

2010 Design Research Society (DRS) international conference · **Design & Complexity**

# **designing for the periphery of our attention**

a study on ambient information systems

**mauro pinheiro**

**Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES)**

**Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)**

Brasil

[mauopin@pobox.com](mailto:mauopin@pobox.com)

# information systems

refers to all the persons, procedures and equipment designed, built, operated and maintained in order to collect, record, process, store, retrieve and display information, using different technologies.

(Houaiss & Villar, 2001)

Time Destination  
10:30 Aberdeen  
Calling at:

10:35 Leeds  
Calling at: Wakefield Westgate and Leeds.

10:40 Glasgow Central via  
Wakefield, Edinburgh, Motherwell and Glasgow Central.

10:45 Leeds  
Calling at: Wakefield Westgate and Leeds.

10:50 York  
Calling at: York only.

10:55

Platform Comments  
- On time National Express  
Peterborough, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Edinburgh

- On time National Express  
CAFE BAR & TROLLEY ONLY

- On time National Express

- On time National Express  
CAFE BAR & TROLLEY ONLY

- On time Grand Central

- On time National Express  
Stevenage, Peterborough

Time Destination  
10:15 Cambridge  
Calling at: Cambridge only.

10:22 Peterborough  
Calling at: St Neots, Huntingdon and Peterborough.

10:36 Peterborough  
Calling at: UR COACHES ONLY

10:45 King's Lynn via  
Calling at: The Cambridge Express

10:52 Cambridge  
Calling at: Aldock, Royston and Cambridge.

11:00

11:05 Luton  
Calling at: Luton, Bedford, Bedford Parkway, Potters Bar, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Welwyn North, Knebworth.

Platform Comments  
10 On time First Cap Connect  
The Cambridge Express

11B On time First Cap Connect

- On time First Cap Connect  
Finsbury Park, P

- On time First Cap Connect  
Cambridge, P

- On time First Cap Connect

- On time First Cap Connect

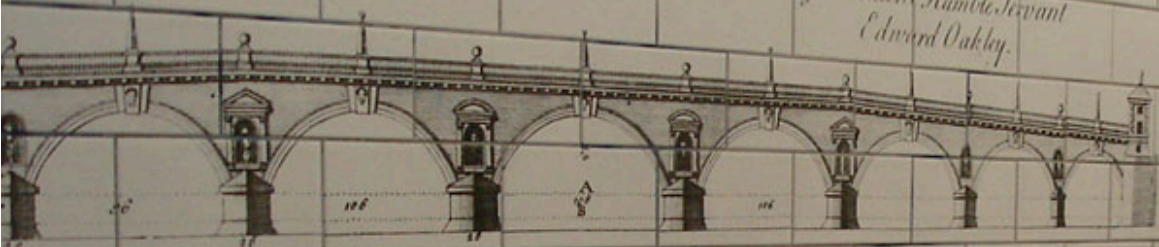
Special Notice

1

National  
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*W. B. Hall Esq. 'ord. Mayor, in the B. Ward, Aldermen & Special Council of the City of London*  
*Plans for Building a Bridge with Stone to Cross the River Thames*  
*From Blackfriars, London, to Southwark in Surrey.*  
*Is most Humbly Incribed by your Hon. most Obedient Humble Servant*  
*Edward Oakley.*

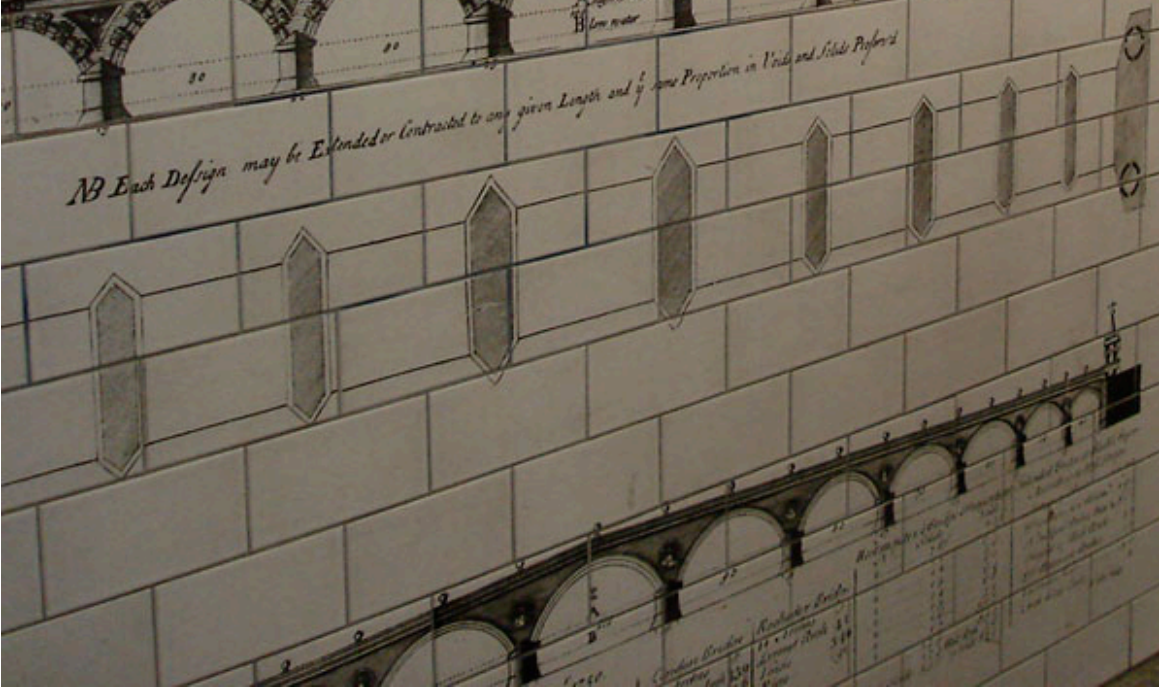


East front

London



*AB Each Design may be Extended or Contracted to any given Length and of any Proportion in Width and Solid Proportion*



