Introduction to Participatory Design

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ABSTRACT

This tutorial gives an introduction to Participatory Design (PD) for newcomers to the field. It will be held in the form of a combined seminar/workshop, offering participants a brief history of PD as well as hands-on experience of some of the methods used in PD practice. The instructors are researchers who have taught PD courses for graduate students as well as used PD methods in their own research projects for a number of years.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TUTORIAL

The tutorial will begin as a seminar, during which the organizers will give a brief overview of the research area and history of Participatory Design, as seen from a Scandinavian perspective. After this, we will proceed with a mini-workshop, during which we will try some of the methods used in PD practice. Finally, based mainly on our own experiences, we will discuss benefits as well as challenges of using PD in practice, in student and research projects.

The tutorial as a whole is intended to be informal and interactive. Depending on the number of participants, we may divide into two or three smaller groups during the workshop part.

AIM OF THE TUTORIAL

- To give an introduction to Participatory Design both as a research area and as part of everyday software development practice
- To give an overview of the history of PD
- To offer hands-on experience of some PD methods
- To discuss some of the main themes of PD and what it might mean to try to weave them into teaching and research practices
- To answer questions and explore issues and ideas about PD that are brought up during the tutorial

AUDIENCE

The tutorial is intended for newcomers to the field of Participatory Design, people who wish to get an introduction to and overview of PD in connection with attending PDC2002.

ABOUT THE TUTORIAL ORGANIZERS

The organizers of the tutorial are all from the Department of Human Work Science and Media Technology at the Blekinge Institute of Technology in Southern Sweden.

Annelie Ekelin is a Ph D student who is focusing on participatory design of community websites in her research work. She has a BA with a major in ethnology, a diploma in librarianship, and has worked as a journalist and librarian. Annelie has been involved in several research projects focusing on the social construction of technology in use during the past three years.

Pirjo Elovaara is a PhD student who has a Technology Licentiate degree in Technoscience Studies. Her current research project is about national Swedish information technology politics and their local interpretations. Pirjo focuses on the collaboration between different human actors, as well as a number of non-human actors, in the development and shaping of both municipal web sites and local IT projects. She has been developing and co-constructing local and regional IT projects and IT training activities for several years.

Sara Eriksén is an assistant professor, with a Ph.D. in Informatics from Lund University, Sweden. She has taught PD courses for graduate students at Blekinge Institute of Technology for a number of years. Before that, in 1989-95, she worked as a consultant, developing municipal information systems, a job where the employer deliberately encouraged and supported the use of PD methods. Her current research project concerns participatory design and development of IT in use in public service one-stop shops and on-line public service systems.