



**MINISTERIAL ADVISORY GROUP**  
FOR ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

# PLACE SOFTWARE

## What is it?

The computer industry borrowed our word Architecture so I borrowed some of theirs

**HARDWARE** = buildings, streets, furniture

**SOFTWARE** = how places are used

**HACKING** = discovering how things work

**WHAT'S THIS?**



**WHAT DOES IT SAY?**





**place software**

# NOW YOU KNOW THE LANGUAGE



**architects**

# DESIGN SKILLS NEEDED



architects



Irish architects

# CATHEDRAL QUARTER





# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



**PEOPLE DESIGNED SOME  
PLACE SOFTWARE**



**CULTURE  
NIGHT  
BELFAST**

# SOFTWARE

If the Project for Public Spaces is right and 80% of the success of a place is due to its management (software) then why do intelligent clients commission designers to spend most of their resources on hardware?

This didn't happen in the fast growing computer industry. Place software is not yet benefiting from design input – it is managerial and needs design.

# SOFTWARE DESIGN

- Architects are well placed to research
- Designers are natural experimenters
- The crucial briefing stages need design input which is often commissioned too late.....
- Clients, particularly public clients, who do not include the design of built environment software in the brief will waste money and produce failures – I can show you some

# COMPATIBILITY

- Hardware and Software have to be compatible
- Before selecting a device we need to know whether it will run the software
- Before designing a place, building or space we need to know the software it is to support
- Public space software is not developed and recorded enough to inform design – we need to do those experiments

# HACKING

Hacking has a bad name.

Hacking, however, is a neutral term – it means finding out how things work – or don't work.

Knowing how things work means we can destroy, repair or just leave them alone if they are working well.

Hacking gives us choices.

# HACKING (POLITELY)

- Hacking (politely) into the systems of clients and citizens discovers how they are working now, how they can change and what they need – not what they think they need.
- Architects acknowledge that research is needed but it is often omitted from the brief because clients regard designers as “experts” and don’t want to pay “extra” for research

# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Rather than solving problems, Appreciative Inquiry spots talents and sparks creativity.

Here are some stills from a You Tube video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwGNZ63hi5k>



Invested in  
Hotel Renovation

Kept  
Original Staff



# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES: PROBLEM SOLVING?



# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY



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# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES: CIVIC STEWARDSHIP

**Civic** is about people and place

**Stewardship** is active caring

# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES:

## CIVIC STEWARDSHIP

### Action Learning

learning by doing

### Connecting

the obvious and the unexpected

### Aligning

policies to get things done

# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES: CIVIC STEWARDSHIP

## Local communities

People who live and work here

## Communities of interest

Passionate communities of interest & expertise (sports, arts, hobbies, businesses, beliefs)



# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES: TELL US – WHAT’S ON?





# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES: AND TELL US – ON-LINE



The image shows a Twitter profile card for 'Ballymena Blackboard'. The profile picture is a black square with the text 'ballymena blackboard' in white. The header features the name 'Ballymena Blackboard' and the handle '@BmenaBlackboard'. The bio reads 'All the latest info on events in the Ballymena area!! #bboard Ballymena'. The card displays 95 tweets, 172 following, and 244 followers. A 'Follow' button is visible in the bottom right corner. The background of the profile picture area is a chalkboard with handwritten text: '#bboard Ballymena' on the left, '#bboard Blackboard' on the right, and 'All the latest info on events in the Ballymena area!' at the bottom left. A Twitter bird icon and the text 'follow us @BmenaBlackboard' are also visible on the right side of the chalkboard background.

#bboard  
Ballymena

#bboard  
Blackboard

**Ballymena Blackboard**  
@BmenaBlackboard

All the latest info on events in the Ballymena area!! #bboard  
Ballymena

95 TWEETS    172 FOLLOWING    244 FOLLOWERS

 **Follow**

# PLACE SOFTWARE DESIGN TECHNIQUES: EVALUATION

Green Book 2011

- it's about activities – not just projects
- greatest benefits to society
- other approaches (include radical options)
- vary the time and scale of activities
- change capital and recurrent expenditure
- consult early
- carry out pilot studies and
- build in flexibility from the start



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