

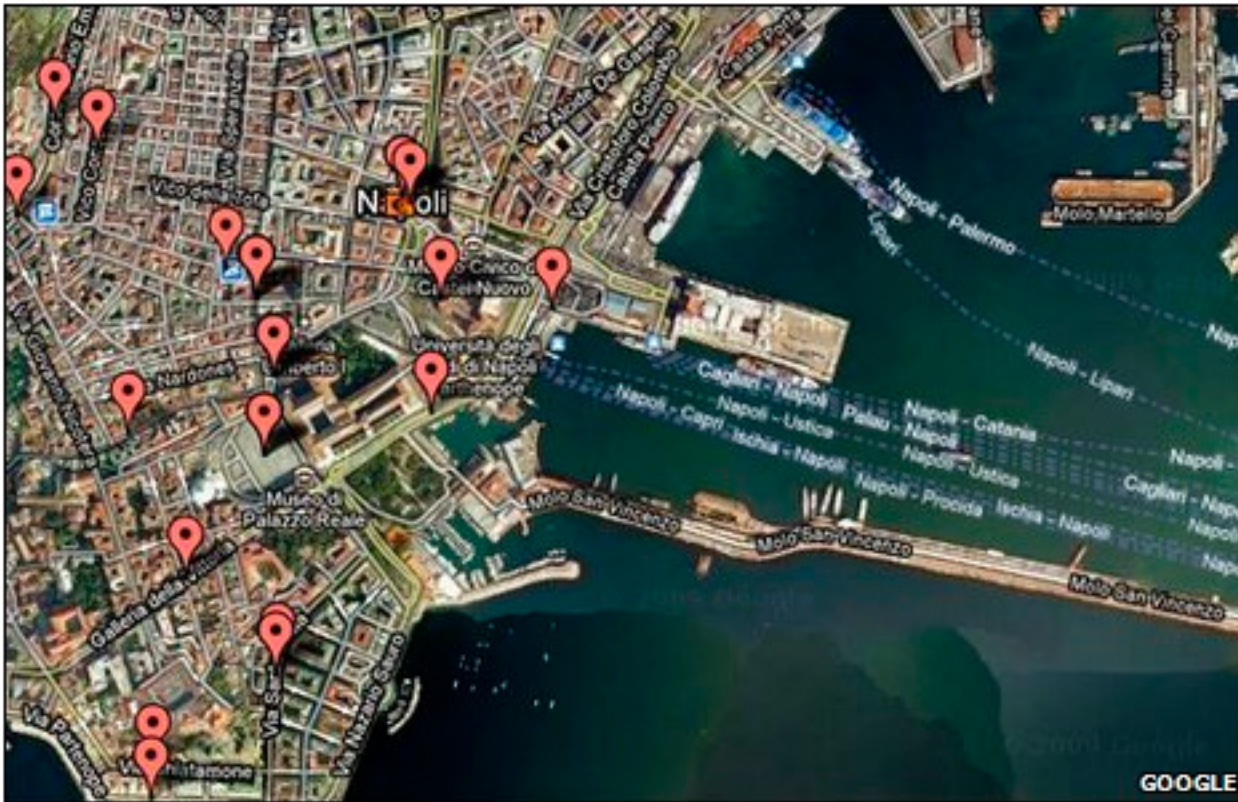


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## Naples' online 'ethical' city



Citizens of Partenope can track and share news by plotting locations on this map

### DIGITAL PLANET

BBC World Service

**Welcome to Naples, a crime-free utopia of moral and ethical values.**

Sound unlikely?

One fledgling online community is hoping to channel their city's ancient roots to create just that.

The people of Partenope City - named after Naples' historical name - only cross at pedestrian crossings, park their cars without blocking people in and never, ever, jump a red light.

These are just some of the values the site's founder, 35-year-old Claudio Agrelli, believes have been forgotten in the 'real' city.

"I wanted to use technology to re-found the old city, but people it with real people, and base my city on ethical values where people respect the rules." he said.

The community currently sits at around 2,000 - a fraction of the real-life population of just under a million - but is steadily growing.

The site produces a daily online newspaper bringing together local news and views from the online community.

Utilising geo-tagging technology, users - or citizens - have populated Google Maps with blog posts and pieces of news from specific locations in Naples.

### Town criers

By far the most important feature, says Mr Agrelli, is the virtual town hall.

"It's a web forum to discuss things which they are passionate about," he said.

"It's as though they change their citizenship and are taking part in a social responsibility project.

"What we hope is through our discussion boards and social networking, we will get the citizens to propose projects, laws and initiatives.

"These will then be voted on by other citizens.

"Once we've taken the temperature of our community, we will put these proposals to the real authorities to try and get things changed in our city."

### Citizens with benefits

The next big phase of Partenope City is expanding its influence in the real world.

The first steps towards this have already been taken with Partenope members being issued with an identity card which they can use to gain benefits in Naples.

"It's a bit different from a loyalty card, as it's not based on economic advantages, but on moral and ethical codes.

"[It] enables all our shopkeepers, who've signed up to our ethical rules, to recognise a Partenopian citizen when they enter their shops.

"Depending on which shop you go in, the shop can set up different types of welcome.

"They could offer a citizen a cup of coffee or a discount if they buy in their shop."

The shops have rules of their own to adhere to - namely pledging to pay the correct amounts of tax, and "not cheating people".

For now, Mr Agrelli is concentrating on increasing the site's user base.

"Today we have over 2,000 citizens, but we hope to keep expanding because it's a grassroots movement.

"It crosses political, class and economic boundaries through the web."

“ We will put these proposals to the real authorities to try and get things changed in our city ”

Claudio Agrelli

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