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Augmented Self-Presentation: Supporting Collocated Social Interaction

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Abstract

As mobile technology is embedded in people's collocated social interactions, it has impacts on self-presentation. With a perspective of self-presentation as a performance, we might gain insights into people's everyday practices with augmented personal information. This research looks into how people could make use of personal information dynamically integrated into their context, appearance and actions. With a focus on practice, this research combines field studies and interventions with personal wearable prototypes to reveal insights for design.

Author Keywords

Self-presentation; collocated social interactions; wearables; augmented information.

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous; K.4.m. Computers and society: Miscellaneous

Introduction and Research Agenda

Mobile devices and wearable technology have entered everyday life in the form of smartwatches and head-mounted displays. Their impact on face-to-face interactions is an ongoing research effort in Human Computer Interaction and social sciences [7,8]. Prior



Figure 1: A participant wearing the personal sticker.

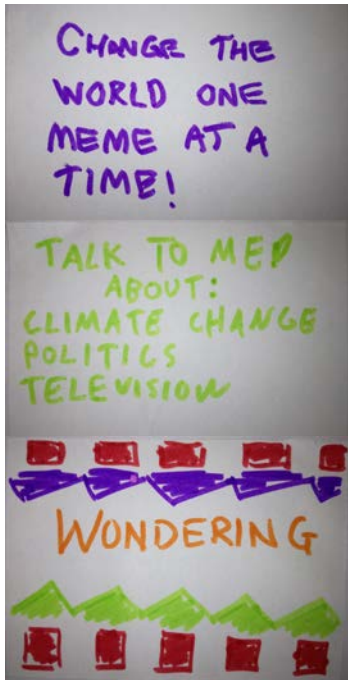


Figure 2: Three more examples of stickers created by participants in the same location as Figure 1.

research by Kytö and McGookin [5,6] on digital self-presentation in face-to-face interactions revealed that participants fear revealing too much information within visual digital representations. As these visualizations were static, users employed ambiguous representations in order to maintain control over their impression during conversations. This is in accordance with the theory of self-presentation as an ongoing performance as coined by Goffman [1]: people regulate disclosure in order to influence the impression they have on others.

The aim of this research is to understand, if and how dynamic personal representations can support people's performances – which I call hereafter augmented self-presentation. Goffman distinguishes between setting, appearance and manner. Considering these aspects, leaves the following questions for augmented self-presentation in collocated social interactions:

1. How does **context** influence how people want to present themselves through augmented information?
2. How can people integrate such augmentations into their **appearance**?
3. How can people actively **control** these augmentations?

My methods in answering these questions are based on what Kuuti and Bannon [4] call "practice paradigm" in HCI. Instead of focusing on the interaction, this perspective looks into the natural setting of real-life practices with technology. This will require observing users in-the-wild and involving participants in the process of designing novel systems for augmented self-presentation. I will therefore apply research through design as a methodology.

Research Conducted So Far

Previous work focused on lab experiments [6] or a narrow context [2,3]. Thus, a first step is gaining a broader understanding of context as a factor for augmented self-presentation. In a field study I investigate the influence of context for sharing personal information visibly in public. For a sample of different context, I conducted on-site interviews in six different urban places. Participants were handed a blank sticker, similar to a name-tag, that they customized and attached to their clothes, as an artefact to reflect on their practices and context in a subsequent interview. First results, as seen in figure 1 and 2, indicate a high variety in people's use of these stickers not determined by the context of the place. The personal context, like mood and motivation, and prior experience seem to shape the expressiveness or explicitness of the information.

Remaining Research Efforts

A more private context, like home or workplace, remains to be investigated in a complementary study. In a second phase I plan to develop interactive prototypes to study in-the-wild focusing on specific practices and motivations for augmented self-presentation. With a small sample size and close cooperation with participants in longitudinal iterative design studies, I hope to gain insights for research questions two and three. This approach should reveal actual practices of augmented self-presentation from in-situ observations. This research hopes to contribute to the body of knowledge necessary for understanding how technology that offers high-versatility of personal information can be integrated into collocated social interactions to inform the design of ubiquitous personal technology.

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