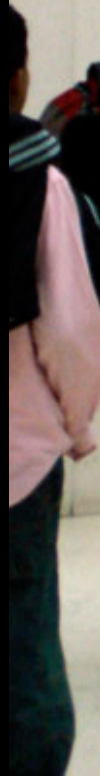
ALTERNATIVE  
 FIRST BRIDGE AT  
 February 1736



Lower floors

Ground floor

Upper floors



# PLANTA 39







Google Earth

▼ Search

Fly To Find Businesses Directions

Fly to e.g., 37 25.818' N, 122 05.36' W

521, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro

☒ [R. Barata Ribeiro, 621 - Copacaban](#)



▼ Places

Add Content

☒ [Av. Constante Sodré 1234](#)

Nosso último endereço em Vitória

☒ [Rua Celso Calmon 266](#)

Meu primeiro endereço em Vitória.

☒ [Barata 621](#)

Nossa casa no Rio

☐ Temporary Places



▼ Layers

☒ Primary Database

☒ Geographic Web

☐ Roads

☐ 3D Buildings

☐ Street View

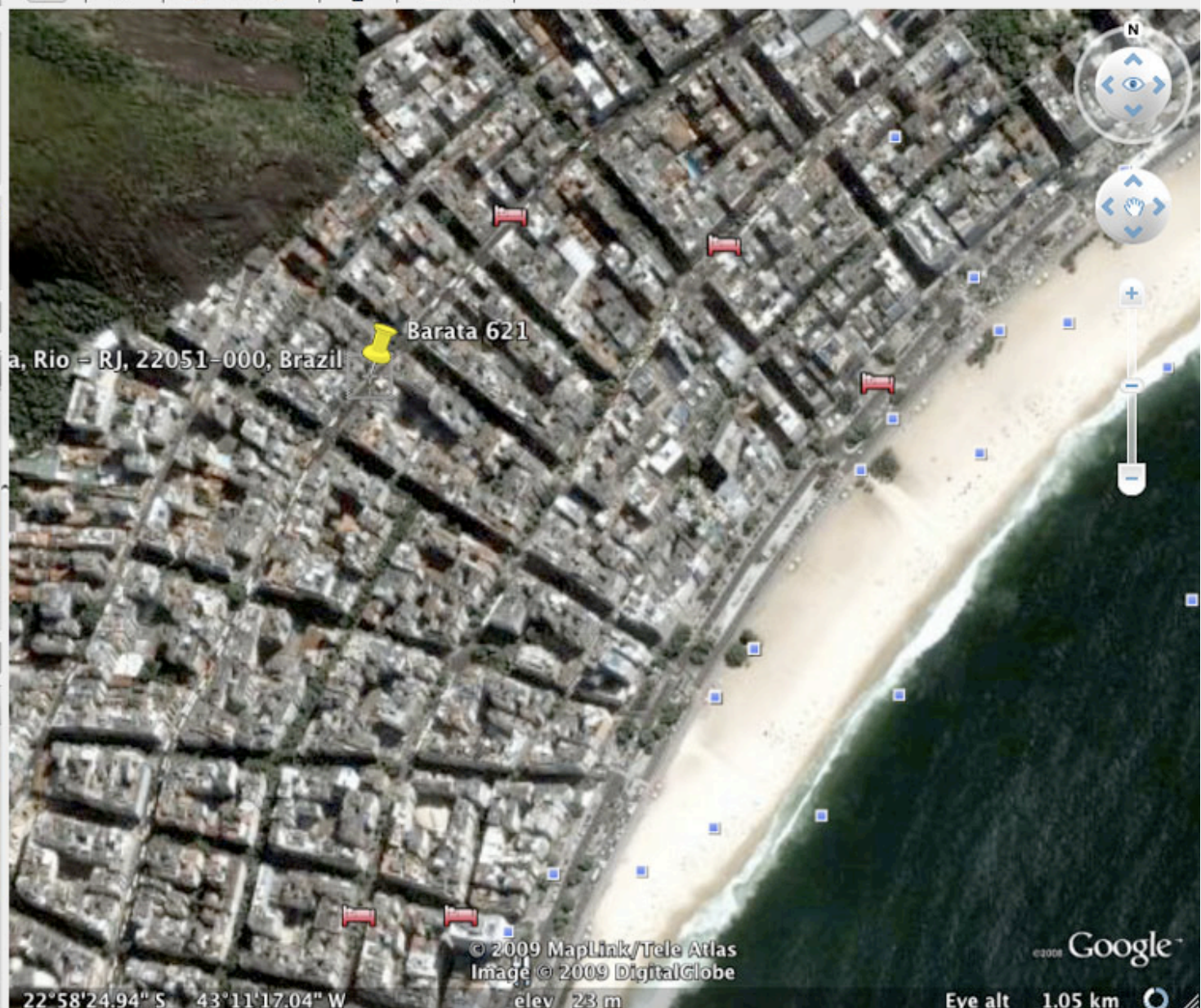
☒ Borders and Labels

☐ Traffic

☐ Weather

☐ Gallery

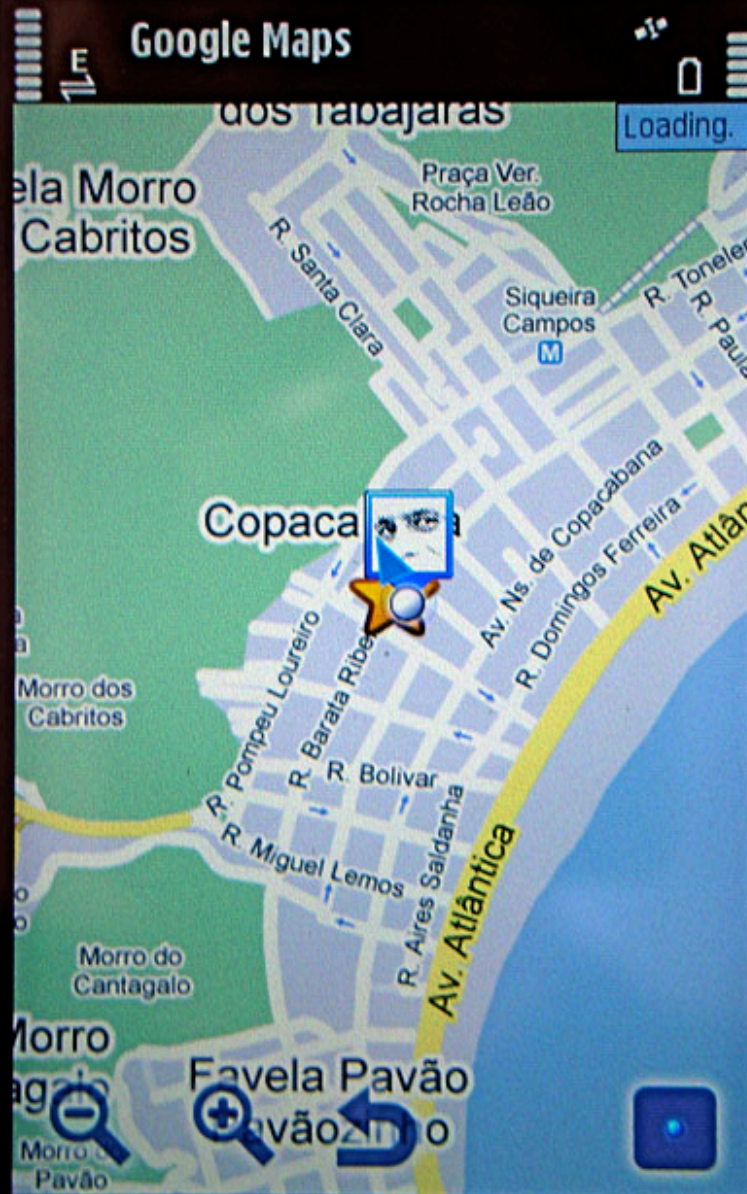
☐ Global Awareness





NOKIA

XpressMusic



Options

See list

**the medium influence  
the way we perceive,  
comprehend and use  
information**

**media creates environments**

**environment implies behavior**



# shush!



**in which environment  
are we living?**















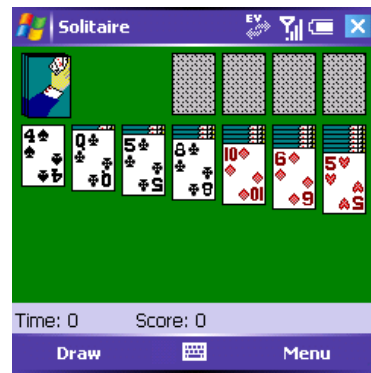
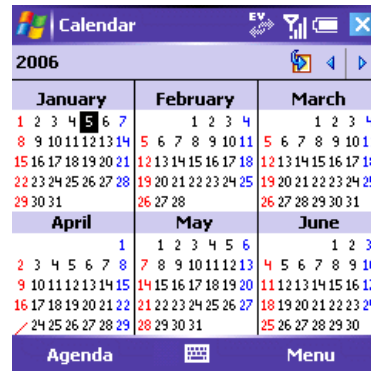
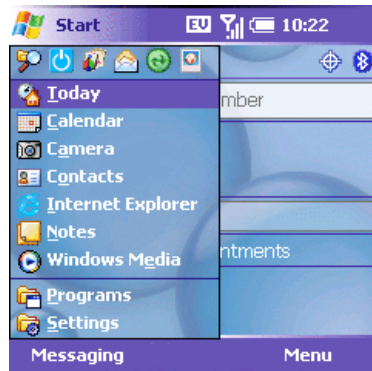


