

Megahouse is a thought experiment that reflects the multiple relationships between technology and urban lifestyles in our media society, with its loss of a sense of place and its ambiguity of boundaries between private space and public space. By the same token, Megahouse is a lifestyle proposal for inhabiting the entire city as if it was one enormous “house.” The concept is based on a new timesharing system for unused space in the city that can be made accessible for individual use.

As is true of most post-industrial societies, population in Japan peaked several years ago, and is now in slow decline. Due to this shrinking of society, many gaps have appeared in the urban landscape, and the city is becoming more and more sponge-like. Many spaces, both in office buildings as well as in residential dwellings, are vacant.

Rather than leaving these gaps of unoccupied rooms randomly scattered and unused, Megahouse is a new management system that intends to integrate these spaces, maximizing urban building use, and indirectly elevating the quality of life in a shrinking and mobile society.

The basic technology that constitutes Megahouse is called ZapDoor system. ZapDoor is an access system that will be used to control access to the empty rooms that permeate the entire city. The manufacture of ZapDoor Systems Megahouse Inc. then rents unused spaces, offering them for individual uses.

As Megahouse Inc. offers spaces all across the city, these rooms collectively constitute a “house” for the users. Users inhabit the entire city like one dwelling, walking from one room to the next. This “house” is dispersed and embedded throughout the entire city, and is occupied at different time periods. This leads to a state where the entire city can be used like a big “house”: Megahouse.

The online databank of Megahouse contains a great deal of information on registered users, the owners of spaces, available spaces, furnishings, as well as indications on use and reports of past experience. This information is always available by way of the Internet or mobile phone. Users register as Megahouse residents by recording their biometric information in advance. When users access the database from mobile phones or computer terminals, they will be introduced to appropriate rooms that respond to their objectives in terms of location, price, equipment, and design. These rooms are available to the users for differing time-spans, from a short-term use of several hours to a long-term occupation of several months. The users

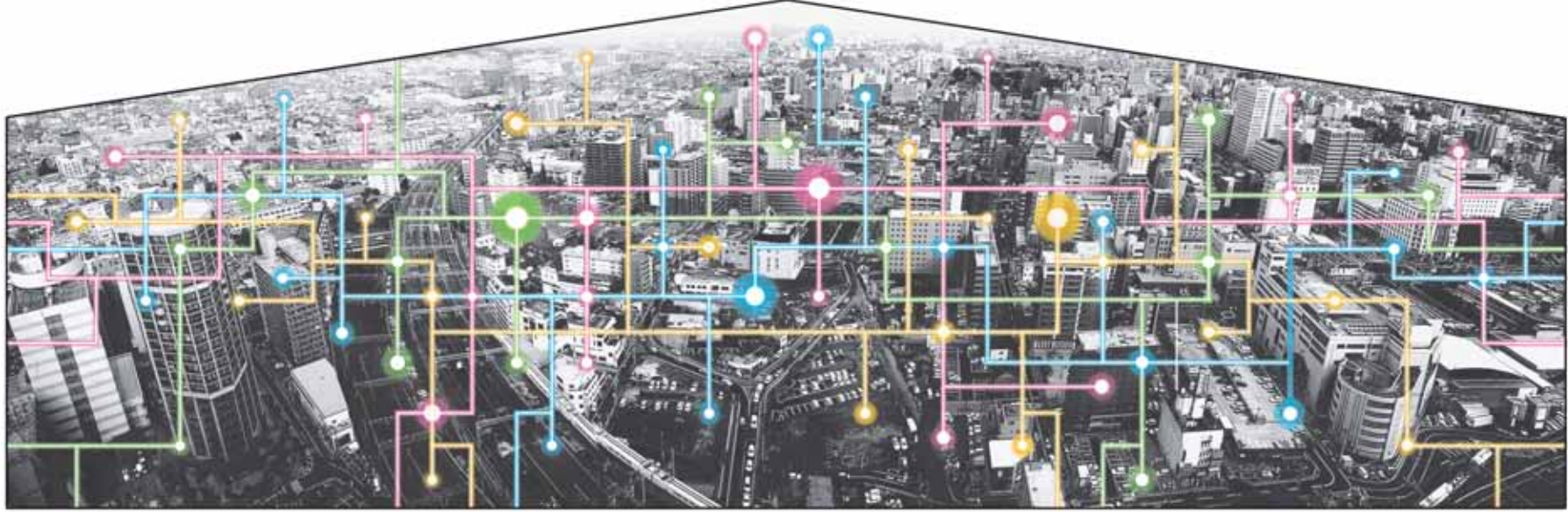
book the room that they prefer and are guided to the reserved room by GPS navigation software. The available spaces are all outfitted with the ZapDoor System. A ZapDoor contains various technologies for identification such as cameras and sensors for biometric recognition by means of fingerprint, iris, or face scans. The ZapDoor connects to the provider server via a digital network, approves the user’s identity, and unlocks the doors. ZapDoors can be visually recognized through their unique style.

