



Observations and Evaluations of Collaborative Systems

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Outline

- Background
- Portholes
- Evaluation
 - The Question
 - The Data
 - The Findings

My Background in Collaborative Systems

- Media Space (audio, couches!, remote camera, persistence, informal, self-display)
- Shared Drawing
- Portholes
- Text-based MUDs
- Anchored Conversations

Portholes



Use of Portholes

- Users took advantage of its availability.
 - to build cohesion and community remotely.
 - to coordinate activities locally.
- It encouraged informal interaction.
- The effects were subtle.

Evaluation methods are an issue!

Portholes: Building Community



Portholes: Building Community



Portholes: Building Community



Portholes: Local Activity



Portholes: Informal Interactions



Lessons From Portholes

- Ask the questions that matter.
- Remember to look for the simple things.
- Don't let the unforeseen go unnoticed.
- Expect answers in many places and forms.

Evaluation

- Identify the questions.
- Gather the data.
- Think, reflect, brainstorm, analyze.

Include Context and Process.

Identify the Questions

- Find a Focus, a Perspective
- Fix on a Person, an Object, a Location
 - Comparison with face-to-face?
 - Evolution of work practice?
 - Opportunities for new technologies?

Access Grid Development(RS)

- Focus on small group-to-group situations?
- Remove need for node operator (or training).
- Improvements in audio/video/text/etc.
- Improve sense of presence.
- Understand options in modality/bw trades.
- Applications support (e.g. style guide).
- Scalability.

Relative Values?

- Spatial metaphors; Navigation scheme
- UI options; Camera and audio placement, count
- Roles of text channels (e.g. back channel)
- Public vs private channels, modes
- Role of asynchronous interaction
- [Types of interaction/collaboration? Users? Domains?]

Access Grid Cookbook

- When is the Access Grid appropriate?
- When is something else better?
- What are the guidelines for evaluation of applications?
- What else can be learned from human factors input?

Gather the Data

- Systematic.
- Objective (recordings, logging).
- Contextual (in situ).
 - We're bad at self-reporting.
 - We don't notice everyday events.
 - We may miss the serendipity.

Our Data Methods Include

- Artifact interviews
- Contextual inquiry
- Day in the life exercises
- Observations (with notes, often video, multiple perspectives)
- Anecdotes and collections
- System logging

Think, Reflect, Analyze

- Debrief
- Written Notes
- Collections
- Brainstorming
- Interactive Analysis



References

- Contextual Inquiry / Design (Holtzblatt, et al)
- Field Studies Casebook
- New book coming from Preece et al
- CHI / CSCW / PDA (inc. tutorials)