# CS 6474/CS4803 Social Computing: Background

*Munmun De Choudhury*

munmund@gatech.edu

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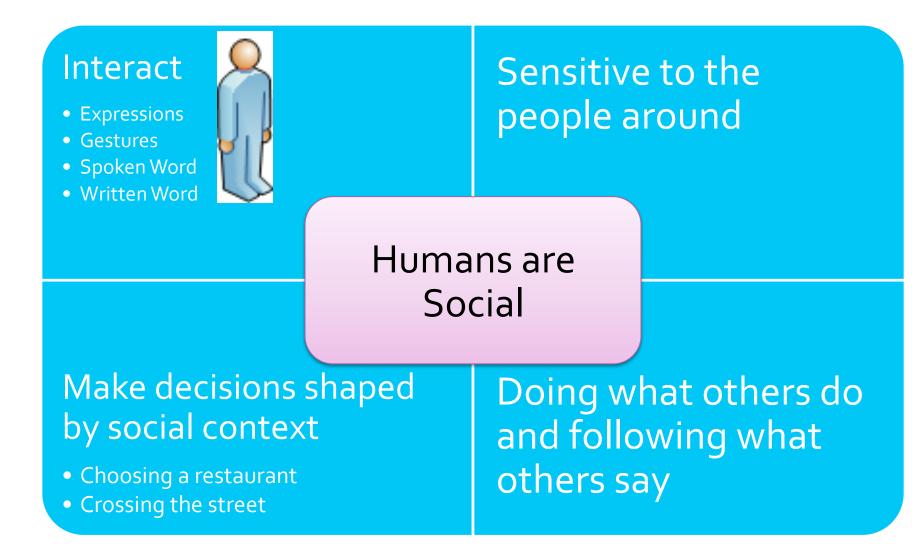
# Grading Distribution Update

# Grading

- Responses to Class Readings (on Piazza) - 20%
  - [Best 16 out of 19 in all]
  - 1.25% each reading reflection response
- Assignment I - 10%
- Assignment II - 10%
- Assignment III - 10%
- Class Participation - 10%
- Term Project - 40%
  - Project Proposal - 5%
  - Midterm Project Presentation - 5%
  - Midterm/Milestone Report - 10%
  - Final Project Presentation/Demo - 5%
  - Final Report - 15%

# Defining "Social Computing" / Background

*"Social computing is an area of computer science that is concerned with the intersection of social behavior and computational systems. It is based on creating or recreating social conventions and social contexts through the use of software and technology."*

# Why Social Computing?

Interact

- Expressions
- Gestures
- Spoken Word
- Written Word

Sensitive to the people around

Humans are Social

Make decisions shaped by social context

- Choosing a restaurant
- Crossing the street

Doing what others do and following what others say

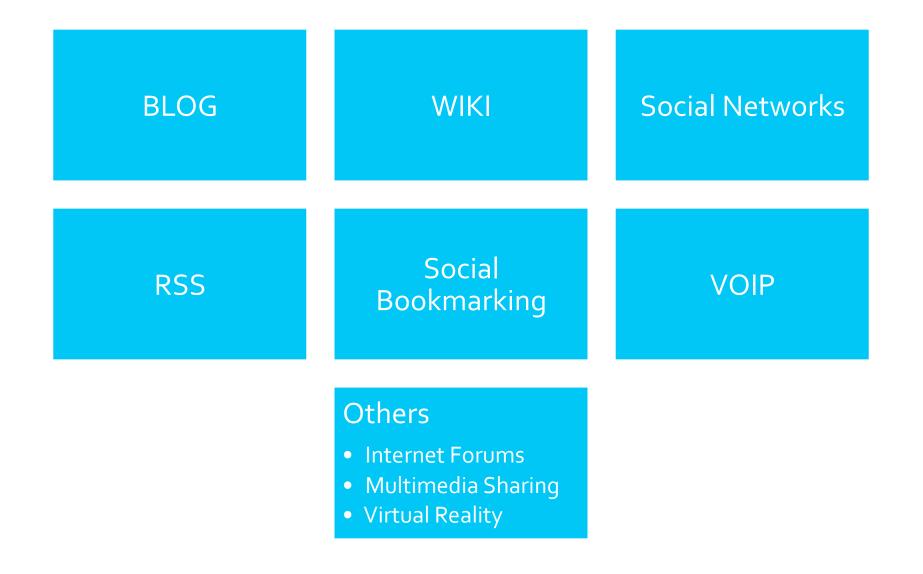# Theoretical and Infrastructure Basis of Social Computing

▪Social Computing is a cross-disciplinary research and application field with theoretical foundations including both ***computational*** and ***social sciences***

▪To support social interaction and communication, it relies on:

- Communication
- Human Computer Interaction
- Sociological, Psychological  Economic, and anthropological theories
- Social network analysis

# Class Activity

A) An example of a social computing system (that exists online)

Why?

B) An example of a non-social computing system (that exists online)

Why?

# Social Computing Tools

BLOG

WIKI

Social Networks

RSS

Social Bookmarking

VOIP

Others
- Internet Forums
- Multimedia Sharing
- Virtual Reality

## people creating
(blogs, user-generated content and podcasts)

**Blogger** | Technorati | You Tube | gather

## people connecting
(social networks and virtual worlds)

bebo | LIFE | myspace.com | twitter | facebook | CLUB PENGUIN

## people collaborating
(wikis and open source)

open source | Apache | Firefox | LINUX | WIKIPEDIA *The Free Encyclopedia*

## people reacting
(to each other: forums, ratings and reviews)

AOL | YAHOO! | yelp | Rotten Tomatoes

## people organizing content
(tags)

digg | flickr | SU | TAGGED

## people accelerating consumption
(RSS and widgets)

Pageflakes | AddThis | Share This | netvibes

What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people.
— William Whyte

# The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces

- Whyte led the Street Life project in the 1970s, and began investigating the various dynamics of urban spaces.

- He focused on the city, and studied New York City's parks, plazas, and various informal recreational areas like city blocks -- a total of 16 plazas, 3 small parks.

- Goal: 1) *why do some city spaces work for people while others don't*, and 2) *what the practical implications might be about living better, more joyful lives in our urban environment.*

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsVZxanrL7s

# Group Discussion

How is an understanding of street behavior relevant to the study of behaviors on social computing systems?

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How is an understanding of street behavior relevant to the study of behaviors on social computing systems?

What are your key observations (find two) and how do they relate to social computing systems?

Observation 1: People gathered and conversed in the most unexpected (crowded) places

Connection to social computing systems –
public social media conversations

Observation 2: People love to gossip and talk about mundane topics; they gathered in specific places and had conversations that were fairly brief or fairly long

Connection to social computing systems – mundane short and long discussions on social media

Observation 3: Conversations had silence and people used reciprocal gestures and movement; streets were a congenial place for expression of these activities

Connection to social computing systems – what would be equivalent reciprocal gestures on social computing systems?

Observation 4: Cities across the world are distinct, but on the streets people acted more or less the same despite underlying contrasts in cultures and practices

Connection to social computing systems – do people talk the same way on social computing systems, despite their contrasting socio-cultural backgrounds?

Observation 5: Public spaces designed to work very well for their initial constituency usually work very well for later ones

Observation 6: Large cities vs. small cities – differences exist in terms of density, pace, nature and types of social activities. But similarities outweigh differences.

Connection to social computing systems – are there behavioral differences between large and small social computing systems? What similarities do you observe?

*Summary:* Urban design needs to account for creating physical places that facilitate civic engagement and community interaction