Technological Initiatives for Social Empowerment

Design experiments in technology-supported youth participation and local civic engagement

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PhD Thesis Defense

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Sao Paulo, Brazil

26B

motivation

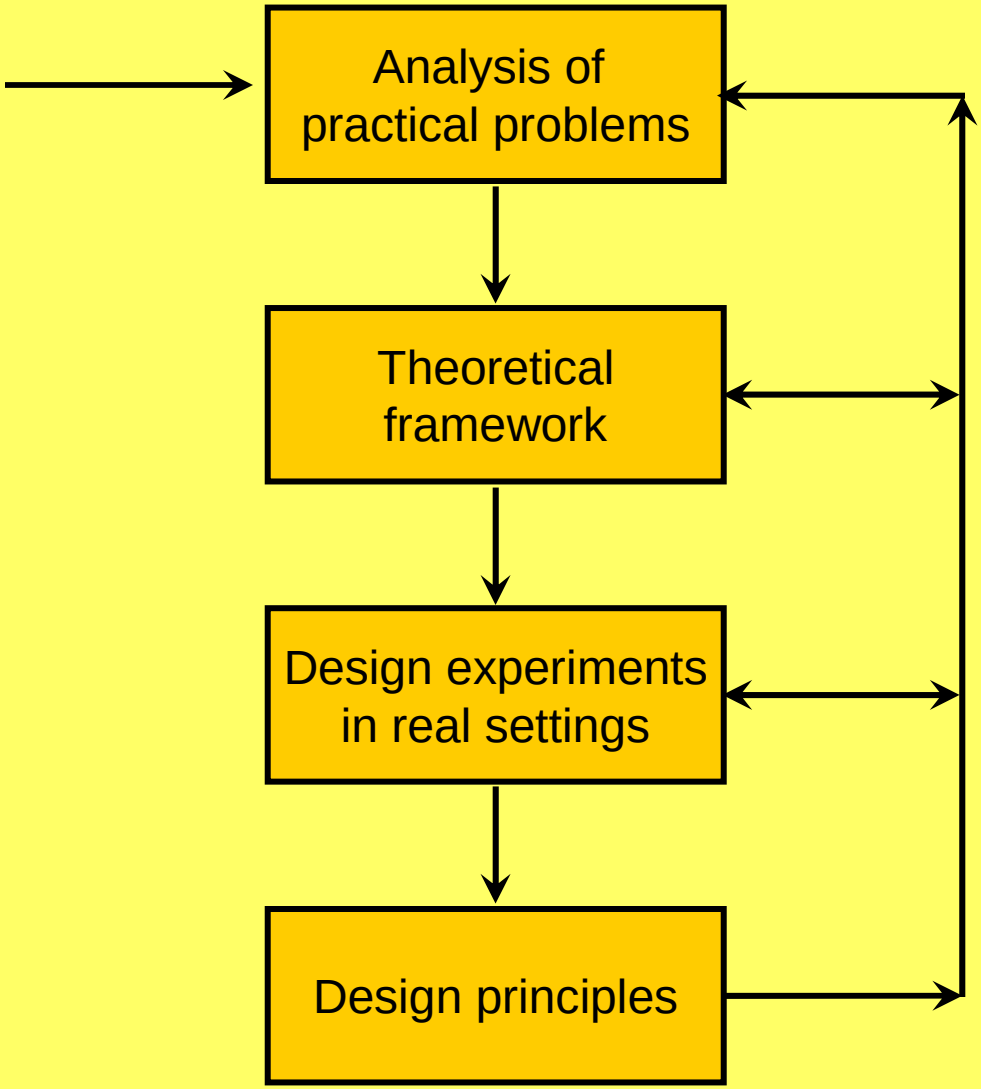
In order to foster democratic and participatory societies, it is important to create innovative learning initiatives in which, from a very young age people are motivated to investigate their communities and do something about matters that affect their lives.

(Hart 1997- Children's Participation: The theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care - pg. 9)

research questions

- What are the main attributes of the learning initiatives that foster youth participation and local civic engagement?
- How can digital technologies support the implementation of those learning initiatives in youth technology centers?
- What attributes should digital technologies have in order to become more suitable for that task?
- What other factors have to be in place, besides the technology, for those initiatives to succeed?

