ABOUT CAMRA   **THE RESEARCH**

SEARCH

Contact Us

CAMRA

cultural asset mapping
in regional Australia

Città di Partenope: comunità virtuosa

Posted on: Sun, 2010-04-11 14:31
Posted by: Nick Keys

Mapping a virtual Naples – Partenope – that reflects but is not identical to it, and then hoping to make changes in the real world based on activities that happen in the virtual world.

There's a fascinating cultural mapping project going on in Naples, or more correctly, *over* Naples. It's a virtual city called Partenope – a city that is ethical, clean, considerate and crime-free – with 2,000 online users, or more correctly, *citizens*. The name of the virtual city comes from a legend of Naples, as told by the creator of Partenope, Claudio Agrelli, to the BBC World Service show *Digital Planet*:

"At the moment, we are on the sea front, and just in front of us is Egg Castle. There's a legend about the castle which ties into the foundation of this city, and also with my city, Partenope. The legend goes that there was a queen who buried an Egg under the castle, as long as the egg is safe, so is Naples. It was on the same Island in the middle of the Gulf of Naples that the Greeks founded their city, Partenope. And from that the name gradually morphed into Neo-Opolis, the *New City*, and then Naples. It was a powerful city commercially, and was the main trading post for most of the Mediterranean. So I took my inspiration from that first City here in Naples to create my virtual city, Partenope in 2008. I wanted to use technology to re-found that old city, but people it with real people, and base my city on ethical values, where people respect the rules."

This virtual city project has a rich sense of the temporal layering. Claudio Agrelli's Partenope utilises the virtual to superimpose the past (to re-found the old city) onto the present (Naples) to try to bring change for the future (the hope of a city run on ethical values). Claudio again:

"Technology was fundamental to us. We managed to create our city using the web. We have people in 106 countries. We use technologies like Geo-tagging, so you can fly over Partenope. I think that makes the city more real. You can fly over the map over of Naples and as you scroll over a place that has significance for our city, you might see links to the blogs of our citizens, telling you about that monument, place or piece of news. We also mark our shops on the map, and other areas which we feel belong to our way of envisioning the city. We've also got a system on our site that will be the first E-democracy system in our region. What we hope is that through our discussion boards and forums, we will get citizens to propose projects, laws and initiatives. These will then be voted on by the other citizens and once we've taken the temperature of our community, we will take these proposals to the real authorities to try and get things changed in our city. Our website acts as a kind of virtual Town Hall, our citizens can unite through this, we have a daily newspaper and a Town Square, which is a web forum for our citizens to discuss things which they are passionate about. We also have a button where citizens can flag up problems and send them to Newspapers and media organizations. We are of course on You Tube, Facebook and Twitter, but what we really care about is our virtual city's Town Hall. Because we have a kind of registry where all our citizens sign up, and it's as though they change their citizenship and are taking part in a social responsibility project."

Claudio Agrelli says in the above quote *"our shops"*, which refers to certain shops that have signed on the vision of his virtual city. At these shops citizens of Partenope are given discounts by showing their citizen I.D. cards. There are radio frequencies in the I.D. cards so shop owners know a Partenopian when they come into the shop. *"It's different from a Loyalty card. It's not based on economic advantages but on moral and ethical codes"* says Claudio. *"Partenopians can recognise each other, stick within the code of the rules, and use only those shops which are signed onto the project."*

You can visit the city of Patrenope if you click here.

Nick Keys's blog   *Login* to post comments   *37 reads*