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Working with Child Participants in Interaction Design

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Abstract. This tutorial will introduce attendees to the challenges and benefits of working with child participants in interaction design and evaluation within the context of HCI. It will outline the most used methods and provide resources to participants so they will be able to carry out effective work with children from 4 to 16 in schools, homes and the outdoors. Delivered by an experienced member of the IFIP WP13.1 SIG in IDC, this tutorial will appeal to researchers and developers working with children and in the design of products for children.

Keywords: Participatory design, Teenagers, Child Computer Interaction, Evaluation, Tutorial

1 Introduction

The Child Computer Interaction (CCI) community has long advocated the active participation of children in its research and development practices [1]. When children are introduced into design and evaluation studies, there are ethical, practical and methodological concerns that need to be considered, indeed it was at Interact, in 2005, where these concerns were first discussed [2]. For many in HCI the thought of engaging with children, especially young children and teenagers, can be daunting. The IDC community, over the last 13 or so years, has developed methods and techniques, and has amassed a wealth of knowledge that can mitigate this concern. This tutorial delivers this knowledge to attendees in a lively interactive format from experts who have been at the forefront of training and instruction in CCI [3].

2 Learning Objectives, Content and Duration

Individuals attending this tutorial can be expected to be able to:

- Plan, carry out and report design and evaluation studies with children
- Understand the importance of ethical practices when children participate.
- Use appropriate methods including verbalisation, survey methods, participatory design techniques and diary methods for technology report.
- Appreciate where additional material can be found

This tutorial will be for half a day. The expectation is that it will proceed as follows:

- 9 – 9.15 Intro to the instructors, brief introductions around the room

- 9.15 – 9.45 Talking to children in evaluation studies – a lecture style presentation with video and audio and a short group activity will introduce retrospective think aloud, peer tutoring and participant observation [4].
- 9.45 – 10.30 Surveying children – a group activity where participants will complete surveys including The Fun Toolkit [5], the ABCCTT [6], the Group Sorter [7] and the This or That method [8]
- 10.30 – 11 Coffee
- 11 - 11.15 Diary methods – diaries will be given out and explanations of how they can be used will be given [9]. The diaries will then be used as self report during the next activity and will be discussed again at the end.
- 11.15 – 12.00 Participatory design using diaries to record activity. Participants will do a design activity as though they are children [10].
- 12.-00 – 12.30 Ethics, and consent and wrap up [11].

3 Audience and Reading List

This tutorial is intended for researchers and developers working with, or expecting to be working with children aged between 4 and 16.

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