Press Release

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Why We're Not Inviting HAL on Our Mars Mission

CHI 2007 Conference Boldly Goes Beyond Earthly Concerns and Considers Interaction Issues for a Manned Mars Exploration

San Jose, CA (12 April, 2007) -- Astronauts exploring Mars will be 100% dependent on technology (computers in particular) in order to work, communicate, and survive. Because of their technology dependence, a seven member crew of international scientists will spend four full months in a Mars manned exploration simulation habitat at the Flashline Mars Arctic Research Station (FMARS). The habitat is located in Hamilton Crater on Devon Island in the Canadian Arctic.

"We are conducting a realistic long-term trial run in the Arctic with limited water, cramped quarters, preserved foods, etc... We are even using EVA (extra-vehicular activity) suits for all outside ventures. By doing this, we hope to discover critical problems in human factors and human-computer interaction so that we can solve them in time for a real Mars exploration mission," notes Dr. Kim Binsted, FMARS Chief Computer Scientist and Assistant Professor at the University of Hawaii.

On May 2nd, Dr. Binsted will give a tour of the FMARS facilities and equipment, and discuss various human-computer interaction issues. She will present remotely from the FMARS habitat and answer questions at the upcoming Computer-Human Interaction Conference, (CHI 2007) in San Jose, California.

The annual conference on Computer-Human Interaction (www.chi2007.org) is the premier worldwide forum for exchanging information on all aspects of how people interact with computers. Scheduled from April 28 through May 3, CHI 2007 offers two days of pre-conference workshops and four days of dynamic sessions that explore the future of computer-human interaction with researchers, practitioners, educators and students. This year's conference features over 300 world-class presentations including: two plenary sessions, highly interactive presentations, over 40 courses, exhibits, recruiting and more at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center in California.

CHI 2007 marks 25 years of research, innovation and development of the Computer-Human Interaction community and will be attended by more than 2500 professionals from over 45 countries. CHI 2007 is sponsored by the ACM Special Interest Group on Computer Human Interaction (SIGCHI). Organizations contributing to the financial support of the conference include (Hero Level) Intel Corp.; (Champion Level) Cisco Systems, Inc.; Cooper; Google, Inc.; Intuit; Microsoft Corp.; the National Science Foundation (NSF); Open Source Technology Group (OSTG) / SourceForge; SAP AG; Sun Microsystems, and Yahoo! Inc.

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