

DWELLING: THE IMMATERIAL  
AND THE INTERNET

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# DWELLING: THE IMMATERIAL AND THE INTERNET

## Abstract

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“Dwelling”—a technical term denoting a subjective sense of belonging and individual experiences within a community—has been primarily associated with physical locales within the material world. The proliferation of the internet and online social networking sites, which are *not* reliant on place-specific locations, suggests dwelling’s immaterial nature is reemerging. This thesis considers this reemergence and indicates the “virtual realm” of the internet accentuates dwelling’s immaterial aspects, reestablishing its importance and balancing its significance in relation to dwelling’s material attributes.

Chapter One reviews extant dwelling literature, revealing that the historiography of “dwelling”—while emphasizing its material attributes—contains a sub-narrative alluding to its immaterial attributes. Fourteen dwelling attributes are derived from the literature and each attribute’s material and immaterial aspects are discussed.

Chapter Two focuses on these fourteen attributes and discusses how they find expression online. The results from a survey, based on a convenience sampling of the demographic groups: 18-24, 25-34, 35-40, 41-54, 55 and up, show that physical presence remains important; but the data also indicates that increased online presence is occurring and in a transitional phase, and hence there is a decreased dependence upon physical locations.

The final chapter presents findings and suggestions for future research. Dwelling attributes that have not found complete expression online are discussed. The thesis concludes with suggestions for how the architectural profession can contribute and embrace the developing virtual domain. More research is needed, but this emerging area of study presents exciting opportunities to understand how dwelling’s immaterial aspects are highlighted in the virtual world.

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## DWELLING: THE IMMATERIAL AND THE INTERNET: AN INTRODUCTION

“Dwelling” as defined by the philosopher Martin Heidegger is, “the way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling.”<sup>1</sup> A human being’s existence is subjective and uniquely individual; therefore, this thesis defines dwelling as a human being’s state of existence subjectively determined by a sense of belonging and individual experiences within a community. A human being’s existence, or dwelling, encompasses two domains, the material and the immaterial. This thesis outlines dwelling’s attributes, how the material and immaterial pertain to each attribute and presents each within the context of the internet and online social networking sites.

For the purpose of this thesis, the material corresponds to tangible and concrete objects and the immaterial corresponds to the intangible consciousness of human beings and the non-concrete, subjective understanding of being and existence. The material domain encompasses the concrete objects surrounding human beings as well as the built environment. Sense of belonging, man’s interpersonal relationships, subjective experiences, and awareness of being fall within the domain of the immaterial. This definition implies that dwelling pertains to both the material world but also a way of being, awareness, intentionality and consciousness.

A review of pertinent literature reveals that the material domain of dwelling is emphasized over the immaterial. The writings of architects, theorists, geographers and philosophers present dwelling with an emphasis on physical place but maintain a sub-narrative alluding to the immaterial nature of dwelling.<sup>2</sup> This emphasis on the material aspect of dwelling downplays the significance of

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 147.

<sup>2</sup> It must be noted that the concept of dwelling is not limited to the field of architecture. The question of dwelling pervades many disciplines, as it is a major topic of human existence. Theorists in other disciplines have considered dwelling and some of their work was reviewed to provide a more complete understanding of dwelling. Beyond the writings of Martin Heidegger, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Kenneth Frampton and other architectural theorists, the works of geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan, Edward Relph and David Seamon and philosophers such as Karsten Harries delve into issues related to place, place-making, and the role that geography can play in developing a sense of place. Sense of place and place-making are closely related to the question of dwelling and often writing about one necessitates addressing the other. The issues of sense of place and place-



the immaterial aspects of dwelling including social interaction and sense of belonging. This thesis works to bring this sub-narrative to the foreground. From the literature, a set of “dwelling attributes” are derived to discuss both the immaterial and material aspects as they pertain to dwelling.

This thesis explains the immaterial attributes of dwelling and describes how these attributes manifest within the virtual realm of the internet. These attributes can be found in a number of web expressions including social networking sites and community websites such as Craigslist and Web 2.0. The ability to establish relationships, interact, exchange and develop a sense of belonging online, independent of physical locales, suggests that the immaterial dominates in the virtual realm. Reconsidering dwelling’s immaterial attributes and positing those within the internet may provide an explanation for the phenomenon of the proliferation of the internet and online social networking sites, which are less reliant on place. The manifestation of certain dwelling attributes online may contribute to the success of social networking sites. Survey data collected from a convenience sample of demographic groups: 18-24, 25-34, 35-40, 41-55, and 55 and up indicates how and for what purposes people use the internet. Similarities between uses suggest that certain dwelling attributes are manifesting online and may promote increased online use and engagement.

This thesis does not seek to replace existing dwelling theories nor does it negate physical place’s importance to dwelling. By making explicit the immaterial aspects of dwelling and positioning them within the digital realm, it opens new opportunities for exploration into the impact of technology and its influence on dwelling. While more research is needed, the survey data suggests that the trend toward increased online use and involvement (and a decreased reliance on locale) provides another means whereby the immaterial needs of dwelling are satisfied and even take precedence over the material. This thesis contributes to extant dwelling literature by distilling key attributes of dwelling. It

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making will be addressed in this paper and the works of Tuan, Relph and Seamon will be reflected. However, it does not fall under the purview of this thesis to address all of these authors’ works and the breadth of dwelling prohibits an extensive analysis of all disciplines within the confines of this type of work. The decision to focus on Norberg-Schulz and other architectural theorists relates to my personal involvement in architecture as well as the historically accepted link between the built environment and dwelling.

also places the internet within the purview of the dwelling discussion suggesting that the proliferation of social networking sites can be attributed—in part—to the satisfaction of dwelling attributes online.

## CHAPTER ONE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DWELL?

### **Dwelling historically – A review of literature**

Dwelling, as understood by philosopher Martin Heidegger, is “the way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth.”<sup>3</sup> Heidegger’s definition of dwelling suggests two aspects to dwelling. The first alludes to man’s way of being, or state of existence, the way in which man is or the “immaterial.” The immaterial is understood as the consciousness of man, his ability to reason and the relationships that exist between him and other people. The second aspect, the “material,” denotes a relationship between man’s body and the material world. To dwell completely, both aspects must be satisfied. Heidegger claims, “building and thinking are, each in its own way, inescapable for dwelling. The two however, are also insufficient for dwelling so long as each busies itself with its own affairs in separation instead of listening to one another.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, “dwelling” requires attention to both the immaterial and the material. By bringing to light the immaterial aspects of dwelling, it is possible to situate them within the internet and understand how the internet and social networking sites satisfy the immaterial aspects of dwelling.

The complex relationship of dwelling and building is outlined by Heidegger and each remains significant. Dwelling remains the state of man’s being and building its corollary. Heidegger establishes this relationship arguing, “only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build.”<sup>5</sup> This statement places immaterial dwelling as a precondition for material building. He writes, “dwelling and building are related as end and means.”<sup>6</sup> Heidegger expresses concern over the compounding of building and dwelling into one meaning. He writes, “being on earth, or dwelling has receded into oblivion and

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 147.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 145.

dwelling has taken a simpler meaning . . . dwelling is not experienced as man's being; dwelling is never thought of as the basic character of human being.”<sup>7</sup> Heidegger seeks to reestablish dwelling's true meaning. Dwelling is more, “above all, it does not assert that to dwell means to occupy a house, or dwelling place.”<sup>8</sup> Dwelling is being on the earth, not merely inhabiting a dwelling place. This removes dwelling from the material realm and makes it possible to consider its attributes within virtual realms such as the internet.

Heidegger's articulation of dwelling as simply “to be” permits dwelling to go beyond the built, material world and address the immaterial nature of existence. Heidegger enriches his definition of dwelling claiming it a poetic endeavor. Basing his ideas on the phrase “poetically man dwells” in a poem by Holderlin, Heidegger reinforces the immaterial nature of dwelling. “When Holderlin speaks of dwelling,” Heidegger writes, “he has before his eyes the basic character of human existence.”<sup>9</sup> As he proceeds with his analysis and explanation, dwelling as “human existence” expands to include building. “Through what do we attain to a dwelling place?” Heidegger asks, “Through building. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building.”<sup>10</sup> Heidegger is not stating that building in the traditional sense is what enables dwelling nor that this is poetic creation; he is expanding on the meaning of “building,” suggesting that it can be an immaterial exercise of the mind making it more than construction with brick and mortar.

### **Christian Norberg-Schulz**

Dwelling's dual nature requires a choice whether to emphasize the material or immaterial. Christian Norberg-Schulz, an architect and theorist, chooses to highlight the importance of the material world through architecture. In the article, “Heidegger's Thinking on Architecture,” Norberg-Schulz argues “when discussing the problem of ‘dwelling poetically,’ [Heidegger] explicitly refers to the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Poetically Man Dwells,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 214.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 214-15, 222, 227.

art of building.”<sup>11</sup> This illuminates Norberg-Schulz’s choice to emphasize on building, more specifically architecture, within dwelling. Norberg-Schulz’s emphasis on the art of building, or construction using bricks and mortar codifies dwelling as concrete and primarily an endeavor within the material world. To reinforce his point, Norberg-Schulz refers to Heidegger’s example of the Greek temple in “The Origin of the Work of Art.” Norberg-Schulz reasons that this example illustrates Heidegger’s “world is a concrete totality. Rather than being conceived as a distant world of ideas.”<sup>12</sup> Norberg-Schulz concludes that, “dwelling means to gather the world as a concrete building or thing.”<sup>13</sup> Norberg-Schulz’s interpretation of Heidegger’s example does not allow for the interpretation that the Greek temple is used as an illustrative example of “gathering” the immaterial attributes of dwelling.<sup>14</sup> Heidegger is not saying that the Greek temple is the best or only means to experience dwelling; it is only one example that happens to be architecture, but the immateriality of dwelling can be experienced independently of concrete architecture.

Although Norberg-Schulz chooses to emphasize the concrete nature of dwelling, his book *The Concept of Dwelling* provides insight into his understanding of dwelling’s twofold nature through a brief and undeveloped sub-narrative. The introduction reveals this understanding of dwelling, “the word ‘dwelling’ here means something more than having a roof over our head and a certain number of square meters at our disposal.”<sup>15</sup> His definition comprises three elements, “first, [dwelling] means to meet others for exchange of products, ideas and feelings, that is, to experience life as a multitude of possibilities. Second, it means to come to an agreement with others, that is, to accept a set of common

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<sup>11</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, “Heidegger’s Thinking on Architecture,” in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, An Anthology of Architectural Theory*, 1965-1995, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 430.

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” 153.

<sup>13</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “Heidegger’s Thinking on Architecture,” 431.

<sup>14</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, “The Phenomenon of Place,” in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, An Anthology of Architectural Theory*, 1965-1995, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 425.

<sup>15</sup> Heidegger’s article “The Thing” presents a jug as an example which he uses to demonstrate that the idea of the jug and its ability to gather meaning is equally important as the jug as a physical object. See Martin Heidegger, “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 165-182.

<sup>16</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, (New York: Rizzoli International, 1985), 7.

values. Finally, it means to be oneself, in the sense of having a small chosen world of our own.”<sup>16</sup>

These three elements do not expressly emphasize the material or immaterial but allude to both.

The first element of dwelling claims that dwelling relies on the “exchange of products, ideas and feelings.”<sup>17</sup> The products exchanged represent the material; ideas and feelings represent the immaterial. Norberg-Schulz classifies this as “collective dwelling” correlated to the city and manifest in the urban environment. The city becomes the place where opportunities are mirrored and revealed to establish identity.<sup>18</sup> These opportunities may be the personalities of people with whom man may interact or the feelings evoked through observation of social and cultural events. The reason why the city is Norberg-Schulz’s chosen place where interaction occurs is in part due to the density and diversity the urban environment provides.

The development of technologies such as the internet and social networking sites now make it possible to experience density and diversity independent of physical place. The internet overcomes physical distance and connects people without the need for physical place. Where cities were once the primary places where diverse cultures interacted, the internet permits these diverse people to interact and exchange ideas, traditions and beliefs across fiber optic cables. Social networking sites allow users to establish connections with people without meeting them in person first. Those with shared interests and beliefs can gather in online forums and create density.

The second element of Norberg-Schulz’s dwelling definition speaks of values and agreement. He chooses to emphasize the architectural manifestation of “values” as expressed in institutions such as churches and classifies this as “public dwelling.” However, he does not discuss that values are a socially constructed set of principles independent of material things. The construction of a church, civic building or other institution does not predicate the creation and expression of values. These works of architecture often emerge after the establishment of a community of individuals with shared

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 51.

ideals. The increased connectivity and communication the internet affords people facilitates this creation of values, shared ideas and agreement.

Norberg-Schulz's final element suggests that dwelling must provide a private, individual place where man can remove himself, classified as "private dwelling." Explaining the purpose of the home, Norberg-Schulz argues, "we withdraw to our home to recover our personal identity. Personal identity, thus, is the content of private dwelling."<sup>19</sup> Identity is a personal, internal phenomenon.<sup>20</sup> While material objects play a part in expressing identity, the psyche also plays its part. In fact, Heidegger emphasizes that man's existence is both internal and external. He writes, "even when mortals turn 'inward,' taking stock of themselves they do not leave behind their belonging to the fourfold. When, as we say, we come to our senses and reflect on ourselves, we come back to ourselves from things without ever abandoning our stay among things."<sup>21</sup> Once again, dwelling's twofold nature is revealed.

Norberg-Schulz argues that all modes of dwelling share two common denominators: identification and orientation. He acknowledges that both are necessary for dwelling and that one may be more dominant than another in certain circumstances.<sup>22</sup> Identification means, "to relate meaningfully to a world of things."<sup>23</sup> As Norberg-Schulz explains this relationship, he emphasizes that things are not mental constructs but objects in a concrete "life-world."<sup>24</sup> This perspective proves problematic when Norberg-Schulz incorporates Heidegger's concept of "thing." He writes, "we may say that dwelling primarily consists in the appropriation of a world of things, *not in a material sense*, but as an ability to interpret the meaning the things gather" (emphasis mine).<sup>25</sup> For Heidegger a "thing" is the meanings it gathers, not the material thing itself. Using a jug as an example, Heidegger writes, "the jug's essential nature, its presencing, so experienced and thought of in these terms, is what we call

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>20</sup> Norberg-Schulz writes of identity stating, "identity is often considered an 'interior' quality of each individual and growing up is understood as a 'realization' of the hidden self." Ibid., 20.

