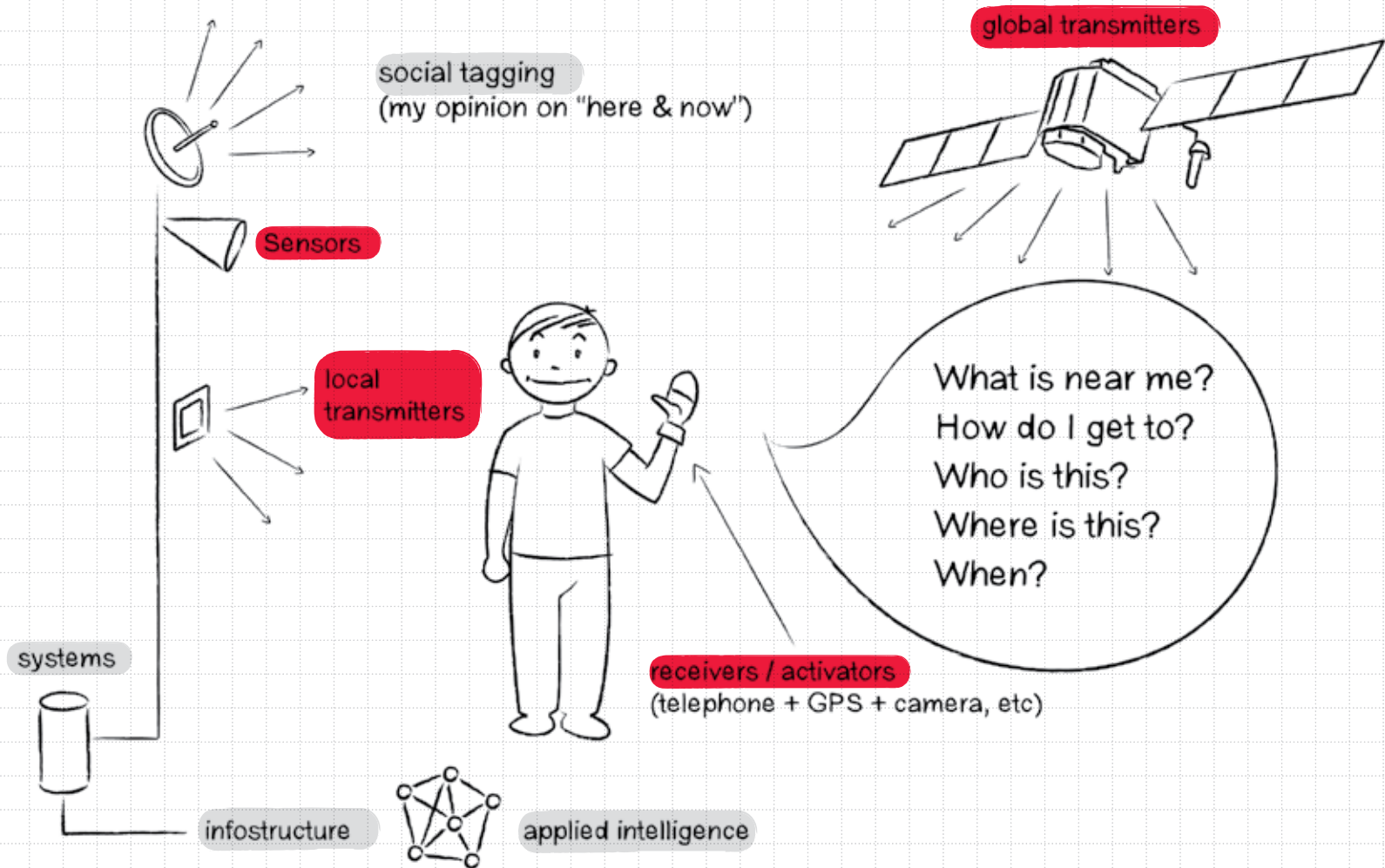


i-biquity



One of our principal concerns in these times of information overload is how to avoid *information anxiety*, or at least, how to reduce it. In other words, how to find *qualified information* that helps us to discern, from the many options available, which is the best at a given time and place. It is the time of relevant versus exhaustive, and of relevance in real time. Of finding the information we need, at the right time: which here I call *i-biquity*.

The Internet's current aim of *ubiquity*, with the objective of connecting you wherever you are at whatever time, will soon be overtaken by the need to guarantee that its users can access the information they need to be efficient (the source of personal productivity) at any time and from any location, whilst enjoying a better quality of life.

For example, when I am waiting on a platform in the underground, the information I need is when the next train will arrive. *It is great* that I can access a television screen that will tell me what's happening on the other side of the world, but what I really *need* to know is the time of the next train. This information contributes to reducing my information anxiety. Moreover, I ought to have this information about the next train while I am still in the street, so I can decide if I want to take the underground according to my time constraints. At a bus stop I would like to be able to *draw* the beginning and end of my journey on the bus map, using only two fingers (one from each hand), so that

the system can *tell* me (*answer* me) which are the best connections between those two points, allowing for the current traffic volume, and the time I will need to complete my journey.

If I decide in the end to take a taxi, I would like to be able to speak directly on my mobile phone to the nearest available taxi, not with the headquarters of the largest firm. If I choose to cycle, I want to know where the nearest public bike-hire centres are, and how many bikes are available at this precise moment in each one (in real time). If I drive, I will need my GPS to tell me where I should slow down (*informing* me, not *penalising* me). And, when I get out of the car, I want to know where to find the product I'm looking for at the best price, with some sort of GPS for localising products in the immediate area (*proximity marketing*). If I'm on the train, I'd like to be able to fall asleep knowing that my mobile, GPS enabled, will alert me with an alarm when we are nearing the station where I want to get off.

The development of the concept of i-biquity will require, as we can see from these examples, a combination of *hardware* that we carry with us, and *software* that stimulates the interface between us and the *hardware*. Some of these pieces of necessary *hardware* will be built into the instruments that we already carry around with us, like our telephones and watches, or *hybrid* forms of these, but others will be totally new. These will inevitably stimulate the emergence of a whole new industry.