GPS based mapping of cyclists’ routes in Copenhagen

A pilot survey

Knudsen, Anne-Marie Sanvig; Harder, Henrik; Jensen, Anders Sorgenfri; Tradisauskas, Nerius; Simonsen, Anders Kvist; Hansen, Jakob Hjorth; Snizek, Bernhard; Bro, Peter; Christensen, Ann Sofie Grimshave

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GPS BASED MAPPING OF CYCLISTS’ ROUTES IN COPENHAGEN
- A PILOT SURVEY
GPS based mapping of cyclists’ routes in Copenhagen - a pilot survey

Anne-Marie S. Knudsen
Henrik Harder
Nerius Tradisauskas
Jakob Hjorth Hansen
Anders Kvist
Anders Sorgenfri
Bernhard Snizek
Peter Bro

Ann Sofie Grimshave Christensen

Ann Sofie Grimshave Christensen

Victor Andrade Carneiro da Silva

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Town Planning Institute
for participating in the survey
GPS BASED MAPPING OF CYCLISTS’ ROUTES IN COPENHAGEN - A PILOT SURVEY
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introduction to the survey

As a part of the research project Bike Infrastructures, workpackage 3, the research team “DMB” at the Institute for Architecture, Design and Media Technology at Aalborg University, undertook a GPS based pilot survey of cyclists’ routes in Copenhagen in August 2010. The overall aim of the Bikeability research project is to investigate how to promote and encourage bike-ability in urban areas. For more information about the research project please see www.bikeability.com.

The aim of the GPS based pilot survey was to collect and show how to create a database through GPS tracking from which cyclists’ routes can be visualized. The aim was furthermore to show how the survey research design works in practice and which elements of the set-up to be aware of and develop when the large scale GPS based survey of the Bikeability research project is carried out in the spring of 2011.
The practical set-up

The large scale GPS based survey which is carried out in the spring of 2011 will involve a “contact-set up”, meaning the participants (cyclists) will be contacted and recruited when “in motion” at key infrastructure intersections in Copenhagen. For the pilot survey the research team decided a more “controlled” set-up as the “contact set-up” was deemed unrealistic to carry out at such a small scale.

The Danish Town Planning Institute (Dansk Byplanlaboratorium) was contacted in June 2010 and they volunteered to participate in the pilot survey. 4 men and 4 women participated in the pilot survey which ran from Monday to Friday of week 35, August 2010.

With help from a contact person at the Danish Town Planning Institute the survey participants where instructed in how to use the GPS (the lommy). The participants were encouraged to carry the lommy 24 hours a day of the five full days the pilot survey ran. The participants are always free to “sign out” of the survey by pushing the red bottom on the lommy (see picture on lommy instruction, appendix B).

As a part of the survey set-up, a text-message service was developed. The purpose of this service was to remind participants to bring the lommy in the morning and to charge it in the evening. A modem connected to a computer was programmed to send out messages at 7 am and 9 pm to the participants mobile phones. The service was optional and one participant did not wish to receive text messages from the research team. Due to technical problems with the computer, the text message-service only worked Monday and Tuesday.

The survey participants were furthermore encouraged to send text messages to the modem regarding their own reflections and perceptions of their chosen cycle route. It is technically simple to couple the GPS log with the time that the text was sent and this method opens up the possibility for geo-coded qualitative data collection. However, no texts were received which might also have been due to the malfunctioning of the computer.

The research team furthermore looked into the possibility of collecting picture messages from the survey participants. Due to the small scale of the pilot survey, the component was left out. Picture messages could potentially have been uploaded to a website, designed specifically for this pilot survey.

Following the GPS based data collection the survey participants were encouraged to fill out a questionnaire concerning their experiences with carrying the lommy. 3 participants answered and submitted the survey.
TECHNICAL SET-UP

GPS-DATA

A lommy was employed to carry out the GPS based tracking (the Lommy Phoenix was used, for more detailed information see Kvist Simonsen et al, 2007). The lommy is about the size of a mobile phone and has a built in GPS and GSM unit. Through a GSM unit the GPS unit logs online and in real time to a server where the participant is and how long he or she spends at a given location. The GPS unit furthermore tells you how fast the participant is moving. For this particular survey the lommy was programmed to log every 5 seconds.

