

# CS 6474/4803 Social Computing: Social System Design

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# Sign up for project proposal lightning talks

- Link to sign up for each team: <http://tiny.cc/ProposalLightning>
- Slides due by 11:59pm tomorrow (Tuesday) via email to Sandeep and me.

# Presentation style

- No more than 5 slides
- Structure:
  - What is the problem
  - Why is it important
  - What has been done so far
  - Are there any/what are the gaps in this prior research?
  - How does your project close these gaps/extend current state of the art

“Social Translucence: An  
Approach to Designing  
Systems that Support Social  
Processes”

- “Socially translucent systems” – visibility, awareness, accountability
- Many analogies to physical world social encounters
- Central hypothesis – online social and collaboration tools should mimic these encounters

# Every day we make countless decisions based on the activity of those around us

In another town on business, you and a few colleagues are looking for a place to have dinner. You notice a small restaurant: through its window you see a cozy room with waiters bustling about; you hear the murmur of conversation, and the clink of glasses and cutlery. You head for the entrance...

You have arrived at the opening reception for a convention. You look around for someone to talk to and see someone you recognize gesturing excitedly as others listen intently. Curious, you wander over...

You are shopping for wine to bring to dinner. As you browse the racks you hear a muttered "Aha!" and watch another shopper grab two bottles out of a nearly empty bin. You get a bottle for yourself...

- “Socially translucent systems” – visibility, awareness, accountability
- Many analogies to physical world social encounters
- “Translucence” stands for the power of constraints
  - In face to face interactions, physical space is translucent (and not transparent) to socially salient information; it is an important resource for structuring interactions
- Context: Knowledge management in organizations – tools for capturing, retrieving, and disseminating information within the organization
- Concept of *knowledge community* (conversationally based communities in orgs), a place within which people would discover, use, and manipulate knowledge, and could encounter and interact with others who are doing likewise.

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The glass window makes socially significant information visible

The glass window supports awareness: brings our social rules into play to govern our actions

Accountability behind opening the door, as a consequence of public knowledge of the above awareness



- Design of socially translucent systems:
  - *Making activity visible*
  - *Conversation Visualization and Restructuring*
  - *Organizational Knowledge Spaces (managing visibility and privacy)*
- Design of a system called Babble, a knowledge management system which makes social information visible, aware, and accountable
  - Textual representation of the conversation
  - Social proxies
  - Group awareness

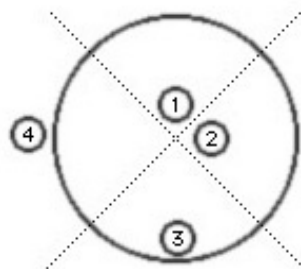
# Babble's Design

```
===Friday 12 Dec 97 3:43:44 From: Bill
Hi Steven!

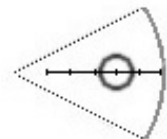
===Friday 12 Dec 97 3:44:49 From: Steven
Hellooo Bill. A little guidance please?
Is the [...] summary we're preparing for
[...] supposed to be an exercise in feeling
good, or are we supposed to be giving
him hard-headed guidance?

===Friday 12Dec 97 3:56:55 From: Bill
yes :-)
```

Fig. 1. A segment of conversation displayed as a single, shared, persistent document.



**(a) proxy layout**



**Active ... Idle**

**(b) animation rule**

# Class Discussion Point II

Erikson and Kellogg say that "*Digital systems are generally opaque to social information*"

Is it really the case?

Give one example where it is

Given one example where it is not

# Class Discussion Point II

Erickson and Kellogg look at social translucence in the context of a corporate environment.

What are the implications of this design beyond collaboration and knowledge communities?

How would these considerations of social translucence (visibility, awareness, accountability) change if it were a different environment?

# Class Exercise I – Pair and Share

How can we adapt Facebook's News Feed to support social translucence?

