

Photos as Mundane Technology

Connor Graham, Mark Rouncefield

Thanks to

- **Microsoft** (Social Interaction and Mundane Technologies)
- **Nokia** (Mobile phones as prototypes, probes and props)

21-Nov-2007

SIM Technologies Workshop

Slide 1

Photos and family life

- Examining how photos (celluloid and digital) are used in families of different cultures
- Early work established photo use is part of the accomplishment of family life
- Cross-cultural comparisons
- Exploring 'remote' methods

21-Nov-2007

SIM Technologies Workshop

Slide 2



Probe pack

- camera
- logbook
- stationery
- timestamp
- USB multi-card reader

Digital photo frame

- off-the-shelf
- memory card with preloaded photos included



21-Nov-2007

SIM Technologies Workshop

Slide 3

Digital Photo Logbook: Photo Frame

This is your Digital Photo Logbook. Please update it regularly. We recommend you include the following with each entry you make:

- Date, day and time of entry (you can use the stamp to record this);
- A reference to the relevant technology e.g. *I showed her the Digital Photo Frame...*
- A reference to the relevant photograph (if you took one) e.g. *see photo below* ;
- A print out, file name (e.g. *DSCN0003.JPG*) or description (e.g. *photo of us looking at the Digital Photo Frame*) of the relevant photograph.

Please include all the digital photographs you refer to in this journal over this period, either as print outs stuck into the logbook or in digital form (i.e. on the digital camera we have provided for you).

Specifically, we would like you to use this Logbook to record your use of *digital photos*:

- Your thoughts about digital photos (e.g. as displayed in the Digital Photo Frame) as time goes on (e.g. initial reactions, good features, difficulties);
- Where you place, or change the position of, digital photos on display and the circumstances around this (e.g. I wanted to see the digital photos while in the kitchen);
- The situations you share digital photos in – who you show it to, what the occasion is, where you stand, how long you look at it;
- What you (and anyone else) say with regard to the digital photos in these situations;



Our approaches

- shared returns
- mirrored blogs in multiple languages
- Chat and VoIP
- home tours

21-Nov-2007 SIM Technologies Workshop Slide 5

Photos: placed & configured



“Yes...I'd say those are the people who are important to me and, eh, I like when I go into my sitting room to have those photographs around me...I don't really think about other people sort of looking at them, it's just the fact that I like them to be there because they are important to me”

21-Nov-2007 SIM Technologies Workshop

“...this one, because it's privacy, private room, so, uh, only the pictures of, uh, she and her husband will appear... So the pictures normally are romantic and private.”



Slide 6

Relationships & obligations

“...any other family new members, coming into the family, like, little babies that are coming into the family the photographs are usually passed round the, the members of the family. So it is, it's good, it's good manners to, when you get one of these lovely wee photographs is to display them. So, em, yes and any other events like weddings or anything like that – those would be important as well.”

“I put on these pictures according to three considerations. First I have already recovered from the death of my husband therefore I want to look at him every day and therefore I centralise my husband and chose the meaningful photos during our life around him. Secondly my grandson [her grandson's name] was about to go to Vancouver with his Mum and my husband was very fond of [her grandson's name] and thought he was very important so in order to let [her grandson's name] remember his grandfather forever and also realise grandfather's expectation of him so I chose lots of pictures of [her grandson's name] and grandfather together. Thirdly my granddaughter [her granddaughter's name] birth brought the whole family a lot of joy. In order to introduce her to everybody I chose some pictures from [her granddaughter's name] birth until she was 2 years old to put on the wall

21-Nov-2007

SIM Technologies Workshop

Slide 7

'Reminders'



“When she puts them on the wall she was thinking “Time flies, my youth passed by so quickly, it was just like yesterday,” and...within a very short time I'm not young anymore and... although these people are not, these people, they are, are all my loved ones, although they are not living with me anymore but they are always in her mind.”

21-Nov-2007

SIM Technologies Workshop

Slide 8

Aesthetic objects

“...the daughter’s picture is, of course, placed in the daughter’s room, it’s, um, reasonable and it’s a lovely picture so she wants to put it up.”

“...this is a display here of, uh, shelves, it’s a shelving unit and, eh, I had, uh, various things in that and I thought the photographs looked better than anything else that I had in it – I had books in it at one stage and then I had thought...it’s just from an aesthetic point of view actually that, that particular display.”

“I mean, you know, it’s, it’s sort of an aesthetic thing really.”

21-Nov-2007

SIM Technologies Workshop

Slide 9

Photos as mundane technology

- Mundane technology is part of the practices of the household i.e. as being *worked out*
- Mundane technology is part of *the joint accomplishment* of family life
- Mundane technology supports and, to some extent reflects, *household values* (e.g. Confucian - the notion of the extended family)
- ‘Mundane’ *does not necessarily mean* non-evocative, emotionless
- Understanding the process of *becoming mundane* is important

21-Nov-2007

SIM Technologies Workshop

Slide 10