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Ambient Sound in Mobile Multimedia

Most studies on multimedia messaging have focused on photographs and other images. However, with most mobile phones, one can add sound to messages. The relationship of sound and image has been investigated in a design study called Audiophotography by Hewlett-Packard, but so far, no papers on this relationship in mobile devices exist. This paper addresses this issue, focusing on one type of sound identified in the Audiophotography project, namely ambient sound. To give an example, street noise behind a spoken text message is ambient sound. This paper investigates the types and functions of ambient sound, addressing the issue from an ethnomethodological standpoint, and partly building on Don Ihde's phenomenology of sound and voice. The study is based on actual MMS messages collected in Summer 2002 a design study in Helsinki, Finland.

Keywords: MMS, mobile multimedia, sound, ambient sound, ethnomethodology