

# SmartDiscuss - Moderation Tool-Support for Face-to-Face Discussions

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**Abstract.** If the size of a discussion groups exceeds a certain limit, some kind of moderation is required – which can be quite challenging, even in face-to-face discussions. Ubiquitous applications can support the moderation task, but need to be introduced in a seamless and intuitive way in order to preserve the discussion atmosphere and not to interrupt the flow of speech. This poster introduces SMARTDISCUSS, a moderation support application, developed to sound the potentials and to study the probable consequences for human interaction in tool supported face-to-face discussions.

## Motivation and Tool-Development

In larger discussion groups some rules have to be respected to ensure a smooth and constructive flow of speech. Usually, a moderator is responsible for managing statement order and speakers signalize their participation request with well defined gestures.<sup>1</sup> In big groups moderation becomes difficult, in particular when the moderator is inexperienced or needs to speak at the same time as moderating.

SMARTDISCUSS was developed as a part of the Context Sensitive Intelligence Project<sup>2</sup>. We exploit pervasive computing capabilities to support the moderator.

## Technical Challenges

Normally, a discussion takes place due to a specific context, e.g. a conference or meeting. This motivates the use of *Dynamic Context-Driven Feature Evolution* to enable the attendees' smart devices with the required software. This technology transmits code blocks from a partner's device or a dedicated host. Hence, the user can adapt its device's software portfolio depending on its context. This adaptation can be simply a new feature or a new application. *Dynamic Context-Driven Feature Evolution* conjoins several techniques under a common notion and user ex-

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<sup>1</sup> Examples for such gestures are: Raising one hand to indicate a classical statement, raising two hands to indicate a direct statement or forming a “T” with the hands to indicate a technical statement

<sup>2</sup> Goal of the CSI project is to explore and develop a framework for context-driven adaptations. It is directed by Prof. Dr. A. B. Cremers and H. Mügge, and supported by Deutsche Telekom Laboratories.

perience: namely network-based push technologies (e.g. OBEX), Context driven feature activation, CSSD Systems (Kuck 2007), Aspect-Oriented and Structural Annotations (Mügge 2007) or Pervasive Service Composition (Bihler 2005).

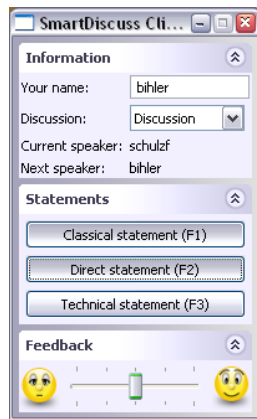


Figure 1. The user interface

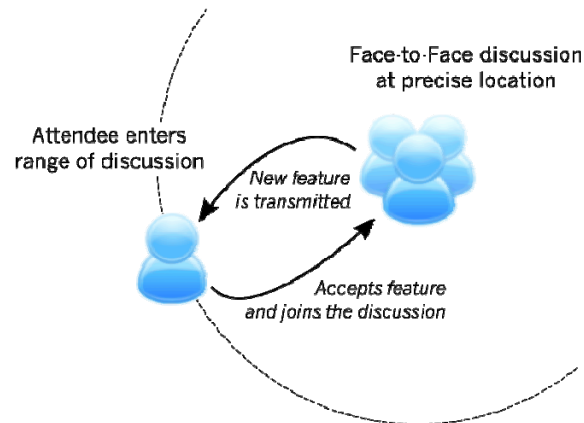


Figure 2. Context-Driven Dynamic Feature Evolution

## First Evaluations & Future Work

A prototype of SMARTDISCUSS which finally will be executed on the users' PDA has been evaluated in several different scenarios. It has been well accepted by the participants and first results indicate that it really can be of help for the moderator and for the rest of the group. We have also learned that a certain number of attendees is required in order to make tool-supported moderation productive. This fact we share with "traditional" moderation approaches.

For the future, we plan to port SMARTDISCUSS to various platforms and support other moderation scenarios such as VoIP-conferences. Furthermore, SMARTDISCUSS enables features like anonymous feedback, measuring of speaking time, managing different groups of interest (e.g. "customer", "engineer").

## References

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