Distinguished Speaker Series
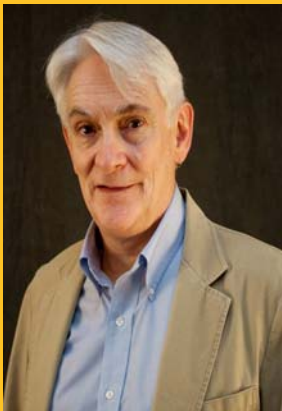
PUSHING COMMUNITY: FROM COMMUNITY NETWORK TO INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Thursday January 26, 2017 ● 10:30 AM – HEC 356

Modern mass society, aka the information society, and its infrastructures present dynamic challenges and opportunities to community. Thus, in the enduring discourses of "lost community" running from Tönnies through Putnam, and beyond, both community and loss are evolving concepts. In this talk I review and reflect on community informatics work on innovation, as an evolving concept. Today, such work is often framed as "smart communities," "smart cities," or "smart territories"; emphasizing responsive management and development of physical infrastructures (electricity, water, sewage). The concept can extend to social infrastructures: new ways to experience and enact community identity, new kinds of community interactions, and new ways to give and receive social support. I will describe sociotechnical design research projects directed at enhancing awareness and participation for local issues and events, coordinating civic action, including volunteering and time banking, crowd activity, and reciprocal peer-to-peer interactions, engagement in local politics and government, healthier active lifestyles, and retention of younger residents. Technology innovation is neither the culprit nor the remedy for lost community, rather, it is emerging as another abiding and evolving trajectory for community.

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John M. Carroll is Distinguished Professor of Information Sciences and Technology at the Pennsylvania State University. His research is in methods and theory for human-centered design, particularly as applied to Internet tools for collaborative learning and problem solving, and to create and sustain community. Carroll received the Rigo Award and the CHI Lifetime Achievement Award from ACM, and the Goldsmith Award from IEEE. He is a fellow of AAAS, ACM, IEEE, the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, the Association for Psychological Science, and the Society for Technical Communication. In 2012, he received an honorary doctorate in engineering from Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

Hosted by: Dr. Pamela Wisniewski