

◆ Introduction to Digital Media: Content and Communication Track

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The *Digital Media: Content and Communication Track* has been running for several years. Its name has changed a few times over these years to better reflect the changing nature of the Track itself and thus reflect the dynamic nature of digital media.

This year, we have three new minitracks to complement the three mainstay minitracks of the Track. The Semantic Web and Software Agent Technologies Minitrack has moved to the Decision Technologies and Service Sciences Track as part of a theme grouping on Services Computing.

The three mainstay minitracks are:

- Genres of Communication and Digital Documents
- Persistent Conversation: Perspectives from Research and Design
- Digital Divide

while the three new minitracks are:

- Knowledge Discovery
- Information Retrieval and Search Effectiveness: Exploring New Perspectives
- Social Spaces: Production and Consumption of Goods in Digital Collectives

This track is about Content and Communication and the minitracks do reflect this. The Genre and Persistent Conversation Minitracks are primarily about communication. Recognizing the genre of a document is important as it makes communications more easily recognizable and understandable by recipients and more easily generated by senders. Thus, the study of genres, besides enhancing our understanding of information searching and use, may also provide insights into organizational or community structures.

Closely aligned with the Genre Minitrack is the Persistent Conversation Minitrack which examines the transposition of ordinarily ephemeral conversation into the potentially persistent digital medium. The persistence of such conversations gives them the potential to be searched, browsed, replayed, annotated, visualized,

restructured, and re-contextualized, thus opening the door to a variety of new uses and practices.

The Information Retrieval and Search Effectiveness Minitrack is focussed on both content and communication. This minitrack addresses how to help the user access and make use of digital data.

The Knowledge Discovery Minitrack is a new addition this year. Knowledge discovery provides new insights and understanding from data. The need for knowledge discovery results from a tsunami of data which comes in a variety of media types, formats, languages, and disciplines, and across a growing number of interrelated problem domains.

Digital collectives are computer-mediated places where a large number of people come together to interact. The Social Spaces Minitrack focuses on how people produce and consume goods in these new social spaces—both online and off. In particular, it is interested in work addressing the design, creation and use of information in many settings, particularly in ways that are newly emerging and especially innovative. We seek high quality papers across a broad spectrum of topics in this area.

The Digital Divide Minitrack is the social conscience of the Track. We have five minitracks that examine cutting edge research on digital media content and communication. This minitrack examines the gap between those people and communities who can access and make effective use of digital media and those who cannot. What are the barriers and how can we eliminate those barriers?

The combination of the three returning minitracks with the three new minitracks has refocused the Track and given it an exciting and stimulating direction.