# FCJ-035 Locating Mobility: Practices of co-presence and the persistence of the postal metaphor in SMS/ MMS mobile phone customization in Melbourne

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## Domesticating cartographies

*Introduction to mobile telephonic practices and spaces*

As a vehicle arguably furthering the collapsing between work and leisure distinctions, the mobile phone is a clear extension of what Raymond Williams dubbed 'mobile privatization' (1974). Here one can still be physically within the home and yet, simultaneously, be electronically transported to other places. According to Wajcman et al's study of Australian mobile telephony, the transformation and diffusion of boundaries between traditional private and public spheres (2004: 9) – as signified in Williams's prescient 'mobile privatization' – sees mobile telephony penetrating 'new geographic spaces that enable the consumption and communication process to be applied in new social, cultural and psychological spaces' (2004: 12).[1] At the heart of Williams's notion is the extension and re-articulation of domesticity beyond simple physical place, into co-present practices of place Doreen Massey calls 'locality' (1993). In this there are many paradoxes. For one thing, domestication may have moved out of the home – literally, in the case of the mobile phone – but ideas of locality (Massey, 1993) and place are still, if not more, enduring (Ito, 2002). Like other domesticated technologies (Morley, 2003), the processes involved are far from simple or finalized, as each specific site locates and adapts to new cultural artifacts in a series of exchanges. We domesticate domesticating technologies (i.e. TV, phone) as much as they domesticate us. Domesticating technologies may be underscored by new modes of 'mobile privatization' but they are also fraught with feelings of disjuncture as one rides the practices of co-presence integral to the relationship between place and mobility – actual and electronic – found today (Urry, 2002; Ito, 2002; Morse, 1998). The "domestic" may no longer be physically located in the actual home. Yet, as we roam with our mobile phones and co-present dreams, locality is only a phone call away...

Or is it this simple? Here I will suggest that, in keeping with the endurance of the 'post' metaphor in the co-present practice of domestic technologies (Arnold, 2003a), locality is 'in the post'. Locality is always in deferral, transition, translation, mediation and recontextualisation.

## In the Post

As we shall see, the persistence of the post metaphor is most notable in the genre of SMS. Is SMS purely a communication application or have some users already taken it into a content-media realm?[2] To engage in this discussion on the contemporary role of SMS and its possible future in the light of paradigm and ecology shifts from 2.5 to 3 G (generation) mobile technologies, we need to examine SMS in terms of a genealogy of exchange, mediation and intimacy. I will shortly sketch out this genealogy through an exploration of a sample study of Melbourne users. First, however, I will historicize mediation and intimacy in terms of what Margaret Morse and Esther Milne acknowledge as a type of cartography of telepresence (Morse, 1998, Milne, 2004). I will suggest that mobile genres such as SMS and MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) continue a tradition founded by the role of the visiting card (Milne, 2004) and can also be understood through the metaphor of the postcard. Both involved practices of telepresence/ co-presence that include gestures of both intimacy and hallmark clichés. I will view customization and its reworking of standardized gestures from genres such as the postcard to SMS/ MMS practices. Both the postcard and SMSing/ MMSing can be read as sites for contestation between vernacular and the colloquial – against a backdrop of standard sizing formats and generic customization (i.e. a cliché imaginary of icons and mass production).

## Postcard from elsewhere; the semiotics of being there and "hear"

*The postcard metaphor, co-presence and the endurance of posting in mobile phone customization*

Whilst tabloid rhetoric may suggest the contrary, discourses within the practice of intimacy have always been mediated. As Morse notes in her discussion of virtuality: telepresence and co-presence are not just the by-products of cyberspace relations (1998). Notions of telepresence and intimacy are central to much of the 'micro-coordination' of mobile telephonic practices (Rich, 2004)

that have been pivotal to the history of telephony and its annexing of the public within the doorway (literally and metaphorically) of the private (home). Mobile telephony extend and invert this blurring by transforming the 'private' into an annex of the public; 'mobile privatization' par excellence (Morley, 2003). The ubiquity and yet interiorized saliency of mobile telephonic practices create a dynamic of being both *everywhere* and *nowhere*, simultaneously *home* and *away*. Or, as Michael Arnold notes, mobile telephony is best understood in Martin Heidegger's state of 'undistance' (*ent-fernen*); the abolishment of distance also, paradoxically, destroys nearness (Arnold, 2003a: 236). As Arnold remarks in his study on mobile telephony in Melbourne, the phenomenology of the mobile phone is best understood as 'janus-faced', whereby seemingly paradoxical concepts and practices are continuously at play – being here and there, local and global, private and yet public, free and yet always on a leash (2003a).

8 The postcard provides a precursor to the contemporary roles (and so-called dilemmas) of mobile phone practices such as SMS and MMS.[3] The postcard carries with it a tautological proposition – to post is to transfer and mutate; thus postcards are therefore much like metaphors (Lopez, 2003). The postcard was marked by the politics of co-presence – shifts in public and private spheres, fusions of work and "leisure" (symbolized by the flâneur), being *here* and yet *there*, being *present* whilst simultaneously *absent*. In contemporary debates, similar co-presences are perhaps found in the simultaneity of actual and virtual worlds (Morse, 1998).

9 There are other continuities. In the case of the mobile phone, Robert Luke has suggested a contemporary version of the flâneur in the 'phoneur' (cited in Morley, 2003). Symbolic of 19th century modernity and the telepresence of the wanderer, the flâneur's surveying of new forms of the public sphere – inscribed by the birth of 'mobile privatization' (i.e. transport) – has transformed into the vicarious phoneur with telepresent microscope in the form of the mobile phone. The flâneur/ phoneur is a janus-faced character grappling with the paradoxes and ambivalences of modernity – most notably through the negotiation of mediated degrees of intimacy through co-presence.

10 Along such extensions of co-presence, another set of key characteristics extended from the postcard to the SMS/ MMS genre – that of textual and visual discourses. The generic souvenir images and format of the postcard was inscribed with the personal, customized by linguistic (vernacular, colloquial, dialect) and cultural musings, then stamped with the markings of place and migration. Paralleling the postcard's negotiation between the generic and the specific, the generic functions of the mobile phone are personalized and customized by a collaging of SMS and MMS in a perpetual encircling of place, locality and practices of co-presence (i.e. 'where r u now?'). Postcards re-created a presence-ness, playing into the logic of 'being here and there' whilst fully aware of the inherent properties of delay and deferral. Whilst the principles of exchange and reception are sped up in mobile telephonic practices, delay and deferral are fundamental to medium's logic (in the face of so-called immediacy). Both function to send a thought or moment, oscillating between being there and here, attempting to bring desires for what is absent and present into correspondence. Both are mediated forms, both the paradoxical bearers of immediacy in their time. They both epitomize the spatial and temporal translation involved in the practice of 'post'.