## Many functions and programs

- |                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| # Bubble Breaker                    | # - Tasks                      |
| # Calculator                        | # - Notes                      |
| # Camera (photos & video)           | # Phone                        |
| # Downloads (Verizon)               | # Pocket MSN®                  |
| # File Explorer                     | # Quick Tour                   |
| # Internet Explorer Mobile          | # Search                       |
| # Microsoft® Office Mobile          | # SMS & MMS Messaging          |
| # - Word Mobile™                    | # Solitaire                    |
| # - Excel® Mobile                   | # Sounds Manager               |
| # - PowerPoint® Mobile              | # Terminal Services Client     |
| # Microsoft® Office Outlook® Mobile | # Voice Command                |
| # - Email                           | # Windows Media® Player Mobile |
| # - Calendar                        | # Wireless Sync Downloader     |
| # - Contacts                        |                                |



## Different interfaces to deal with in order to use the product









**different trends in product development**



the general concept of the product remains the same

evolution through time  
doesn't affect too much the  
way we use the product

limited functions

## trend in computer technology



the general concept of the product evolves through time

as the product evolves, this  
evolution affects the way we  
use the product

products are multifunctional



# pervasive computing

pervasive computing (also known as Ubiquitous Computing or simply ubicomp) is a post-desktop model of human-computer interaction in which **information processing has been integrated into everyday objects and activities.**

in pervasive computing, ordinary objects not only have computational resources; **they are networked, connected in a way that they can share information.**

# pervasive computing

**anything** can be a “node” of a complex information system

**multiple information sources**

**in different formats and contexts**



Pileus Internet Umbrella (Takashi Matsumoto, Sho Hashimoto, Keio University)  
<http://www.pileus.net/>





Hug Shirt  
<http://www.cutecircuit.com>

A diagram with a yellow background. In the center, the text "multiple information sources" is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font. Surrounding this central text are four brown circles, each containing white text. The circles are positioned at the top-left, top-right, bottom-left, and bottom-right. The text in the circles is "constant connection", "pervasive computing", "increasing complexity", and "mobility" respectively.

