Twitterido: designing for transitions in communicating through doing

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Twitterido is a set of early design exploration on the idea of twittering by doing. Twitterido offers an alternative way of microblogging enabling us to twitter about the things we do by simply doing them. The overall aim is to stimulate social interaction by making peoples' activities visible to their community. We position Twitterido as an alternate avenue of research with respect to the Internet of Things, stressing on human-to-human communication mediated by electronically augmented everyday artefacts.

Notice and be noticed, everyday activity, social interaction, embodied interaction, dedicated channel of communication, microblogging.

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea behind Twitterido is simple: to allow people to make their everyday activities known in the community by augmenting their everyday physical artefacts. First, we believe that sharing information about everyday activities could enhance the sense of "what's going on" in a local community and then create openings for social interaction. Then, we believe that coupling the communication about an activity with the activity itself can facilitate the information sharing.

We explore the role of technology in mediating a sense of people's everyday activities allowing to "notice and be noticed": notice the activities of others and allow ones activities to be known in a local community. We refer to communities of people that share interests and hobbies, and live in the same neighbourhood for example.

Twitterido starts from the phenomenon microblogging: sharing and get informed by small bits of information. We understand Twitter as prominent example of this phenomenon and we will use its terminology to describe our ideas.

2. TWITTERIDO

Consider the following instance: I am going for a jog and I use my mobile phone and tweet: "Jogging...". Alternatively, we imagine, I could just keep jogging and let my jogging shoes tweet the fact that they are jogging. This is Twitterido: twittering by doing. Twitterido enables us to tweet about the things we do by simply doing them. It connects everyday activities (like walking), artefacts (a four-wheeled walking aid augmented with sensing, actuating and communication capabilities), communities (rehabilitation walking group), and displays (digital picture frame where walking feeds are activated).

Twitterido aims for an easier transitions between doing (in the physical world) and communicating (through the digital world). We add sensing and communication capabilities to the physical object a person uses to perform an activity. I don't need to have my laptop or mobile phone to type and send a tweet before starting an activity: I just do something and at the same time I also communicate what I am doing. Microblogging becomes then a physical experience. The communication

of the activity (in the form of a twitter status) is combined with the activity itself through the physical artefact used and becomes implicit. The communication is then embodied in augmented everyday artefacts with our acting in the real world.

3. UNDERLYING THEMES: DEDICATED CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AND THE INTERNET OF THINGS

While designing Twitterido, we are exploring two underlying themes. The first is what we call a shift from general channels of communication to dedicated channels of communication and display.

The information is created with the activity (John is walking with his nordic sticks), the communication is directed within a group of people connected by a shared interest (the nordic walking group), the information is then presented in potentially different dedicated displays (Tom can register to the feeds of the nordic walking group activities on his digital picture frame on the shelf at home or directly on his TV). The infrastructure to enable this flow composes a dedicated channel of communication.

The second theme is rooted in the phenomenological view of technological mediation and we argue that it opens up an alternate avenue of research in recent interest in the Internet of Things (IoT; connected physical objects able to sense, communicate and actuate in the real world). IoT is contributing largely in human communication and interaction with and between things. Our research focus instead on the mediator role of technology between humans, as a complementary resource for human to human communication and social interaction.

5. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Twitterido is a set of design explorations[2] in the form of sketches of augmented physical artefacts.

Our explorations align with Dourish's[1] summarisation of embodiment as a source

of both action and meaning. We see Twitterido as an embodied way of twittering. By using the same artefact that we use for an activity, to tweet about the activity, we create a strong link between the action, the artefact and the meaning. Hence, the meaning of the information communicated is implicit, or embodied, in the usage of the artefact itself.

Twitterido is also conceptually influenced by Don Ihde's[2] phenomenological perspective of the role of technology in everyday life, mediating our experience with the everyday physical world. As dedicated communication channels, technology enters into a dynamic relationship with humans and physical artefacts. It provides a situated framework for humans to take new meaning from and make new meaning of their actions.

To conclude, with Twitterido, we are working on designing for an embodied way of generating and sharing information about everyday activities. We call the infrastructure to enable this a dedicated channel of communication. Our aim is to explore the role of technology in mediating social interaction in local communities.

Currently we are exploring Twitterido through the physical sketches of augmented four-wheeled walking aids for senior citizens as part of a larger project named 'Senior interaction and welfare technology'.

3. REFERENCES

- [1] Dourish, P. *Where the Action Is: the Foundations of Embodied Interaction*, MIT Press, 2001.
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- [3] Ihde, D. *Technology and the Lifeworld*, The Indiana series in Philosophy of Technology, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, USA, 1990.