

Co-Lab

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MICROSOFT DESIGN EXPO 2009
PROJECT INTERACTION ART 484

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project overview

The future of work will involve increasing amounts of collaboration due to the complexity of work relationships and processes. One of the key avenues to achieving collaboration is the meeting.

Our group intends to revitalize and rethink meeting interactions during the entire meeting process through a product called, CoLab.

Create a new meeting

Scroll through meetings with the Up or Down tabs

Use the "magnifying glass" to browse other meetings

NOTIFICATION	LOCATION	5/15 Design Review_(Project 1)	10:00 am
AGENDA	LOCATION	ATTENDEES	
SUMMARY		Brian Kim (Manager)	
		Lucas Barnett (Sales)	
		Hilary Anbe (Marketing)	
		DOCS	

View the meeting agenda, summary, location and attendees



Instant Data capture



research

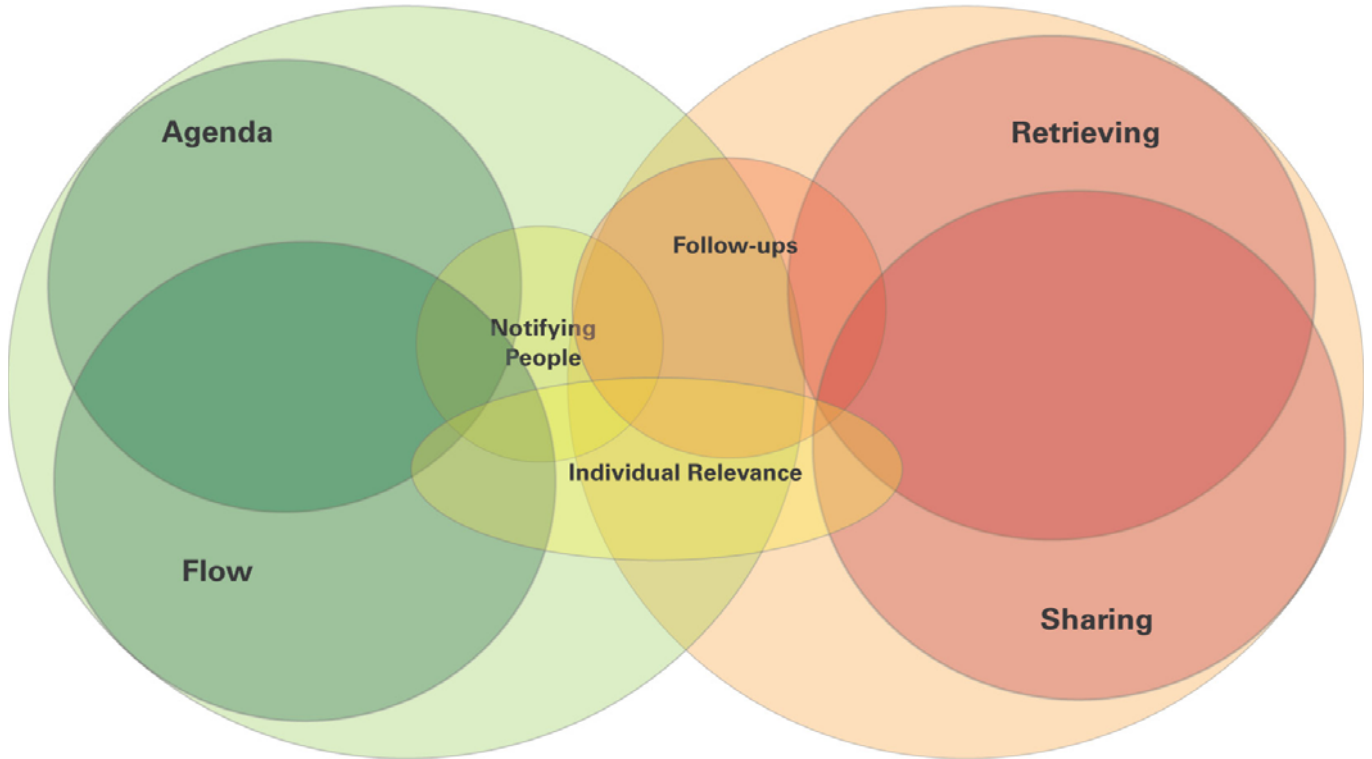
Our group was intrigued by the complications of collaboration as they relate to work. In order to investigate how collaboration occurs, we employed various methods of observation focusing on meetings. This included interviews, surveys, and observation of meetings and meeting facilitators. The primary themes that arose from our research findings were organization and information management.

