

A GPS + heartrate monitoring approach to walkability audits

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chris on eParticipation...

Here at CU Denver, I've recently been involved in a Safe Routes 2 School project. We collected spatial information by doing a neighborhood walk with a group of parents who marked potential risks on paper maps. I also helped set up a mapping tool for the students, within the MicroWorlds framework (think of it as Flash actionscript for kids) that they were familiar with. The kids designed icons that were used as a basis for interviews with all 5th graders at Munroe Elementary School. Student leaders were trained to interview their peers and to collect the dangerous spots they identified with the help of our mapping tool. We're still in the process of importing the data into GIS and analyze the outcomes.

While working on this project, I stumbled upon Christian Nold's great approach to mapping risks based on emotions, biomapping.net - utilizing a GPS device and a heartrate monitor. I think this would actually be a great type of community mapping or starting point for a conversation about risks for a project like SR2S, as the conventional methods of identifying risks are mainly based on assumptions (especially when asking the parents - is graffiti dangerous?... I'm not necessarily disagreeing, but do think it depends on the urban context). And with the [next generation of GPS devices](#) replicating emotional mapping as a method for walkability audits is pretty simple and effective. Maybe I do need a new GPS gadget...

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