Megahouse Inc. not only offers empty spaces, but also furnishes them temporarily according to the desires of the users with so-called “fills.” There is a choice between standard furnishings (Basic Menu) or many intricate, individual, and expensive variants (Premium Menu). The standard furnishings are multifunctional, so that by using mobile furnishings a tatami room can be used as both a sleeping and living quarters. All fills are equipped with RFID tags providing information about the owner, location, and usage thereby offering a means of control.

People with superfluous furniture, electrical appliances, or other miscellaneous goods can put that domestic dead stock in Megahouse Inc.'s charge and thus offer it for rent. By arranging this stock, Megahouse inc. furnishes the rooms of Megahouse to provide the users a new and sometimes extraordinary life style.

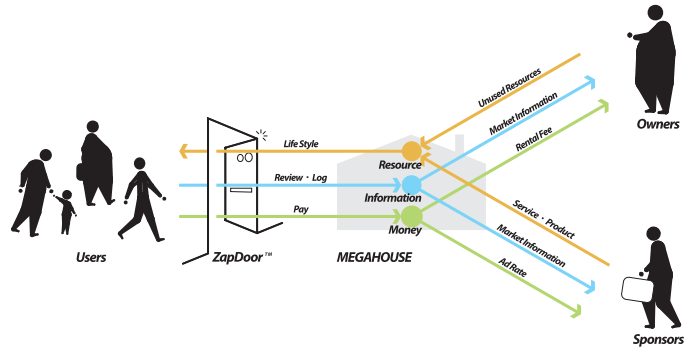
To those not satisfied with the Basic Menu and have additional requirements Megahouse Inc. provides an optional Premier Menu, with features such as BrandRoom, CharacterHouse, and EventBox. Those with a special affection for a particular brand can have the time of their lives in the BrandRoom. If desired, Megahouse Inc. provides products of the favored brand: not only in relationship to the BrandRoom, but in general. Megahouse offers an ideal platform for sponsors that can advertise in the spaces for a certain fee. In the CharacterHouse, the added value is a legend/story relating to the life and styles of certain celebrities. In a space equipped with legendary and personal goods, you can feel like you have slipped into the private life of your favorite celebrity.

The EventBox offers an ideal situation for all kinds of events. The wedding anniversary, birthday or bachelor party can become unforgettable in this room with special decoration, food, bands, and other amenities.