design-based research approach

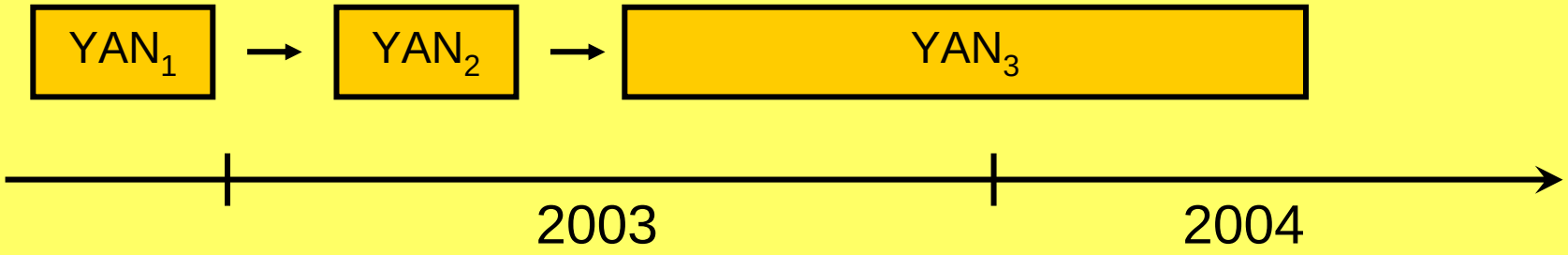


Refinements of problems, solutions and methods

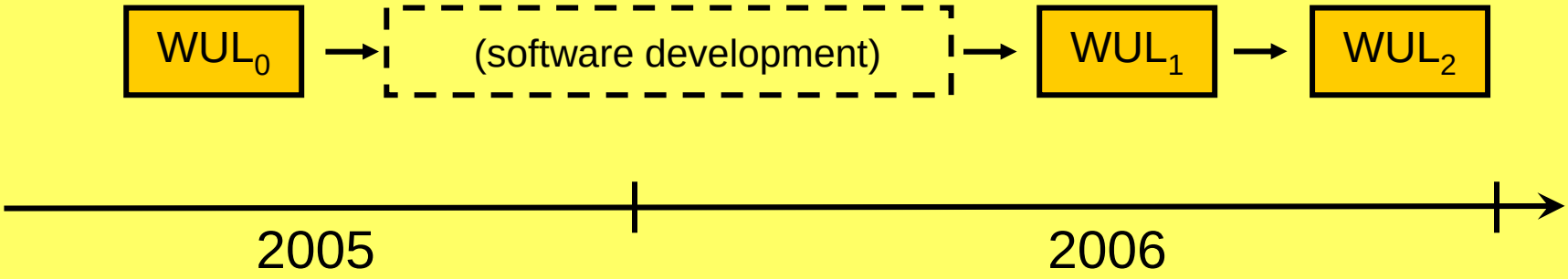
(based on http://projects.coe.uga.edu/dbr/FAQ.html)

design experiments developed during this thesis

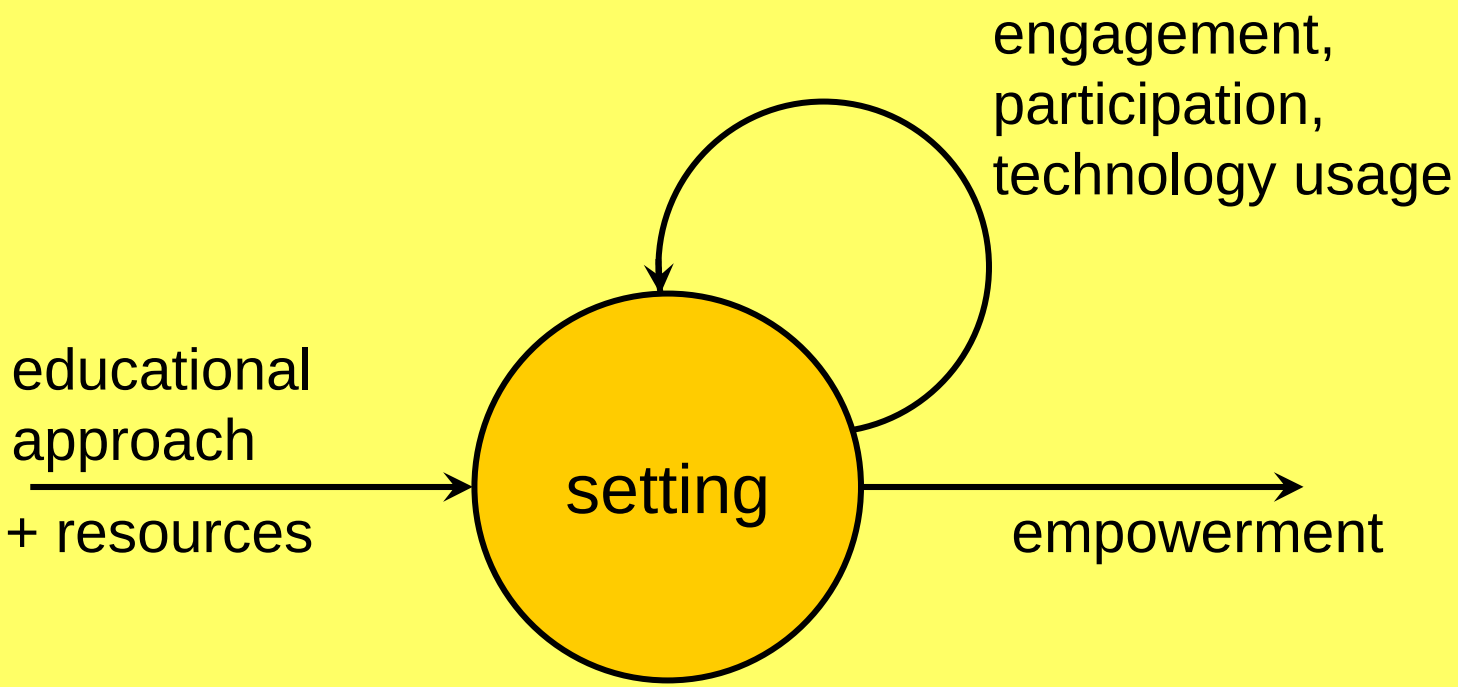
The Young Activists Network (YAN) initiative



