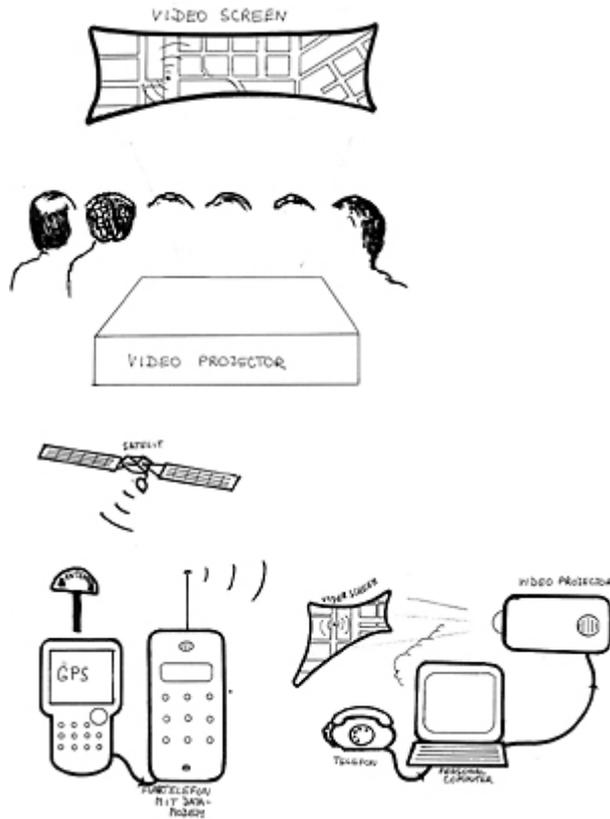


the intelligent mailman MICHAEL BIELICKY



Over many centuries, the mailman (messenger) has become the archetype of an information carrier. His job has remained unchanged to the present day. He still delivers information (letters) by hand. The GPS (Global Positioning System) developed by the American Department of Defense has been extended over the entire globe. Of all the artificial ambiances we have at present, it is the most global. With the aid of the GPS, one can determine his or her location relatively precisely at almost any spot on the Earth in three dimensions (length, width and height). The control system consists of 24 satellites that alternately send their signals to the Earth. When one links the GPS to a sender (e.g. a cellular telephone), one can transfer its data to other places. By giving the information carrier (mailman) a GPS/cellular phone unit and having him run through the urban landscape, one can make his movements visible in the form of a virtual mailman at another location (e.g. a museum). In doing so, this "intelligent mailman" becomes an anachronism: On the one hand, he still delivers the information by

hand; on the other hand, he is able to simultaneously transmit "live" information on his location and movements to other localities across any distance. With the aid of such a system, humans could become computer mice. I am interested in developing this system further, thereby organizing virtual performances, for example, I can well imagine that, as a performer, one could control all kinds of devices (robots, virtual spaces, etc.) because of the changes in location (latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates).

"The Intelligent Mailman", in his anachronistic dual function, represents the present intermediate stage on the way to the total age of information.

Technical description

A portable GPS device is linked to a cellular telephone containing a modem. Carrying this device, a person (e.g. a mailman) runs through the city.

The data are transmitted to another location (e.g. a museum) via the telephone line. These data are then processed in a PC in which a digital city map is stored. Lastly, a video beam makes the situation visible on a projection screen.