

The Culture of Information: Ubiquitous Computing and Representations

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ABSTRACT

In the late 1980s, Weiser suggested that the ages of mainframe and personal computing would give way to a third wave of “ubiquitous computing,” a confluence of embedded physical computing and pervasive wireless networking. Indeed, ubiquitous computing has become a dominant paradigm for computing research and an increasingly prevalent form for the delivery of information services. Ubiquitous computing reconfigures the relationship between people and the world around them. It does this by interpreting that world in terms of information. This is not a new phenomenon. Information systems research has, since its inception, been built upon a model of information as commodity, to be extracted, exchanged, moved, stored, and processed. The idea that the world is populated with information objects and artifacts is at the heart of the technological enterprise. However, in the context of ubiquitous computing, this model privileges certain models of spatial and environmental knowing while obscuring or devaluing others. In this talk, I will use ubiquitous computing as a lens through which to examine these concerns, and explore the consequences of the model of information as commodity.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Paul Dourish is an Associate Professor in the Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of California, Irvine and Associate Director of the Irvine Division of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology. His primary research interests are in the areas of Ubiquitous Computing, Computer-Supported Cooperative Work, and Human-Computer Interaction. He is especially interested in the foundational relationships between social scientific analysis and technological design. His 2001 book “Where the Action Is: The Foundations of Embodied Interaction” (MIT Press) explores how phenomenological accounts of action can provide an alternative to traditional cognitive analysis for understanding the embodied experience of interactive and computational systems. Before coming to UCI, he was a Senior Member of Research Staff in the Computer Science Laboratory of Xerox PARC. He has also held research positions at Apple Computer and at Rank Xerox EuroPARC. He holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from University College, London, and a B.Sc.(Hons) in Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science from the University of Edinburgh.

For more information about his research interests, publications, and teaching, see:
<http://www.ics.uci.edu/~jpd/>.