<sup>21</sup> Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 157.

<sup>22</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 16. Norberg-Schulz places his understanding of things according to the definition of Merleau-Ponty, who contends that is that things are not "mediated by our senses." Norberg-Schulz emphasizes the concrete and physical presence of things.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 17.

thing. The jug's presencing is the pure, giving gathering of the one-fold fourfold into a single time-space, a single stay."<sup>26</sup> Norberg-Schulz's emphasis on the material must be rebalanced to account for the ability to interpret meanings; hence, he returns to a balanced position stating, "the twofold nature of dwelling thus appears: first the faculty of understanding the given things and second the making of worlds which keep and 'explain' what has been understood."<sup>27</sup> He claims, "true belonging however presupposes that both psychological functions [identification and orientation] are fully developed."<sup>28</sup>

While Norberg-Schulz acknowledges dwelling's twofold nature, his book *The Concept of Dwelling* delves into the built, material world of dwelling. He classifies dwelling within four primary expressions: settlement, the city, institution and the home. Norberg-Schulz then uses each of these expressions as domains in which the three components of his dwelling definition—collective, public and private dwelling—are manifest. While there is a sub-narrative in his work, Norberg-Schulz remains fixed to the physical, built environment as the primary realm where dwelling occurs.

### **Karsten Harries and Kenneth Frampton**

Beyond the writings of Norberg-Schulz, philosopher Karsten Harries provides further insight into dwelling. In the essay, "Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture," Harries returns to Heidegger's writings.<sup>29</sup> Using Heidegger's farmhouse as his example, Harries sheds light on the immaterial aspects of dwelling. From his analysis, Harries points out that dwelling includes time and space. Time and space transcend physical place and individual persons. He argues, "this thinking of genuine dwelling is thus *regional*, as it is *generational*" (emphasis mine).<sup>30</sup> Harries suggests that dwelling is a function of time, space and region. The regional aspect of dwelling is also understood as its *genius loci*

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<sup>26</sup> Heidegger, "The Thing," 174.

<sup>27</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 17.

<sup>28</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place," 424.

<sup>29</sup> Karsten Harries, "Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture," in *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, ed. David Seamon, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 41-59. Harries refers to Heidegger's example of the family farmhouse which has been owned by multiple generations of one family. The farmhouse contains areas designated for the placement of infants as well as the placement of coffins awaiting burial. The home is described as a place where life and death are experienced and manifest and each generation understands these events in accordance with the home.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 52.

or character. Norberg-Schulz emphasizes that the *genius loci*, or spirit of a place, contributes to dwelling. He writes that man's existence depends upon a "good relationship to the place in a physical as well as a psychic sense."<sup>31</sup> The character of a place manifests in the cultural phenomena of day-to-day living. Kenneth Frampton's theory of critical regionalism emphasizes character and its significance to dwelling but like Norberg-Schulz, he prioritizes architecture for the articulation of a region's character rather than the intangible cultural relationships that contribute to its *genius loci*.<sup>32</sup>

### Space, Place and Dwelling

To understand dwelling and its immaterial aspects more completely, it becomes necessary to discuss space and place. According to Heidegger, dwelling is "the relationship between man and space, strictly thought and spoken."<sup>33</sup> Heidegger establishes that man and space are not separate entities but the totality of existence.<sup>34</sup> Norberg-Schulz provides a similar perspective on space introducing it as "an existential dimension."<sup>35</sup> Norberg-Schulz defines "existential space" as "one of the psychic structures which form part of man's being in the world."<sup>36</sup> This definition acknowledges that dwelling, or being-in-the-world, also occurs within an intangible psychic realm. This implies that "space" is free from physical boundary limitations and makes cyber-existence a possibility.

However, Norberg-Schulz qualifies existential space by tying it to the material environment. He argues, "human life depends on the establishment of an 'existential space' that is, an image of the environmental structure. This image depends on the concrete properties of the environment."<sup>37</sup> This

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<sup>31</sup> Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place," 422.

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Frampton, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, an anthology of architectural theory, 1965-1995*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 473.

<sup>33</sup> Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 157.

<sup>34</sup> Heidegger writes, "when we speak of man and space, it sounds as though man stood on one side, space on the other. Yet space is not something that faces man. It is neither an external object nor an inner experience. It is not that there are men, and over and above them space; for when I say 'a man,' . . . then by the name 'man' I already name the stay within the fourfold among things. Ibid., 156.

<sup>35</sup> Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place," 418.

<sup>36</sup> Norberg-Schulz provides an in-depth discussion on space in his book, *Existence, Space and Architecture*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 37.

<sup>37</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture: Meaning and Place*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 37.



environment of concrete properties is understood by Norberg-Schulz as “place.”<sup>38</sup> “Place” then becomes “an integral part of existence.”<sup>39</sup> Norberg-Schulz further emphasizes the need for place in his claim, “to dwell means to belong to a given place.”<sup>40</sup> Although Norberg-Schulz highlights the material nature of “place,” he does acknowledge that the world consists of phenomena both concrete and intangible and “place” relies on both.<sup>41</sup>

Other theorists acknowledge that “place” is comprised of the immaterial and material. The geographer Mary MacDonald writes of place, “place is not only a physical location, but also an idea, a mental construction which captures and directs the human relationship to the world.”<sup>42</sup> Geographer Edward Relph also claims, “places are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. Place experiences are time-deepened and memory qualified.”<sup>43</sup> Place, like dwelling, relies on time, memory and relationships. This allows “place” to encompass man’s state of being and “place” can exist within the constructs of the mind or even within the realm of cyberspace.<sup>44</sup>

Beyond its spatial and temporal boundaries, place encompasses both a poetic and aesthetic conception resulting in a “sense of place.” MacDonald elaborates on place arguing, “place is not just a spatial, or even a spatial and temporal notion; it is also a poetic and aesthetic conception.”<sup>45</sup> This poetic and aesthetic conception of place may be understood as “sense of place.” Sense of place, which is a subjective sense of belonging to the environment, may be understood as the intangible aspect of place. Sense of place is achieved when man identifies with a place that contributes to man’s “way of

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<sup>38</sup> Norberg-Schulz in “The Phenomenon of Place,” defines place as, “a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture, and colour.” 414.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 414.

<sup>40</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “The Phenomenon of Place,” 414.

<sup>42</sup> Mary N. MacDonald, “Introduction: Place and the Study of Religions,” in *Experiences of Place*, ed. Mary N. MacDonald, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>43</sup> Edward Relph, “Geographical Experiences and Being-in-the-World: The Phenomenological Origins of Geography,” in *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, eds. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), 26

<sup>44</sup> Psychologist David Canter has proposed a “theory of place” which broadens the concept of home to include personal, social and physical attributes. Canter’s work revolves around qualitative studies exploring how people become attached to places. Place is understood to encompass physical or concrete objects as well as emotional and social components. See David Canter, *The Psychology of Place*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1977).

<sup>45</sup> MacDonald, 3.

being in the world.”<sup>46</sup> Place is constructed not only through material objects, but also relationships and social interaction. Frampton argues, “[place’s] sole legitimacy stems, as it must, from the social constituency it accommodates and represents. It depends on the conscious signification of social meaning and the establishment of an articulate realm on which man or men may come into being.”<sup>47</sup> The significance of social interaction for places and dwelling is further reinforced by Relph who claims, “places are impalpable territories of social activities and meanings projected into entire assemblages of buildings and spaces.”<sup>48</sup> Relph establishes that place is projected onto physical buildings, it is not contingent upon them; by understanding place as a territory of social interaction, place becomes less reliant on physical locales and can manifest itself wherever social interaction occurs.

Dwelling, like place, is dependent on the immaterial relationships of social interaction. Karsten Harries introduces a social aspect to dwelling not addressed by Heidegger in that dwelling is more than man’s being but also being with others.<sup>49</sup> To further support social interaction’s role in dwelling, Norberg-Schulz claims, “public dwelling does not only consist in social identification, but in a poetical relationship to the shared world.”<sup>50</sup> In this phrase, Norberg-Schulz emphasizes two immaterial aspects of dwelling: social identification and a poetical relationship. This reveals the relationship between dwelling and sense of place; both involve a sense of belonging and a poetic relationship to the world. Norberg-Schulz chooses to emphasize the material aspect of place and dwelling claiming that sense of place is contingent upon the figural quality of a city or home but the nature of social identification does not require a figural quality; it requires social interaction. The establishment of being, identity and social interaction play key roles in understanding how the internet highlights dwelling’s immaterial nature.

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<sup>46</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 12.

<sup>47</sup> Kenneth Frampton, “On Reading Heidegger,” in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture, An Anthology of Architectural Theory*, ed. Kate Nesbitt, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 444.

<sup>48</sup> Edward Relph, “Modernity and the Reclamation of Place,” in *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing*, ed. David Seamon, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 31.

<sup>49</sup> Karsten Harries, “Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” 56.

<sup>50</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 71.

## **Distilling Dwelling's Attributes**

To understand what comprises dwelling, this study undertook an exercise of distilling the most common attributes of dwelling mentioned in the literature reviewed. The key authors reviewed include Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz, Harries, Frampton, Fleming, Relph and MacDonald.<sup>51</sup> Heidegger's work is included as it provides the foundation of this thesis. Norberg-Schulz, Frampton and Fleming provide architectural perspectives on both dwelling and place. Karsten Harries' writings elaborate on Heidegger's thinking and provide another philosophical perspective on dwelling. Geographers Edward Relph and Mary MacDonald write on place and its contribution to man's existence in the world. These authors were reviewed due to their emphasis on dwelling, place, Heidegger and phenomenology in their own theories.

The literature review revealed that common traits or attributes of dwelling are frequently mentioned by multiple authors. While reviewing the literature, common traits emerged which are often considered important to dwelling or included as part of an author's definition for dwelling. These traits have been defined as "dwelling attributes." The overlap and repeated mention of any attribute merited inclusion in the matrix shown below. Similar ideas or concepts were grouped together into broad categories in order to simplify and clarify the various attributes found within the pertinent literature. Fourteen different attributes, which are my creation, are identified and classified. A series of questions were created and compiled into a survey based on the fourteen dwelling attributes. These questions help determine whether the attributes derived from the literature are in fact important attributes of dwelling. The questions also serve as a way to determine whether a trend toward decreased reliance on material objects and places in instances where the internet provides similar services is emerging. The survey will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

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<sup>51</sup> The literature on dwelling and place was not limited to these authors. Other authors were also reviewed and their work is reflected in the conditions distilled. These authors were Pierre Bourdieu, David Seamon, Michael Zimmerman, and Joseph Grange.

A matrix of the attributes and the author who writes about each attribute is provided below.

The author whose work references a specific attribute is denoted by an “X”. Each author’s remarks on the corresponding attribute can be referenced in Appendix A.

The Attributes of Dwelling	Heidegger	Norberg-Schulz	Frampton	Harries	Fleming	Relph	MacDonald	Grange	Bourdieu	Zimmerman	Seamon
1. Exchange/Interaction		X	X		X	X					
2. Community/Fellowship		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
3. Identity/Individuality	X	X								X	
4. Making	X	X	X	X			X				
5. Orientation/Organization		X			X			X			
6. Boundary/Threshold	X	X		X							
7. Gathering	X	X									
8. Time/History		X	X	X		X					
9. Character		X	X	X							
10. Sensations		X	X				X	X			
11. Security		X						X			
12. Stability		X	X	X					X		X
13. Nature	X	X	X			X		X			
14. Proximity/Distance	X	X		X							

Figure 1: This matrix outlines the fourteen attributes of dwelling and shows which theorists have written about each. For complete quotes on each attribute, refer to Appendix A.

## 1. Exchange/Interaction:

The opportunity to interact and exchange ideas, products and feelings provides a basic element to dwelling.<sup>52</sup> This attribute highlights the importance of social interaction and communication with other people. Interaction facilitates the development of “sense of place” because the exchanges and socio-cultural experiences contribute to the sense of belonging and participation. Frampton suggests that the “socio-cultural experiences” a place offers can facilitate exchange and interaction according to their appropriateness and richness.<sup>53</sup> Exchange provides a multitude of possibilities and interactions that animate and enliven man’s experience.<sup>54</sup> Ronald Fleming’s understanding of place recognizes that not only do material objects play a role, but also the interactions that take place there.

The urban environment is often attributed as the location where exchange and interaction occurs but with the advent of the internet and social networking sites, exchange and interaction can now occur independently of physical locale.<sup>55</sup> Exchange and social interaction contribute to sense of place. This suggests that place develops concurrently with social interaction. Thus, place does not have to be physical—it can also exist in the cyber realm.

## 2. Community/Fellowship:

The socio-cultural relationships that develop following exchange and interaction facilitate the creation of community. A community is a group of people that agrees on common values and principles for living.<sup>56</sup> These agreements may be as complex as laws and regulations that govern society or they may be unspoken agreements on proper conduct and demeanor. Harries speaks of man’s being in the world as “being with others.”<sup>57</sup> Man must choose the people with whom he wishes

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<sup>52</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

<sup>53</sup> Kenneth Frampton, “On Reading Heidegger,” 444.

<sup>54</sup> Ronald Lee Fleming, *The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community Through Public Art and Urban Design*, (New York: Merrell, 2000) 14.

<sup>55</sup> Norberg-Schulz classifies the urban environment as the primary place for exchange. He qualifies collective dwelling with this condition. Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 51.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>57</sup> Harries, “Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” 56.

to associate. The creation of fellowship allows man to share his thoughts and beliefs with others sharing similar beliefs and satisfies a “need for belonging and participation.”<sup>58</sup>

The internet facilitates the search for belonging and participation by connecting geographically distant individuals, allowing them opportunities to create communities based on their shared beliefs. Being online is not a solitary experience. The creation of chat rooms and social networking sites as well as communication tools such as instant messaging and email demonstrate that the online realm is developed and used to connect and remain connected with people. Communities can be created electronically and the surveys collected examine to what extent that is possible.

