The Future of Interaction Interfaces Everywhere

We've been a bit preoccupied with interfaces as of late. For one thing, you're holding the launch issue of *XRDS*, ACM's magazine for interfacing with the student population. In many ways, this is a brand-new publication—new format, new content, and new vision. But it's also an evolution of *Crossroads*, and as such, it's staying true to a 15-year legacy of student-centric content.

Introducing XRDS

You've probably already noticed we've donned a fresh new look, created by world-renowned design firm Pentagram and the dedicated staff at ACM headquarters. However, you'll quickly discover cosmetic changes are only a small part of this redesign. You might have also noticed we've put on a bit of weight. On the next 50 or so pages, you'll discover a dozen new columns, things like "Advice" (page 7), a tutorial called "Hello World" (page 50), "Labz" (page 52), and much more.

These columns, headed up by a dedicated group of departments editors (see masthead on page 2), were carefully selected and designed to get useful information into your hands and help you connect with the organizations, opportunities, and other students that matter most to you. These columns will be recurring, so you will be able to jump right to the information you find most useful in every issue.

Our goal is to make *XRDS* the premier news and information platform for students interested in computer science, computer engineering, information systems, interaction design, and similar fields. This is one of ACM's chief missions, and we intend for this magazine to be a bold step toward fulfilling that promise.

Interested in helping us realize this vision? *XRDS* is not only a magazine for students, but also run by students. That means we need you! If digging up

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Chris Harrison

leads for feature articles, writing columns, or reporting from conference floors sounds exciting, we want to hear from you.

Email us (xrds@acm.org). Join our discussions on our Facebook group page (<http://tinyurl.com/XRDS-Facebook>). Chatter with us via Twitter by using “#xrds” in any tweet.

Interfaces for Input

We've decided to kick off *XRDS* with an issue dedicated to a highly relevant and rapidly evolving subject: interfaces for input—where they are now, and where they'll be going soon.

Advances in electronics, both in computational power and reduced cost, have allowed computers to pervade almost all aspects of our lives. No longer do we think of computing solely as sitting in front of a desktop computer with a keyboard and mouse. Computing occurs in cars, while we're walking or riding the subway, at a kiosk in the airport, and even on interactive tabletops and walls. To fully unleash the true potential of these computing

modalities, researchers are developing new ways for us to get information into these rich platforms—what we generally refer to as input.

This topic is particularly close to my heart and forms the core of my present PhD research. I think about ways to enable (small) mobile devices to “steal” (large) everyday surfaces for input. Consider, for example, a cell phone sitting on a desk. Why reach over and press some diminutive button to silence an incoming call when you could simply issue a finger gesture right on the (large) table in front of you? Or imagine a music player strapped to your upper arm while out for a jog. Why reach over to interact with some tiny scroll wheel when you could use the nearly two square feet of skin surface area on your lower arm for finger input?

It's All Happening Now

That might sound like science fiction, but these projects have already been published at UIST (the Symposium on User Interface Software and Technology) and the annual SIGCHI conference (or the Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction), two premier ACM conferences that you, as an ACM student member, get discounted entrance to, by the way.

That's just the tip of the input iceberg. We've got six feature articles from top researchers covering everything from tangible tabletops and pen input, to micro-device interactions, and brain-computer interfaces. Intrigued? Keep reading...

Chris Harrison

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He is a Microsoft Research PhD Fellowship recipient, and has worked as several industry labs, including IBM Research, AT&T Labs, and Microsoft Research. More about his background and work is available at www.chrisharrison.net.

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