

Visitor: Antti Oulasvirta, Helsinki Institute for Information Technology
HIIT

Visit period: June 14-30, 2011

Research field: Human-computer interaction (HCI)

First of all, I want to thank SICSA for this great opportunity to visit the top groups in HCI in Scotland. Secondly, in this report, I summarize the events and outcomes of my visit.

Overview of visit: During the period, I visited University of Glasgow (roughly one week), University of St. Andrews (roughly one week, including summer school), and University of Edinburgh (brief visit with speech and discussions). Given that my visit in School of Informatics in Edinburgh was brief, my interactions and therefore the outcomes mainly focus on the two other universities.

Talks: I held 6 one-hour lectures during the visit. Two one-hour talks were held in Glasgow, two in St. Andrews, and one in Edinburgh. All talks were related to latest research in HCI, especially in the area combining mobile human-computer interaction (HCI) and "embodied HCI". I also participated as a mentor and as a lecturer in the SICSA-organized Summer School in Multimodal Interaction and Digital Tourism held in St.

Discussions with research groups: In Glasgow, I had discussions with the groups of Professors Murray-Smith, Brewster, Chalmers, and Ounis. I also visited the Department of Psychology, where I met with Professors Pollick and Simmons. In St. Andrews, I had extensive discussions with the Lecturers Miguel Nacenta and Per Ola Kristensson. In both Glasgow and St. Andrews, I had the opportunity to discuss one-to-one with most of the postdocs and postgraduates in the HCI groups.

Outcomes: The outcomes can be divided into two categories: 1) collaboration within existing projects and 2) planned new projects. Concerning the first, during my visit, we planned and will run three HCI studies. These studies involve the aforementioned HCI-related groups from Glasgow and St. Andrews and will result in high quality publications targeted for the year 2012. Preparation for one of these studies has started immediately after my return to Finland, and may involve hiring a student from University of Glasgow; the two other studies will start later on during the Fall. Concerning the second, we have started discussing a proposal for EU FET involving PIs from Scotland, Finland, and possibly Germany. With Prof. Brewster, we talked about the possibility of collaboration within the EIT ICT Labs. In addition, we have talked about the opportunity of joining forces in the area of information retrieval and HCI. The Director of HIIT, Prof. Samuel Kaski, has interest in visiting Glasgow later on in 2012 to develop this (IR+HCI) connection in particular.

Assessment of strategic importance: We have had mutual research exchange with University of Glasgow in the past, but I have never had the chance to properly visit and meet the professors and researchers. In hindsight, being able to give talks and discuss at "grass-root level", and have plenty of time dedicated just for that, was important for building mutual understanding of the full scope of research activities and plans. Regarding St. Andrews, it has recently started to build HCI competence and I think the timing of my visit was perfect for building a long-term collaboration with the key people there. I believe that without the SICSA visit I would not have built the collaborations with St. Andrews that I list above. Overall, I see that the visit was essential for research collaborations in the future.