(33 pts 120-180 minutes) Prepare your own Hot Topic, covering something you think is really interesting for HCI but that we didn't cover in class. You can use one of two formats:

1) Up to six slides/figures (3 per page), along with up to two pages of text that explain the topic. This could be a script for a presentation or a short paper that references the slides/figures.
2) OR A video of no longer than five minutes of you presenting the Hot Topic. This could be mostly a video of you talking with visual aids, could be slides that you talk over, scenes that help illustrate the hot topic, or some combination. Note this will probably take extra time.

Your presentation should make clear what the key idea is, why it's important and interesting to HCI, and how it relates to other concepts covered in class. You can include a reference to an online video of a minute or so in length, as we did in our own hot topics. If you choose to do a video, put it on a server somewhere where we can download it, and include the URL of the video as your answer.

I chose location based systems because unlike the digital maps HOT TOPIC we had during the semester, these technologies have incredible developments into the future of how people experience a place. For those in HCI, it's not only looking at how people use computers and whether or not they are easy to understand with logical functions, but it's seeing how technology can develop as a passive or ambient tool in the way we experience or pass through life. Location based systems are wide and diverse in their application, purpose, and device. My HOT TOPIC lecture covers the basics of what the popular services are, why people use them, and the potentials of what they can be.

What Are Location Based Systems?

- Services that use GPS to locate you, your friends, and let you discover new places
- Examples:
  - FourSquare
  - Gowalla
  - Dodgeball (Google Latitude)
  - Brightkite
  - MyTown
  - Facebook Places
  - Loopt
  - SCVNGR
  - Geocaching

Many of us do and don’t know what these applications are, but to put it bluntly, they are social devices for connecting you back into the physical world. While it seems contradictory to use technology to get away from technology, these services are games for our normal day to day lives. The slogan for most of these applications are to help people discover, unlock, explore, and learn more about their city, environment, and world.

Why use them?

- Social Networking
- Find Friends
- "Mass Text Message"
- Leave Tips & Notes
- Exploration
- Hunting Caches
- Cornell SCVNGR (Orientation)
- Trips on Gowalla
- Mayorship on FourSquare

Why do most people use these applications? Each and everyone of these are considered games, but they give multiple dimensions to social networking and exploration. For example, most of these share your location to friends so that they can find you, or you can find them. Others are well known for opening a world of exploration for people to discover new places or to understand their cities better.
Discovering

In the example of discovering, the most popular technology is geocaching, which is a GPS based treasure hunt. *Show Video*

Video downloadable here:

Geocaching is just one example of exploring applications, but there are also ones like SCVNGR, which Cornell’s Orientation team used this summer with freshmen. These tools not only engage people to explore in the wilderness, but also in corners of their neighborhood that they have yet to utilize.

Social Networking

- Find Friends
- Friends Find You
- Recommendations
- Rewards:
  - Badges & Pins
  - Coupons & Discounts
- Recognition as a Regular

The most popular reasoning for using these applications are for their social networking qualities. Dodgeball was first of its kind back in 2000, which let people share their whereabouts with friends through mass text messages. This ideal is still the same for those who use LBSs, but now they come with more benefits. For example, businesses give coupons and discounts to those who most frequent their establishments. The games themselves reward users with recognition for their work in visiting different locations with pins, badges, and local status as a regular.

What does this mean for HCI?

- We design functionality between users and computers. Why not design to engage people in their physical world?
- Futures of ubiquitous location technologies

In terms of HCI, yes, we can say that there is an abundance of location based systems, and maybe there are too many. However, with the research we have of people using these systems, why they use them, and how it influences place, we should be able to use that information to forward the development of newer technologies such as cellphones, computers, and cities.
As for future developments, I would like to see the virtual information that sits on these applications to be pulled out and manipulated into physical representations so that we can physically interact with them as we do with the natural world. What do you think?

* Bringing Virtual Information into Physical Space.

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8 + 8 + 7 &= 23 \\
6 + 3 &= 9
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