# Open Design Issues in Babble

- Should private chats be presented (the social scope)
- Should asynchronous conversations be shown – longitudinal view (the temporal scope)
- Should multiple conversations/topics be shown (the spatial scope)
- Coherence and evolution of activities and norms not shown
- Best way to visualize a conversation?
- Structure of knowledge communities or knowledge spaces (conventions)

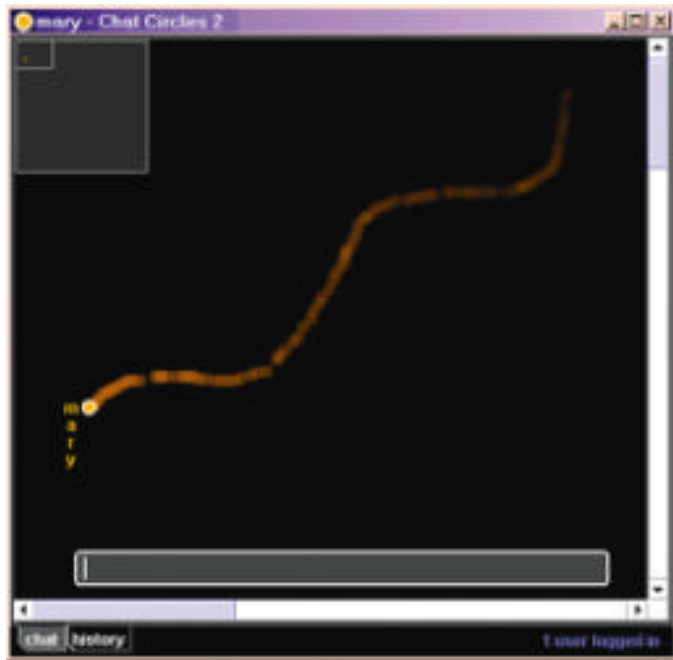
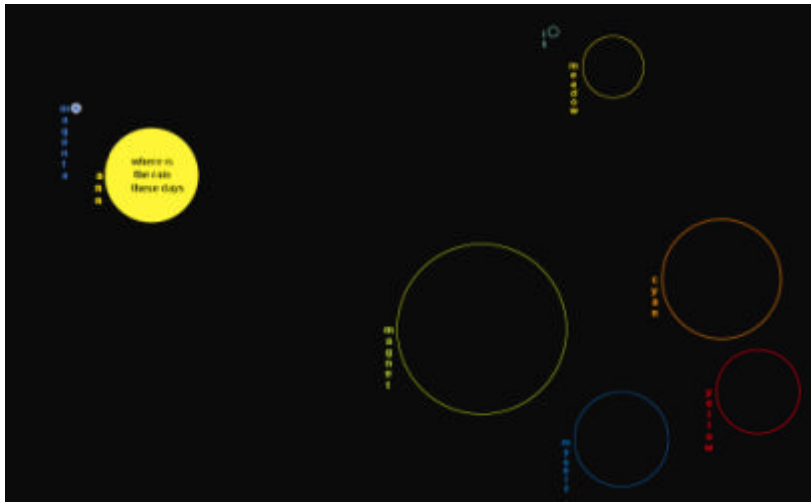
# Class Exercise II – Pair and Share

Erickson and Kellogg point out the tensions between visibility and privacy in designing socially translucent systems. What kind of design elements can help resolve this tension? Modify from the design you started with for Facebook in Class Exercise I.

