. We all sit down by the tower quietly.

Suddenly, a woman’s screaming over us shuts down the calmness in the forest. We look up to the tower, and a woman’s head cranes out of one of the windows.

“A902!” She shouts, and drops a string. A passenger stands up, and puts his box under the string. The string looks like a tentacle and it quickly grabs a cellphone from the box and retracts to the window.

“Haha, it’s the time,” I hear the girl whispering.

Not allowing me to ask what’s happening, hundreds of strings fall down from different windows on the tower in a second. Hundreds of tentacles crawl into everyone’s boxes and look for their phones. And I even don’t have the chance to count how many tentacles I have, my box is empty.
fig4. Data about the time duration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURATION (minute)</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PEOPLE</th>
<th>PROBABILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The girl walks to me, looking very satisfied with the result. She stretches into her box and pulls out a bunch of post-its, “Take out yours.”

I put my hand into the box, there are really a bunch of post-its in it as well. I pull them out, the post-its are full of texts including times and activities.

“What are these for?” I ask.

She takes my post-its and smiles, “Something has to be a replacement. You know, human needs replacement.”

She then throws all the post-its into the air, and suddenly all these pieces of paper become real life creatures. They land on the ground and look like a piece of cellphone that can talk. There are at least 50 of them, and it becomes very annoying. I can hear them saying that “I need to check things out online;” “I need to take a photo;” or “I miss my boyfriend,” etc. These little cellphone creatures are jumping or flying everywhere like butterflies, and gradually become transparent. Finally, they disappear, and I only see two train tickets lying on the ground.

The girl picks up the tickets and holds my hands, we walk back to the train station.
I miss my boyfriend!

I need to call Amber!

I need to go home!

I need to take a photo!

I want my phone back!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>SOCIAL CONTACT</th>
<th>NO REASON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ex.**
- I want to use my phone to take a photo
- I want to check the time
- I want to play Pokémon Go
- I want to check my e-mail message
- I am going to leave so I want my cellphone back
- How much time is left

**Ex.**
- Has anyone emailed/contacted me alerts on phone
- I want to check text from my boyfriend and I am worried about my social life!!!
- I am wondering if Alison is texting me…
- Check it predictive text worries

**Ex.**
- I want to touch it
- I want my phone for no specific reason
- I want my phone so I don’t forget it
- I went for my phone wasn’t there looking for no reason
- Just impulse
- I want to randomly browsing
- Look for my phone

Fig6. Reasons and messages collected from the test.
Topic:
How long can you keep your cell-phone away?

Subjects: RISD Grad Students

Content:
Keep a log on the phone-shaped post-it

Key words:
Time  Function  Social Contact
No reason/Instinct/Habit

fig6. Photos of cellphone-shaped post-it
1.2 Sandwich City
When we arrive at the second stop, we saw its name.

“Sandwich City.”

We get off the train and walk on the street. I grab a girl and ask her if she knows Nechesa. She smiles and says, “Definitely, everyone knows Nechesa. He just asked me to use my phone to check my Facebook and email.”

“Where is he?”

“Well, I don’t know. Maybe somewhere in the library,” she says, running away.

Then I ask a little boy if he knows about Nechesa. He also says: “Sure, everyone knows Nechesa. He just asked me to use the phone to check the time for a couple of times.”

But when I ask the boy where is he, he doesn’t know either. “Probably in the park,” he says.

We keep walking until we see a hole on the ground and there is sign:

“Downstairs-Next Layer”
We walk into the hole.

This inside world looks like a huge factory. There are huge curtains hanging on the wall. When we get closer we find out there is no curtains, they are screens. Every screen has its host, with his/her profile and a sentence about what he used to do on the cellphone. I walk and walk, finally stop at a profile of a little boy.

“Hey, you see, is this the profile of that little boy?”

“We asked him about Nechesa today.”

