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ICT PhD thesis opens up new technology for users in the developing world

Andrew Maunder's PhD thesis, *Designing appropriate interactive systems for the developing world,* explores the process of designing appropriate information communication technologies (ICT) for developing world communities. He describes the design of two cellular phone-based interactive systems, both of which aim to provide a locally appropriate interface to a multimedia information system. The first system, dubbed MuTI Mobile, utilises multimedia messaging to enable new, collaborative medical processes between a rural hospital and remote clinic. The second system, dubbed SnapAndGrab, enables playful interactions and sharing of multimedia within a work environment.

Maunder's design work reveals that current interaction design methods, tools and techniques provide little assistance when designing such systems, especially when considering that the major design problems stem from complex socio-cultural and value-related issues. He addresses these shortcomings by presenting a new design strategy that focuses on ubiquitous artefacts, abstract scenarios, local accessibility and progressive participation. The new strategy resulted in the innovative SnapAndGrab prototype that probes a community's local perspective of a technology through real, first-hand experiences and a novel evaluative technique. The evaluative findings suggest that the SnapAndGrab system shows promising signs of being a highly appropriate interactive technology for developing world users who do not have access to a PC or the Internet, but still want to access rich, multimedia content such as photographs, music and videos.

Maunder was born and raised in Cape Town and completed his BSc in Applied Computing at UCT in 2003. He began his postgraduate studies with a BSc (Hons) in Information Technology, in which he was awarded the class medal. His PhD is in Computer Science. His supervisor is Associate Professor Gary Marsden of the Computer Science Department at UCT. He received his degree on Friday, 10 June 2011.

ENDS

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