# CS 6474/4803 Social Computing:
# Social System Design

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"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…

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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.
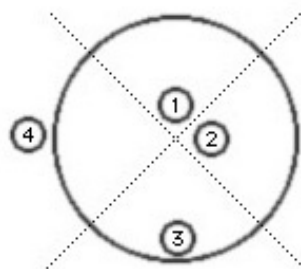


(a) proxy
layout
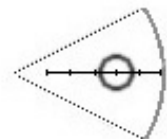
(b) animation
rule

# Class Discussion Point I

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 Discussion Point II

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

Is it really the case?
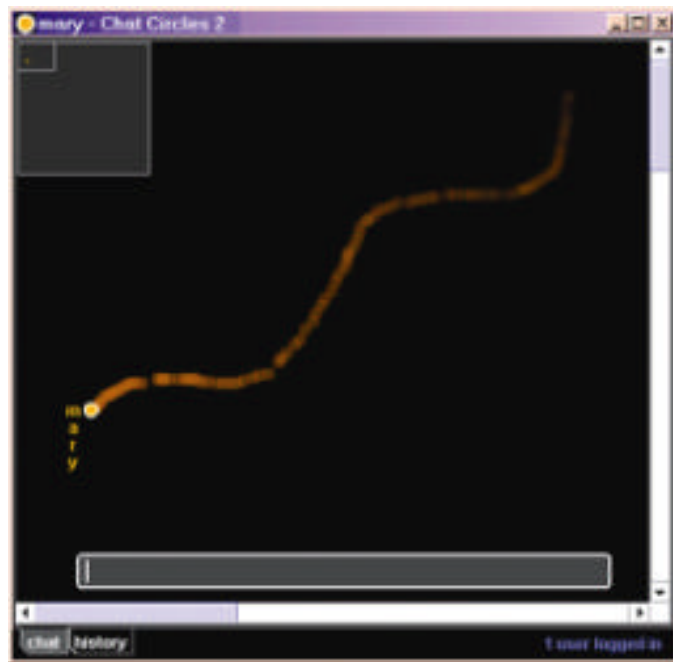Give one example where it is
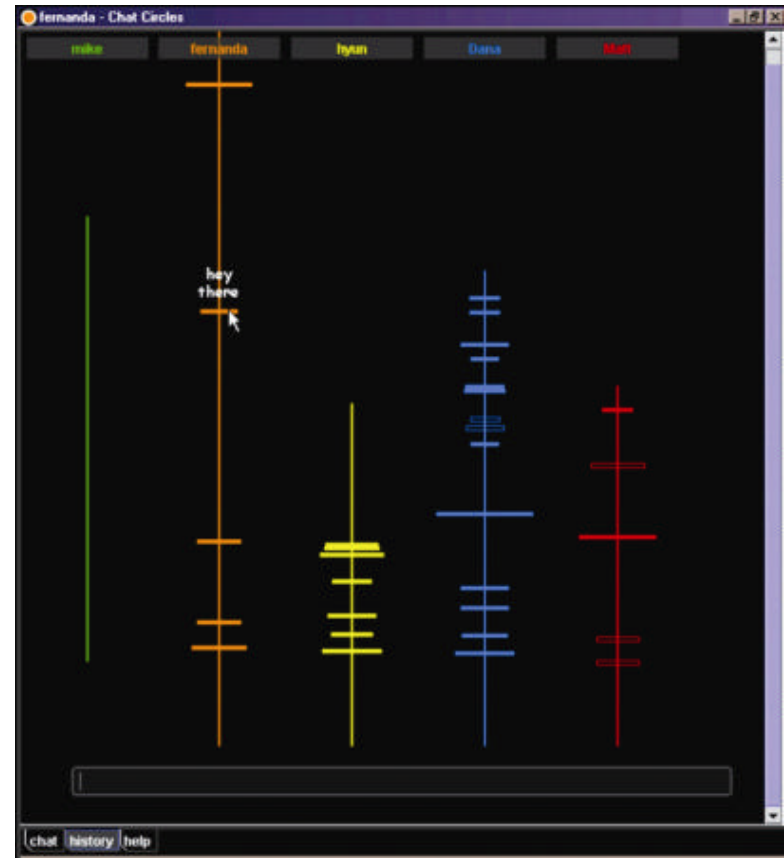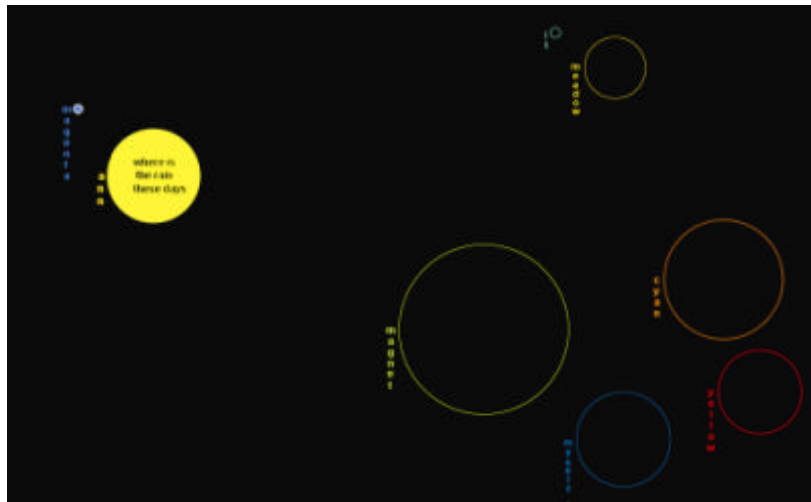Given one example where it is not