The What's Up Lawrence initiative

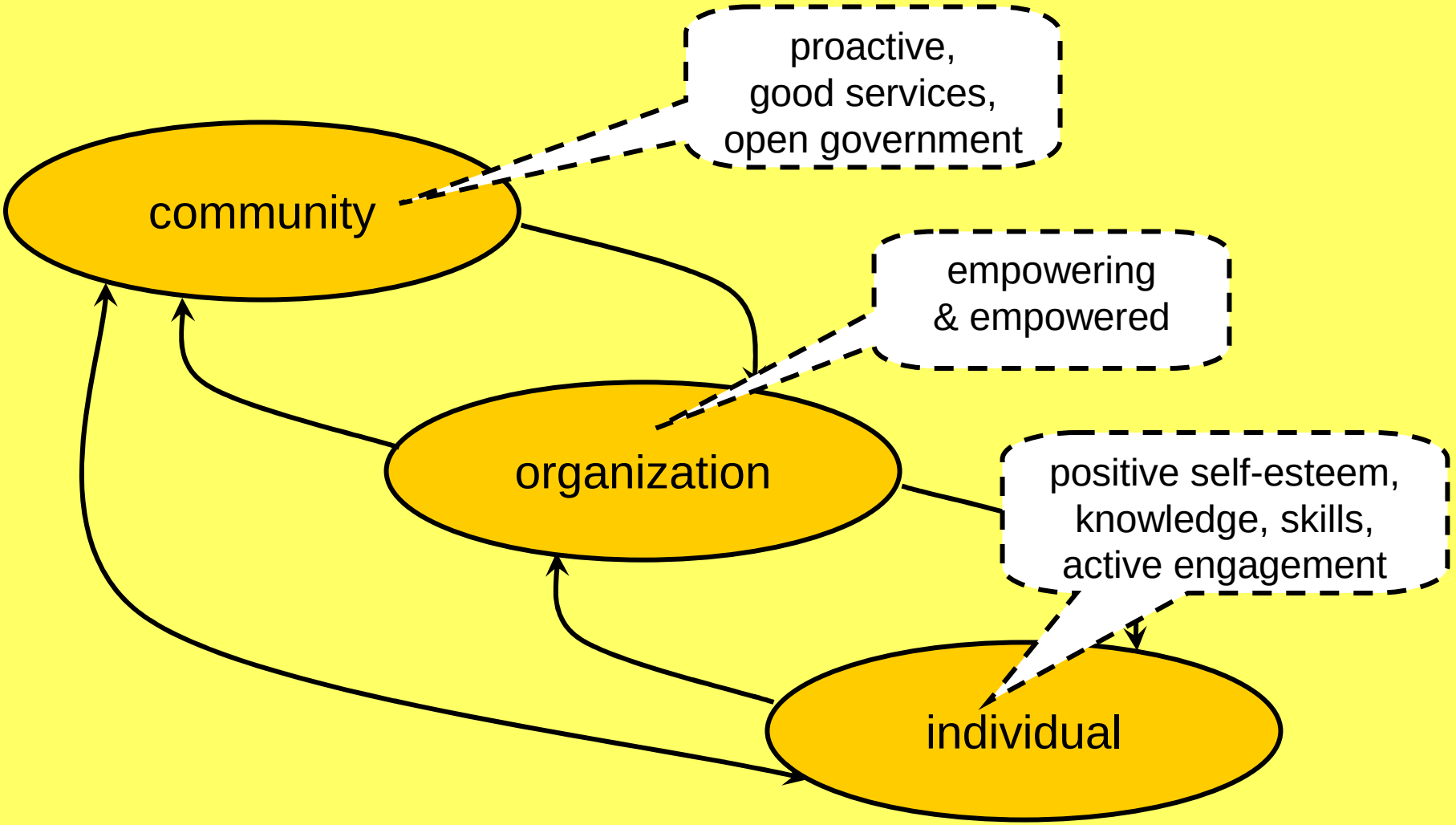


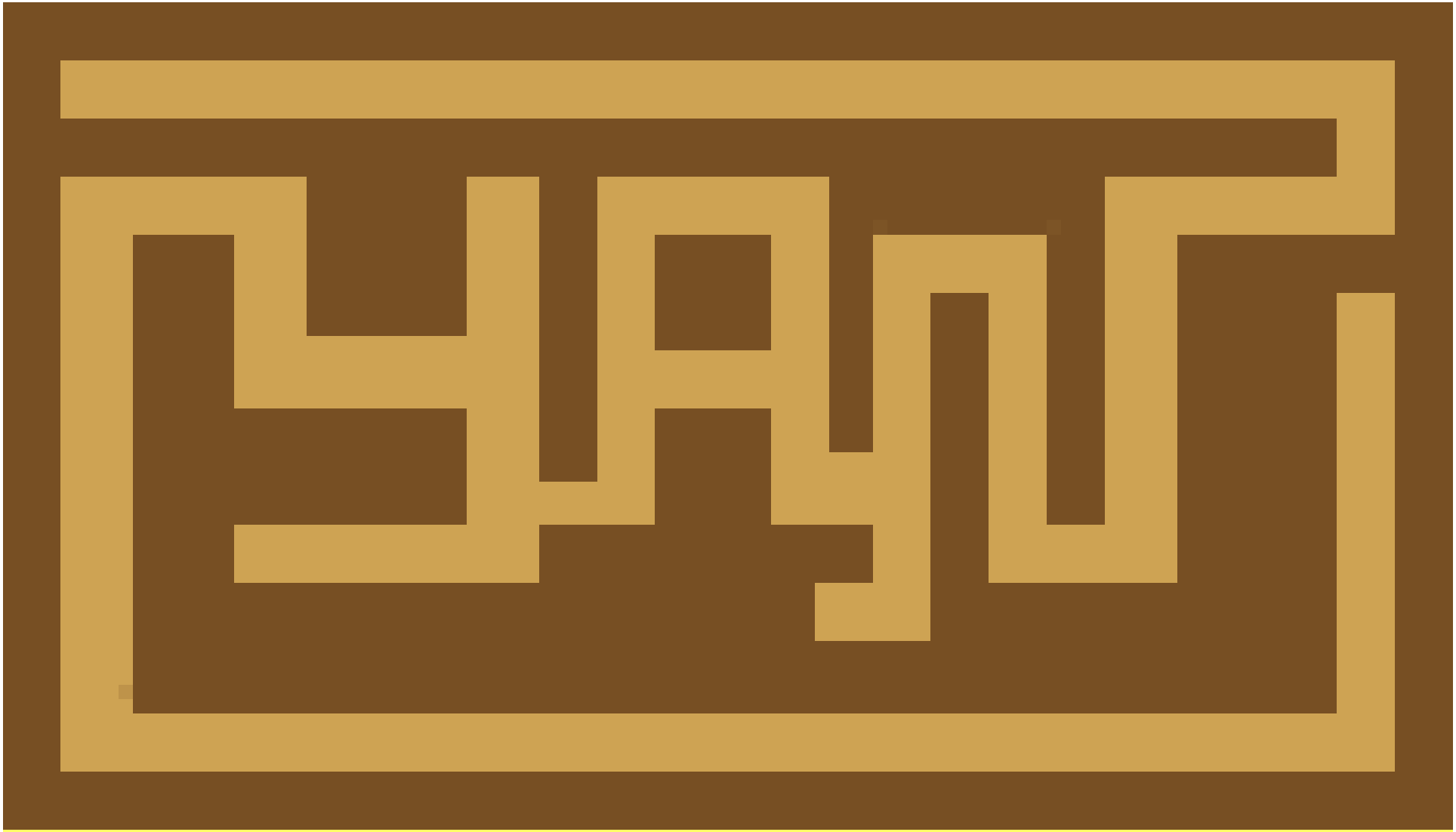
variables analyzed by proposed framework