11 The postcard/ SSM-MMS comparison traverses a particular kind of co-presence represented by specific forms of textuality and visuality. Within each different context, linguistic and cultural (both hegemonic and subcultural) factors render the pertinence of place through particularities of visual and textual practices. Modes of customization – such as particular forms of SMS lingo – seek to further emphasize the interdependency between place and intimacy. It is the mobile phone's *mobility* that, dialectically, makes place even more important (Ito, 2002). Place can be denoted by the generic "where are you now?" rhetoric common to mobile conversations or it can be connoted through phonetic and colloquial gestures. Whilst both email and SMS are about compression and abbreviation, mobile phones – by way of their movement – are fundamental to what Rich Ling dubs the 'micro-coordination' (2004) of the everyday. The compression and gestures of intimacy central to mobile telephonic genres such as SMS can be found reproduced in the 'micro-coordination' of the postcard. Both SMS/ MMS genres extend various senses/ modes (visuality, orality and texuality) akin to the postcard. So much so that I argue that the postcard was once the

equivalent to the "SMS moment". It was personal, subject to unauthorized viewing, a democraticising of writing, and a genre able to capture the fleeting moment whilst being mobile.

12 There are differences of course. Whilst both the postcard and SMS/ MMS practices involve often unspoken forms of obligation and reciprocity, the former (an example of co-presence rhetoric in extreme) did not entail the immediacy and simultaneity that SMS/ MMS presupposes in its "gift giving" etiquette (Taylor and Harper, 2003). The postcard was, dialectically, about being *mobile* and yet *immobile*, moving over *there* whilst thinking about *here*, it was a sandwiching between the generic image, format and cliché as the author attempted to write/speak whilst negotiating a type of co-presence (virtual/ projected/ imagined and actual). The postcard relationship between sender and receiver was a relationship between the *mobile* and the *static*. In the case of the mobile phone, sender and receiver can both be static and/or mobile simultaneously. If the postcard marked an initial form of mobile privatization (indicative of the rise of the printing press, transport and associated forms of co-presence), the mobile phone marks both an extension of these principles as well as a departure into a new mode of performing individualism and sociality (Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2003; McVeigh, 2003).

13 The postcard, like SMSing and MMSing, functioned as a form of co-present mobile privatization by being both there and here ('wishing you were here'). It extended vernaculars of individualism during the rise, and subsequential privatization, of the public space and notions of the "community". Such vernaculars and others can be read as evolving from the earlier visiting card. In discussing the 'semiotics of "speaking by the card"' and its role in replicating certain class-related modes of 'exchange', Milne states, 'visiting cards reproduced divisions of class by regulating the public and private' (2004). According to Milne, the shift from visiting cards to the image and photograph genre of the *carte-de-visite* in 1854 was marked by gender inflection. Women were warned about the implications of being too generous in disseminating their carte-de-visite as it could be viewed as a form of flirting. It is no surprise that similar discourses about flirting and dating have erupted within SMS/MMS practices with a plethora of companies advertising to extend one's social circles (Constable, 2003).[4] MMS, on the one hand, furthers the role of representations of self and forms of social exchange first initiated by the birth and rise of amateur, vernacular photography as symbolized by the introduction of the Kodak camera. On the other hand, the personal frame of the mobile phone means that the space between taking, editing and presenting the images becomes less mediated (i.e. no sending off to get the film processed) and more operative to the shrinking space between the doing and the viewing. These economies of the micro (micro narratives, micro temporality, micro-politics of self) demonstrate that presence in the telepresent politics of representation is a *verb* rather than a *noun* (Ito, 2002). We 'do' presence.

14 As Mizuko Ito has noted, the mobile phone helps facilitate 'communities of presence' (2002). What MMS lacks in the significance of place (such as the postcard's imprints of stamps as passport for actual travel) it makes up for in its emphasis on personalisation (i.e. more bricolage, one's own photos of place rather than the "postcard/ souvenir" version, thus symbolizing the place of the individual). Such a concurrent enhancement of mobility – from actual to electronic travel – is central to John Urry's discussion of co-presence. Urry identifies a dialectic between the actual and virtual. In this dialectic, electronic/virtual travel further reinforces, rather than erases, the importance of actual travel (2002). This paradigm is particularly prevalent in the continual reiteration, rather than destruction, of place by mobile telephonic practices. As Ito argues in the case of Tokyo (2002), and Kyongwon Yoon in the context of Seoul (2003), mobile phone practices are contingent upon the agencies of the local. They perpetually emphasise the role of place in maintaining intimacy. As Massey notes, locality – as a particular practice of place – emerges through a combination of electronic co-presence and face-to-face actions (Massey, 1993).

15 Let us now briefly turn to the relation between another precursor – photography – and texting. For Matt Locke, (in 'Light touches – text messaging, intimacy and photography'), one can make many parallels between the representational act of photographing and texting (2004). Drawing on the work of Roland Barthes and Geoffrey Batchen, Locke argues that the tactile quality, intimacy and 'light touches' of vernacular photography are akin to the practices of texting. Of course, the notions of tactility, intimacy and scale have been central to the design of both the postcard and the mobile phone; indicative of Marshall McLuhan's argument that technologies are an extension of the human body (1964). With the "handy" format of both the postcard and mobile phone we

momentarily feel the “light touches” from intimates. Via these mediations, our intimates hold our hands in a co-present gesture of lightness that both reinforces their *presence* and *absence* simultaneously.[5] The interdependent roles of intimacy and tactile representations can be found throughout many “posting” genres, as argued in Milne’s cartography of 18th to 20th century epistolary genres.

