

# Documenti della decadenza

**URBEX** Gli urban explorers lasciano solo impronte e portano via solo fotografie, per documentare cosa succede ai luoghi che abbandoniamo

di Wikipedia Foto di Shaun O'Boyle, Philip Deltgen, Rob Dobi, urbex.nl, dmexplorationsbrigade



Un divano abbandonato al Pines Hotel del New England, fotografato da Rob Dobi. Nelle pagine seguenti, il bagno di una casa di operai esplorata da alcuni urban explorer olandesi

GLI URBAN EXPLORERS NON SOPPORTANO VANDALI E GRAFFITARI. PUR FACENDO IRRUZIONE ILLEGALE IN EDIFICI PRIVATI, QUELLO CHE LI MUOVE È SOLTANTO L'AMORE PER LA BELLEZZA NASCOSTA DEI LUOGHI ABBANDONATI





In queste pagine, porte e finestre di case e hotel abbandonati. Gli urban explorers fanno irruzione attraverso tunnel sotterranei o dalle finestre degli ultimi piani degli edifici

Urban exploration (often shortened as urbex or UE) is the examination of the normally unseen or off-limits parts of human civilization. Urban exploration is also commonly referred to as infiltration, although some people consider infiltration to be more closely associated with the exploration of active or inhabited sites. In the USA, it may also be referred to as "draining" (when exploring drains) "urban spelunking", and "urban caving", "vadding", "trolling", "building hacking", "reality hacking" or "roof and tunnel hacking".

### Abandonments

Ventures into abandoned structures are perhaps the most common example of urban exploration. Abandoned sites are generally entered first by locals, and often sport large amounts of graffiti and acts of vandalism. Explorers face various risks in abandoned structures including collapsing roofs and floors, broken glass, guard dogs, the presence of chemicals, other harmful substances, most notably asbestos, hostile squatters and sometimes motion detectors. Some explorers wear respirators to protect their airways. Exploration targets vary from one country to another, but some of the more popular or high-profile abandonments include amusement parks, grain elevators, factories, missile silos, hospitals, asylums, and sanatoriums. Throughout eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the abandonments also include all forms of housing, a testament to the swift migration of people after the collapse of communism. Also, due to a marked lack of governmental support of historical monuments under the various communist regimes, some structures may be centuries old, from various architectural epochs and still freely accessible in their unrenovated states. Many explorers of abandonments find the decay of uninhabited spaces to be beautiful; many of these ex-

plorers are also photographers. Some abandonments are heavily guarded with motion sensors and active security. Others are more easily accessible and carry less risk of discovery. Abandonments are also popular among history buffs, 'urban archaeologists,' 'ghost hunters' and fans of graffiti.

### Ethics

Most urban explorers understand the risks they face if caught while trespassing or breaking and entering. The crime is generally seen as a means to an end, however, rather than being the focal point of the hobby. There are some urban explorers that tend to stick to a basic set of "ethical practices" out of respect for the locations that they visit, as well as for any other explorers who may want to visit later. The hobby, however, is still ultimately an unstructured one, and there are rarely two explorers who share the same views on ethics. As such, there are many exceptions to these "practices". To some, the idea behind these "ethical practices" is to leave buildings in the same state that they were in before they were visited. The common, but not always entirely accurate catchphrase for this ethical standpoint is the Sierra Club's motto: "take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints." Some try and adhere to this motto which frowns heavily upon theft, vandalism, tagging, graffiti, and any other crime except for trespassing. Some explorers, though, remove items from abandoned sites to preserve them or to keep as souvenirs. More often than not, these explorers save these items from further decay or destruction when a location has become a target of vandalism or is being demolished. Another counterpoint to the "leave no trace" ethic is tagging. Graffiti in drains is sometimes condoned or encouraged as long as speleothems and other features aren't da-



Nelle pagine successive, una foto di Philip Deltgen, scattata nella cucina di un Castello, non meglio precisato. Spesso gli urban explorers omettono le indicazioni che consentirebbero ad altri di raggiungere i luoghi abbandonati



**GLI URBAN EXPLORERS LASCIANO NEI LUOGHI VISITATI  
UN LIBRO DELLE FIRME DOVE REGISTRANO IL LORO PASSAGGIO  
E GLI INDIRIZZI INTERNET DA VISITARE PER LE FOTO.  
SPESSE NON VERRÀ MAI RITROVATO:  
L'EDIFICIO SARÀ DEMOLITO PRIMA**





Immagini di oggetti lasciati dietro di sé da chi ha abbandonato le case.

Fermati nel tempo dagli urban explorers



maged. Drainers may use it to indicate how far down the drain a given explorer has been. Similarly, tags may be left in very inaccessible places such as inside false ceilings, at the tops of elevator shafts, and so on.

Some locations contain a small area reserved for leaving tags, known as a guest book. These vary from actual books to blackboards to pieces of scrap metal or wood, or even the dust on an old piece of machinery. Rarely, employee guest books will be found, made before the business in question closed. Tags, especially those left in guest books, are sometimes referred to as "sign-ins", and the process of leaving them is "signing in". In marked contrast to the values of mainstream U.S. urban graffiti, tags are generally made to be unobtrusive, being written in conventional or slightly enlarged handwriting with pens or markers rather than larger markings made with paint. As with many other cases of ethical principles, it is primarily up to the individual to make their own decisions based on their viewpoints and their current situation. Genuine urban explorers never vandalize, steal or damage anything — they don't even litter. They're in it for the thrill of discovery and a few nice pictures, and probably have more respect for and appreciation of our cities' hidden spaces than most of the people who think they're naughty. They don't harm the places we explore. They love the places they explore. Urban explorers strive to actually earn their experiences, by making discoveries that allow them to get in on the secret workings of cities and structures, and to appreciate fantastic, obscure spaces that might otherwise go completely neglected.

