

Session: **Sport facility management**

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**Sport facilities as a broadcast studio for human extensibility? Geographic information system diagrams of a high and low identified fan**

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**Background**

The professionalized sport facility produces contests through which people seek to satiate their physical, social, and entertainment needs (Friedman & Silk, 2005; Seifried & Shonk, 2009). Sport organizations able to embrace communication innovations will likely capture the greatest audience and capitalize the most financially. For instance, communication technology can delocalize sport to increase fan awareness, improve the number of highly-identified sport fans, and create a fan nation (Foster & Hyatt, 2008). A fan nation includes fans not from host cities and who utilize an imagined cohesiveness they share with others through the use of myths, symbols and rituals (Foster & Hyatt, 2008). As an example, Manchester United (English Premier League) is the most valuable sport organization at \$1.8 billion (U.S.) because they enjoy a highly committed fan nation of over 50 million (Foster & Hyatt, 2008). Fan nations are frequently created through telecommunication networks because individuals can live and interact with others through organizing/creating a new reality from the incredible amount of multidirectional and instantaneous sensory information available (Yu & Shaw, 2008). This phenomenon is better known as extensibility or the use of communication technology to help individuals and/or institutions imbue their presence to others outside their physical location (Adams, 2005; Janelle & Gillespie, 2004).

Seifried and Shonk (2009) predicted sport organizations can and will capitalize upon this phenomenon by embracing newer telecommunication structures within their facilities because they can help motivate highly-identified fans to change their spatial consciousness. Essentially, the importance of the event, combined with sensory information, attracts them to participate in a higher level of interaction. This concept has not been studied yet, although evidence of this phenomenon exists from sport scholars who indicated highly-identified fans generally spend more time and money than lower identified fans (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006); and others who predicted improvements in virtual mobility will increase the willingness of these people to engage in virtual locations and devote more time toward that leisure pursuit (Lyons & Urry, 2005; Mokhtarian, 2003).

**Objectives/Methods**

This exploratory investigation attempted to understand how professionalized sport facilities embrace communication technology to help remote spectators become extensible agents. The space-time path of both a high and low identified fan during an American college football game of national significance was tracked through the creation of a three-dimensional Geographic

Information System (GIS) based model. The GIS-based diagrams were established with the help of data from space-time diaries, video camera, and participant interviews. Space-time diaries, popular in transport research and spatial/human geography, reveal the chronological and comprehensive record of a person's activities and contribute to the reliability and validity of studies because they overcome data acquisition quality issues possibly connected to survey instruments. (Bonke, 2005; Harvey, 2003). Crosbie (2006) promoted the idea of combining recording devices and interviews when possible to triangulate the information recorded in diaries. Together they created the visualization function available from the GIS tool to help study the multiple branches of participants along the space-time continuum noting the simultaneity and disruption of activities.

### Results/Application

Results from the investigation suggest professionalized sport facilities enjoy the space and ability to incorporate highly technical structures within their confines to improve human extensibility, however, people must possess the resources (i.e. time, money, desire, and knowledge) to exploit the technology. In this instance, the subjects utilized high-definition televisions, surround sound, telephones, and the Internet along with their desire to engage in the activity to change spatial consciousness. To promote the movement of potential fans from simple awareness toward allegiance, organizations need to remain mindful to provide technology that is easy to learn and accessible. Participants indicated increasing accessibility and interaction with team/players and the core product appears as the best method to help increase and maintain fan identification because it is a highly valued commodity by them and others. The sport facility can service this goal by supporting technology within its confines that allows fans to choose specific camera angles, statistical information, and the ability to talk to other people at their discretion at the facility or to others in a remote location. Finally, this presentation will discuss some new technology (e.g., 3D, 360° imaging, holograms, aroma therapy) that professionalized sport facilities will or should likely embrace in the future to improve extensibility for all types of fans and to create, maintain, and/or secure greater fan identification.