

Pervasive 2007 Workshop: Designing for palpability

Call for Participation

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URL with CfP, programme etc: http://www.ist-palcom.org/palpable_pervasive_2007

Call for participation

Pervasive computing has taken computing beyond comprehensive systems into a multitude of devices and environments. In some sense this makes the computer disappear (Weiser 1991) and it enables 'bricolage' of disparate elements. However, people find it hard to realise the potential of pervasive computing. Which devices, services or resources are the best ones to use in a given situation? How to address breakdown? What to do when surrounded by potentially thousands of services and devices one could use? What when safety or privacy matters? To engage pervasive computing technologies effectively and creatively, people need to be able to notice and make sense of actual and potential computational processes, states, affordances and dependencies. They need to be able to do so in ways that are appropriate for their specific situation, their level of computer 'literacy' and interest.

For us, an important element of what is needed is captured by the word 'palpable', especially in its meaning of 'plainly observable', 'noticeable', 'manifest, obvious, clear'. Palpability is not a property of the technology itself, but an effect of people's engagement with technologies, objects, and environments. For designers of pervasive computing, this means that they cannot design palpability *into* technologies. But they can design *for* palpability, to support people in making computing palpable. Doing so challenges a number of concepts introduced with the vision for pervasive computing. For example, 'invisibility', 'ambient intelligence', 'autonomy' and '(de-)composition' - turn out to require respecification with regard to people's practices of using technologies at work, and in everyday life and play. Notions like inspection, experimentation, translation, emergent use, etc. become important.

For this workshop we invite 3-5 page position/design example papers that explore how one might design for 'palpability'. Our own approach is informed through ethnographic studies and participatory design and focuses on the development of architectural support and a vision for 'palpable' pervasive computing. Questions contributors might wish to address include:

- How do people make things 'palpable' for themselves and others? E.g. fieldstudies of human-

computer interaction, but also practices within the sciences, medicine, the arts or any other relevant area of human practice. Theoretical or philosophical submissions are also welcome.

- What technical possibilities exist? E.g. reviews and reports of existing approaches, for example, computational reflection, accountability, seamless design, design for dependability, palpable computing
- What are the experiences with existing technical approaches?
- How can we understand, and create new resonances, between human and machine, actual and potential, behaviour?
- Which design methods are best suited to addressing the challenges? E.g. reports and reflections on methodological innovations, or new challenges for traditional methods

The aim of this workshop is to bring together experts from different disciplines and approaches to develop the state-of-the-art in this emerging field of research and design. We may pursue opportunities to publish a special issue journal edition. Participation is limited to 30 participants. Position papers will be circulated beforehand. It is possible to participate without submitting a paper. Please contact us.

Important dates:

February 16, 2007: Deadline for Position/Design example Paper (3-5 pages) submissions
March 2, 2007: Notification of accepted Proposals, registration for the workshop
May 13, 2007: Palpable Computing Workshop and Pervasive 2007 conference

Background

The proposers have a long-standing involvement in socio-technical innovation and participate in the Palpable Computing project (PalCom: A new perspective on ambient computing, www.ist-palcom.org), which brings together European research teams to create an open architecture, application prototypes, and a vision for, palpable computing through ethnographically informed and participatory design. The PalCom initiative envisages pervasive computing technologies whose states, processes and affordances can be made 'palpable', and are therefore more effectively understood, appropriated and controlled.

Agenda:

March 2- May 13 Exchange of papers.
Participants are encouraged to read all papers before the workshop.

Sunday, May 13, Pervasive 2007

09:30 – 10:00 Introduction and plan for the day
10:00 – 11:00 Short presentations/demos by participants
11:00 – 11:30 Coffee
11:30 – 13:00 Short presentations/demos by participants
13:00 – 14:00 lunch
14:00 – 15:30 Group discussions
15:30 – 16:00 Plenary discussion
16:00 – 16:30 Coffee
16:30 – 17:30 Plenary discussion, summary of results in a poster for the conference Exhibition area. Where do we go from here?