Augmenting Social Interactions: Experiments in Socio-emotional Computing

Wijnand IJsselsteijn

Eindhoven University of Technology,
Eindhoven, The Netherlands
w.a.ijsselsteijn@tue.nl

Abstract. In recent decades, research on affective computing, social signal processing, and mediated communication has flourished. Combining these diverse fields leads to the new, multidisciplinary area of socio-emotional computing, where computing technologies are applied to transform and enrich communication between people, either mediated or face-to-face. As a research field, socio-emotional computing serves a number of goals. First, it aims to inform the design of communication media through identifying, implementing and validating those socio-emotional elements that enable or augment awareness, mutual understanding, empathy, and intimacy between people. Augmented social interactions can be beneficial to many application areas, including mental healthcare, training and coaching, behavior change, negotiation, and intimate social interactions. Secondly, research in socio-emotional computing allows us to obtain a more fundamental understanding of the impact of mediated communication on human intimacy and social connectedness. Finally, media tools developed to augment social interactions can, at the same time, serve as research tools to extend and improve research on the fundamental emotional and interpersonal processes underlying intimate communication. In this presentation, I will highlight some of the exciting research opportunities that emerge in this multidisciplinary field, and will present a number of experiments that exemplify socio-emotional computing as applied to intimacy, empathy, and persuasion.