DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
FACULTY CANDIDATE 2010 SEMINAR

WHEN: FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2010
WHERE: PGH 232
TIME: 11:00 AM

SPEAKER: Dr. Divya Ramachandran, University of California, Berkeley

Host: Dr. Zhigang Deng

Title: Designing Mobile Persuasive Technologies for Rural Health Promotion

Abstract

Social, cultural and political factors often pose barriers to achieving the intended outcomes of rural health interventions. In this talk, Ramachandran discusses the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to address these barriers and strengthen local health initiatives. Rather than view ICT solely as a vehicle for information transfer, she instead takes a human-centered approach to understand how technology can change attitudes, behaviors and practices. She presents three years of field research studying gaps in the maternal health care system in rural India, and designing persuasive mobile applications to build the capacity and motivation of rural health workers. Based on her experiences, she describes her agenda for future ICTD research focusing on in-depth ethnographic study, human-centered theories of behavior, and in-context evaluation of development outcomes.

Biography

Divya Ramachandran is a doctoral candidate at the Berkeley Institute of Design and Computer Science Department, University of California, Berkeley. She works in the area of human-computer interaction, with a special focus on international development. She has worked on a number of projects in the fields of rural communication, education and health. Her dissertation examines the use of mobile, persuasive technologies for maternal health promotion. For this work, she conducted qualitative research, iterative prototype design, and evaluation over three years in rural India. Within the broader ICTD space, she is interested in how ICTs can be designed to motivate local change agents to achieve development outcomes. She holds a bachelor's degree in computer engineering from the University of Utah.