### **3. Identity/Individuality:**

In order to dwell, a human being must know who he or she is at a profound level.<sup>59</sup> Norberg-Schulz refers to this as, “to be oneself, in the sense of having a small chosen world of our own.”<sup>60</sup> A person’s individuality roots itself in the persona created within the constructs of his or her mind.<sup>61</sup> Human beings require a place where they can remove themselves from others and conduct private or personal acts. The internal nature of man’s identity suggests that it cannot be tied to physical locations. While material objects may provide a means by which man can express his identity, they are not requisite for the creation of that identity. Heidegger speaks of this relationship of man to objects and the meanings derived from the object, not the object itself.<sup>62</sup> Man’s individuality comes from his ability to think about his relationship within the world. Individuality develops when man removes himself from the public realm to gather and evaluate the multitude of experiences and encounters. The establishment of identity does not occur in a physical location but is an internal, uniquely individual phenomenon.

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<sup>58</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

<sup>59</sup> Michael E. Zimmerman, “The Role of Spiritual Discipline in Learning to Dwell on Earth,” in *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, eds. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985) 249.

<sup>60</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 89. Norberg-Schulz writes of this as, “personal identity is the content of private dwelling.”

<sup>62</sup> Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” 157.

This internal phenomenon can occur regardless of location and the multitude of possibilities presented by the internet may facilitate identity development through rapid connection and increased chance of interaction. Norberg-Schulz defines it as, “an interior quality of each individual and growing up is understood as a realization of the hidden self.”<sup>63</sup> This hidden self is the immaterial aspect of dwelling. The expression of the hidden self can occur online just as it can occur in material objects. The internet provides an arena where identity can be expressed through intangible, digital bits. These digital bits can be photos, music or blogs. Links to websites can be presented online as an expression of self.

#### **4. Making:**

Making is the manifestation of man’s comprehension of the world through built works. These built works may include art, sculpture, buildings or a domain. As such, Harries claims, “to build is to help decide how man is to dwell on the earth.”<sup>64</sup> However, it does not suffice to limit the idea of built works to material objects. Heidegger spoke of the “thing” as an idea. The “thingness” of a thing is its idea. Heidegger writes, “an independent, self-supporting thing may become an object if we place it before us, whether in immediate perception or by bringing it to mind in a recollective representation.”<sup>65</sup> The “thing” is created because the idea of its “thingness” exists. Therefore, thinking precedes making. This allows for making to occur within the mind and accounts for the inclusion of things such as web pages as products of making.

Although immaterial, a web page is no less present despite its immaterial nature. The desire to make and express a world understanding remains relevant in the immaterial realm of the internet. Making, in the virtual realm, also pertains to identity. A person’s identity is made online through the inclusion of digital objects that express that identity. Social networking pages allow users to compile

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<sup>63</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 20.

<sup>64</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 14, Karsten Harries, “The Ethical Function of Architecture,” 396.

<sup>65</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 167.

photos, music, videos, blogs and links into a personal profile. Users in effect “make” their digital selves by compiling these elements into one virtual webpage.

## 5. Orientation/Organization:

Humans must be able to orient within a space and understand their position in relation to the world. Norberg-Schulz refers to this as “apprehending spatial order.” Place-making incorporates organization and ordering of a place to suit the needs of the place’s inhabitants.<sup>66</sup> As cultural and social beings, humans create place.<sup>67</sup> Certainly, “place” may be understood as the relationship that a person holds relative to others within a similar socio-cultural heritage. Orientation is a relative concept. Orientation in the material world requires a point of reference or object relative to the physical body. Kevin Lynch writes about orientation within the physical world in his discussion of the city. Lynch breaks down components of the city into nodes and paths that help orientation within the city and contribute to the experience.<sup>68</sup> Man orients himself according to his body providing for the emergence of terms such as up, down, forward, backward, in front of, and behind.<sup>69</sup> Lynch’s work also maintains a narrative of the immaterial. Lynch’s work focuses on the construction of mental maps and how distinct physical features can help in the creation of these immaterial mental maps.

However, orientation can also be understood as the immaterial placement of identity within the greater community of beings. Human beings may move throughout their life and orient themselves based on that identity. Decisions and interaction with other beings may be relative according to their social position or perceived identity value. Social hierarchies can be understood as a means of orientation. The perception of these hierarchies and subsequent placement of self in relation suggests a chosen point around which to orient. Orientation also requires a center that may be satisfied through the physical body; or it can also be a point within the sphere of man’s existence

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<sup>66</sup> Fleming, 14

<sup>67</sup> MacDonald, 7.

<sup>68</sup> Kevin Lynch, *Image of the City*, (Cambridge: Technology Press, 1960).

<sup>69</sup> Joseph Grange, “Place, Body, and Situation,” in *Dwelling, Place and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, ed. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), 72.



around which he orients himself.<sup>70</sup> This category also encapsulates the ideas of topology, spatial order and organization.<sup>71</sup>

## **6. Boundary/Threshold:**

A boundary defines one place from another. Heidegger writes, “a boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which an object begins its presencing.”<sup>72</sup> A boundary reveals a site or location and establishes an inside from an outside. Boundaries define nodes and domains and facilitate orientation in the world.<sup>73</sup> Thresholds serve as portals or gateways between domains and indicate the transition across a boundary.<sup>74</sup>

The cyber-realm has established such boundaries and thresholds, understood as web pages and portals. While the physical body holds no relation to these boundaries, the mind is capable of orienting itself within the cyber-realm and understands when it is leaving one domain and entering another. The online virtual world is organized much like the physical built environment hence the transition from webpage to webpage mimics the spatial transition experienced in the physical world.

## **7. Gathering:**

Gathering is the means of making and the expression of an object’s meaning. Gathering is not understood as the collection of objects but the coming together of meanings to establish identity and place. Gathering is the process by which man correlates meaning from his surrounding environment.<sup>75</sup> Gathering also includes the acts of concentration and enclosure that help to establish an inside and outside. Man’s identity is linked to gathering in that he feels at home when he is able to

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<sup>70</sup> Max Robinson, “Place-Making: The Notion of Center, A Typological Investigation of Means and Meanings,” in *Constructing Place, Mind and Matter*, ed. Sarah Menin, (London: Routledge, 2003), 148.

<sup>71</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 15, Fleming, 14, Norberg-Schulz, “The Phenomenon of Place,” 425.

<sup>72</sup> Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” 41.

<sup>73</sup> Karsten Harries, “The Ethical Function of Architecture,” in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965-1995*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 395.

<sup>74</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “Heidegger’s Thinking on Architecture,” 436.

<sup>75</sup> Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” 153

gather his surroundings into a meaningful construct.<sup>76</sup> Gathering also manifests certain characteristics of place such as topography and contributes to architecture that is “earthbound.”<sup>77</sup> Gathering highlights material characteristics but it also pertains to the collection of meaning.

The internet makes meaning collection possible due to the increased accessibility of content and information. If the internet is understood as an environment, then as a person travels within its domain, information is gathered, downloaded, stored and redistributed as a form of identity and expression of understanding.

## **8. Time/History:**

Dwelling requires or presupposes the passage of time and the existence of a history associated with any given place. Time is subjective and each man experiences the passage of time differently. Community membership and sense of belonging develop over time.<sup>78</sup> Man’s sense of belonging to a given place strengthens as time passes and the presence of multiple generations of a family establishes a historical bond with a specific place.<sup>79</sup> The subjective nature of time and the fact that time moves forward regardless of man’s position in the world demonstrates that time is independent of physical locale. Time is much more difficult to perceive in the virtual world; however, involvement and interaction in certain online social networks do establish a historical relationship and contribute to the establishment of sense of belonging.

## **9. Character:**

Character refers to the *genius loci* or spirit of a place. Man’s ability to identify with the character of a place contributes to a more complete sense of belonging. Frampton’s theory on critical

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<sup>76</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “The Phenomenon of Place,” 418

<sup>77</sup> Frampton, “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism,” 473.

<sup>78</sup> Frampton, “On Reading Heidegger,” 444. Here Frampton refers to the necessity of an awareness of the history of a region. By incorporating historical context, Frampton hopes to combat the “non-place” that is so prevalent today. Harries, “Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” 52. In this circumstance, Harries is referring to the passage of time and how that allows a person to achieve dwelling by remaining a “member of an ongoing community.”

<sup>79</sup> Harries, “Thoughts on Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” 52.

regionalism emphasizes the regional or geographical location of a place that imbues it with character. Character is often attributed to the quality of light in a place. The passage of time affects the quality of light, so character and time are closely related.<sup>80</sup> Often, sense of place is described or best understood by the character a place displays. Therefore, the character of a place contributes to feeling sense of place. Character can also be expressed through cultural activities and rituals.<sup>81</sup> The character of a place is often difficult to express in language, for it is something that must be experienced. While material attributes such as light, architecture and topography help express the spirit of a place, man's identification with a place is personal and internal. It is this internal phenomenon, defined as poetic dwelling by Heidegger that constitutes part of dwelling's immaterial nature.

#### **10. Sensations:**

A complete sensory experience allows man to identify with his surroundings more completely. Frampton posits that dwelling must arouse all the senses.<sup>82</sup> Frampton's argument is limited to the empirical senses and does not permit for the arousal of the intellect and contemplation that contribute to a human's sense of belonging. A place's tactile and material qualities enrich man's experience and contribute to achieving a poetic sense of dwelling.<sup>83</sup> Man sees, smells, touches, tastes and hears in order to evaluate and understand the world.<sup>84</sup> Place identity strengthens with increased engagement of the senses. The more engaged the senses, the more completely man identifies with a place. In addition, a place's ability to arouse the mind may also contribute to a more complete identification. The memories formed after sensory experiences fade often influence place identity more than the sensations themselves.

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<sup>80</sup> Frampton, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism" 473, Harries, "Thoughts on Non-Arbitrary Architecture" 52, Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place", 420.

<sup>81</sup> Grange, "Place, Body, and Situation," 78. MacDonald, "Introduction: Place and the Study of Religions," 7.

<sup>82</sup> Frampton, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," 473.

<sup>83</sup> Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place," 413.

<sup>84</sup> Grange, "Place, Body, and Situation," 72.

## 11. Security:

Security allows dwelling to be habitual. The security felt within man's surroundings influences the extent to which he will explore and become involved. The sense of belonging to a community provides security in that being surrounded by others with similar values insulates man from feeling threatened or challenged. The internet provides this security of community. It also provides security in anonymity; a person can present his or her opinions and feelings without fear of alienation or ridicule if done anonymously. Feeling lost or disoriented may contribute to a diminished sense of security, so orientation and identification can be closely linked to security.<sup>85</sup> While security can be accomplished through material means such as locks, walls and gates, the feeling of security is subjective and unique to each person.

Increased security may be a secondary effect of online use as it decreases the need to leave the home to conduct banking, shopping, and other activities. While increased internet use may decrease interaction with people in the physical world, the increase in time saved from leaving home may be re-allocated and used to participate in an online forum for discussion.

## 12. Stability:

Stability means constant and reliable, it does not mean fixed in place or immovable. The establishment of a center and choice of settlement place requires stability. Stability may be achieved through permanence to a place or through generational ties and tradition. Cultural identity, social relationships and a history of interaction also contribute to stability. Frampton refers to place and argues that its "placeness" is tied to its stability.<sup>86</sup> Norberg-Schulz refers to the need for an "existential foothold" from which to launch explorations in the world; he identifies this foothold as the home.<sup>87</sup> The home is a manifestation of a center but man's center of existence may be the relationships developed with other people and may be independent of place.

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<sup>85</sup> Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place," 425.

<sup>86</sup> Frampton, "On Reading Heidegger," 444.

<sup>87</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 89.

### 13. Nature:

Dwelling necessitates a relationship to nature; nature here understood as the non-man-made environment.<sup>88</sup> Heidegger's philosophy emphasizes a relationship with nature achieved through preservation and nurture of the natural environment and that dwelling is achieved at the boundary where sky and earth meet.<sup>89</sup> Norberg-Schulz also states that, "to dwell, therefore, also means to become friends with a natural place."<sup>90</sup> Norberg-Schulz provides examples of architecture that complements the natural surroundings and presents this as the means to establish that relationship; he classifies it as "settlement."<sup>91</sup> The important point of this attribute is the subjectivity of the relationship between man and nature.

### 14. Proximity/Distance:

Proximity and distance allow for the development of character and regional identity. Norberg-Schulz emphasizes that density and figural quality contribute to character and this is achieved through the proximity of people and regions. Proximity facilitates interaction and exchange as well as the creation of community and fellowship. Distance provides clarification and separation necessary to establish regional character. These spatial relationships contribute to identity and sense of belonging. Norberg-Schulz laments urban sprawl claiming that the resulting separation has "brought about a weakened sense of human belonging and thus a dangerous loss of identity."<sup>92</sup> Proximity reinforces identity and permits human beings to identify themselves as Washingtonians or New Yorkers. If proper scale and articulation are achieved, an intimacy with the surroundings may also result.<sup>93</sup>

The internet bridges great distances and brings people together much more rapidly than ever before in history. It should be noted that rapid connection and instant proximity is viewed by

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<sup>88</sup> Frampton, "On Reading Heidegger," 440.

<sup>89</sup> Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 147.

<sup>90</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>93</sup> Harries, "The Ethical Function of Architecture," 396.

Heidegger as problematic.<sup>94</sup> He argues that the abolition of great distances results in a uniformity and the loss of the value of the “thing.”<sup>95</sup> While proximity and density may no longer be measurable empirically, the virtual proximity created through fiber optic cables, webcams and social networking sites diminishes the need for physical proximity. The value of the “thing” may not be as relevant where ideas and meaning can be expressed through digital images and computer-generated models.

### **Summarizing the Attributes**

These attributes provide insight into dwelling’s complex nature. Their importance to dwelling illuminates the reality that dwelling cannot be accomplished simply through construction of a building. Some attributes emphasize the material world while others pertain to the immaterial. Man’s dwelling pursuit seeks to incorporate all of these attributes to achieve a fully orbéd existence. The satisfaction of each attribute remains uniquely individual and can be accomplished through various means.

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<sup>94</sup> At the time, the internet was not in existence, so Heidegger was referring to air travel, the telephone and the television.