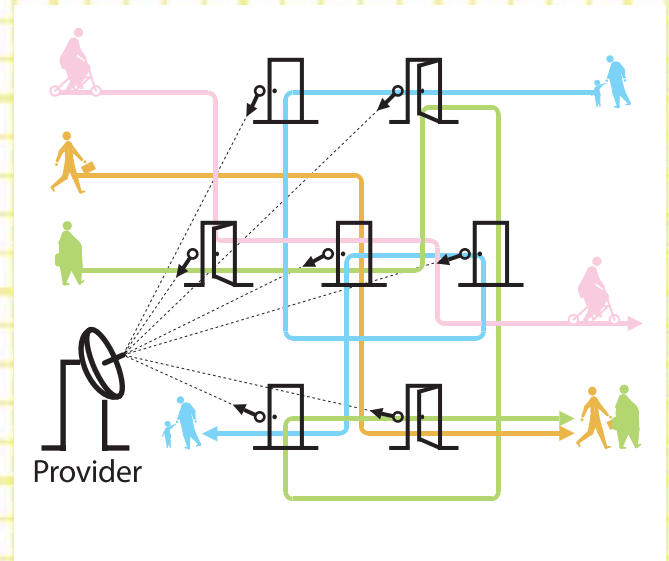
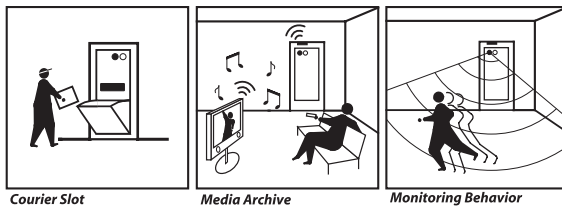
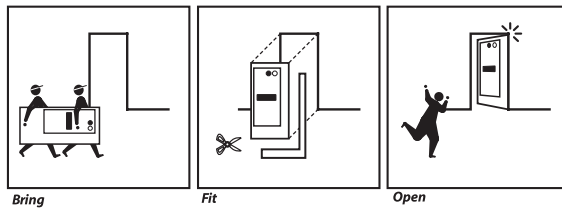
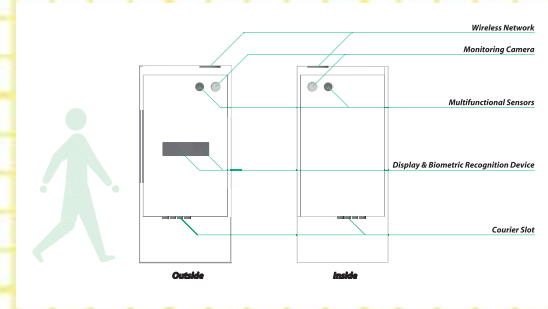


MEGAHOUSE IS A LIFESTYLE PROPOSAL FOR INHABITING THE ENTIRE CITY AS IF IT WERE ONE ENORMOUS HOUSE.

MEGAHOUSE OFFERS AN ONLINE PLATFORM FOR SPACE PROVIDERS, PROVIDERS OF INTERIORS AND SERVICES, AND USERS. ACCESS TO THE SPACE, WHICH BELONGS TO THE MEGAHOUSE NETWORK, IS PROVIDED BY SO-CALLED ZAPDOORS.

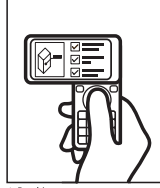


The technical elements required for implementing ZapDoor are already in use. Megahouse is nothing more than integrating existing technical systems into a new way of using technology and an alternative way of using urban space.



ZAPDOORS ARE EQUIPPED WITH A BIOMETRIC SENSOR, POSSESS A COMPARTMENT FOR RECEIVING AND EXAMINING COURIER PACKAGES, AND CAN MONITOR THE BEHAVIOR OF RESIDENTS.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF A ZAPDOOR ALL ZAPDOORS ARE NETWORKED WITH MEGAHOUSE.