Key research findings:

- relevance of the meeting content to the individual is key
- information sharing and retrieval is integral to meeting success
- time is wasted in the process of collecting and organizing information

Organization

Information Management



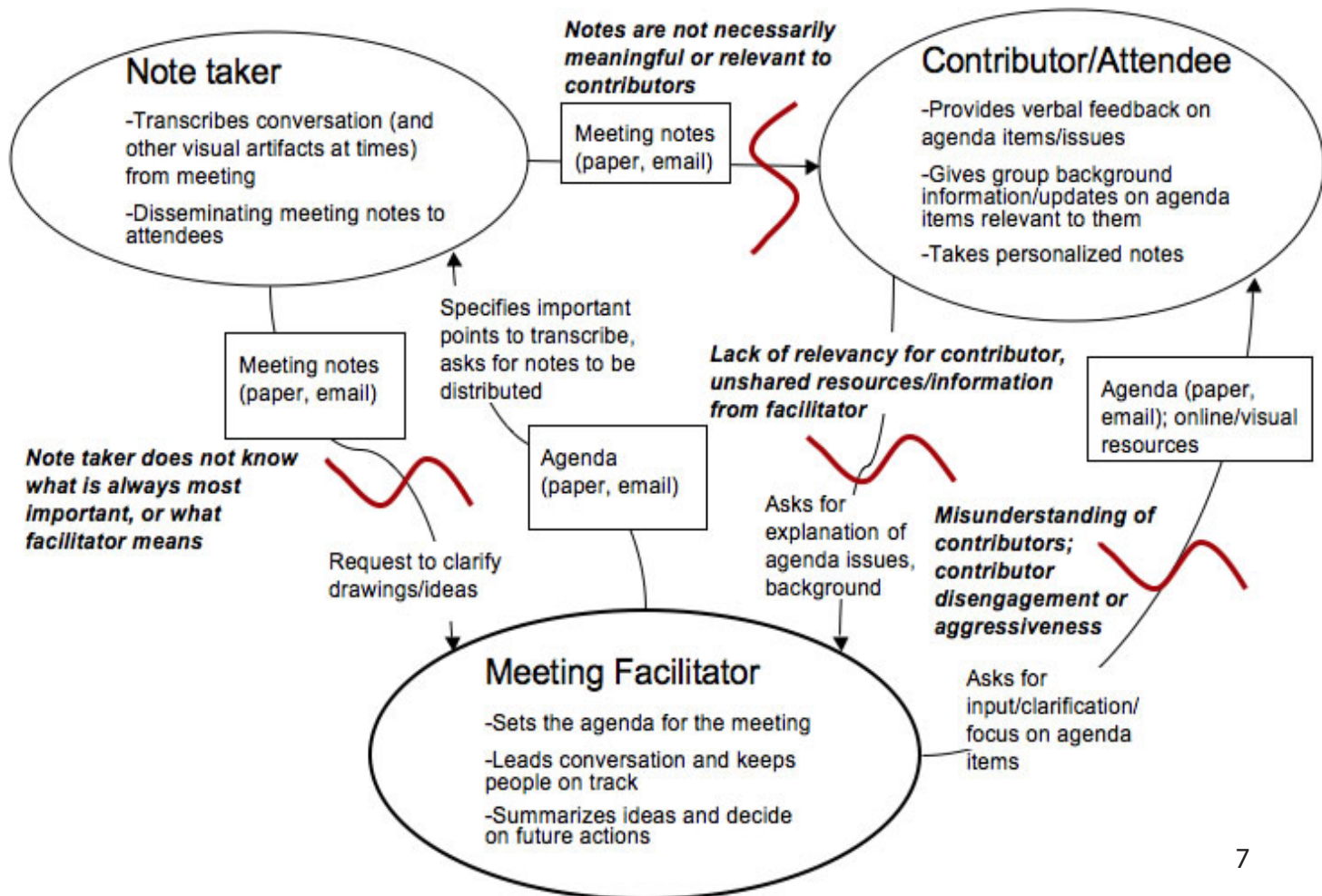
observation of a board meeting

This flow model depicts an overview of the people involved in meetings and their roles, the artifacts transferred between them, and lines of communication. Breakdowns in communication and understanding are shown in red.

Breakdowns:

- Lack of relevant information to meeting attendees
- Notes taken are not necessarily meaningful to contributors

Facilitator Flow Model



Later in the research process we conducted user testing to evaluate the 3 stages of meetings:

- pre-meeting
- meeting
- post-meeting

Users were asked to do a word sort and image sort in order to show actions and ideas they associated with the various stages of the meeting process.

The results varied from displeasure and frustration to success and understanding.

design evolution

The focus of this design was to build on the collaborative effects of face to face meetings and extend that collaboration beyond the meeting room. The desire was to capitalize on the combusive effects of meetings in which