constant  
connection

pervasive  
computing

multiple  
information  
sources

increasing  
complexity

mobility

constant  
connection

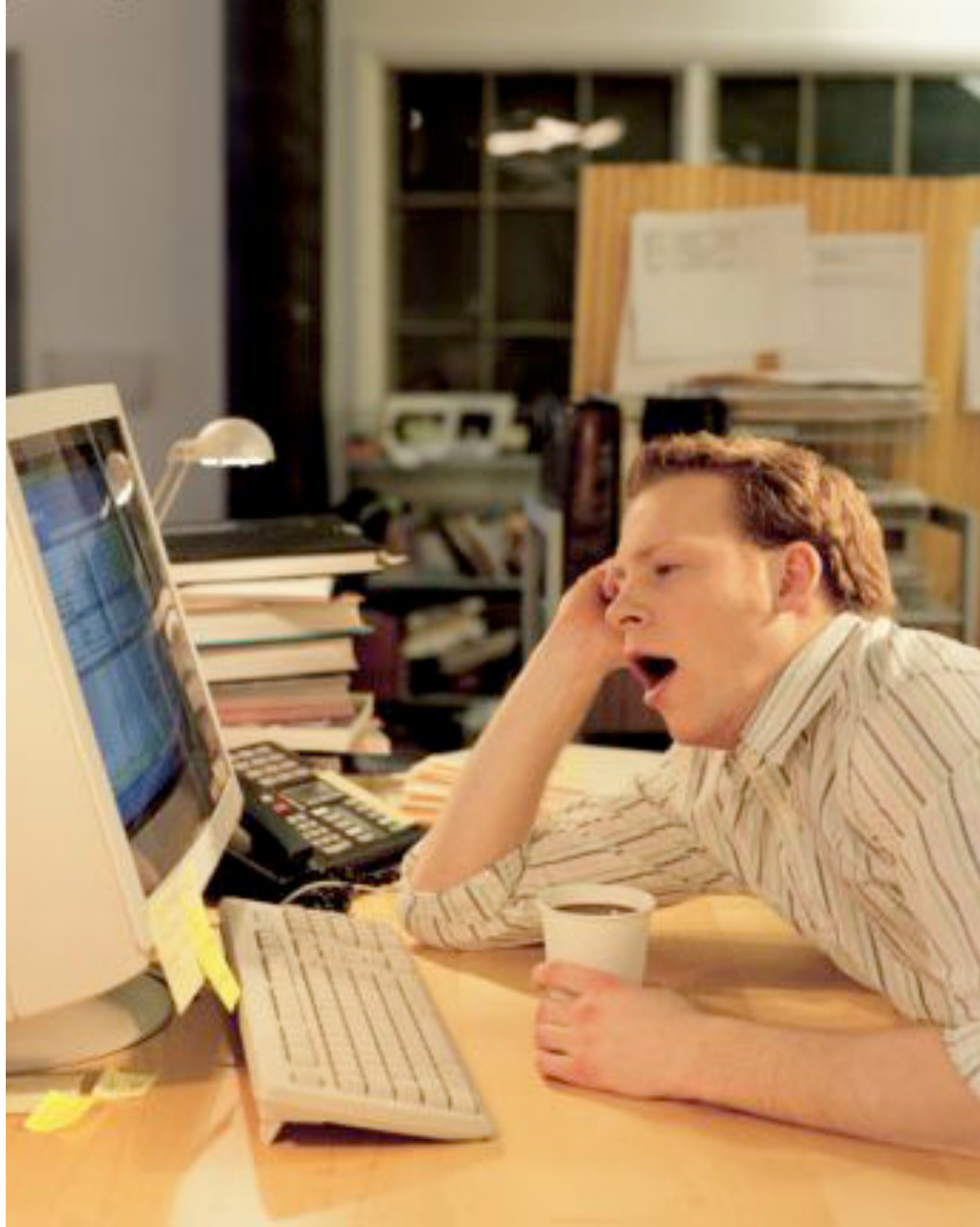
pervasive  
computing

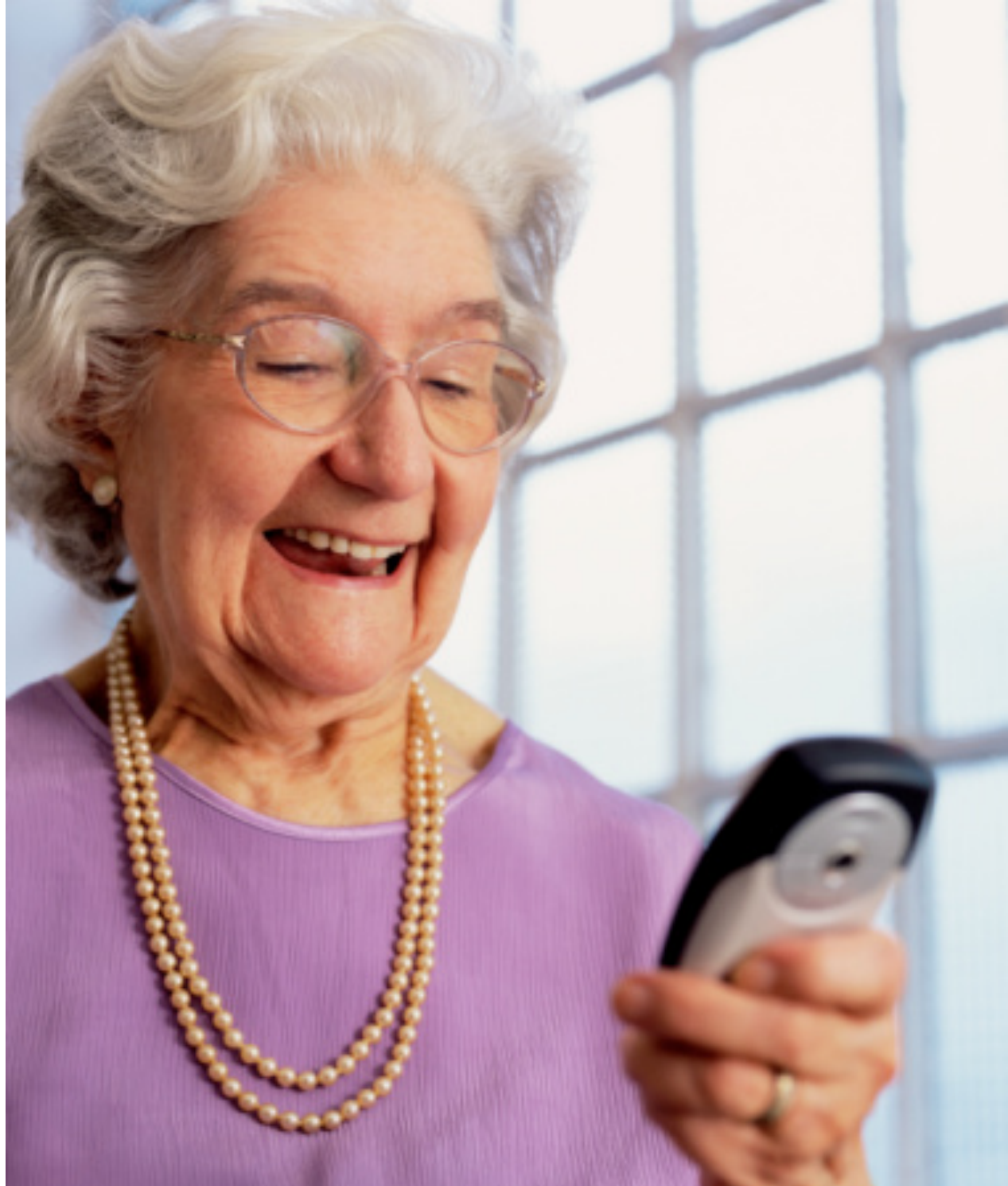
**information  
overload  
stress**

increasing  
complexity

mobility







**how can we make it less stressful?**

not all information is important

**all the time**

information must be available,

