

PDC'94: Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference

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WELCOME TO PDC '94

The Conference on Participatory Design provides a continuing forum for discussing and promoting user participation in the design of systems, both organizational and computer-based. The first Participatory Design conference explored the historical roots of this way of working, by bringing European practitioners together with American researchers and industry developers. By the second conference, PDC'92, participatory approaches to design had taken root in the US, not only in research environments, but also at several commercial firms. Both conferences included practical workshops where attendees could learn about techniques developed to support and encourage participation in various aspects of design. One theme that emerged from the papers and sessions of PDC'92 was the crucial role played by organizational issues — politics, culture, memory and learning — in design.

PDC'94 picks up this theme with papers, panels, and plenaries covering politics, organizations, education, and field studies. As in the previous two conferences, we're featuring a half day of parallel workshops covering practical aspects of user involvement in technology design and development. For the first time this year, we're offering a forum for the presentation of artifacts — representations, techniques, methods, and technologies developed for or through participatory design. We are excited by the program and by the opportunity these two days provide for conversation, discourse, and interaction among all participants. We look forward to participating.

Finally, we wish to thank the many people who have made this conference possible. The members of the conference and program committees, listed on the next page, gave generously of their time to insure that the conference came together. Special mention is due Barbara Katzenberg for publicity work and Susan Suchman Simone for early work on local arrangements. Andrea Mosher led the design of the program flyer and conference logo. Mimi Gardner's assistance was crucial for the work of the program committee. The proceedings were produced by Elizabeth Dykstra-Erickson and Pat Coleman. Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, the main sponsor for this conference, deserves special thanks, particularly Nikki Draper, Kathleen Kells, Susan Evoy and Al Whaley.

This promises to be a wonderful opportunity to meet and talk about our shared interests, our accomplishments and our concerns. We hope you enjoy it,

Bill Anderson, Susan Anderson, and Randy Trigg

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Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility is a national, non-partisan, public-interest organization dedicated to understanding and directing the role of computing in society. Decisions regarding the use of this technology have far-reaching consequences that reflect particular values and priorities. The mission of CPSR is to provide the public and policy makers with realistic assessments of the power, promise, and problems of information technology.

Founded in 1981 by a group of researchers concerned about the use of computers in nuclear weapons systems, CPSR has grown into a national public-interest alliance of information technology professionals and other people. Currently, CPSR has 1800 members, 22 chapters in the US, and contacts with similar groups worldwide. CPSR recently published the influential report "Serving the Community" on policy issues in the National Information Infrastructure, and is an active participant in the Telecommunications Policy Roundtable in Washington.

We believe that as the influence of computers continues to permeate every aspect of our society, it is important that professionals become active participants in formulating the policy that governs computer use and access. CPSR welcomes everyone who uses or is concerned about the role of information technology in our society.

CURRENT CPSR PROJECTS

By sponsoring both national and local projects, CPSR serves as a catalyst for in-depth discussion and effective action in key areas:

- The National Information Infrastructure
- Civil Liberties and Privacy
- Computers in the Workplace
- Technology Policy and Human Needs
- Reliability and Risk of Computer-Based Systems

In addition, CPSR's chapter-based projects and national working groups tackle issues ranging from the implementation of Calling Number ID systems to the development of nanotechnology and virtual reality, from the use of computers in education to working conditions for computer profes-

sionals, from community networks to computer ethics.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- CPSR published the first papers and held the first public debates on the computing aspects of the Strategic Defense Initiative, or "Star Wars."
- CPSR members testified before a US Senate subcommittee on the feasibility of SDI.
- CPSR/Boston produced an award winning slide show and videotape called "Reliability and Risk: Computers and Nuclear War."
- CPSR members produced the first book for general audiences on the ways in which computers revolutionize modern weapons systems, *Computers in Battle: Will they Work?*
- At the request of a House subcommittee, CPSR studied the FBI's proposed National Crime Information Center upgrade (NCIC 2000). CPSR's report was widely credited for the FBI's subsequent decision to drop a proposal to track individuals who had not been charged with any crime.
- CPSR co-produced a "Special Report on Computers and Elections" for the 1988 Presidential Campaign, highlighting the potential for errors in electronic vote-counting systems.
- CPSR filed lawsuits under the Freedom of Information Act to force the FBI and Secret Service to reveal whether they monitor computer bulletin boards and electronic mail.
- CPSR/Portland hosted a conference on *Computers and the Environment*.
- The CPSR Workplace Project organized PDC'90 - the first U.S. conference on participatory design, in which users work together with software designers to ensure that systems meet workers' needs.
- CPSR helped lead a successful grassroots campaign to convince the Lotus Development Corporation not to release their proposed *Marketplace: Households* product, which would have included data on 120 million Americans.
- CPSR/Berkeley organized a media campaign to register our concern over the deadly role of computing technology in the Persian Gulf War.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

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- Access to on-line information and discussion groups on key topics concerning the socially responsible use of information technology.
- The chance to participate in local and national work groups on issues of particular interest to you.
- A quarterly newsletter containing in-depth analysis of major issues as well as updates on CPSR activities and action alerts.
- Invitations and discounts to CPSR events and publications. CPSR sponsors conferences on Participatory Design (PDC), Directions and Implications of Advanced Computing (DIAC), and Computers, Freedom and Privacy (CFP), among others.

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CPSR also maintains a number of email lists that focus on various issues and projects. To find out what email lists are available and how to join them, send an email containing the message LIST to listserv@cpsr.org

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Keynote speaker:

From subversion to hype: On political and technical agendas in PD

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Over the last decades involvement of users in relation to system development has changed dramatically. Twenty years ago users entered the process at the end of the day, when the system was to be installed, and the 'users-to-be' thus needed to be instructed on how to use the new system. These days Microsoft wants end-users involved early in their design efforts -- not managers, and not IS people. Nokia develops and evaluates remote controls by studying television users in their homes and by means of mock-ups. Lotus and IBM do usability testing 'up-front' based on paper mock-ups of the interface. And Microsoft tells us that they base their design work on a Hegelian notion of conflict.

But what about the basic assumptions concerning this role -- the conditions for influence? Here much less has happened -- in some respects it seems that the political agenda of democratic oriented PD work hasn't progressed at all. Users are basically brought into the process because this makes it easier to develop profitable systems. They are not viewed as possibly influencing the overall requirements, but rather as contributing to meeting the goals set up by others.

The talk discusses such changes in user involvement and more broadly, changes in societal conditions for various

types of PD. It considers past and present Scandinavian experiences in PD, positive as well as negative, and takes a look at the future of 'democratic PD'.

Morten Kyng is a member of the System Development Group at Aarhus University. Since the mid-seventies, the group has worked on a variety of projects in participatory design. The DUE project (1975-1979) had the goal of increasing worker influence on design and use of computer systems. The main focus was on development of local group-based work practices. The project was carried out together with local unions at three different companies and supported by the Danish TUC. The Scandinavian Utopia project (1980-1984) supplemented the local, factory level strategy with a central, trade union based effort to develop alternative computer support, support that could enhance the quality of work and products. For the last decade the main emphasis of the group has been on tools and techniques for participatory design. The current Devise project focuses on the development of computer-based tools, with the aim of making tools and techniques that support -- instead of obstruct -- worker influence in design.

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