Many Computers, Many People, and Everything in between: Supporting Shared Computing

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Abstract

Over the years we have seen a shift from mainframe computing, to personal computing, to a world heavily dominated by web interactions. Users today have access to a wide variety of devices and advances in social computing now enable users to keep in touch with colleagues, friends, and family all over the world; however, we are still limited by the one-user/one-computer origins of PC technology. Whether we want to interact with people in the same room, down the hall, or 10,000km away; whether we want to work together, or apart, at the same time, or independently, our computing environments need to adapt. In this talk I will emphasize the importance of designing for “shared computing”; the notion that devices as well as experiences are often shared, and we need to effectively support all dimensions of shared use. Extending a design from individual to shared use is more than adding a few new features and often, the underlying conceptual model of the system must change. This talk will reflect on where we’ve come from, current stumbling blocks, and where we are headed.