people, ideas, and information combine to generate new concepts that propel projects and personnel into action. To truly enrich the activity of meetings, the design encompassed not only the activity of the meeting but also the pre and post meeting phases as well.



Prototypes



early concept

Initially our group focused on the idea of data capture. We felt that this reflected the need to improve individual and group data capture and exchange during meetings, and would extend the collaborative effects of meetings.

Many of our early sketches and wireframes focused on the idea of sharing and retrieving information during meetings. To streamline the process of organizing and managing information, we thought that a software application with the ability to run on multiple platforms would assist users in retaining data. To enable this, we began to reimagine the meeting environment.

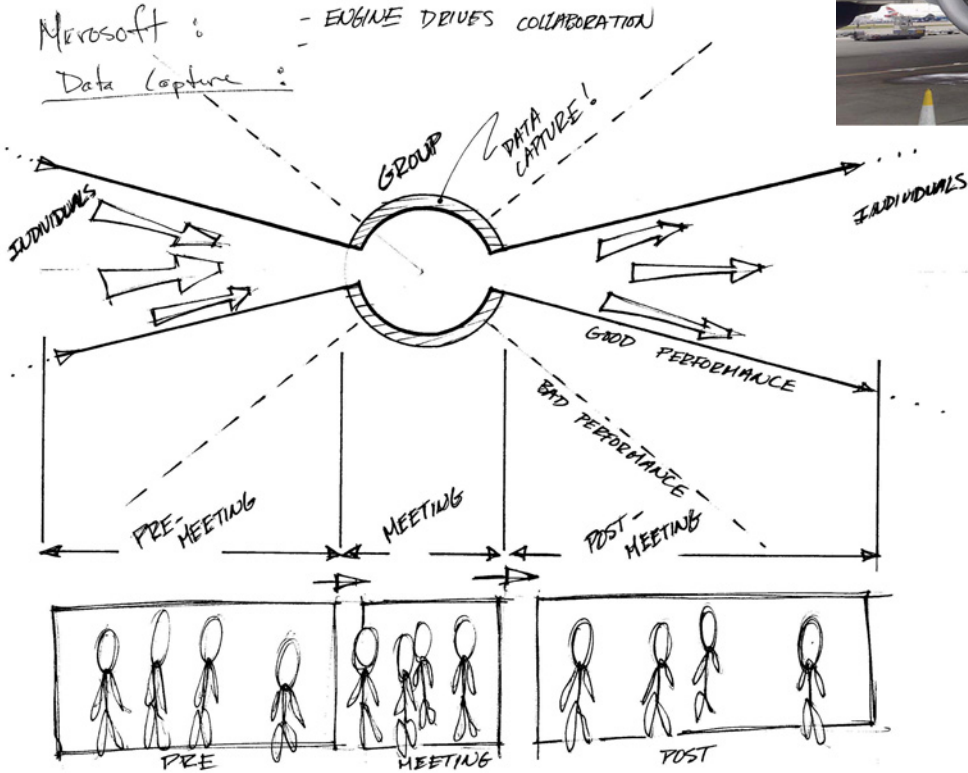
In the future, computers could have detachable screens that also function as touch-screen tablets. They could be joined with one another to create one overall surface for the meeting application to run on. We considered different ways in which the users would be able to interact with a touch-screen surface and conduct meeting business, as shown in the sketches on the opposite page.