“Yes, I think so.”
CHECKED THE TIME, COUPLE TIMES

UNKNOWN AGE

[Sketch of a person with 'UNKNOWN AGE' written on their arm and a speech bubble saying 'CHECKED THE TIME, COUPLE TIMES.']
I have been mapping my way to the mall to buy a new charger for my computer, right? Before that, I was on one of my Instagrams, just kind of chatting things, and before that, I was on my other Instagram. Prior to that, I was Googling the address and looked up the place to buy hanging folders. Before that, I was looking for another address..."
While we are curious why everyone living in the outside world has a profile screen here, a huge insect flies in and sticks on the little boy’s profile. The insect starts eating the screen of the little boy’s. We want to help but unfortunately, more and more insects fly in. We are so afraid that we have to hide ourselves.

Give the postcards to another group of selected people and let them imagine their lives and habits. The “insect” here is responding to the new group of people.
I see each of them occupies one profile screen and starts to eat it. Shortly, the little boy’s screen is totally eaten by the insect. It rests for a while, and slowly flies to somewhere.
Outside of work, I like to spend time with my boyfriend and my puppy, Sophie.

I'm a pretty down-to-earth person. Things that make me happy are my friends and family, going for a long walk and my puppy, Sophie.

Texting, social media, like Instagram, Snapchat, etc.
I love my work - I study what I love so doing assignments is a pleasure. I enjoy learning and it's crucial in my life.

I have high expectations towards myself and love to push my limits.

I can work a lot but need to unwind with friends from time to time.

I believe in the idea: "Work hard - play hard = 1"

fig11-12. The latter group of people create a new persona on the postcards.
“Catch up!” The girl says, “Let’s see where it is going!”

We secretly follow the insect and pass through many broken screens. Eventually we see it fly into a bright hole.

We jump into the hole together.

The world looks like a real city. It makes me think about every big city in the world, for instance, New York or Tokyo. In the corner of the street we find the insect sitting there. It is deforming. We see it starts becoming smaller and smaller, and its shell becomes human clothes, finally, it becomes a man.

By creating a persona for the postcard profiles, the new group of people also wrote down their own causes for satisfaction subconsciously.

The “man” here is responding to the latter written words about satisfaction.

**fig13.** The latter group of people create a new persona on the postcards.
The man looks back and he sees us, before we can think about an excuse, he comes to us and says hi.

"Sorry, we are just being too curious," the girl says to him.

"No worries, I understand. However, how are we born to be a human." The boy answers.

"Why you guys need to eat other people's profile to be born?"

"We have to live on a profile as a base. Whenever we get the base, we can create our own life. It's a circle that keeps a story going on. Everyone is the same."

Why you need to eat other people's profile to be born?

"The story of Nechaes. He created this world and let us. But you may find him in Maze Island."

"What story?" I ask.

"The story of Nechaes. He created this world and left us. But you may find him in Maze Island."

In this experiment there are 3 steps:

1. Interviews for random people who walk on the street to specifically ask them about their activities on cell phones in last few hours.
2. Translate this information to an illustrated postcard format and let another group of selected people imagine their lives and habits.
3. Let the latter group of people create a new persona for the random people described on the postcard.

Key words:

Social Contact Function Frequency

Content: Interviews Lives Personalities

Subjects: Public

Notes from your cellphone's activities

fig14. The latter group of people are to create a new persona on the postcards.
1.3 Maze Island
We take a ferry to the Maze Island and we walk in the maze through the entrance.

“Talking is forbidden here,” the maze guard says.

We are asked to put on a special mask and enter the silent world. The maze is made of glass so that we can see many other people walking in different places but we are not sure where exactly they are.

In this experiment, I made a game which people can interact and physically play with. This game is a reactive simulation of dependency on modern, digitized communication.