<sup>95</sup> Heidegger, “The Thing,” 166.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE IMMATERIAL AND THE INTERNET

The immaterial nature of certain dwelling attributes makes it possible for these attributes to manifest independently of place. One possible realm in which these attributes may be found is the immaterial domain of the internet. Increased online participation and use suggests that the internet lends itself to the incorporation of certain dwelling attributes. This chapter highlights these attributes and their manifestation online. Survey data is presented to indicate trends as well as demonstrate how these attributes fit within the internet and its applications.

### **Increased presence online**

Increased internet use over the last decade indicates the internet provides more resources and applications that satisfy daily needs. The Pew Internet and American Life Project, part of the Pew Research Center, (a non-profit organization whose mission is to track trends and provide information about forces influencing American society) has tracked internet use over the last decade.<sup>1</sup> Since 2001, internet use among adults has increased from 50 percent to nearly 80 percent. This increased use is partly attributed to the development of social networking sites. Participation in social networking sites, tracked by the Pew Research Center since 2004, has increased from 5 percent to nearly 30 percent in just five years.<sup>2</sup> While youth are widely believed to be the dominant demographic using these sites, the survey data indicates that adults use social networking sites more frequently and account for the sudden increase in online social networking.<sup>3</sup> Respondents claim the primary reason for using social networking sites is to maintain relationships with friends and family. Thirty-seven percent of adult users of social networking sites access their page daily, suggesting that online social networking is a

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<sup>1</sup> The Pew Research Center, "About Us," at <http://www.pewinternet.org/About-Us.aspx> (accessed July 21, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Online Activities," at <http://www.pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data/Online-Activities-20002009.aspx> (accessed July 21, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Amanda Lenhart, "Adults and Social Network Websites," Pew Internet & American Life Project, January 14, 2009, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Adults-and-Social-Network-Websites.aspx> (accessed on July 21, 2009).

preferred method to connect and interact socially. The manifestation of dwelling attributes including interaction, exchange, and community may explain the increase in internet use.

### **Conducting a survey**

I conducted a survey to determine if increased internet use may be attributed to the development of dwelling attributes online. Using the fourteen dwelling attributes outlined in Chapter One, I generated a series of questions that were framed to determine whether the respondent continues to use physical locations and objects to conduct daily activities or if he or she looks online. A convenience sample was collected from a wide range of the researcher's friends, family, and acquaintances. The surveys maintained the respondents' anonymity but demographic data was collected in order to observe trends and tendencies. Of 300 surveys distributed, 244 responses were returned comprising 81 percent. The demographic breakdown of these 244 is as follows: 18-24 (131 respondents or 54 percent), 25-34 (43 respondents or 17 percent), 35-40 (17 respondents or 7 percent), 41-55 (23 respondents or 9 percent) and 55+ (26 respondents or 11 percent) with four non-responses. The respondents' level of education is as follows: high school (39), some college (124), college- BA or BS (52), graduate (12), post-graduate/professional (8) and nine unresponsive. Certain dwelling attributes and their manifestation online are discussed in the subsequent chapter. The survey results are incorporated into this discussion to demonstrate emerging trends or the lack thereof. The complete survey is included in Appendix B as well as a matrix of responses to each question.

The survey data collected indicates that 98 percent of respondents own or have access to web-enabled devices including desktop and laptop computers and cellular telephones. Only four respondents did not own any of these devices. Of those with access to the internet, 41 percent claim to be online between one and three hours each day outside of work and school. Another 16 percent claim to be online for more than three hours each day. The remaining 40 percent use the internet less than one hour per day. This means that 97 percent of respondents log on daily and 57 percent spend more than one hour online each day indicating that the internet has become an integral component of



many people's lives. The incorporation of the internet into many people's daily routine suggests it provides satisfaction that may be found in the physical world but satisfaction is being found online as well.

## 1. Exchange/Interaction

Social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace provide for the attributes of exchange and interaction online. The importance of interaction and exchange for dwelling plays an integral role in Christian Norberg-Schulz's concept of dwelling and he correlates these attributes to the city. He quotes American urbanist Milton Webber, "the essence of the city is not place, but interaction."<sup>4</sup> Interaction contributes to a city's vibrancy more so than the physical, constructed space. Online social networking sites facilitate interaction and exchange much like a city but without the reliance on physical places. Social networking sites connect people with shared interests, backgrounds or purpose and provide opportunities to reestablish or maintain old friendships and create new ones.

Over the last five years, the popularity and use of social networking sites has exploded, the two dominant sites being MySpace and Facebook. The researcher's survey indicates that social networking sites are a popular component in people's online activity. The survey indicates that 73 percent of respondents belong to at least one social networking site (many belong to more than one), while only 23 percent do not. This suggests people are using the internet as a venue to engage in social interaction. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2008 found that 89 percent of those with social network profiles use them to maintain contact with friends and 49 percent use them to make new friends.<sup>5</sup> In 2009, Facebook touts 175 million members and grows at an estimated rate of 5 million members weekly while MySpace has recently leveled off in member growth.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> As quoted in Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture, Meaning and Place*, 27.

<sup>5</sup> Lenhart, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Jessi Hempel and Beth Kowitt "How Facebook is Taking Over Our Lives," *Fortune* 159, no. 4: 48-56. 2009, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 7, 2009).



Figure 2: My home profile page on Facebook. The page contains links to friends, groups, photos, quizzes and other social activities. The profile page serves as a portal to the world of Facebook and is the location where users reconnect with old friends, make new friends and express their identity.

Those who use Facebook and MySpace often discover other connections through existing relationships. Social networking sites provide users with the option to connect with people who share similar hobbies or interests and suggest “friends” to others. “Friends” in this context refers to people with whom users have indicated a willingness to share access to their social networking page. The use of the term “friend” indicates the original intent of social networking site creators. The intent was to maintain connections with people with whom users previously knew but has since developed into an arena where new acquaintances and connections are made. Under this context, the degree to which someone is a “friend” varies and can include a relative, lifelong acquaintance, or someone who may be an alumna/us of the same school but with whom the user has had no prior interaction. For example, alumni of Washington State University can subscribe to feeds and join member groups tracking the progress of Cougar sport teams.<sup>7</sup> Social networking sites also provide opportunities to pledge support to various organizations or causes. As users join new groups and organizations, they can recommend joining to the people within their network of friends; thereby, expanding social networks and potentially contributing to increased social engagement. Just like networking in person, virtual networking can provide new opportunities and information to its users.

In addition to using social networking sites for interaction, the internet allows users to log on to conduct exchange with others. Norberg-Schulz writes that dwelling means, “to meet others for exchange of products, ideas and feelings, that is, to experience life as a multitude of possibilities.”<sup>8</sup> The exchange of goods, ideas and feelings is now possible without the need for physical markets, bazaars or even the public square, since the advent of the internet. Virtual representations of goods through digital photographs and virtual storefronts diminish the need for physical locations. In fact, 67 percent of those surveyed indicate a preference to selling an object online using EBay, Amazon.com or Craigslist over traditional means. This may indicate that people no longer feel a need to meet in physical places for the sale of goods. However, online shopping is only one of the “multitude of possibilities” available online. A simple Google search on any given topic reveals the millions of web

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<sup>7</sup> www.facebook.com. Followers of cougar sports can join this “group” among other groups.

<sup>8</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

pages available at a mouse click. The internet's complexity may be likened to Norberg-Schulz's analysis of the urban environment where man identifies with the city and claims, "I am a New Yorker,"<sup>9</sup> only it may now be said, "I am a Facebooker or EBayer."

While the exchange of goods is now possible without physical stores, perhaps the clearest example of manifestation of the immaterial nature of exchange is the internet's facilitation of the exchange of ideas. In ancient Greece, the agora played an integral role in civic involvement and interaction and provided the physical space where political ideas were expressed; today, that agora is virtual. The internet allows for the distribution of political ideas and messages to a broader public, extending the public space of politics.<sup>10</sup> Those interested in political ideas can gather online in a virtual agora and debate the merits of government and discuss policy. Then, they can work to exact change in the physical world despite being geographically distant.<sup>11</sup> The appropriation of the internet by the public creates "a new public space in which the citizenry can become informed and organized for rational political activity."<sup>12</sup>

An example of politics' transition to the virtual domain is its application during the 2008 presidential elections. In 2008, presidential candidates established MySpace and Facebook pages and the popularity or appeal of a candidate could be measured by the number of supporters on their respective pages.<sup>13</sup> For example, Barack Obama boasted nearly 3 million supporters while John

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<sup>9</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 51

<sup>10</sup> Zizi Papacharissi, "The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere," *New Media Society*, vol 4, 2002: 9-27. Papacharissi and others note that the extension of the public space online does not extend the public sphere. Because the internet is not available to all this diminishes the effectiveness of online political discourse. It cannot be assumed that the extension of political discourse online will increase democratic involvement.

<sup>11</sup> Although the internet provides opportunities to organize and distribute political information, politics remains linked to physical locations. MoveOn.org, perhaps the best known political website, has contended with this issue of virtual presence and physical presence. After ten years of only online presence, MoveOn.org found it necessary to establish satellite offices where political organizers can meet. Members of the group often choose to meet in person to participate in rallies and other protests that cannot be carried out online. Organizers of MoveOn.org recognized that petitions for change generated and submitted online were less effective or disregarded by politicians. In 2007, a "virtual march on congress" was organized on MoveOn.org and participants were encouraged to call Congress to express their opposition against the surge in Iraq. See <http://pol.moveon.org/virtualmarch/>

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Koch, "Cyber Citizen or Cyborg Citizen: Baudrillard, Political Agency, and the Commons in Virtual Politics," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 20(2&3), 2005: 159-175.

<sup>13</sup> Steffan Dalsgaard, "Facework on Facebook: The Presentation of Self in Virtual Life and its Role in the US Elections," *Anthropology Today*, Vol 24, No. 6, Dec. 2008: 8-12.

McCain only shared 620,000.<sup>14</sup> Supporters could donate money and volunteer to distribute campaign materials through the candidate's social networking page. While the outcome of the 2008 presidential election depended on multiple factors, the internet's application as a tool to connect a diverse group of people and establish a shared identity can no longer be overlooked. Politicians are not the only people to embrace the political power of the internet. MoveOn.org is a grassroots organization that distributes petitions and solicits support for causes online. The organization began with simple email petitions and grew into a political force. MoveOn has members across the country conducting their work via email and online communications. The ability to share ideas and feelings online demonstrates how the internet satisfies the need for interaction and exchange and it may serve to satisfy a second dwelling attribute: community and fellowship.

## **2. Community/Fellowship**

The foundations of interaction and exchange can lead to the development of community in the physical world and possibly in the virtual world. When people meet and exchange ideas, they find common beliefs upon which a community can develop. Norberg-Schulz emphasizes this claiming, "[dwelling] means to come to an agreement with others, that is, to accept a set of common values."<sup>15</sup> A community is a group of people that shares common values and an agreed upon code for living.<sup>16</sup>

Engagement with a community begins with the desire to find community groups and information. The researcher's survey asked respondents where they seek community information. Forty-seven percent (116) said they use the internet to research community events and activities; while 41 percent (101) rely on the local newspaper and 11 percent (27) the television or radio. Pew Research Center's 2001 survey indicated that 35 percent of internet users go online to find out about local events

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 11

<sup>15</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 7.

and community groups.<sup>17</sup> This data indicates that while the newspaper, radio and television remain significant sources to gain community information, comparison of my survey data to Pew Research Center's data indicates the internet's usefulness as a tool to access local, community information is increasing, and more people demonstrate a preference to it. This trend may be attributed to the rapid availability of information and the rapidity in which new information can be posted and distributed to those interested. However, this also makes the internet a viable realm in which new interest groups and established community groups can make primary contact with people searching for community involvement.

The internet's capacity to promote community beyond providing information is developing. In the book *Better Together, Restoring the American Community*, Robert Putnam addresses the internet and its potential for creating community through his examination of the website [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org).<sup>18</sup> Craigslist, which started in San Francisco in 1995, is a free website where users post listings about goods for sale, services, trade, apartments and job postings. One way in which users establish community norms, values and an agreed upon code of living is by sharing the responsibility for monitoring and discouraging improper use by "flagging" inappropriate postings.<sup>19</sup> Putnam acknowledges that through self-monitoring and shared responsibility, Craigslist does demonstrate some of the preconditions for community. Putnam writes, "the user control over norms and content that is gradually differentiating these sites from one another argues in favor of there being at least a core of genuine community at Craigslist."<sup>20</sup> Putnam is reluctant to use the term "community"<sup>21</sup> to

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<sup>17</sup> John B. Horrigan, "Online Communities: Networks that Nurture Long-Distance Relationships and Local Ties," Pew Internet & American Life Project, October 31, 2001, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2001/Online-Communities.aspx> (accessed July 21, 2009), 6.

<sup>18</sup> Robert D. Putnam and Lewis M. Feldstein, *Better Together, Restoring the American Community*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 227.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 238. "Flagging" is a process by which users mark or "flag" an inappropriate posting that then results in the posting being dropped from the server and returned to the user making the posting. Inappropriate language, scams or other offensive material is managed by Craigslist users through this process. This establishes and maintains values and codes of conduct that are the foundations of a community.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>21</sup> Putnam feels that the use of "community" to describe Craigslist and similar websites diminishes its meaning to nothingness. See Putnam, 234.

describe Craigslist but remarks that the site manages to “establish and maintain community norms” which are defining characteristics of community.<sup>22</sup>

Participation in civic organizations has been in decline steadily over time as noted by Putnam.<sup>23</sup> To determine the extent of involvement in civic organizations, my survey asked respondents to indicate affiliation with any of the following organizations: PTA, Lions Club, Rotary, Toastmasters, a book club, church group, community watch, or “other.” The survey indicates that involvement in traditional civic organizations is limited. Forty-six percent claimed membership to a church group, while other groups, both those specified and not, accounted for 26 percent. Ninety-nine respondents chose to write in “no” or elected not to respond. The dwindling involvement in civic organizations may be attributed to many factors. While traditional civic involvement is in decline, a 2001 Pew Research Center survey found that more than half of internet users joined online organizations, including organizations pre-dating the internet. The same survey also indicated that those online used the internet as a tool to connect with local groups and communities that meet regularly in person.<sup>24</sup> While a multitude of factors contributes to decreased civic engagement, Pew Research Center’s survey suggests that the internet does not diminish civic engagement but serves as a tool to those wishing to be involved.