16 In ‘Magic bits of Paste-board’, Milne suggests that SMS should be seen as an extension of modes of ‘telepresence’. Telepresence, for Milne is, ‘the degree to which geographically dispersed agents experience a sense of physical and/ or psychology proximity through the use of particular communication technologies’ (2004). Milne thus suggests the need to acknowledge the long history of telepresence in definitions of corporeality. Extending from the work conducted by feminists on conceptions of cyberspace and corporeality (Stone, 1994; Brook, 1999; Haraway, 1991; Hayles, 1999; Waldby, 2000; Nakamura, 2002), Milne succinctly argues that ‘text’s uncanny power to stand in for the corporeal body’ has a ‘long’, and often ‘overlooked’ history. By sketching the history and social functions of the tradition of British eighteenth-century visiting cards and their evolution – through the introduction of photography – into the *carte-de-visite* (a visiting card with photograph, similar to MMS), Milne argues that these genres are ‘conceptually, culturally and materially’ precursors of ‘a range of contemporary technologies of propinquity’ (2004). Milne argues that –

17 > … acting as complex cultural avatars, these visiting cards conveyed the desires of class and gender in the construction of identity… Visiting cards functioned as avatars of presence and identity, a complex language system which allowed the discursive agents to mediate social relations according to the varying degrees of intimacy that were desired. (2004)

18 In all these message forms, this intimacy can be compromised. Anonymous readers can view the postcard (whilst in the post) just as saved text messages can be read if the mobile phone is left unattended. The suspended feeling of potential unintended readers makes the inscriptions on both postcards and SMS subject to a play between the generic, formulaic sentiments and particular customizing codes that are only understood between the sender and the intended reader. A related issue is that both mobile phones and postcards serve as tracking devices – being used to legitimate absences, to operate as an alibi, the traces of moving moments. Mobile phones have been subject to both the embellishing of the micro-coordinations of affairs as well as instrumental in “catching out” infidelities, as have postcards, with intimate exchanges caught in the wrong hands. At a more general level, postcards and MMS/ SMS operate as bookends to the simultaneous rise of ‘mobile privatization’ and what Benedict Anderson dubs as ‘imagined communities’ (1983) – the rise of the nation through geographic demarcations and linguistic homogenization by inventions such as the printing press. This is not just a chronological book ending – the postcard heralded the printing press and the mobile phone being symbolic of the immersion into digital – but also a socio-spatial epoch marked by reframing gestures of intimacy through revisions of what constitute place and thus the practice of co-presence. Postcards illustrate that a dialectical tension between virtual and actual was traversed long before the rise of the digital, and significantly the Internet. These “bookends” highlight the continue antagonisms between mobility and immobility, here and yet there, public and yet private discourses through three main on-going characteristics – co-presence, visuality and textuality. I can only gesture here towards how the “virtuality” of the Internet is experienced through the tactility, “lightness” and mobility of the 3G mobile phenomenon and associated emerging genres.

19 This is not to say that there is nothing particular about SMS. As Gerard Goggin notes in ‘mobile text’ (2004), SMS is a burgeoning area of expression that needs to be understood as, not just a remediated form of expression, but also a media/ genre in its own right with its own conventions and codes. SMS, according to Goggin, needs to be understood as an emerging genre, ‘forming a new culture of media use’. Like other types of media and cultural forms, SMS needs to be analyzed in terms of its ‘specific textual modes’ (2004). So whilst I have made parallels between emailing, texting and the visiting card, drawing on both the work of Milne and Arnold’s observation of the persistence of the “post” metaphor, one also needs to acknowledge that new forms of visual and textual practices are always emerging.

20 A relevant example can be found via a quick detour through the uses of the camera phone. In the work of Anita Wilhelm, Nancy Van House and Marc Davis (and the Garage Cinema Research) (2004)

users are denoted as 'producers'. Camera phones are seen to work with a 'power of now' quality. Whilst the earlier rise of vernacular photography also exhibited this power of immediacy, there are some marked differences. As Wilhelm et al. note, the 'power of now' quality has resulted in a speeding up of self-regulation, self-editing and self-disclosure. Many of the happy accidents associated with analogue photography (and the severing of time between the taking, processing and final viewing of the image) are deleted in rash and fleeting moments and 'instant' editing decisions. In addition, unlike the digital camera that is not taken everywhere, the converging of the camera with the mobile phone sees the practice of photography being liberated and made an integral part of the everyday. The *context* of the mobile phone frame provides emerging forms of photographic content. Here, content becomes contingent to mobile contexts. For Mizuko Ito and Daiske Okabe in their seminal MMS ethnographies in Japan, "camophone" practices are creating new genres in representing and exchanging amongst intimacies (2003).

21 So the questions of remediation between media forms are complex. Locke, for example, finds more parallels between vernacular photography and texting than between analogue and digital photography (2004). It is now to texting in its Melbourne context that I shall turn.

## Locating the mobile

22 *Understanding the contexts of Melbourne mobile telephony*

23 From the plethora of printed matter linked intertextually, via texting, to TV programs such as *Australian Idol* and *Big Brother*, to the cacophony of mobile ads and chat services flooding late night TV and weekly magazines and daily newspapers, one could be mistaken for thinking that everyone in Melbourne is connected. On the streets one is greeted by the autistic behaviour of one-sided mobile phone conversations conducted as people walk, bike, catch public transport and drive. Supermarkets and video stores are brimming with mobile phone users asking their invisible friend/ partner about appropriate choices. In particular, the omnipresence of SMSing – and now MMSing – is patent. Is it just the case of a severe case of what Ling dubs the 'micro-coordinating' of everyday practices? These souvenirs of mobility – the post-postcard practices of SMS/ MMS practices – are complex, marked by different types of co-presence (seen, for example by gendered usage of visual and textual customization).

24 The commercial context is also complex – and perhaps partly responsible for some of the customization. With four main service providers (Telstra, Hutchison, Optus and Vodafone) and ten minor service providers – all vying for the Australian market – there seems a massive amount of choice.[6] However, this choice is underscored by what James Fergusson (a specialist in new market trends in the Asia-Pacific region working for the third largest information research company in the world, TNS global) sees as a market in which service providers do not yet cater well to niche demographics. In an interview with Fergusson I inquired about the role of customization – that is, the hanging of characters from the phone, face plates, personalized screen savers and ring tones – and whether it was just a fleeting trend (2004). He believed that user's customization of phones was a way of completing what the service providers had overlooked – the need for specific applications for particular niche groups. This is particularly the case in the introduction of so-called 3G mobile phones such as Hutchison's 3 whereby the phones are crammed with applications – applications not necessarily relevant to users.

25 Fergusson believes that current 3G devices available in Australia are gimmicky – jam-packed with various applications most users will only use once or twice. The applications that are important, Fergusson argues, are those that make a difference to people's lives. MMS applications such as camera phones are mainly adopted by youth markets, and, due to the lack of picture quality and resolution, Fergusson believes that professional (work-related) usage will defect to the digital camera.

