
HabiTech¹: Inhabiting Buildings, Data & Technology

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Abstract

As larger parts of our lives are determined in the digital realm, it is critical to reflect on how democratic values can be preserved and cultivated by technology. At the city-scale, this is studied in the field of 'digital civics'; however, there seems to be no corresponding focus at the level of buildings/building inhabitants. The majority of our lives are spent indoors and therefore the impact that 'indoor digital civics' may have, might exceed that of city-scale, digital civics. The digitization of building design and building management creates an opportunity to better identify, protect, and cultivate civic values that, until now, were centralized in the hands of building designers and building owners. By bringing together leading architecture/HCI academics and commercial stakeholders, this workshop builds on previous workshops at CHI. The workshop will provide a forum where a new agenda for research in 'HabiTech' can be defined and new research collaborations formed.

Author Keywords

Digital technologies and inhabitant-driven design; user voice; user data; building users; building activism, technology enabled inhabitation; privacy.

CSS Concepts

• Human-centered computing~User studies • Human-centered computing~Participatory design • Social and

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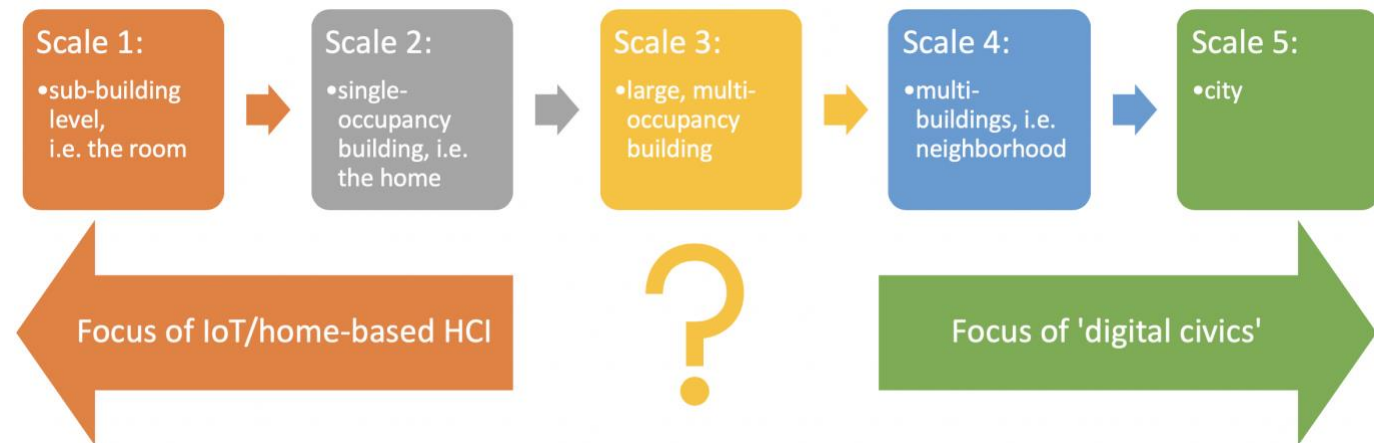


Figure 1: Showing the gap in knowledge in HCI research

professional topics~Corporate surveillance • Computer systems organization~Sensor networks

Background

As larger parts of our lives are determined in the digital realm, it is critical to reflect on how democratic values can be preserved and cultivated by technology. On the city scale, this is studied in the field of 'digital civics'; However, there seems to be no corresponding comparison on the level of buildings and building occupancy. The majority of our lives are spent indoors and therefore the impact 'indoor digital civics' may have on our ethics and democratic engagement may well exceed the corresponding impact of city-scale digital civics. Furthermore, we suggest that there is a

gap in the built environment/HCI literature which fails to address this mid-scale issue (see figure 1). The digitization of building design and building management also creates an opportunity to better identify, protect, and cultivate civic values that, until now, were centralized in the hands of building designers and building owners.

Human-Computer Interaction plays a critical role in this change, because it facilitates the exchange of information (data) between the building systems, building users, and facility managers. As more data on building use is logged, and more experiences inside buildings are determined by automated processes based on this data, it is critical to communicate to building users:

1. What data is being collected about them (what do building-owners/stakeholders now know that was previously unknown/unknowable?).

¹ The word *HabiTech* is both nod to the widely used term 'PropTech', or the use of IT to research, market and manage real estate, whilst also being a play on the word 'habitat'.



Figure 2: a building user speaks? (Interactive public work of art and video sculpture in Chicago's Millennium Park) Image CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 by Shutter Fotos via Flickr.

