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Mapping Social Media Texts as the Basis of Place-Making Process

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Abstract

This paper explores the idea of ‘surface’ as a way to define the new landscape in place-making process. It examines how the new landscape could be generated regarding the virtual space of social media. The idea of ‘surface’ is explored through a case study in Twitter social media by analyzing the visual tracking of position based on specific texts, using Twitonomy database application. In this analysis, we investigate the tweet traffic of people’s tweets, retweets, replies, mentions, and hashtags on specific topics leading to particular position of pinpoints concerning those topics. We trace the spatial distribution of individual texts about particular words. Through spatial mapping of those texts, we could curate the new landscape as a platform that visualizes the spatial network based on texts. Through this process, we could extract various possibilities of place-making in everyday life that becomes intertwined between the real and virtual space.

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1. Understanding the New Landscape in Place-Making Process

The current exploration of place-making process should not be limited to the creation of a physical environment. This paper considers the important inclusion of technology to define the new landscape in innovative way. In particular, it looks into how the new landscape is generated in relation to the virtual space of social media. The new landscape is defined by the idea of surface. The surface does not only attach to land and; it consists of multilayer lines as an interface between the body and the surrounding (Spiller, 1998). With the technology, the surface could be created in a way that may be diverse from the real existence and could be “shaped by the connectivity” among the collective fragments, such as texts in virtual space (Mitchell, 1996).

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The virtual realm is a space that emerge ‘the new presence of the present’ through parallel network (Grosz, 2001). In terms of everyday spaces, the parallel networks intersect particularly among individual users of social media. The networks are everywhere and reflect everyday real events (Mitchell, 2003). The Twitter texts could be “duplicated, recreated, and reconfigured” (Spiller, 1998) in order to generate information and to establish the new types of relationship in virtual space. Therefore, it is possible to explore the parallel network among texts in virtual space and to understand their role in the generating the new landscape in place-making process.

The goal of this research was to explore the creation of the new landscape in virtual space based on social media as a possible approach for place-making process. In particular, the new landscape is developed by the intertextuality-parallel texts, produced in Twitter. In developing the new landscape, it becomes important to investigate the interactions between texts that are linked and created circle of network. It is also necessary to examine the possibility of texts to be connected and related to different practices or to be recreated by itself (Leach & Guallart 2009). The different practices affect the way how it acts for recreating the new landscape in order to generate the networking in another surface. The process of creation of new landscape based on parallel text becomes important in discussing the making of the “other” place in a virtual realm.

2. Finding the New Landscape

This study was conducted through investigation of specific texts of the people’s tweets, retweets, replies, mentions, and hashtags, using Twitonomy database application. This method allows us to identify the particular position and the visual traffic of anyone’s tweet that concern about specific topics. Twitter is a kind of social media that contains microblogging with limited word-140 words of texts that are posted as a tweet. Twitter is also an open and public medium (Hawelka et al., 2014), and thus it makes possible to examine a collective data on particular topic rather than individual behavior. Twitter platform also supports the identification of specific geo-location based on either GPS set in mobile phone or the IP address of a computer. In addition, we take advantage of the hashtag feature in Twitter that makes it possible to find certain texts from all the user’s tweets. Hashtag system is used as tagging prefixed by a #symbol with a particular keyword. The Twitter users could participate in tagging any topics in order to manage the information on Twitter (Chang, 2010).

In order to track certain texts that consist of the hashtag, we use Twitonomy database application, in particular ‘Search Analytic’ function that generate the significant data about the particular keywords. This application could monitor the tweet traffic that concerns about the topic for several days and could illustrate how it has been tweeted recently. The ‘Search Analytic’ function calculated the data returned by Twitter’s search service and usually represented up to 3,000 of the tweets posted in the last 6 to 9 days. For this reason, it is possible to have a dataset that illustrates about the specific texts that are related to the certain hashtag.

To illustrate the process of creating a new landscape, we choose ‘#lombok’ as the keyword to analyze. Lombok is tourist destination in Indonesia. We would like to see the possibility of making Lombok as a world tourism destination in Indonesia beside Bali. We would like to obtain the widespread potential of Lombok in a global world by tracking the data information from Twitter. The data traffic from Twitonomy application could indicate how Lombok could be reached from anywhere in the world and could be a topic of conversation in a virtual realm. The new landscape created from the analysis could establish the new potentiality of Lombok.

In this paper, we present the study of generating the new landscape based on parallel texts that are organized as follows. First, we describe and analyze the dataset of particular vocabulary, ‘#lombok’ based on Twitonomy application using spatial mapping and visual chart to indicate the traffic from the texts in social media. The mapping represents two kinds of visual and interactive mapping; the global mapping based on the location of the users that mentions “#lombok” for several days and the distribution mapping on how the users’ data are circulated in various ways. This mapping establish basis to find a mechanism in generating the new landscape. Next, the mechanism for text distribution based on the spatial network is established. This study offer a creative way in collecting and analyzing data based on database application in order to understand its peculiarities and to combine different data sources to conclude the phenomena we are interested in (Offenhuber & Ratti, 2013).

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