What’s Happening? The Community Awareness Application

Q. Alex Zhao, John T. Stasko
Information Interfaces Research Group
GVU Center & College of Computing
Georgia Institute of Technology
The Problem

- Large real-life community
- Geographically separated
- Need to promote awareness and communication
- Information-overloaded
- Choosing the right channel: periphery
The “What’s Happening” Application

- Automatically collected content
  - Community events reminder
  - News, weather, stock monitor
- User contributed content
  - Notes and chat-rooms
- Unobtrusive and simple
- Multiple levels of detail
Live Demo
Interface

- **Distance Matters**: GVU Distinguished Lecture Series: Gary & Judith Olson, University of Michigan. 12–1pm MiRC Room 102

- **Tennis this afternoon?**
  - The weather outside is perfect! (Posted by quartz@gvu on Mon 01/17 01:17PM-EST)

- **Tennis this afternoon?**
  - quartz: Forgot to ask: anybody has the # for the tennis center? Better reserve a court now... 1:18pm

- **Add:**
Status

Initial pilot deployment

- November 1999
- Unix, Windows, Mac
- 20-25 regular users, ~ 20 casual users
- User suggestions led to several revisions
- Data gathering:
  - Logs
  - Participatory observation
Observations

- People use multiple levels of detail to gauge what the current blurb is about
- It is fairly unobtrusive
- Different types of user contribution
- Different styles of interaction
- Passive-use most common
Future Directions

• Full-scale deployment
• Content generation
• Evaluation

For more information, please visit:

http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/ii/community/