2. How their ongoing building use is being determined by automated processes based on data.
3. What possibilities exist for users to be aware of, or even control, these processes.

Furthermore, technology can serve to enhance and cultivate:

1. User-driven building design (typically known as participatory design, but this tends to occur – if at all – prior to a building being designed. Could technology facilitate user-driven design/re-design/adaptation once a building is already in use? [5]);
2. User-driven input/change in facilities management;
3. The creation of communities of building users, with the potential to address a number of issues ranging from loneliness to the rights to live in a safe environment.

At the same time, interactions with buildings cannot interfere with the spontaneous and everyday life of their inhabitants (e.g., [1]). Classical non-digital, or non-technologically enabled, building systems are typically controlled by actions as simple as pressing a light switch, pulling a handle to open a window, or re-arranging chairs to change the room's purpose. Interfaces serving the 'digital civics' equivalent of the realm of indoor buildings cannot be any less inclusive or less intuitive.

This workshop is aiming to build a new CHI community of members currently working around a number of building-level related projects (e.g., workplaces of the future, sensor-enabled buildings, digital community

making, user data privacy etc.). It aims to promote a discussion among the workshop participants about their past, present and future research and, most importantly, to identify areas of overlap and potential integration between participants' different academic backgrounds and the different research foci.

Specifically, the workshop will seek to answer the following questions – is there a building level equivalency to 'digital civics'? It is there enough of a difference to warrant it having a separate and distinct identity rather than it merely being a sub-part of digital civics (we, the organizers, obviously think so) and can we come up with a better name for this new area than HabiTech? Through this workshop, we hope to stimulate a lively discussion about all things *HabiTech-ish* and to produce a roadmap for how it can best be integrated into existing human-environment interaction research and to encourage members of the CHI community to engage robustly in this topic.

Organizers

The co-organizers are all researchers on the overlap between HCI and Architecture. Three of the workshop's organizers, Dalton, Hölscher and Dalton (see below), have organized two past CHI Workshops, in 2012 [3] and 2014 [4], on this area of overlap between architecture and interaction design, the 2014 workshop resulting in the book of the same title, 'Architecture and Interaction' [2] that emerged from these two workshops. We are therefore an experienced team with international reputations in the field of architecture, interaction design and HCI. For individual bios, please see overleaf:



Figure 3: Building users engaged in community action. Image CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 by 'Daniel2005' via Flickr.

Professor Ruth Conroy Dalton

Ruth is Lancaster University's Inaugural Professor of Architecture. Her research interests are centred on the relationship between the spatial layout of buildings and environments and their effect on how people understand and interact in those spaces. She is an expert in space syntax analysis and using virtual environments as a method for researching human factors in the built environment.

Professor Christoph Hölscher

Christoph has been Professor of Cognitive Science at ETH Zurich since 2013. Currently a member of the Singapore-ETH Future Cities Laboratory, he is also the programme director of the Future Resilient Systems programme - the second programme at the centre. His areas of research include wayfinding, spatial cognition & usability research for architectural design, HCI, user modelling & personalisation, information retrieval & web search behaviour.

Dr Jakub Krukar

Jakub is a researcher and lecturer in spatial cognition - a branch of cognitive science studying how people think about, think in, and think with space. He is a psychologist by training, and he applies psychological methods in the fields of geoinformatics, architecture, and human-computer interaction.

Assoc. Professor Nick Dalton

Nick's research exists in the crossover between architecture and human computer interaction. This includes areas such as space syntax in theoretical architecture. His current research area is that of very large-scale user interfaces: any user interface which is larger than a person. For example, this includes public

displays, a digital wine shop, information sculptures, table-sized multitouch group interactions etc. He is a founding member of NORSC (Northumbria's social computing research group).

Christian Veddeler

Christian Veddeler is an architect based in Amsterdam. Currently he is a strategic advisor to UNStudio, where until recently he has performed as a Director being responsible for numerous international projects, as Frankfurt FOUR currently under construction. Christian has a focus on system thinking in architecture and was in charge of several award-winning projects, amongst others the Campus for the Singapore University of Technology and Design.

Professor Mikael Wiberg

Mikael is a Professor of Informatics at Umeå university, Sweden. He is editor for the Architecture & Interaction forum for ACM Interactions, and his research interests includes a focus on interaction design at the scale of architecture, an interest in the materiality of interaction, and an interest in concept-driven design methods. He is the author of a recent book, "The Materiality of Interaction - Notes on the Materials of Interaction Design" (MIT Press, Jan 2018).

