

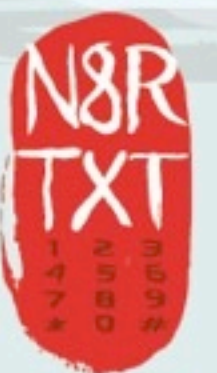


N8R TXT

Amos Latteier
<http://latteier.com/>

Location-Specific Nature Haikus by SMS

- "Winter day, bloor and lansdowne toronto"
militant pigeons
jamacian-style xmas cake
colour all drained out



Try It Now

- Text your location to 416-662-3408
- Location examples:
 - “queen and ossington, toronto”
 - “M6J 2Y8”
 - “baffin island”
- Any location in Canada



Poems Reflect

- Local environment, e.g. urban, park, near water, etc.
- Local plants & animals
- Weather, time of day, season
- Specific local knowledge, e.g. place names



More Info

- Project site - <http://n8rtxt.org/>
- Twitter feed - <http://twitter.org/n8rtxt>



Why?

- A sort of call & response game, like Eliza
- A way to use cell phones to connect you to your environment
- Explore tech-mediated experience of nature



Why Haiku?

- Short enough to fit in a text message
- Traditionally express season through everyday elements, e.g. leaves
- Detourned haiku geek tradition



How?

- Server written in python
- Communicates with GSM modem
- Gathers data from web services
- Uses databases (ecozones, plants, animals)
- Composes poem from customized phrases



Web Services

- Google maps: geocoding
- Geocoder.ca: local street names
- Geonames.org: weather
- Urbanmapping.com: neighbourhood name



Environmental Determination

- Colour analysis of Google maps image of area near geocode
 - Can be tricky, e.g. need to take captions into account
- Road density determines urban/rural
- Look for water & park colours



Phrase Database

confrnce attendees. NP, BEING, PLURAL, 5, (51.16985 -115.558350)
INSECTS commute 2 PLANTS. S, 3, BEING, PLURAL
over-anxious sprng. NP, SPRING, WEATHER, 5
CITY the good. NP, URBAN, PLACE, 2
on the STREET sidewalks. PP, URBAN, BEING, FEATURE, THING, URBAN, 4
BIRDS nest in the roof eves. S, FEATURE, SUMMER, URBAN, 5, PLURAL
...



Plant & Animal Databases

bunchbrry, BS, RURAL, 3

blk spruce, AM, BP, BC, BS, HP, TC, TS, SA, RURAL, 2

yte spruce, MC, BP, BC, BS, HP, TC, TS, TP, RURAL, 2

jack pine, BP, BS, TS, TP, RURAL, 2

...

pigeon, urban, bird, 2, !arctic

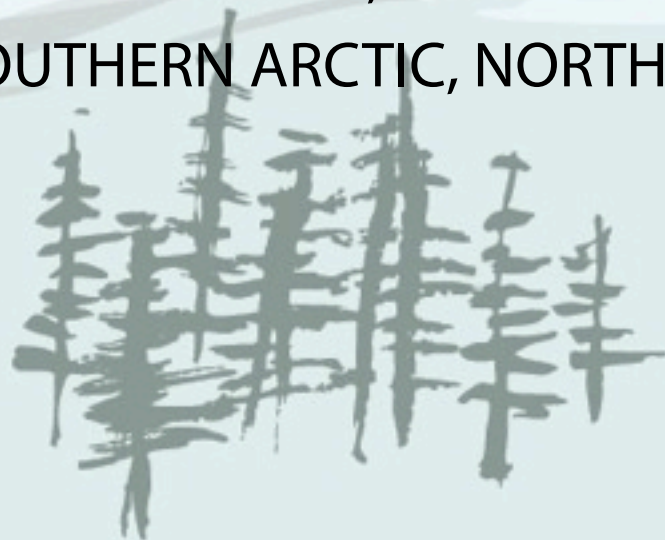
polr bear, HUDSON PLAINS, arctic, 3, rural

grzzly bear, south, north, !PRAIRIE, rural, spring, summer, fall, 3

cougr, PACIFIC MARITIME, MONTANE CORDILLERA, night, 2, rural

muskox, SOUTHERN ARCTIC, NORTHERN ARCTIC, 2, rural

...



Poetry Generation

- Phrases customized with local plants, animals, place names
- Syllables checked
- Phrases scored based on relevance to conditions



Poetry Generation, cont.

