Collaborative Computing

Computer Literacy 1 Lecture 12
16/10/2008

Topics

- Computer Meditated Communication
- Real-world communication
- Email
- How to express emotions in verbal environment
- Chat/Desktop Conferencing (internetphone)
- Groupware
- Online relationships

CMC

- CMC = Computer Mediated Communication
  - Email
  - Web
  - Chat
  - Messaging systems
  - Desktop video conferencing
  - Learning environments

Factors

- Technological
- Psychological
- Social
- Conversation might convey information or be phatic (performs a social function)

Real-world Communication

- Face to face
  - Content
  - Context
  - Relationship cues - status, age, gender
  - Common ground
  - Body language, expression, tone of voice
- Phone
  - Difference to above is that you are reduced to tone of voice instead of whole body image

Written

- Letter (pre-computer)
  - Relationship cues from header and wording
  - Handwritten or typed
  - Verbose (sometimes you have to be very specific to express yourself, that might take up more words)
  - Slow (Mail)
  - For business it should be very formal

Email

- Informal (even with business contacts)
- Lack of relationship cues
- No immediate feedback (but quicker than letter)
  - Has "the last word" effect

Email

- 1:1 or 1:many (mailing list)
- Many : Many (distribution list)
- Asynchronous
  - No timing link between message send and replay
  - Facilitates communication between different time zones
- Can be rapid
- Relatively private (and can be encrypted)
- Location independent

Replacing non-verbal cues

- Emoticons like smileys
  - :-) or (^_^) for happy
  - :'-(or (ToT) for crying
- Emphasis:
  - "this is a *seriously* bad idea"
- Abbreviations (mainly for chat)
  - LOL, AFK

SPAM

- Unwanted email promotional material
- Organisations filter what they can
- Always update own spamfolder
  - Don't forget to check it from time to time, since normal email can end up in spam folder accidentaly
- Spammer hijack email addresses
  - when you send emails to a list better use Bcc
- Spambots look for email addresses in the webpages
  - so try to disguise

Chat

- Interactive, online
- Synchronous
- Multiple participants
- Choice of fonts etc…
- Can choose names for your chat-personality to stay anonymous
- Abbreviations and graphic emoticons common
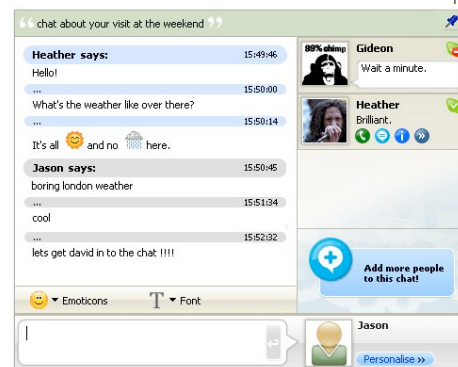
Desktop Video Conferencing

- 1:1 or 1:small number
- Shared applications
- Conference talks possible
- Full screen images
- Easier since webcams and microphones are higher quality nowadays
- For free with Skype
- Sometimes a bit of a hassle due to connection and stability problems
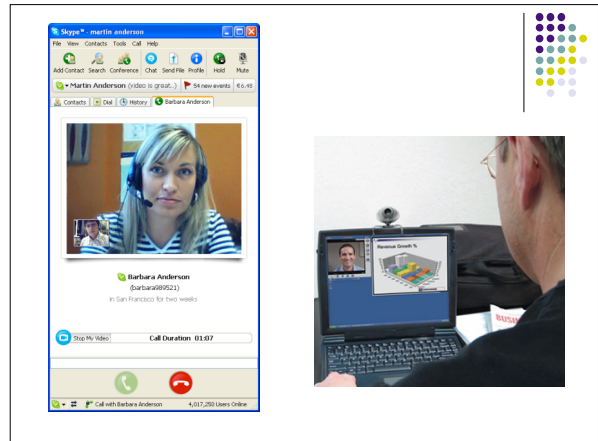
Studio Video Conferencing

- Can also be done in lecture theater, big conference rooms
- Transmission as well as exchange of information possible
- Video feds can be switched
- Speaker, speaker slides, local audience
- Remote audience
- "Follow me" systems steer cameras to speaker
  - Almost broadcast quality - Needs steady service

Learning Environments

- WebCT (now owned by), Blackboard, MyEd…
- Web authoring package
  - Visual styles like clip art, buttons etc. are already at hand
  - Framework leading to bulletin boards, chat rooms etc…
  - Testing and assessment support
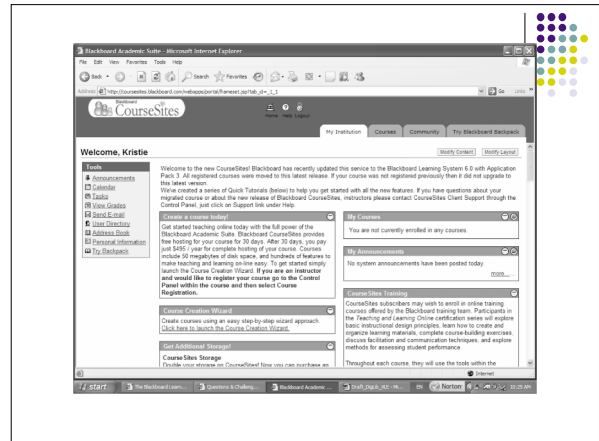
Does groupware work?

- Works best with small to medium group with strong common interest
- Works best if people know each other in real world or at least have common ground together
- Self-perception, self-consciousness effects
- Confidence with technology can be an issue
- Extroverts can dominate and introverts opt-out
- Role of moderator important

Internet Relationships

- Forever online
  - Factor anonymity
    - Less inhibited - chance to invent yourself new
- Real life relationships go online
  - Maintaining existing relationship over long distance
- Online relationships go Real Life
  - Can work without problem
  - Can go wrong when person doesn't life up to online character
    - Either because they created a wrong image themselves or other person pictured them different

Social Function and Dysfunction

- Are internet relationships socially healthy?
- It depends:
  - Functional:
    - Breaks down social, geographical barriers
    - Maintains relationships in an easier way letters do
  - Dysfunctional:
    - Facilitates antisocial behaviour
    - Allows predation on naïve users
- How come?
  - http://www.education-world.com/a_tech/tech043.shtml

Key points

- Forms of interpersonal communication
- Lack of non-verbal cues
  - Replacement of cues with emoticons
- Use of conferencing and groupware
- Online relationships
  - Anonymity