

# On the run, online and on the streets

## Web game pits global players against city pursuers

RUNNERS kitted out with walkie-talkies and satellite equipment are pacing the city centre as Preston plays host to a global game of chase.

A 3D virtual representation of the city centre and its landmarks is being beamed out across the world thanks to the online game and art project *Can You See Me Now?*

For three days online gamers can explore the city, the twist being that as they move through the virtual streets, they are actually pursued by real-life runners on the streets of Preston.

Some shoppers looked on with interest, while others were keen to try the game at its launch in the Guild Hall shopping centre yesterday.

*Can You See Me Now?* was developed by award-winning Brighton-based artist group Blast

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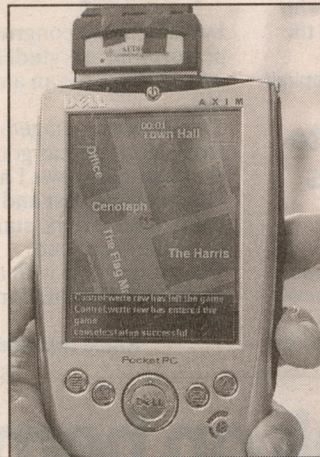
Theory and has been commissioned by In Certain Places, a partnership between UCLan and the Harris Museum and Gallery, backed by Preston City Council's Wireless City initiative and the Granada Foundation.

Carole Denny, 57, took three grandchildren to play the game in the 'control room' yesterday.

Up to 20 players can access the game online at one time, from anywhere in the world, and through an audio stream players can eavesdrop on their pursuers getting lost, wet and out of breath on the streets of Preston.

Carole, of Bowness Road, Faringdon Park, was tracked down by the runners after 11 minutes.

She said: "It's as if you are really there. I seemed to be going around in circles, but I don't think I was. I literally walked into him and it was too late to get away."



**MAPPED OUT: Runners are guided around the city by handheld satellite navigation devices**

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Carole's grandson Leshawn Thompson, nine, from Ribbleson, added: "You have to run away. It's good fun."

The game explores the impact new technologies can have in a city in the 21st century, and their potential to offer new experiences of the urban environment.

Charles Quick, a reader in art and public spaces at UCLan and part of In Certain Places, explained: "These sort of projects don't happen everywhere."

"They are only happening in Preston because of the support Preston is showing for cutting edge work."

● Members of the public can play the game via public terminals in the control room at unit 14 in the Guild Hall shopping centre from today until Sunday, from 1pm to 4pm. It's also at the Brew cafe in Lune Street and Brucciani's cafe in Fishergate.

To play, visit the website [www.canyouseemenow.co.uk](http://www.canyouseemenow.co.uk) between 1pm and 4pm.