

example of a more fine-grained analysis approach is Experiscope [97], a tool for analyzing user tests of mouse- or stylus-based interaction techniques. Experiscope can both visualize input event data well as produce aggregate reports of event frequency and duration. As an initial step into this direction, d.tools visualizes how many times a transition was taken by changing transition line thickness in the diagram. However, it is not currently possible to extract the precise number of times the transition was taken, or to derive a similar figure for the number of times a state was active during a test.

6.1.4.2 Limited Visibility of Application Behavior During Test

d.tools video records a single stream of live video from a digital camera. Recording how a device was handled is especially important for devices with new form factors, as ergonomics and questions about device control layout may be part of the test. This focus on embodied use of a device during a test comes at a price: it is not always possible to see what happened on the screen(s) of the tested prototypes in live video. Linking the video to the state diagram enables the tester to see which state the device was in at any given time. However, states present only a static view of the application. Dynamic animations scripted in d.tools are not visible — reviewing these may be important as well. One possible solution suggested by commercial GUI testing applications such as Silverback [4] is to record multiple video streams of both live video and screen output and to then composite those streams into a single video feed.

6.1.4.3 Cannot Compare Multiple Prototypes in Analysis Mode

The video spreadsheet view enables comparison of multiple test sessions by multiple users, but only for a single prototype. As the previous chapter has argued, exploration of design alternatives is an important practice and should therefore be supported in analysis tools as well. We see two separate opportunities for further research: 1) enabling comparative testing of multiple, simultaneously developed alternatives; 2) supporting comparison of prototypes across different design iterations.

Tohidi and Buxton [243] note that testing multiple prototypes is preferable to testing a single prototype, since users will feel less pressured to be “nice” to experimenters and can draw comparisons between prototypes. In addition, if prototypes are more refined and the designer has concrete hypotheses in mind, formal comparative testing is required to support or reject these hypotheses. For traditional GUI interactions, tools that support such comparative analysis of alternatives exist. Experiscope [97] enables testers to visually

compare event traces of multiple treatment conditions side-by-side. However, existing tools such as Experiscope do not link the recorded trace back to the source of the application being tested. It is an open question how tools can show video, event traces, and software models for multiple alternative designs simultaneously without overwhelming the designer with complexity.

A separate question is how one might support the comparison of different iterations of a given project over time. In the iterative design-test-analyze paradigm, subsequent iterations are informed by what was learned before. Testing tools should offer support for checking whether the feedback collected during prior iterations was properly acted on in later iterations and if identified issues were in fact resolved.

6.1.4.4 Limited Query Language

An additional limitation of d.tools video analysis is that the query language over states and events is rather primitive at the present time. The queries that can be executed select segments from single video files based on states or input events. A natural extension would be to enable testers to specify more complex, and thus more useful, queries. Badre suggests using regular expressions to filter user events [39]. We are skeptical whether regular expressions are accessible to our target audience. An alternative approach would be to use a textual query language, such as SQL, and then building GUI tools for specifying queries in that language. Interactive query builders are common for expressing SQL queries in database applications.

6.1.4.5 Interaction Techniques Have Not Been Formally Evaluated

The introduced interactions have not been evaluated in a formal user study. Their efficacy in real design contexts has not been established, although the rapid video query techniques have received positive comments from professional designers in informal conversations and at presentations to professional design conference attendees.

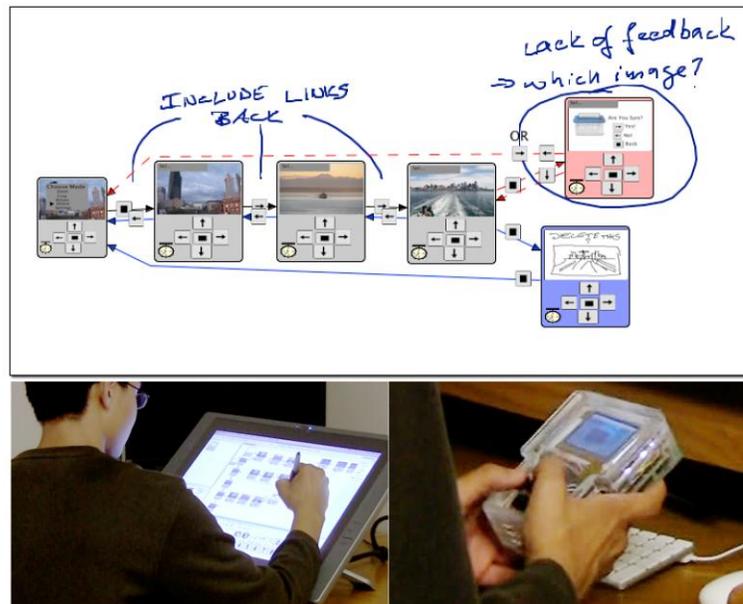


Figure 6.9: d.note enables interaction designers to revise and test functional prototypes of information appliances using a stylus-driven interface to d.tools.

6.2 CAPTURING FEEDBACK FROM OTHER DESIGNERS: D.NOTE

Interaction design in teams oscillates between individual work and team reviews and discussions. Team reviews of user interface prototypes provide valuable critique and suggest avenues forward [189:pp. 374-5]. However, changes proposed by others can rarely be realized immediately: often the proposer lacks the implementation knowledge, the changes are too complex, or the ideas are not sufficiently resolved.

In many areas of design, annotations layered on top of existing drawings and images, or “sketches on top of sketches” [55], are the preferred way of capturing proposed changes. They are rapid to construct, they enable designers to handle different levels of abstraction and ambiguity simultaneously [66], and they serve as common ground for members with different expertise and toolsets [205]. Individual designers later incorporate the proposed changes into the next prototype. This annotate-review-incorporate cycle is similar to revising and commenting on drafts of written documents [198]. While word processors offer specialized revision tools for these tasks, such tools don’t yet exist for the domain of interaction design.

This section demonstrates how three primary text revision techniques can be applied to interaction design: commenting, tracking changes, and visualizing those changes. It also

introduces revision tools unique to interaction design: immediate testing of revisions and proposing alternatives. The novel revision techniques are embodied in d.note (Figure 6.9), an extension to d.tools. The d.note notation supports modification, commenting, and proposal of alternatives (see Section 5.7, p. 140) for both appearance and behavior of information appliance prototypes. Concrete modifications to behavior can be tested while a prototype is running. Such modifications can exist alongside more abstract, high-level comments and annotations.

This section also contributes a characterization of the benefits and tradeoffs of digital revision tools such as d.note through two user studies. We show that the choice of revision tool affects both what kind of revisions are *expressed*, as well as the ability of others to *interpret* those revisions later on. Participants who used d.note to express revisions focused more on the interaction architecture of the design, marked more elements for deletion, and wrote fewer text comments than participants without d.note. Participants who interpreted d.note diagrams asked for fewer clarifications than participants that interpreted freeform annotations, but had more trouble discerning the reviser's intent.

In the remainder of this section, we first describe revision principles from related domains. Current practices of UI designers were described in Section 3.1.2.2. We then introduce d.note and its implementation. We present results from two studies of revision expression and interpretation, and conclude by discussing the design space of revision tools.

