



The Meaning of Place

technological imagination and human experience

http://www.intel.com/research/exploratory/papr/meaning_of_place-forum.htm

forum and workshops
September 9 and 10, 2003

organized by
People and Practices Research Lab (PAPR)
Intel Research

WELCOME!

Forum Agenda

- 12:30 Welcoming Remarks — Scott Mainwaring, PAPR
- 1:00 Opening Keynote — Joe McCarthy, Intel Research Seattle
Situated Computing: Technology in Place(s)
- 2:00 Break
- 2:30 Roundtable Discussion — John Sherry, PAPR, *moderator*
Gaetano Boriello, IR Seattle & U Washington
Paul Dourish, UC Irvine
Mimi Ito, USC
Jamy Sheridan, Maryland Institute College of Art
Nina Wakeford, U Surrey
Barry Wellman, U Toronto
- 5:45 Forum Adjourns

About Your Hosts

Intel Research

- Long-term research into emerging and disruptive technologies, centered on a vision of ubiquitous, proactive computing
- Portfolio of strategic research projects, collaborative university labs, academic research grants, and PAPR

Make it Personal

Empowering individuals and addressing their concerns over security and privacy

Closing the Loop

Bridging the gap between anticipating and acting on needs-predictably, and under human supervision

Anticipation

Creating proactive software that anticipates our needs and produces answers before they are required.

Dealing with Uncertainty

Using statistical modeling to deal with uncertainty inherent in the physical world.

Planetary Scale Systems

Developing software that works across a wide range of diverse platforms and networks.

Deep Networking

Locally networking billions of embedded nodes; driving computing deeper into the infrastructure that surrounds us.

Getting Physical

Connecting computers directly to the physical world around them.



People and Practices Research

- Holistic studies of technology use (and non-use) in real-world settings to inform and inspire future designs and strategies
- Multi-disciplinary team of anthropologists, psychologists, interaction designers, and engineers

Studying People, Practices, and Places

Production Environments



Shared Computing Centers



Non-Office Workplaces



Homes and Care Centers



Defining *Place*

A place is a space which is *invested with understandings* of behavioural appropriateness, cultural expectations, and so forth. We are *located* in "space," but we *act* in "place."

Harrison & Dourish, 1996

- Place is a spatial/social concept - a point of contact between physics and culture
- Rooted in everyday experience, often taken for granted
- Often used metaphorically, though most of our focus today and tomorrow is on literal, tangible places

Technology and Place?

- Should technologists care about place?
Why? How?
 - Conversely, should makers, caretakers, and users of place care about technology?
- How to think about place with respect to technology?
 - Place as infrastructure
 - Place as habitat
 - Place as creation
 - Place as overhead



Place as Infrastructure

- Places offer pre-existing collections of resources that technologies can use
 - To find users and target services
 - To embed devices and ground augmentations
 - To serve as metaphors
 - To leverage existing practices, laws, perceptions

Place as Habitat

- Places are living systems whose health is impacted by technologies
 - Natural habitat monitoring and management
 - Sustainability - economic and ecological
 - E-government and community networking
 - Many critiques, regarding surveillance, privacy, isolation, distraction, division

Place as Creation

- Places are expressions of design or culture, made with technologies as materials or tools
 - Places as cultural statements, vessels for emotion and meaning
 - Professional and vernacular place-makers
 - Acts of creation, and re-creation
 - Sense of place vs. placelessness

Place as Overhead

- Places impose barriers and constraints on flows of people, things, and information for technology to overcome
 - Distance and other physical barriers
 - Local, idiosyncratic practices as challenges to standardization, rationalization, globalization
 - Challenges to ubiquitous adoption

Goals for the Forum and Workshops

- To better understand “place” and its relations to technology from a variety of different disciplines and perspectives
- To begin a process of cross-pollination through interdisciplinary discussion
- To identify directions for future research and collaboration