Enabling convergences: smarter communities in public phigital spaces
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Today an important challenge is opening: designing public spaces by taking into account the augmented meaning carried by new digital citizen and users. The huge revolution that Internet and open data made in the communication, affected naturally also the city and the way we interact with it and in it. The true revolution of the smart city is to create smart citizens, inhabitants able to live the new communication system and digital information. Social networks make easier the participation and the communication from the bottom and cities are becoming new media and new forms of Internet where people are connected in a global network of individuals living the same public space. Therefore it is necessary to design new urban models with technologies.

The urban and social change is very clear in the public space, as the place where there is the community experience's sharing, where people have the most important role according to the free communication and the way they can interact with the city and the urban characters.
People, through new technologies and new media 2.0, gain the power and are not passive actors of the new system, but the driver and the main characters of the new public space's experience.

The usual material conception of the space has to be improved with a new dimension: digital communities have growing and becoming "place-maker". Creativity is the development driver of the smart city spaces. The space is becoming more and more an hybrid, where virtual and real are two mixed layers, where it is no more important the two aspects separately, but the boundary between them and the way they interact.
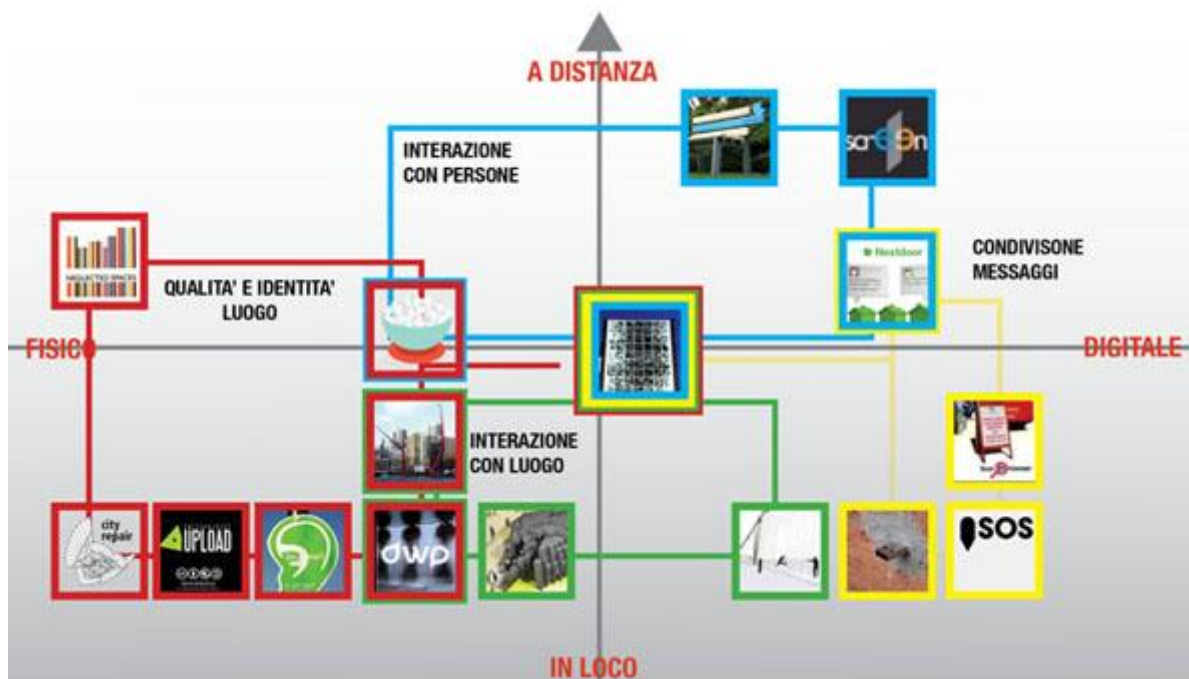
The general aim of the thesis is to open a global reflection on the new model of public space proposed: hybrid, active, participated, in a single word: _phigital_. _Phigital_ is a neologism used to define the new value of the public space, where the convergence between the digital and the physical dimensions modify their importance reciprocally.

The convergence is conceived as a strategy aimed to "inter-activate" people through technology, triggering new relational models and networks that make communities smarter and more conscious of the city where they live in order to make it an optimal habitat giving it back its lost value and meaning.

Firstly, the research finds its general context in writings of Castells, Mitchell, Mc Quire, Meyrowitz. Then, it goes ahead analysing and trying a classification of social media as the contemporary digital public space, and deepening the diffusion of wireless as a tool for the physical space's hybridization.

