Skateboards as a Mobile Technology

» A New Perspective for Interaction Design and Mobile HCI

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Skateboards are embodied tools transforming user’s mobility, their understanding of their environment, and the way they interact with it. Skateboarding requires extensive practice and experimentation, the user has to adapt to it and create a connection between the user’s body, the skateboard and the environment. Skateboards are not user-friendly but they trigger creativity and provide a high reward.

Other mobile technologies such as smart phones provide opportunities to forget the environment, focus on user-friendliness and less on experimentation.

This research shows new Implications for HCI by illustrating a new way of looking at mobile technology and a transformation of mobility. A model to rethink embodiment, creativity, and experimentation when designing mobile technologies.

Connection to the environment and embodiment
“When I started skateboarding I feel like it helped my brain to understand or to just get a better appreciation for my environment. Some usual space like a parking lot gets all of a sudden to be a new favorite place. Skateboarding changes your perspective.”

Creativity
“(Skateboarding) is about having a good time and being yourself with the board and creating your own rides and tricks.”
“You see a post and you think, wow, I can ollie over that and then if I ride this way, I can boardslide or do a noseslide over that bench”

Extensive Practice

User-unfriendly

Creativity

Adaptivity

Connection between body, skateboard and environment

Familiarity by extensive experimentation and practice
“First you think: ‘I wanna try this I don’t wanna get hurt!’ There is a lot of talking to yourself. Then you just have to try it. For a hundred times. It is a lot the mental power.”
“It’s a matter of tweaking the angle of your body where your feet are located and how you’re feeling, flicking the board.”