

# ~\*\* \*~\* EIXOGEN ~ player's handbook

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## WELCOME

Welcome to Eixogen, an experiment in collectively exploring and imagining the city of the future in the context of emerging smart city technology.

Smart cities are the concept of the future, promising impressive progress in terms of efficiency and quality of life inside the cities. The recording and processing of data such as traffic, sounds, air quality, and consumer behaviour, enables the improvement and optimization of traffic flow, reduced air pollution, prevention and fight of crime, mobility and energy saving. More and more cities, including Rotterdam, are striving for this transformation.

However, data collection and processing also raises complex social and ethical issues as it affects the way we live, work and interact socially. The enormous amount of data recorded and processed presents a technical challenge, and the management is often passed on to private companies. Questions about privacy, equality and sustainability emerge. Who decides what data matters and whose interests are taken into account when processing it?

The data collection and archiving of this data is a form of history of a city's inhabitants. But according to what criteria is this history written, and what is excluded, overshadowed, unheard in these records?

Through an alternative reality game, we want to invite you to dive into these questions together and take part in envisioning a city of the future.

eixo.codes is a simulation of a city travel app, typically employed for the analysis and organisation of a city's residents' movements. In our fictional scenario, we aim to repurpose these often consumption-oriented apps to facilitate a city exploration experience that shifts from a focus on efficiency, profit, and goal-oriented behaviour to one centred around randomness, wonder, and mindfulness. This approach allows us to generate data about citizens based on their emotions, dreams, and personal desires.

## HOW IT WORKS

Eixogen will be played over a span of 6 weeks in two different layers, virtually and physically. There is the interface of the platform, accessible through the browser and there is the urban space of the city of Rotterdam, which will be the physical playground. In addition, it is a role-play which means, you will play as a fictional character. The game includes everyday life prompts to break out of your reality tunnel, riddles and geocaches to solve in the urban space and four optional collective storytelling events, in which players can meet in their character and exchange about their experience and the thematics offered in the game. During these sessions, you'll have the opportunity to play out your character and collectively shape the ongoing storyline.

The sessions last from 19:00 - 22:00, The dates are as follows:

**October 1st @Ijzerblock, Coolhavenstraat 10**

**October 15th @.zip, 1e Pijnackerstraat 75**

**October 29th @Rib Art Space, Katendrechtse Lagedijk 490B**

**November 9th @Nieuwe Instituut -1, Museumpark 25**

All locations are situated in Rotterdam.

## **SIGN-UP**

We ask you to sign up for each of the events connected to the game, if you want to take part in them. Reminders of events and your participation in the game will come via mail. Sign up via email to [info@eixo.codes](mailto:info@eixo.codes).

## **GAMEPLAY**

Through this game, we offer you the opportunity to engage with the city while envisioning potential futures, aiming to ignite collective imaginations about how we want our city to evolve. To facilitate this, we have incorporated various methods, including role-play, geocaching, and psychogeography.

### **Geocaching**

Geocaching is a location-based game where players utilize GPS data and riddles to hide and discover containers, known as caches, at specific coordinates worldwide. Originating in the early 2000s, this game has garnered a global community of millions of participants. Geocaches are deliberately challenging to locate, encouraging players to thoroughly explore an area. In Eixogen, geocaches serve as letterboxes for communicating messages to players seeking refuge from governmental surveillance within the internet network. These caches provide valuable insights into the storyline.

### **Role-play**

In role-playing, participants embody characters, allowing them to experience the fictional scenario within the game. These characters provide motivation and reasons for actions within the story. Assuming different roles creates an opportunity to perceive and act differently from everyday life, encouraging a departure from routine thought patterns and habits. It fosters self-discovery and often leads to the exploration of previously uncharted aspects of oneself. In Eixogen, your character challenges your relationship with the city and guides you in unexpected interactions with your surroundings and fellow players.

