

Preface

Welcome to the proceedings of UbiComp 2004.

In recent years the ubiquitous computing community has witnessed a significant growth in the number of conferences in the area, each with its own distinctive characteristics. For UbiComp these characteristics have always included a high-quality technical program and associated demonstrations and posters that cover the full range of research being carried out under the umbrella of ubiquitous computing. Ours is a broad discipline and UbiComp aims to be an inclusive forum that welcomes submissions from researchers with many different backgrounds. This year we received 145 submissions. Of these we accepted 26, an acceptance rate of just under 18%. Of course acceptance rate is simply a measure of selectivity rather than quality and we were particularly pleased this year to note that we had a large number of high-quality submissions from which to assemble the program for 2004.

The broad nature of ubiquitous computing research makes reviewing UbiComp submissions a particular challenge. This year we adopted a new process for review and selection that has, we hope, resulted in all authors obtaining extremely detailed feedback on their submission whether or not it was accepted for publication. We believe the process enabled us to assemble the best possible program for delegates at the conference. If you submitted a paper, we hope that you benefited from the feedback that your peers have provided, and if you attended UbiComp 2004 we hope that you enjoyed the technical program. For those of you interested in this process, it is briefly described at the end of the preface.

Of course, whatever the process adopted for reviewing it will fail without a hard-working technical program committee. We were fortunate to assemble a truly world-class committee that worked exceptionally hard under tight deadlines to produce very high quality reviews. In addition to the core technical Program Committee, we also created a pool of external reviewers who each reviewed approximately four paper submissions. This allowed us to draw on the community to obtain expert reviews for all papers and to add new insights to the reviews created by the Program Committee. We would like to thank all those who took the time to review submissions for UbiComp, whether as a member of the Program Committee or as an external reviewer — your hard work and diligence was much appreciated.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank (in no particular order) the numerous people who helped to make this such an enjoyable job: the General Chair, Tom Rodden, for offering us the opportunity to serve as Program Co-chairs for the conference, the Publicity Chair, Fahd Al-Bin-Ali, for helping to ensure that we received a large number of submissions, Elaine May Huang for, among a host of other jobs, her work in processing all of the information needed to assemble the reviewer pool, Craig Morrall for dealing with the huge number

of papers that had printing issues or were not properly anonymized when first submitted, and Hazel Glover for handling the preparation of the camera-ready version of these proceedings. We would also like to thank Henning Schulzrinne and the EDAS team who patiently answered all of our questions whatever the time of day — if only all on-line support systems were as responsive!

Finally, thanks must go to all of the authors who entrusted their work to us and to everyone who attended Ubicomp 2004 and enjoyed the program we helped to assemble. We hope you enjoyed and benefited from your time in Nottingham.

July 2004

Nigel Davies, Beth Mynatt and Itiro Siio

UbiComp 2004 Paper Review Process

The review process for UbiComp 2004 was divided into three phases plus the Program Committee meeting and paper shepherding:

Phase 1: Quick Reject and Reviewer Nomination

All papers submitted were assigned a Lead Program Committee (PC) and second PC reviewer, both selected from the Program Committee (PC). These PC members in turn nominated two additional reviewers from a pool of external reviewers suggested by members of the PC and vetted by the PC chairs. Where the PC members considered that the paper was clearly not going to be accepted to UbiComp or was wildly out of scope the two PC members could nominate the paper as a “Quick Reject”. In this case the decision was checked by the PC chairs and then returned to the authors with just two reviews. This feature enabled us to concentrate effort on the papers with the best chances of being accepted.

Phase 2: Reviews

Once Phase I was completed, the PC chairs processed all of the papers, allocating external reviewers based on the selections suggested by the PC members in Phase I and adjusting to ensure load balancing across external reviewers. Thus each paper received four reviews — two from PC members and two from external reviewers.

Phase 3: On-line Discussion

After all of the reviews were received the Lead PC member for each paper coordinated discussion among the reviewers to reach a consensus as to the technical merit of the paper. When necessary, the reviewers could ask for additional reviews to be carried out and some papers ended up with several additional reviews.

PC Meeting

In contrast to previous years, we decided to hold a single PC meeting rather than the split-site format that had been used in previous years. Attendance was usually a condition of acceptance to serve on the PC and almost all of the PC attended the meeting (a very small number had to cancel). At the two-day meeting in Atlanta, GA, the committee examined all papers above a threshold and arrived at the final program.

Shepherding

To help authors interpret their reviews, all of the papers were allocated shepherds who guided the authors through the final revisions of their papers. This process helped considerably in a number of cases and ensured that the papers in these proceedings were revised to reflect the feedback provided to the authors by the PC.

Conference Organization

Organizers

Conference Chair

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Nigel Davies Lancaster University (UK)
University of Arizona (USA)

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UbiComp 2004 is supported by the Equator Interdisciplinary Research Collaboration together with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and also enjoys in-cooperation status with the following special interest groups of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM):

SIGCHI (Computer-Human Interaction)
 SIGMOBILE
 SIGSOFT (Software Engineering)
 SIGWEB

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