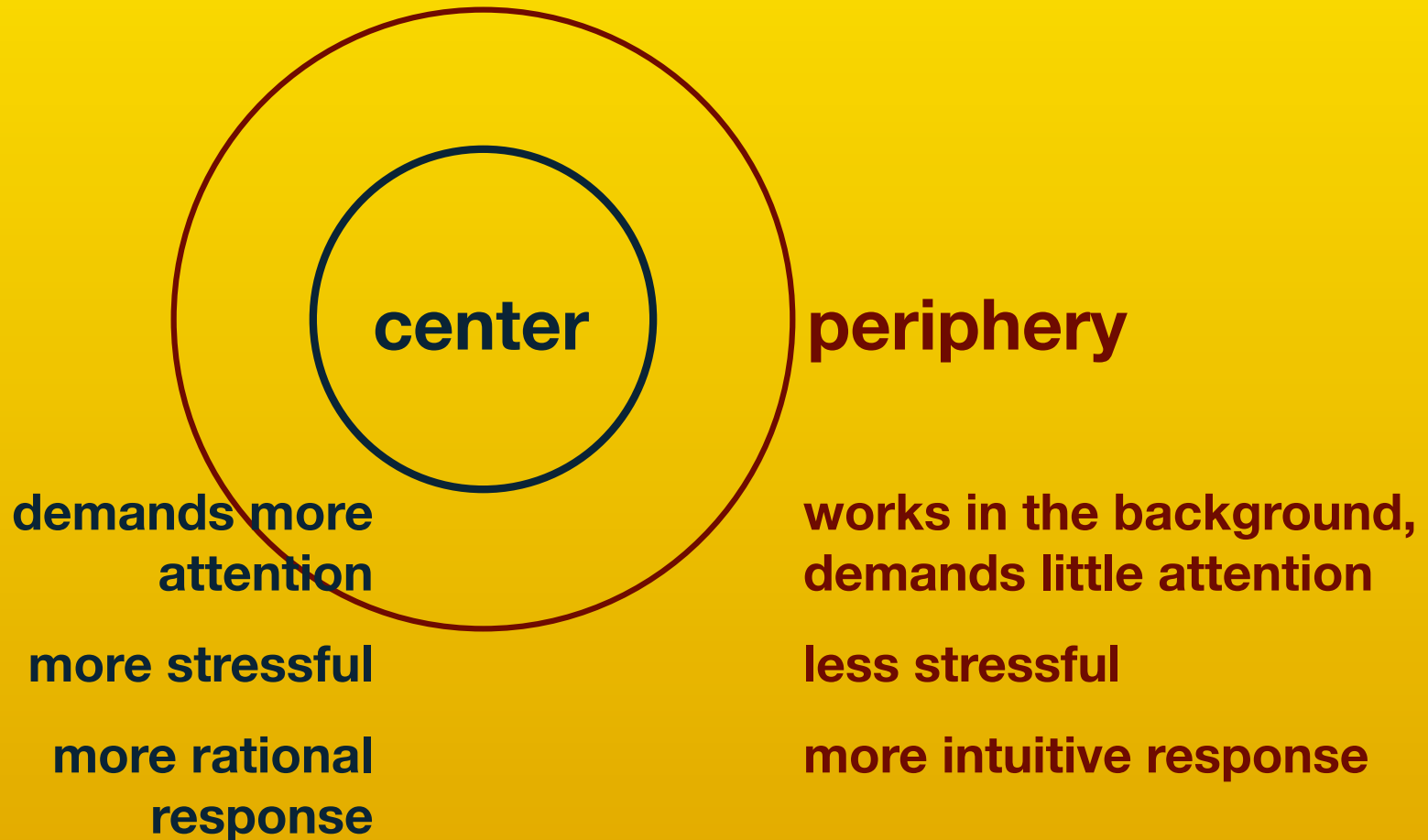
but not all information needs to

**be in the center of our attention**

Mark Weiser's concept of **calm technology**



# attention // perception



# ambient information systems

most common application of the **calm technology** concept

- publish information in a nonintrusive manner
- demand little attention
- information is embedded in the surroundings
- work in the periphery of our attention
- preattentive processing

