CSCW 2002 Doctoral Colloquium

Paul Dourish
Information & Computer Science
UC Irvine
jpd@ics.uci.edu

goals for the colloquium

• to gain new perspectives
  – present your work to new audiences
  – solicit a wider range of feedback
• to initiate reflection
  – most of you are in the later stages of your work
  – reflecting on how to organize and present
• to initiate conversations
  – with us
  – with each other
  – today and in the future

plan for the day

• the schedule is very tight
  – conference constraints & our desire to accommodate as many people as we could
  – please try to keep to time
    ● we have a little slop, but not much
  – regard today as the start of conversations
    ● use breaks, lunch, the conference, email to follow-up

plan for the day

• day broken into half-hour slots
  – we’ll go alphabetically rather than by theme

1:30 Kris Nagel
2:00 David Pinelle
2:30 Ekaterina Prasolova-Forland
3:00 Ahmad Reeves
3:30 Break
4:00 Stephanie Roeder
4:30 Wendy Schafer
5:00 Irene Sigismondi
5:30 Wrap-up
6:00 Repair to the bar!
**some generic issues**

- constructing an argument
  - identifying a thesis
  - identifying a contribution
  - motivating the work
  - situating the work
  - “That’s Interesting” -- Davis
- listen to the talks (today & at CSCW) for this...
  - the form as well as the content of the argument
- read other people’s dissertations!
  - best way to write one is to know what they look like

---

**PhD is your first piece of research**

- two views of the PhD
  - a contribution to the sum of human knowledge
  - a licence to do further research
  - demonstrate that you understand and can execute the process of conducting research
- focus, focus, focus
  - precision is absolutely critical
  - a narrow but well-defined problem is much easier to defend than a broad but diffuse one
  - don’t leave anything to the examiners’ imagination!

---

**final caveat**

- emphasize constructive criticism
  - students are often the harshest critics of their own (and others’ work)
  - different research styles
    - different national approaches
    - different disciplinary approaches
    - different personal approaches
  - constructive comments are better listened to
  - constructive comments are more relevant to group