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Social interaction in computer-augmented environments - towards an understanding of users' experience in interactive spaces

Dr. Eva Hornecker, Pervasive Interaction Lab, The Open University, UK

Program co-chair, Tangible and Embedded Interaction/Mardi Gras'07

Johnston Hall 338
February 28, 2007 - 03:00 pm

Abstract:
With technological advances, computing progressively moves beyond the desktop into new physical and social contexts. For these novel systems to be functional, usable, and enjoyable, their design requires interdisciplinary thinking, encompassing hardware, software, design aesthetics, usability etc. This talk will focus on the user experience in interactive spaces, which embed computing in the real world, and enable users to control and interact with computers through tangible devices and full-body interaction. Freeing users from the desktop and integrating computer output into the everyday world in particular is expected to support collaborative activities and communication. Yet research up to now has focused on exploring technical options, with little principled work and theory development that could guide design taking place. The proliferation of computing into everyday appliances, machines and environments renders a conceptual understanding of this new interface type ever more important. The talk will explain 'tangible interaction' as an umbrella term encompassing different technical and disciplinary approaches. It will introduce a framework which contributes to understanding the user experience of 'tangible interaction' and to principled design approaches that address the social use context. This is exemplified through a range of practical examples, including a study of different museum installations, a tabletop decision support system, and a public audio installation.

Speaker's Bio:
Eva Hornecker is Program co-chair of the first international Tangible and Embedded Interaction Conference (Mardi Gras'07). This new conference series brings together researchers and practitioners to discuss about aspects of design, interaction, use, art, and tools for or making use of this area of technologies. Eva studied informatics (computer science) with a minor in pedagogics at TH Darmstadt (Technical University of Darmstadt), Germany. In the summer of 2004, she defended her PhD thesis on 'Tangible User Interfaces als kooperationsunterstützendes Medium' in Bremen. She is currently a member of the new Pervasive Interaction Lab at The Open University in Milton Keynes, UK focusing on her research project titled 'A framework for collaboration-sensitive Design of Tangible Interaction.'