
Collocated Social Practices Surrounding Photos

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Abstract

Recent developments in technology mean that it is becoming increasingly possible to support collaboration around digital photos. This makes an exploration of the existing collocated social practices that are associated with photos both timely and relevant. This workshop will explore social practices in the areas of photowork, photo sharing and photo displays, with the aim of drawing together current research and considering how the findings might inform technology innovation.

Keywords

Photograph, photowork, photo sharing, photo-talk, photo display, situated display, co-located, co-present.

ACM Classification Keywords

H5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous.

Introduction

The continuing growth in digital photography has resulted in technology being incorporated into a range of the social practices associated with photographs. Photos may be shared through email or websites instead of delivered via the post, displayed as screensavers instead of in physical frames, and stored in digital 'folders' instead of the oft-cited physical 'shoebox' [e.g., 4]. Much of the research in this area has focused on the challenges associated with archiving

[11], browsing [13] and editing [15] large numbers of digital photos and on the use of photo sharing websites such as Flickr [10]. Recently, increasing attention has also been paid to opportunities for displaying digital photos [e.g., 5].

This last topic points towards the theme of this workshop. Here the area of interest is the social practices that are associated with photos, and in particular, collocated social practices. Frohlich *et al.*'s [4] classification of photoware highlights the notion that photo technologies for collocated groups should offer support for the co-present sharing of photos. Since this initial turn to the social, researchers have further explored the complex situated activities in which users are engaged when variously interacting with their photos [6] and displaying them within the home [17].

Recent advances in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) suggest that technologies are becoming increasingly suitable for supporting collocated collaboration around photos, and may potentially offer new forms of expression. For example, demonstrations of Microsoft Surface [9] have frequently used photo sharing as a potential application. Developments such as these mean that it is now timely to consider the collocated social practices that currently exist around photos, both physical and digital, and how these can be supported, or how they may be altered, by technology.

Related Work

Photowork

Kirk *et al.* [6] have presented an overview of home users' photowork practices, the 'activities people perform with their digital photos after capture but prior to end uses such as sharing.' Though the focus of this

work was not collaboration per se, it was an analysis of photo handling in a highly situated context, sensitive to the social practices of the home. It was observed that a sensitivity to such social practices was imperative to a grounded understanding of the work that goes into capturing, organising and editing photos. An argument was proffered that technology development for photo handling must be directed toward supporting these complex activities as they actually occur (in accordance with issues further discussed in Taylor *et al.* [17]). The work suggests that the potential for collaboration in such socially grounded photowork practices would be enhanced if the technology were there to support it.

Sharing photos

Photo sharing is clearly a social and collaborative activity, and collocated sharing is a topic that has received some attention in the literature. Frohlich *et al.* [4] discussed the different types of photo-talk that can surround photos, and Crabtree *et al.* [3] have looked at the practices that have evolved for the collocated sharing of prints. The development of technology to support the sharing of photos has often attempted to emulate the apparent success of using prints. Crabtree *et al.* [3] draw a number of design implications from their study of how prints are used, and Balabanović *et al.* [2] present a handheld device that aims to offer some of the advantages of printed photos. However, as photo sharing increasingly centres on digital displays, it is worth looking at the advantages associated with them. Lindley & Monk [7, 8] have examined the affordances of different technologies and how these affect the experience of sharing photos, and the use of tabletop displays for photo sharing has recently been examined by a number of researchers [e.g., 1, 16].

Displaying photos

Research in HCI has focused on topics such as digital photo displays that adapt to the preferences of those present [5], or that display images that are sent by remote users [e.g., 14]. The social practices that surround the creation of photo displays have recently been explored by Taylor *et al.* [17], who also consider how these might inspire the design of novel digital displays. Focusing on the form and arrangement of displays in the shared space of the family home, the authors were concerned with issues of collaboration, control and obligation for representing family members, and the challenges presented by this for design.

An alternative approach to exploring the display of digital photos has been taken by Petersen [12]. Her Squeeze prototype facilitated an exploration of how technology might be used to support the collaborative capture and display of photos in a playful way. Squeeze comprises a camera embedded in a cushion, which takes photos when squeezed, and an oversized beanbag, which can be pressed or punched to influence the display of photos projected onto a wall. Again, focusing on collocated practice, work such as this points to new directions that can be taken when considering how photos might form the basis of interaction with technology in the home.

The three themes of photowork, photo sharing and photo displays will form the basis of this workshop, in which the collocated social practices associated with each will be explored. In the context of CHI, discussion is orientated towards understanding how these practices may inform technology innovation, in particular for supporting digital photographic practice.

Workshop Goals

The main goal of the workshop is to offer a platform for researchers to share their knowledge of the collocated social practices that surround photos, and to take a snapshot of the current progress of research in this area with a view to collecting contributions for a special journal issue on the topic. Specific goals are as follows:

- To share findings and insights among researchers who are interested in the social practices that surround photos. It is hoped that participants from industry and academia will be able to exchange experiences and ideas, and develop a shared sense of the area's key issues.
- To consider the challenges of working in this area. It is anticipated that a collective understanding of practical and methodological issues, in terms of how challenges can be addressed, and how findings might inspire design, will be attained.
- To support the possibility for cooperative research proposals for participants with common research interests. The potential for emerging collaborations will be supported through a website and forum, which will continue to run beyond the end of the workshop.
- As already stated, it is hoped that the discussions that emerge from the workshop will be disseminated to the research community through a special journal issue. The website that accompanies the workshop will also be a means for discussions that originate in the workshop to reach a wider audience.

Conclusion

The collocated social practices that surround photos can be loosely organised into the themes of photowork, photo sharing and photo displays. The aims of this workshop are to draw together research in these three areas, and to explore the findings in relation to the development of how technology might support, or offer new expressions for, digital photography practices.

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