

TIME/SLICE:

A digital bulletin board, brought to you by the Library

Overview:

Time/Slice is an online interface that displays upcoming events associated with a specific geographic community. The proposed project would result in a framework that could be easily scaled and adapted to a variety of environments, whether a specific Harvard department or a campus-wide resource.

It does two unique things:

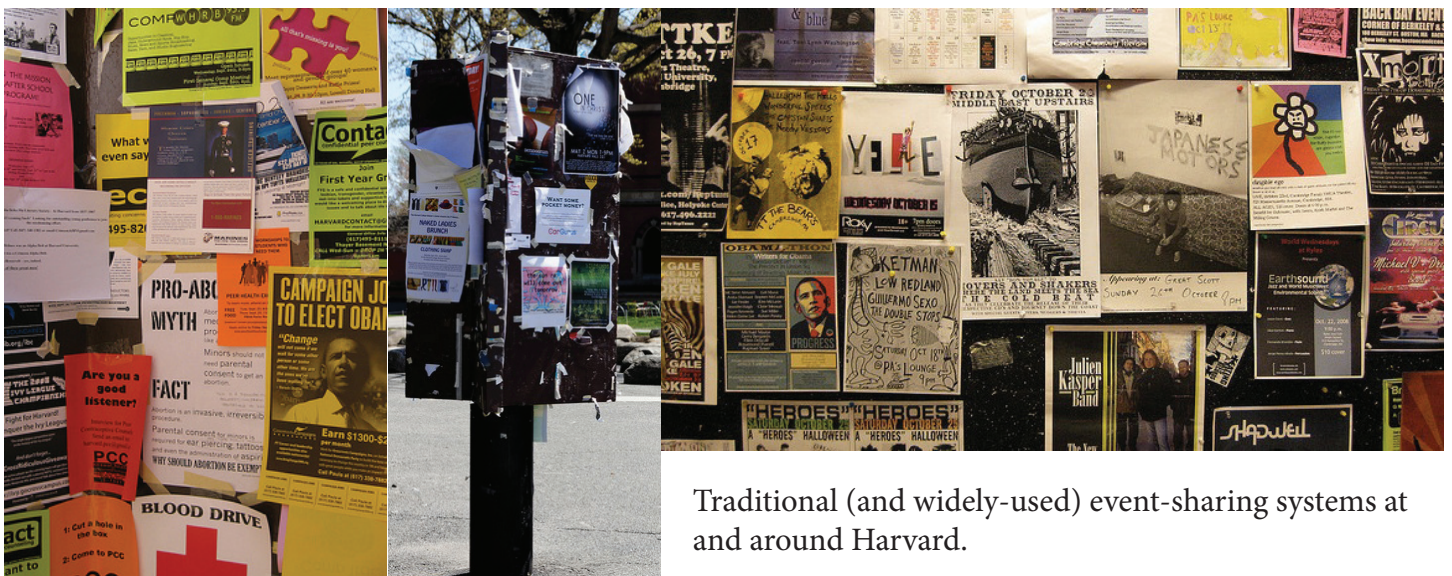
Events and activity = Library information

- Time/Slice assumes that community goings-on are valuable information that is an essential part of a community's past and present, and should thus be under the purview of the community library.
- Currently, this information tends to be disorganized, inaccessible, fragmented, and impermanent; Time/Slice organizes and preserves it.

Interactive

- Time/Slice provides a slick and simple platform to display collaboratively-submitted, media-focused digital content. A diverse range of community members can submit the events and activities that are important to them.
- Time/Slice increases event visibility and the potential for interdisciplinary or serendipitous involvement to occur.

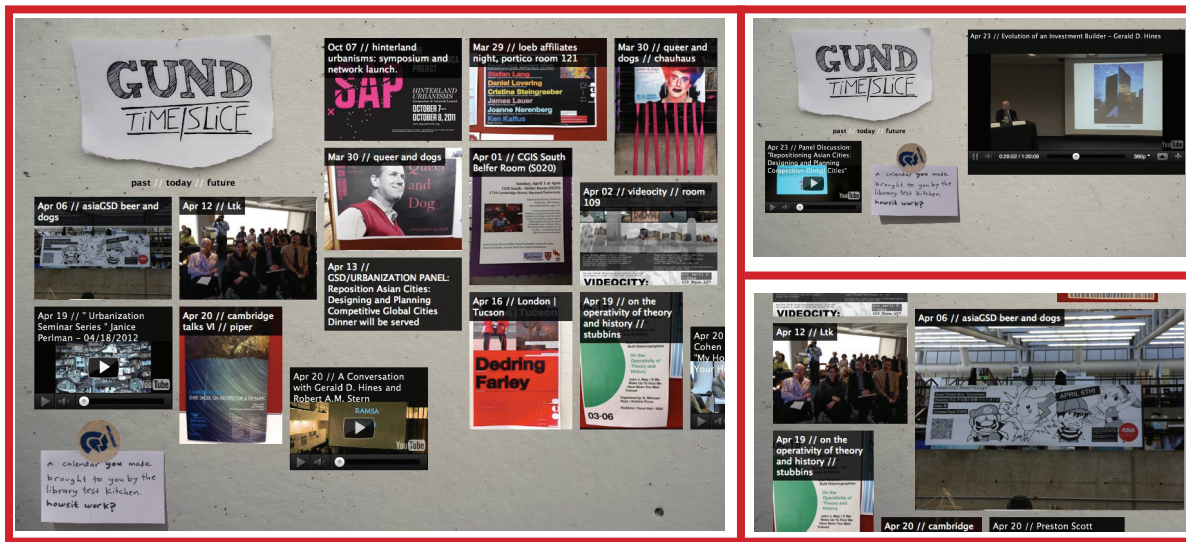
In short, Time/Slice takes the traditional sloppy and dynamic community bulletin board (see below), and makes the content more accessible and engaging. It simultaneously archives content, including it as part of the community's actively created history. (You can see the demo up at <http://www.jessyurko.com/timeslice>. Use Chrome browser for full functionality in this version. Click on the "how's it work" image link to see the Library Test Kitchen review slide show. Navigate using arrow keys.)