Throughout the analysis of some of experiences held in the world and their classification on a scale based on interaction's level, boundary between physical and digital and dimension of the affected community, the thesis proposes the new concept: the *phigital* space starting from its constitutive elements as people, relations, interaction, proximity, appropriation.
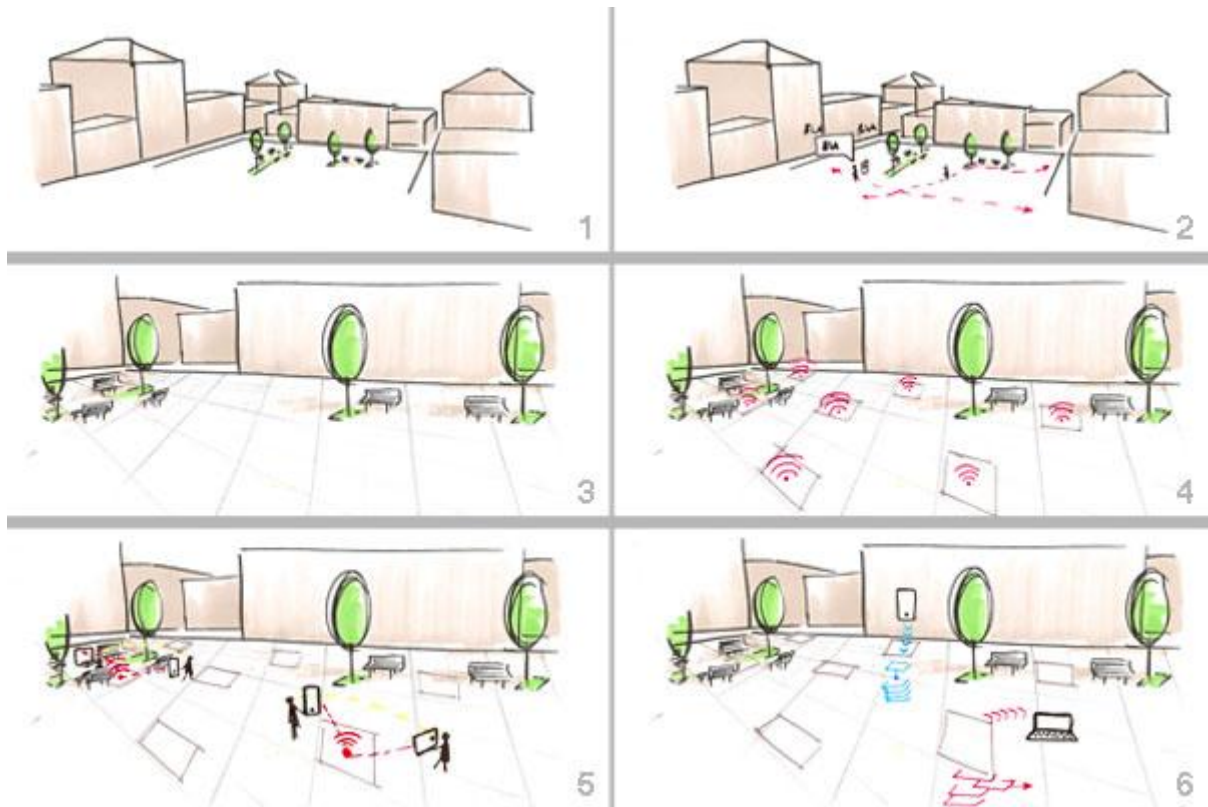

Classification of some case studies on a dual scale based on:
- *kind of interaction: in loco/away*
- *relation between physical and digital.*
The results are four big families: two related to the place, two to people

The final chapter proposes a design strategy, but not the only one possible, based on the activation of those contemporary public spaces that are meaningless and senseless, through the equipment of free access to Internet, and not only.

Storyboard of the proposed planning strategy

The provided digital infrastructure, integrated in physical elements, creates an urban space that collects and elaborates contents from and for users, feelings, desires and contributes to the construction of the history of the city, promoting a sense of community and an increase of the knowledge system.

Abandoned and underused space: through the proposed phigital infrastructure, it collects information, desires and social practices indirectly, allowing future efficient and responsive planning. The platform works also as an archive of people profiles, assuring their presence in that place in a precise moment

The result is a hybrid public space, even a network of micro-public spaces that takes advantage of telematics relations' space as an opportunity for a more participated design process of cities and places where people feels comfortable and part of local community: a place to share, as in a social network.

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