

LINC, An Inkable Digital Family Calendar: The Video

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ABSTRACT

LINC is an inkable tablet-based digital family calendar designed to overcome coordination challenges within existing family routines. We illustrate its use in this video. As an awareness appliance, LINC can be placed in any home location to provide *at-a-glance family calendar awareness* which in turn can enable family coordination. LINC can also run on multiple desktop PCs at home or work; LINC Mobile runs on a cell phone enabling calendar access when not at a computer, while LINC Web provides calendar access from a web browser. This allows families to coordinate activities wherever they may be located.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

H.5.3 [Group and Organization Interfaces]: Computer supported cooperative work

General Terms

Design, Human Factors.

Keywords

Family, calendars, home, coordination, awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

Coordinating family activities often requires a complex system involving planning events, rescheduling them, and much more [1,2]. Family coordination routines also extend beyond the home to include scheduling and coordinating events while mobile or at work [1,3]. At the heart of many families' coordination systems is a paper calendar that families use to record and stay aware of each others' activities. Paper calendars are easy to use, mobile, and personalizable [2], yet they are not easily available from the many locations that family members frequent during their daily activities. Some families use multiple calendars to overcome this problem, yet this brings challenges of synchronization [1,2].

Technology offers promise for family calendaring. Via networking, digital calendars can make calendaring information ubiquitous and simultaneously accessible from a variety of locations. This lets families more easily view, coordinate and update their activities and events. The challenge is that we cannot

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Figure 1. LINC in a family's kitchen.

simply migrate digital calendars from work into the home [3,4]. *Family coordination is focused on gathering awareness of the family's activities which then enables family members to coordinate* [4]. This contrasts with workplace practices where coordination is done by sending meeting invites which assign people to events. Thus, families need a digital calendar that can provide them with *easy awareness of the entire family's activities* while being as *simple to use* as the paper calendar that many are already accustomed to using. Commercial digital family calendars have been designed for the web (e.g., FamilyScheduler, Trumba), yet they are still not designed around the awareness model needed by families. For this reason, we have designed LINC, a digital family calendar, specifically to meet family coordination needs [4]. This video illustrates LINC in action (full details are in [4]).

2. AWARENESS AND COORDINATION

LINC is an inkable digital family calendar (Figure 1) designed to be a simple awareness appliance (prototyped with a Tablet PC) that provides the benefits of a digital calendar, yet is still as simple to use as a paper calendar [4]. The video and this paper describe the features of LINC that are focused on enabling family awareness and coordination. Figure 2 shows the events of the Jones family where Kayla, the mother, is its primary scheduler.

Shared by the Family: LINC is designed to be a shared family calendar that can display all activities that will affect the family. This contrasts work and online family calendars which are typically designed for the individual. After providing the family password initially, LINC users do not have to logon to LINC or otherwise authenticate themselves.

Simple and Flexible Interaction: Adding events to LINC is a simple process, much like paper calendars. Kayla hand-writes on an empty sticky note under 'New Events' with the Tablet PC stylus (Figure 2, top left) and then drags the note on to the

