

Student Interest/Motivation for participating in workshop:
**METHODOLOGIES FOR EVALUATING COLLABORATION IN CO-
LOCATED ENVIRONMENTS.**

I am a third year doctoral student in School of Information, University of Michigan and my area of interest is Collaboration in Sensemaking. I am sure I will gain a lot by participating as a student in the workshop. During the past 2 years I have been studying collaboration in sensemaking (information gathering and understanding). My ultimate goal is to develop a system that would help users collaboratively make sense of online information (abstract of a work in progress is provided below). One of the collaborative conditions that I anticipate to be both challenging and naturally occurring will be people who will be collocated (e.g. couples searching for nursery furniture or a group of students working on a research paper).

Methodologies for evaluation- I have been using experimental methods with mixed results for my studies and have encountered most of the issues mentioned in the workshop introduction. I am sure the discussion in the workshop will be both informative and stimulating.

Types of Tasks and their impact on evaluation- I have used a task involving online search for a consumer product and a task involving preparation for a talk. Both of which have prompted me to explore the different task dimensions. (eg. time, Large vs. small problem, one time vs. ongoing). An opportunity to explore all these issues with other participants will be extremely stimulating for me.

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ABSTRACT: *Synchronous and “Hand-Off” Collaboration in Information Seeking and Sensemaking*

Solving problems using the internet as a resource can be difficult, requiring both information gathering and sensemaking. Collaboration might sometimes make this easier, but this has yet to be well verified. Two studies reported here investigated collaborative information gathering and sensemaking. The first study examined how both synchronous and a kind of sequential (“hand-off”) collaboration affect performance in an online task. Subjects working synchronously in pairs and subjects using informal notes and bookmarks that were “handed-off” by earlier searchers both did better than subjects working on their own, suggesting the value in future design for the support of such collaborations. A second study looked in detail at “hand-off” collaboration, yielding insight into how the handed-off material affects the subsequent information seeking and sensemaking.