

The object of interaction

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SYNOPSIS

The workshop intends to focus on artefacts when exploring the design space between people and context in interaction design. Furthermore, the workshop will explore how ‘creative’ versus ‘engineering’ approaches [11] to user centred design lead to different engagement between user, design and context. Many interaction design methods either introduce artefacts, or rely on artefacts drawn from the design context in order to engage users in the design process. For example, in-situ methods such as contextual design [2] engage with users in-context, allowing artefacts that are used there to support discussion between user and designer. Cultural probes [6], on the other hand, have been proposed as a way to generate inspiration for design, by providing potential users with artefacts to provoke or generate responses about their current setting. Playful triggers have also been used to foster a more creative engagement between designer and user [9]. In many cases, the justifications for adopting methods such as probes appeal to the nature of the design context and how the method is appropriate for it, or can be adapted to it [1]. In this workshop we are also interested in the match between method and context, but our focus is on the role that artifacts play in informing or inspiring the design of interactive technologies for particular design contexts.

In this workshop, we invite researchers and practitioners to submit examples of their experiences of using or creating artefacts in interaction design. Examples from above could be how artefacts from the users’ context are recruited into design, or how cultural probes are created for a specific context. Other examples such as technology probes [8], low fidelity prototypes [10], or less tangible artifacts such as video [4] would also be of interest. In discussing the roles that artefacts can play in interaction design, we are particularly interested in how more designed approaches make use of the artefacts in a generative way. This is in contrast to more traditional HCI approaches which tend towards a more analytic approach, treating engagement with users and their contexts as ways

of ‘capturing’ hard data, requirements, etc. As such, we hope that this workshop will contribute to recent debate on the role that design plays in HCI [11], as well as critiques of how cultural probes have been increasingly used as means of data capture rather than inspiration [7]. There are also some parallels here to concerns with the role that ethnography often plays in HCI where ‘scenic fieldwork’ [3] is more about data capture, and the analytic power of the method is reduced to a list of implications for design [5]. How ethnography and other established approaches to understanding human interaction can interrelate with artefact-based approaches to interdisciplinary design is another related concern here.

The aim of the workshop is to provide ‘scaffolds’ to investigate the design space, led by the unique contexts provided by workshop participants. Through their submissions and attendance, we ask all participants to actively participate, experience and explore their own design space, in their own context of interaction design. Engagement in this experience will hopefully provide participants with a deeper insight and a greater awareness of their own design methods and processes, as well as informed knowledge gained from their peers.

This workshop is designed to be an organic and people-centred interactive event. Consequently, the workshop will model the iterative nature of a design process and foster an emerging community of practice. It will also address areas of concern by the participants and create opportunities for communication and interaction between researchers and practitioners in the workshop itself, and in the future online via the workshop web site.

Outcomes for participants

- Explore the relationship between artefacts, method and context;
- Participate in an experiential learning environment to understand design-led processes for interaction design,
- Join a community around the workshop topic as a place for the focus of exploring artefact-based interaction design methodology into the future.

Relevance for OzCHI

This workshop addresses concerns that are central to OZCHI's theme of *Design: activities, artefacts and environments*. In particular, the workshop will foster discussion around the nature of design-led research and creative design in HCI, the role that artefacts play in

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interaction design, and the interplay between people, artefacts, and context.

Artefacts as exploratory tools

This workshop asks the participants to submit a position paper (up to 4 pages in OzCHI conference format), which presents their experience with exploring artefacts in user centred design processes. This becomes the first stage of a design-led inquiry requesting participants report on their engagement/experience of artefacts informing an interaction design *through* an interaction design activity.

The second stage of the design-led inquiry will take place at the workshop. Participants will be asked to bring all materials, visuals, writings, thoughts and loose concepts that have been triggered by the artefacts discussed in the position paper. The participant's own presence, along with the materials they bring, and the position papers submitted will provide the context and framework to explore the design space.

Position papers should document and reflect on participants' experiences of artefacts in the design process. Particular attention should be focused on the relationship between artefacts, methods and context.

Workshop Plan

Participants will be selected for the workshop based on their demonstrated interest in the workshop topic via position papers. Papers will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary design team, drawing primarily upon the members of the workshop organising team. Submission will be online via a dedicated workshop page available on the team's website.

The precise nature of the workshop itself will inevitably be shaped by the background and experience of the participants, the different design contexts they describe, and of course the nature of the artifacts and other design materials which they bring with them. However, the following indicates a basic plan which will be adapted to these conditions once they are finalised. The emphasis will be on participation and interaction, and following a design-led process to allow an in-depth exploration of the artifacts in the context they have been created and used.

09:00-09:30 Introduction and setup of design materials

09:30-09:45 Overview of artefacts in interaction design.

09:45-10:30 Presentation and critique of design materials.

10:30-11:00 Break

11:00-12:30 Split into small groups and create new artefacts based on critique session.

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Presentation of the artefact outcomes and discussion

15:30-16:00 Break

16:00-17:00 Discussion and exploration of artefacts in the participant's context.

After the workshop it is expected that ongoing discussion will move to a website forum on the workshop website (www.hdm.net.au). Ongoing discussion may also lead to

a journal special issue on design-led practice in interaction design.

Key Dates

Call for papers: 28th August 2006

Submission deadline: 22nd September 2006

Author's acceptance: 6th October 2006

Final workshop paper submissions: 27th October 2006

Workshop Committee

Stephen Viller is a lecturer in the Information Environments Program at the University of Queensland where he teaches interaction design and studio-based IT design. He has published particularly in the areas of Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and Requirements Engineering.

Matthew Simpson (primary contact) is an associate lecturer with the Information Environments Program, School of ITEE, at the University of Queensland. Over the past 7 years at UQ, he has also been involved with the Interaction Design Research Division and the Australasian CRC for Interaction Design.

Laurene Vaughan is Project Manager of the ACID Human Dimensions program. She has a PhD in Communication Studies and is actively engaged in design research projects. She is Research Leader in the School of Applied Communication at RMIT.

Jeremy Yuille is an interaction designer, digital media artist and academic specializing in interactive audio visual and design systems. He manages the ACID Multiuser Environments Program and Virtual Communities Project.

Yoko Akama is a RA on the ACID Human Dimensions project. Yoko is in her final year of a PhD by project at RMIT University, School of Applied Communications. Her research explores a people centred design framework within the practice of Communication Design. She also lectures in communication design at various design institutions in Melbourne.

Roslyn Cooper is an RA working for the HDM project as well as another ACID project. She has an honours degree that focused on Interaction Design and IT. Her background is in the health domain with qualifications as an RN and midwife

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