6.2.1 REVISION PRACTICES IN OTHER DOMAINS

Interaction designers are concerned with both look and feel of applications [189]. Absent a current, complete solution for both aspects, we can draw on important insights from revising textual documents, source code, and movie production.

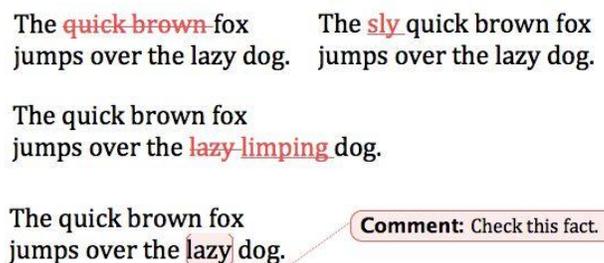


Figure 6.10: Interlinear revision tracking and comment visualization in word processing.

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1 /**
2  */
3 package edu.stanford.hci.helmeout;
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5 import java.awt.Color;
6 import java.awt.Container;
7 import java.awt.Toolkit;
8 import java.awt.datatransfer.Clipboard;
9 import java.awt.datatransfer.StringSelection;
10 import java.awt.datatransfer.Transferable;
11 import java.awt.event.ActionEvent;
12 import java.awt.event.ActionListener;
13 import java.awt.event.WindowEvent;
14 import java.awt.event.WindowListener;
15 import java.util.HashMap;
16 import java.util.Map;
17 import java.util.Set;
18
19 import javax.swing.JFrame;
20 import javax.swing.JScrollPane;
21 import javax.swing.JTextField;
22 import javax.swing.event.HyperlinkEvent;
23 import javax.swing.event.HyperlinkListener;
24 import processing.app.Editor;
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Figure 6.11: Source code comparison tools show two versions of a file side-by-side.



Figure 6.12: Video game designers draw annotations directly on rendered still images (from [55:p. 179]).

TEXT DOCUMENTS

The fundamental actions in written document revision are history-preserving modification (insertion, deletion) and commenting. Each operation has two components: visual syntax and semantics. For example, in word processing, a common interlinear syntax to express deletion is striking through the deleted text (Figure 6.10); the semantics are to remove the stricken text from the next version of the document, should the revision be accepted. Original and modification are visible simultaneously, to communicate the nature of a change. Furthermore, edits are visually distinguished from the base version so the recipient can rapidly identify them. When editing documents collaboratively, different social roles of co-author, commenter, and reader exist [198]. Offering ways to modify the underlying text as well as adding meta-content that suggests further modification serves these different roles.

SOURCE CODE DOCUMENTS

Source code revision tools, such as visual difference editors, enable users to compare two versions of source files side-by-side [115] (Figure 6.11). In contrast to document revision tools, changes are generally not tracked incrementally, but computed and visualized after the fact. Comments in source code differ from comments in text documents as they are part of the

source document itself. Meta comments (comments about changes) are generally only available for an entire set of changes.

VISUAL MEDIA

WYSIWYG document editors do not distinguish between source and final document; authors revise a single, shared representation. For program source code, there is no way to comment directly on the output of the program, only the source. In contrast, movie producers and video game developers convey revisions by drawing directly on output, i.e., rendered video frames (Figure 6.12). Because the revisions address changes in appearance, sketching is the preferred method of expression. Working in the output domain is a compelling approach, but has thus far been limited to static content [55].

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Comparing these three existing domains leads to the formulation of four design principles. UI revision tools should support the following workflows:

- 1) History-preserving incremental modification of the source representation
- 2) Commenting outside the underlying source language
- 3) Sketching as an input modality for graphical content
- 4) Revising the output, i.e., the resulting user interface screens, not just the source.

6.2.2 A VISUAL LANGUAGE FOR REVISING INTERACTIONS

Guided by our assessment of current practice and tools available in other domains, we developed d.note, a revision notation for user interface prototypes. d.note extends the d.tools authoring environment. In text, the atomic unit of modification is a character. Because visual program diagrams have a larger set of primitives, the set of possible revision actions is more complex as well. In d.tools, the primitives are states, transitions, the device definition, and graphical screens. With each primitive, d.note defines both syntax and semantics of modification. This section will provide an overview of each modification operation. Concrete examples of these operations in d.note are provided in Figure 6.13 – Figure 6.17.

6.2.2.1 *Revising Behavior*

d.note uses color to distinguish base content from elements added and removed during revision. In d.note and in the following diagrams, states and transitions rendered with a black outline are elements existing in the base version; added elements are shown with a blue outline; deleted elements in red.

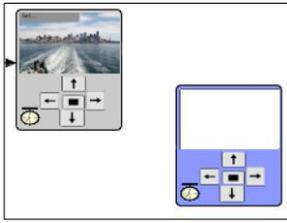


Figure 6.13: States added during revision are rendered in blue.

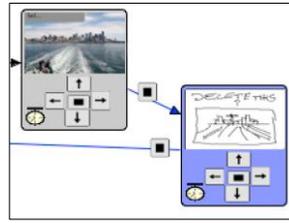


Figure 6.14: New screen graphics can be sketched in states.

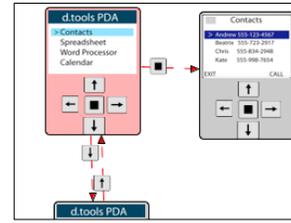


Figure 6.15: State deletions are rendered in red. Connections are marked as inactive.

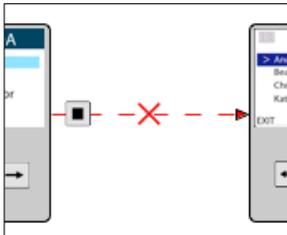


Figure 6.16: Transition deletions are marked with a red cross and dashed red lines.

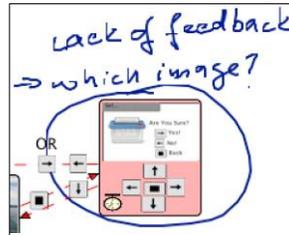


Figure 6.17: Comments can be attached to any state.

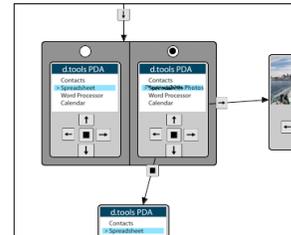


Figure 6.18: Alternative containers express different options for a state.

In revision mode, users can add states and transitions as they normally would; these states and transitions are rendered in blue to indicate their addition (Figure 6.13, Figure 6.14). Semantically, these states and transitions behave like their regular counterparts.

When users remove states from the base version, the state is rendered as inactive in red. To visually communicate that a state can no longer be entered or exited, all incoming and outgoing transitions are rendered as inactive with dashed lines (Figure 6.15). At runtime, incoming transitions to such states are not taken, making the states unreachable. Individual transitions can also be directly selected and deleted. Deleted transitions are shown with a dashed red line as well as a red cross, to distinguish them from transitions that are inactive as a result of a state deletion (Figure 6.16). As with many source code and word processing tools, deleting states or transitions that were added in revision mode completely removes the objects from the diagram.