metaphor development

After examining the various elements that contribute to a meeting, we endeavored to develop a series of diagrams and metaphors to describe the function and flow of a meeting. Based on the insights gain from the research phase of the process, it was apparent that the value of meetings was in there generative effects as well as their ability to help align group goals.

The effectiveness of meetings was highly dependent on the organization and alignment not only during the meeting but before and after as well. Effective meetings seemed to have a combustive characteristic among many of the people that we spoke with. This combustion occurs when people, ideas, and information come together and ignite into new concepts, which propel a group into a focused action after the meeting. In doing so the meeting behaved similar to a jet engine that was fueled by people, ideas and information.

As with a jet engine, alignment of information and personal helps to produce better generative effects when compressed into a collaborative situation like a meeting.



concept refinement

Refinement of the widget through many iterations.

First concept

Wireframe mock ups

Wireframe with rendering

4/15/Mon. +

Meeting Name.

Series

Notification Agenda shared.doc. Summary

Location

Time

	Mon. 5/11	Tue 5/12	Wed. 5/13	Thur. 5/14	Fri 5/15

DOCS

save. publish

+ 🔍 Type Meeting's Name

1 2 3 4 5

NOTIFICATION TIME 31

AGENDA LOCATION

SUMMARY ATTENDEE

DOCS. ▲

+ 🔍 6/5 2 meetings 1

+ 🔍 6/4 Design Review_(Running 1) 10:00am

NOTIFICATION Actions Jenny Lee (Design)

AGENDA Prepare sketches and notify factory / developer of color changes.

SUMMARY Notes Voice captured notes

SHARED DOCS Group hand notes
Individual hand notes

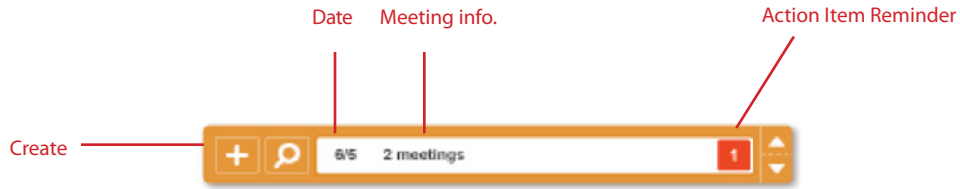


widget details

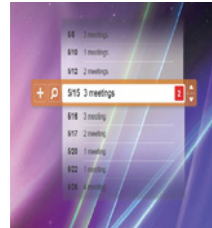
The CoLab design utilizes a multi-platform, multi-user software application partnered with a flex-use touch screen laptop. As previously mentioned, this application is used to streamline the 3 main phases that constitute the entire experience of a face-to-face meeting. The primary function of this design is to centralize 4 main elements that form the organizational and communication aspects of any given meeting.

