

Editorial Preface

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Welcome to the latest issue of the *International Journal of Mobile Human Computer Interaction* (IJMHCI) which contains an eclectic collection of interesting articles—from stability in adaptive mobile homecreens to mobile government challenges in Saudi Arabia to understanding of continued use of mobile SNS and finally arriving at experience of input devices for mobile gaming.

The first article, “*Investigating UI Displacements in an Adaptive Mobile Homescreen*,” is by Lauren Norrie and Roderick Murray-Smith. In this, Lauren and Roderick highlight the issues associated with locating apps when (a) space is restricted on the homescreen, (b) the most frequently used apps (the natural contenders for homescreen positions) change over time, and (c) users find arranging icons on a homescreen to be annoying and time consuming (so much so that they often don’t bother). The authors assert that by supporting users in organizing their homecreens we, as designers, could improve mobile device usability. In recognition of the fact that it is possible for a system to predict app launch likelihood if given access to a user’s app launch history, Lauren and Roderick suggest that it possible to adapt automatically the app icons that appear on the homescreen. Hence, they present such a system—i.e., one that adapts app shortcuts on the homescreen of an Android phone—and report on an investigation of the impact of the automated icon displacement (which they use as a measure of stability) by comparing adaptive models and the order of the layout. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they found that selection time correlates with the size of the displacement. They also found, however, that for infrequent icon updates, selection time and users’ subjective ratings were positively linked to transparency of model and where an alphabetical ordering of icons is utilized – with the authors suggesting that these conditions help improve stability – but that rank ordering is preferred when the model updates frequently and is less transparent. Lauren and Roderick suggest their findings “*will inform the design of more reactive adaptive homecreens.*”

In “*Mobile Government in Saudi Arabia Challenges and Opportunities*” Anan Alssbaiheen and Steve Love highlight the increasing attention given to mobile government (m-Government) in recent years, especially within developing countries in which it is seen as a means to reduce costs whilst at the same time increasing public access and government effectiveness. In an attempt to address the paucity of research into potential opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of m-Government in countries where it has yet to be introduced, Anan and Steve report on a study which, using semi-structured interviews, explored opportunities and challenges for the deployment of m-Government services within Saudi Arabia from the perspective of the country’s citizens. Their objectives in conducting the study were to understand citizens’ demand for services as well as preferences for accessing such services, to identify demand for a centralized mobile portal providing access to all government services, and to understand citizens’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges of m-Government. Interestingly, participants were able to envisage the benefits of m-Government within Saudi Arabia and indicated that they would engage with such services if available, but they felt that such service delivery would not be feasible (at least in the short term) given current infrastructural (internet) capacity which they did not see as likely to improve in the near future. They highlighted a range of challenges to the deployment of m-Government services in Saudi Arabia, some (including internet access and data security concerns) matching results reported elsewhere, but others were more

specific to Saudi Arabia, such as the perceived “*obstructive and bureaucratic attitude of government departments*”—problems associated with physically interfacing with government officials being one of the key identified motivators for citizens to engage in m-Government—and the difficulty of matching citizens’ desire for customized services with the identification and delivery of such customized services. The authors posit that countries (especially developing countries) can use their findings “*to be more specific in their intentions for implementing m-Government services and the planning mechanism behind the program.*”

The third article—“*Understanding Continuance Usage of Mobile Social Network Sites*” by Tao Zhou—argues that user retention and continued use is critical to the success of mobile social network sites given that it costs five times as much to attract a new user as it does to retain an existing user. Tao highlights that mobile social networks currently collect significant user information (including both demographic and location information which is used to ‘push’ personalized products and services to users) and, as such, this can raise users’ concerns over privacy and ultimately diminish their intent to continue using the service in the absence of the trust that is necessary to mitigate such concerns. Tao reports on an investigation designed to uncover the factors influencing users’ continuance of use of mobile social network sites. On the basis of his findings, Tao suggests that both system quality and service quality affect users’ trust and that this, in turn, impacts their flow experience and privacy concerns. He was able to show that privacy policies have the capacity to mitigate users’ privacy concerns and that, together, trust, flow and privacy concerns determine continuance of use. Tao posits that mobile social network providers need to look to improve users’ experience whilst also reducing/addressing their privacy concerns if they want to be successful in terms of retaining users who continue to use their service over longer timescales.

In the final article—“*Usability and Player Experience of Input Device for Mobile Gaming*”—Chu Kimberly, Tek Yong Lim, Chee Weng Khong, and Chui Yin Wong suggest that the different interaction required of hard- and soft- keypad devices as used for mobile gaming impacts usability and player experience but that the impact is not fully understood such that recommendations relating to player experience are as yet limited. As such, in the work reported in this article, the authors’ aim was to compare, via an empirical user study, the usability of the two input devices in order to derive a list of recommendations for improved player experience. The authors suggest that the recommendations list they were ultimately able to elicit has the potential to serve as “*a reference for interaction designers, game developers and designers to discern the differences in input devices, especially factors that encourage better player experience*”. This is especially prevalent given that their study also illustrated that users (gamers) currently still favor the use of hard keypad devices. In this regard, the authors hope that the focus of their study on a combination of usability and player experience will encourage future “*development and advancement of input devices for an even more refined player experience in the future*”.

Collectively, the articles in this issue challenge us to find workable solutions to everyday problems associated with the use of mobile systems. From efficiency gains associated with adaptive homescreen icon placement to barriers to population engagement and empowerment via m-Government deployment, from making users more trusting of and comfortable using mobile social networking sites to identifying the optimum controllers for mobile gaming, I trust that you find these articles thought provoking and, even if you are not working in an immediately-related domain, you can generalize from either the findings or methods used such that this reported research can help inform your own endeavors.

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