"WHOSE RESULTS ARE THESE?"

COUNTER-MAPPING, AND THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN USER, PLACE, AND TARGETED CONTENT IN GOOGLE MAPS

Brett Tweedie | PhD student | QUT

Supervisors: Dan Angus, Axel Bruns, and Flora Salim

Interactive maps are part of the daily lives of many, whether used directly, or as a component in other location-based services that we rely on, and **Google Maps** is one of the most downloaded apps in the world. But despite its near ubiquity, Google Maps is comparatively understudied as a platform, perhaps due to the **perceived neutrality of maps** (Craib, 2000), especially in regards to the **algorithmic processes** that determine the targeted content we are shown, such as search results, ads, and points of interest (POI). This research aims to address this gap by analysing what different users are shown over time, in order to better understand the algorithmically-mediated relationships between user, place, and targeted content.

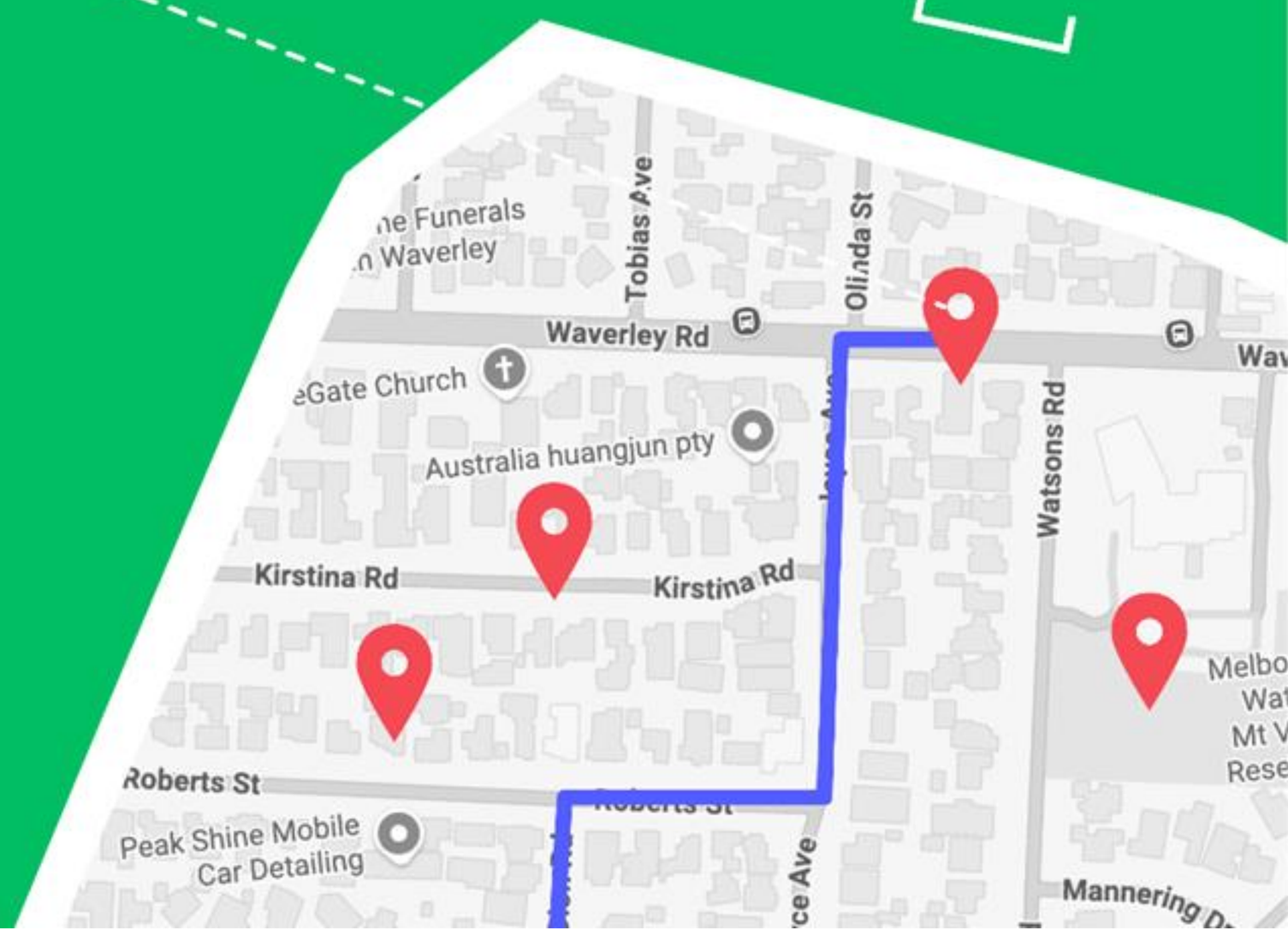
This project combines an **autoethnographic** approach with **data donation**, to examine and map the relationships between user, place, and targeted content. The results will be presented as a form of **counter-maps** (Peluso, 1995), an approach from critical cartography that has been used to create alternative narratives in cases where knowledge and/or power asymmetries exist between a map's creator and its users.

As part of a short paper for the Digital Humanities Australasia conference last year I recorded **every ad and POI I was shown over a week** on Google Maps, using both the app and the browser based version. Over this period I viewed **81 maps,** and was shown **1,314 pieces of targeted content**, of which around 14% were ads. This was to both test ways of gathering, storing, and analysing what I was shown, as well as getting some basic parameters about the types and number of ads and POIs shown each time a user views the map.

11.30PM
FEMALE • 30S • IPHONE
SEARCHING FOR A GP THAT BULK BILLS

9.05AM
MALE • 50S • IPAD
SEARCHING FOR CHEMISTS NEARBY





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