Urban exploration is free, fun and hurts no one. It's a thrilling, mind-expanding hobby that encourages our natural instincts to explore and play in our own environment. It encourages people to create their own adventures, like when they were kids, instead of buying the pre-packaged kind. And it nurtures a sense of wonder in the everyday spaces we inhabit or pass by that few local history books could ever hope to recreate. I've had some of the best moments of my life while exploring, and I can't recommend the hobby enough.

### Popularity

The West Virginia State Penitentiary in Moundsville, West Virginia. It offers tours to the public.

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Una libreria e una vecchia cucina, foto tratte dal sito di un gruppo di urban explorers finlandesi

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The rise in the popularity of urban exploration can be attributed to its increased media attention. Recent television shows, such as "Urban Explorers" on the Discovery Channel, MTV's Fear, and the ghost hunting exploits of The Atlantic Paranormal Society have packaged the hobby for a popular audience. Talks and exhibits on urban exploration have appeared at the 5th and 6th Hackers on Planet Earth Conference, complementing numerous newspaper articles and interviews. With the advent rise in the relative popularity of the hobby due to this increased focus, there has been increasing discussion on whether the extra atten-

tion has been beneficial to urban exploration as a whole.

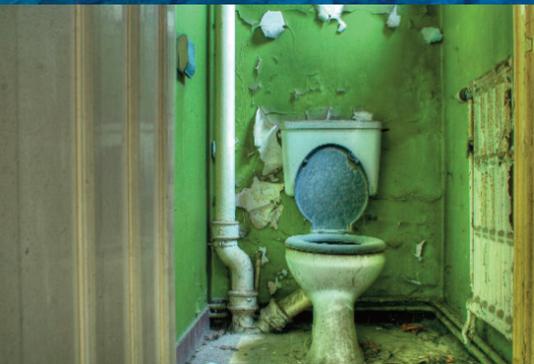
The growing popularity of the activity has resulted not just in increased attention from explorers, but also from vandals and law enforcement. The illicit aspects of urban exploring, which may include trespassing and breaking and entering, have brought along with them critical articles in mainstream newspapers. In one recent article, web-postings and photographs from the website Urban Exploration Resource were cited as evidence that explorers were trespassing in a closed prison in Northern Virginia. Users had posted specific details on entry points and how "easy" it was to gain entry to the disused facility.

In that regard, some explo-

rers have become wary of posting information and photographs on UE-related websites for fear of being prosecuted for trespassing. Recently there has been a conflict of interest between explorers about this issue. Additionally, arguments focus on whether online listings of explorable structures undermine the "underground" aspect of urban exploration.

Along with the rise in the popularity of urban exploring, numerous events have been hosted throughout the world. These organized meetings have included campouts, barbeques, day-long explorations, and tours of active and abandoned sites. While most of these are illegal in the sense that they involve trespassing or breaking and entering, a handful of meets, such as a

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recent event held at the West Virginia State Penitentiary, involve tours or lock-ins. Others include UE-related gatherings, such as a meet held by an urban explorer who calls himself Shiroi in which stunts were performed in an abandoned structure. This has received mixed criticism from the urban exploration community.

### Safety

Urban Exploration is a hobby that comes with a number of inherent dangers. Storm water drains are not designed with human access as their primary use. They can be subject to flash flooding and bad air. There have been a number of deaths in storm water drains, but these are usually during floods, and are normally not Urban Explorers. Confined spaces rules may need to be used in drains and some confined spaces that urban explorers travel into. Many old abandoned structures featured hazards such as unstable structures, unsafe floors, asbestos, exposed electrical wires and entrapment hazards. There have been some cases of urban explorers dying while urban exploring, such as an explorer who fell through a roof of an abandoned underground station. Another helpless urban explorer was found in a hotel in a wall cavity after wedging himself into the space while drunk. Asbestos is a long term health risk for urban explorers, along with breathing in contaminants from pigeon feces. Urban explorers use dusk masks and respirators to alleviate this danger. Similarly gas masks and respirators are used in situations where bad gases and lack of oxygen may be a problem.

### SITI

Ecco i siti più interessanti per ammirare le fantastiche foto degli urban explorers:

- [www.urbex.nl/portal.php](http://www.urbex.nl/portal.php)
- [www.oboylephoto.com/ruins/index.htm](http://www.oboylephoto.com/ruins/index.htm)
- [www.forbidden-places.be](http://www.forbidden-places.be)
- [www.deonderwereld.com](http://www.deonderwereld.com)
- [www.dobi.nu/photos](http://www.dobi.nu/photos)
- [www.infiltration.org](http://www.infiltration.org)
- [www.edificiabbandonati.com](http://www.edificiabbandonati.com)
- [www.simoncornwell.com/urbex/frames.htm](http://www.simoncornwell.com/urbex/frames.htm)
- [www.darkpassage.com](http://www.darkpassage.com)
- [www.forbidden-places.be](http://www.forbidden-places.be)
- [www.urbex.org](http://www.urbex.org)
- [www.28dayslater.co.uk](http://www.28dayslater.co.uk)