Key contact points: Ruth Dalton & Jakub Krukar.

Website

Information about this workshop is available at:
www.answeronapostcardplease.com.



Figure 4. Three participant slides for rapid fire session.

Pre-Workshop Plans

The workshop will be promoted through both HCI and architectural email lists. We aim to recruit participants primarily through our existing extended interdisciplinary professional and through our own existing institutional as well as social media. All of this activity will be coordinated through a dedicated workshop website. In addition, on the website there will be a forum for exchanging and posting comments/initial ideas around the theme of 'HabiTech' and participants will also be invited to help start to compile a shared bibliography/resource space. An associated twitter account will be used to communicate with the community in the run-up to the workshop taking place, keeping participants updated about the workshop and important announcements etc.

Participants will be welcomed from a range of disciplines including architecture, environmental psychology, computing, HCI, interaction and experience design, service design, digital arts and media, and cognitive science.

Following a call for papers, participants will submit a 2-4-page position paper, related to the workshop issues, themes and goals. These position papers will be peer reviewed by an interdisciplinary review committee with workshop attendance being dependant on acceptance. To facilitate engaged discussion, it is anticipated that a maximum of 20 participants will be selected.

Workshop Structure

This will be a one-day workshop attended by approximately 20 participants. The first activity will be run as a mini-conference with fast-paced presentations, in which each participant is asked to present three

slides (see figure 4): the first slide introduces the participant and indicates how their past experience and expertise is relevant to 'HabiTech'; the second slide proposes a definition or statement of what the participant thinks 'HabiTech' is about; the third and final slide describes what the participant hopes to get out of being part of the HabiTech CHI 2020 Workshop. Each participant has 5 minutes to present these three slides.

This activity will be followed by a coffee break, during which participants will be encouraged to engage in a 'domain-dotting' exercise. On a large-format, pre-prepared graphic outlining the Key concepts/terms in 'digital civics' mapped onto suggested, corresponding equivalents for HabiTech (see table 1), participants will be given two colors of sticky 'dots', one color indicating areas of expertise/research in which the participant is already engaged and the second color dot indicating future areas around 'HabiTech' they are hoping to explore.

After the coffee break, the keynote talk will be given by an architect Christian Veddeler. With his lecture "*Motion still Matters*", Christian Veddeler aims to illustrate his interest in system thinking in architecture and design strategies that go beyond the infatuation with specific formal manifestations. His focus lies on the research and importance given to the various relational conditions that influence decision making in design. The technological redefinition of the conditions of design and the negotiation of diverse stakeholder interests allows for the potential of large-scale differentiation and the introduction of conditions of association, relativity and complexity. Through rule-based approaches, intricate systems can be generated with specific control

and attention to relative parameters. Attendant formal structures and programs are further resolved in relational contexts, and feedback-loops: helping to overcome the limitations of linear thinking and an attitude of instant solutions. The scope of Christian's undertakings lies in the research of relational conditions of relevant layers of and influences on architecture, such as space, structure, function, material and its impact on the experience of its users. The lecture attempts to anticipate a changing role of the architect, to discuss novel design strategies, reflecting the more and more complex nature of the architectural project. This keynote is meant to act as a provocation from industry in order to get participants both motivated and excited.

After lunch, at a nearby restaurant, we will immediately launch into a 90-minute session based on 'constructive controversy methods [6,7]. The basic process of constructive controversy is based upon an established method permitting the pros and cons of an issue to be presented from diverse points of views, allowing a 'deep dive' into an issue in order to potentially arrive at a consensus solution. In constructive controversies the search for 'certainty' becomes a cooperative effort, seeking to accommodate the perspectives and reasoning of others. It yields creative solutions and positive feelings among the parties. Two groups will be formed, each given an opposing position, the first being that 'HabiTech' is a genuinely new and under-researched topic; the opposing position being that it is simply a sub-area of 'Digital Civics' and does not need a separate research focus. Once each team has worked out its position, they present it. After this, the teams exchange positions, each presenting the other's viewpoint. This exercise (see figure 5) will culminate in

a group discussion and an attempt to find common ground followed by a reflection on the overall process (and finally a well-earned, second coffee break).

The last workshop activity will build upon the constructive controversy activity by engaging in a final mind-mapping exercise: in order to both map out the domain and establish the boundaries of the field. This domain-mapping will be conducted in small groups of four to five people; a spokesperson representing the group will then report on the outcomes of this session in the final wrapping up session. Finally, we will conclude with a discussion of future plans.