# dangling string

**Natalie Jeremijenko,**  
Xerox PARC  
(80's)





# **galo meteorológico (weather rooster)**



# ambient umbrella



**datafountain**

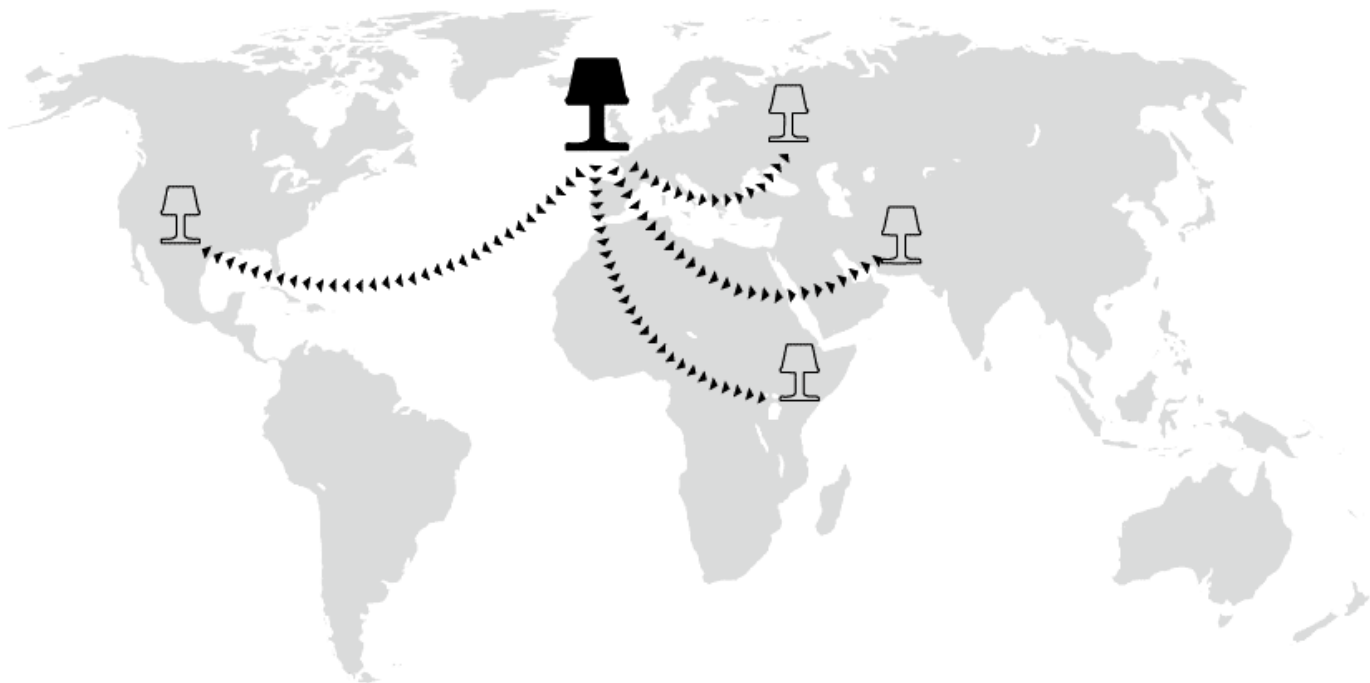
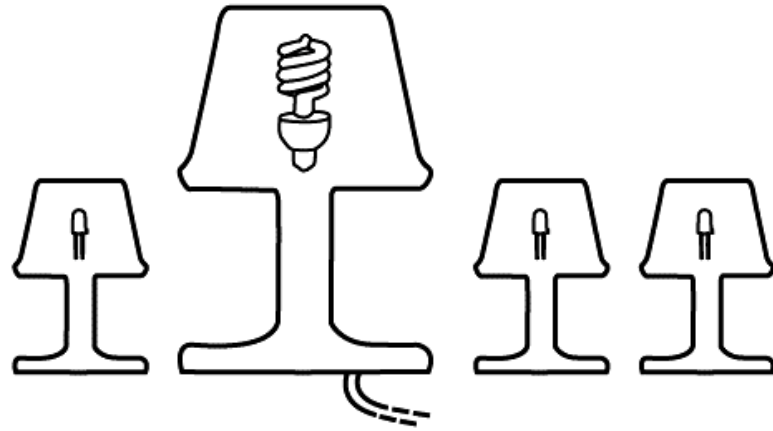