The batteries of the lommies lasted on average 20 hours with a logging frequency of 5 seconds. The battery duration always depends on how frequent the lommy is set to log. Please see appendix A for a detailed description of the battery test.

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

As a supplement to the trips logged by the lommy, the research team developed an on-line questionnaire which allowed the participants to log their cycle trips by typing in start-and finishing time of a given trip. The digital questionnaire automatically generates the trip from the GPS-data stored in the on-line database. The participant is furthermore given the option to fill in a brief questionnaire describing the trip (insert picture)

GPS data as well as questionnaire answers are kept in relational MySQL-database. From this database it is possible to generate “joins” and data extracts for further analysis.
presentation and analysis of data

GPS-DATA

Data was collected amongst 8 participants and the lommys were in use for 5 full days, from Monday morning (defined as 00.01) to Friday midnight. The analysis was carried out using a dataset which is geographically delimited to a boundary box, which covers the entirety of Copenhagen and Frederiksberg Municipality defined by the vertices from the municipal borders polygon-theme, which have the lowest and highest Easting and Northing coordinates in the ETRS89/UTM32 reference system. The dataset contains 96168 points altogether.

The method and algorithm used to distinguish between data that represents stays and data that represents movements is described by Sorgenfri et al (2009). The procedure is basically an algorithm which scans the entire dataset and evaluates every record. Based on the attributes of each point and the attributes of adjacent points, the procedure will return a certain value. This value can later be used to determine a point as either a trip or a stay point depending on what would be most likely according to the performed calculations. Of the 96169 points, movement data was identified to 16547 points (17.2%) and stay data was identified to 79621 points (82.7%). In comparison with previous surveys, the dataset contains a large proportion of movement points.

18 trips were logged via the on-line survey. The initial dataset, drawn from a join between GPS data and the on-line survey only contained 12282 points which the research team considered insufficient to use as a basis for further analysis. The lack of data either stems from participants not registering trips via the on-line survey or discrepancy between the actual time when the trip was carried out and the time the participants noted in the on-line survey. Feedback from participants points to the former.

On the next page is the map showing the 8 participants’ transports corridors, based on the points identified as movement by the algorithm.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Only 3 participants answered and submitted the questionnaire following the GPS based survey. Due to the small survey sample it is not possible to generalize from the data collected through the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the answers submitted do offer relevant insight that are useful for future survey set-ups. This particularly concerns the on-line questionnaire. All 3 participants emphasize that logging each single trip was not intuitive- it was easy to forget and it was seen as too time consuming.

“It [the GPS survey] all seemed at bit heavy, there were too many things to remember. It would be nice if the system could automatically figure out when you are actually cycling, so you don’t have to log the time slots yourself. It seems like too much work.”

The participants found the text message service useful and it helped them remember the lommy in the morning. It did not cause any difficulties carrying or using the lommy. However, the design of the lommy was perceived a bit “old school”:

“It [the lommy] wasn’t really cool. It seems out-of-date and old fashioned. [I] had envisioned a device with a display [allowing to see the route in real time].”

Meanwhile, there is a valid point of maintaining an “old-school” design as the lommy does not represent any use value and therefore can’t be sold on.

The questionnaire furthermore allowed the participants to elaborate on whether they sometimes cycle “against the current”-see question 14 in appendix E. Two participants answered positively which would indicate that the question is worth including in the 2011 survey.
reflections regarding survey activities

TEXT- AND PICTURE MESSAGES

Due to technical difficulties this component of the survey set-up never worked as intended. Participants however state that the text message service was helpful.

In related survey set-ups text messages have been used to collect qualitative data about the participants’ experiences and perceptions of the urban environment (see http://vbn.aau.dk/files/17053915/ZooRapport.pdf). This component would seem relevant to include in future surveys.

ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

It is relatively demanding to work with the on-line questionnaire for both participants and research team. It is perceived time-consuming by the participants to log the trips—which a relatively low return frequency also shows. In order to boost this frequency, the research team could remind survey participants to fill out the questionnaire. This activity would however show time consuming and potentially perceived intrusive by the participant.

