INF351: Information Design Studio I: How to Make a Computer and Why

In INF351, the professor gave students a lot of flexibility in determining the scope of their projects. Using an Arduino Uno kit, students had to build a computer that would fulfil a purpose given in the professor's prompt. We had a lot of creative freedom and could choose our approach to the prompt, which in this case is a "sociable computer." A "Sociable computer" was loosely defined and I choose to word it as a computer that will promote social interactions between two or more humans. My choice of interaction was promoting communication between two people.

Using two Arduino kits and two computers, I created a messaging system between the two computers. It uses Arduino's master and slave function so both computers can send and receive messages. The two Arduino boards are wired to each other and each Arduino is connected to a computer, which connects both computers to each other. By connecting the two computers together, it eliminates the reliance on wifi or data.

This computer demonstrates many concepts that were taught in the class. I chose to focus on time sharing and accessibility. The purpose of this computer is to create accessible communication. Public computers are on the more accessible side compared to smartphones. In addition to public access, computers have bigger screens, keyboards, and text size. This makes it easier for people who have bad eyesight. Other benefits provided by my computer include fast clearing of conversation, no middlemen in transferring messages, and no record of conversation upon closure or clearing.

Rather than use my design analysis paper, I thought that the presentation summed it up well. It has all the key concepts and design explanations but the important element of the presentation is the video. It is a lot easier to see a project in action than it is to understand with words.