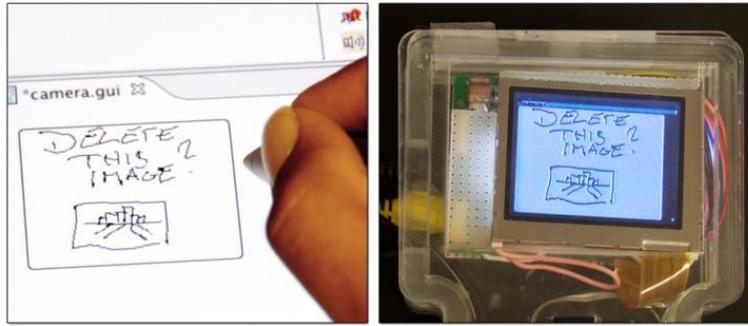


Figure 6.19: Sketched updates to screen content are immediately visible on attached hardware.

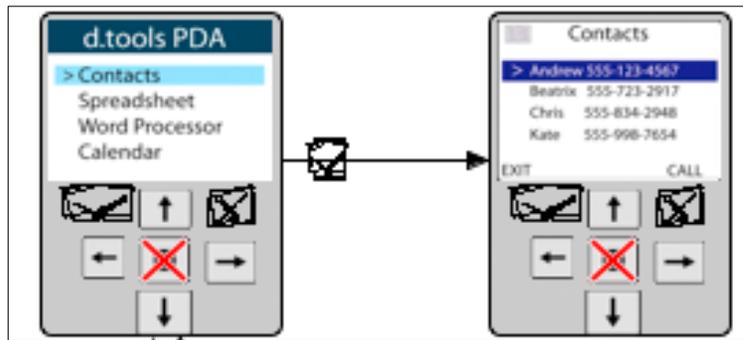


Figure 6.20: Changes to the device configuration are propagated to all states. Here, one button was deleted while two others were sketched in.

6.2.2.2 Revising Appearance

Designers can modify graphics by sketching directly on top of them with a pen tool within the d.tools graphics editor (Figure 6.19). Sketched changes are then rendered on top of the existing graphics in a state at runtime. In addition to sketching changes to appearance, users may also rearrange or otherwise modify the different graphical components that make up the screen output of a state. d.note indicates the presence of such changes by rendering the screen outline in the state editor in a different color, as showing modification side-by-side with the original graphics would interfere with the intended layout. The changes are thus not visualized on the level of an individual graphical widget, but in aggregate.

6.2.2.3 Revising Device Definition

Thus far, we have described changes to the information architecture and graphic output of prototypes. When prototyping products with custom form factors such as medical devices,

the set of I/O components used on the device may also be subject to change and discussion. When revising designs in d.note, users can introduce new input elements by sketching them in the device editor (Figure 6.20). Prior to binding the new component to an actual piece of hardware, designers can simulate its input during testing using the d.tools simulation tool (see Section 4.1.3). Currently, the d.note implementation does not support adding output devices through sketching; we believe adding output within this paradigm would be fairly straightforward.

6.2.2.4 *Commenting*

In addition to functional revision commands, users can sketch comments on the canvas of device, graphics, and storyboard editors (Figure 6.17). Any stroke that is not recognized as a revision command is rendered as ink. This allows tentative or ambiguous change proposals to coexist with concrete changes. Inked comments are bound to the closest state so they automatically move with that state when the user rearranges the diagram.

6.2.2.5 *Proposing Alternatives*

As covered in Section 5.7 (p. 140), users can introduce alternatives for appearance and application logic. We summarize the functionality of alternative containers again briefly: d.tools represents the alternative by duplicating the original state and visually encapsulating both original and alternative (Figure 6.18). The original state's incoming connections are rerouted to point to the encapsulating container. Each state maintains its own set of outgoing transitions. To define which of the alternative states should become active when control transfers to an alternative set, the set container shows radio buttons, one above each contained state. To reduce visual clutter, only outgoing transitions of the active alternative are shown; other outgoing transitions are hidden until that alternative is activated.

6.2.3 SCENARIO

The following scenario summarizes the benefits d.note provides to interaction design teams. Adam is designing a user interface for a new digital camera with on-camera image editing functions. To get feedback, he drops his latest prototype off in Betty's office. Betty picks up the camera prototype, and tries to crop, pan and color balance one of the pictures that Adam preloaded on the prototype. She notices that exiting to the top level menu is handled inconsistently in different screens. She opens up the d.tools diagram for the prototype and, with d.note enabled, changes the transitions from those screens to the menu state. She next

notices that the image delete functionality is lacking a confirmation screen – images are deleted right away. To highlight this omission, Betty creates a new state and sketches a rudimentary confirmation dialog, which she connects to the rest of the diagram with new transitions so she can immediately test the new control flow. Betty is not convinced that the mapping of available buttons to crop an image region is optimal. She selects the crop state and creates an alternative for it. In the alternative, she redirects button input and adds a comment for Adam to compare the two implementations. She also thinks that the current interface for balancing colors via RGB sliders is cumbersome. Since she does not have time to change the implementation, she circles the corresponding states and leaves a note to consider using an alternative color space instead.

6.2.4 THE D.NOTE JAVA IMPLEMENTATION

d.note was implemented as an extension to d.tools. As such, it was written in Java 5 and makes use of the Eclipse platform, specifically the Graphical Editing Framework (GEF) [24]. d.note runs on both Windows and Mac OS X operating systems.

6.2.4.1 Specifying Actions Through Stylus Input

Because much of early design relies on sketches as a visual communication medium [55], d.note’s revision interface can be either operated through mouse and keyboard commands, or it can be entirely stylus-driven. Stylus input allows for free mixing of commands and non-command sketches. When using the stylus, strokes are sent through a recognizer (the Paper Toolkit [258] implementation of Wobbrock et al.’s \$I recognizer [253]) to check if they represent a command. Command gestures to create states and alternatives use a pigtail delimiter [120], to reduce the chance of misinterpretation of other rectangular strokes (Figure 6.21). Gesture recognition takes into account what existing diagram element (if any) a gesture was executed above. The gesture set contains commands to delete the graphical element

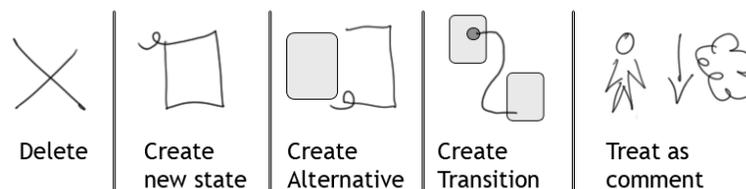


Figure 6.21: The d.note gesture set for stylus operation. Any stroke not interpreted as one of the first four actions is treated as a comment.

underneath the gesture, and to create new states, transitions and alternatives. All other strokes are interpreted as comments. In addition to providing drawing and gesture recognition, d.note extends the d.tools runtime system to correctly handle the interaction logic semantics of its notation, e.g., ignore states marked for deletion.

6.2.5 EVALUATION: COMPARING INTERACTIVE & STATIC REVISIONS

To understand the user experience of the interactive revision techniques manifest in d.note, we conducted two studies: the first compared *authoring* of revisions with and without d.note; the second compared *interpretation* of revisions with and without d.note. We recruited product design and HCI students at our university. Because the required expertise in creating UIs limited recruitment, we opted for a within-subjects design, with counterbalancing and randomization where appropriate.