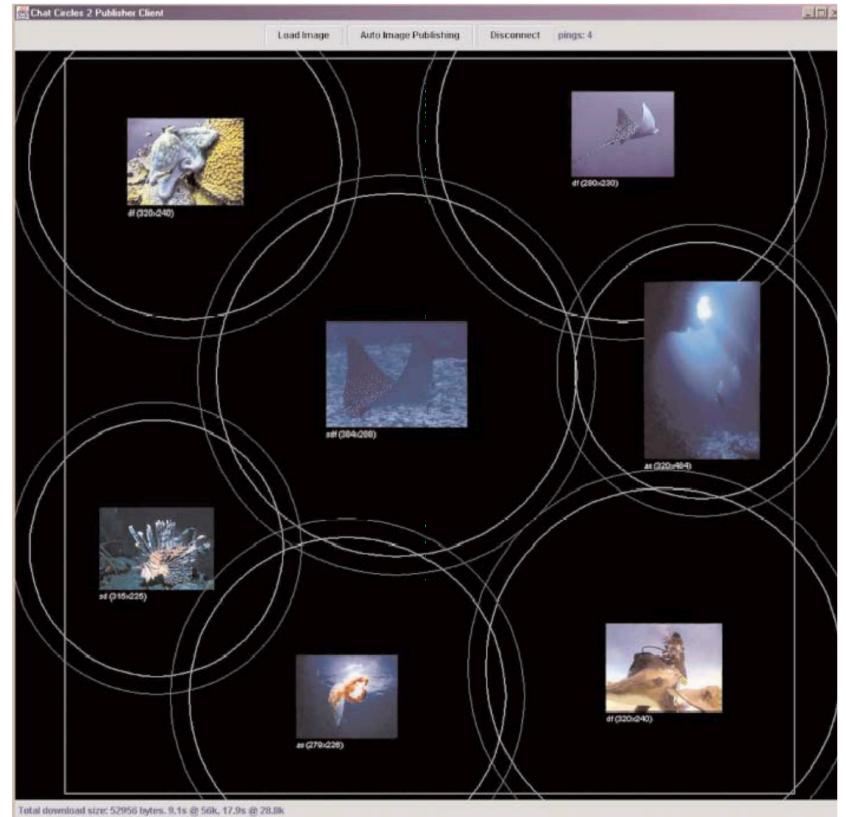
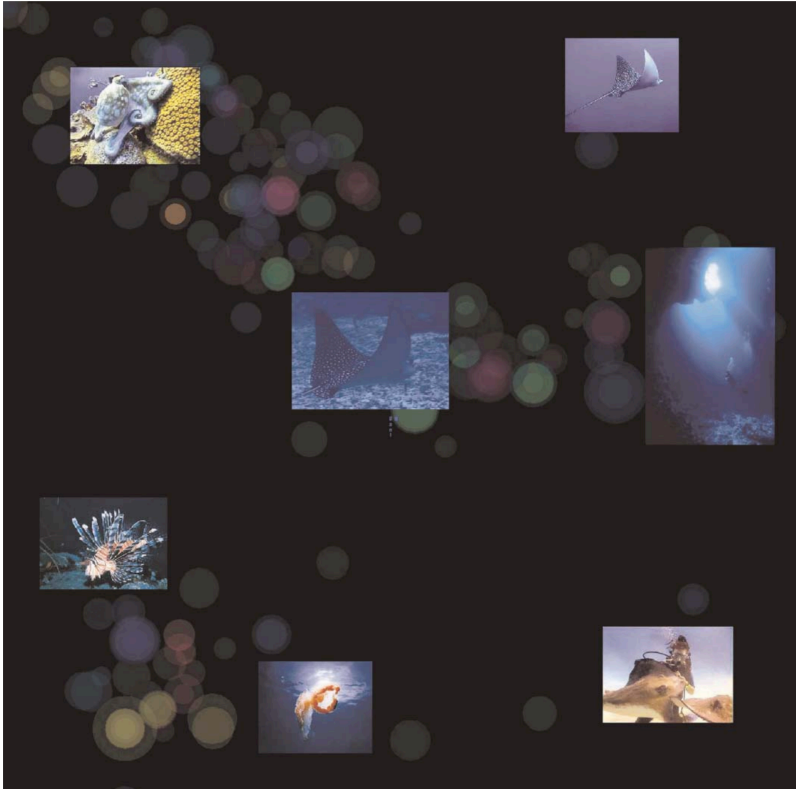
The Chat Circles Series:  
Explorations in designing  
abstract graphical  
communication interfaces



- An early paper on visualizing social conversations.
- The paper shows a progression from allowing simple features to more complicated manifestations of interactions.
- Key challenge: how to balance between rudimentary text and highly graphic representations of conversations
- Chat circle series:
  - *Environment*: what demarcates the space? What is there to do besides chat?
  - *Communication channel*: how do the participants communicate with each other?
  - *Individual representation*: what do the participants look like? Is there a particular meaning to one's appearance?
  - *History*: is the conversation permanent or ephemeral? How can one see bygone interactions?
  - *Movement*: how do the user's move in the space?
  - *Context*: what is the purpose of the site?



# Chat Circles II – the viewing range



# Class Discussion Point III

Chat circles were about online chat rooms where people conversed.

To what extent these principles of design (environment, history, individual representation, comm. channel etc.) are present in today's social media sites?

Interpret Snapchat and 4chan with the design principles of chat circles (environment, history, individual representation, comm. channel etc.).

# Class Discussion Point IV

Which platforms could benefit from the design principles of chat circles, and for which ones this design can have counter-productive outcomes?

# Class Exercise III – Pair and Share

How would you implement a “hearing range” feature within a social media conversation? Take Facebook and Reddit as two examples.

Situate how the visualizations of social interactions by Donath and Viegas fit with the social translucence theory

A common premise for both papers is that they want online social interactions to mimic offline interactions. Almost 15 years later, is this still a requirement in the design of social computing systems? Why?