

Title: Digitally disabled; exploring how digital technology can alter constructions of disability.

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This thesis analyses the role of location-based media and video games in constructions of disability. Disablism is outlined as a socio-cultural process that marginalises people with physical impairments and compounds issues of accessibility. The digital applications and the paratextual issues surrounding them are explored for their ability to enable members of the disabled community to resist normative notions of the built environment.

Affect theory is used throughout this thesis so as to frame how experiences of disability are subject to change. Patricia Clough describes affect as a way of measuring how the bodily capacities of a socio-cultural group rise and fall, of how their ability to take meaningful action in their society and to produce change is influenced by external forces. It is the purpose of this thesis is to explicate how the use of digital media by the disabled community increases or decreases their ability to affect issues of spatial inequality.

This thesis finds that while the location-based media and video-games discussed here have the potential to increase bodily capacities, they are limited by issues such as the structuring of user-generated content, industry commodification and disablist notions that pervade the applications. Further study in the area should focus on the digital content produced by the disabled community in order to better understand the nuances of how they affect constructions of disability.