26 Fergusson also sees that 3's hybridization of 3G technologies – the first example of 3G in Australia – has resulted in resistance from consumers.[7] Unlike markets such as Japan and South Korea where government infrastructure and financial support helped to fully implement 'broadband' mobile phone technologies, Australia's up-take of the hybridized 3G technologies is much slower, uneven and cautious. This has perhaps become an important factor in the dominance and maintenance of SMS genres and the shift of SMS from a "making-do" application to a pivotal semiotic exchange in everyday micro-coordinations. According to Steve Watson (from Legion

Interactive), Stuart Tucker (from Optus) had claimed in 2004 that 90 per cent of all revenue was generated from peer to peer SMS.[8]

27 Beyond SMS and basic services the market is perhaps not well understood. Watson notes that in one year the market had shifted and that whilst MMS was yet to take off in Australia, digital content and services had changed dramatically (2005). He claimed that the "future" of mobile telephony, and its convergence with the net, would see multiplayer games dominating the content and applications industry. Currently, the key sources for downloading revenue are ring tones (50 per cent) and games (35 per cent). However, such statements and figures perhaps belie some uncertainty. For example, one of the main underlying issues that became apparent in Watson's discussion of mobile telephony was that the relationship between users and the industry was clearly conceived within a hypodermic model in which Watson seemed – visibly and verbally – unable to grapple with the strange phenomenon of female users. Watson is not alone. Yet the Australian mobile games industry must acknowledge, as the Japanese market did when it shifted in broadband mobile technologies in 1999, the importance and power of female users as 'producers'.[9] It is true that companies such as Adelaide's Kukan are designing and producing mobile games that address both males and females in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region (most especially China, Taiwan and Hong Kong). Yet much more research needs to be conducted into the specificities of the Australian market, for example into specific aspects of the market such as gender, and how this fits into its relationships in the region. Wajcman et al. (2004) note, as does Arnold (2003b), that the relatively small and under-researched Australian market is in need of more qualitative and quantitative studies especially beyond just youth-orientated studies.

28 Thus the contribution here is to seek to gauge some of the correspondences between intimacy and customization – looking at the *how* and *why* rather than just the quantitative *what*.

## Pixoleur: the art of being mobile

29 *Case study of a sample group of Melbourne users*

30 Much of the advertising for mobile phones in Australia – from service providers such as Optus, 3 (Hutchison), Vodafone and Telstra, and from device providers such as Sony Ericsson, Nokia, Siemens, Motorola, LG and Samsung – reiterates the importance of being connected both *literally* and *metaphorically*. Moreover, in advertising on TV and printed matter the mobile phone signifies status, and increasingly this identification is marked by the so-called "choices" offered to users to customize and personalize the device. These choices range from faceplates to wallpapers of their favourite pop stars, with associated polyphonic ring tones. More and more, different device providers are selling identity and status – from prestigious Nokia limited edition designer phones (such as models 7260 and 7280) to Motorola's fun play on the currency of Japanese popular culture in Australia.

31 In order to gain insight into some current modes of customization in Melbourne I conducted a small sample study across a group of twenty University of Melbourne staff, students and administrators, aged between 15 and 50. The group consisted of an equal number of male and female users. The aim of this sample study – which consisted of twenty surveys and then six follow up in-depth interviews – was to gain a window onto some of the different ways the mobile phone was customized and what this said about representation, identification and co-presence. I was particularly motivated by a curiosity about prevailing gendered codes of intimacy, and the way in which the mobile phone helped maintain or transgress these codes.

32 This study is just that – a sample study. It did not seek to address all practices and attitudes of the Australian population but rather grab a sound byte/ freeze frame/ SMS of some relationships towards mobile phones and the attendant paradoxes of mobile privatization. As the demographic was clearly marked by particular types of cultural capital – tertiary educated respondents linked to an established university (The University of Melbourne) – one can see specific modes of identification and performativity attached to their SMS and MMS practices. Just as postcard inscriptions denoted types of cultural capital (particularly shaped by middle class attitudes or aspirations) by way of textual and visual conventions, so too is this continued in mobile phone practices. The importance of class (especially the middle-class) in the rise and adoption of mobile phones into the general community (particularly as mobile phone use is hijacked by youth cultures) is integral to mobile telephony's history (Agar, 2003; Goggin, 2004). Class stratification has

been central to the historical passages of both the mobile phone and postcard; and central to these class formations has been the role of gender (Haddon, 1997).[10]

33 In the sample study, gender featured both in the practices, and in attitudes to the role of mobile telephony in the everyday. In particular, stereotypes about gender and technology were continuously contested within individual user's responses. On the one hand, the stereotype of females not being apt and fluent in the use of various applications was not true. Often the females seemed more curious and adventurous in exploring and mastering genres than their male counterparts. However, female users tended to spend most of their mobile phone time (unlike the male users) contemplating, re-reading and editing text messages. Moreover, whilst female users tended towards regular usage of their mobile phones, spoke eloquently about the importance of customization, and tended to view the mobile phone as a predominantly communication-based device, male users tended to view it as both a data/content transferring technology *and* a communication device. The usage of games on mobiles was overtly gendered – none of the female respondents had *ever* played the games, in comparison to most of the male respondents who had not only played the games once, but did so *regularly*. Apart from the obvious male-orientation towards mobile games, however, female users seemed more apt in knowing and using the various applications, although the dominant mode of female usage was still SMS.

34 The younger the user, the less gendered differences were noted in customizing of applications such as SMS. Having said that, most of the older male respondents denied the use of any customization despite the fact of it actually being used! For many of the female respondents the functions of the SMS genre seemed much more open to possibilities; many female users were able to articulate different forms of SMS customization comparable to corresponding degrees of intimacy. When asked about the chosen screen savers, ring tones and abbreviations for SMSing, the male users seemed indifferent to their customization, often stating that it 'just came with the phone'. In contrast, female users seemed much more *attached* to the customization modes, discussing the role of the phone as a diary and a very important mode of everyday communication and maintaining intimacy. In addition, female users seemed much more aware of the janus-faced role of customizing mobile phones as a grappling between modes of individualism and self-identification and the ways in which they were judged by these modes (most prevalent in such public 'space invading' modes as ring tones).

