A-On (Always On)

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Abstract. A-On is an interactive system that allows users to be able to tune to family, friends and contacts all around the world in order to feel mutual presence.

A-On system encourages than user and contacts feel each other presence, it's a system that will help to maintain a bond between people in the distance.

A-On with its "Friend's Tuner[1]" will help the users to tune into their contacts' music, video and pictures and with its "Presence display[2]" will show the contacts presence.

A-On system will favour INFORMAL communication over formal communication; with A-On, the user will show to contacts its "Virtual Presence[3]".

KEY WORDS:

- Presence
- Virtual Presence
- Physical Presence
- Being sociable
- Haptic

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[1] Friends' tuner is the interface within A-On System that allows the user to tune its contacts.

[2] Presence Display is the interface within A-On system that shows others contact presence.

[3] User's presence displayed to others that are not sharing the same physical space.

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

The development of Intelligent Technology and the massive and fast expansion of methods of communication such as internet, mobile phones, etc. have promoted the design of social software (Shirky, 2003)[4].

Easier access to air travel, easier access to information throughout internet and political and economical differences between countries has favoured an exodus of people[5] from their own country of origin to other countries.

> During the last year (2006), immigration attorneys estimated that between 25,000 and 50,000 people from Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela have arrived in South Florida -- legally or illegally -- as virtual ``refugees'' from turmoil in their homelands. Most are seeking help in obtaining U.S. residency

People that move from one country to another normally leave their families behind.

HYPOTHESIS

People have to rely on "new" ways of communication to "replace" the physical contact between them and their families and friends.
Social software such as instant messaging (IM), Social software programs, etc. allows this "replacement" but is based in a virtual form of approach rather than a face to face or direct (touch) contact.

This "replacement" has left an entire generation that can not "catch up" quickly enough with technology "out of touch[6]" with the relatives abroad. This "analogue[7]" generation is only reachable by more common methods of communication such as travel, telephone, and letter. Those "traditional" methods do not entirely satisfy the need of touch and physical contact between people.

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

1. A-On system should help people to feel one another's presence in the distance with emphasis on emotional values.

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[4] Social Software: it's software that supports group interaction Clay Shirky's Writings About the Internet

[5] http://www.latinamericanjobs.com/contenido/ingles/comun/mundo_laboral/Noticias/Latinoamerica/Articul os/ml-latinam-13090001.ht

[6] Touch here has a double meaning: first that people cannot keep in touch and second the lack of being able to hug their families and friends.

[7] Analogue people is referring to people that are not computer literate or do not use mobile phones, basically people that are not "digital".

(Figure 1. I do care!!)

- Feel the presence
- Being Present
- Knowing you care
- Showing your care (Fig. 1)

2. This system will favour INFORMAL communication, allowing users to feel each other presence without being nosy. (Fig.2)
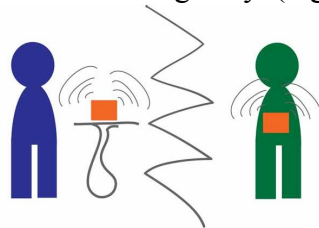
(Figure 2. Informal communication)

3. People will share their ACTIVITIES CONTEXT and CONTENT (data: music, pictures, movies, conversations, Fig 3).

(Figure 3. Share activities and content)

4. User will be able to FILTER content output and input.
5. User and contacts mutual AWARENESS in distance of what they do.
6. SENSORIAL feedback