

## ▼ Introduction to Persistent Conversation 9: Design and Analysis of CMC Systems Minitrack

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Persistent conversation is human-to-human interaction carried out over computer networks; it is produced by typing, speaking, or other means. Unlike face-to-face conversation, however, it leaves a trace—in the form of text on a computer screen, sound files, etc.—that persists for varying amounts of time. Examples of persistent conversation include interactions carried out via group chat, IM, texting, MUDs, email, newsgroups, web boards, blogs, wikis, 3-D virtual environments, and other digital media.

Persistent conversation differs from spoken conversation in interesting ways. For example, because it leaves a trace, persistent conversation can occur with lags of minutes to months between conversational turns. Alternatively, the turns of persistent conversation can overlap, with many participants effectively ‘speaking’ at once, as often happens in online chats. Freeing conversation from the lock-step synchrony of face-to-face talk has major implications both for the ways in which people and groups turn persistent conversation to their own ends, and for the design of systems that support conversation.

Other characteristics that distinguish persistent conversation from its spoken counterpart include textual and graphic compensation for the loss of social cues present in face-to-face conversation; the possibility of very-large-scale conversations with hundreds or thousands of participants; and the social and ethical consequences (in terms of responsibility, accountability, and liability) of the creation of persistent and potentially permanent records of what was once an ephemeral process.

The aim of this minitrack is to bring together researchers who analyze existing computer-mediated conversational practices and sites, with designers who

propose, implement, or deploy new types of conversational systems. By bringing together participants from such diverse areas as anthropology, computer-mediated communication, HCI, interaction design, linguistics, psychology, rhetoric, sociology, and the like, we hope that the work of each may inform the others, suggesting new questions, methods, perspectives, and design approaches.

This is the 9th Persistent Conversation minitrack (see [www.visi.com/~snowfall/HICSS\\_PC\\_History](http://www.visi.com/~snowfall/HICSS_PC_History)). This year’s papers take up themes from previous years, —avatar-based communication and blogging—as well as venturing into new territory, such as interactive television.

- Television-Mediated Conversation: Coherence in Italian iTV SMS Chat, Asta Zelenkauskaite and Susan C. Herring
- Cues to Deception in Online Chinese Groups, Lina Zhou and Yu-wei Sung
- Communicators' Perceptions of Social Presence as a Function of Avatar Realism in Small Display Mobile Communication Devices, Sin-Hwa Kang, James H. Watt and Sasi Kanth Ala
- Social Exchange Online: Public Conversations in the Blogosphere, Michael A. Stefanone and Chyng-Yang Jang
- Exploring the Corporate Blogosphere: A Taxonomy for Research and Practice, Nicholas S. Lockwood and Alan R. Dennis
- Online Gestures: Icon Use by Fan Communities on LiveJournal, Claudia Rebaza
- Venice, California and World of Warcraft: Persistence and Ephemerality in Playful Spaces, Silvia Lindtner and Bonnie Nardi