### **Psychogeography**

Psychogeography explores how geographical locations influence the emotional landscapes and behaviors of individuals residing there. Originating from the Situationist movement in 1950s Paris as a response to the consumer-oriented development of urban landscapes, it encourages the study and engagement with cities beyond conventional design and consumerism. In psychogeography, you do not follow a predetermined map; instead, you pursue your interests. It serves as a tool to reawaken your senses to the unfamiliar and the wonder within everyday life.

We employ psychogeography in Eixogen as a counter-practice to the typical smart city app-based travel experience. Our goal is to generate deeply personal data about the city, devoid of profit motives. Additionally, we aspire to inspire players to perceive the city through fresh perspectives, fostering possibilities for future imaginings. With that said, we provide you with a framework for gameplay, but the true experience lies in your hands. Your engagement and openness to exploring the tools we offer will shape your journey. The gameplay will evolve alongside its players, and at every stage, you are encouraged to co-create the narrative with us. While we understand that not every element may be equally accessible to every player, we advocate for an open-minded approach, encouraging you to try out and make the most of the available opportunities.

## SAFETY RULES

The game runs under a code of conduct and safety rules in order to provide a safe and enjoyable playing experience for everyone.

**In-game/off-game:** Since this is a game, we will be role-playing most of the time, referred to as “in-game.” There might be situations in which players want to communicate or exchange information about things out of character. This could be because a player wants to act out a scenario and needs to inform other players about it, share a background story, or agree on a mode of simulation for an activity that cannot be played out in reality. To avoid mixing up the worlds, stories, and characters, players can signal that their comments or conversations are off-game by either writing “(off-game ...)” in the chat or saying “off-game” in live-action situations.

**The X rule:** During the game, certain topics may come up that are triggering or uncomfortable for someone. In such cases, players can type “X!” in a chat conversation or make an X with their arms or say “X” in a live-action situation. If “X!” is used, it means that the conversation and topic will come to an abrupt end and will not be discussed further. The player who used “X” does not need to explain the reason, and it must be respected by other players. If the player who used “X” wishes, they are free to start an off-game conversation about it.

**The Cut rule:** If a player finds themselves in a conversation or a played situation that crosses boundaries, violates the code of conduct, or makes them feel uncomfortable, they can use the word “CUT.” This means the situation will come to an abrupt end, and an off-game discussion will begin about why a cut was necessary. When the situation is solved players can continue playing.

**The Yes rule:** Everyone’s playing experience is different, and especially in role-play, a significant part of the story is experienced internally. To respect everyone’s playing experience and ideas, we are implementing the “Yes, and.../Yes, but” rule, commonly used in LARP communities. As the name suggests, the rule is simple and means that players should accept what is said by other players as facts that they can expand upon or comment on. This rule encourages collective storytelling, in which we build on and add to each other’s ideas and avoid crushing each other’s ideas. Example:

Player 1: “I met you once before at a party.”

Player 2: “Yes, but probably years ago because I became quite introverted in the past couple of years and don’t go to parties anymore.”

**Play to Uplift:** Playing to uplift encourages and supports other players in playing out their characters. This includes, first of all, treating other players as real people, not just as characters, and listening to them (in-game and off-game). Get to know their character by finding out what the character likes, what their fears are, and what their goals are, in order to understand what other players need to properly portray their character. Playing to uplift also means including players: involve people in conversations that are within arm’s reach. Ask people for their thoughts and opinions, especially if they don’t usually voice them.

## THE CODE OF CONDUCT

We are all on the same level: All members of 868MHz are seen as equal and on the same level, regardless of their background and position. This should be a place free from stress, pressure, and competition, allowing vulnerability, experimentation, and doubt.

We respect each other: Respect for all members is required. While people may not like each other, it is important to maintain a cordial and tolerant level of respect for all members.

Celebrate difference: Every member has fun in different ways, and with different aspects, has different skills and knowledge. All members should do their best to contribute to the enjoyment of all members and learn from each other.

We listen to each other: Everyone is great at what they are doing and has a message that is important. In listening to each other there's always an opportunity to learn something new from someone else.