35 When asked to provide adjectives to describe their relationships to mobile phones, some of the responses were: easy going, casual, evolving, distanced, frustrating, resistant, obsessive, attentive, fun, easy, takes over my life, happy, sad and pathetic. Many saw the mobile phone as beneficial in maintaining relationships, especially in terms of being available anytime for friends and to the contingencies of last minute face-to-face meetings. One respondent was ambivalent towards the medium, acknowledging its ability to 'establish intimacy with new people' but, paradoxically, 'creating distance with already established friends'. This is a clear example of another janus-faced feature of mobile telephonic practices to both reinforce and yet fragment social capital. Many mobile phone researchers have noted such fragmentation – what Robert Putnam sees as a 'balkanization' (2000) – of communities (or 'tele-cocooning') (Ling, 2004; Ito et al., 2005). However it is important to problematise Putnam's technological determinist model. It laments and romanticises a so-called ideal time when supposedly intimate relationships were not mediated. As Rich Ling suggests (via his domestic technologies approach) one must not isolate or scapegoat the mobile phone but instead understand the remediating role in terms of a genealogy of domestication (2004). This is where the peripatetic cartography of co-presence is useful. Present within such an enduring phenomenon is the grappling between *desiring* to overcome distance and, thus, like the very force of desire (as defined by psychoanalysis), the actual inability to meet the object (closeness). Again, this is a dialectic, as Arnold argues, that is best encapsulated by Heidegger's 'un-distance" (Arnold, 2003a).

36 Un-distance is further complicated by the fact that the role of the mobile phone as social tool – arguably now THE social glue – is subject to local nuances.[11] Whilst still not fully immersed in the world of 3G mobility, Melbourne has a burgeoning industry for convergent mobile media aimed at facilitating socialization – especially the establishment of new relationships through the mode of mobile net telephony. Dating services, chat lines and after-production customizing services (downloading specialized ring tones and screensaver animations) fill the TV airwaves (after 10pm)

and tabloid newspapers and magazines. When people are not actually customizing and SMSing/ MMSing, they are perpetually bombarded by a plethora of possibilities in these regards. Or so it seems. In fact, in the sample survey, very few respondents used the relationship services, arguing that mobiles were more important in reinforcing *already existing* relations rather than establishing *new* relationships. In addition, of the sample study, only two out of the 20 respondents had downloaded their customizations from post-production mobile phone companies. Many preferred to either use their own images (mostly taken by camera phones) or choose from the images provided with the phone. Images used included places visited, Asian animations of cute characters, Betty Boop, the user's name and a flower. Some had tried the downloading services but had found them unsatisfying – too costly and often frustrating to use. While most respondents (70 per cent) selected ring tones and screensavers supplied with the mobile phone, many claimed that they would do their own customization if the phone had the capabilities (i.e. camera phone, Bluetooth).

37 Gender featured predominantly in discussions about customization, with female respondents tending to be more decisive and opinionated about their selections, often downloading different screensavers (wallpapers) and ring tones rather than using the generic (and unsatisfying) ones supplied by the manufacturer. In addition, female respondents spoke reflexively about the ways in which people judged others by the types of mobile phone used and such features as ring tones. Key features for ring tones were factors such as being 'distinctive but not annoying'. As one female respondent noted:

38 > I have chosen Betty Boop (screen saver, face plate and doll hanging from the phone) because she is a bit of a role model of mine – she operates like a type of avatar or alter ego. There are some physical similarities such as we both have black curly hair. My ring tone is one of the Nokia ring tones supplied with the phone. It was chosen because it suits another alter ego of mine – so I felt it correspond with that identity; it's like playing dress-ups.

39 When asked whether she saw customization as an extension of the user's personality/ identity she replied:

40 > I think so because I think you get judged by your ring tone when you are in public. When you hear someone's ring tone that is the same as yours you expect to find your doppelganger… It (customizing) does become a fashion thing that you do get judged on.

41 Here, the respondent's discussion about the role of mobile phones' function as a form of identity and cultural capital is significant. Her discussion of the ring tone as a signifier of her own identity – the role of mobile phone customization in the construction and maintenance of the illusionism of individualism – was exemplified by the potential threat to individuality just by someone else having the same ring tone Whilst the respondent was being humorous, this point did signpost the performative elements involved in customizing the phone as both a playful and thoughtful exercise. This is not only in regard to self-presentation but, in this case more importantly, self-identification. Here we see a good example of the individualising process associated with mobile phone customization – and its specific localising qualities (see also Brian McVeigh's study of Japanese university students [2003]).

42 For this respondent – perhaps not incidentally the youngest of the sample study – the performativity associated with mobile phone customization was very significant in her everyday practices. She not only gave great consideration to the way in which she customized inside and outside her phone but also, as a fairly regular SMSer (i.e. more than 5 times a day), she spent much time personalising her text messages. As an important essential everyday item, the mobile phone for this respondent was embroiled in paradoxes associated with identification and identity. On the one hand, she was aware of the ways in which she was judged in public by her phone's attire – from the hanging betty boop wearing a flashing light to the distinctive polyphonic ring tone – which she thought was often misread (i.e. the people didn't "get" her sense of humour). On the other hand, customizing the mobile phone – from attachments to personalising SMS – was a site for meaningful play and gestures of intimacy amongst already established friends. Here we see that Arnold's comment on mobile phone practices being janus-faced, in the case of this respondent customization created a bifurcation of effects and affects – some intended and others unintended/ unavoidable.

43

The so-called divide between those that have mobiles and those that do not was broached with the respondents. Female respondents believed there was a difference, whilst male respondents did not. The gendering of attitudes was also noted in the respondent's comments about mobile etiquette in public. For James Fergusson, Australia is relatively unfazed by public mobile performativity in comparison to the US or Japan. However, the female respondents felt otherwise to Fergusson. Female respondents were more articulate about the possible readings and interpretations of particular ring tones and what Sadie Plant calls 'phone staging' whereby people stage calls in public and exploit the possibility of an audience for extroverted performativity (2002). The female respondents seemed more aware of the *power* of *aural* customisation ('being heard'), most notably ring tones. Many of the female respondents identified the insidious nature of some ring tones and thus their choice not to use certain popular/ generic types. However, for the males, they tended to download favourite songs and seemed less aware of the level of public judgement operating around ring tone customisation.

44 Whilst both male and female respondents tended not to use the silent mode in public, they would often lower the volume of the ring tone and would answer calls briefly and quietly. Of the male and female respondents, only a couple of female respondents put their mobile on silent mode in public spaces such as transport. Female users, however, tended not to initiate phone calls on public transport, unless imperative. One female respondent stated:

45 > I think the correct mobile etiquette in public is brief and discrete. I use silence mode when I am in private, more than public. I usually don't have my phone on a loud ring mainly out of respect for other people's personal spaces. I don't think it should be banned; you should just act as you would normally – not talking loudly and making it brief… I don't think it is frowned upon to use your mobile in public but people do seem weary and self-conscious to use mobiles in public because – unless you're an extrovert – it is quite a self-conscious process as everyone can hear what you are saying and find out quite a bit about you (i.e. where you are going, where you have been).