empowerment

“have control over the decisions that affect one’s own life”





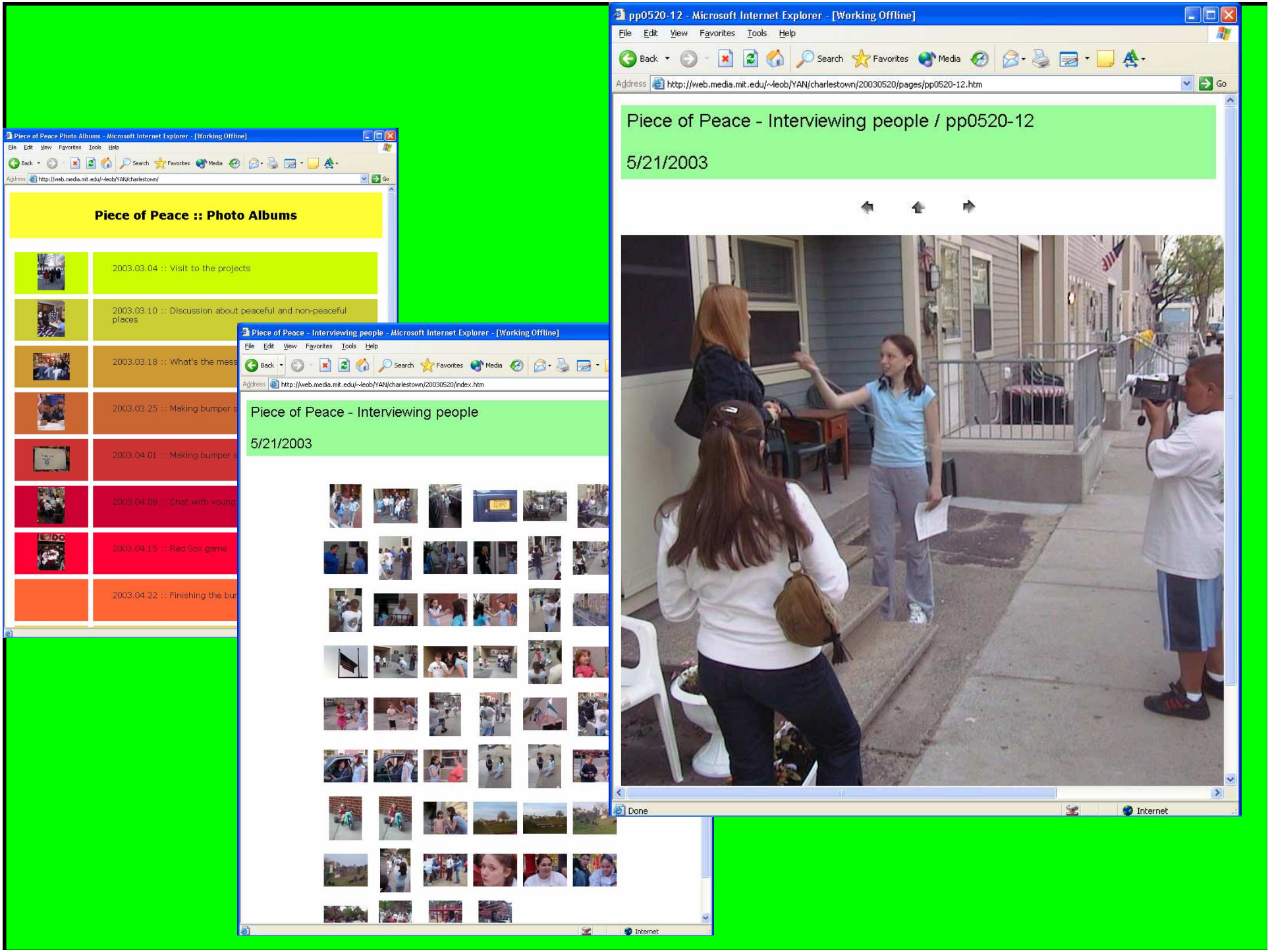
the Young Activists Network (YAN)

Bangalore, 2003

Children's Rights Flyer (Charlestown 2003)

Teen Pregnancy Event (Chelsea 2004)

Trash Olympics (Charlestown 2004)