The internet’s potential for bridging the gaps between traditional civic organizations and “tertiary organizations” may be recognized in virtual communities.<sup>25</sup> The internet provides “virtual third places” not unlike the “third places” suggested by sociologist Ray Oldenburg.<sup>26</sup> Places such as chat rooms, social networking sites and Craigslist are some possible corollaries to the corner coffee

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>23</sup> For a compelling study about dwindling involvement in civic organizations, see Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Horrigan, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Horrigan, 9. “Tertiary associations” are geographically spread organizations typically lacking local chapters that request membership dues in exchange for a newsletter and regular updates.

<sup>26</sup> Horrigan, 10. Examples of these “third places” include bars, cafes, or bookstores. They are places where people meet and spend time discussing their daily lives and the neighborhood. See Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of the Community*, (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1999).

shop, local bar or bookstore. The extension of a person's social network beyond that which is geographically proximate by means of the internet may contribute to the creation of social capital.

Social capital is understood as “the collection and access of resources made possible through associations among people.”<sup>27</sup> Robert Putnam questions whether websites are capable of creating social capital. Putnam hinges the creation of social capital upon the creation of trusting and reciprocal relationships and his research revealed very little evidence supporting the establishment of social capital within these parameters.<sup>28</sup> He attributes this to the fleeting nature of the online world where anyone can log in, comment and log out before hearing what others have to say in response.<sup>29</sup> For Putnam, the transient nature of the internet diminishes the possibility of creating social capital. Putnam's work, published in 2003 counters a 2001 report by the Pew Research Center, in which online virtual communities were found to be active, engaged and involved in regular communication online.<sup>30</sup> This suggests that virtual communities can contradict the assumption of the internet as transient, fleeting and devoid of meaningful interactions. Putnam's analysis remains fixed in the importance of physical places and proximity but acknowledges the internet's capacity to strengthen social ties and relationships through a combination of online and face-to-face interactions creating a strengthening “alloy.”<sup>31</sup> Putnam notes that websites that facilitate the exchange of political, economic and other ideals to instigate change may be more successful in creating social capital online.<sup>32</sup> Social networking sites are promoting these social capital “generators” as noted in their use in the 2008 elections.

### **3. Virtual Gathering and Identity Formation**

Gathering relates to place identification and the establishment of a human being's identity. The act of gathering objects is understood as a means by which a particular worldview or

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<sup>27</sup> J.S. Coleman, “Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital,” in *American Journal of Sociology*, 94 (Supplement), S95–S120, 198.

<sup>28</sup> Putnam, *Better Together, Restoring the American Community*, 227.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>30</sup> Horrigan, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Putnam, 235.

<sup>32</sup> Putnam, 237.



understanding may be expressed.<sup>33</sup> From my survey, respondents were asked what objects they choose to gather around their places of work or study. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents admitted to surrounding their places at work or school with some form of personal object. The gathering of meaningful objects and their placement within a space, such as a desk at school or work, demonstrates acceptance of a place and its transformation into a meaningful place. That many of the objects were personal, such as photographs, suggests that the space becomes an extension of self. The establishment of meaningful place in the physical world manifests in the virtual through assessment, sorting and collection of the “multitude of possibilities” available online. Just as a person absorbs, evaluates and gathers meaning from the physical world, the same can occur online through the exploration of the internet, the collection of various links, data and information. Once collected, a person inserts the gathered elements into their social networking page as an expression of identity.

Because identity is an internal phenomenon unique to every individual it may be impossible to prove empirically what contributes to or influences identity formation. However, the expression of identity manifests itself in various ways and the survey asked how respondents felt they best expressed their identity. The survey indicates that music, personal photos, and the internet were respondents’ top three choices for expressing their identity. Now that music and photos can be transmitted digitally, the application of these virtual objects for identity expression can be implemented online. Social networking sites permit users to upload profile photos and embed music and videos into a user’s profile page. Users can also embed links to other websites or upload digital images found online. The collection and placement of these virtual objects within a social networking profile page is not unlike the gathering of personal objects and their placement within a person’s workplace or school place. Facebook and MySpace are two examples where personal photos can be uploaded and shared with friends. However, they also go beyond posting personal photos at a desk because users of these sites have access to the photos of their friends and family. This may contribute to a more personal connection than is possible in the physical world.

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<sup>33</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “The Phenomenon of Place,” 425, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 18.

Identity development online is not limited to the placement of photos, music and videos within a social networking profile page. Norberg-Schulz wrote of identity development, “when we have a world, we dwell, in the sense of gaining an individual identity within a complex and contradictory fellowship.”<sup>34</sup> Dwelling becomes dependent on the establishment of an identity through the confrontation of diverse opportunities and possibilities. Norberg-Schulz emphasizes that dwelling is to “experience life as a multitude of possibilities.”<sup>35</sup> The internet may facilitate identity formation through increased access, interaction and opportunity which otherwise may not be accessible in the physical world. Through online encounters and engagement in virtual communities, users may develop or refine their individual identity based on these interactions. Putnam noted that users of Craigslist “feel connected to a community and see their participation in the site as part of their identity.”<sup>36</sup> Virtual identity remains linked to the identity in the physical world. Online social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace build on its users’ identities by allowing them to add elements to their profile pages while remaining grounded in their physical selves.

Another emerging social networking site is Second Life. Second Life, created by Linden Labs and launched in 2003 is an online virtual world where users create avatars and a “second life” in a computer-generated three-dimensional world. Second Life seeks to establish a spatial relationship through computer-generated worlds similar to that experienced in the physical world. While the environments are completely fabricated and possibilities are unlimited, many of the “worlds” mimic the physical world. Users buy and sell goods and services. They can design and create virtual buildings, landscapes and objects. Second Life has an assortment of user groups that can be joined. William J. Mitchell in *City of Bits* writes about the development of computer-generated three-dimensional worlds. He claims that the lines between the physical and virtual world would blur, making it difficult to distinguish between real and artificial worlds.<sup>37</sup> He posits further, “we are all

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<sup>34</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 51.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>36</sup> Putnam, 235.

<sup>37</sup> William J. Mitchell, *City of Bits, Space, Place and the Infobahn*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 20.

cyborgs now, architects and urban designers of the digital era must begin by retheorizing the body in space.”<sup>38</sup>

The blurring of the physical with the virtual world presents many possibilities and obstacles. Because the virtual realm is limited only by processing power, digital storage and internet speed, a three-dimensional world created online has the potential to be boundless and infinitely expandable. Access to this world could only be limited by users’ accessibility to the internet or their desire to participate. The potential for a limitless, unbounded environment in the virtual realm has proven appealing to some public institutions. On June 9, 2009, Washington State University announced the opening of its Second Life campus to students.<sup>39</sup> WSU is not the only university to extend its learning to the virtual world.<sup>40</sup> The creation of virtual learning environments raises questions as to the relevance of a physical university and traditional university classrooms. Washington State University’s Second Life campus appears very similar to its physical counterpart with computer-generated representations of the Terrell Mall and its surrounding buildings. The desire to recreate the material world within the virtual suggests a continued dependence on the physical relationships and identity rooted in the university’s physical campus.

Individuals remain tied to their physical identities much like institutions. The survey asked respondents if they belonged to Second Life. Only one respondent indicated having a Second Life profile. The key difference between Second Life and other social networking sites is that Second Life requires users to create a new identity independent of their real world identity. Users can choose to include their first name as part of their avatars’ name but the surname must be chosen from a provided list. Physical characteristics can be recreated to mirror the user’s physical body or created according to the user’s desires. This identity flexibility permits users the freedom to experiment and experience new things but it also reduces the connection users may have with their Second Life avatar. The

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>39</sup> WSU Today, “Virtual Life, WSU to launch 3D campus on Second Life,” June 9, 2009 <http://www.wsutoday.wsu.edu/Pages/Publications.asp?Action=Detail&PublicationID=14686&PageID=> (accessed June 21, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> A search for universities on Second Life yields a list of 171 different learning institutions. Some of the more notable include Princeton, Stanford University, and Montana State University.

importance of identity as it pertains to dwelling suggests that the creation of a make-believe identity decreases the sense of dwelling because it is not considered true to life. This identity flexibility and independence from physical world factors gives Second Life the sensation of a video game. However, some who do participate in Second Life find it beneficial as a social networking tool. Some users have found love through Second Life that has developed into real world relationships.<sup>41</sup> It is through these interactions that Second Life straddles the domain between social networking and video games. Second Life may not yet be as popular as sites like Facebook and MySpace, but it may be only a matter of time before more people embrace an avatar and the virtual world Second Life offers.

The development of identity relies upon the gathering of surrounding meanings, evaluation of those meanings and their recombination and expression to others. Identity is a personal and unique attribute that forms within the psyche. Because identity develops independently of physical place, it is possible to consider the internet as another environment where ideas can be gathered, identities formed and, through social networking sites, expressed.



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<sup>41</sup> Jessica Bennett, "Digital Love," Newsweek, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/189784> (accessed April 7, 2009). This article tells the story of Rhonda and Paul. Rhonda and Paul met online in Second Life four years ago. Since then, they have dated virtually and developed a relationship through their avatars. After three weeks of virtual dating, Paul and Rhonda were married in Second Life. Since then, Paul and Rhonda have expanded their relationship and have met in person. Paul lives in Wales and Rhonda in California, so for now, they continue to court online in Second Life and via webcam.

Figure 3: My Second Life avatar, Maxx Brentley. Second Life is a virtual 3-D world created by users and contains many of the same objects found in the physical world such as buildings, trees, clothes and other objects that enrich the online experience. Avatars can chat, gesture and interact. The creation of virtual worlds blurs the lines between the physical and the virtual and raises the question: What is real?

#### 4. Making a place online

“Making” as it pertains to dwelling is the means by which a world understanding is expressed. Norberg-Schulz emphasizes the concrete world as the express manifestation of understanding.<sup>42</sup> Heidegger places making, or building, within the immaterial realm claiming, “poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building.”<sup>43</sup> Poetic creation relates to the immaterial articulation and expression of ideas pertaining to how a human dwells. Mary MacDonald refers to the significance of the mind in place creation arguing, “places are conceived of and constructed by human beings.”<sup>44</sup> The conception of places becomes an act of making in and of itself. Heidegger calls this “poetry,” MacDonald refers to it as “conceptualization.” The initial conceptualization of a place or a way of being is often followed by the act of building or making. Place conceptualization and making begins with the desire to express a worldview or identity. The desire to make something reflecting identity is revealed in my survey.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents indicated that—given the choice—they would design and build their primary place of residence. Twenty-one percent indicate a preference to purchase an existing residence then remodel it according to their desires. What this data indicates is that a majority of respondents feel a need to make or modify their world. Although the question corresponds directly to the built environment it reveals that having the option to shape the environment is significant for dwelling and this ability to make and modify environments is important to people.

Making a place online became possible as the internet evolved over time. “Web 2.0” refers to the second developmental phase of the internet that expanded its functionality beyond simple communication and information retrieval into a platform for participant involvement.<sup>45</sup> Web 2.0

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<sup>42</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “The Phenomenon of Place,” 425.

<sup>43</sup> Heidegger, “Poetically Man Dwells,” 215, 227.

<sup>44</sup> MacDonald, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Darcy DiNucci, “Fragmented Future.” *Print* 53, no. 4: 32. 1999. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 5, 2009).

allows users to create and maintain their own web site.<sup>46</sup> Web 2.0 enthusiasts refer to this as participatory design and the architecture of participation.<sup>47</sup> Social networking sites, blogs, and wikis are examples of the products of the internet's evolution. Before Web 2.0, programmers wrote complex code and designed web applications, but in 2009 users work with programmers to design websites, create content, transfer information and ideas online, produce video, distribute photos and share on a worldwide scale. Social networking pages provide users with a basic structure and kit of parts that allows users to make their virtual place. Users can include links, music, photos, images and other objects to make the web page their own. As noted above, the ability to make or modify an environment is desirable to human beings and the evolution of the internet makes modification of the online environment possible. That modification manifests itself through ones and zeroes rather than bricks and mortar, but it remains the personal expression of its maker.

## 5. Orientation, Boundaries and Thresholds

The dwelling attributes of orientation, boundary and threshold manifest themselves in the virtual world much the same way they manifest in the physical world. Orientation within the virtual online environment begins with the establishment of a center. Max Robinson writes of center, "centre is necessary for man to orient himself, find refuge from the world's chaos and to establish his identity."<sup>48</sup> The center becomes the point from which all explorations of the virtual world begin.<sup>49</sup> The importance of center has not gone overlooked by social networking site creators. Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg envisions Facebook becoming the point of departure for anyone wishing to

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<sup>46</sup> There are disputes as to the meaning of Web 2.0. The term suggests that a new version of the web has been developed, but there exists a debate that the basic infrastructure of the web is unchanged, only abstracted and adapted. Whether or not Web 2.0 really is distinctly different from the early internet does not diminish the fact that the advent of sites such as Facebook and YouTube has changed how we use the internet and the extent to which we use it. A major proponent for Web 2.0 is Tim O'Reilly of O'Reilly media. In 2004, O'Reilly media held the first Web 2.0 conference and presented a series of discussions regarding Web 2.0 and what made it different from Web 1.0. O'Reilly has written an article on the subject and it can be accessed at his webpage, <http://oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html?page=1>.

<sup>47</sup> Tim O'Reilly, "What is Web 2.0?" <http://oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html?page=1> (accessed July 5, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> Robinson, 148.

<sup>49</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, 22.

access other web sites, connect with friends, or join forums because it will be the home base of a person's virtual identity.<sup>50</sup> Internet domains such as Yahoo! and Google vie for users' attention and encourage the use of their domains as homepages. Choice of a homepage in effect becomes the center around which online orientation begins.<sup>51</sup>

In the virtual environment, URLs serve as boundaries and thresholds. The importance of boundary and threshold as it pertains to place is noted by Norberg-Schulz. He contends, "boundary and threshold are constituent elements of place. They form part of a figure which discloses the spatiality in question."<sup>52</sup> The establishment of virtual place relies on these distinguishing web pages and URLs to differentiate between spaces. These URLs serve as the boundaries and thresholds much like walls and gates in the physical world. Password protected or user-restricted web pages reinforce the sense of boundary and threshold, and the transition from one web page to another is as apparent as crossing a physical threshold. Websites that are determined useful or interesting can be bookmarked and may be likened to nodes connected by links or "paths" as described by Kevin Lynch.<sup>53</sup>

The virtual world mimics the physical world in order to facilitate orientation and movement within an otherwise boundless space. Web designers provide cues indicating movement from web page to web page. The basic navigation tools of "back" and "forward" suggest orientation much like the physical world where movement is contextually related to the human body.<sup>54</sup> Center, orientation, boundary and thresholds transcend physical place and can be found within the virtual realm.