46 Whilst both male and female respondents predominantly used the mobile phone to contact friends (rather than family or work colleagues), many of the female respondents preferred SMS as a means of communication. Over half of the respondents (70 per cent) SMSed more than 80 per cent of the time, with only 20 per cent mobile phone usage being voice calling. Both male and female respondents claimed that at least 80 per cent of their friends had mobiles; the only respondent (female) who did not SMS used her mobile phone mainly to contact family. Only 10 per cent of her friends had mobile phones, hence the irrelevance (in terms of her social network) of SMS for this respondent.

47 It would be easy to surmise that the rationale for using SMSing over voice calling and MMSing would be the cost factor; and while this was acknowledged, it was not the *only* reason. One male respondent stated: 'Most of my communication is SMS because it is cheaper. But I don't like telephone conversations; I think they are often misleading – there is not enough eye contact or body language to determine what they are really saying. So hence I prefer SMSing'. The same respondent noted a difference in his frequency of contact with the acquisition of a mobile only one year ago. He noted:

48 > Probably in a space of a week I keep in contact with just over a dozen people. It's very important – particularly with people I am close to – that I can communicate with them immediately when necessary. The mobile does reinforce relationships. I would take calls/ messages from people at 2am; it is very unlikely that I would with the landline.

49 For one female respondent, SMSing was a new form of expression that she saw as an 'art form'. In weaving the spoken into the written, she viewed SMS as a very particular mode of communication that was not confronting (as in face-to-face) and operated as a form of reassurance. She stated:

50 > I see texting as a new form of expression; it's not necessarily destroying but a borrowing and reappropriation – not the same as. It has a lot to do with compression, speed, and efficiency. The main form of writing I do is texting; I do see it as an art form. I enjoy making a funny message; and I appreciate receiving ones where the sender has put in time and thought by personalising and individualising it… A text message is like a book, each sentence can be compressed to become a chapter. If you have four different thoughts you can have four different sentences. I spend time editing texts, I really consider 'what *is* important'…'what has to *stay*'. Often the initial original message is quite different from the one I end up sending; for example, if I am sending a long text

> message that goes over into two messages I will edit into one message. This is not because of the cost but more about the *flow* of the message; often if it gets sent as two separate messages, this hinders the message and its intentions. Recently I got a message from someone who sent six messages in a row; they were obviously not use to writing texts! She wasn't concise, it was *literally* as if she were talking!

51 Here the respondent identifies the role of customisation in the act of writing SMS as signifying a type of performativity and self-presentation. As the respondent described the process of creating an SMS, there was nothing immediate about it. The editing and regulatory process was, as she stated, not just a matter of cost. Rather, it was about a type of conversion within a different genre – one that moulded the language of the user (just as writing a postcard moulds the language of the user). It was about flow and individualisation, not just efficiency and speed. Like all media and genres SMSing comes with often unspoken conventions and etiquette. As the female respondent conveys the story of her friend's long-winded messages – overlooking the medium's convention of word compression and conservation – we can see the importance of such techniques in the experience or, to borrow from McLuhan, in the "massaging" of the medium (1964). Here, the medium's message/ massage is a hybridising of phonetics, vernacular, spoken and the visual – something about which many of the surveyed female respondents seemed to be more aware than their male counterparts.. When the above female respondent was asked about SMS and the function of language, she answered, 'It is a compressed form of writing and it does make you revalue words. Although it can be instant, it can also be very deliberate and premeditated'. Here the respondent's views seem in direct conflict with the convention of SMS taken as a spontaneous genre that erodes "proper" language. In particular, the very mediatory and co-present quality of language (as noted by poststructuralists) is highlighted in the role of SMS. This attests to the fact that language is continuously negotiated and "butchered" through the specific practices of culture and place as denoted in Massey's notion of locality (1993).

52 Another female respondent spoke of the gender divide in terms of the previously noted male users opting towards predictive text and more direct conveying of data (rather than opting for SMS an expressive form of communication). Often certain terms were used for specific people – a type of intimacy in the text that would be lost on the outsider. Yet it has to be admitted that at times predictive text becomes part of the expressive form. One male respondent played with the predictive function that converted his name 'brian' as 'asian' and he now uses 'asian' as his sign name with specific friends. Another female respondent commented:

53 > I'm not big on smiling faces; it's too generic. You want people to read the text like you would hear it – incorporating both the written and the spoken. When I read a text I read it in their voice. I try to make it a bit more personalised. Sometimes I put the generic kiss thing; I like it when people make strange faces or symbols. I don't like when people use predictive text; I never use that (predictive text tends to choose wrongly)... For example, 'go' becomes 'in'. I notice with my male texters there tends to a usage of 'in' when I think they mean, 'go'. I don't like it because I like people's personalities to come across, to express their sense of humour.

54 Most respondents noted the gendered inflections of mobile phone behaviour. However most also noted the influence of age and class in the equation. One male respondent stated, 'I don't know the difference. It seems as if women take more phone calls and text messages than men. That's something I have just noticed but I don't know if it's true'. Another female respondent stated:

55 > I do think gender has a role. I could agree with the myth that males use more voice calls and tend to be more to the point in their text messaging. I suppose young females text a lot, males tend to be more familiar with the games on the phone, whilst females don't care about the games. If I were to generalise I would say that males use the calling phone function more often, females send and receive more SMS. However, I do think it is subjective – it depends on the person.

56 One can't help but wonder, with the shift into 3G mobility and the change over from being a communication tool to a "content-media" driven device, whether this will affect the current gender divide between female communication-driven usage (both symbolically through fashion accessories signifying types of cultural capital and literally through SMS and voice calling) and male focus on content-media/ data-transference.

57

The respondents noted the function of the mobile as a type of souvenir, caching of moments or electronic diary, similar to that which the postcard once signified. Many stored SMS and MMS that had personal significance. One female respondent stated:

58 > Yes, definitely, I do use my mobile as a form of electronic diary. But it's not quite stable because you can delete it; I know it's not that safe but because it is easy – it's with me all the time. I do use it as a way of remembering events and certain messages people have sent to me are kept for sentimental reasons. But I am aware that they could all just go very quickly and I wouldn't have a way of retrieving them.

