CFP Misuse and abuse of interactive technologies

So far research into the user's emotional engagement in computing has addressed pleasurable affective states such has enjoyment, fun, and playfulness. *Abuse: The darker side of human-computer interaction* at Interact 2005 explicitly addressed negative emotions in computing. It was concluded in this workshop that interface design and metaphors can inadvertently rouse more than user dissatisfaction and angry reactions: they can promote a wide range of 'abusive' behaviors that are directed not only towards the machine and the interface but also towards other people.

The purpose of this interdisciplinary workshop is to explore interactive systems as targets and medium of disinhibited behavior. The goal is to bring together researchers who have encountered instances of negative user behavior in HCI, who might have given some thought to why and how such negative behaviors happen, and who have some ideas on how pro-active, agent based interfaces, should respond. Workshops discussions should provide a foundation for understanding the misuse and abuse of interactive technologies and for developing a systematic approach to designing interfaces that counter negative behaviors.

Some of the larger questions and issues we hope to address during the workshop are the following:

- How does the misuse and abuse of the interface effect the user's computing experience?

- How do different interface metaphors (embodied conversational characters, windows, desktops) shape a propensity to misuse or abuse of the interface?

- What design factors trigger or restrain disinhibited behaviors?

- How does computer-mediated abuse differ from other forms of abuse, e.g., the abuse of people, symbols, flags sacred objects, and personal property? Is it appropriate to use the term *abuse* in this context?

- Put downs and other forms of verbal abuse are a part of our everyday social world. It is something we try to diffuse and avoid. How can we develop embodied conversation characters that learn to constrain users who engage in verbal abuse? Do we even need to diffuse it?

- Is the act of verbally abusing a conversational agent anti-social behavior or is it the expression of social norms reflecting an asymmetric power distribution where the user is the master and the agent the slave?

As the workshop is intended to be interdisciplinary, we hope the questions and methodologies discussed will be of interest to a broad audience, including social scientists, psychologists, computer scientists, and those involved in the game industry. To help inform our questioning, we also welcome philosophical and critical investigations into the misuse and abuse of computing artifacts.

Prospective participants should send a 4-page position paper (following LNCS format) to Antonella.de-angeli@manchester.ac.uk. Further information on the workshop can be found at www.agentabuse.org.