HabiTech CHI 2020 Workshop Schedule

- Welcome: 09:05 to 09:10
- 20 x rapid fire presentations: 09:10 to 11:00
- Coffee break ('domain-dotting' activity over coffee): 11:00 to 11:30
- Christian Veddeler Keynote, Q&A: 11:30 to 12:30
- Lunch: 12:30 to 13:30
- Constructive controversy exercise: 13:30 to 14:30
- Afternoon coffee break: 14:30 to 15:00
- Mind-mapping/mapping the domain: 15:00 to 16:00
- Reporting back and discussion about future plans: 16:00 to 17:00 (and close)

Post-Workshop Plans

This workshop is fairly speculative, and therefore we do not wish to be too prescriptive as to the outcomes. However, if it seems as though there is sufficient material arising from the workshop we would like to produce either a special issue of a journal, ideally within the architectural research area, such as the

Architectural Science Review (ISSN 00038628) and/or to produce an summary article for Interactions/IX journal.

250 Word Call for Participation

We invite submissions for a one-day workshop to help define a new research area – the building-level counterpoint to digital civics - how do new technologies enable and empower the inhabitants of a multi-occupancy buildings? This workshop will gather interdisciplinary experts in HCI, design, architecture, data ethics, and cognitive science to reflect on the role of HCI in cultivating digital civics inside buildings.

Papers should be 2-4 pages long in the CHI Extended Abstract format and may address any subjects related to the topic including but not limited to:

- Making the ongoing logging of user-behavior transparent, opt-in, and voluntary.
- Data interfaces embedded in architectural space.
- Encouraging the emergence of communities among building users.
- User-driven building design, building management, and facility maintenance.
- Ethics of building-based personal data.
- Maintaining data privacy inside buildings, including privacy-by-design.

Please see the table for a preliminary mapping of relevant concepts against those already established in digital civics. Submissions should refer to one or more of these concepts. The due date for submissions is February 11th, 2020. Participants notified: February

28th, 2020. The submission site can be found at www.answeronapostcardplease.com. At least one author of each accepted position paper must attend the workshop, and all participants must register for both the workshop and at least one day of the conference. Participants will be selected based on their prior experience, expressed interest in the workshop and the quality of their submissions. We will focus on recruiting from a diverse group of participants.

| Digital Civics | HabiTech |
|---|---|
| The city | The building |
| Citizen | Building User |
| Citizenship | Building occupancy, residency, 'usership' |
| Community | <i>Do "building communities" exist or is it always about individual users? Who would constitute a "building community"? People who routinely share space/tasks?</i> |
| Democratic engagement | Democratic engagement |
| Digital technologies | Digital technologies |
| Citizen-driven city design | User-driven building design |
| Ethics | Ethics |
| Citizen rights | Building user rights |
| Privacy in public space (e.g., right not to be tracked) | Privacy in buildings (e.g. right not to have one's access logs recorded?) |
| Equal rights to access and use public parts of the city | Equal rights to access and use public parts of the building? |
| Rights to healthy | Rights to (mentally?) healthy |

| Digital Civics | HabiTech |
|---|--|
| environments | buildings |
| (Citizen) voice | (User or inhabitant's) voice |
| Community-driven digital technologies | (Building) user-driven digital technologies |
| Community-driven digital services | (Building) user-driven digital services |
| Action | Building user action |
| City activism (offline: guerrilla gardening / digital: citizen-built public transit apps) | building activism (offline: flexibly self-rearranging space/furniture / digital: community building) |
| Civic potentials of | Building user potentials of |

Acknowledgments

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- [2] Nicholas S. Dalton, Holger Schnädelbach, Mikael Wiberg, and Tasos Varoudis. 2016. *Architecture and Interaction*. Springer International Publishing, Cham.
- [3] Nicholas Dalton, Keith Green, Paul Marshall, et al. 2012. Ar-CHI-Tecture: Architecture and Interaction. *CHI '12 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, ACM, 2743–2746.
- [4] Nick Dalton, Keith Evan Green, Ruth Dalton, et al. 2014. Interaction and Architectural Space. *CHI '14*

| Digital Civics | HabiTech |
|---|--|
| digital life | digital tools |
| volunteered geo-information | volunteered building-level info (sensors?), reporting of faults/building repairs |
| city data from sensors (not always volunteered) | building data from sensors (not always volunteered) |

Table 1: Key concepts/terms in 'digital civics' mapped onto suggested, corresponding equivalents for HabiTech

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