



GRAFFOLUTION

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Awareness and responsive solutions to graffiti vandalism among public areas and transport

Background

European city administrators, public transport services, law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders spend enormous amounts of money attempting to tackle graffiti vandalism. Effective and more holistic approaches to fighting illegal graffiti is needed, including a community resource to help understand vandalism problems whilst at the same time sharing and innovating new protocols and responses. Graffolution seeks to counteract increases in graffiti vandalism in public areas and transportation networks by focusing on smart awareness and positive prevention solutions for all affected stakeholder groups, including those who manage graffiti, as well as those who have utilised street art as part of city regeneration, place making or community involvement strategies.

Graffiti vandalism remains a serious safety issue in settings such as transport environments. However, it is also linked to changing European contexts and demands an holistic approach, beyond the "Broken windows theory" (Kelling and Wilson, 1982). Currently, this theory is being revisited (Gladwell) and, to some extent, overcome with new insights. Taylor & Kahn (2014), report that over two years following the introduction of a new scheme to increase financial and incarceration penalties for repeat graffiti offending in Australia, there was no significant reduction in the incidence of graffiti offending. Such findings demand new analysis, dialogue and innovation around new approaches that could help streamline effort, resources and efficacy related to graffiti responses. Multiple and different publics are also indicating the increased value of certain kinds of illegal graffiti related practice, some of which are now seen to "regenerate" rather than simply to "degenerate" (Young, 2014; Iveson, 2007).

Project Facts

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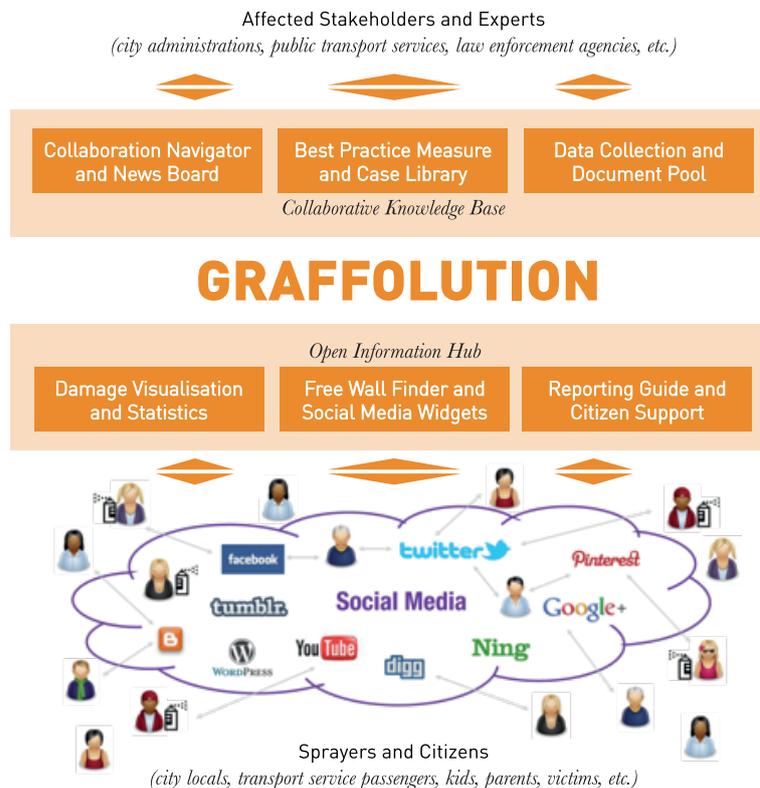
Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer - France



Project

Graffolution works to deliver an extensive set of “Collaborative Tools and Resources” that would include (a) a secure space for duty holders, with cases studies and other methods of evidencing successful practice, to empower city administrations, public transport services and law enforcement agencies, to share knowledge and more widely promote best practices. Additionally, Graffolution will develop (b) an interactive “Open Information Hub” addressing local communities, citizens and graffiti writers,

The first stage of the project was completed through an extensive literature review focusing on the extent of graffiti vandalism in Europe with the specific concentration on public areas and transport. Graffolution reviews existing graffiti vandalism categorisations from the existing literature and a consistent categorisation model is developed, thereby allowing the coherent restructuring of data and subsequent integration into the Graffolution platform. The research pointed to some significant insights which may



to strengthen public awareness and facilitate responsive solutions and the prevention of problematic illegal spraying activities, using effectual tools and visualisations. Social media features and channels will also be integrated to reach young people, graffiti writers and other connected publics.

occasion some rethinking around how graffiti is addresses and in which way resources and efforts are allocated to meet different challenges. Such findings reveal a present need for increased understandings, analysis, dialogue and innovation around how categorisations may help respond to challenges linked to graffiti vandalism.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 608152.