GPS-DATA

The method to distinguish trips from stays showed useful in identifying cycle trips. Regarding the join between GPS data and the on-line survey, this method showed less useful which also relates to the section above.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

Inputs from the participants are useful in order to further develop the research method. Again this is a relatively time-consuming activity which demands motivation from the participant and time from the research team.
references


list of appendices

Appendix A: Battery test
Appendix B: Lommy instruction
Appendix C: Mail to Christian Broen, Danish Town Planning Intitute, including screen shots of online questionnaire
Appendix D: Follow-op questionnaire

Appendices, data set and map are included on a CD
**APPENDIX A: BATTERI TEST**

*By Jakob Hjorth Hansen*

All lommyes were fully charged when they were unplugged from their chargers at 14 hours August 10th 2010.

Below are is shown the time and date when the lommies logged their last signal:

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![Graph showing battery life](image-url)
Levetid i timer
APPENDIX B: LOMMY INSTRUCTION
Kære Christian


Vil du notere hvem der får hvilken GPS i vedlagte excelark. Det er vigtigt at I noterer fødselsdato, så vi har et unikt ID på deltageren. Hvis de vil udfyde deres mobilnummer også, så kan vi sende daglige reminders om at medbringe/ oplade GPSen. Det er frivilligt om man vil opgive sit mobilnummer. Senere på ugen får jeg også nummeret på vores mobilmodem, således at deltagere kan sende sms'er til os om oplevelser og indtryk fra deres cykelrute (træelse lyskryds, huller i cykelstien, yndlingsstrækninger, o.lign. Ting der beskriver hvordan deres cykeltur opleves og afvikles) . Altså et lille kvalitativt input til undersøgelsen. Vi arbejder på at der også kan oploades billeder til vores server. Mere om det i løbet af ugen.


I løbet af uge 36 sender jeg et lille spørgeskema til deltagerne om hvordan deres oplevelse har været med at bære GPSen og udfyde spørgeskemaet.

Endelig, her er et par links til ”moderprojekterne”:

http://www.bikeability.dk/
http://www.detmangfoldigebyrum.dk/

Hvis der er spørgsmål af nogen som helst art, så må I bare ringe eller skrive. Mit nummer er 51925045.

Venlige hilsener
Anne-Marie
Link til spørgeskema:
APPENDIX D: FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Spørgeskema- GPS cykelsurvey september 2010

• Var GPSen overskuelig at betjene?

• Var det besværligt at få GPSen med og /eller at oplade den hver dag?

• Modtog du SMSer fra os i løbet af ugen?

• Hvis ja, hjalp de til at huske GPSen/opladning?

• Oplevedu nogen praktiske problemer ved at bære GPSen?

• Hvis GPSen/overvågningen nogen påvirkning på den rute du valgte?

• Loggede du dine ture på vores online-spørgeskema?

• Hvis ja, hvordan oplevede du brugervenligheden af spørgeskemaet?

• Hvis nej, uddyb gerne (det var for besværligt, tidskrævende, brugervenlighed el. lign)

Lidt om dine transportvaner

• Bruger du cyklen fra dør til dør, når du skal til og fra arbejde

• Hvis nej, hvilke transportmidler bruger du uderover cyklen?

• Hvor langt har du til arbejde?

• Hvor lang tid bruger du dagligt på transport til og fra arbejde?

• Cykler du af og til ”ulovligt” (modkøreteretning, på fortove, over pladser el. lign) og/eller igennem private arealer (firmagrunde, porte, baggårde etc.). Motiver gerne hvorfor!

• Øvrige kommentarer og forslag vedr. vores undersøgelsesmetode

For mere information om projektet, kan du læse videre her:
http://www.bikeability.dk
http://www.bikeability.dk/wps/wp2/

Med venlig hilsen og på forhånd tak!

Anne-Marie Sanvig Knudsen
PhD Fellow
Department of Architecture,
Design and Media Technology
Aalborg University
Gammel Torv 6, Room 319 (Office)
DK - 9000 Aalborg Denmark
askn@create.aau.dk

Bernhard Snizek
PhD Fellow
Forest and Landscape
KU, LIFE
Rolighedsvej 23
1958 Frederiksberg
besn@life.ku.dk