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<sup>50</sup> Hempel and Kowitt, 48-56.

<sup>51</sup> Internet terminology reflects terms and descriptors used in the physical world. It can be assumed that these terms were appropriated because they serve the same purpose online as they do in the physical world. Homepage, domain, portal, and firewall are examples where the architects of the internet mimicked the physical world to create familiarity in a foreign realm.

<sup>52</sup> Norberg-Schulz, "Heidegger's Thinking on Architecture," 436.

<sup>53</sup> Kevin Lynch writes about nodes, paths and orientation within the built environment in the book *Image of the City*.

<sup>54</sup> Grange, "Place, Body and Situation," 72-74.

## 6. Stability

Norberg-Schulz argues, “*stabilitas loci* is a necessary condition for human life.”<sup>55</sup> Stability as it pertains to dwelling depends less on a fixed physical place than the establishment of a routine and relationships. David Seamon provides insight into this idea as well. He claims, “dwelling involves a lifestyle of regularity, repetition and cyclicity all grounded in an atmosphere of care and concern for places, things and people.”<sup>56</sup> Within this context, the seemingly unstable nature of the internet becomes stable through the regular and repeated visits to a particular web page. The survey results indicate that when accessing the internet, most visit the same four or five websites on a regular basis. This suggests the development of a system of permanent actions or habits, which establishes a sense of stability. This fits according to Pierre Bourdieu’s model of *habitus* as “a system of dispositions, that is, of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking, or a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata.”<sup>57</sup>

The importance of physical place as it pertains to stability may be less relevant in a highly connected society. Stability may be achieved more successfully through the interpersonal relationships that exist between people. Survey results indicate that 51 percent of respondents prefer communicating with their family over the phone while 36 percent prefer face-to-face interaction. Interestingly, more respondents favor communication with friends to occur in person (37 percent) compared to 27 percent choosing the telephone. This may be accounted for due to the perceived instability associated with friendships in comparison to familial relationships that may be considered inherently more stable. However, the distribution of preferred communication methods is broader among friends than with family. Texting and emailing among friends account for 21 and 10 percent respectively compared to 4 and 7 percent when communicating with family. Considering the demographic data, the trend toward more diverse communication methods such as texting and

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<sup>55</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “Phenomenon of Place,” 422.

<sup>56</sup> David Seamon, “Reconciling Old and New Worlds: The Dwelling-Journey Relationship as Portrayed in Vilhelm Moberg’s ‘Emigrant’ Novels,” in *Dwelling, Place and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, ed. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), 227.

<sup>57</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “Habitus,” in *Habitus: A Sense of Place, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, ed. Jean Hillier and Emma Rooksby, (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 43.



emailing between friends may be attributed to the familiarity and integration of cell phones and the internet into the lives of 18-24 year olds. Regardless, the ability to remain linked across broad geographical areas through communication tools such as telephones and the internet suggests a diminished need for physical places to experience stability. The continued nurture of relationships both familial and friendly through social networking sites and the ease of communication they afford contribute to maintaining a stable, interpersonal network of relationships.

## **7. Security and Time/History**

Online security is most often associated with passwords, anti-virus software or firewalls, but this oversimplifies this attribute. Security develops not only from a sense of safety, but through the development of routines and the ability to orient within the surrounding environment. Norberg-Schulz writes of security, “to be lost is evidently the opposite of the feeling of security which distinguishes dwelling.”<sup>58</sup> Geographer Joseph Grange builds on this definition writing, “social place must contain two elements: first, a protective routine shielding humans from the devastating intrusion of novelty; second, an openness that allows, even encourages, freedom and its outcomes.”<sup>59</sup> The freedom allowed by the internet may be reflected in a user’s willingness to conduct routine daily activities online.

Beyond the freedom gained by feeling protected online, the use of the internet to perform routine activities requiring security of valuables suggests the development of trust in the virtual realm. To test the development of trust, the survey asked how respondents preferred to conduct their banking. While 53 percent prefer visiting a local branch, 45 percent prefer banking online with only 2 percent banking over the phone suggesting an increased trend toward online banking. While local branches remain the preferred method, the preference of nearly half of the respondents to online banking may suggest increased trust and the development of a sense of security while online.

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<sup>58</sup> Norberg-Schulz, “The Phenomenon of Place,” 423.

<sup>59</sup> Grange, 80.

Feeling secure may be a secondary result of increased online participation. Social networker Facebook recently updated its security settings to provide control over what can be viewed and shared and which may increase online participation and involvement.<sup>60</sup> Sense of security may be strengthened by continued participation and membership in online groups where similar ideas and feelings can be expressed without fear of censure or ridicule. As noted by Putnam, online members of groups such as Craigslist feel it contributes to their identity and involvement suggests a feeling of security.<sup>61</sup> It must be assumed that as online presence and participation grows, so too will security.

Time and history develop concurrently with stability and security. The passage of time and history is portrayed in architectural literature as generational. Philosopher Karsten Harries, for example, argues, “not only space, but also time, are shaped by it in such a way that the individual gains his dwelling place as a member of an ongoing community. This thinking of genuine dwelling is thus regional, as it is generational.”<sup>62</sup> Heidegger’s account of the farmhouse in the Black Forest is laden with a sense of tradition and generations.<sup>63</sup> Heidegger’s account of the farmhouse, like his other writings, revolves around the ideas of dwelling, not the physical dwelling itself.

The survey results suggest that physical place is less important as it pertains to generational ties. Seventy-three percent of respondents consider home where they currently reside, only 23 percent live in the city of their birth, 41 percent in the same city as their parents and 22 percent in the same city as their grandparents. When compared to communication trends between respondents and their family, most choose to call their family on the phone as opposed to meeting them in person. This indicates that generational ties are maintained through communication and connection and do not rely

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<sup>60</sup> Jon Swartz, “Facebook Changes Privacy Tools So Users Feel Safe Sharing: New Settings Allow for Greater Control Over Sharing,” *USA Today* online, <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=7983060&page=1> (accessed July 2, 2009). The use of social networking sites for crime does happen, but police agencies are also using these sites to apprehend criminals and discourage illegal activities. Just as in the physical world, the development of a new environment brings with it those that will abuse and those that seek to protect.

<sup>61</sup> Putnam, *Better Together, Restoring the American Community*, 235.

<sup>62</sup> Harries, “Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” 52.

<sup>63</sup> Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” 160.

on physical place for communication to occur. A Pew Research Center survey found that 89 percent of those surveyed use their online social networking profiles to maintain relationships.<sup>64</sup>

The inter-connectedness of the attributes of stability, security and time indicates that as one develops, so do the others. Stability develops through continual care of relationships and interpersonal connections. These relationships contribute to a sense of safety and security, which, in turn, allow a person the freedom to explore and experience new things. Both stability and security develop as time elapses. The most significant factor of these attributes is their independence of physical place and reliance on immaterial interpersonal relationships. The inclusion of social networking sites within the realm of interpersonal communication allows these attributes to emerge online, independent of the physical realm.

## **8. Bridging distances and creating proximity**

The internet bridges great distances and diminishes distances through increased connectivity and communication. While the internet succeeds in decreasing physical and geographic distance, Heidegger suggests that proximity does not relate to physical space, “the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance. Short distance is not in itself nearness. Nor is great distance remoteness.”<sup>65</sup> While it may seem confusing that great distance is not remoteness and vice versa, Heidegger is suggesting that proximity, like dwelling, must be considered beyond the context of the physical world. Therefore, proximity can be correlated to the intimacy of interpersonal relationships and the maintenance of those relationships through facilitated communication networks like the internet and social networking sites. The internet can be seen as one large neighborhood bridging geographical distances and facilitating interaction, exchange and community.

The diminishment of geographic distances by the internet reduces the ability to distinguish regional identity and character founded in geographical uniqueness. Cultural identity can be expressed

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<sup>64</sup> Lenhart, 6.

<sup>65</sup> Heidegger, “The Thing,” 165.

through language online but the ability to distinguish the boroughs of New York from the parishes of Louisiana cannot be achieved as easily. Craig Newmark, creator of Craigslist, believes that proximity to and a shared experience of the same metropolitan region contributes to Craigslist's success. He claims, "the idea that these are people in your neighborhood is what matters, that these are people you might know or see around town, or at least have a sense of the same local considerations."<sup>66</sup> Proximity and distance are less significant when maintaining social relationships, but for the development and maintenance of regional identity and character, these attributes' material components play an important role.

### **Summary and Observations**

Interaction, exchange and fellowship can be fostered online. The immaterial nature of these dwelling attributes allows for media such as online social networking pages to embrace and enhance them. While there remains some debate whether true community can be established online, there is some evidence that sites such as Craigslist contain some of the precursors to community. Web 2.0 makes it possible for users to gather objects such as images, web links, video and other digital data from the internet and compile it making a website that expresses their world understanding and identity. However, the creation of identity online remains rooted in the real world identity. Virtual campuses developed in Second Life mimic their physical counterparts and survey results indicate that as a social networking site, users have not fully embraced the idea of creating an identity completely removed from that of the real world. This may be overcome in time, but at this moment in history, sites such as Second Life fall more within the realm of video games. Homepages serve as the centers for online orientation and organization and URLs and web pages serve as analogs for boundaries and thresholds. Attributes such as stability, security and time/history appear less rooted in physical place and more dependent on relationships and interaction. This is the strength of the internet's

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<sup>66</sup> Putnam, *Better Together, Restoring the American Community*, 231.

contribution to dwelling; it embraces and emphasizes the interpersonal social relationships and connections independent of physical place.

The Immaterial and the Internet:  Dwelling attributes manifested online								
	Facebook	MySpace	Second Life	EBay	Amazon	Craigslist.org	MoveOn.org	Web 2.0
1. Exchange/Interaction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Community/Fellowship	X	X	X			X	X	
3. Identity/Individuality	X	X				X		X
4. Making	X	X	X					X
5. Orientation/Organization								X
6. Boundary/Threshold	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7. Gathering	X	X						X
8. Time/History	X	X	X			X		X
9. Security	X					X		
10. Stability	X	X	X			X		X
11. Proximity/Distance	X	X	X			X		X

Figure 4: This matrix shows the dwelling attributes that exhibit presence online through certain internet sites such as Facebook and others. Those sites shown are only a representative sample and there are certainly a number of other possible web sites in which certain attributes may be seen.

## CHAPTER THREE: DISCUSSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### **Possibilities and potential**

The objective of this thesis from the outset was to discover a connection or explanation for the proliferation of the internet and its permeation into the lives of so many people. The communicative power of the internet did not appear to explain satisfactorily its proliferation so it was proposed that the internet provides more than ease of communication. This led to the proposition that dwelling and its attributes are finding expression online. As noted in Chapter One, architects and theorists often choose to emphasize the material nature of dwelling resulting in a frequent assumption that dwelling pertains more to the physical place than a combination of the immaterial and material. Writers such as Christian Norberg-Schulz allude to dwelling's two-fold nature but elect to reduce it to a sub-narrative of dwelling. Acknowledging this emphasis on the physical does not diminish dwelling's material attributes but rebalances the relationship between the material and immaterial.

This thesis seeks to bring to light the immaterial attributes of dwelling in order to return them as equal contributors to dwelling. It also seeks to address the importance of both the material, or built environment, and the immaterial or interpersonal relationships, to achieve a more robust and satisfying human existence. Dwelling opens up to many possibilities when it is contemplated as the state of humanity's existence. Heidegger emphasizes that dwelling is not limited to buildings such as homes or apartments but all buildings.<sup>1</sup> Dwelling then follows a person throughout his or her daily routines and encompasses all of the spaces, people and events a person encounters.<sup>2</sup> This understanding repositions immaterial events such as interpersonal interactions, memory, and identity creation as key components of dwelling. Acknowledgement of the immaterial nature of dwelling broadens the dwelling domain and makes it possible to include the internet as another realm where encounters and interaction between human beings enrich the dwelling experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 145.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 146.

The fourteen dwelling attributes articulated in this thesis serve to consolidate and classify significant aspects of dwelling recognized in extant literature. These attributes also help to understand dwelling's two-fold nature. By defining and classifying these attributes, it is possible to grasp how each relates to the material or immaterial. Certain attributes lend themselves to the immaterial such as exchange/interaction, community/fellowship, and identity. Other attributes such as gathering, making, boundary/threshold, security, stability and orientation balance between the material and immaterial. Remaining attributes including character, nature and sensations are more easily experienced in the physical world. These fourteen attributes cannot nor should they be taken as an exhaustive and immutable list of dwelling attributes.

Perhaps the most intriguing element of this exploration is the perspective provided on the internet and how it influences and shapes human activity. Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz and Harries write that the advent of technology diminishes dwelling and attribute it with humanity's sense of being lost. However, the researcher's survey data as well as others' research indicate that the internet does not appear to diminish dwelling but, rather, contributes to its development. Those able to go online are making new connections and finding satisfaction of some of their needs. Social interaction and exchange appear to occur independently of physical place and foster community involvement. Human beings connect in new and intriguing ways and find a place within a broader, global network of people. While shortcomings to a virtual existence such as lack of character, sensation, and the lack of nature still exist, it may be only a matter of time before new developments will address these shortcomings and draw more people into the virtual domain.

### **Attributes not yet manifest online**

The two-fold nature of dwelling inevitably results in some attributes that are more fixed in the material world than the immaterial. This does not suggest that the material attributes supersede the immaterial nor does it diminish the potential of the internet's contribution to a more complete dwelling experience. In 2009, some dwelling attributes remain difficult to express online but this does

not mean that future technological developments will not overcome these difficulties. Of the attributes categorized: character, sensation, and nature demonstrate limited manifestation online and remain predominantly fixed in the material world.

