

SFB/TR 8 Spatial Cognition / IQN Video Conference

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**Information Grounds:
A Place-based Framework for Understanding
How People Experience Information in Informal Social Settings**

What is the role of place and spatial factors in how people experience information? How can we use an understanding of place to facilitate how people engage with each other, and improve lives? Such are the questions that drive Information Grounds—a place-based framework pioneered by Canadian information scientist Dr. Karen E. Fisher with colleagues at the University of Washington, Michigan, and Microsoft using varied methods over 20 years' of study. Information Grounds is a lens for understanding information flow in informal social settings—informal, temporal social settings where people gather for a focal, instrumental purpose, and create, remix, and share information using degree technology of any degree. Information Grounds can occur anywhere—football match, hair salon, rock concert, at the beach, tailgate party, dog park, or pub; sometimes though people may not be there by personal choice as in the case of queues or waiting offices, classroom hallways; and disaster, crisis and refuge contexts. Most simply, Information Grounds are predicated on the presence of people (usually 2 or more) in any physical or online setting; however the quality of Information Grounds will range from abysmal to superb, depending on how well their collective attributes facilitate the creation and sharing of information among individuals. Information Grounds comprise a people-place-information trichotomy with 15 facets; it premises that by understanding the characteristics of the people present (e.g., demographics, motivation, number, connectedness, and social type), the characteristics of the place itself (e.g., victuals, safety, location, comfort) and the characteristics of the information experience (in broadest post-modernist sense), design options can be created to support that information ground for varied topics. At the University of Washington, Information Grounds is taught to all iSchool students from undergraduate to PhD; within information science, Information Grounds is widely respected as a robust approach to understanding and designing around people, place and information, be it for specific populations (e.g., aged, teens, people dealing with illness) or physical context (hair salon, library, shopping malls), or type of information (health, civic).

Dr. Fisher will overview research on peoples' everyday Information Grounds as well as those that arise during crisis and disaster, and discuss the implications for designing applications and policy. Her early research with immigrants/refugees in New York, work for the Gates Foundation/IMLS post-Katrina on the impact of computers in U.S. public libraries, and current mixed-methods design work with immigrant and refugee youth from Eastern Africa and South-East Asia suggest that Information Grounds are a universal phenomenon, and that interventions based around people-place-information factors hold great potential for strengthening social fabric.

- Freitag, 13. Juni 2014
informelle Kaffeerrunde: 15:15
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