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Int. J. Human-Computer Studies 62 (2005) 159–160

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International Journal of  
Human-Computer  
Studies

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## Editorial

# Special issue on subtle expressivity for characters and robots

This special issue is devoted to theoretical and empirical studies of subtle expressivity for characters and robots. People both consciously and subconsciously use subtle expressions to communicate their emotions and intentions through variations in gaze direction, voice tone and gesture speed. People also perceive changes in the internal states of others from subtle changes in such expressivities while interacting with them. Subtle expressivity is generally regarded as playing a supporting part to the leading role of explicit expressivity, such as the contents of speech and voice prosody. However, under some circumstances subtle expressive cues take precedence, e.g. expressing emotion.

The human–computer interaction research community has come to recognize life-likeness and personality as important objectives of software design in seeking to reduce cognitive load. However, we are far from having a coherent understanding of what subtle expressivity actually is and how products and processes can utilize it. We might question whether designing for subtle expressivity will actually result in gentle emotional effects on the users and whether the processes and issues involved differ in any significant way from designing for believability or personality.

The basic idea for this special issue is a result of the CHI2003 workshop we organized in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. In response to a general call for papers, we received a wealth of submissions, demonstrating the keen interest of researchers and designers in this area. The many high-quality submissions resulted in the publication of a total of eight papers, six on screen characters and two on robotics characters. We would like to thank all of the authors who helped create this special issue.

As a last remark, we would like to thank the previous Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Brian Gaines, the current Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Susan Wiedenbeck, the Journal Manager, Dr. Fred Kop, and their colleagues for their great support in the process of editing this special issue. We also appreciate the Review Committees, who helped the authors revise their papers.

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*ATR Media Information Science Laboratories, Department of Cognitive Media Informatics, 2-2-2 Hikaridai, Keihanna Science City, Kyoto 619-0288, Japan*  
*E-mail address: noriko@atr.jp*

Christoph Bartneck (Guest editor)

*Department of Industrial Design,*  
*Eindhoven University of Technology, Den Dolech 2,*  
*5600 MB Eindhoven, The Netherlands*  
*E-mail address: christoph@bartneck.de*