For questions, conflicts, suggestions and complaints please contact us via [info@eixo.codes](mailto:info@eixo.codes)

You can always go back to look at the players' handbook on [eixo.codes](http://eixo.codes).

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## Colophon

This game was created as part of the exhibition Modding The Mirror World by Louisa Teichmann at MaMA, 15/09/2023 – 12/11/2023.

Concept and storyline: Louisa Teichmann, Sophie Allerding

Coding: Louisa Teichmann, vo ezn, Joseph Knierzinger

Non-playable Characters (NPC's): Auryn Parkinson, vo ezn, Simon Labbé, Roos Groothuizen, Rosa Maria Zangenberg

Radio-device + NPC: Jack Bardwell

## THE WORLD OF EIXOGEN BACKSTORY

Every bit of your being—your footsteps, your heartbeat— is sensed; and a constant question in the air: are you where you should be?

In the year 2025, Rotterdam is taking the next step in becoming a smart city and launched Project Eixogen, a city-wide network featuring an intricate web of interconnected smart light poles scattered throughout the urban landscape. These poles have a remarkable purpose: collecting behavioural data and seamlessly guiding citizens through the bustling city streets via the use of the Eixogen app.

In this transformed reality, citizens have become users of the city-scape, each possessing a personalised user ID that meticulously logs their every movement and interaction within the city.

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Smart Cities undoubtedly promise impressive advancements in terms of efficiency and quality of life in urban areas. By recording and processing data such as movements, sounds, air quality, and consumption behaviour, we can optimise traffic flow, reduce air pollution, combat crime, improve mobility, and save energy. For many citizens the promise of a safer city, hitting the road only when there is no traffic jam; exercise outside when knowing the air is clean; finding easily free parking space; never having overflowing dustbins and sounds attractive.

However, data collection and processing also raise complex social and ethical questions as they influence our way of life, work, and social interactions. The vast amount of recorded and processed data presents a technical challenge, and often, private companies take charge of its management. Questions about privacy, equality, and sustainability are growing louder. Who decides which data is significant, and whose interests are considered in its processing?

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The city streets now feel like a grand stage, where every action unfolds according to a hidden script. Citizens are voluntarily participating in this production because they are rewarded with ether credits.

“You don’t have to do anything, just log in and earn credits”.

The action of login to the city travel app, your regular transformation from a citizen into an user, grants Eixogen access to your daily paths inside the city.

With the Ether credits, users can purchase, in addition to numerous discount vouchers for online magazines, package holidays, and tickets to local event locations, so-called trails. These trails are guided tours through the city, navigated through the Eixogen travel app, taking you to unique cafes or shopping spots, allowing you to experience the city in an exclusive way. The more you experience the city via the Eixogen travel app, the higher your personal score rises.

A personal score brings you benefits such as discounts at certain event locations, on parking spots, or the use of sharing services. Beyond a certain score, you also have the privilege of uploading your own trails to the Eixogen travel app. For every trail of you that others walk, you naturally earn even more Ether credits and climb higher in the score. Playfully, personal data is exchanged for credits, and a rating system is meant to motivate users to compete for voluntary self-control. Everyone should stay active!

Even when the sky darkens, the city remains awake, its smart poles flickering like mechanical fireflies in the jungle of buildings. Any disturbance of the movement patterns

is noted and directly addressed to the Eixogennetwork's control centre. You feel like an Amazon parcel, every route is planned, calculated, tracked and traced, No way to escape,

Yet, in the underground of the automated city, resistance thrives. A group of outliers, deviants, rebels and mavericks has formed around the 868mHz underground (and illegal) online radio station.