Character, understood as the *genius loci* or spirit of place, is an individual experience that is immaterial but its expression is most often attributed to physical or material objects. Kenneth Frampton explains, “[character is] sensitivity toward local materials, craft work, and, above all, to the subtleties of local light.”<sup>3</sup> Craftwork, which incorporates technical skill and consideration of materials, need not be limited to the physical world. Web page design and computer programming can be acknowledged as craftwork. Other forms of craftwork may include videos, music and digitally created or manipulated images that find broad expression online. These works of craft should be acknowledged for the technical skill and attention to detail in their creation and presentation.

While the technical expertise of craftwork online may be appreciated, the nuances of local light and the tactility of materials are less successfully expressed in the virtual realm. While it is possible to view sunrise, sunset and daylight from anywhere around the world via webcams, the subtleties of light such as temperature change, shade and shadow and passage of time cannot be fully experienced through a computer screen. This disconnection between the senses and experience is also evident in materials. High-resolution digital images allow characteristics such as wood grain, color, texture, luminosity and sheen to be experienced visually, but viewers cannot feel these characteristics. William J. Mitchell predicts that this shortcoming will change as technology develops. He writes, “you will be able to immerse yourself in simulated environments instead of just looking at them through a small rectangular window. This is a crucial difference: you become an inhabitant, a participant, not merely a spectator.”<sup>4</sup> Mitchell anticipates that the development of actuators, temperature and pressure sensitive devices will transmit feedback to users, enhancing the virtual experience. Actuators and motors have seen limited use in the video gaming industry as a means to enhance the gaming experience. Some video game controllers contain “rumble packs” which vibrate in concert with the

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<sup>3</sup> Frampton, “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism,” 473.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, 20.



video game to simulate turbulence, explosions or other disruptions, but their inclusion into the online experience has yet to occur.

This immersion and incorporation of all sensory experiences has not yet been achieved online. While a person may feel the keyboard and mouse, see the images on the screen and hear music or sound bites, he or she is still unable to taste and smell in the virtual world. Using a Likert scale, respondents from my survey were asked how engaged they felt with their surroundings while involved in a number of activities. Driving (43 percent), hiking (28 percent) and exercising (27 percent) are the activities in which respondents feel most engaged with or focused on their surrounding environment. Conversely, playing video games (45 percent), shopping online (31 percent), and watching television (15 percent) are activities in which respondents feel least engaged or focused. Notably, 68 percent of respondents feel moderately to fully engaged while checking email. This may be attributed to the increased use of email as a communication tool both for personal and professional reasons so users' senses may be heightened to ensure no mistakes are made. This may be understood as focus or attention and not be attributed to increased sensory engagement or stimulation. Primarily, the findings from the survey indicate that activities conducted outside the realm of the computer are more likely to evoke more engagement of the senses. While fiber optic cables provide visual connection to remote locations, it remains impossible to touch objects, taste, or smell through these connections.

Nature, understood as non-man-made environment, is unattainable in a completely fabricated world. While it is possible to watch videos of the natural world in high definition, the inability to experience the subtleties of light, temperature, and odor prevents true engagement with nature online. Natural laws do not exist in online virtual worlds so avatars in worlds such as those in Second Life can fly, teleport and move freely across space. This makes these three-dimensional virtual worlds more video game than replacement for the natural world. The recreated nature in a computer-generated world remains flat, dull and less satisfying. This lack of satisfaction is reflected in my survey with 65 percent of the respondents spending one to three hours outside each day compared to 41 percent

spending the same amount of time online. Until nature can be experienced in the same manner online as in the physical world, this dwelling attribute will remain fixed to the material world.

The development of new technologies does not diminish humanity's ability to dwell, but as the internet demonstrates, provides new outlets to develop relationships, make connections and develop community. Although certain dwelling attributes are not yet expressed online, this should not diminish the role the internet plays in humanity's pursuit to dwell. As newer technologies develop, some of the attributes such as character, sensations, and nature may find expression online. Recognition that these attributes are not yet fully expressible online may lead to development of the necessary technologies to overcome this shortcoming.

### **Suggestions for future research**

An examination into the correlation between the internet and dwelling is an emerging field of research and as such, future research over time is necessary. As this thesis proposes, social networking sites and their characteristics satisfy many of dwelling's immaterial attributes. This satisfaction is posited as a possible explanation for the rapid growth of these sites. However, social networking sites are relatively new developments online and as such, this thesis and its theories should be reexamined as time passes. As more time elapses and social networking sites become more established, further data must be collected to determine the extent to which these sites serve to satisfy certain dwelling attributes. The evolution of Facebook and its uses over time will illuminate the reasons why people use social networking sites and whether these sites have become the primary virtual identity for online interactions and communications.<sup>5</sup> As more is written and researched about social networking sites, these findings must be considered and incorporated into the foundations of future studies. As the body of literature pertaining to social networking sites grows, the theories of this thesis may require reformulation to consider new insights.

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<sup>5</sup> Hempel and Kowitt, 2.

Certainly, as the internet begins to reach more people, broader survey data will need to be collected to determine whether people in developing nations use the internet for the same purposes as those in developed nations. Because the survey was drawn from a convenience sample, it cannot be seen as fully representative. Future research would include a broader sampling that would demonstrate trends and tendencies more clearly and make it possible to draw conclusions beyond those already described. A more statistically rigorous sample could reaffirm preliminary findings from the initial survey. The initial survey sought to determine trends toward online participation and activity, so a second survey would refine and ask questions pertaining to online pursuits, use and satisfaction found online. The initial survey was also conducted using physical questionnaires because an online survey would have only reflected online users' tendencies and its purpose was to sample the tendencies of both those online and off. A longitudinal study, tracking respondents for three or four years would demonstrate changes in online behavior or use. A study of this nature could target different age brackets to evaluate differences or similarities between demographics. Future studies could conduct online surveys distributed via email or social networking sites or over the telephone similar to the method practiced by Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center's survey data was extremely beneficial in the formation of many of the ideas for this thesis, but a survey on the notion of online "community" must be conducted following the advent of social networking sites. A survey of this nature would illustrate whether social networking sites resolve some of the issues expressed by Putnam as it pertains to online community development.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis serves two purposes: first, to bring to the fore dwelling's immaterial aspects and second, to provide an explanation how the immaterial attributes are finding expression in the expanding online realm. The exploration into establishing dwelling attributes and acknowledging their dual nature is intended to provide a renewed understanding of dwelling that seek to satisfy both the material and immaterial. It is hoped that the renewed emphasis on dwelling's immaterial component

will encourage many architectural designers to approach design with a holistic approach considering not only the physical attributes of a building or project but also the importance of the immaterial such as social connection and interaction. The desired result from this holistic approach is architecture that does not seek to create “sense of place” through nostalgia, use of stylistic elements, or zoning and planning regulations but architecture that considers the complete existence of inhabitants and meeting this challenge.

Another intriguing aspect of this study is the possibilities and potential that open up within the architectural profession. Architects are tasked with careful design and articulation of the world in which humans live and the emergence of cyber realms presents a new domain where architects can apply their unique knowledge and skill set. As dwelling’s attributes continue to manifest online, the meaning of architecture can change to include these developments. The meaning of architecture can expand to include design of social interactions, creation of identity as well as design of virtual worlds. The power of computers has been embraced in design providing three-dimensional, computer-generated design for real-world projects, so it would not be difficult to translate these skills into the design of virtual worlds and domains. Until some of the attributes discussed in this thesis find expression that is more complete online, computer-generated architecture will remain linked to video games, as is the case with Second Life. However, architects seek to promote interaction and dynamism within their designs and these principles can be applied within the virtual realm. While this thesis uses architectural theory founded in the physical world as its basis, it certainly should not limit the possible uses of this renewed understanding of dwelling to the physically built environment.

The expansion of architecture into the virtual realm can provide new ways to design and develop the internet and its applications resulting in a more satisfactory online experience. A simple online search for the job title “architect” reveals a multitude of jobs available within the computer industry that have appropriated this title. The value of an architect as a planner, designer and thinker has not gone overlooked by computer programmers resulting in job titles such as “software architect” or “network architect.” While the value of the title has been appropriated, the knowledge and design

training of architects has not been carried over to this field necessarily. While the expertise in computer programming may fall beyond the purview of traditional architectural education, the creativity and unique approach to problem solving fostered in architectural programs can translate directly and contribute to an enhanced online experience. Perhaps the application of dwelling theory, most commonly associated with material place, within the immaterial discipline of web design and programming will make the dwelling experience between the virtual and material worlds more satisfying. Perhaps it will present another possibility to address that which Heidegger claims is humanity's problem, "that we must ever learn to dwell."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 161.

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## APPENDIX

## Appendix A: Dwelling Attributes Matrix

### Exchange/Interaction:

Norberg-Schulz: “[Dwelling] means to meet others for exchange of products, ideas and feelings, that is, to experience life as a multitude of possibilities.” *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

Norberg-Schulz quotes American urbanist Milton Webber, “The essence of the city is not place, but interaction.” *Architecture: Meaning and Place*, 27.

Frampton: “Place’s sole legitimacy stems, as it must, from the social constituency it accommodates and represents.” “On Reading Heidegger,” 444.

Fleming: “Place is not merely what was there, but also the interaction of what is there and what happened there.” *The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community through Public Art and Urban Design*, 14.

Relf: “Places are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations.” “Geographical Experiences and Being-in-the-World: The Phenomenological Origins of Geography,” 26.

### Community/Fellowship:

Norberg-Schulz: “Second, [dwelling] means to come to an agreement with others, that is, to accept a set of common values.” *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

Frampton: “Place depends on the conscious signification of social meaning.” “On Reading Heidegger,” 444.

Harries: “Our being in the world is a being with others.” “Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” 56.

Relf: “Places are impalpable territories of social activities and meanings.” “Places have to be made largely through the involvement and commitment of the people who live and work in them.” “Modernity and the Reclamation of Place,” 31, 34.

MacDonald: "A sense of place includes a sense of community." "Introduction: Place and the study of religions," 2.

Grange: "We must envision the environment as showing itself in three ways, the physical, world of nature, social, the world of human relations, and built, the world of human creation." "Place, Body and Situation," 78.

Bourdieu: "The habitus, as the Latin indicates, is something non natural, a set of acquired characteristics which are the product of social conditions and which, for that reason, may be totally or partially common to people who have been the product of similar social conditions." "Habitus," 45.

### **Identity/Individuality:**

Heidegger: "Dwelling is the basic character of human identity." "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 148.

Norberg-Schulz: "Finally, [dwelling] means to be oneself, in the sense of having a small chosen world of our own." "Personal identity, thus, is the content of private dwelling." "When we have a world, we dwell, in the sense of gaining an individual identity within a complex and often contradictory fellowship." *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7, 89, 50.

Zimmerman: "One can live peacefully or dwell appropriately only if one knows, at some profound level, who one really is." "The Role of Spiritual Discipline in Learning to Dwell on Earth," 249.

### **Making:**

Heidegger: "We build because we dwell." "Through what do we attain to a dwelling place? Through building. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building." "Poetically Man Dwells," 215, 227.

Norberg-Schulz: "We may conclude that dwelling means to gather the world as a concrete building or thing." "The Phenomenon of Place," 425.

“Architectural space as a concretization of existential space gives us the key to the problem.” *Existence, Space, Architecture*, 69.

Frampton: “The minimum physical pre-condition for place is the conscious placement of an object in nature, even if that artifice be nothing more than an object in the landscape or the rearrangement of nature herself.” “On Reading Heidegger,” 444.

Harries: “To build is to help decide how man is to dwell on the earth or indeed whether he is to dwell on it at all, rather than drift aimlessly across it.” “The Ethical Function of Architecture,” 396.

MacDonald: “Places are conceived of and constructed by human beings.” “Introduction: Place and the Study of Religions,” 2.

### **Orientation/Organization:**

Norberg-Schulz: “Together identification and orientation make up the general structure of dwelling.” “Orientation within the domain it belongs to completes man’s being-in-the-world.” *The Concept of Dwelling*, 15, 25

“It is therefore not only important that our environment has a spatial structure which facilitates orientation, but that it consists of concrete objects of identification.” “The Phenomenon of Place,” 425.

Fleming: “In order to create place, two of the four-urban design objectives is orientation and direction which reveal layers of meaning and provide visual clarity that links placemaking elements so the visitor can navigate the space.” *The Art of Placemaking: Interpreting Community through Public Art and Urban Design*, 14.

Grange: “There would seem to be four elemental structures that our bodies deploy in order to found place: posture, orientation, feel and comprehension.” “Our incarnate being evaluates place; from that act of orientation, all knowledge grounded in truth arises.” “Place, Body and Situation,” 72, 74.

Robinson: "Centre is necessary for man to orient himself, find refuge from the world's chaos and to establish his identity." "Place-making: the Notion of Centre, A Typological Investigation of Means and Meanings," 148.

### **Boundary/Threshold:**

Heidegger: "A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing." "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 154.

Norberg-Schulz: "A boundary may also be understood as a threshold." "Boundary and threshold are constituent elements of place. They form part of a figure which discloses the spatiality in question." "Heidegger's Thinking on Architecture," 436.

Harries: "If the destruction of boundaries is welcomed by freedom, it also renders man's place arbitrary." "We demand heterogeneity and boundaries, periods and regions, sacred events and central places which can gather a manifold into a meaningful whole." "The Ethical Function of Architecture," 395.

### **Gathering:**

Heidegger: "The bridge is a thing; it gathers the fourfold, but in such a way that it allows a site for the fourfold. By this site are determined the localities and ways by which a space is provided for." "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," 153.

Norberg-Schulz: "We may conclude that dwelling means to gather the world as a concrete building or thing." "The Phenomenon of Place," 425.

"We shall discuss the content of works of architecture, that is, the world they gather, as well as the means which are used to fulfill the gathering, taking the concept of world as our point of departure." *The Concept of Dwelling*, 18.

### **Time/History:**

Norberg-Schulz: "When history is not related to a stable system of places it becomes meaningless." *Existence, Space, Architecture*, 114.

“To some extent the character of a place is a function of time.” “The Phenomenon of Place,” 420.

Frampton: “the ‘non-place urban realm’ may only be modified through a profound consciousness of history and through a rigorous socio-political analysis of the present, seen as a continuing fulfillment of the past.” “On Reading Heidegger,” 444.

