what is placemaking?
Placemaking capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential to create public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and well-being. Digital placemaking uses smart city infrastructure and the growing number of personal cellular devices to optimize placemaking efforts. The nature of digital placemaking is more participatory—residents can give their opinions over the internet or research can be done via forums or comment sections to gain information about the beliefs and feelings of residents of a place.

the ways we already placemake
One way we already placemake through digital means is by building up, submitting, or participating in digital representations of our physical world. For example, residents of Capitol Hill set up a group and post pictures to the blog’s Flickr account, building on residents’ knowledge of the ways their neighborhood works. Another way we do this is through review sites like Yelp. This can lead to an impact on the physical world if the place does not live up to community value.

design opportunities

digital placemaking can create intricacy
Urban spaces require intricacy in space and use. The digital infrastructure of neighborhoods can provide for more of this intricacy in physical space. There is also opportunity for diverse users that can create value for the space or have value communicated for city-making purposes.

digital placemaking can create a platform for discourse
Location-based information about community debates or thoughts surrounding new additions to the neighborhood is a powerful way to inform. Digital placemaking can create the agency that residents need to engage more in the way their city grows.

the physical - digital feedback loop
Digital placemaking can create a feedback loop that has an effect on the physical world. One of the ways that the loop can create itself is with public authoring—the alteration of the physical environment to call attention to a greater movement or idea that exists in the digital space. This feedback loop is only the first step—participation in the next. One of the questions I am researching is if ideas can have a role in helping residents take the digital placemaking they already do and become active participants in the neighborhood they live in.

neighbour’s alley case study
A Capitol Hill Zoo District project that is set to take place in Neighbor’s Alley between Pike and Pine is trying to get residents to participate in the design process through both physical and digital means. The physical includes meetings and activities in the alley and the digital, online means online surveys. Could there be a better way to get people to participate through the digital means and could this potentially lead to more physical participation in this project?