6.2.5.1 Study 1: Authoring Revisions

In the domain of word processing, Wojahn [254] found that the functionality provided by a revision interface influenced the number and type of problems discussed. Do users revise interaction designs differently with a structured, interactive tool than by making freeform, static annotations on a diagram?

METHOD

We recruited twelve participants. Participants each completed two revision tasks: one without d.note and one with. The non-d.note condition was always assigned first to prevent exposure to d.note notation from influencing freeform annotation patterns. Each revision task asked participants to critique one of two information appliance prototypes, one for a keychain photo viewer, and one for the navigation and management of images on a digital still camera (Figure 6.22). The tasks were inspired by student exercises in Sharp et al.'s interaction design textbook [226]. We counterbalanced task assignment to the conditions.

Participants were seated in front of a Mac OS X workstation with an interactive 21", 1600×1200 pixel tablet display (Figure 6.23). Participants could control this workstation with stylus as well as keyboard and mouse. We first demonstrated d.tools to participants and had them complete a warm-up menu navigation design (taken from the d.tools evaluation in Section 4.1.5.1) to become familiar with the visual authoring language. In the condition with d.note, students were given a demonstration of its revision features, and five minutes to become familiar with the commands using the warm-up project they completed earlier.



Figure 6.22: Participants were given a prototype device with a color display and button input. They were asked to revise designs for a keychain display and a digital camera, both running on the provided device.

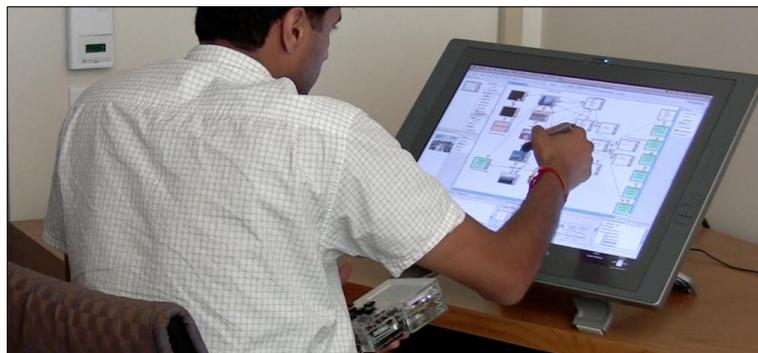


Figure 6.23: Participants in study 1 revised d.tools designs on a large tablet display.

Participants were then given a working prototype, run by d.tools and d.note, and were asked to take 15 minutes to revise the prototype directly in the application using d.note's commenting and revision features.

In the non-d.note condition, participants were given a working prototype along with a static image of the d.tools state diagram for the prototype. The image was loaded in Alias Sketchbook Pro [30], a tablet PC drawing application, and participants were given 15 minutes to draw modifications and comments on top of that image.

The caveat of our design is that ordering of conditions may have affected usage. For example, participants may have become more comfortable, or more fatigued, for the second condition. However, we judged this risk to be lower than the potential learning effect of becoming familiar with the d.note annotation language and then applying it in the non-d.note

Participant	Task	Written Comments	Sketches on Canvas	Drawn Transition Arrows	Other Arrows	Drawing/Modifying Screen	Circled States	Circled Groups of States	Circled Transitions	Circled components	Crossed out Items	Created States	Created Alternatives	Created Transitions	Deleted Transitions	Deleted States
Without D.Note																
4	C															
5	C															
7	C															
9	C															
10	C															
12	C															
1	K															
2	K															
3	K															
6	K															
8	K															
11	K															
With D.note																
1	C															
2	C															
3*	C															
6	C															
8	C															
11	C															
4	K															
5	K															
7	K															
9	K															
10	K															
12	K															
Inked Annotations										D.Note Revisions						

Table 6.1: Content analysis of d.tools diagrams reveals different revision patterns: with d.note, participants wrote less and deleted more.

Perceived advantages of d.note for expressing revisions		Perceived disadvantages of d.note for expressing revisions	
Can test proposed changes		Commenting is more difficult	
Can make functional changes		Steeper learning curve	
Less cluttered than drawing		Danger of getting stuck on details	
Notation easier to interpret		Lack of rich drawing tools	
Can express alternatives		Diagramms become too cluttered	

Table 6.2: Most frequently mentioned advantages and disadvantages of using d.note to express revisions.

condition. After the design reviews, participants completed a survey that elicited high-level summative feedback in free response format.

RESULTS

We categorized all marks participants made; Table 6.1 summarizes the results. Figure 6.24 shows four examples of diagrams; two for each condition. Most notably, participants wrote significantly more text comments without d.note than with it. In contrast, deletions were rare without d.note (4 occurrences); but common with d.note (34 occurrences; 8 out of 12 participants). Finally, revisions with d.note focused on changes to the information

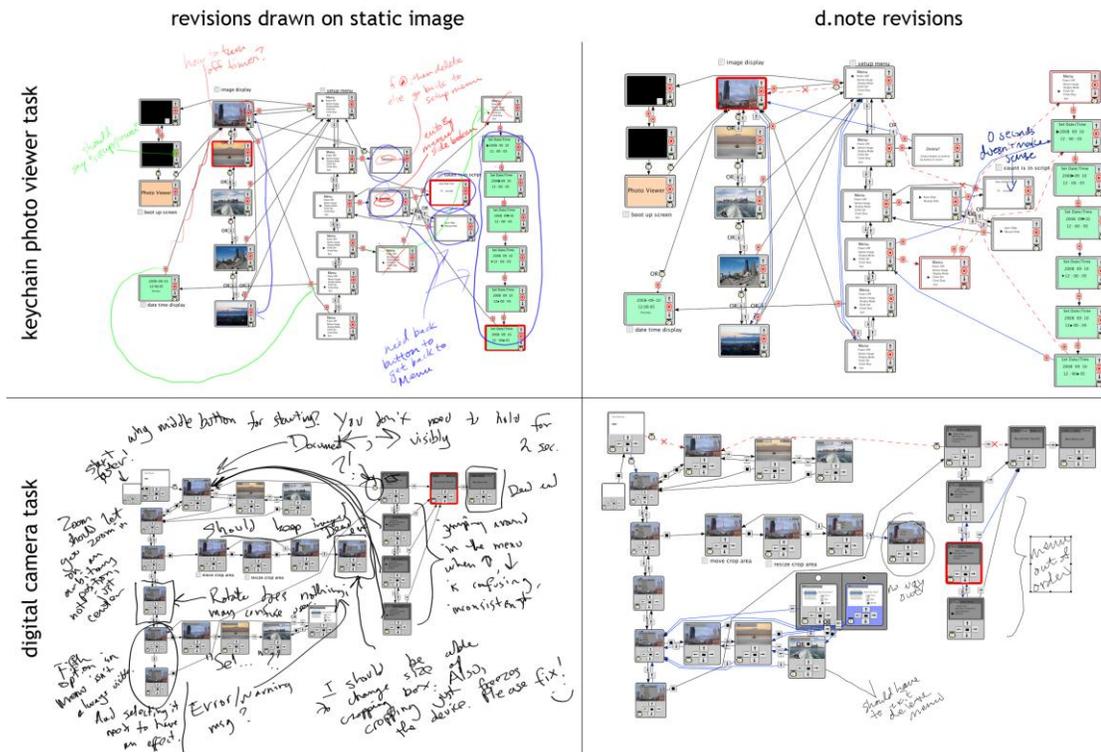


Figure 6.24: Two pairs of revision diagrams produced by our study participants. Diagrams produced with Sketchbook Pro in the control condition are shown on the left; diagrams produced with d.note are shown on the right.

architecture, while freeform revisions often critiqued the prototype on a more abstract level. Our results thus corroborate Wojahn’s finding that the choice of revision tool affects the number and type of revision actions [254].

