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Cultures of Participation

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Abstract

Cultures are defined in part by their media and their tools for thinking, working, learning, and collaborating. In the past, the design of most media emphasized a clear distinction between producers and consumers. The rise in *social computing* has facilitated a shift from *consumer cultures* (specialized in producing finished artifacts to be consumed passively) to *cultures of participation* (in which all people are provided with the means to participate and to contribute actively in personally meaningful problems). These developments represent unique and fundamental opportunities, challenges, and transformative changes for innovative research and practice in human-centered computing as we move away from a world in which a small number of people define rules, create artifacts, make decisions for many consumers towards a world in which everyone has interests and possibilities to actively participate.

The presentation will discuss *theoretical foundations* and *system developments* for understanding, fostering, and supporting *cultures of participation* grounded in the basic assumption that innovative technological developments are *necessary* for cultures of participation, but they are *not sufficient*. Socio-technical environments are needed because cultures of participation are not dictated by technology: they are the result of changes in human behavior and social organization in which active contributors engage in innovative design, adoption, and adaptation of technologies to their needs and in collaborative knowledge construction.

Short Bio

Gerhard Fischer (<http://l3d.cs.colorado.edu/~gerhard/>) is a Professor Adjunct and Professor Emeritus of Computer Science, a Fellow of the Institute of Cognitive Science, and the Director of the Center for Lifelong Learning and Design (L3D) at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is a member of the Computer Human Interaction Academy (CHI), a Fellow of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), and a recipient of the RIGO Award of ACM-SIGDOC. His research has focused on new conceptual frameworks and new media for learning, working, and collaborating, human-centered computing, and design. His recent work is centered on social creativity, meta-design, cultures of participation, and rich landscapes for learning (including MOOCs).

He is currently (April – June 2015) a fellow at the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg Institute for Advanced Study at Delmenhorst, Germany (HWK).

Background Reading

Fischer, G. (2011) "Understanding, Fostering, and Supporting Cultures of Participation," *ACM Interactions* XVIII.3 (May + June 2011), pp. 42-53.

<http://l3d.cs.colorado.edu/~gerhard/papers/2011/interactions-coverstory.pdf>