Traditional (and widely-used) event-sharing systems at and around Harvard.

How it works:

- A law student is walking through Harvard Square when she sees a flyer saying that a human rights lawyer she's interested in will be speaking at a nearby book store. She takes a picture of the flyer with her phone, and emails it to the Law School's Time/Slice, with the date and time in the subject. It is automatically added to the calendar, and other interested law students read about (and attend) the event.
- An urban planning club is screening short films about transportation. They put together a 1-minute promo video and upload it to youtube. Instead of emailing the link out to their Design school lists, they send it to GSD Time/Slice, with the date of the event in the subject of the email. It is automatically added to the GSD Time/Slice website, and students looking at the site's "future events" are shown the embedded video. On the day of the event, the promo is displayed on a monitor in the GSD lobby among the day's other events through Time/Slice. A couple of visiting Kennedy School students in the lobby watch the promo and decide to stay for the films.



Screenshot of alpha version with user-submitted GSD events and GSD youtube feed.

top: youtube video playing (under filtered "today" events).
bottom: user-view of event.

Integration with existing displays and locations:

- *Harvard Library Portal*: Kira Poplowski sees a finished version potentially meshing with goals for the new Library Portal: "This calendar provides event information a new, dynamic way by incorporating video, audio and images--and users themselves can easily contribute to the calendar using mobile devices. The Harvard Library is implementing a new Library-wide event calendar, and the team looks forward to seeing how this app might fit into its plans."
- *Harvard GSD*: Ann Whiteside enthusiastically supports installing a finished version on a touch screen at Loeb Library. The Design School is an ideal pilot site; students produce engaging visual content almost daily to promote events, and most of this material is only briefly visible.
- There is strong interest in deploying a final version at the *Fine Arts Library, Widener, and Harvard Art Museum's Education Dept.* (Librarians consulted include Laura Blake, Mary Clare Altenhofen, and Susan Fliss.)
- *Science Center*: Time/Slice could be integrated with the digital displays in the Science Center. There is some overlapping content; the proposed interface would provide interactivity and multimedia content, and could be deployed on one of the existing event touch screens, with a modified layout to include some of the student information currently displayed.

Development:

An alpha version is in progress as part of the Library Test Kitchen course at the GSD. Right now, it displays user-emailed content (images/video) and integrates Harvard YouTube content. The time constraints of the course will not allow the project to be developed to the point where it is fully usable. This proposal is an outgrowth of Library Test Kitchen work that would allow the project to reach a point where it is a robust web app and a resource ready for use by the broader Harvard community.

Next Steps:

- Improve the system for media storage. The current version is using a free service that is somewhat unstable, and download times can be burdensome depending on the amount of media content.
- Create an interface for moderating content that could be used by librarians to delete irrelevant material, link connected items, or correct errors.
- Improve the display interface through a series of test runs with students, faculty, and librarians.
- Create an associated twitter feed with Time/Slice content for better smartphone integration.
- Explore alternate methods of media inclusion that leverage existing mobile apps (Instagram, etc).
- Create a display for the library/lobby space of a test site with Time/Slice ready to go on a touch screen and accompanying signage.

Timeline (one month per phase):

- Phase I: complete a functional initial version, continuing Library Test Kitchen work. Create a connected twitter feed for mobile access to content.
- Phase II: user studies (primarily students and librarians) and modifications.
- Phase III: integrate feedback into a robust web app, ready for library deployment. Produce signage and visual promotional content with QR code. Create a mobile version of the site.

Evaluation: Success will be measured through page views and number/variety of submissions.

Funding proposed:

Web app development, interface design, and user testing: \$8400 (12 weeks/420 hours)

Touch screen display: \$350

Postmark (email delivery for webapps): \$10

Domain registration / hosting: \$10 + \$6/month

Total: \$8788

Principal Investigators:

Jessica Yurkofsky. GSD Master in Urban Planning, 2012.

Jeff Goldenson. Library Innovation Lab.

Jeffrey Schnapp. metaLAB (at) Harvard.

Ann Whiteside. Librarian/Assistant Dean for Information Resources, Frances Loeb Library.

Advisor:

Kira Poplowski, Library Director of Communications.