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Mobile Interaction and Pervasive Social Technologies

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Perpetually emerging technological fads and fashions catch the imagination of business and research. They bring the promises of immense change (somehow always improvements). Much of the current debate relates to the issue of *mobility*, for example in terms of mobile technologies, mobile commerce, mobile organisational practices or indeed the mobile society. This debate is of course anchored in the significant technological developments that has managed to miniaturize the desktop PC and to provide wireless computer and telephone network connections. Multi-billion Euro investments has been spent on licenses and infrastructures. As a result we have seen immense technological changes and are preparing for what the near future will bring. The explosive growth in the uptake of GSM mobile phones in Europe and of Internet-enabled phones in Japan has stimulated the debate. However, it is important to back the technologically informed visions with academic studies of how these mobile, wireless and ubiquitous technologies are being brought into use.

One of the defining characteristics of the technologies in question is that they can be considered as social technologies that support the mobilisation of interaction. They are social in the sense that they often will be personal, ubiquitous and support inter-personal connections. Much of the debate investigating mobile and ubiquitous technologies in social settings focuses on the immediate characteristics and commonsensical notions for example of the concept of mobility.

This panel will, from different perspectives argue that understanding how mobile technology infrastructures and changes to human behaviour can be re-configured to co-exist must be informed from a broader perspective that the simplistic notion of human's carrying mobile devices whilst on the move. Indeed, we shall argue that the main change is the explosive mobilisation of interaction implying a fluidisation of locational, operational and contextual aspects of the interaction. The panel will also highlight the role of empirical studies and theoretical considerations. The panel will address some of the main issues of mobilising interaction within a work context. The panel will not consider the use of mobile and ubiquitous technologies for leisure purposes, but will highlight that one of the characteristics of the use of these technologies is that they have a profound impact on both individual, group and organisational levels. With the significant private investments in mobile technologies and infrastructures, there clearly is a sharpened interest in how to develop mobile information services. We will, furthermore, provide a comprehensive discussion of how the concept of mobile interaction can be theoretically extended from the commonsensical notion of mobility in terms of human movement.

The structure and argument of the panel will develop as follows:

First, Carsten Sørensen will introduce the theme, outline the agenda, and highlight the need for a better understanding of the role of mobile services.

Second, Kalle Lyytinen will outline a research agenda for studying the next wave of nomadic computing. He will emphasise the fundamental research questions that must be considered at individual, group and organisational levels, as well as relate these research questions to established Information Systems theories.

Third, Daniele Pica will, based on fieldwork of mobile interaction and information management within the UK Police Force, highlight the role of mobile technologies in a highly mature domain. Daniele Pica will demonstrate that the successful uptake of mobile technologies is highly contextual.

Fourth, Jan Damsgaard will highlight the issue of adoption and diffusion of mobile technologies and services exemplified by the explosive growth in WiFi hotspots.