

Futuresonic 2006

10 May 2006

HELP US PUT MANCHESTER ON THE MAP - LITERALLY

Mapping weekend, Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 May 2006

Futuresonic, the electronic music and media arts festival, will be launching a unique map of Manchester during its July festival. The map will be created by the people of Manchester and will be fully interactive and editable. It will be a 'wikimap': just as users of Wikipedia can add, amend and edit entries on this online encyclopedia, so too will users of the 'Mapchester' map be able to add their comments to the map of the city.

The Mapchester map needs your help – a one-off 'mapping weekend' is open to anyone who would like to take part.

On Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 May, Futuresonic is holding its mapping weekend. Open to all, the weekend will bring together as wide an array of people as possible and get them to walk / cycle / drive / bus / train / skate along city streets, recording GPS tracks and noting down road names. These tracks will then be added to the online OpenStreetMap database and edited into map features. No equipment or prior training is required, as both will be supplied by Futuresonic. The end result will be whole quarters of the city recorded over the weekend.

"Imagine what it would be like to be there at the birth of Wikipedia, a collaborative knowledge base generated by a community of users. Combine that with an Anneke Rice-style challenge to map the city of Manchester in a weekend, and you've got an idea what the mapping weekend is going to be like," says Drew Hemment, Director of Futuresonic.

Mapchester will generate a new kind map of Manchester - produced by collective, community effort that will be completely copyright-free. Mapchester was first proposed at the PLAN workshop (<http://www.open-plan.org>), as a test-case for how a city could be mapped and a guide for a festival created on collaborative and open principles.

How to get involved:

|||| How: Just come along and choose an area of central Manchester to map. Head out with a GPS device (Global Positioning System, which monitors signals from satellites to record location) and notepad to record street names and other notable features. You can map for the whole day or just for a few hours. No prior mapping experience needed - intro briefings and equipment training will be provided.

|||| When: Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th May, 2006. Welcome briefings held at 10am and 2pm both days.

|||| Where: Mapchester HQ, Lower Ground Floor, 117-119 Portland Street, Manchester M1 6ED, see <http://manchesterdda.com/article/12/>. (The space has been generously provided by the Manchester Digital Development Agency and they are also helping in signing people up to take part.)

|||| Registering: if you are interested in participating please send an email: mapchester@manchesterdda.com or call Jo Blackwell on tele: 0161 255 8111. (Please indicate on what days you want to participate and whether you have your own GPS / laptop.)

|||| Refreshments: Drinks and a sandwich lunch will be provided for participants.

|||| What to bring: If you have it please bring your own mapping equipment (GPS, laptop, camera, notepad + pencil, etc). If you don't have a GPS receiver, don't worry, there will be a number of extra units available on each day. If you have never used a GPS receiver, don't worry either, hands on training will be provided.

|||| Further questions: please contact Martin Dodge (m.dodge@manchester.ac.uk).

Ends

For more information or images, please contact Susie Stubbs on 07919 575 740 or email susie@futuresonic.com

Notes to Editors

- Mapchester will be profiled, and feature in a number of artistic projects, during the Futuresonic 2006 festival, 20-23 July 2006. Mapchester is a world-first that is generating a high level of attention internationally, and is a flagship project within the Futuresonic 10th anniversary theme: **Collaborative Cultures**. It is an experiment in 'citizen cartography' that will make a significant contribution to wider efforts in so-called 'open-source' mapping. This an emerging and rapidly growing cartographic activity, driven in part by technology (cheap GPS equipment and online collaboration tools, like OpenStreetMap.org), but also by a very different ethos to knowledge production. Under open-source models the right of authorship are de-centred and the ownership of knowledge is seen as a common resource that can be distributed and re-used without restriction or license. As such 'opening' up mapmaking has real potential to empower people to create their own knowledge and encourages re-use of cartographic resources in novel, creative ways.
- The map data produced for central Manchester will contribute to OpenStreetMap.org, one of the leading projects in the open-source mapping field. Currently, OpenStreetMap has mapped 25,000 kilometres of roads in the UK, including all motorways. However, thus far the majority of this data is for London and Birmingham and many other major cities are hardly mapped at all. It is hoped that an intensive effort to build a map of the whole of a city in a weekend will inspire others and be important to build momentum across the country.
- All the map data generated for Mapchester will be free to view, edit and use via the OpenStreetMap platform. An editable map will also be created and used as a test-case festival guide for the Futuresonic International Festival, held in Manchester 20-23 July 2006.
- The full Futuresonic line-up and prices will be released in June. Tickets will be available online and from selected outlets in Manchester. Visitors to the festival can sign up for festival updates and get full festival information on www.futuresonic.com
- Futuresonic was established in 1995, and has an international reputation for promoting cutting-edge music and media arts. The 2005 festival involved 211 artists in 44 events at 15 arts, music and club venues, and was attended by around 6,000 people.
- Mapchester and Futuresonic is presented by Future Everything, a not-for-profit creative studio at the forefront of electronic arts and culture.