DESIGNING FOR PARTICIPATION: EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH-DRIVEN PRACTICE

presented by

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Abstract:
When designing for variation in human ability, accessibility is frequently the measure of success. Although accessible design can make it easier for an individual to gain access to spaces, products, and information, the emphasis is often solely on impairment and its mitigation as the basis for design. Thus, we end up with “handicapped parking”, assistive technology, and other specialized designs that can be exclusionary and don’t necessarily address an individual’s participation needs – or engagement that sustains personal identity, supports context-related motivations, and promotes inclusion. While interactive technologies have the potential to enable this type of participation, there is a lack of evidence-based design that demonstrates how this can be accomplished. My work focuses on operationalizing and designing for participation through building an evidence base and encouraging research-driven practice. I will discuss the Accessible Aquarium Project and its focus on participation as the primary design and evaluation goal for developing real-time descriptive exhibit mediation for visitors with and without vision impairments. This work investigated specific, measurable exhibit motivations as part of the design process and proposed participation-relevant outcomes (i.e., personal understanding, independence, sharing, and belonging) that can result from exhibit mediation intentionally designed to provide a more equitable experience for visitors regardless of vision function. I will show how we can perform user-centered, research-driven practice in designing interactive spaces, products, and information based on access and participation needs.

Bio:
Carrie Bruce is a Senior Research Scientist in the School of Interactive Computing at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She serves as the Director for Student Research in the Human Computer Interaction Master’s program and is a research affiliate at the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA). Her work is distinguished for examining design issues related to accessibility and investigating methodologies that measure the impact of design and technology on activity and participation. Dr. Bruce is also a licensed speech-language pathologist and assistive technology practitioner who has worked in healthcare and rehabilitation for nearly 20 years.

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