

Social Television for the modern nomads

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ABSTRACT

This is a paper about the ongoing project of Ambient Shared Live Media positioned in the field of social television. It illustrates a scenario of social television that exemplifies how media sharing/TV watching can be a facilitator for social TV across physical locations. It also addresses a specific target of users, being the modern nomad.

Keywords

Home, mobility, modern nomads, interaction design, interactive television, social television.

1. INTRODUCTION

As globalization grows people are getting more and more mobile. Many families live their daily life apart from each other, as a result of this rising mobilization, where some of the family members travel a lot and others have to stay more fixed, to continue their everyday life. The travelling people have several houses or stay at hotels on a frequent basis. We call these people modern nomads.

Watching television or listening to music together is often a shared activity with co-located family members and it is something to gather around. But how can we support this kind of experiences while apart? In this project we aim at supporting co-experiences between remote family members and support a domestic way of doing it.

2. RELATED WORK

There are many examples of studies of social interactive television. Recent research indicates that sharing context and video-calling on the television[4] can help families living apart to feel more connected. Other work calls for synchronized shared content [5] and it is important to indicate presence in the remote home [6]. Instant messaging has proven not to be the right way of interacting when in sync[7]. We want to investigate how interactive social television can be integrated in the domestic environment to make it as home like to interact with as possible. The computer is therefore not a relevant device to use for our social interactive television concept.

3. WORK-IN-PROGRESS SCENARIO

It is common to meet around different activities, for instance watching a movie together, meeting to see a sports match or listening to some music with others. Ambient Shared Live Media concept is about using media as inspiration for social interaction despite the physical distance. The idea is that two households can be connected with their media use as facilitator.

We aim to build a concept that supports various kinds of communication levels in this concept. Based on Ludvigsen's scale of social interaction we seek to support a smooth transition between the different levels, moving from peripheral awareness to more direct communication and even to the most engaging type of interaction –shared activity. All of course for people in remote locations.

The concept is about connecting two homes with sharing media experiences as the facilitator. We work with applying media usage as ambient awareness between related homes and as a facilitator for socializing. When turning the presence on you also expose your current status on media usage (what music you are listening to, what program you are watching or game you are playing). This is an invitation for the remote home to join in on the media session that you are currently running. When connecting you listen to the same media and can then scale to other levels of connection. This is then done through scaling up and down between shared media experience and conversation going from silent to voice through speakers and picture on television, with several steps in between. This scaling has an important role for the experience of the concept and we will work intensely through experience prototypes to develop this into a strong interaction solution. We wish to make the experience different from video conferencing so that it integrates with the home feeling and becomes a natural way of connecting in everyday life.

4. THE MODERN NOMAD

We have chosen to design for the modern nomad when families are not always physically co-located, as it becomes a condition of life for more and more people. Research by anthropologist Ida Winther indicates that people are not place-less nomads [1] but rather that people make home locally through different tactics to establish comfort and develop 'homing strategies' in the middle of changeability. Inspired by this perspective, the challenge of the increasing mobilization and globalization is to develop strategies for making home not physically attached to the primary home. Ambient Shared Live Media is an example of this.

5. FUTURE WORK

We are working on interfaces and scales for the first demo that will be up and working in October 2008. We will then experience and test it in various ways and context to find the potentials and the failures for future development of social television across physical togetherness. There will most likely also be developed a dedicated presence device.

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