Harries: “Not only space, but also time, are shaped by it in such a way that the individual gains his dwelling place as member of an ongoing community. This thinking of genuine dwelling is thus regional, as it is generational.” “Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” 52.

Rolph: “Places are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. Place experiences are time-deepened and memory qualified.” “Geographical experiences and being-in-the-world: The phenomenological origins of geography,” 26

#### **Character:**

Norberg-Schulz: “The particular character of ‘spirit’ of a place was known as the *genius loci*.”

“All landscapes are characterized by an atmosphere which maintains its identity through climatic and seasonal changes.” “To identify with a place primarily means to be open to its character or genius loci, and to have a place in common means to share the experience of the local character. To respect the place, finally, means to adapt new buildings to this character.” *The Concept of Dwelling*, 19, 63.

“Character denotes the general ‘atmosphere’ which is the most comprehensive property of any place.” “The Phenomenon of Place,” 418.

“In general we have to emphasize that all places have character, and that character is the basic mode in which the world is given.” “The Phenomenon of Place,” 420.

Frampton: “sensitivity towards local materials, craft work, and, above all, to the subtleties of local light.” “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism,” 473.

Harries: "This thinking of genuine dwelling is thus regional." "Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture," 52.

### **Sensations:**

Norberg-Schulz: "[Place] is a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture, and colour." "The Phenomenon of Place," 414.

Quoting Piaget, "the true nature of space does not reside in the more or less extended character of sensations as such, but in the intelligence which interconnects these sensations." *Existence, Space & Architecture*, 17.

Frampton: Referring to Alvaro Siza y Viera Frampton highlights the importance of materials and tactile qualities, "tactile and materialist, rather than visual and graphic."

"Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," 473.

MacDonald: "Feeling at one with a particular terrain, we say we have a sense of place; body and mind come to grips with their environment." "Introduction: Place and the Study of Religions," 1.

Grange: "There would seem to be four elemental structures that our bodies deploy in order to found place: posture, orientation, feel and comprehension."

"Place, in effect, is intimacy through the mystery of the body." "Place, Body and Situation," 72, 74.

### **Security:**

Norberg-Schulz: "To be lost is evidently the opposite of the feeling of security which distinguishes dwelling." "The Phenomenon of Place," 423.

"dwelling means to be at peace in a protected place." "The Phenomenon of Place," 425.

Grange: "Social place must contain two elements: first a protective routine shielding humans from the devastating intrusion of novelty; second, an openness that allow, even encourages, freedom and its outcomes." "Place, Body and Situation," 80.



**Stability:**

Norberg-Schulz: “*Stabilitas loci* is a necessary condition for human life.” “Phenomenon of Place,” 422.

“The place, therefore, unites a group of human beings, it is something which gives them a common identity and hence a basis for a fellowship or society. The permanence of the place is what enables it to play this role.” *The Concept of Dwelling*, 9.

Frampton: “The receptivity and sensitive resonance of a place – to wit its sensate validity qua place – depends first on its stability in the everyday sense and second, on the appropriateness and richness of the socio-cultural experiences it offers.” “On Reading Heidegger,” 444.

Harries: Speaking of natural dwelling, “region and history help determine what we find natural and hence inevitable. But the less an individual is bound to a particular place in space and time, the weaker that determination, and the greater the uncertainty about what is to count as natural.” “Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture,” 50.

Bourdieu: “Habitue is a system of dispositions, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking, or a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception, and action.” “Habitue,” 43.

Seamon: “dwelling, which involves a lifestyle of regularity, repetition and cyclicity all grounded in an atmosphere of care and concern for places, things and people.” “Reconciling Old and New Worlds: The Dwelling-Journey Relationship as Portrayed in Vilhelm Moberg’s ‘Emigrant’ Novels,” 227.

**Nature:**

Heidegger: “Mortals dwell in that they save the earth. To save the earth is more than to exploit it or even wear it out. Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate it.” “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” 150.

Norberg-Schulz: "To dwell, therefore, also means to become friends with a natural place." *The Concept of Dwelling*, 7.

Frampton: "In this hypothetical confrontation between the macro-scaled environmental desirability of urban containment and micro-scaled environmental undesirability of high-rise construction, we have perhaps a convenient if highly schematic example of what one might regard as an environmental dialectic of production, that is, a state of affairs wherein the quantitative and qualitative gains at one level should be evaluated against the quantitative and qualitative losses at another. The necessary relation obtaining between place, production, and nature implacably suggest the biological concept of the 'homeostatic plateau.'" "On Reading Heidegger, 445.

Relph: "A place is a whole phenomenon, consisting of three intertwined elements of a specific landscape with both built and natural elements." "Modernity and Reclamation of Place," 34.

Grange: "Engagement with nature requires of primary disengagement." "Place, Body, and Situation," 73.

### **Proximity/Distance:**

Heidegger: "The frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance. Short distance is not in itself nearness. Nor is great distance remoteness." "The Thing," 165.

Norberg-Schulz: "Evidently meeting implies that things are close together, or, in spatial terms, it means density. A city where the parts are scattered around, is no city. Rather the city has to surround us, tightly and firmly." *The Concept of Dwelling*, 53.

Harries: "There is no genuine dwelling without both intimacy and distance." "The Ethical Function of Architecture," 396.

## Appendix B: Survey Questions and Response Matrix

### Please read thoroughly:

This questionnaire does not collect any personally identifiable information. All responses to the following survey will be kept confidential. The information requested precludes the possibility of personal identities being revealed. Please check the box below indicating that you understand and are aware that your identity will not be disclosed in any way and you agree to complete this survey with this awareness.

I understand that no personally identifiable information will be collected in this survey and agree to complete the questions below. (Please check box) ☐

1. If you were listing an object for sale, which method would you choose?  
(Circle only one)
  - a) A want ad in a local newspaper
  - b) Post flyers around the community
  - c) EBay, Craigslist, Amazon or another online forum
  - d) Place a “for sale” sign on the object and place in a visible location
2. Where do you go to find community information? (please choose the source you use most often)
  - a) Local newspaper, newsletter or other printed material
  - b) Television
  - c) Radio
  - d) Internet
3. If you needed to conduct a meeting with people in different locations, would you: (circle only one)
  - a) arrange a conference call
  - b) schedule a meeting in a physical location (conference room, office or elsewhere)
  - c) use videoconferencing (such as Polycom, Skype, webcam or other)
4. When exercising do you prefer: (circle only one)
  - a) Exercising alone
  - b) Exercising with a friend
5. How many personal photos do you have displayed in your home? (circle only one)

0-5	5-15	15-30	30-50	50 or more
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6. How long have you lived in the city or town where you live at the time of taking this survey?

a) < 1year	c) 3-5 years	e) 10-15 years
b) 1-3 years	d) 5-10 years	f) > 15 years

7. When banking do you prefer to: (circle only one)
- a) Visit a local branch
  - b) Conduct banking over the phone
  - c) Bank online
8. If you were looking for a job, where would you go **first** for job listings/opportunities? (choose your first choice)
- a) Want ads in local newspaper
  - b) Job source, work source or another government agency
  - c) Monster.com or other online job service
  - d) Friends, family or other acquaintances
9. When communicating with **family** do you prefer? (please choose one)
- a) Writing a letter
  - b) Calling on the phone
  - c) Emailing
  - d) Meeting in person
  - e) Instant messaging
  - f) Texting
10. When communicating with **friends** do you prefer? (please choose one)
- a) Writing a letter
  - b) Calling on the phone
  - c) Emailing
  - d) Meeting in person
  - e) Instant messaging
  - f) Texting
11. Do you live in the same city as your grandparents?
- Yes                      No
12. Do you live in the same city as your parents?
- Yes                      No
13. Do you live in the city of your birth?
- Yes                      No
14. Are you a member of any of the following groups/organizations? (please circle all that apply)
- a) PTA (parent-teacher association)
  - b) Lions club, Rotary, Toastmasters
  - c) Book club
  - d) Church group
  - e) Community watch
  - f) Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
15. What is your preferred type of exercise or physical activity? (circle one)
- a) running/jogging
  - b) team sports (baseball, football, basketball, soccer, etc.)
  - c) bicycling
  - d) weight lifting
  - e) yoga
  - f) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

16. If given the choice and money were no concern, would you: (circle one)
- a) purchase an existing home
  - b) build your own home
  - c) purchase an existing home and remodel/renovate it
17. Do you rent or own your primary place of residence?
- Rent                      Own
18. How long have you lived at your current residence?
- a) < 1 year                      c) 3-5 years                      e) 10 + years
  - b) 1-3 years                      d) 5-10 years
19. Do you consider your current residence "home"?
- Yes                      No
20. How close do you live to your immediate family? (immediate family includes parents, grandparents, and siblings)
- a) less than 5 miles                      c) 26-75 miles                      e) more than 100 miles
  - b) 6-25 miles                      d) 76-100 miles
21. In a typical day, how much time do you spend *talking* with **family** on the phone?
- a) <1 hour                      c) 3-5 hours
  - b) 1-3 hours                      d) 5 + hours
22. In a typical day, how much time do you spend *talking* with **friends** on the phone?
- a) <1 hour                      c) 3-5 hours
  - b) 1-3 hours                      d) 5 + hours
23. In a typical day, how much time do you spend ***texting*** **family** on the phone?
- a) <1 hour                      c) 3-5 hours                      e) I do not text.
  - b) 1-3 hours                      d) 5 + hours
24. In a typical day, how much time do you spend ***texting*** **friends** on the phone?
- a) <1 hour                      c) 3-5 hours                      e) I do not text.
  - b) 1-3 hours                      d) 5 + hours
25. Which of these do you feel allow you to ***best*** express yourself? (circle one only)
- a) Music                      c) Personal photos                      e) Your home furnishings (furniture, etc.)
  - b) Art                      d) Your home (design, paint color, etc.)                      f) Internet (blogging, Facebook, etc.)
  - g) Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

26. What percentage of your close friends live within 5 miles of your primary residence?
- Less than 25%      25-50%      50-75%      over 75%
27. How much time a day do you spend outside?
- a) < 1 hour      b) 1-3 hours      c) 4-6 hours      d) more than 6 hours
28. How much time do you spend online every day outside of work?
- a) < 1 hour      b) 1-3 hours      c) 3-5 hours      d) 5+ hours
29. When you access the internet, how many websites do you visit on a regular basis each instance you go online? (please consider all websites, including work, email or other)
- (enter number) \_\_\_\_\_
30. Have you ever used twitter?
- Yes      No
31. Does your desk at work/school have any of the following? (circle all that apply)
- a) photos  
b) personal objects (knick-knacks, toys, etc.)  
c) plants/flowers  
d) comic strips or cartoons  
e) none of the above
32. Do you own any of the following? (circle all that apply)
- a) Desktop computer  
b) Laptop computer  
c) Cellular telephone  
d) Web-enabled device (cell phone, blackberry, other)  
e) Electronic reading device (Kindle, other)  
f) None
33. Are you a member of any of the following online communities? (circle all that apply)
- a) Facebook  
b) MySpace  
c) Second Life  
d) Flickr, Picasa, other photo sharing website  
e) Personal website or blog  
f) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
g) I do not belong to any online communities.
34. To which age category do you belong?
- a) 18-24      c) 35-40      e) 55+  
b) 25-34      d) 41-55

35. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- a) High school
- b) Some college
- c) College – Bachelor's Degree
- c) Master's Degree
- d) Doctorate/Professional

36. Consider the place where you feel most relaxed or comfortable. In one or two sentences, describe what contributes to your sense of comfort.

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Using the scale below (1 least engaged, 5 fully engaged), please rate how involved or engaged you feel with your environment (environment refers to your immediate surroundings) while participating in the following activities:

**Exercising**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Hiking**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Working**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Studying**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Reading**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Checking email**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Shopping online**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Grocery Shopping**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Driving**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Watching television**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Listening to music**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

**Playing video games**

1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged				Fully engaged

Question #	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	N/R	
1	47	9	163	25				0	244
2	101	20	7	116				0	244
3	56	153	34					1	244
4	109	134						1	244
5	95	88	43	10	8			0	244
6	26	57	38	28	16	79		0	244
7	129	6	109					0	244
8	53	37	81	72				1	244
9	2	124	18	88	3	9		0	244
10	2	66	22	91	11	52		0	244
	Yes	No							
11	50	191						3	244
12	97	145						2	244
13	56	188						0	244
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
14	11	6	10	114	3	35		57	278*
15	68	63	27	29	8	49		0	244
16	25	164	53					2	244
	Rent	Own							
17	134	107						3	244
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
18	78	60	25	27	53			1	244
	Yes	No							
19	178	64						2	244
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
20	67	30	21	12	112			2	244
21	199	37	2	2				4	244
22	195	38	5	2				4	244
23	170	15	1	3	51			4	244
24	124	48	8	16	46			2	244
25	61	29	43	30	16	35	21	9	244
26	108	59	41	31				5	244
27	35	158	30	15				6	244
28	96	100	25	16				7	244
29	** Open-ended question – Responses vary								
	Yes	No							
30	24	211						9	244
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
31	119	103	34	33	78			11	378*
32	120	178	216	86	6	4		3	613*
33	168	75	1	27	33	19	56	4	383*



	1	2	3	4	5	No Response	Total
<b>Exercising</b>	11	25	69	66	67	6	244
<b>Hiking</b>	50	35	39	45	69	6	244
<b>Working</b>	20	23	60	67	64	10	244
<b>Studying</b>	21	41	70	61	44	7	244
<b>Reading</b>	23	56	57	52	50	6	244
<b>Checking email</b>	27	45	56	61	48		244
<b>Shopping online</b>	75	58	49	26	26	10	244
<b>Grocery shopping</b>	11	36	79	64	48	6	244
<b>Driving</b>	5	6	36	84	105	8	244
<b>Watching television</b>	36	68	58	50	26	6	244
<b>Listening to music</b>	9	35	64	68	62	6	244
<b>Playing video games</b>	110	48	35	26	13	12	244

\*Results that exceed 244 apply to questions where respondents could choose more than one option.

#### Demographic data:

##### Age group:

18-24: 131 respondents

25-34: 43 respondents

35-40: 17 respondents

41-55: 23 respondents

55 and over: 26 respondents

##### Level of Education Completed:

High School: 39

Some College: 124

Bachelor's Degree: 52

Graduate Degree: 12

Doctorate/Professional: 8