Piece of Peace Photo Albums - Microsoft Internet Explorer - [Working Offline]
http://web.media.mit.edu/~leob/YAN/charlestown/
Piece of Peace :: Photo Albums
2003.03.04 :: Visit to the projects
2003.03.10 :: Discussion about peaceful and non-peaceful places
2003.03.18 :: What's the mess
2003.03.25 :: Making bumper s
2003.04.01 :: Making bumper s
2003.04.08 :: Chat with young
2003.04.15 :: Red Sox game
2003.04.22 :: Finishing the bu
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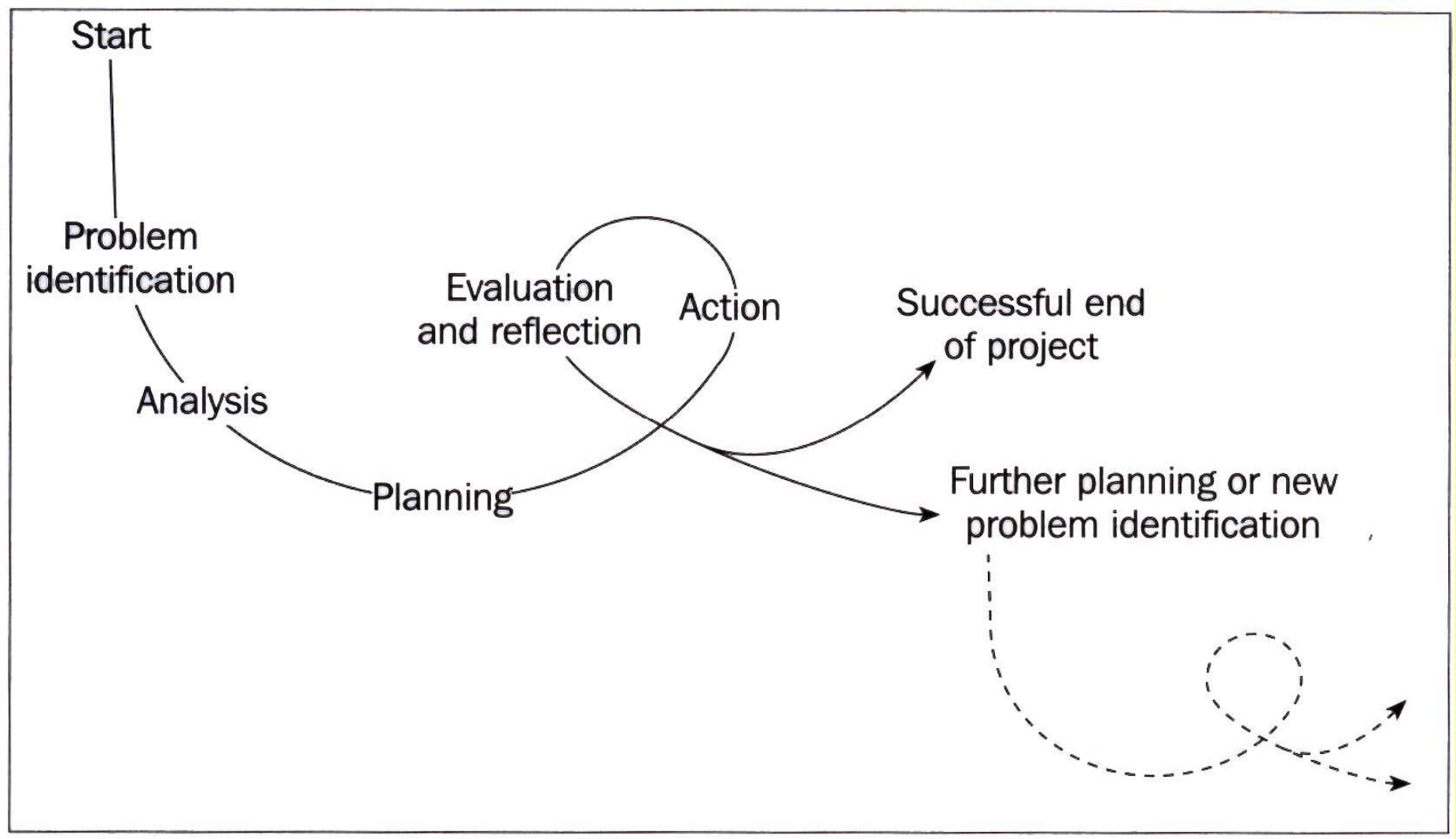
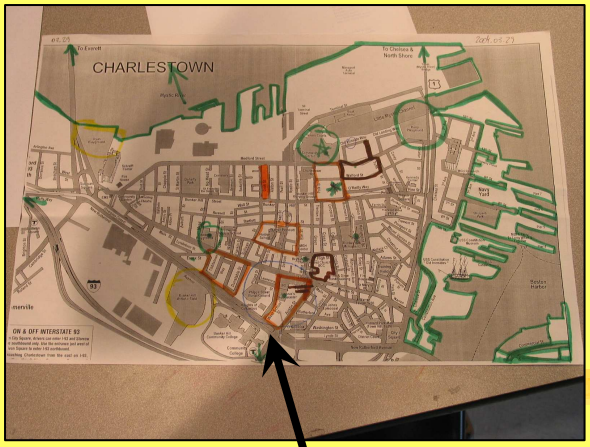
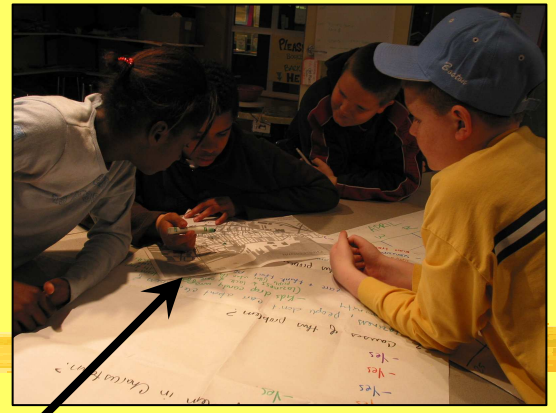
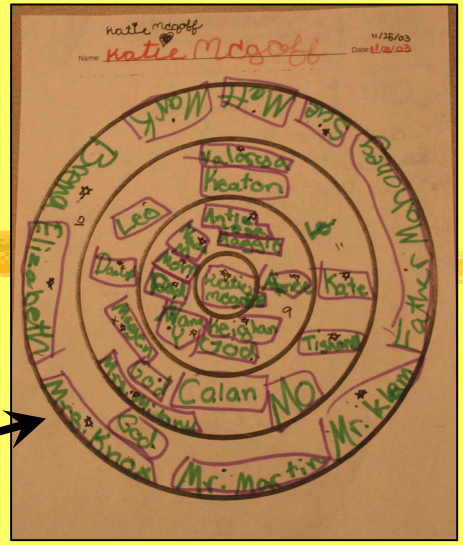
Internet