59 Another respondent, this time male, stated that he kept specific messages from each one of his close pool of frequent contacts. He said, 'I don't remember people's phone numbers anymore. I have no idea, no recognition of people's numbers anymore. If I don't have my mobile with me I couldn't communicate with anyone via a landline'. When asked how he determines which messages to save and which to delete he responded, 'If someone has text me about a dozen times I will always communicate with them via one of the saved SMS. I always use one to reply to, not necessarily the most recent one. I choose carefully which ones I save and which ones I delete'.

## Wish you were hear

60 *Conclusion*

As I have argued above, via the use of different and subtle forms of SMS and so on, mobile phone users in Melbourne are customizing as much as in other parts of the Asia-Pacific. It is just that this is occurring in more internalised forms.

61 Customizing is also clearly occurring in different forms among different groups. In this regard, issues such as age, class and ethnicity underscored the role of gender in defining modes of mobile telephony in Melbourne. The fact that younger users are less gender differentiated in their customization codes suggests that the future of mobile telephony will be gendered but not in the way Haddon has described previously (1997). Female users are becoming more adventurous in mastering the applications, integrating the technology into everyday practices, and further demonstrating their "user as producer" techniques whilst also becoming more active in the actual creative production of the industry.[12] However whilst the female respondents seemed more articulate, self-reflexive and creative in their customizing of mobile applications, one could argue this is indicative of the pervasive stereotype of female proclivity towards communicative aspects, in contrast to male inclination towards technology. This conundrum of both reinforcement and yet transgression of gendered types is central to the janus-faced logic of the mobile phone, highlighting that the mediation of intimacy isn't just a product of technological intervention. The other side of this is found in Steve Watson's comments concerning "female users" as a type of primitive tribe that he "can't get his head" around how to explain – let alone conquer (2005). One cannot help but wonder if he is aware of his own gendered customization that, like the so-called democracy Legion Interactive claims to facilitate, has to engage a "profiling" approach that cannot comprehend the contradictions and janus-faced forces underlying the dialectic between our domestication of technologies (i.e. through customization) and technology's domestication of us.

62 The comprehension of such contradictions and paradoxes – and their particular workouts in specific localities – could be crucial to understanding mobile telephony. The Asia-Pacific region is marked by diverse penetration rates and modes of mobile telephony performativity (Bell, 2004; Katz and Aakhus, 2002; Plant, 2002). In areas of high penetration rates one can notice exponentially large usage of after-production customization. In 3G centres such as Tokyo and Seoul one notices a cornucopia of mobile phone fashioning *inside* and *outside* the phone as users attempt to personalize the device – operating as both a site for self-identification and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984[1979]) for on-lookers. In contrast to such data savvy locations such as Tokyo, 3G is yet to be fully implemented into Melbournians everyday life with only 2 out of 20 respondents in the survey having camera phones (although many stated that they were 'upgrading' soon to camera phones) and only 6 having part MMS functions. This is not to suggest that Melbourne users – with their residual use of 2.5 G technologies – are technophobes in comparison to the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. Rather this is an indicative example of how global ICTs are subject to local nuances. In the case of Melbourne and Australian urban areas in general, the use of SMS will not just die away because of a technological paradigm shift – by way of 3G

broadband devices – as a technological determinist would argue. Rather, as I have suggested – through the discussion of previous "post" genres and the postcard metaphor in general – the legacy of mediation and remediation will be intertwined with the roles of intimacy and locality.

63 I have argued throughout that one of the features of mobile privatisation is the persistence of the post/postal – and associated forms of representation and exchange – in mediations of intimacy. From the 18th century visiting card to contemporary forms of mobile telephony, the metaphor and co-present practice of post endures. In this paper I have contextualised the dominance of SMS practices in terms of previous cartographies of co-presence and evolving modes of mobile privatisation. As a domestic "global" technology, the mobile phone is localised in diverse ways through user customisation. By exploring some of the local modes of customisation, we can gain insight into forms of identification and performativity that have a long history in the very mediation that is the act of practicing and imagining culture. In this way, we are always sending postcards that simultaneously enact our subjectivity as well as regulate it in accordance with localised rituals of exchange; intimacy always involves both being *here* and *there*. Thus locating contemporary forms of mobile privatized intimacy and co-presence may well be – as is the case of SMS customisation evoking a creolisation between text, aurality and visuality – the art of 'being hear'...

64 In the context of SMS's hybrid phonetic textuality, the familiar postcard greeting might become, more aptly, 'wish you were hear'!

## Author's Biography

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## Notes

[1] According to Arnold, the story of the first mobile phone in Australia was similar to the story of the first mobile phone invented by Ericsson. As with Ericsson model, this one was a large bakelite telephone located in the car. This first phone was a one-off construction at huge cost by the Post Master General's Department for Reg Ansett in the 1960s. See Michael Arnold's (co-authored by Matthew Klugman), *Mobile phone uptake: a review of the literature and a framework for research* (Heidelberg, Vic: Heidelberg Press, 2003).

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[2] As mobile technologies shift from 2.5 G to 3G technologies and we move into a new broadbanded form of mobile privatization, mobile devices supposedly shift from communication to media-content driven tools (Padden, 2005). With this shift, the role of customization moves from a predominantly user as producer (Wilhelm et al., 2004) model – indicative of the disjuncture between pre-production and post-production markets – to a predominantly industry regulated/ filtered exercise (i.e. increasing emphasis on profiling). This is not to say that 3G close down user options – this seems to go directly against the evidence supporting the contrary with the opening up of networks through broadband facilities. Rather, this "opening" up is also a process of orientating and ushering users into "preferred" choices and associated profiling. Most of us have experienced the slightly disorientating – but undeniably useful – profiling of Amazon books where one goes in as a personalized/ customized consumer. Unlike the simultaneous anonymity and personalization of the ubiquitous "you" in 20th century advertisements, in Amazon, *they* select "other" books that maybe of your interest according to your previous choices. So too has iPod realized the importance of intertextuality in the identity of the consumer, with a service that will download "appropriate" profiled music that *they* believe will interest you according to your history of music downloads. In both examples one is reminded of Tom Cruise's character in *Minority Report*, in which the advertisements no longer metaphorically interpellate consumers but now *literally* call the individual's name. This example is indicative of the popular dystopian view of customization based on a trickle down, industry-enforced scenario commonly articulated as "profiling". However, it is important to realize that many forms of customization are at play, not just the vertical imposition (Frankfurt School) model. Whilst "profiling" analysis and the associated corporate surveillance of individuals is an important area for critique and analysis (Lyon, 1994),

this paper is concerned with forms of micro-customization whereby users – despite the industry push towards profiling – become active producers subject to forces of locality.