The Rules of the Game:
1. Participants can only use the straws to blow through the holes on the side boards.
2. The game is complete when the ball is directed into a certain gate, either through cooperation or singular activity.
2. No verbal language can be used. In some games, physical languages are also prohibited.
As an initial ‘outsider’ of the in-game communication, I observed the process and made changes to this game accordingly. Personalities are also reflected through this game in various ways.

After walking for a while we see a little girl running towards us, she is waving her hands and jumping up high. On the other side of the glass wall, there is a boy who is also doing the same gesture. They jump and wave, and suddenly they seem to understand what each other is going to do, and they run away.

I think they find the way out to the maze, however, there is sign appearing on walls saying: No Gesture.

I see the girl being sent back to the original place with the boy, and they start finding the way again.
There are four behavioral types due to the inconvenience of in-game language loss, here is the first one:

1. Active: positive reactions, attempts to try and communicate

fig 15. Round 1 of the game
We walk along the glass wall and go into a space that has a bench on the corner, a boy sits there quietly. When he see us he takes off his mask.

“Do you guys see a girl and a boy like my age? I cannot find them.”

We realize who he is probably looking for, however, we are afraid of being sent out of the maze so that we say nothing.

He looks very confused and keep playing with his fingers.

“I keep sitting here and no one is coming for me, I think I am abandoned. I just wait to be picked up and sent out.”

A guard appears, he holds the boy’s arm and they leave the Maze.

Later on I saw the previous gesturing girl and the boy somewhere in the maze again, still focused on finding their way.
fig16. Round 2 of the game

2. Confused: confused about the loss of information, feels upset
We keep walking in the maze for a while until we are attracted by a boy and a girl.

They do not talk to each other, however, I can see that they look like “fighting” with each other by not allow each other to find the right way. Whenever the boy wants to go some way, the girl jumps out to prevent him. We follow them for a while and they are competing with each other for quite a while.

Finally the boy gives up, he sits down. The girl leaves. The guard comes again. The boy takes off his mask and tells the guard that he has no idea why the girl is competing with him. The guard says nothing and sends him out.
3. Competitive: anger directed at others when ability to communicate is hindered

fig.17. Round 3 of the game
In this game, I ask a girl secretly to help the other girl finish her goal. Without gestures and language, the girl who is going to help cannot transfer her idea to the other girl.

The next person we meet is a girl who has already found her way successfully. I know that she found her way because you cannot see any anxiety on her face. But on the other side of the glass, she notices that another girl is getting lost, and she is very close to her.
She starts walking towards that lost girl and then tries to lead her coming back to the right way. However, the lost girl does not follow her direction. After few times of the obvious hinting being provided, the girl who has found her way gives up and leaves the lost girl behind.

I see the lost girl looks really upset and tired. She sits down and whispers: “I have no idea where to go, how I can get out of here.”

The guard appears, he holds the lost girl’s hand and they disappear.
1. I did something. Achieve my goal.
2. I don't know what other people are doing.
3. I feel happy anyway.
4. I know what other people are doing.

1. I just want to against people for no reason.
2. I know we have different goals but I still feel happy.
3. I know we have different goals but I still feel happy and I want to offer my help.

1. I don't care about anything.
2. I don't feel happy at all.

I don't know what's happening.

---

**SIMULATION OF COMMUNICATION MODE**

- The same goal
- Multiple goals
  - Personal goals
  - Overlapped goals

**NO**
- Verbal language

---

**PERSONALITY**
- GATE1

**EMOTION**
- GATE2

**SELF CONSCIOUSNESS**
- GATE3
- GATE4

---

**LIFE**
- FRUSTRATION
- DIAGNOSIS

---

**SIMULATION OF COMMUNICATION MODE**

---

**GATE1**

---

**GATE2**

---

**GATE3**

---

**GATE4**
1. I did something (achieve my goal)

2. I don’t know what other people are doing.

3. I feel happy anyway.

4. I know what other people are doing.

1. I enjoy the function on my digital devices;
2. I don’t care my social connections;
3. I live in my own world;
4. I like to exchange my ideas with other people (enjoy the communication)