action-research life cycle




CHARLESTOWN

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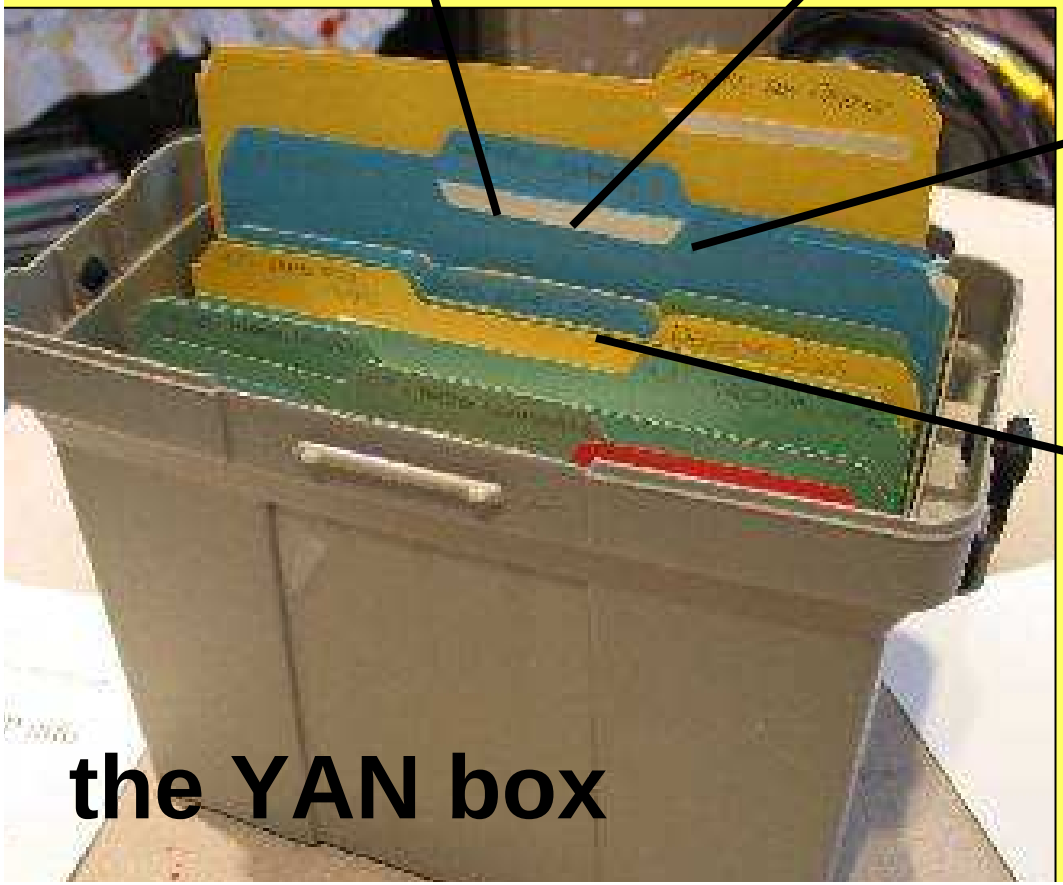
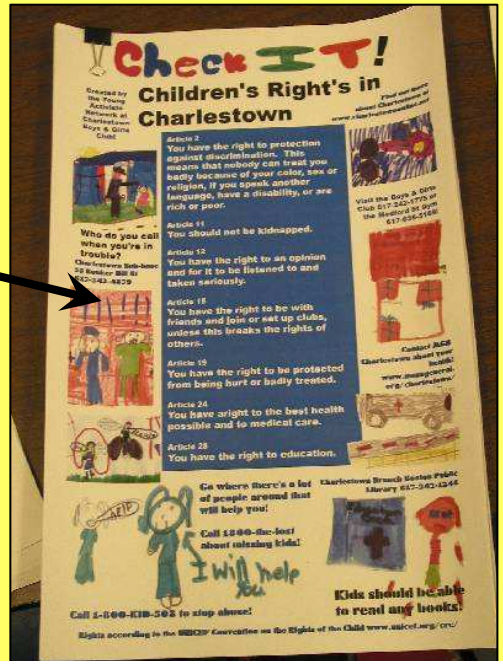
Calan
Mr. Martin
Mr. Klem
Mrs. Knox
Elizabeth
Kate
Tishard
Leo
Keaton




Check IT!
Children's Right's in Charlestown
Article 2
You have the right to protection against discrimination. This means that nobody can treat you badly because of your color, sex or religion, if you speak another language, have a disability, or are rich or poor.
Article 11
You should not be kidnapped.
Article 12
You have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.
Article 18
You have the right to be with friends and join or set up clubs, unless this breaks the rights of others.
Article 19
You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
Article 24
You have aright to the best health possible and to medical care.
Article 28
You have the right to education.
Who do you call when you're in trouble?
Go where there's a lot of people around that will help you!
Call 1800-the-lost about missing kids!
I will help you
Call 1-800-KID-503 to stop abuse!
Kids should be able to read any books!

the YAN box

analysis of the experiment

personal empowerment	• YAN fostered critical understanding of the neighborhood • YAN provided many opportunities for personal expression and participation • YAN helped youth implement personally meaningful projects in the community
technology usage	• existing technology is not appropriate
sustainability and scalability	• youth participation requires a lot of adult support

