

Week 5

+ I don't see the computer itself being the main focus of people's attention. People today use their computers to do whatever it is they need/want to do – be it typing up a paper, reading their favorite webcomic, etc. If I was physically writing a paper, I don't think the pen and paper would be my main focus – it would be the task at hand. Computers today already have a sort of invisibility, and I don't buy that people of the future won't be naming their wearables and cursing them for their failures just as they would today with their computers.

+ Would Ubiquitous computers really be able to fully fade into the background? Would having them there suddenly enable people to multitask like they never have before, or would people hit up against the barriers of their own capabilities to focus on a limited number of things at once?

+ If every device is networked and the “network” is everywhere, what happens to privacy? In the scenarios given, a person's own devices could potentially be able to track them through their day. Do we really trust data encryption enough to put our entire life out there on the network? And what happens when a device breaks or gets disconnected – will it still be able to function on its own, or will it flounder as it searches for input?

+ Portable and ubiquitous computing seems limited in its usability...where a laptop still has the convenience of a full keyboard, a wearable would just have...an even smaller screen and smaller keyboard, if that. We already lose power and stability in moving from a desktop to a laptop; how much will we lose in moving to a smaller, more portable system?

+ Weiser's take on intelligent agents seems a bit skewed. Granted, I might have been misreading everything so far about intelligent agents, but my impression is that they would be working in the background, trying to do things for the user; not be the “center of attention,” as he describes.

+ The idea of a widespread wireless network sounds really appealing, but I just don't see the advances in technology (and policy) that are going to make this happen. It raises a lot of questions – how are these going to be developed, and how are you going to convince entire countries to buy, install, and run a (rather intrusive) wireless network everywhere?

+ What's up with Multicast these days? And the Dangling String sounds like an ingenious way to translate network traffic volume into a tangible representation that anyone can understand; at the same time, it still seems like something a bit more distracting than the notion of “Calm Technology” implies.

(the idea of embedded processors in everyday objects reminds me of a funny scifi story, if you want a quick amusing read: [and the dish ran away with the spoon](#))