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[3] As Taylor and Harper (2003) noted in their study of youth usage of mobile phones, the practices of phone sharing and text messaging create a level of reciprocity best understood as an extension of gift-giving practices. So too, Kyongwon Yoon (2003), in his study of youth usage in Seoul, observes that mobile telephonic practices act as a form of gift-giving whereby traditional Korean relationships – as symbolized by the notion/ noun of Cheong (an expression used to denote affective/ attached relationships between people) – are re-enacted in order for users to share feelings of intimacy. Both studies convincingly argue that mobile telephony is not eroding tradition and sociality in the face of rampant individuality.

Moreover, gift-giving evokes gestures of intimacy and affect experienced in modes of co-presence of mobile telephony. However, the contradictory logic of mobile telephony and its playing party to (not the cause of) particular everyday rituals and what Ling (2004) dubs as 'softening micro-coordination' (i.e. suspending time by calling so one is never being late but always stretching time) means that often individuals are, by the very obligatory nature of gift-giving, having to participant in such practices whether they want to or not.

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[4] Critics such as Zygmunt Bauman have argued that such industries are capitalizing on the fact that our heavily technological mediated environment has caused a fracture between 'virtual proximity' and 'actual contact' (2003). Although such an argument negates the long history of co-presence and telepresence that Milne and Urry acknowledge. This leads us to a politics of intimacy that is, as Bauman himself notes, articulated through the ambivalent condition of modernity in forming networks, instead of relationships, founded on *liquid love*. Whilst Bauman's argument is certainly as seductive as it is reactionary, his liquid love seems to be scented with an underlying romanticism that presupposes that intimacy was once not mediated.

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[5] An interesting side note to the cultural specificity of light touches is the case of Germany, where the mobile phone is called "handy", and voice calling far outweighs texting. According to Stephanie Broege this is due to the incompatibility of German with translation into conventional SMS abbreviations. See Broege's 'CU in IM: The Instant Messaging Generation', 2004.

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[6] Australia has many service providers in addition to the aforementioned, such as AAPT and Virgin mobile to name but a few. For details on the various providers see: https://toolkit.gov.au/mobile.csp.html

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[7] Telstra was set to adopt the Black Berry phone – successful in UK and US markets – when the deal subsequently fell through. Now Telstra has signed with NTT DoCoMo to take up i-mode; six years after it was implemented in Japan in 1999. According to Telstra press releases, it is believed that 1 in 20 Australians will have i-mode in the next 3 years. Already established i-mode content service providers include Optus zoo and Vodafone Live. In Optus's zoo arcade we are greeted with a space not unlike a department store where commodities (such as ring tones and games) can be bought to create a co-present identity between the user in the actual and net/ virtual spaces. According to Fergusson, for 3G technologies to take off in Australia, the carriers and device manufacturers need to consider niche applications for corresponding niche demographics. In other words, the manufacturers need to identify the specific forms of SSM/ MMS genres applicable to particular demographics and attendant forms of cultural capital.

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[8] Legion Interactive is a mobile aggregator that has been instrumental in oiling the intertextuality of Interactive TV and SMS voting for such programs as *Big Brother* and *Australian Idol* whereby democracy is denoted by consumers – rather than citizens – having to pay (per SMS) for the right to vote. Whilst Watson identifies the dominance of female voters (concurrent with the fact the

female consumers do use more regularly SMS) he seems mystified as to why... apart from perpetuating the disproved stereotype that females shop and males don't.

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[9] This is, in part, due to the lack of diversity in mobile games. The stereotype of males being gamers is being dismantled, particularly in places of 3G technologies such as South Korean and Japan. With video games such as Will Wright's *The Sims* and mobile games such as Kukan's *Miki* and *Jojo*, the female market is starting to be addressed. It is a market full of potential – as is the case in Japan whereby some argue that the yen is pretty much controlled by the fashions/ whims of the high school girl as noted by 'high-school girl pager revolution' (Ito et al., 2005). In Japan there has been much research into the ways in which the uptake of mobile technologies – from the pager, PHS to *keitai* (mobile phone) – by female users has continued to subvert industry expectations. Japan provides a great example of how mobile technologies are 'user-driven'; the applications that are adopted or fail (dubbed 'discontinuous innovation') are subject to the specific cultural factors at play.

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[10] In choosing to limit this sample to the University of Melbourne, this study is marked by particular forms of cultural capital that, in turn, inform the experiences and relationships to mobile phones. In particular, as a demographic encompassing all tertiary users, there were certain forms of class that were not explored. Factors such as class produce specific practices that have been noted in studies of the rise of mobile consumption from yuppies to youth cultures (Katz and Aakhus, 2002; Agar, 2003). However, for the practicalities of this sample survey a particular demographic was limited (i.e. cultural capital) in order to address issues such as gender. With half the respondents being male and the other half being female, encompassing a broad cross-section of age, occupation (current and ex-students, lecturers, administrators) and ethnicity (40 per cent of the respondents came from non-English speaking backgrounds or were not born in Australia), this study found gender to be a determining factor in specific customizing practices from mobile phone fashioning (adorning inside and outside the phone with particular face-plate, ring tones, screen savers) to performativity (from public etiquette to SMS/ MMS forms of textuality and visuality). Whilst age could be noted as a factor – the younger respondents were more active and articulate in their modes of customizing – gender was the dominating distinguishing factor. The notion of young users being 'pioneers' was not necessarily the case; rather, as an indicator of one's lifestyle, innovative use of mobile phone was often found to be associated with users with 'young' attitudes (not necessarily young age-wise) and relatively high disposable income levels.

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[11] This is, of course, a contentious argument but the point being made is that much of the 'micro-coordination' of meeting up with friends spontaneously or the fleeting postcard-like texts that inject a type of co-present intimacy is missed. I remember getting a mobile phone only a couple of years ago – I resisted for so long to be different – and realizing just how many possible connections I was missing when I didn't have a mobile. *Ignorance is bliss* (and encased in a ring tone free silence whereby one is ignorant to how much fun one's friends are really having!)

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[12] With the burgeoning of new industries such as mobile games (the video games revenue has already outstripped the film industry revenue), there is also a growing number of women producers as well as initiatives to actively promote women in the industry (as both users and producers) such as the *women in games* mentorship.Studies in the UK and US have noted many mobile phone users are completely unaware of the games available on their devices.

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