1. I just want to against people for no reason.

2. I know we have different goals but I still feel happy.

3. I know we have different goals but I still feel happy and I want to offer my help.

1. I don’t care about anything.

2. I don’t feel happy at all.

3. I don’t know what’s happening.

1. I might lose some part of the communication and information

1. I care about other people’s thoughts on me, I want to get everybody’s attention;
2. I can accept others’ opinion;
3. I am willing to listen.

fig19. The conclusion of the test
1.4 Performance Theatre
At the time we feel very exhausted, we see a exit gate right in front of us with a label says “Performance Theatre.”

We look at each other and we all think it’s the time to rest a bit.

We walk into the Theatre and take a seat.
On the stage there are two characters. One of them is dressed up like an angel, the other one is dressed up like a devil.

The narration says: “Jealousy. She starts developing feelings for your ex-boyfriend.”

The stage lights are turned red, so everyone is covered by a weird red smog.
The devil says: “I hate you!”

The angel comes and says: “I am so sorry for what I have done.”

They start quarreling with each other.

D: “You make me so mad!”

A: “I just don’t know what to say.”

D: “You are so selfish!”

A: “I didn’t mean to do that.”

D: “I have never met such an ignoramus.”

A: “We will be okay.”

D: “You shouldn’t have done that!”

A: “Please forgive me.”

D: “Give me a break.”

A: “Are you okay?”

D: “You are nothing to me!”

A: “Things are never as bad as they seem.”

When the angel finishes this sentence, the evil dies on the stage.

Then red lights are turned off. And we leave the theatre.
fig20. The devil and praise card-front view
Devil poker

1. TWO PLAYERS, EACH WITH THEIR OWN DECK OF POKER CARDS (1 FOR SLANDER, 1 FOR PRAISE)

2. SHUFFLE POKER CARDS AND PLACE THEM FACE DOWN

3. EACH PLAYER DRAWS 8 POKER CARDS

4. FLIP OVER A TOPIC CARD

5. FLIP A COIN TO DECIDE WHO STARTS FIRST

6. PLAYER ONE PLAYS A CARD

7. PLAYER TWO PLAYS A LARGER CARD, EACH PLAYER TAKES TURNS PLAYING LARGER CARDS

IMPORTANT:
( 2>1; 3>2; 1>3; )

8. WHEN A PLAYER CANNOT PUT DOWN A LARGER CARD, THEY CAN PLAY A CARD EQUAL TO THE OPPONENT’S, THEN DRAW A NEW CARD FROM THEIR DECK

9. THE PLAYER WHO FIRST DISCARDS ALL THE CARDS IN HIS/HER HANDS WINS!
this game is a simulation of our quarrels that have a bad influence on our lives. By playing the game, the two players will experience different emotions and attitudes in one situation. Although there are rules for winning the game, the game is aimed at helping people realize and observe the awkwardness and absurdity in fighting. It can also be used as an emotional outlet for stress, as well as a conversation starter.
The languages are not intentionally set up and they might not work together logically. The game is not going to achieve a successful “quarrel”, however, with the mix of words the dialogue will seem to be very funny, insane, and silly.

fig23. The devil and praise card-back view
1.5 Forest of Lies
We go through the exit tunnel of the theatre and find out there are two ways to go:
One says it is back to the maze; the other says it is to the Forest of Lies.

“Which one should we pick?” The girl looks at me and asks.

“Let’s go to the forest.”

The forest is a lovely forest. We walk through the beautiful maples, oaks and firs. We can see fruits hanging on the branches. Flowers are blooming.
fig24. The forest of lie
Under a red oak tree we see two men are talking.

I hear one of them say: “Have you ever stolen something from your parents?”

“Yes.”

“You are lying. I bet you never.”

“Well, you win.”

Then the man asking questions uses a saw to cut down this poor red oak tree.

The man is very happy and he carries his tree and walks away.

