

Augmented Life in the Public Sphere: A Case Study of Google Glass, Google Cardboard, and Google Now

Student: James O'Sullivan

Student I.D.: 13310894

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Glenn Strong

Abstract

This thesis will endeavour to answer the question of how the public sphere interacts and limits technological advancement and how it has shaped future products similar to Google Glass, Google Cardboard and Google Now. More specifically, this thesis aims to examine how the public sphere has influenced and limited Google. With Glass eventually being relinquished as a failed project, how has Cardboard proved that the private sphere is best suited to advanced technologies, and how does the public sphere continue to conflict with Google Now?

What, in a larger context, does this analysis expose? It exhibits the sociologically structured phenomenon of the public sphere, how it applies to the future of technological advancement, and points of contention between the public sphere and technology that must be resolved. Furthermore, it establishes a gulf in reasoning in the development of technology, often eschewing utility in favour of unrealistic perceived necessities of the public, while concurrently being limited by the technology available. The public sphere represents a structure of the subconscious of a unified mass and therefore establishes a formulaic approach to events that are seen as circumstantial.

A quantitative study, for the purposes of this thesis would result in enormous amounts of data, far beyond the scope of the question at hand. For this reason, a qualitative study of the public sphere's impact on Google Glass, Cardboard, and Now will be performed. Using a framework developed from the literature review, four key elements will be applied to analyse the question at hand: collectivity and exclusion; scandal; privacy; and publicity.