MUSICFX: An Arbiter of Group Preferences for Computer Supported Collaborative Workouts

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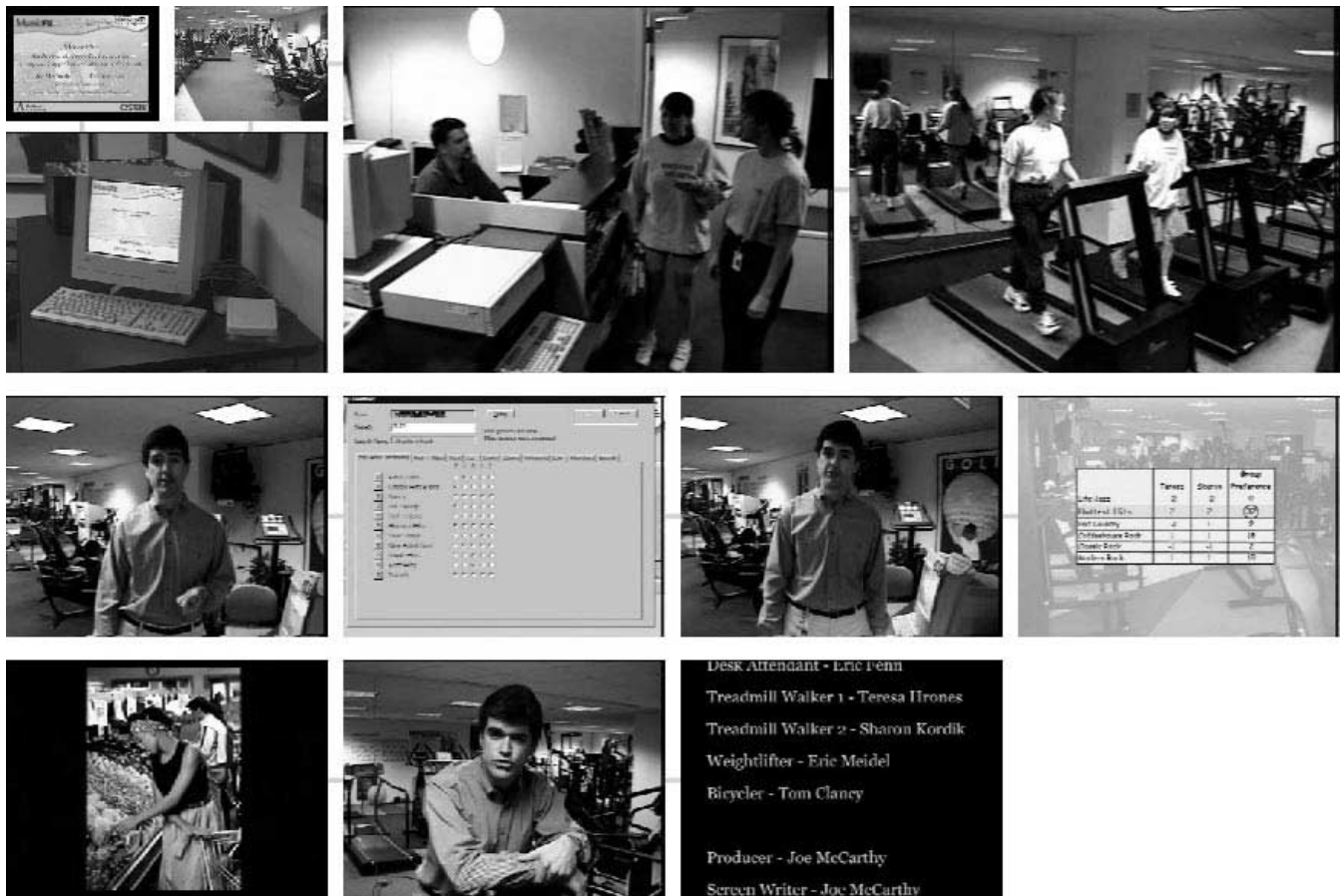Center for Strategic Technology Research
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Environmental factors affecting shared spaces are typically designed to appeal to the broadest potential audiences they will serve, while ignoring the preferences of the actual inhabitants found in the environment at any given time. Examples of such factors include the lighting, temperature and décor in the common areas of an office building. MUSICFX is a group preference arbitration system that allows the members of a fitness center to influence, but not directly control, one of these shared factors: the selection of music in the fitness center. The system includes a database of member preferences, a badge reader to track who is in the fitness center, and a group preference arbitration algorithm that sorts the 91 genres of music (available via satellite) according to the preferences of the current group of members. MUSICFX has been in daily operation at the fitness center located in the Northbrook office of Accenture since November 1997, and currently has over 800 members enrolled in the system. This video illustrates the impact of MUSICFX in a series of vignettes and describes how the system allocates influence among the inhabitants of the fitness center environment. Further details on the system can be found in our CSCW '98 paper.