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PICNIC Network 2008

by Brady Forrest

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♥ PICNIC

The week of September 22nd I am going to be flying across the Atlantic for the third PICNIC Network. Ever since i heard about the conference last fall I've wanted to attend. My friends' stories last year focused on the many RFID-enabled art pieces. As discussed in this interview these were developed by Mediamatic, a digital art lab.

> Last year Mediamatic offers PICNIC delegates some fun and intriguing services. An RFID-tag was added to the PICNIC badges, and linked to the delegates profile on the PICNIC network. A team of top notch hackers, developers and dreamers got involved and came up with cute, fun and relevant new services. Remind us!.

"Last year we had the first version of the hackers camp where we built some cool physical interfaces for the PICNIC social network. We had the Photobooth, Badger, The Friend-Drink station, I-tea and of course a whole range of inspiring designs that we only could realise later."

Mediamatic is going to be hosting another hacking workshop and I'll be volunteering. Additionally there are a number of sessions and day long minitracks:

Surprising Africa has a great selection of content. I've never been to Africa, but there is an increasing amount of tech heading there. Google, Nokia and Vodafone are going to be describing their initiatives. Ethan Zuckerman will be discussing citizen journalism in Africa; Ethan gave an amazing talk at last year's ETech on this topic (Radar post).

Visible City is exploring the data available from cities. As their page states "What if an entire city could be visible from above, like we see it from an airplane? Not simply buildings and squares, but also the aggregation of people who populate it, outdoor as well as indoor. We could detect public gatherings and traffic jams, estimate which neighborhoods are most crowded, reconstruct commuting patterns during the day." This is very relevant for this year's ETech.

In the Internet of Things speakers from SAP, OpenSpime, and ThingM (amongst others) will be discussing how they are moving devices and objects online. This session makes me think of the soon-to-be released Fitbit, a personal web-enabled activity tracker. Soon it won't be just things online, but our passive data as well.

Perhaps the most significant event of the week be the Green Challenge. The winner will get €500,000 from Sir Richard Branson. Last year's winner was Qurrent, an energy consumption monitoring company.

If you're going to be there drop me a line.

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