NCSUE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaged Scholars Series

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

All sessions are free and open to the public. Seating is limited.
Please register online at usability.msu.edu/conf2006.asp by November 7, 2006.

The Sessions

Usability as a Tool for Capacity Building
Conducting Community-Based User Research

9:00 am–11:00 am • Kellogg Center • Willy Room

This workshop helps participants move common and well-understood practices and methods ("usability") into a less common domain of application, "the community." The workshop focuses on key contextual differences and resulting methodological decisions that researchers must make. Significant focus is given to usability as a way to help build capacity in communities.

The Expertise and Complexity of Citizen Knowledge Work; or, A Tale of How Information Technologies Move from Being Good Collaborators to Poor Collaborations

4:15 pm–5:15 pm • Kellogg Center • Big Ten Room C

This talk is based on a study of an existing data democratization effort called CACVoices, which includes a public Web site that hosts a powerful set of databases and other types of public information. It is an example of a common type of community network that aggregates information, tools, and IT capacity for "the public." Citizen and community-based organizations in nearly every community rely on networks like CACVoices to do their work.

In doing this research we have learned that the work of individuals and groups within these organizations constitutes a type of "knowledge work." However, while complex information technologies are readily available to such users, it is unclear how well the tools support expert knowledge workers in these new contexts. This study is one attempt to provide evidence about a common but largely invisible area of human-computer interaction—community-based knowledge work. In this talk we discuss our results and report on our attempts to design new tools to support community-based knowledge work.

Speaker

Jeff Grabill, Ph.D.

Co-Director
MSU Writing in Digital Environments (WIDE) Research Center

Associate Professor
Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures

Grabill is interested in how people write together to do the "knowledge work" of their everyday lives. He locates his work at the intersection of professional and technical writing, rhetorical theory, and literacy theory.

Grabill is the author of *Community Literacy Programs and the Politics of Change* (SUNY, 2001) and the forthcoming *Writing Community Change: Designing Technologies for Citizen Action* (Hampton, 2007). He has also published articles in *College Composition and Communication*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *Computers and Composition*, and *English Education*.

World Usability Day 2006
14 November 2006 • Making life easy!

These sessions are part of the Michigan State University commemoration of World Usability Day. For more information visit usability.msu.edu. NCSUE is proud to support World Usability Day at MSU.

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