

Call for Participation

HCIC 2017 Designing Futures

Location: Pajaro Dunes, Watsonville, CA

Dates: June 25-29 2017

Robert Heinlen's function-specific, interchangeable prosthetic arms. Flying cars. The Star Trek transporter. Digital drugs. Rocket packs.

Come give a: **presentation**
demonstration
boaster-poster

Visions of the future from science fiction often appear to inspire or justify technical innovation. Does this help? Do they lead to innovations that makes the world better?

Within the HCI design community there are two competing ideas on how to envision the future. On one side, *idealistic* design researchers do critical design, speculative design, and design fictions; drawing insights and inspiration from art and the humanities. On the other side, *pragmatic* design researchers conduct field studies and/or more formally assess their designs; drawing on behavioral theories, ethnographic methods, co-design, experimentation, and action research. Between these two poles, many design researchers blend the idealistic and the pragmatic. What they all agree on is

We believe that by speculating more, at all levels of society, and exploring alternative scenarios, reality will become more malleable and, although the future cannot be predicted, we can help set in place today factors that will increase the probability of more desirable futures happening.

Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby
Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming

the importance constructing sensitizing concepts; making artifacts that embody their idealistic or pragmatic stance, and that broaden the design space describing how people could and should live with new technology.

Both idealistic and pragmatic approaches probe the possible future or possible futures. All reveal insights that point to possibilities that could be better and/or could be worse. Design research on futures asks "what if?" It probes what could be and questions what should be. What can we change? What should we change? What is wrong with today? What must be saved and carried into the future? What if things were different? Constructing designs that probe possible futures creates scenarios around these "what if" questions.

In this HCIC, our topic is Designing Futures. We would like to reflect on activities, approaches, and practices that pose "What if?" questions to explore new ways in which technology might bring value to people. Where do we feel such practices work well and where do they break down? How can we usefully engage with imaginary futures if we are working on the mundane everyday of contemporary interaction(s)? How do we go about the translation work to

enact these grand speculative futures into the very specific and local designs that remain the focus of much of our daily work?

For HCIC 2017, we invite you to push beyond instrumental “implications for design” and instead spend time charting the gap between the vision and the production of these design futures. We want to push beyond what is produced by design and look at the process of designing itself. We invite you to explore the capacity for speculative fiction in design and to think about methods that explore beyond the boundary of what is possible—let’s push on contemporary design practice in HCI. We ask you to consider:

- What are good exemplars of idealistic design research: speculative, anticipatory and future-imaginary methods in design practice? What are BAD exemplars? Why?
- What are good exemplars of pragmatic design research? What are BAD exemplars? Why?
- What are good case studies of such practices in action?
- Are some approaches more appropriate to certain domains than others?
- Is there a distinction between different envisionments of the future, between possible, plausible, probable and preferable?
 - Are some methods better suited for understanding possible futures—that is, those that might happen?
 - Are some methods better for understanding plausible futures—that is, those that could happen based on our current knowledge of how the world works?
 - Are some methods better for probable futures—that is, what are likely to happen?
 - Are some methods better for charting preferable futures—that is, what we want to happen based on our value judgments which are of course based in our cultural assumptions?
- In terms of inspiration, what speculative approaches, from art to fiction to workshops to filmic renditions, if any, are effective or ineffective?
- Finally..... a critical question we ask is: How well do we need to understand the present to imagine a preferred future?

We invite three venues/formats for exploration of these topics: presentations, demos, and “poster-boasters”.

To propose a *presentation*, submit a 2-3 page extended abstract discussing your idea. We invite challenging and provocative ideas. Controversial topics, fierce (but well argued) challenges, and thoughts on the future of designing futures are strongly encouraged. The standard presentation format is a 45-minute talk followed by a 10-minute discussant response period, and then 35 minutes of open discussion. Topics should be appropriate for this format.

To propose a demo, please submit a 2-3 page extended abstract with images/sketches detailing what the demo is, what it is intended to illustrate,

and how people will interact with your demo. Your demo could be a technology, it could be a participatory game, it could be a participatory active improvisation, or it could be in the form of a scripted role play. It should, however, clearly illustrate the ways in which possible futures can and do play a role in design practice within HCI.

You need not propose a poster-boaster, but may bring one with you to share at the venue. Format for a poster-boaster is as follows: a short description of your perspective and interest in this area, plus a description of your work in form of a single page poster. Your poster should not exceed 24 x 36 inches, and should be in portrait format.

Submissions may:

- Reflect on the provenance and application of fictional futures within design processes
- Compare and contrast different forms of speculative futures design
- Offer cogent arguments for or against using speculative storytelling in design
- Discuss methods for exploration of many simultaneous possible futures, envisioning what people don't want as well as what they do want, countering our tendency in HCI to be "solutionist" and to focus evaluation on what we believe people want
- Introduce new formats for speculative, anticipatory or fictional design practices
- Investigate how do we can do design ethnography on the future
- Present new designs or design considerations that challenge existing reigning theoretical assumptions
- Offer perspectives on future research directions
- Engage with questions regarding whether imagining technologies and societies in which they are used make innovation more or less likely? Make innovation easier or harder? Increase or decrease the chance that the particular forms technologies are envisioned will be realised in practice? Can the imaginaries of design fiction and "What If" approaches help forestall undesirable innovations?

Please contact us if you would like to consult with us about your ideas.

The rules of the consortium state that only employees of member organizations may submit abstracts for this call. Abstracts may have non-member coauthors, but the board must approve attendance or co-presentation. Students are not eligible to submit abstracts. However, they are strongly encouraged to submit "poster boosters," short descriptions of their interests and current work in the form of single page posters (not to exceed 24 x 36 inches in portrait format).

We ask interested parties to submit presentation abstracts by March 19th 2017 at 11:59pm. Submissions should be sent to hcic-2017-design-futures@googlegroups.com.

For all logistics questions related to HCIC, please email hcic-chairs@googlegroups.com

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