868mHz is a self-organised underground radio station that emerged as a response to the pressing issues arising from the rapid transformation of urban space in which every area of our personal life starts to become commodified and monitored. Human experience gets reduced to mere data, numbers, consumer behaviourism. Government surveillance is accepted without resistance. Members of 868mHz share feelings of alienation and powerlessness and are driven by a need and desire to create a platform for expression, connection, and dialogue amidst the challenges and changes within their everyday life in the smart city. The 868mHz radio community meets every other week to discuss internal matters and commute to a broadcast. At the heart of their collective is the belief that every member's voice matters and every member's perspective is essential. To ensure this, their meetings always begin with an open discussion of their code of conduct, with opportunities for members to propose amendments. Furthermore, each member is free to add whatever they feel is necessary to be discussed on the agenda or on air.

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## **Build your character**

Before you start building your own character, here is some general information about the characters in the game: We will give you a role that has a backstory and some functions inside of the game. You will make this role a character, by playing it and enriching it with your own ideas and imagination. We strongly encourage you to take ownership over your character, add to it what makes it fun for you to play it. If certain aspects in your role don't sound interesting to you, leave them out and create new ones. The most important thing is that you have fun with it.

Following parts of your character will be displayed on your profile:

**Username:**

**Pronouns:**

**Collective:**

**Interests / group association**

**Favourite place in the city:**

**Level:**

All Players in the game will play members of an underground online radio station called 868mHz. The 868mHz community has developed a distinct style and identity, reflective of their subversive, tech-savvy, and outsider spirit. Members of 868mHz embrace a futuristic, cyberpunk-inspired aesthetic. Their clothing is often dark or features a blend of neon accents and augmented reality accessories. Hair is styled as if it were antennas, and makeup expresses their passion and interests. Members are adept at crafting and hacking their own equipment and cyborg-like accessories. 868mHz also has its own logo that is used to symbolise members belonging to the group.

We encourage you to contribute to the community's aesthetic and develop a style and costume for your character. We have prepared a mood board for you, which you can visit here: <https://pin.it/5tp3pXZ>

## **Character Groups:**

The characters in our story are divided into four distinct subgroups, each representing a unique way of engaging with the environment and viewing the world. These subgroups help define the character's perspective and actions within the narrative.

### **The Observers**

Observers have a tendency to spend time in quiet contemplation and keen observation. Their senses are sharpened to notice the nuances of the city, from the smallest bug to the highest skyscraper, seeking to understand the urban landscape on a deeper level. Often they have a specific obsession or interest on which they focus on in their observation. Observers believe that by observing the city, they can uncover hidden stories and gain unique insights into their own mind. Observers often note down or record observations in different mediums such as writing, audio recordings, drawings or photography.

### **The Collectors**

The Collectors are passionate about discovering the city's hidden treasures and ephemeral moments. They often have the sense of objects speaking to them, therefore they are almost magically drawn to their finding. They are avid documenters, archivists, recorders of urban artefacts, and unique curiosities, capturing through photographs, sketches, and collecting items. They believe that by curating and archiving these fragments of urban life, they can uncover and preserve the city's identity and share its beauty with others.

### **The Mappers**

The Mappers are dedicated to charting the city's uncharted territories beyond the traditional categories of maps provided by tech giants like Google or Apple. They are adventurous souls who embark on quests to map out obscure routes, hidden passages, and unconventional spaces. These individuals use their knowledge to create alternative maps of the city, revealing paths less travelled and inviting others to explore the urban labyrinth. They believe that by mapping the city's mysteries, they can reshape the way people navigate and experience it and can open pathways for walking against the cities' commercial driven mainstream.

### **The Wanderers**

The Wanderers are free spirits who roam the city with a sense of curiosity and wonder. They embrace the serendipity of unplanned journeys, often getting lost in the labyrinthine streets and alleyways. These individuals find beauty in the unexpected encounters, chance discoveries, and spontaneous adventures that the city has to offer. They believe that by wandering aimlessly, they can unlock secrets in the city and in their mind too. They usually record or document their thoughts, ideas and experiences, not seldom in an abstract way, sometimes it becomes hard for others to relate but this doesn't bother them. They love to share their discoveries to inspire others to embrace the magic of exploration.