

tunA

a handheld ad-hoc radio device for local music sharing

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tunA is a mobile wireless application that allows users to share their music locally through handheld devices. Users can “tune in” to other nearby tunA music players and listen to what someone else is listening to. Developed on iPacs and connected via 802.11b in ad-hoc mode, the application displays a list of people using tunA that are in range, gives access to their profile and playlist information, and enables synchronized peer-to-peer audio streaming.

Can the Walkman become a social experience?

Can anyone become a mobile radio station?

With the tunA project we are investigating a way to use music in order to connect people at a local scale, through the creation of dynamic and ad-hoc wireless networks. tunA allows users to listen to what other people in physical proximity are listening to, synchronized to enable the feeling of a shared experience. tunA also provides the opportunity to users to share their songs in many situations and while moving around, fostering a sense of awareness of the surrounding physical environment.

In this project, music constitutes the main interest around which communities, virtual and real, can be formed and reinforced. Music is commonly used as a form of mobile entertainment, through personal devices such as Walkmans or digital players. While so far listening to music when moving around has been mostly an individual and quite isolating experience, tunA suggests it could also be made into a fun and socialising experience.

tunA can be used as a standard MP3 player for personal music, but it also keeps track of all the other tunA users who are in range and provides options to access their personal profile and playlist information. The user has an option to “tune in” and start listening to what another person is listening to. An important aspect of this work is the synchronisation of the listening experience. The “tune in” option gives in fact only streaming access to the song the remote user is currently listening to, not other songs in their playlist. To keep track of songs and people encountered, tunA incorporates the ability to keep a record of favorites.

tunA could accommodate a number of scenarios in which people gather during the course of the day. For example, while riding the bus or subway to and from work, people could discover what other commuters are listening to nearby and perhaps get to know each other over time. Or while spending an afternoon in a park or on the beach, people could tune in to the music their friends are listening while relaxing under the sun and have a shared music experience without disturbing others nearby who don't wish to listen to music.



Visit the tunA web site at <http://www.medialabeurope.org/hc/tuna>


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