Building Blocks 2005 summer program

LAWRENCE
WHAT'S UP

what's up-related hypotheses

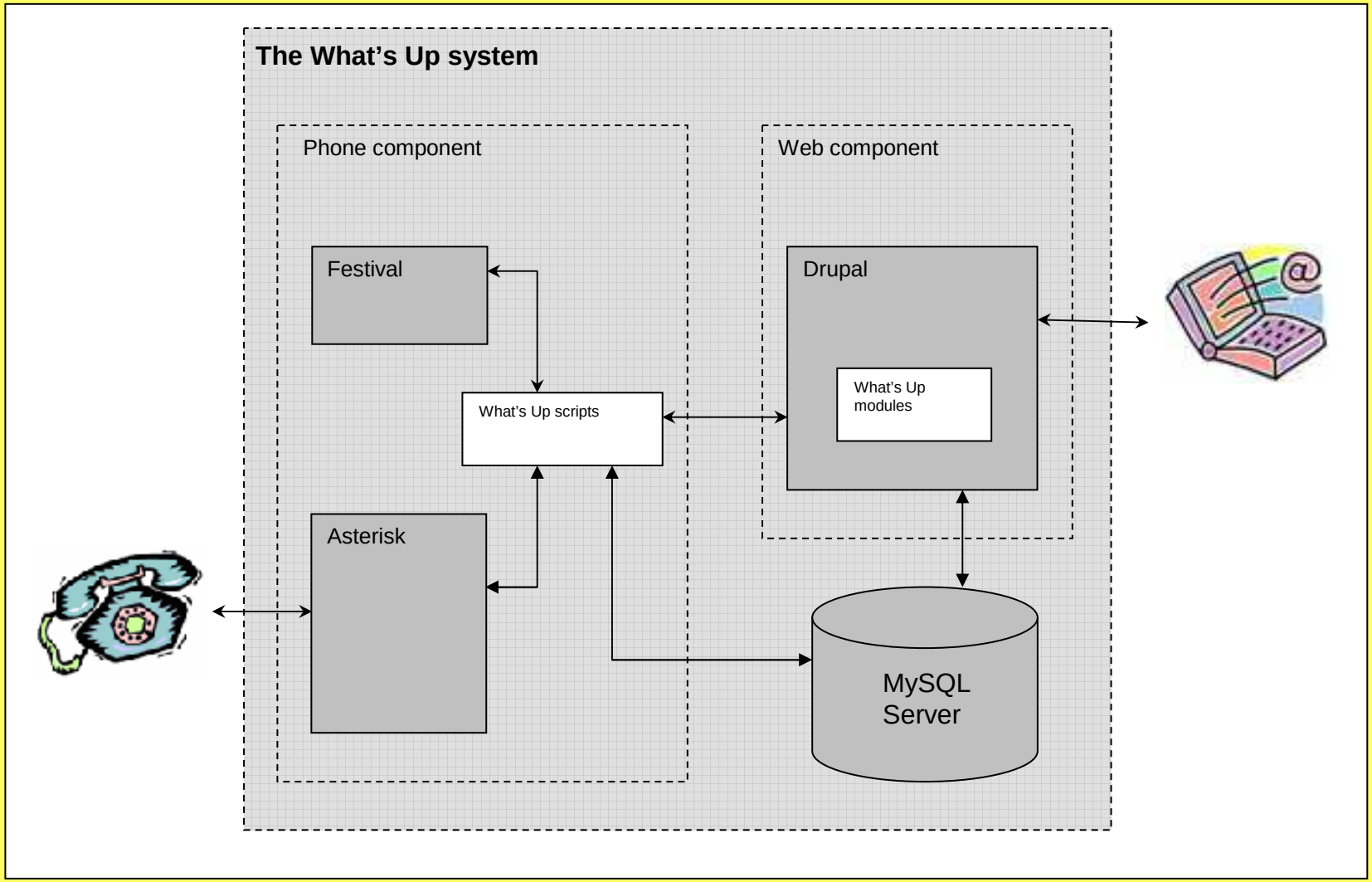
Helping young people organize personally meaningful community events may overcome some of the barriers present in other more traditional approaches to youth participation and local civic engagement.

A telephone-based community system can bring great value to the above mentioned initiative.

why telephones?

- easily accessible
- easy to use
- low-cost
- can be integrated with computers and the Internet (VoIP)

system architecture



What's Up Lawrence - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://whatsuplawrence.org/

Google

join us TODAY!

USER LOGIN

Username: *

Password: *

Log in

- Request new password

NAVIGATION

- member's directory
- how to join
- about what's up

NEW GROUPS

- Station Fashion
- Movement City fashion
- Station Lyrical
- Whats Up Lawrence Facilitators
- Movement Squad
- Movement City Station Staff
- Movement City Zones Staff
- Spoken Life
- Leo's buddies
- Movement City Staff

more

WELCOME!

Welcome To What's Up!

0:27 minutes (57.29 KB)

Please use the system to connect with your friends, promote events, and share your interests with others! Make sure to access the telephone system at 1 866 460 6602. If you need help with anything, feel free to ask!

download audio file | by Rasec | add to myspace

"Our Metamorphosis" by Christopher Benitez

0:51 minutes (102.8 KB)

This is a new audioblog entry created by Christopher Benitez from extension 45.