The post-test survey asked participants to compare the relative merits of Sketchbook and d.note. We categorized their freeform written answers (Table 6.2). The two most frequently cited advantages of d.note were the ability to make functional changes (6 of 12 participants), and to then test proposed changes right away (7 of 12 participants). Three participants suggested that commenting was more difficult with d.note; two wrote that the tool had a steeper learning curve. Two participants with a product design background wrote that using d.note led them to focus too much on the details of the design. In their view, the lack of functionality in the Sketchbook condition encouraged more holistic thinking.

DISCUSSION

Why did participants write less with d.note? One possibility is that that users wrote more with Sketchbook because it was easier to do so (Sketchbook is a polished product, d.note a research prototype). To the extent this is true, it provides impetus to refine the d.note

implementation, but tells us little about the relative efficacy of a static and dynamic approach to design revision.

More fundamentally, d.note may enable users to capture intended changes in a more succinct form than text comments. Four participants explicitly wrote that d.note reduced the need for long, explanatory text comments in their survey responses: “[with d.note] making a new state is a lot shorter than writing a comment explaining a new state”; “[without d.note] I felt I had to explain my sketches.” d.note’s rich semantics enable a user’s input to be more economical: an added or deleted transition is unambiguously visualized as such. In d.note, users can implement concrete changes interactively; only abstract or complex changes require comments. Without d.note, both these functions have to be performed through the same notation (drawing), and participants explained their graphic marks with additional text because of the ambiguity. In our data, inked transition arrows drawn without d.note (44 drawn transitions) were replaced with functional transitions with d.note (78 functional transitions added; only 3 drawn as comments).

Though participants could have disregarded the revision tools and only commented with ink, the mere option of having functional revision tools available had an effect on their activity. This tendency has been noted in other work [55,156] as well.

Why did participants delete more with d.note? While participants created new states and transitions in both conditions, deletions were rare without d.note. Deletions may have been implied, e.g., drawing a new transition to replace a previously existing one, but these substitutions were rarely noted explicitly. We suggest that deletions with d.note were encouraged by the ability to immediately test concrete changes. Quick revise-test cycles exposed areas in which diagrams had ambiguous control structure (more than one transition exiting a state on the same event).

Why were more changes to information architecture made with d.note? The majority of revision actions with d.note concerned the flow of control: adding and deleting transitions and states. In the Sketchbook condition, participants also revised the information architecture, but frequently focused on more abstract changes (Example comment: “Make [feedback] messages more apparent”). The scarcity of such comments with d.note is somewhat surprising, as freeform commenting was equally available. One possible explanation is that participants focused on revising information architecture because more powerful techniques were at hand to do so. Each tool embodies a preferred method of use; even if other styles of work remain possible, users are driven to favor the style for which the tool offers the most leverage.

6.2.5.2 Study 2: Interpreting Revisions

The first study uncovered differences in expressing revisions. Are there similar characteristic differences in interpreting revisions created with the two tools?

METHOD

Eight (different) participants interpreted the revisions created by participants of the first study. After a demonstration and warm-up task (as in study 1), participants were shown the two working prototypes (camera and key chain) and given time to explore. Next, participants were shown screenshots of annotated diagrams from the first study (Figure 6.24) on a second display. Participants were asked to prepare two lists in a word processor: one that enumerated all revision suggestions that were clear and understandable to them; and a second list with questions for clarification about suggestions they did not understand. Participants completed this task four times: one d.note and one freeform diagram were chosen at random for each of the two prototypes.

RESULTS

The cumulative count of clear and unclear revision suggestions for all participants are shown in Table 6.3. Participants, on average, requested 1.3 fewer clarifications on revisions when using d.note than when sketching on static images (two-sample $t(29)=1.90$, $p=0.03$).

The post-test survey asked participants to compare the relative merits of interpreting diagrams revised with d.note and Sketchbook. The most frequently mentioned benefits arose from having a notation with specified semantics (Table 6.4): revisions were more concrete, specific, and actionable. Frequently mentioned drawbacks were visual complexity and problems discerning high-level motivation in d.note diagrams.

DISCUSSION

Why did participants ask for fewer clarifications with d.note? When interpreting revised diagrams, participants are faced with three questions: First, what is the proposed change? Second, why was this change proposed? Third, how would I realize that change? The structure of the second user study asked participants to explicitly answer the first question by transcribing all proposed changes. We suggest that the formal notation in d.note decreased the need for clarification for two reasons. First, the presence of a formal notation resulted in a smaller number of handwritten comments, and hence fewer problems with legibility (Example without d.note: “Change 6 — unreadable”). Second, because of the ad-hoc nature of handwritten annotation schemes in absence of a formal system, even if comments were

		S2 Participant		Task		S1 Participant		Clear Annotations		Unclear Annotations		S1 Participant		Clear Annotations		Unclear	
		With D.Note						Without D.Note									
1	C	6				7											
	K	4				3											
2	C	8				9											
	K	12				2											
3	C	11				4											
	K	9				8											
4	C	2				10											
	K	10				11											
5	C	1				5											
	K	4				6											
6	C	11				12											
	K	10				5											
7	C	6				7											
	K	12				3											
8	C	2				4											
	K	9				8											

Table 6.3: How well could study 2 participants interpret the revisions created by others? Each vertical bar is one instance.

Perceived advantages of d.note for interpreting revisions	Perceived disadvantages of d.note for interpreting revisions
Changes are concrete and specific	Visual clutter in regions of dense changes
Contains proposed solutions	Hard to glean motivation for changes
Can automatically apply changes	Hard to keep track which changes were already examined

Table 6.4: Perceived advantages and disadvantages of using d.note to *interpret* revisions as reported by study participants.

legible, participants frequently had trouble tying the comments to concrete items in the interface (Example: “I have no idea what it means to ‘make it clear that there is a manual mode from the hierarchy’. What particular hierarchy are we talking about?”)

In the survey, participants commented on the remaining questions of why changes were proposed and how one might implement those changes. We next discuss mitigation strategies for managing visual complexity and the reported problems discerning high-level motivation in d.note diagrams.

Visual complexity of annotated diagrams: Visual programs become harder to read as the node & link density increases. Showing added and deleted states and transitions simultaneously in the diagram sometimes yielded “visual spaghetti”: a high density of transition lines made

distinguishing and following individual lines hard. The connection density problem becomes worse when state alternatives are introduced because each alternative for a state has an independent set of outbound transitions.

In response, we already modified the drawing algorithm for state alternatives to only show outgoing connections for the currently active alternative within an alternative container. Additional simplification techniques are needed though. One option to selectively lower transition density in the diagram while preserving relevant context would be to only render direct incoming and outgoing transitions for a highlighted state and hide all other transitions on demand.

