

Reflections on Sustainable Human-Computer Interaction

Have We Taken On Too Much? A Critical Review of the Sustainable HCI Landscape

This paper discusses how design should not be focusing on individuals but on the ability to influence a community. It also suggests in some cases avoiding designing at all because a new solution won't solve the problem at hand. Sometimes, simply researching the work of others can help so much. In my opinion, this paper will fall down the "Sustainable Interaction Design" genre of SHCI, because it uses SHCI to make researchers rethink their role and outcomes of their design. A principle strongly introduced in the paper is the belief of researchers that they can solve anything, but the truth is that they can't. For real change to happen it must come through policymakers. In our group project also, although it has aspects that focus on the individual, we try to contribute to reducing water wastage as a community as well because we understand that one person cannot help save water but a whole community working together has more prospects to achieve real change. This paper, using the seven axes of differences can be described under the category of "Technology as an adequate vs inadequate solution" because the main discussion is about the fact that technology cannot solve everything.

This Changes Sustainable HCI

This paper refers to SHCI's role and according to the authors the vision for the community. The authors believe that researchers should abandon any research or design involving small changes and focus their research on large changes related only to climate change. Another controversial issue they discuss is the need to create new laws on the subject of climate change but this might lead to less autonomy and the loss of rights, which in my opinion is morally wrong. This paper describes the "HCI as usual vs HCI must be rethought" axis of difference because the article aims to criticize how HCI research is progressing and how it must be re-evaluated. Additionally, it can be classified in the genre of "Sustainable Interaction Design", because its main goal is to make SHCI revise its role and focus on big changes and specifically on the problem of climate change. Moreover, the principles introduced in the paper are that we need first to understand how the system works and then how an individual works. My opinion about the paper is that it tries to take a rather extreme attitude about the whole problem of climate change.

Design for Collaborative Survival: An Inquiry to Human-Fungi Relationships

This paper discusses the concept of collaborative survival which is based on the concept of the dependence of human survival on the health of a multitude of other species. The authors focus on the human-fungi relationship and how humans should begin to observe their surrounding environment. This is how the concept of the art of observation is described. The paper likely uses the "Persuasive and Participatory Sensing" genre of SHCI. Moreover, this article falls under the "Improving vs fundamentally changing lifestyles", because it argues that people should start observing their surroundings and not focus entirely on themselves. My reflection on this paper focuses on the concept of the art of observation and specifically on the fact that humans must begin to observe and understand what is around them. Because the first step in solving any problem is noticing that the problem exists, and it is important to understand our role in this process. In summary, this paper focuses on the need to change people's way of thinking and the way they see things around them.

Getting to Green: Understanding Resource Consumption in the Home

This paper is about people's attitudes toward energy saving. Although, this paper was published several years ago the problems discussed have not yet been resolved and are still debated. In my opinion, the paper is under the "Formative User Studies" genre, because the authors researched users and their opinion on energy saving. Additionally, this paper refers to the user's problematic behavior and how it can be improved. It, therefore, falls under the "Users as the problem vs solving users' problems" axis of difference. In my opinion, the problem is not wasting energy but producing too much energy. So, the point is to regulate the production of energy before we start regulating the amount of energy we consume. Moreover, people are not interested in saving energy, but they are more interested in saving money and reducing their bills. Another important point is that although we make electric cars to save energy, we use a lot of energy to build them and especially for their batteries. So, the question ultimately remains whether we end up saving energy from them.

Transforming the stories, we tell about climate change: from 'issue' to 'action'

This paper discusses how the issue of climate change is reflected in the media. The authors begin by saying that almost all the environmental news stories are negative leaving readers feeling hopeless and with questions like 'what can I do?'. They propose an approach to climate communication by providing a wide variety of stories of people taking positive action on climate change. I think this paper is under the genre of Ambient Awareness because their approach is meant to make people aware of how they can help the environment. The main principle that is repeated throughout the article is that climate change doesn't have a checklist of actions that you can just check and say 'I've done my part', so this paper discusses the "HCI as usual vs HCI must be rethought" because it criticizes how climate change is handled today and how it should change. Additionally, in my experience, HCI researchers argue that they have the 'best' solution for climate change but this paper shows that we need to have a better understanding that everyone has different roles and everyone can make an impact however small it's still a positive impact.

Econundrum: Visualizing the Climate Impact of Dietary Choice through a Shared Data Sculpture

This paper is about a full ceiling-mounted installation that allows the submission of consumed food types, appearing on individual disks, using color and surface area to reveal their associated carbon emissions. The disks would change attitudes depending on the sustainability of people's diets. The higher it is, the more sustainable the diet. This paper is considered as the genre of Ambient Awareness because the intention was to inform users how their diet is connected to sustainability. Moreover, this paper falls under the "Users as the problem vs solving users' problems", because it highlights the problematic aspects of the users' lifestyle. I believe that although the design looks very interesting, the experiment is bound to fail. The main concept behind the design is that people are judged for their dietary preferences, making them feel ashamed and guilty about their choices. The experiment was easy to succeed because it was done with a small population in an open space and therefore it was very easy to hold each other accountable. But if the experiment was done in a larger population, then the results would be different. I suggest that there would be a balance between personal reflection and social sharing. People should feel that they belong to a community while keeping in mind that even the smallest individual change can have an impact.