Call for Proposals for a session to be held at the Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society, London, 29 August to 1 September 2017

This session is sponsored by the Geographical Information Science Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society.

Open-source, the Internet of Things, and the democratization of local geographies

Recent developments in open-source hardware and software have meant that that cost of computing power has been reduced and that the coding of software is now accessible to a broader spectrum of academia and the general public. Forty years ago, Tuan (1976) described the concept of topophilia as the study of how the land influences the way one thinks, particularly through the affective bond between people and place. One of the most critical aspects of topophilia is Tuan's use of different (spatially defined) lenses through which the dialectical relationship between affect and land might be interrogated. Thus, for example, Tuan considered the city, the suburb, the countryside, and wilderness areas as all imparting distinct affordances to the mediation of topophilia.

This session is interested in exploring the implications of technologies such as the Raspberry Pi, Arduino, mesh networks, play-based coding environments, as well as cultures of making, for inquiry in to local geographies – be they in terms of micro-climate, intuition and tacit understandings, socio-cultural practices, and suchlike.

For example, how might the same data infrastructures which support 'smart homes' and 'smart campuses' afford geographers more granular insight in to local heat islands and seasonal variations in local micro-climate? How might farmers make use of the self-contained, weatherproof, portable and low-cost open-source sensors in their decision-making with regards their agricultural practices? This session proposes to tell some of these stories, and to start conversations around such implications.

Session organizer:

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Presenters are kindly invited to submit their proposals to the session organizer by the 13th of February 2017. Proposals should minimally comprise the title of the paper, an abstract (of up to 150 words), and full contact details.