

Introduction to the Mobile Informatics Mini-Track

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People become more mobile to increase their opportunities. They rush around in offices, they wander in city centers, and they drive around in cars. But mobility also disconnects them from their surroundings, both nearby and things at a distance. Mobile work is often characterized by disruptions of the work task and limited access to resources such as information and colleagues. Things might be missed if not at the right place at right time with right information. However, mobile information technologies have the potential to reestablish some of the benefits of stationary proximity and allow people to conduct their business or lead their everyday lives while on the move. Three assumptions about mobility seem to be shared by people in general: (1) People are increasingly mobile. (2) Several new types of wireless access will be available in the next few years. And (3) Mobile information technology will offer new possibilities for mobile people.

As described in the call for papers, Mobile Informatics is an applied research area exploring mobile people and mobile information technology. Mobile informatics research is often conducted close to the industry. Much of the research is design and future oriented, combining field studies with technological innovations, scenario work with visions of the future. The result is innovative concepts and knowledge for the research community, business value and new opportunities for the industrial partners and services adding value to people's life.

Mobile informatics research is multidisciplinary and takes place in a number of different academic disciplines. The two main fields for the research are CSCW (computer supported cooperative work) and HCI (human computer interaction). Mobile informatics research is therefore commonly conducted, like much of the CSCW research, as a combination of a special form of sociological research (field work studies) and computer science. Sociology is employed for its focus on social interaction and everyday practice, and computer science for its knowledge of technology.

For presentation at this mini-track we have selected three excellent papers covering different aspects of mobile informatics.

In the first paper, Mobility, by Kakihara and Sorensen the concept of mobility is reconsidered from a theoretical perspective. In their paper they are critical to the tendency to concentrate mobility to corporeal travel, rather they

suggest human interaction to be a more fruitful conceptualization.

In the second paper Jennie Carroll and her colleagues ask: Just what do the youth of today want? Technology appropriation by young people. To answer their question they propose a model that discusses appropriation in terms of the interplay between what young people desire, the capabilities and implications of technology and the situations of use that young people inhabit.

Finally in the third paper, Use contexts and usability problems in mobile Internet, Jinwoo Kim and colleagues presents the results of an empirical study in which the use contexts of mobile Internet and corresponding usability problems have been monitored reliability using ethnographic methods.

Mobile Informatics is a young, dynamic, innovative and interdisciplinary research field. We will during the coming years see a variety of efforts researching aspects of mobility we haven't thought of today. We are looking forward to this.