

MAS 961 • Designing Sociable Media

Lec # 4 • graphical conversations

readings

- Rossney, R. 1996. [Metaworlds](#). Wired 4.06 (June 1996).
- Kurlander, D., T. Skelly and D. Salesin. 1996. [Comic Chat](#) In *Proceedings of ACM SIGGRAPH*.
- Viegas, F. and J. Donath. 1999. [Chat Circles](#). In *Proceedings of CHI 99*
- Karahalios, K. 2000. [Communication systems: A comparison along a set of major axes](#) (optional)

graphical chats

- [Chat circles](#)
- A [list of graphical chat sites](#) (some are now defunct...)

assignment

Graphical chat and discussion systems are potentially much richer communication environments than their text only counterparts. It is possible to encode social information in the appearance and actions of the participants and of the background and other objects. Yet today's graphical chat environments are still in their infancy, with awkward interfaces and cliched imagery. Our goal is to first understand how existing systems function, what works and what doesn't and then to create designs that explore new ways of using interactive graphics to communicate.

1. Please read the listed articles.
2. Explore 2 or 3 graphical communication environments.
3. Write an analysis of the environments you visited. Think about how the graphics are being used: do they add a new dimension of expressiveness? make new types of interactions possible? facilitate more complex or subtle social communication? What are the differences between the graphical and text-based

environments you have observed. What are the entrance requirements to the graphical sites? Are there specifically graphical forms of communicative competence? How are the graphics used to establish identity? to interact and communicate? What is the role of the background? How is motion used? What do you think works well in the systems you observe and what does not? Please submit the URL of your critique online by Monday evening. Copies of the readings are available outside the classroom.