

# Glossary Board

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## Abstract:

This project has three goals: (a) to encourage interaction about the words and definitions we take for granted; (b) to remove the distinctions between “authors” and “audience”, thus providing a more egalitarian — but nonetheless public — discussion environment; and (c) to collect informal data on the growth of community knowledge. Using bulletin boards, conference participants will be able to post definitional questions (“what do you think is the meaning of xxx?”), and other participants will be able to provide their own answers. There will also be opportunities to post comments or annotations on answers. The state of the asynchronous discussion will be captured periodically via still camera or video recorder.

## Keywords:

Artifacts, communication, equal opportunity.

PDC'92 will benefit from a participatory atmosphere. One way to achieve this is to provide novel means for sharing information at a grassroots level — i.e., in a way that does not distinguish between categories of “authors” vs. “audience”. What is needed is an environment that permits people to make contributions on an equal opportunity basis, and that provides exercises that will engender and motivate broad interest.

One or more bulletin boards will be provided that are considered to be community property.<sup>1</sup> A similar approach was used to solicit questions and comments prior to the CHI'91 participatory design panel (Muller, 1991b); this was called “partici-

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1. It would be nice to do this electronically — but perhaps not for the 1992 conference.

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patory design of the panel on participatory design,” and was used to bring voices not ordinarily heard into the panelists’ discussion. Similarly, we used the concept of a “participatory poster” at CHI'92 to encourage comments and corrections to a taxonomy of participatory design practices (Muller, Wildman, and White, 1992).

One of these community bulletin boards will be a Glossary Board, in which people will share their definitions of ideas, concepts, buzzwords, etc. The board will consist of the following:

- **Question Papers.** These are large sheets, perhaps 18"x12". Someone who wanted to pose a glossary question will write that question at the top of the paper, and then post the paper on the Glossary Board. We will print a template onto the Question Papers, with a question “field” at the top of each sheet, and an “originator” field at the bottom.
- **Answer Papers.** These are much smaller sheets, perhaps 5"x3" or 6"x4". People who wanted to offer their definitions will write them on these sheets, and then attach the sheets to the appropriate Question Paper. We might print a template onto the Answer Papers, with a “definition” field covering most of the sheet, and a “signature” field at the bottom.
- **Annotation Papers.** People may also wish to comment on one another’s answers, or on the questions themselves. We will provide a set of smaller materials, perhaps 3"x2", for these annotations.
- **Colored Pens.** We will provide a set of colored pens, perhaps anchored by strings, to help people write their questions and answers.

Tacks or other means of attaching the papers to the board will be provided.

There will be one set of examples of Question, Answer, and Annotations to guide people in their usage. The example might encourage graphical as well as textual answers (e.g., Crane, 1990). And, of course, if the participants choose not to abide by the size-based conventions described above, that will have only minor impact upon the project.

We hope to take snapshots of the Glossary Board at regular intervals, to document the growth of community knowledge

(Muller, 1991a; Muller and Cebulka, 1990) during the course of the conference. These might provide data for a study of asynchronous discourse.

The Question Papers and Answer Papers will be printed onto pastel colored paper. The colored pens will be fully saturated colors, using the color subset advocated by Crane (1990) at the 1990 meeting. The combination should provide an attractive set of materials whose appearance will help to encourage participation; the contrast between saturated pens and pastel papers should improve our ability to capture the growth of community knowledge via still camera or video recording (e.g., Muller, 1992).

We will provide at least two Glossary Boards — one on the concept of Participatory Design itself, and one for individual concepts within that field.

## References

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- [6] Muller, M.J., Wildman, White, E.A. (1992). Taxonomy of Participatory Design Practices: A Participatory Poster. Poster at CHI'92, Monterey CA, May 1992.