Capturing the motivation for changes: While many handwritten comments focused on high-level goals without specifying implementations, tracked changes make the opposite tradeoff: the implementation is obvious since it is already specified, but the motivation behind the change can remain opaque. We see two possible avenues to address this challenge. First, when using change tracking, multiple individual changes may be semantically related. For example, deleting one state and adding a new state in its stead are two actions that express a desired single intent of replacement. The authoring tool should detect such related actions automatically or at least enable users to specify groups of related changes manually. Second, even though freeform commenting was available in d.note, it was not used frequently. Therefore, techniques that proactively encourage users to capture the rationale for changes may be useful.

6.2.6 LIMITATIONS & EXTENSIONS

The d.note project introduced a notation and interaction techniques for managing revisions of user interface designs expressed as state diagrams. Diagrams can be modified and annotated. The particular implementation of revision techniques in d.note represents only one point solution in a larger design space of possible user interface revision tools. The main salient dimensions we considered during our work are summarized in Figure 6.25. This table reveals limitations and additional areas of exploration we have not touched upon so far.

A Design Space of User Interface Revision Tools

What can be revised?	Information Architecture	Static Screen Content	Dynamic Behavior
How concrete are revisions?	Suggest Problem	Suggest Change	Demonstrate Change Implement Change
Where are revisions captured?	Diagrams of UI Structure	Source Code	Static Screen Images Recording of Running Application (Video)
What modalities are used for input?	Digital Ink	Direct Manipulation	Text Voice Annotation Video Annotation
When are changes computed?	Incrementally, Online	Between two separate versions, Offline	

Figure 6.25: A design space of user interface revision tools. The sub-space d.note explored is highlighted in green.

6.2.6.1 Cannot Comment on Dynamic Behavior

The stylus-driven annotation makes it easy to add comments to both layout and information architecture. It is not feasible to efficiently comment on dynamic behaviors, as there is no visual record of these behaviors in the interaction diagram. Recording and annotating video of an application’s runtime output is one promising avenue to enable comments on behavior. d.tools can already record live video of interaction with a built prototype. If this video capture were augmented with a second stream of screen captures, then designers could sketch directly onto those video frames. To make such sketches useful for others, they have to be retrievable from the editing environment. Future work should examine how to associate such video annotations with the state diagrams and other static source views.

6.2.6.2 Cannot Revise Dynamic Behavior

d.note currently enables designers to express functional changes to the information architecture of the user interface, and to the screen content of a given state within that larger architecture. However, changes to scripts are not well supported in that there are no visualizations to show in detail what has changed, and no interaction techniques to accept or undo such changes.

6.2.6.3 *How To Support Identified Revision Principles for Source Code?*

The presented design space finally raises the question how one might offer the benefits of a revision tool such as d.note for user interfaces specified entirely in source code. The particular revision techniques of d.note are based on a visual language that shows both user interface content and information architecture in the same environment. The techniques should therefore transfer to other visual control-flow tools such as DENIM [171] or SUEDE [148]. But what about user interfaces that are not programmed visually? Existing source revision techniques for non-visual programs do not permit designers to comment or revise the output of their application. Future research should investigate if sketch-based input and annotation in the output domain of a program can be transferred to such applications.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This dissertation has shown how to support creation, exploration, and iteration of user interface prototypes for ubiquitous computing applications. This final chapter recapitulates the contributions made by the presented systems, and concludes with an outlook on future work.

7.1 RESTATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS

We introduced principles and systems for prototyping user interfaces that span physical and digital interactions. Three areas of technical contributions can be distinguished:

- 1) Techniques for authoring user interfaces with non-traditional input/output configurations. This dissertation contributed:
 - a. Rapid authoring of interaction logic through a *novel combination of storyboard diagrams* for information architecture *with imperative programming* for interactive behaviors.
 - b. *Demonstration-based definition of discrete input events from continuous sensor data streams* enabled by a combination of pattern recognition with a direct manipulation interface for the generalization criteria of the recognition algorithms.
 - c. *Management of input/output component configurations for interface prototypes* through an editable virtual representation of the physical device being built. This representation reduces cognitive friction by collapsing levels of abstraction; it is enabled by a custom hardware interface with a plug-and-play component architecture.
- 2) Principles and techniques for exploring multiple user interface alternatives. The dissertation contributed:
 - a. *Techniques for efficiently defining and managing multiple alternatives of user interfaces* in procedural source code and visual control flow diagrams.
 - b. *User-directed generation of control interfaces* to modify relevant variables of user interfaces at runtime.

- c. *Support for sequential and parallel comparison of user interface alternatives* through parallel execution, selectively parallel user input, and management of parameter configurations across executions.
 - d. *Implementations of the runtime techniques for three different platforms:* desktop PCs, mobile phones, and microcontrollers.
- 3) Techniques for capturing feedback from users and design team members on user interface prototypes, and integrating that feedback into the design environment. The dissertation contributed:
 - a. *Timestamp correlation between live video, software states, and input events* during a usability test of a prototype to enable rapid semantic access of video during later analysis.
 - b. *Novel video query techniques: query by state selection* where users access video segments by selecting states in a visual storyboard; and *query by input demonstration* where sections of usability video are retrieved through demonstrating, on a physical device prototype, the kind of input that should occur in the video.
 - c. *A visual notation and stylus-controlled gestural command set for revising user interfaces* expressed as control flow diagrams.

The dissertation also provided evidence, through laboratory studies and class deployments, that the introduced techniques are successful. In particular, the dissertation contributed:

- 1) Evidence that the introduced authoring methods for sensor-based interaction are accessible and expressive through two laboratory evaluations and two class deployments.
- 2) Evidence from a laboratory study that the techniques for managing interface alternatives enable designers to explore a wider range of design options, faster.
- 3) Evidence from two laboratory studies that an interactive revision notation for interfaces leads to more concrete and actionable revisions.

7.2 FUTURE WORK

Future work in the space of design tools outlined by this dissertation falls into two general categories. First, additional research can extend the introduced systems and techniques, to overcome present limitations or to take logical next steps that enhance expressivity and utility. Second, reconsidering the assumptions underlying the systems described in this thesis

yields additional opportunities for different types of tools that can support a broader range of authoring tasks. Important limitations and possible extensions were discussed at the conclusion of each preceding chapter, in Sections 4.1.7 (d.tools, p. 92), 4.2.6 (Exemplar, p. 116), 5.6 (Juxtapose, p. 136), 6.1.4 (d.tools video analysis, p. 149), and 6.2.6 (d.note, p. 167). This chapter briefly discusses some larger future research directions.

In retrospect, most of the work presented in this dissertation implicitly shares a set of assumptions: that *an individual designer* creates one or more alternative designs for *a single device*, starting *from scratch*, through a *desktop-based graphical user interface tool*. Changing any of these four core assumptions yields areas of future work that suggest different types of design tools. We review each of these four areas in turn.

