

Groupware and Text Technologies

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Abstract. In this talk, I will outline the history of text technologies and the ways in which they have supported groups working across time and place and changed work practices. I will focus on the rise of annotation practices and its importance to reading and writing processes, and review new technologies that are likely to change the ways in which annotation can enhance and will alter traditional reading and writing practices, both in collaborative writing and in cooperative learning to write. I will raise some directions for future research, including how professionals read and annotate, how readers might make use of annotations produced by others, and how interfaces to annotations are likely to affect communication and collaboration. I will identify outstanding research issues, research methods that are likely to be productive in furthering our theories of workplace and classroom communication, and draw implications for the design of annotation technologies in groupware.

Speaker Biography. Dr. Christine Neuwirth is Professor of English and Human-Computer Interaction at Carnegie Mellon University. In 1986, she received her Ph.D. degree from Carnegie Mellon and, at the same time, she became a member of its faculty. Her research has focused on designing computer tools for computer-mediated communication as well as conducting empirical research that explores the effects of those tools. Early work focused on building a conceptual framework for understanding collaborative writing, coupled with the development of a "work in preparation" (PREP) Editor to study collaborative writing relationships, especially collaboration at a distance. The PREP Editor implemented an innovative "column" architecture and served as a "proof of concept" for many of the design requirements that were identified from the theoretical and empirical work. Her latest work involves exploring "authorable" visualizations as a way to mitigate or reduce attention and overload problems in electronic mail. Dr. Neuwirth is a member of the Association of Computing Machinery and has served on various advisory panels and conference program committees.