

TRENDS ANALYSIS

Sensors that detect room temperature, motion, and lighting have been around for many years, as have devices that measure our biological vital statistics: heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, and so on. The former have been used for building and space management, while the latter have been primarily deployed for health and fitness reasons. The Affective Mapping System (AMS) will take advantage of these readily available technologies to take a giant leap ahead and measure the emotional energy in the library – data that we believe people are craving.

Over the last few years, our hunger for products and services that measure and analyze the personal data of our daily lives has been growing. One prime example can be found in the “quantified self” movement -- people who meticulously measure everything from their brain waves during sleep to calories burned during the day. The many ways in which such data are already recorded in our everyday devices – from the digital scale that keeps track of your weight and body fat percentage to the treadmill at the gym that measures your heart rate while you exercise – demonstrate our desire for this information and our comfort with having it tracked.

Moving from the physical to the psychological, the latest trend involves not only tracking one’s emotions -- through apps such as MoodScope¹-- but sharing this highly personal information online. Carnegie Mellon’s MoodJam² is one successful example, and numerous mood-sharing Facebook and smart phone apps (e.g., Mood Swing,³ Mood Detector,⁴ Mood Weather Report⁵) all speak to the desire not only to quantify and visualize our state of mind but to broadcast it, as well. One excellent example of how this information can be parsed and aggregated is MoodPanda,⁶ a mobile app that allows users to track their moods and chart them, share them on social media, and see real-time mood maps of the world. Users of these systems have reported improved psychological well-being from the ability to express and share their emotions as well as from the feeling of solidarity gained by receiving (and giving) support to others.

Our system will bring together all three of these hot trends: 1) constant measuring of our physiological states, 2) tracking our emotions, and 3) sharing personal data with the world.

¹ <http://www.moodscope.com>

² <http://moodjam.com/>

³ <http://www.windowsphone.com/en-US/apps/42203162-c98d-e011-986b-78e7d1fa76f8>

⁴ <http://apps.facebook.com/zapaskaq/>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/MoodWeather>

⁶ <http://moodpanda.com/>