First Results

The conceptualization of graffiti by stakeholders has changed over time and three main milestones have been identified: this social phenomenon was born in the 70's in New York City and since then it has spread mostly through mass media into other countries. In late 80's, public authorities start considering graffiti as a problem although since 2000's graffiti received closer attention from the art world, partially fostered by the rise of street artists. Concepts such as street art appear and fine art galleries admit graffiti in their exhibitions. Obviously, this new phase requires a reconceptualization of both prevention strategies and awareness campaigns. In order to better inform this practices, a diagnosis phase has been carried out.

The very early stages of the project have been oriented to information gathering through an interview process to relevant stakeholders (from dutyholders to graffiti writers). Undoubtedly, graffiti is a social phenomenon that usually starts during adolescence and may last for years and even decades. It is an urban and international phenomenon. Graffiti writers are mainly male although female presence it's increasing rapidly.

It needs to be mentioned that while "tagging" can be considered the lowest quality graffiti, there is a wide range of techniques, qualities and forms of graffiti writing. All these forms encompass from a single color signature in a wall to the most elaborated art piece deserving a place in the most reputable art gallery. All are forms of self-expression but the motivations behind each form varies.

Since the advent of new ICTs and social media particularity, it is becoming an international phenomenon based on networks of graffiti writers, fostering and widening the large and interconnected networks. Social media is, at the same time, mitigating to some extent the effects of the so-called rapid removal strategy. Now the showcase to the world is not only a train, a wagon

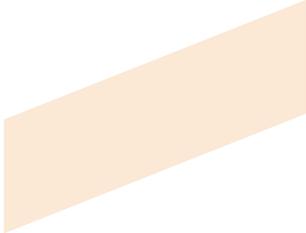
or a wall, but also a picture that can travel around the world and is only a few clicks away.

The definition of graffiti differs on the stakeholder but often revolves around two questions concerning their artistic value and the legality of the attachment. Generally speaking, graffiti writers acknowledge graffiti as a way of self-expression whereas other stakeholders as transport operators or law enforcement agencies understand this practice under anti-social behaviour incidents. Nevertheless, data on graffiti incidents is difficult to obtain in that there's a lack of categorization of what is considered vandalism. Transport operators identify this practices as vandalism because of the costs and dangers it causes and therefore mainly see it as a problem.

This latter conception leads to implement repressive prevention strategies in contrast to legal alternatives such as "free walls". This highlights the lack of communication between stakeholders. Understanding each other's views and needs while allocating specific people that can have dialogues with both parts seems to be crucial. Graffolution seeks to accomplish this through the web-based platform.

A web-based response

The Graffolution project creates a web-platform that addresses a wide range of actors from a diverse field of experience and specialism including state/local authorities, transport operators, law enforcement, social/cultural projects, manufacturers and suppliers, street art networks, graffiti writers and collectives, researchers and also different types of partnerships, alliances and initiatives that consist of several of the mentioned actors. Identifying and understanding these stakeholders is a key aspect of building up a successful platform. Therefore a comprehensive stakeholder library was



established that will further support surveying experiences, challenges and requirements of different actor groups during the project. For further analysis of existing prevention strategies and to identify best-practices as well as new approaches that can be included or disseminated over the Graffolution web-platform a structured overview of existing cases was created. The found activities are very different and range from surveillance and prosecution to community engagement and activity support.

The main Graffolution platform concept will be iterated and improved in response to the forthcoming research insights, aiming to allow project members to collect, structure and discuss the information that can be considered to shape the platform an ideas pool was created. The main objective is to create novel ways with the potentialities to positively impact graffiti

vandalism across Europe. Relevant knowledge found during research and interviews will be shown as structured use cases and will be subsequently extended, discussed and evaluated regarding their relevance. This allows the project team to iteratively enrich the platform.

Currently the design and development team of Graffolution is working on the overall interface and concept of the platform. The first vision of the Graffolution platform will be established on the basis of early insights made by the research provided in the diagnosis as well as on initial collection of case studies.

If you are interested in further information and details on results, you can find all the deliverables available to the public in PDF at <http://project.graffolution.eu>.

Visit our website and stay tuned!

Useful References

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