These 4 elements are: notification, agenda, summary, and shared documents. By allowing users to have a centralized system to access and exchange information about a particular meeting at any time during the process, CoLab allows for an extended structural platform to collaborate at all times, and not just in face-to-face encounters.

In the initial widget screen, it shows the user at a glance the meetings and action items for that day, as well as the create, search, and browse functions. Hovering over the widget reveals meeting information over the previous day and the next day, and clicking on a day shows an extended view with the 4 main elements of a meeting.



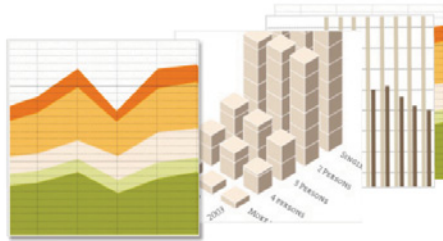
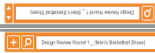
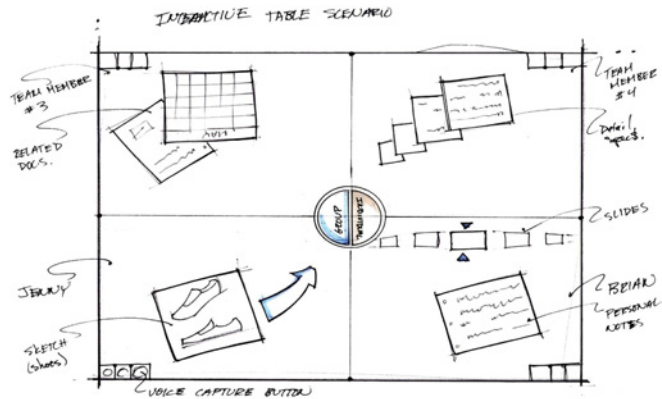
Browse through the Summary, Agenda and Shared Docs



final design

In current meeting situations a user or a series of users may utilize a range of programs and systems to compile data, communicate with others, and conduct the physical meeting itself. By converging the various organizational and communication characteristics of a meeting into an accessible and organized format that functions in the 3 main phases of a meeting, the design allows for both a functional and symbolic representation of what a meeting is.

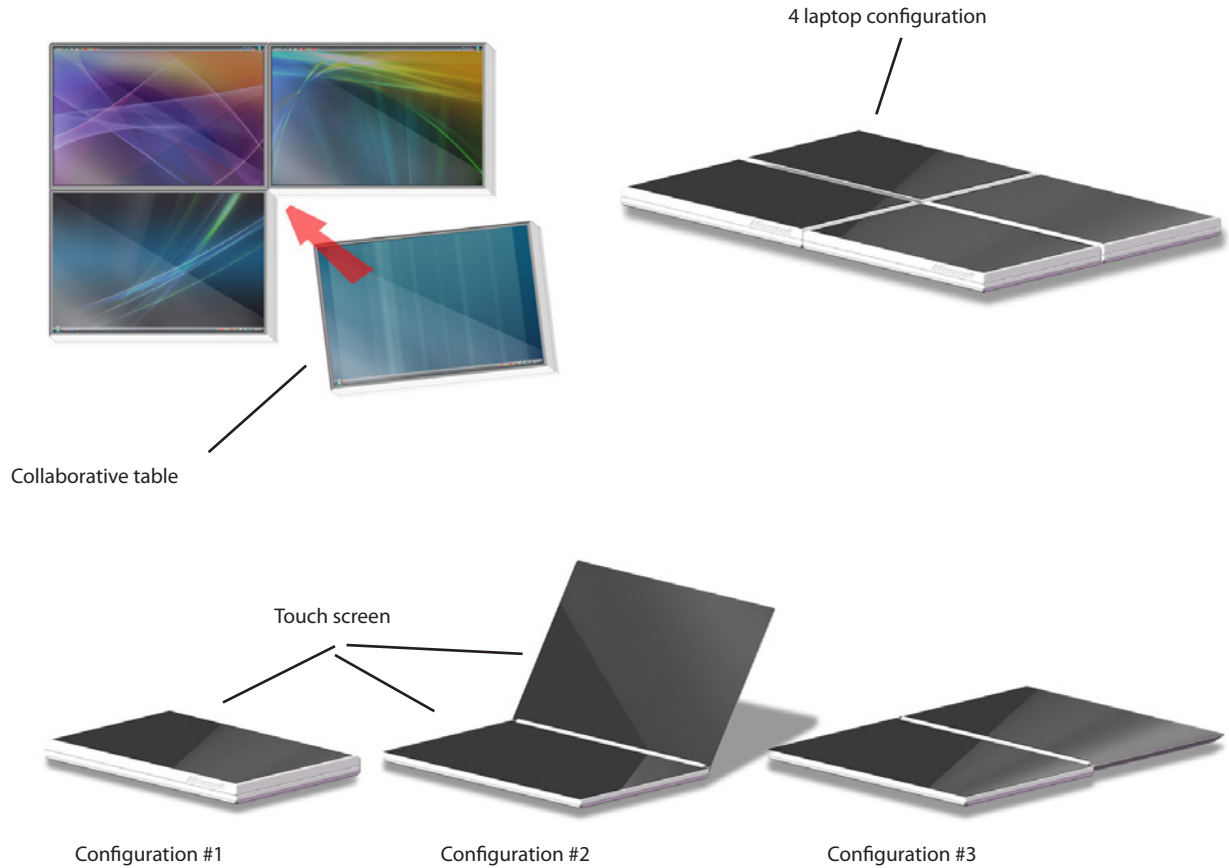
Additionally, the system allows users to pool generated material (voice and text) in meetings to allow for a more open and free dialog to occur.



