

What next, ubicomp  
celebrating an  
intellectual  
disappearing act  
essay



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Gregory D. Abowd speaks about Weiser's landmark Scientific American article which boosted the exploration of exciting socio-technical vision of the third computing generation. Nowadays ubicomp is not considered to be the niche of research.

The author highlights the contributions of ubicomp community, speaks about remaining intellectual challenges, and formulates new visions of computing. As the ubicomp discipline is disappearing, it is really hard to identify what is uniquely ubicomp. There is an idea that the ubicomp community is among the most eclectic computing research communities as it encourages multidisciplinary research

Abowd critiqued modern research community as the next step is to be dissolved in the larger agenda of computing research or in the research literature of other domains. The author is convinced that there are research threads that follow the direction which is suitable for the development environment of ubicomp. But ubicomp development cannot be declared to be mainstream because of the tools which are at the disposal of modern 3D movies like Avatar

There exist four generations of computing. The first one provided many individuals with one computer whereas the second generation provided every individual with one computer. The third computing generation delivered many computers to one individual. In this way, these three generations provide a division between computers and people. The fourth computing generation does not need to follow this division.

It is really difficult to deny the ubicomp success as the third computing generation. The author predicted that in the 2010's ubicomp would be mainstream and mundane. He finds it necessary to document how our accomplishments have influenced computing and research communities. Contemplating the fourth generation of computing we have to understand the differences between the computing climate of today and of the past as they allow us to realize new productive climate.