The game is a simulation of how we misrepresent ourselves in our daily lives, and how we judge others by their representations of themselves. How many truths and lies do we tell and how many silly questions do we ask in digital communication? How much do we believe of what we see or hear? The technology helps us to create false personas, and it is an age where we don’t even have to pay for it. Virtual communication is very attractive as we are totally safe and free online to be true or fake.
fig25. “Cut down” the tree
The game has 14 trees with different patterns. Each tree corresponds with a pair of cards with the same pattern. Each pair of cards says either ‘truth’ or ‘lie’.

fig27. Each tree has a pattern that matches two cards
Each player starts with three cards, each of different patterns. Players will take turns asking each other questions. During player one’s turn to answer, the other players will pick one of player one’s card, and player one should answer truthfully or falsely according to the word on the card. The other players will try to guess whether the answer is true or false. If they guess wrongly, player one gets to keep the tree with the corresponding pattern and draw a new card, and if they guess wrongly, the tree stays alive.

The game ends when all the trees have been cut down, and the player with the most trees win.
We keep walking until we meet another two women under a silver maple tree.

One of the woman asks: “What is the craziest thing you have ever done?”

The other woman laughed and says: “I peed in the woods.”

We all laughed and the woman who is asking questions says: “You are lying, aren’t you? Though I am not sure but it’s not crazy enough for me.”

“Yes, I am lying.”

Then the woman who is asking the questions puts out a saw and cuts the maple tree.

The forest is a symbolization of our inner satisfaction and by fighting with truth and lies we are losing the trees in this forest. In the game, everyone is cheering about their effort to destroy the forest, since whenever a tree falls down, it satisfies one person’s curiosity. However, does this funny game truly satisfy our communication?
We walk and walk and hear a bunch of silly questions. People are guessing whether the answers are truth or lies. After a while, many beautiful trees are being cut down. The forest become more and more arid. We can easily see the sky now.
1.6 The Stump of Memory
We almost walk out of the forest, and I notice that there is a stump with many little holes on it.

I crouch down to look into the holes and find out there are engraved words. Sometimes it says “Wind”, sometimes it says “2009”.
“Don’t look into it!” I hear the girl shouting while she’s running to me.

Suddenly, there is a strong suction that comes from the hole dragging me into the stump.

At the last second I hear the girl shouts: “It collects memories!”

I am sucked into the black hole.

In the dark I hear someone is mumbling: “Wind, wind, wind, wind....” I try to find a way out, but it is too dark to see anything.

“Tell me about wind.” A voice says.

“Who are you?”

“Tell me about wind.” It repeats.

“What wind?”

Silence. No one replies. I shouts and shouts but the black engulfs everything.

I don’t know for how long I have waited, and I finally get very tired. I lie down and fall asleep.
When I look at the word “Wind”, this is the memory that I share with people about wind.

I was walking on the seaside. The waves are hitting the rucks. I heard someone is calling me, then I turned back, it is my mom.

I saw my mom standing on the dams, the wind blew up her hair. She was smiling.

Behind her was the vast, fresh green lawn. I saw kites flying up high behind her and her hair was intertwining with the strings of kites.

She looks so happy and satisfied. I wanted to use my cellphone to take a photo of her, however, when I stretched my hand into my pocket, I realized that I lost my phone.

I suddenly wake up. The dark hole disappears, and I am sitting in the woods.

The girl looks down at me, says: “Welcome back!”
fig 29. Model of the stump
fig 30. *Holes on the stump*
fig31. People in the game
2.1 Underground Tube
I have no ideas what happen in the stump.

The girl tells me that I sacrifice a memory to get out of the stump so I lost that piece of memory.

“Don’t worry, Nechesa will help you find it back.” She says, “I am going to get you some water.”

I am left in the woods and my mind is blank. The eager of finding Nechesa is becoming stronger and stronger. I don’t really need my phone back, but I do have many questions to ask him.