1.Booking



2.Navigation



3. Open Door with Biometrics

User Experience of **MEGAHOUSE**



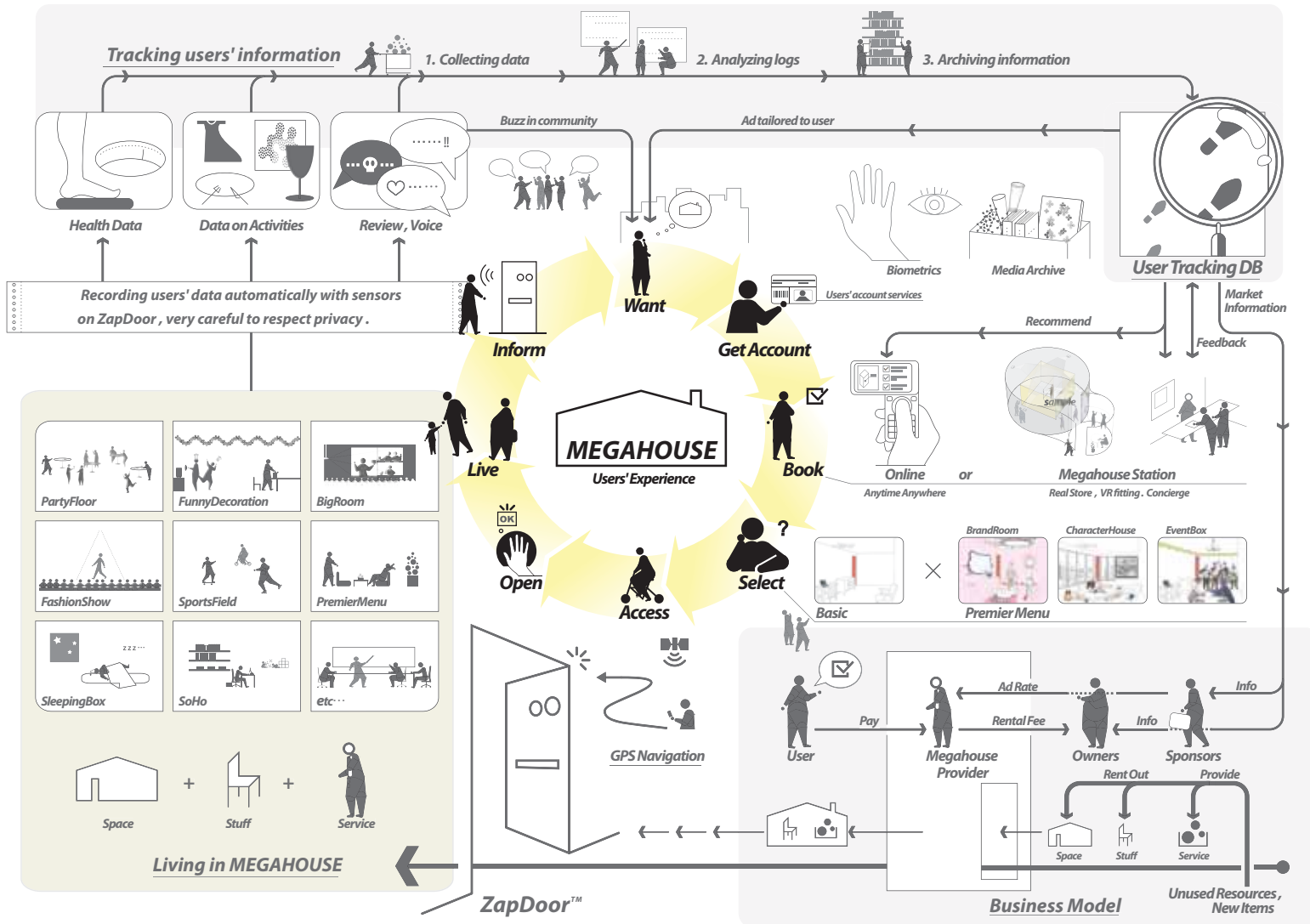
THE USER CAN BOOK THE SPACES USING HIS MOBILE PHONE. USING A NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEM BUILT INTO THE MOBILE PHONE, HE OR SHE IS DIRECTED TO THE ROOM. ACCESS TAKES PLACE BY WAY OF A BIOMETRIC SENSOR, SO THAT NO TRANSFER OF KEYS IS REQUIRED; AT THE SAME TIME, THE ZAPDOOR REGISTERS WHO IS IN THE ROOM.

