

Wifi Camera Obscura

"Wi-Fi (or wifi) is a set of product compatibility standards for wireless local area networks (WLAN) based on the IEEE 802.11 specifications... Wi-Fi was intended to be used for mobile devices and LANs, but is now often used for Internet access. It enables a person with a wireless-enabled computer or personal digital assistant (PDA) to connect to the Internet when in proximity of an access point." — definition from Wikipedia.org

The camera obscura, just like a large pinhole camera, is a dark room that has one wall punctured by a small hole. Light comes through the hole and projects an inverted image of the exterior scene against the opposite wall.

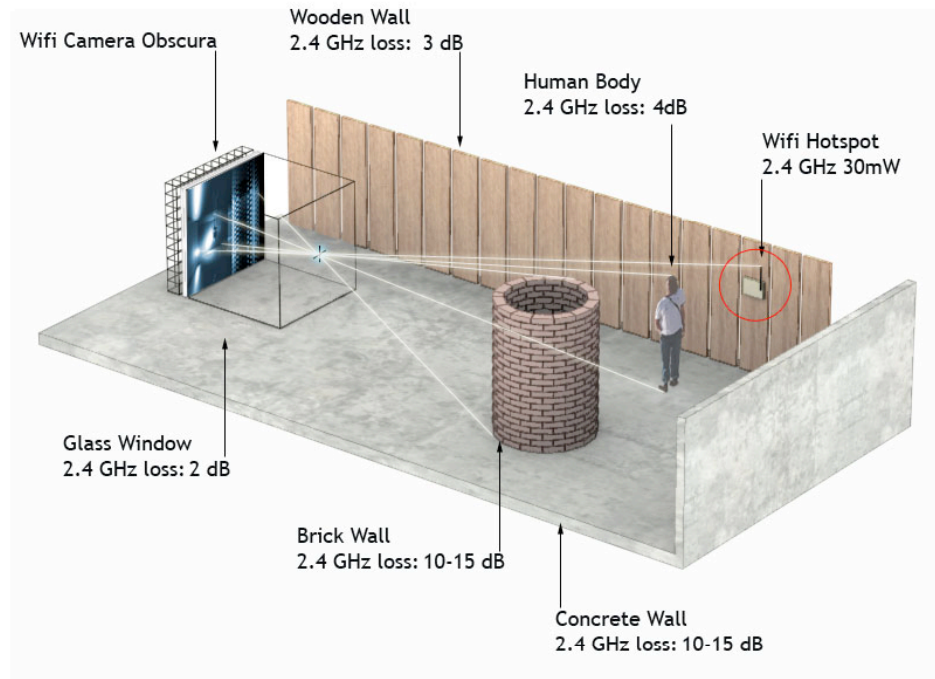
In the age of "enlightenment", electromagnetic waves that we knew as "visible light" formed our most ubiquitous medium and was the medium of choice both in "recording" and in "representing". Today, however, we find that increasingly we are creating and responding to non-visual electromagnetic fields: those emanating from our devices and environments. What might a camera obscura for our age look like? What sort of images might it capture? How might it reveal the obscure relationship that we have to our data environments?

Wifi Camera Obscura will reveal the electromagnetic space of our devices and the shadows that we create within such spaces, in particular our wifi networks which are increasingly found in coffee shops, offices and homes throughout cities of the developed world. We will take realtime "photos" of wifi space...

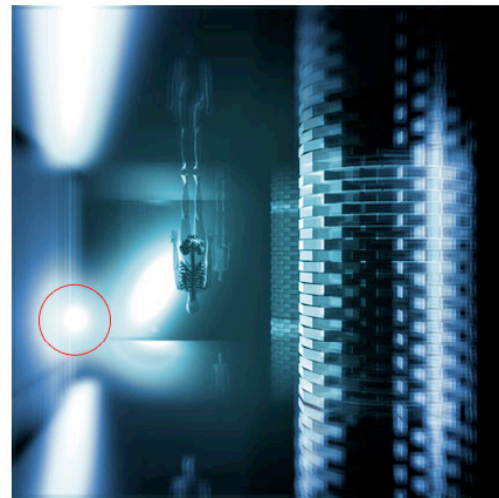
One of the most important intentions of the project is to develop a 21st century notion of the "picturesque", which encompasses the space of our electromagnetic data bodies. As such, determining where we point our "wifi camera" (which, in its X-ray connotations has various intriguing privacy implications) is as important as determining how to construct it.

Wifi camera obscura Concept Illustration

2.4 GHz (Wifi) Path Loss data source: Airespace Inc 2005



Camera Obscura image using visible light



Camera Obscura image using Wifi radiowaves

BIOS

Usman Haque has created responsive environments, interactive installations, digital interface devices and choreographed performances. His skills include the design of both physical spaces and the software and systems that bring them to life. He has been an invited researcher at the Interaction Design Institute Ivrea, Italy, artist-in-residence at the International Academy of Media Arts and Sciences, Japan and has also worked in USA, UK and Malaysia. As well as directing the work of Haque Design + Research (www.haque.co.uk) he was until 2005 a teacher in the Interactive Architecture Workshop at the Bartlett School of Architecture, London.

Bengt Sjöln, born in Sweden (1972), is a self-taught software architect interested in technology for visual manifestations and sound and the interaction between man and machine, but also in the knowledge and technology for computation. Technology for making games has for long been pushing the limits of what you can do with the machine and pushing those limits was the driving force but now the challenge is making the

better system with the smarter design and by standing on the shoulder of giants, avoiding to re-invent what is already done if possible, while at the same time refusing to accept that anything is impossible (even though things might be slightly impractical or not commercially viable.) Doing a boring thing once is once too many, and a risk of error, and therefore automation is one key to success strongly advocated.

Adam Somlai-Fischer (Szabolcs) 1976 Budapest), founding partner of Aether Architecture (www.aether.hu), specializes in designing interactive architectural projects, information spaces, mediating technologies. His work has been exhibited internationally both at architectural and artistic contexts, including ISEA festivals and the Venice Biennale of Architecture; published in design magazines and receives regular posts at leading design blogs. Graduated from the Architecture + Urban Research Laboratory, KTH, Stockholm, Adam has been teaching at the Architecture and Media technology departments at KTH, working as a guest researcher at the Smart Studio, Interactive Institute in Stockholm and at MOKK, Media Research Centre at the Department of Sociology and Communications, BME, Budapest.