

### **Place orientation**

Places come as abstract or physical. Computer science has, e.g., allowed the development of abstract places in many forms: websites, chat places, virtual communities, and most graphically virtual reality worlds. Human-computer interaction is evolving into a discipline concerned with the experience of *being-a-visitor* in addition to *being-a-user*. Whether or not human artifacts are physical or abstract, it is a truism that they should work well if they are to serve the mindset of the computer user. In like manner, it is a truism that places for use and other activities should be satisfying to people who seek positive experiences. No doubt, it is possible to make alternative descriptions of subjects interacting with computer technology which brings the dualism of place and person to the foreground and captures accommodative aspects of digital places. Three major and concrete categories of digital places are: information places, social places and places proper. To exemplify, web sites can be seen as information places, chat sites as social places and 3D games as places proper, i.e., 3D games purport to and provide for especially strong and direct place experiences.

### **Approach to place orientation**

Earlier research has shown how to design and construct visitor-oriented studies and that visitor orientation is a viable perspective [Hedman '01]. The next step is to further develop the perspective and to foster a greater sensibility of place within HCI. The perspective is developed partly through researching and analyzing the literature on place, e.g., the philosophy of place, architecture, virtual geography, and environmental psychology. Another venue for perspectival growth is the design and execution of specific place-oriented studies in human-computer interaction. Uniquely designed and focused place-oriented studies yields empirical results that can be understood against the theoretical background developed through the literature research. Examples of place-oriented studies that have been undertaken so far are: digital television with a place-like interface, collaboration in a desktop virtual reality system, and learning in a desktop virtual reality environment.

Hedman A (2001) *Visitor Orientation—Human-Computer Interaction in Digital Places*  
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