BRANDROOM
SPECIAL VALUE IS ADDED TO THE BASIC MEGAHOUSE BY OUTFITTING IT WITH BRAND NAME PRODUCTS. THOSE WHO LOVE A SPECIFIC BRAND CAN HAVE THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES IN THIS TYPE OF MEGAHOUSE.

CHARACTERHOUSE
IN THIS MEGAHOUSE, THE SPECIAL VALUE ADDED IS CELEBRITY. THE ROOMS ARE LITERALLY EQUIPPED WITH THE STUFF OF LEGENDS. YOU CAN FEEL LIKE YOU SLIPPED INTO THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A STAR.

EVENTBOX
SPECIAL VALUE ADDED TO THIS TYPE OF ROOM BY PROVIDING THE STAFF TO MAKING YOUR EVENT PERFECT. YOUR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OR BIRTHDAY PARTY CAN BE MADE UNFORGETTABLE WITH THE HELP OF A CHEF, A BAND—YOU NAME IT.

DIAGRAM OF THE OPERATION OF MEGAHOUSE, WHICH MEDIATES BETWEEN SPACE PROVIDERS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, INTERIORS AND USERS



Basic Graphics : Asao Tokolo (TOKOLO.COM)

**Atelier Hitoshi Abe
Megahouse**

Born in Sendai in 1962, Hitoshi Abe studied architecture at Tohoku University and Southern California Institute of Architecture. Having worked for Coop Himmelb(l)au in Los Angeles for several years (1988–92) he received his Ph.D. in 1993. In the same year he founded his own practice Atelier Hitoshi Abe. Abe also served as associate professor at Tohoku Institute of Technology and since 2002 has been professor at Urban Design Laboratory, Tohoku University.

In his use of new materials and construction techniques, his architecture is known to challenge conventional notions. Some of Atelier Hitoshi Abe's key projects include Miyagi Stadium, Rifu, Japan (2000), Shiki Community Hall, Kumamoto, Japan (2002), SOB (Sasaki-Gishi Prosthetic & Orthotic Services, Inc.), Sendai, Japan (2004), Aoba-tei French restaurant, Sendai, Japan (2005), and SSM sculpture museum, Shiogama, Japan (2006).

His numerous honors and prizes include the 8th World Triennial of Architecture INTERARCH'97, Sophia (1997), the Tohoku Architectural Award for the Michinoku Folklore Museum (2001), the 42nd Building Contractors Society Award for the Miyagi Stadium (2001), the Business Week/Architectural Record Award (2003) for the Sekii Maternity Clinic and the Architectural Institute of Japan Award for the Shiki Community Hall (2003).

Abe's work has also been featured in a number of exhibitions both in Japan and abroad, including the 2000 Venice Biennale.

Masashige Motoe studied environmental science and is currently associate professor at the Department of Architecture, Urban Design and Building Science, School of Engineering, Tohoku University.

Shohei Matsukawa is an architect and interface designer. In 1999 he established his firm 000studio; in 2003 he founded the firm Synctokyo.

Shingo Abe is a visual designer who has worked for w0w Inc. since 2004, while at the same time working independently. In 2005 he won the 9th Japan Media Arts Festival.

Tohru Horiguchi teaches at Tohoku University. He has supervised the work of the two Megahouse student teams at Tohoku University (Hiroaki Miura, Shigeki Honma, Hiroto Nonaka, Yusuke Hayashi, Akira Moteki, Naohiro Sasamoto and Shuhei Yamamura) and at Miyagi University (Shutaro Konno, Tetsuhiko Hanabara, Yusuke Ono, Toshifumi Sato, Atsushi Abe, Keisuke Fukuda, Akira Takahashi, Tomoaki Todome, Takaaki Sugiyama, Rumi Saito, Minami Nagao and Toshiki Oike).

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