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Human Computer Interaction with Mobile Devices

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Preface

It was a wager, but it has worked. Mobile HCI used to be a workshop, often held in conjunction with other events. Instead, this time it was a true symposium. I felt there was a need for this change because of the ever-increasing interest prompted by the issues involved in interactive mobile systems and the lack of specific events focusing on such aspects. Although there are events addressing the broad area of ubiquitous computing, they tend to concentrate on other topics. For example, a paper on criteria for the design of interactive mobile phone applications would be considered inappropriate for such events, whereas it would certainly be relevant for Mobile HCI.

The response to the symposium has been positive in terms of submissions and participation. The contributions, especially the long papers, were selected carefully by the International Program Committee. The result is a set of interesting and stimulating papers that address such important issues as location awareness, design criteria for PDAs, context-dependent systems, innovative case studies, usability evaluation in small devices, and novel interfaces for mobile devices. The interest shown in the symposium has truly been worldwide: we have authors from 16 countries on three continents. There is a good balance of contributions from academia and industry. The final program of the symposium included two technical invited speakers (Brad Myers from Carnegie Mellon University and Luca Passani from Openwave), 18 full papers and 32 short papers, as well as a session with a representative of the European Commission to present and discuss their future programs in this area, and a number of interactive demos that allow participants to have direct experience of innovative results.

More generally, we can note that recent years have seen the introduction of many types of computers and devices (e.g., cellphones, PDAs, etc.) and the availability of this wide range of devices has become a fundamental challenge for designers of interactive software systems. Users wish to be able to seamlessly access information and services regardless of the device they are using, even when the system or the environment changes dynamically. To this end, computer-based applications need to run on a wide spectrum of devices. These challenges are addressed in research projects such as the CAMELEON IST Project (<http://giove.cnuce.cnr.it/cameleon.html>), which I coordinate. The project's main point is to develop methods and tools able to support the design and development of highly usable context-sensitive interactive software systems with the support of models that allow designers to better manage the increasing complexity of design. The resulting applications should behave like chameleons! They should be able to change their forms depending upon the types of devices utilized by users to perform their tasks and the surrounding environment.

Last, but not least, let me thank all those who helped to organize the symposium, in particular, the International Program Committee and Carmen Santoro who managed the symposium website and chaired the tutorial and workshop program.

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