7.2.1 DESIGN TOOLS THAT SUPPORT COLLABORATION

Most existing authoring tools for user interfaces, the ones proposed in this dissertation included, focus on the work of a single creative individual. Future research should broaden this scope to integrate support for collaboration and sharing directly into authoring environments. Two reasons for making such a shift are the predominance of team-based design in industry, and the rise of open, amateur design communities online.

PROFESSIONAL DESIGN TAKES PLACE IN TEAMS

Professional work on complex user interfaces takes place in design teams; and an increasing number of such teams are geographically distributed. Office suite applications such as word processors and spreadsheets now routinely offer support for asynchronous review and annotation; some web-based applications also support synchronous collaborative editing. Outside the realm of office applications, support for distributed work is still lacking. In this dissertation, the d.note project for revising interaction design diagrams considered the importance of asynchronous communication about such diagrams between team members. But the presented work has not yet addressed synchronous collaboration. How can technology help teams jointly construct, discuss, and test user interface prototypes? In this chapter, Section 7.2.3.1 proposes a concrete project to redesign the interaction design studio itself to better support team activities.

SUPPORTING AMATEUR DESIGN COMMUNITIES

Beyond the professional, corporate context, social production of both information and software is becoming increasingly important. Successful online environments for collaborative information production (e.g., Wikipedia, 'view source' on Web 1.0 HTML

pages) are built around open access to modify, copy, and reuse content. For interaction design beyond HTML pages, and programming in general, most social exchanges today happen outside the authoring environments, through plain text in online forums and blogs. We believe that there is significant additional latent value in integrating collaborative aspects of design and development directly into our authoring tools, where richer ways for collecting, presenting, and interacting with authored media are available.

As a first step, some programming IDEs have begun to integrate support for publishing projects online. Scratch [13], the multimedia programming environment for children developed at the MIT Media Lab, has a function to share one's program on the Scratch website. Resnick recently reported that 30% of projects on the Scratch website are based on other projects; and that some projects have been "remixed" (copied, modified, and shared again) up to 29 different times [76]. We believe that sharing the authoring process in addition to the end result can significantly aid designers and developers in gaining expertise, integrating pre-existing pieces of functionality into their project, and understanding and correcting problems. The following section on authoring by example modification introduces some concrete research projects along these lines.

7.2.2 AUTHORING BY EXAMPLE MODIFICATION

Most existing authoring tools implicitly assume that creators start with a clean slate, and then create their design, e.g., a user interface, a layout of a brochure, or a personal website, from scratch. However, less design happens *tabula rasa* than one might surmise. In practice, much creative work starts with finding relevant existing examples and modifying those to fit a new context.

Examples play at least two fundamental roles in the design and programming of user interfaces: they can provide *inspiration* by providing anchors for analogical thinking [85], and they can provide *concrete functionality* that can shortcut the time required for implementation. For inspiration, designers like to immerse themselves in the domain of their current project by collecting a large and diverse set of examples [118]. These examples can be competing products, swatches of materials, color schemes (e.g., 'mood boards'), or clever mechanisms (e.g., the IDEO Tech Box [141:pp. 143-145]). In fact, "shopping for functionality" was reported as an important early design activity in our study of interaction, web, and hardware designers [108]. Examples provide an experiential feel for the space of existing solutions and allow identification of desirable traits, both concrete ("knob should be self-centering with detents")

and abstract (“product should feel warm and welcoming”). These traits are then transferred to the product being designed by analogy.

Many designers and programmers also rely on examples to provide working implementations of desired functionality. Integrating existing examples may be faster, more economical, or may enable designers to leverage functionality they could not create themselves. In the software domain, *programming by example modification* [196] is especially useful for learning how to integrate existing libraries into one’s own project. Brandt et al. found programming by example modification to be pervasive [50]. In a lab study where subjects had to implement a chat room application, all participants extensively copied code found on web sites: 1/3 of the final code in participants’ projects came from pre-existing examples..

If use of examples is pervasive in design and programming, what are the implications for future design tools? We see four aspects deserving of future work: New tools can help users *find* relevant examples, *synthesize* new examples if none exist, *extract* examples from larger projects, and *facilitate integration* of found examples into projects. The following sections review three of these areas in some additional detail.

7.2.2.1 Finding Examples

For programmers, code search engines like Assieme [122] and Mica [235] provide support for finding relevant source examples. Brandt’s Blueprint system integrates search for example code snippets directly into the Adobe Flex development environment [49]. Going beyond source code, it is not immediately clear how searches for examples should be specified. For visual material, hierarchical browsing interfaces [181], faceted metadata browsing [257], and image search by sketching [223] have been proposed, but we are not aware of studies about the efficacy of such techniques for design. It is even less clear how designers might search for interactive behaviors.

7.2.2.2 Synthesizing Examples

Our d.mix project [113] explored how to automatically synthesize new examples of web service API calls by enabling developers to point to elements on web pages that they would like to access programmatically. The Design Galleries system [181] generates a space-spanning set of examples based on algorithms evaluating alternatives. For any system that automatically generates examples, designers somehow have to steer and control the synthesis

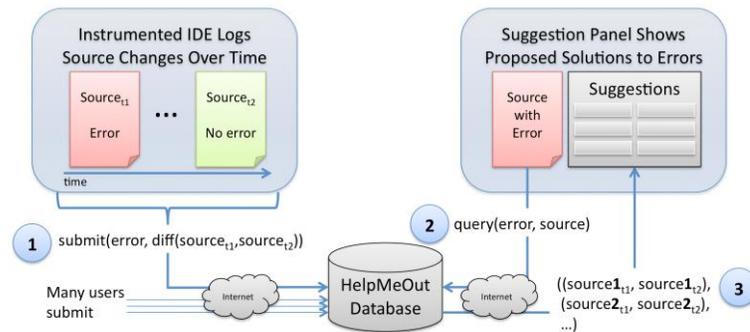


Figure 7.1: HelpMeOut offers asynchronous collaboration to suggest corrections to programming errors. 1: IDE instrumentation extracts bug fixes from programming sessions to a remote database. 2: Other programmers query the database when they encounter errors. 3: Suggested fixes are shown inside their IDE.

process. Whether the right interfaces for doing so can be general or have to be domain-specific remains to be determined.

7.2.2.3 Extracting Examples

Useful examples for programmers are short, minimal, self-sufficient, and have explanatory documentation. These attributes are entirely different from the characteristic of source code found in open repositories, where projects are large, complex, and rife with interdependencies. One possible area of future research is therefore how to give developers the right tools to make it easier (or automatic) to publish relevant, small examples from their larger codebases.

Our recently started HelpMeOut project [110] suggests that IDE instrumentation can be used to automatically collect histories of problems and problem fixes during programming sessions. A database of such fixes can then be used as a source of examples for other programmers who are experiencing similar problems (Figure 7.1).

7.2.2.4 Integrating Examples

Once relevant examples have been found, how can designers integrate parts of those examples into their projects? The Adaptive iDEAS project [158] introduced limited support for copying font and color attributes of web pages these exemplars into one's own page designs. Kumar and Kim [152] are expanding on the motivation of this work by enabling designers to reuse the layout structure of existing web pages, but substitute one's own content.

