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TOTeM: The tale so far – Partnership and engagement with the community

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Paper 173 – Pecha Kucha

TOTeM: The Tale So Far – Partnership and Engagement with the Community .

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Abstract

The relationship between the possessions we value and the narratives behind them is unmistakable. Current technologies of connection, and enterprises that take advantage of them, surface this idea in new ways — but they also suggest the many different kinds of stories, information and data that objects can, or will, tell us.

A project called TOTeM, (Tales of Things: Electronic Memory) financed by a grant from the UK Research Councils concentrates on the narratives of thing-owners. The basic concept is that users can write up (or record) the story of, say, a silver bracelet and upload it to TalesofThings.com. Stick on a newfangled QR Code which links to a web page, and anybody with a properly equipped Smartphone can scan the object and learn that the bracelet was a gift purchased in Lisbon. In May, Totem researchers worked with an Oxfam thrift store in Manchester, recording stories by donors, for a spinoff project called RememberMe. Shoppers could hear short back stories for about 60 pieces of secondhand merchandise.

Since then work at Salford has concentrated on application of the product to business and has explored concerns relating to Estate Agents and Property outlets. The Estate Agents have been able to use the QR Code to enhance both window displays and newspaper advertising. This Pecha Kucha will be a quick visit to the world of TOTeM and the potential impact on both the business and the consumer of different ways of interacting with the technology.

Keywords – QR Codes, Tagging, Estate Agents, Digital Economy, TOTeM