
Sukeshini A. Grandhi
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Information Systems College of Computing Sciences,
New Jersey Institute of Technology,
University Heights Newark New Jersey, USA 07102
Email: sg49@njit.edu

I am a second year Ph.D. student in the Information Systems Department, New Jersey Institute of Technology. Having recently passed my qualifying exam, I am actively looking to narrow down my research topic for my Ph.D. thesis within the areas of CSCW and HCI.

I have been working as a research assistant on the NSF funded grant “Mark This! - Operationalizing the notion of ‘place’ for interactive community systems” since its inception in June 2003 (http://modiin.njit.edu/nsf/place_grant/). I am currently exploring social and technical issues associated with the use of ‘Place’ in interactive location-based systems. Over the last few months I have had the pleasure of coauthoring a book chapter and Journal paper on P3-Systems (Systems that link People-to-People-to-Places). The P3-System framework organizes existing location based community system features into meaningful categories that can be used to guide system design. We further expanded the utility of this framework (Jones, Grandhi et al. forthcoming, JCSCW), showing how certain important CSCW tasks such as awareness and informal communication, coordination, social matching, and social navigation can be supported by techniques distinguished by the framework.

The P3-Systems framework divides the design space into people centered and place centered techniques. Each approach differentially supports various basic tasks. People-centered tasks include meeting, communicating with, or tracking other people, and utilize place information to achieve these essentially social goals. Place-centered tasks flip the perspective, focusing on navigation within and decision-making relative to a place and associated activities, with social information serving as a resource for these tasks. To realize this potential, however, we identified difficult socio-technical challenges that must be addressed, including: (1) *conceptual* issues concerning notions of place, community, and identity; (2) *algorithms* for place discovery and labeling, social matching, and place-based recommendation; and (3) *interaction techniques* for managing complex people-centered and place-centered information on a variety of devices.

Of these socio technical challenges, I am interested in interaction techniques in interactive systems for proximate communities. In particular I am exploring (as my potential Ph.D. thesis topic) the relationship between interruptability, social status, and interaction context. Some of my broad research questions are 1) What constitutes interruptability in interpersonal interactions?; 2) What is the relationship between one’s social network and interruptability?; 3) What role does interruptability play in interpersonal interactions?; 4) What is the relationship between interruptability and Polychronic/Monochronic personalities?; 5) How can interruptability be managed more effectively by taking into account a user’s collaborative environment?

I believe that this workshop on “Methodologies for evaluating collaboration in co-located environments” will help me gain deeper insight into this area and provide me with the necessary ground work in identifying various research issues in collocated collaboration. The broad themes outlined for this workshop will help me expand my knowledge in current as well as potential future research. In this process I am hoping to understand and clearly define the various challenges in technology induced collaborative behavior and interactions intertwined with interruptability.

Finally it will be a privilege to attend a workshop organized by your team and a pleasure to interact in an excellent research oriented environment.