- Your What's Up team

29 Nov, 2006 at 7:04:54 PM

categories: poetry
3 comments | download audio file | by Christopher | add to myspace

Movement City choir

LISTENING STATION

WHAT'S UP

[info] [popup player] [add to myspace]

EVENTS

« December 2006

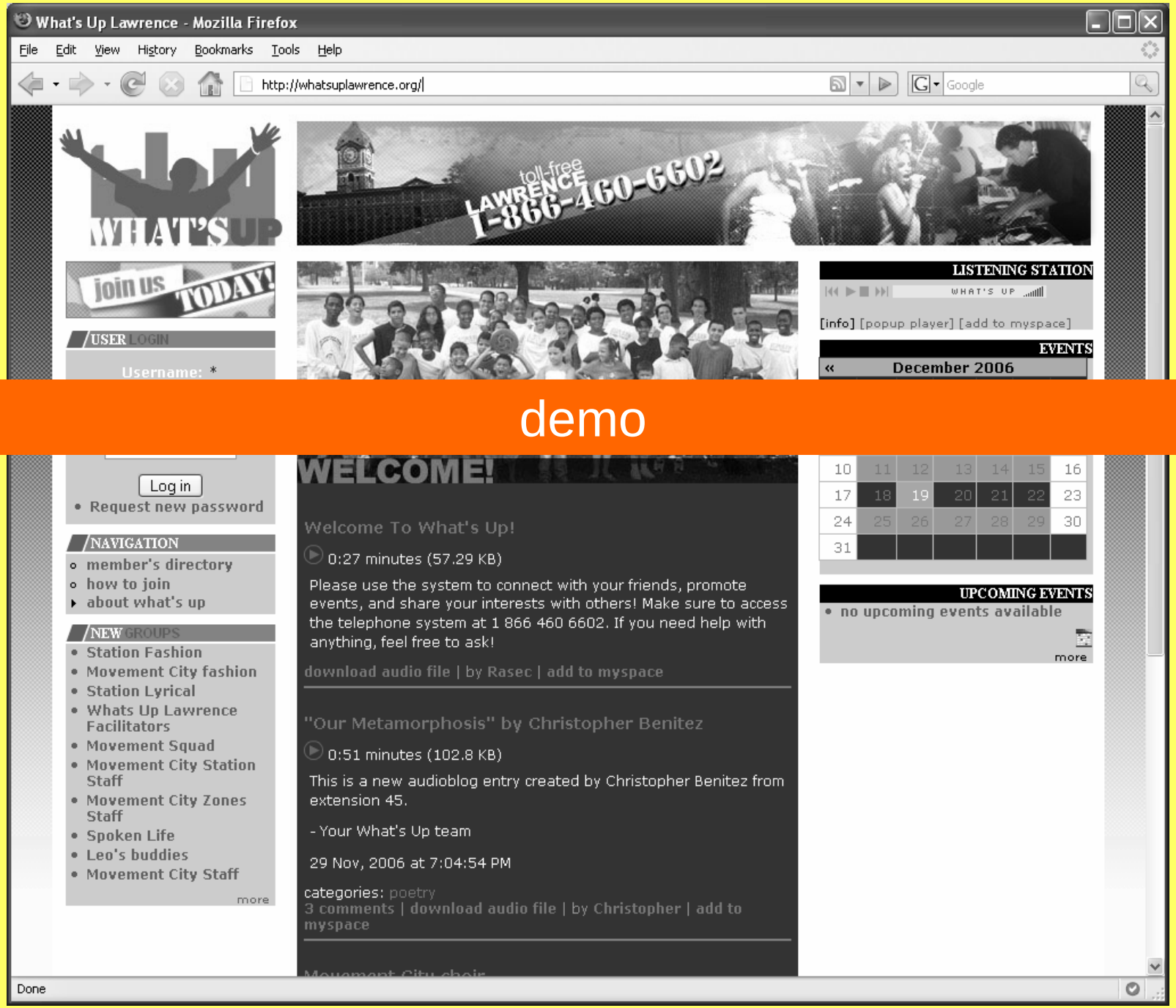
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

UPCOMING EVENTS

- no upcoming events available

more

Done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http://whatsuplawrence.org/
Google
WHAT'S UP
toll-free
LAWRENCE
1-866-460-6602
join us TODAY!
USER LOGIN
Username: *
Log in
Request new password
NAVIGATION
member's directory
how to join
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WHAT'S UP
[info] [popup player] [add to myspace]
EVENTS
« December 2006
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31
UPCOMING EVENTS
no upcoming events available
more
Done

demo

seeds of system usage

by youth	• uploading of original songs, poetry • access by non-cellphone, non-email users • voicemail and system usage at odd times • integration with MySpace
by the youth organization	• creation of groups for different departments to facilitate communication among staff and members • promotion of community events • announcements and voicemail broadcasts

analysis of the experiment

empowerment	• What's Up facilitated personal expression • What's Up facilitated community awareness • What's Up facilitated outreach to/from organization
technology usage	• audio is very attractive • telephone interface is very abstract, unusual
sustainability and scalability	• proper use of the system requires a central team to oversee the project

comparing the initiatives

	YAN	What's Up
accessibility		x
engagement		x
individual empowerment	x	
organizational empowerment		x
sustainability		x
scalability		x
spread		x

attributes of the new organization

support youth empowerment by providing youth organizations with the appropriate technologies, materials, and support required for the implementation of youth-led community initiatives.

- education
- outreach
- technology
- funding

thesis contributions (1 of 2)

- framework for the design and analysis of technological initiatives for social empowerment
- detailed description and critical analysis of 2 initiatives that focus on youth participation and local civic engagement
- a new model of community-technology initiative that is more inclusive and empowering

thesis contributions (2 of 2)

- the What's Up system as a tool that can potentially expand the outreach of community organizations and facilitate networking among youth, youth organizations and supportive adults
- generic platform for the implementation of telephone-enhanced community systems
- guidelines for the design of technologies for social empowerment
- proposal of new type of community organization to support the development of technological initiatives for social empowerment

future directions

- release What's Up system as open-source modules
- enhance tool based on findings
- test framework with different settings, audiences
- disseminate findings and promote discussion

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mãe, pai, meus super irmãos e cunhadas
barbara and norty
noah

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