

# Digitally Augmented Remembrance: Public Memory, Mobile Technology and the 9/11 Memorial

ANTHONY COCCILO

**Abstract:** Mobile technology delivers digital information to users in places where traditional computing hardware would have been inconvenient or cumbersome. This new arrangement has opened up opportunities to design physical spaces that have digital counterparts or tie-ins, making possible unique experiences for the user. A particularly salient example of the marriage of physical and digital space is the new National September 11 Memorial in Lower Manhattan, which features a mobile app designed in relation to the physical memorial. Using the memorial as a site of inquiry, this project will address the following research questions: *How are remembrance and memory impacted by use of mobile technology in conjunction with a designed space at a site of memorialization? And, what factors mediate engagement with mobile technology for the purposes of remembrance?* Nineteen New York area residents visited the memorial while using the app, and then participated in a mixed-method study (in-depth focus groups and survey). The results reveal that participants—if they experienced no significant technical troubles—found the app as significantly enhancing the memory and remembrance functions of the memorial. This is largely the result of having access to the curated oral histories or stories available on the app. The paper will discuss the quantitative and qualitative findings from this study.

## About the author:

*Anthony Cocciolo* is an Assistant Professor at Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science in New York City where his research and teaching are in the areas of digital archives and moving image/sound archiving. He completed his doctorate from the Communication, Computing, Technology in Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University, and BS in Computer Science from the University of California, Riverside. Prior to Pratt, he was the Head of Technology for the Gottesman Libraries at Teachers College, Columbia University.