artifact

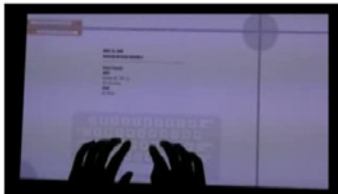
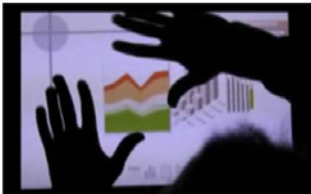
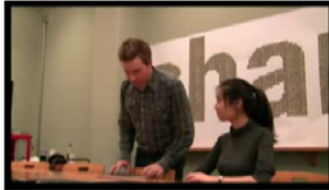
In addition to exchanging existing information, CoLab also allows users to capture and organize information and conversations that are generated during a meeting. To complement the application, CoLab utilizes a flex-use laptop which is a collaborative artifact that when combined with other laptops forms a single point of engagement (single interactive table) during actual meetings.

(Touch-screen laptop)



video

Snapshots from our final video demonstrating the fluid and seamless interaction of CoLab in the workplace.



conclusion and future work

This system was designed in the hopes of enhancing the collaborative process in meetings by streamlining and simplifying meeting tools. CoLab serves to bridge the gap between various software applications and people, and ultimately, to inspire extended forms of collaboration.

We would like to thank our professor, Axel Roesler, and Microsoft advisor, Georg Petschnigg, for their advice and expertise throughout this project.

Microsoft is providing a forum around the theme “The Future of Work” to showcase exceptional design process and ideas. As part of a quarter long course, students are asked to design a user experience prototype, from which a selected project will be featured in a presentation at the 2009 Microsoft Faculty Summit July 12-14, 2009 in Redmond, Washington.

The Design Expo creates a forum for encouraging “out of the box” thinking, by exploring students’ visions for the future of computing.

Participating design programs this year are: Art Center, Product Design, Pasadena, CA, Carnegie Mellon, School of Design, Pittsburgh, PA, Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing, China, Dundee, Innovative Product Design & Interactive Media Design, UK, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico, New York University, Interactive Telecommunications Program, and University of Washington, Division of Design.

Axel Roesler, Ph.D.

