

Mueller Fever

Muellerfever.com: An online community for the Mueller Redevelopment Project

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Project goal

To create an online community serving the needs of a nascent geographical community, by bringing together textual and geospatial forms of interaction.

Background

The Mueller project is a 711-acre mixed-use infill development under construction on the site of Austin's former airport.

The result of over 20 years of planning, the resulting Mueller neighborhood is intended to be an ambitious experiment in New Urbanist design and green, affordable construction. Intense public interest and a complicated, competitive homebuying process have created an acute information need for would-be neighbors to make connections before the first house has even been built.



Image source: Catellus

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Features

Discussion forums

The screenshot shows the 'Mueller Fever' website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Forums', 'Maps', and 'News'. Below the header, there's a 'Latest Discussions' section with a table listing various topics and their activity. The main content area features a forum post titled 'Rathgeber Village' by user 'riddle', discussing the proximity of Rathgeber Village to the Mueller neighborhood. The post includes a detailed description of the area and its potential benefits. To the right of the forum post, there are sections for 'About', 'Search', and 'Flickr Photos'.

A familiar web discussion board metaphor, consisting of discussion threads organized in a shallow and extensible topical hierarchy.

Methods

A mix of open-source software and open-API web services:

- bbPress, with a theme extensively modified to add geolocation metadata to its MySQL database
- Google Maps, using its custom layer feature to add the Mueller land use plan
- Yahoo! Pipes to filter and aggregate news sources
- An opt-in Flickr group for sharing photos

Interactive maps

The screenshot shows the 'Mueller Fever' website interface with an interactive map. The map is a Google Maps mashup with a custom layer showing the Mueller land use plan. The map is overlaid with discussion threads represented as points. Red arrows indicate the interaction: 'See it on the map' and 'Pin it to the map'. The map includes a legend, search bar, and other navigation elements. The text 'Rathgeber Village started 1 hour ago by riddle' is visible on the map.

The Mueller land use map inserted into a Google Maps mashup, with discussion threads represented as points on the map. The linkage is made explicit with a “see it on the map”/ “pin it to the map” metaphor.

Future work

- Complete beta test and launch to a wider audience
- Refine or extend topical hierarchy based on user behavior and requests
- More features: social networks, groups, calendars
- Consider issues of granularity: should individual replies be “pinnable”? What about sentences or words? If arbitrarily fine units of text (on the model of hypertext) can have geolocations, how can that be useably represented on a map?

Syndication

The screenshot shows the 'Mueller Fever' website interface with syndicated content. It features a 'Flickr Photos' section displaying a grid of photos from the Mueller neighborhood. There are also sections for 'News' and 'About'. The layout is clean and organized, with clear navigation and content presentation.

Imported news and photo feeds.