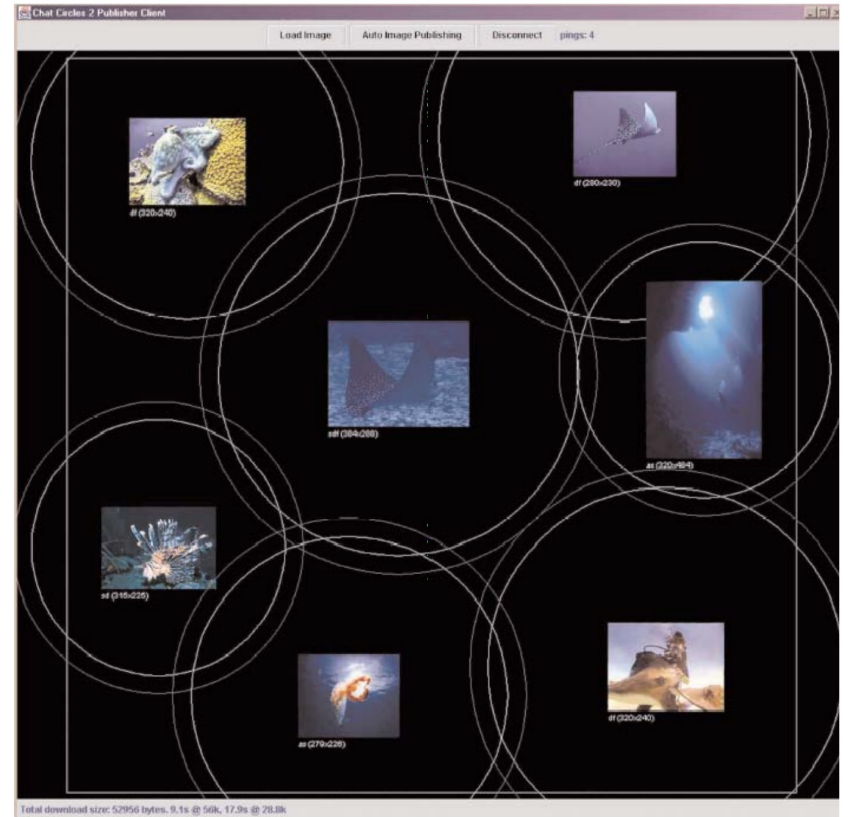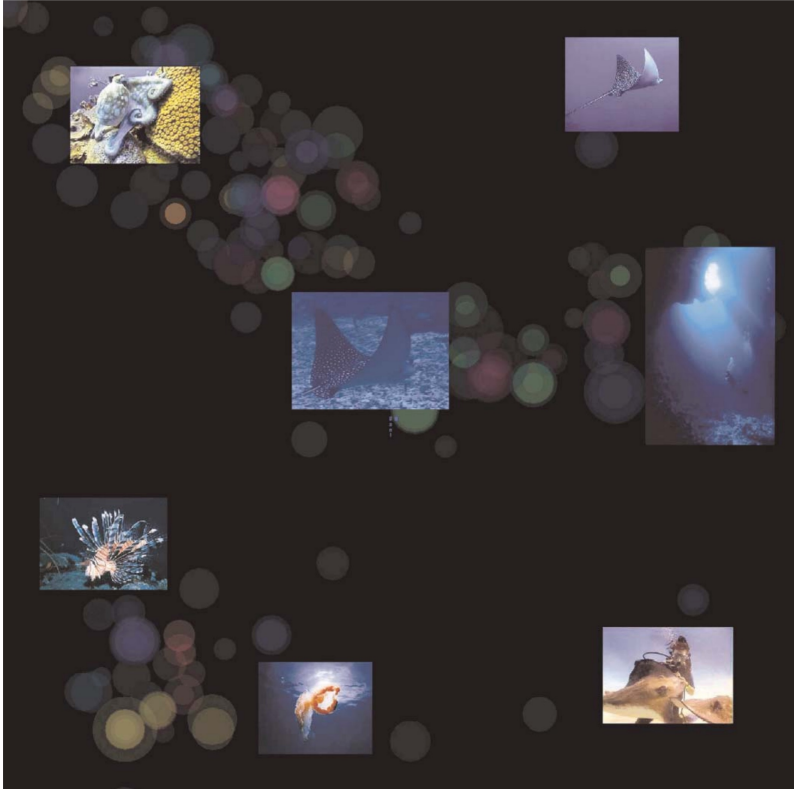
# Open Design Issues in Babble

# Class Exercise I

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?

Take how Facebook promotes some social translucence via the News Feed. Modify this design to negotiate the tension between visibility and privacy.

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

*Fig. 1. The original Chat Circles interface. The loudness is indni...*



*Fig. 2. Chat Circles history view. Each user's chat lines...*

# Chat Circles II

# Class Exercise II

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 III

How would you implement a "hearing range" feature within a social media conversation? Take/contrast Tiktok and Reddit as two examples. Is it a good idea?

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?