Summary of the INTERACT97 Workshop on the Next Generation of CSCW Systems

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ABSTRACT The INTERACT'97 Workshop on the Next Generation of CSCW Systems focuses on new directions for CSCW. Participants are selected on the basis of short position papers which provide forward-looking insights into CSCW. Position papers cover diverse, yet related, topics ranging from new theoretical foundations for CSCW, design methodologies and HCI issues in groupware, architectures and infrastructure for groupware, evaluation of CSCW systems, and new applications for CSCW. All accepted position papers appear in the workshop proceedings, and it is intended to make this available electronically via the World Wide Web.

KEYWORDS CSCW, groupware, theory, design, infrastructure, evaluation, applications

1. WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

CSCW is a rapidly-expanding area of interest. Current research work in CSCW ranges from developing new theoretical models of how people can cooperatively work together using computer support (Fitzpatrick et al., 1995), investigating new design methodologies for CSCW systems (Reeves, 1996), developing new HCI techniques for use by groupware (Greenberg et al., 1996), developing new infrastructure for groupware (Patterson, 1995), conducting evaluations of CSCW systems (Twidale et al., 1994), and exploring ever-more diverse applications for CSCW technologies (Venable and Travis, 1996).

This workshop focuses on such next-generation issues in CSCW. General topics of the workshop include:

- new theoretical insights into CSCW
- new HCI issues in CSCW
- new design methodologies for groupware

- new infrastructure and architecture approaches
- new evaluation techniques or results of evaluations of CSCW systems
- new applications of CSCW

Participants are selected based on short position papers submitted for the workshop. Position papers are refereed by the workshop committee comprising of leading CSCW researchers and practitioners. All accepted position papers appear in the workshop proceedings. It is intended to make this accessible electronically via the WWW from:

http://www.cs.waikato.ac.nz/~jgrundy/interact_ws.html

2. WORKSHOP TOPICS

Topics for the workshop are grouped according to three key themes, as outlined below.

2.1. Theoretical and Design Issues

Position papers focusing on this sub-theme present new insights into the nature of CSCW, how it effects collaborative work, and how a better understanding of the nature of CSCW can enable better groupware systems to be built and utilised.

Next-generation design issues include new methodologies for developing groupware systems, utilising new understandings of CSCW to influence the design process, and new HCI issues relevant to CSCW.

2.2. Infrastructure and Architecture Issues

This sub-theme is concerned with new infrastructure for support of groupware applications. Existing computer technologies do not sufficiently support the development of groupware as they focus on single-user applications and interfaces.

A related issue is next-generation software architectures for the construction of groupware. Such architectures may utilise component-based approaches, specialised architecture description languages, or new toolkits for groupware development.

2.3. Evaluation and New Applications

A crucial issue in the effective development and deployment of CSCW is identifying when different kinds of CSCW support is appropriate. Next-generation evaluation issues include methodologies for evaluating CSCW systems, results of evaluations of CSCW systems, and how evaluation results can be utilised to better understand CSCW and improve deployment of CSCW systems.

An ever-increasing number of applications are being developed which exhibit greater or lesser degrees of CSCW aspects. This sub-theme attempts to identify domains where CSCW can be effectively utilised, how CSCW systems can be deployed in these areas, and how the use of CSCW systems might affect how work is carried out within an organisation.

3. WORKSHOP ORGANISATION

This is a one-day workshop which comprises three sessions focusing on the sub-themes as outlined above, followed by a general discussion session. The sub-theme sessions enable participants to focus on theoretical and design issues which underlie CSCW, examine next-generation infrastructure and architectural

issues which impact on the realisation of groupware, and examine how evaluations of CSCW systems can be utilised to improve our understanding and deployment of groupware in diverse situations.

A session leader will facilitate the discussion for each session, including summarising the position papers relevant to each session's sub-theme. The general discussion at the end of the workshop will provide an opportunity to relate and summarise issues raised in the preceding sessions.

4. SUMMARY

The INTERACT97 Workshop on the Next Generation of CSCW Systems is an informal gathering of researchers and practitioners to discuss forward-looking issues relevant to the CSCW field. It is hoped that during the course of this workshop a fruitful exchange of ideas between people working on disparate, yet related, aspects of CSCW will occur, and complementary research agendas may be facilitated.

4. REFERENCES

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