“Do you know Nechesa?”

I sit on a stump, asking a man while he walking pass by me.

“I have no idea. But the forest knows.”
“How can I ask the forest question?”

“There is a secret hole next to an old ginkgo tree. The answer is always buried underground.”

I thank him and find the old ginkgo tree. It’s very obvious because other trees are all being cut down.

It looks so peaceful. I put my hand on its strong root and I can feel that it is asleep.

I touch the soil around its roots and try to find the secret. I put my hand into the soil and feel the wet moisture of the rotted leaves from last season. The soil particles are dancing on my fingers and little earthworms are escaping from my skin. I go through this lovely world and finally touch a layer of liquid.

It feels like a river, I immerse my hand in it.

The water is getting warmer and warmer slowly. I didn’t feel that until my hand is held by someone else. It’s not terrible as the hand is so gentle. I even feel very joyful to be held like that.
For some reason I feel like the hand is very familiar to me. But I am not sure who that is.

After a while, the hand from the other side relaxes its hold and leaves. I search for a while and make sure that it is not there anymore.

“Is he Nechesa?” My mind is wondering.

The objects will be placed in communal spaces where people gather and encourage them to escape from their phones / laptops by sitting down and spending time / effort to communicate with each other instead. Strangers can get an interesting, non-stressful way to meet and start a conversation, while friends and family can enjoy the journey of finding each other. The abstract form of the sculpture engages the participants’ imagination and evokes the joy of early childhood.

This is a simulation of physical communication as opposed to virtual communication, emphasizing the lack of ease and immediacy offered by social media and messaging.
fig32. Final project 1 - top view
fig33. Final project 1 - people in the game
2.3 New Adventure
I wait for a while and the girl doesn’t come back. So I walk out of the woods to see if I can find Nechesa.

At the end of the woods there is a river. I sit by the river and look into the water. I see my mom’s face, and she is smiling at me.

I look closer and try to talk to her. I find she is talking to me as well. It is a mirror. I am talking to myself.

“No way! I am not my mom.”

I touch the surface of the water and few bubbles rise up.
In the water, my mom now looks anxious and confused. She is touching the water surface as well. In the water the bubbles are flying to the very bottom of the river. The more we touch the surface, the more bubbles come out. Finally, we are all blocked by them.

I use my hand to break the bubbles, and dive into the water to look for her.

“Mom, where are you?”

There is no one.

The river starts trembling and departs from the land. I can see the river is gradually flying up high in the sky. I stick my head out of the water and look down to the ground. The girl is standing at the edge of the land and waving her hands. She is saying goodbye to me. I want to ask her for help, but the river flies very fast and I cannot see her any more.

The river is evaporating. I find myself standing among clouds.
In one of the clouds there is a hole in it. I put my hand in the hole and suddenly, my hand is held by another hand.

I know it is the hand from underground. The hand holds my hand again. It feels so satisfying.

The clouds start dissipating. I find my mom standing in front of me.

She comes to me and hugs me.

“Do you want to go back? ” She asks me, “The door is there.”

“No,” I say.

“Where do you want to go?” She points to the ground. I look down and see out that there is a huge map underneath, with lights shining on it.

“It is a map that we can use to travel,” she says, “pick a spot my dear.”

I pick one.

We land on the ground, and walk into the deep.
fig34. Final project 2 - Tips of good places of Providence
fig35. Final project 2 - people searching for tips
fig36. Final project 2 - people in the game

Osvaldo Jimenez, Leveraging the Social Aspect of Educational Games, The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University, January 1, 2015

Chao Yang*, Padmini Srinivasan, Life Satisfaction and the Pursuit of Happiness on Twitter, Computer Science, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, March 16, 2016


Daul, Stephanie. Game Design for Learning. [Place of publication not identified]: American Society for Training & Development, 2014
I am fine thank you I am fine thank you I am fine thank you I am fine thank you I am fine thank you