Kelleher's Looking Glass project [138] aims to enable users of the Alice virtual world authoring system to "steal" behaviors from other users. Since these behaviors are represented in code in a structured editor, key challenges are how to find the right scope of code to copy, and how to adapt the found code to fit, e.g., by remapping object identifiers. How to aid similar integration for arbitrary code remains an open question. It would also be valuable to have a more concrete understanding which kind of examples are most frequently consulted and appropriated for different kinds of design projects by studying example use in real-world scenarios.

7.2.3 AUTHORIZING OFF THE DESKTOP

The tools introduced in this dissertation focused predominantly on prototyping user interfaces that aim beyond the standard desktop paradigm. However, the tools proposed for doing so were desktop applications themselves. What benefits can be realized by moving the authoring environment off the desktop? We propose two possible research directions: *going large* to create new design studio spaces, and *going small* by researching authoring tools for mobile computing devices.

7.2.3.1 *Going Large: New Studio Spaces for Interaction Design*

As noted in section 7.2.1, professional design is a team activity. Creative work alternates between phases of individual production and team discussion, ideation, and review. Based on insight into design team work patterns, what should the computing infrastructure in the interaction design studio of the future look like? To what extent can designers benefit from interactive spaces that are tailored to their design process, as opposed to generic meeting support? Three different "form factors" have been proposed in prior work to support team collaboration: large interactive wall displays, interactive tables, and entire augmented rooms that combine interactive walls, tables, and other computing devices.

WALLS

A number of prior systems have focused on supporting design teams with interactive display walls. Notable systems include PostBrainstorm [98], a large high-resolution projected mural for enhancing and capturing brainstorming sessions, TEAM STORM [101] a brainstorm support system that uses individual tablet displays and a shared wall display; and the Designers' Outpost [147], a wall display that integrates digital capture and projection, and physical post-it notes to create information architecture diagrams for web sites. While wall



Figure 7.2: The Pictionary table supports co-located design team work through multi-touch, multi-device input and overhead image capture.

displays offer the benefit of a shared focal point, arm fatigue limits their use for extended work sessions [95:p. 1322].

TABLES

Interactive tables have unique benefits that may make them suitable for interaction design and product design. Discussion in these domains is almost always tied to concrete artifacts: designers use sketches, photographs, physical prototypes, and other products to structure conversation and creativity. As a result, design meetings, whether they focus on planning, brainstorming, or reviewing, draw on a wide variety of “stuff.” Creative thought moves freely across digital and physical boundaries. We hypothesize that interactive tables are particularly suited to support and enhance group design work when they enable co-habitation of digital and physical artifacts on the table surface. In our own recent work, we have developed Pictionary (Figure 7.2), a large, multi-user, standing height interactive table that supports physical to digital transition techniques through overhead image capture [111]. Pictionary was expressly created for team meetings of user interface designers; its software supports the creation of linear interface walkthroughs from sketches and photographs. The next logical step is to move beyond sketching straightforward walkthroughs into higher-fidelity prototyping of interfaces on the table.

There are additional reasons for moving away from desktop UIs, even for individual design work: in the domain of 3D modeling and animation, repetitive strain injuries (RSI) are a serious problem for professional artists. Research on leveraging multi-touch authoring techniques for animation professionals, e.g., at Pixar, is ongoing [142]. Large interactive tables

that offer high-resolution pen-input for digital drawing are also an active area of research [102].

To truly gauge the potential of table form factors and to find the right fit with professional practice, longer deployments outside research labs are needed. It would therefore be valuable to study use of a large interactive table such as our Pictionary system with a local professional design company.

ROOMWARE

Streitz' iLand [234] and the Stanford iRoom [134] investigated how collections of many different computing form factors can support team work in a single room. The results, at least for the Stanford iRoom, have been mixed. Distinct benefits of a room-scale infrastructure include the ability to migrate applications between multiple displays and retarget interaction based on the best available input device at the time. However, the complexity of room-scale systems also creates maintenance and challenges that may outweigh the offered benefits. It is telling that one particular interactive wall display was replaced with a traditional, non-interactive whiteboard after it fell into disuse. The experience with roomware then should serve as reminder not to blindly accept a vision of an all-digital future. More realistically, future research will have to find solutions that tread a careful line between keeping appropriate physical processes physical while adding digital flexibility where it is beneficial.

7.2.3.2 Going Small: Authoring on Handheld Devices

As a counterpoint to large, complex team design environments, we may also ask what kind of authoring is possible on very small devices such as smart phones or PDAs. This question is reasonable to consider because of two trends:

- 1) At the cutting edge of technology, smart phones today offer the processing power found on desktop computers only a few years ago. Video and still image capture, location sensing, and 3D graphics acceleration are becoming common place. The latest version for Apple's iPhone now includes an application for video cutting and editing on the phone.
- 2) On the other end of the spectrum, for the majority of the world's population, access to computation happens through cheap, low-powered cell phones. The mobile phone may be the only computing device millions of people will ever have access to.

These two trends raise the following research questions: Fundamentally, what kind of content will users *want* to author on mobile devices in the future? What kind of content *can* be authored on such devices? The technical challenges are plentiful. The limited input/output

affordances of mobile devices are an immediate, obvious hurdle. While mobile authoring is unlikely to replace the desktop paradigm, these questions are deserving of future study.

7.2.4 DESIGNING DEVICE ECOLOGIES

d.tools, Exemplar, and Juxtapose all assumed that a single, standalone device or software interface was being designed. Increasingly, this assumption is no longer sufficient, as a growing number of smart products offer their value through device or application ecologies with multiple, connected components. An important, if overused, example of such an ecology is the Apple iPod + iTunes system. The iPod is a portable digital music player; iTunes is an application to play and manage one's digital media library on a desktop computer, linked to an online store for browsing and purchasing new music. The overall user experience arises out of the tight integration between the components. As another example, personal fitness devices such as heart rate monitors are starting to include web interfaces for analyzing and sharing the collected data [224].

Sensor networks — collections of small, programmable, self-powered computing nodes that communicate with each other over ad-hoc wireless networks, are another area where behavior for multiple interconnected components has to be authored. While early sensor networks were used for unattended data collection, for example in conflict areas or for environmental monitoring, future applications, e.g., controlling energy usage in smart buildings, will likely require end-user interfaces. Merrill's Siftables project [187] explicitly realizes the potential of sensor networks as user interfaces. Each node has a small color display and can sense neighboring nodes as well as acceleration. While existing research has introduced hardware and software tools for programming sensor network applications (e.g., tinyOS [160]), and multi-display applications (e.g., Vigo [151]), such tools are aimed at researchers and technology experts. Support for prototyping and end-user authoring of multi-display or multi-device applications is still lacking and worthy of future research.

7.3 CLOSING REMARKS

The desktop computing paradigm has largely ossified around a common set of input devices and interaction techniques. With the rise of mobile and ubiquitous computing, it has also already eclipsed its zenith. While desktop computing still has an important role to play, a wider variety of different computing devices are quickly populating our lives. Beyond bringing new technologies for novel interfaces within the reach of interaction designers, this dissertation advocated that tools should also explicitly support fundamental design process steps. By encouraging exploration of alternatives, informed by feedback, design tools can help designers create interfaces that truly fit their intended users, contexts, and tasks, while being delightful to use. The research presented in this dissertation empowers designers to better envision and realize a broader range of such alternative futures for the post-desktop computing age.