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**Personal Dynamic Media**

Alan Kay and Adele Goldberg

**Introduction**

The Learning Research Group at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center is concerned with all aspects of the communication and manipulation of knowledge. We design, build, and use dynamic media which can be used by human beings of all ages. Several years ago, we crystallized our dreams into a design idea for a personal dynamic medium the size of a notebook (the Dynabook) which could be owned by everyone and could have the power to handle virtually all of its owner's information-related needs. Towards this goal we have designed and built a communications system the Smalltalk language implemented on small computers we refer to as "interim Dynabooks." We are exploring the use of this system as a programming and problem solving tool, as an interactive memory for the storage and manipulation of data, as a test editor, and as a medium for expression through drawing, painting, animating pictures, and composing and generating music. (Figure 26.1 is a view of this interim Dynabook.)

We offer this paper as a perspective on our goals and activities during the past years. In it, we explain the Dynabook idea, and describe a variety of systems we have already written in the Smalltalk language in order to give broad images of the kinds of information-related tools that might represent the kernel of a personal computing medium.

**Background**

**Humans and Media**

Devices which variously store, retrieve, or manipulate information in the form of messages embedded in a medium have been in existence for thousands of years. People use them to communicate ideas and feelings both to others and back to themselves. Although thinking goes on in one's head, external media serve to materialize thoughts and, through feedback, to augment the actual paths the thinking follows. Methods discovered in one medium provide metaphors which contribute new ways to think about notions in other media.

26. Personal Dynamic Media

Figure 26.1. Kids learning to use the interim Dynabook.

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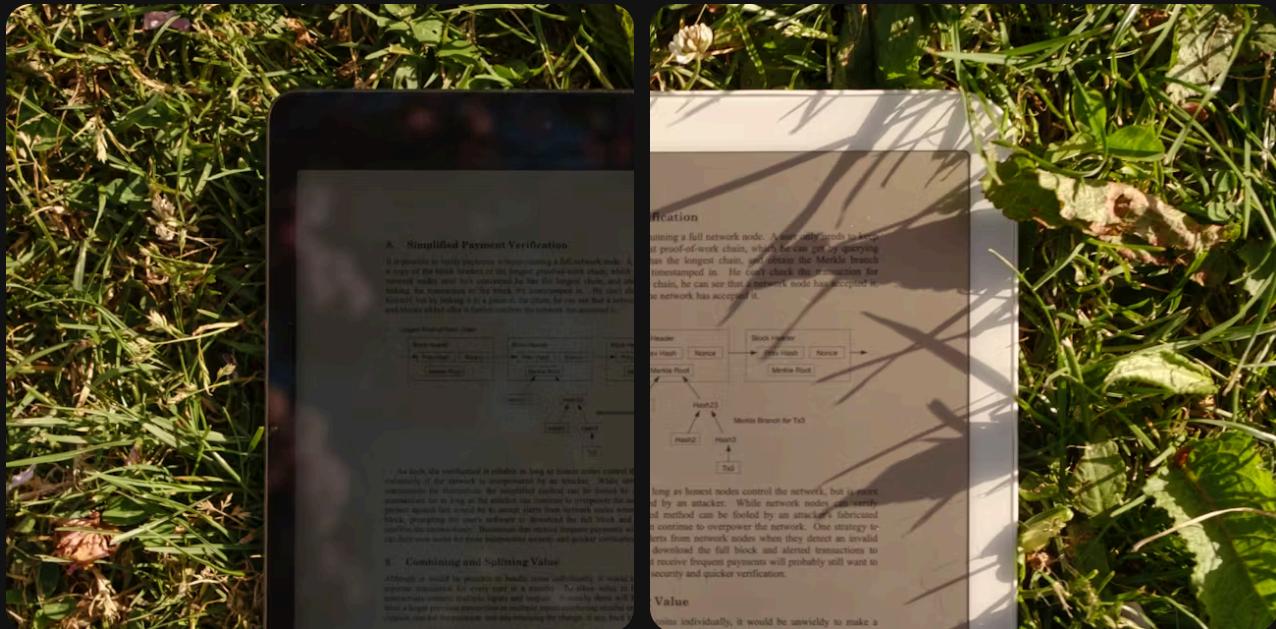
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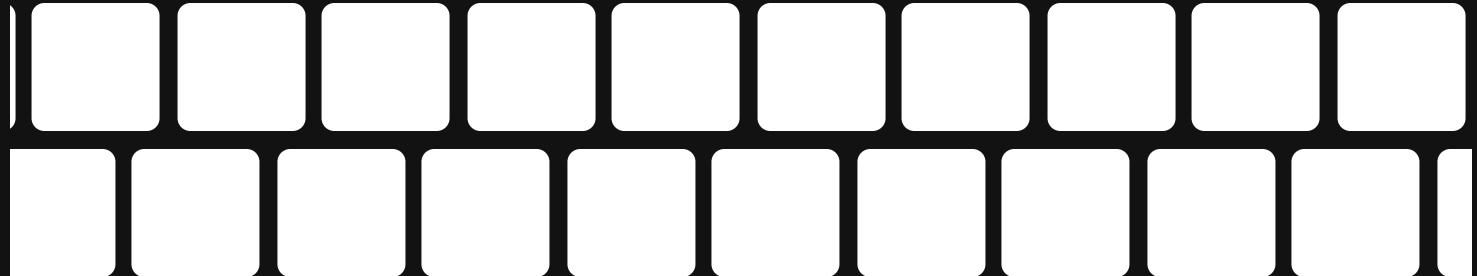
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