

A workshop on the Family and Communication Technologies was held at Northumbria University on the 24th May, 2007

The Psychology and Communication Technology (PACT) Lab, School of Psychology & Sports Science, Northumbria University held a very successful workshop that focused on the Family and Communication Technologies. The workshop was funded by the ESRC E-Society. The ESRC E-Society is the largest ever-academic research programme to investigate the impact of digital technologies, particularly the internet on society. A total of 25 people attended the workshop from a number of different backgrounds and disciplines. 11 position papers were presented covering a range of issues related to design, methodological approaches, connectivity, older adults, cognitive deficits, children and technology use within the family. Participants were both researchers and practitioners and included representatives from Microsoft UK, BT and the European Telecommunication Institute (ETSI) as well as academic sociologists, psychologists, computer scientists and HCI professionals. Two keynote speakers were invited to present their latest work. Dr Abigail Sellen, a Senior Researcher in Microsoft's Socio-Digital Systems, Cambridge Lab which focuses on the human perspective in computing. Her talk entitled, 'Connecting to the home' gave insight into how new innovative technologies might be used and incorporated into family life to exchange information. Panos Markopoulos, an Associate Professor in the Department of Industrial Design, University of Eindhoven, Netherlands gave a talk entitled 'Connecting the family: challenges for research and design'. Panos's talk described new types of technology used within the home and different methods and approaches available to researchers and designers.