- Two matching phrases (e.g. NP & PP) chosen from among high scoring phrases
- Complex rules about how to match phrases
- Another unrelated 5 syllable phrase added
- Combined according to template



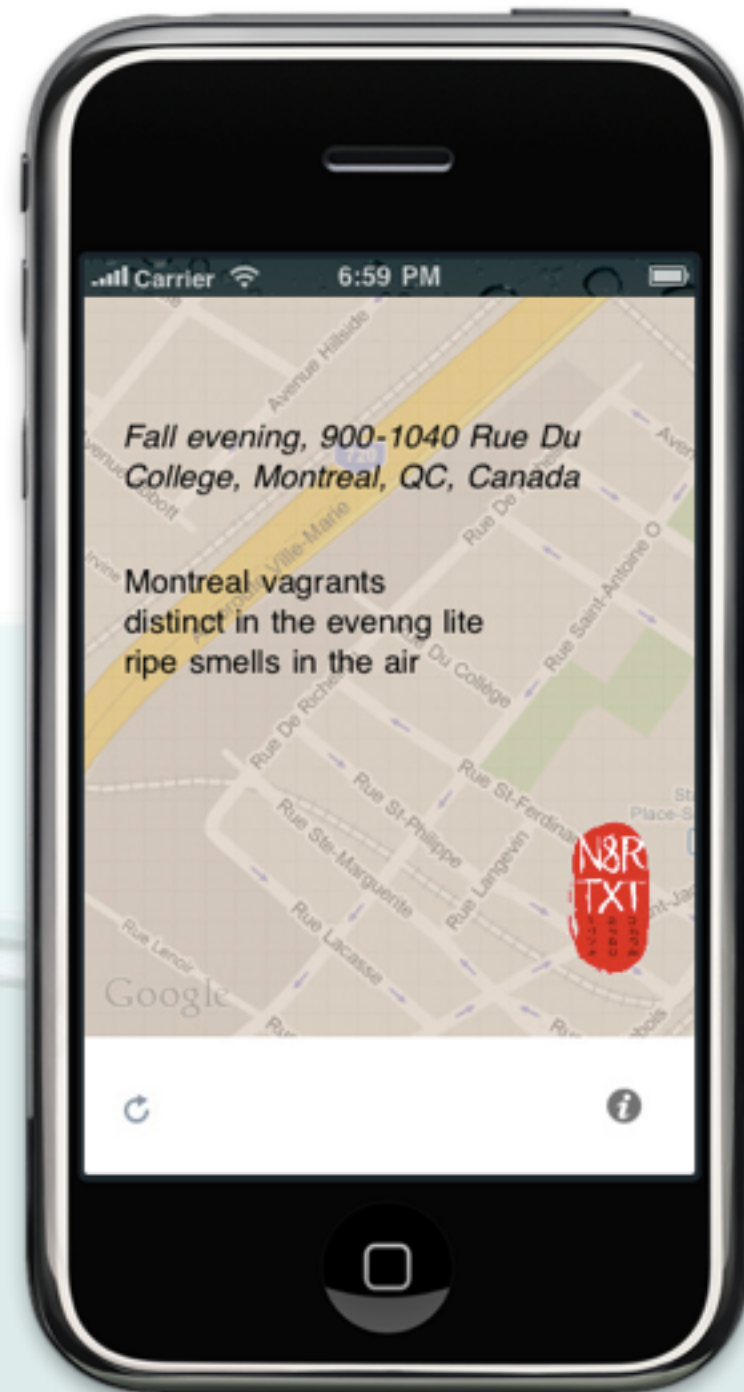
Poetry Generation, cont.

- Lots of special casing to avoid awful poems
- Weekday/weekend
- Don't repeat words
- Don't repeat phrases too often



One More Thing...

- Free iOS client
- CoreLocation, no need to enter location
- Uses IP not SMS communication



Future Directions

- More location-specific content, e.g. geocoded phrases
- Perhaps collaborations
- Different languages (e.g. French in Quebec)



Shout Outs

- My father - writing most of the phrases
- Ontario Arts Council - funding most of the work
- Banff New Media Institute - giving me time to work



Conclusions

- Lots of work for a seemingly simple project
- It's really hard to make poems not completely suck
- True for human-generated poetry too



Q & A

- Are you an artist or a computer programmer?
- Did you build a giant telephone-shaped kite based on Alexander Graham Bell's designs & fly it at the centennial of manned kite flight in Canada?
- Are you done yet?