goodnight lamp







# thirsty light

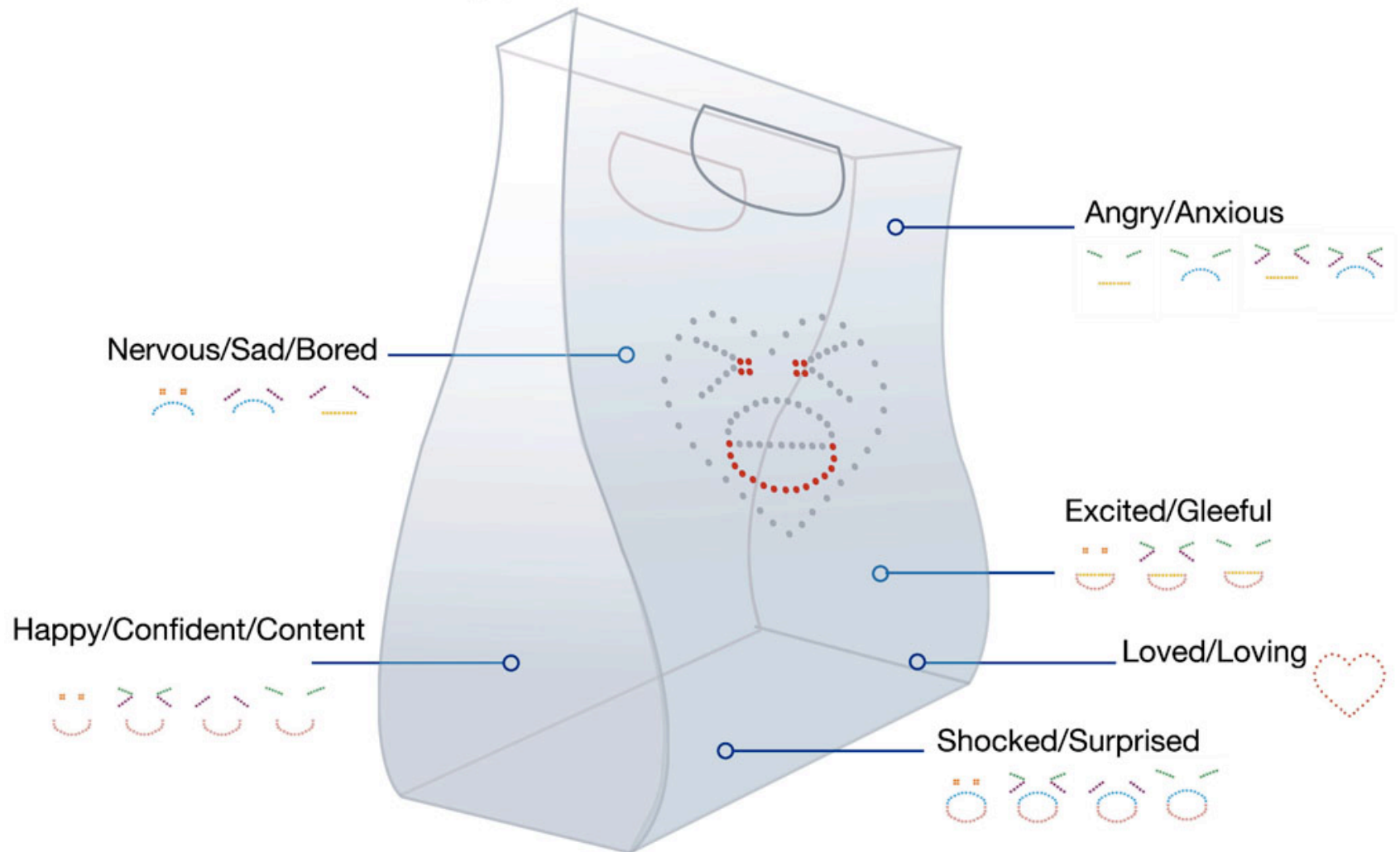


**ladybag**



# ladybag

## Emotion to emoticon mapping



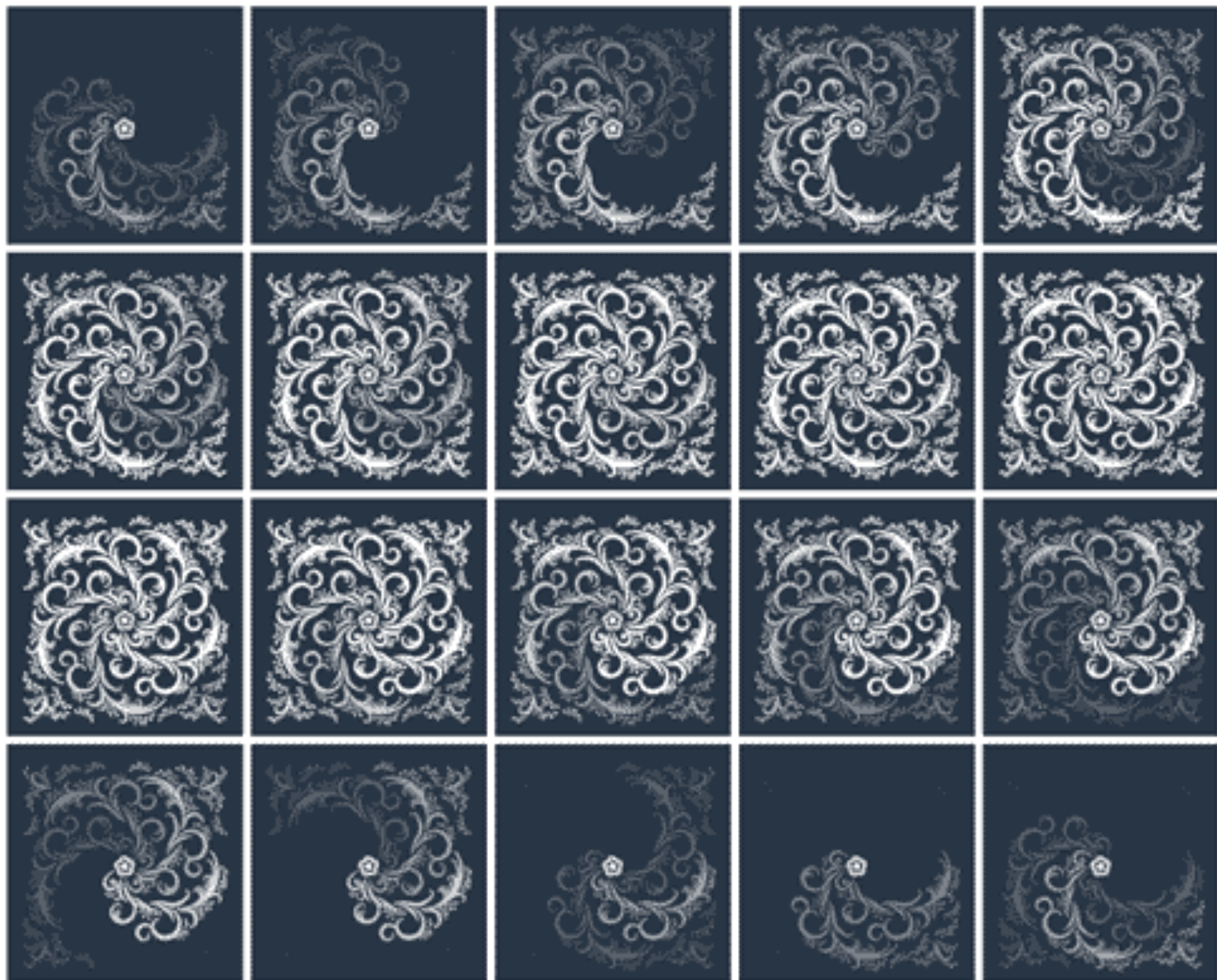


# weather patterns









# ambient information systems

## general guidelines

- not suited for critical data monitoring
- works better with coarse data
- not suited for complex data analysis



# ambient information systems

## some conclusions

- we can create information systems that are fun
- having access to more information doesn't necessarily mean more stress
- the periphery of our attention can be explored for communicating without overburdening us

# topics for future research

- how to design information systems that do not draw our attention, acting in the periphery?
- why not design for the other senses, besides vision?
- which metrics and evaluation methods should we use to assess the effectiveness of ambient information systems?
- are there types of information that are more appropriate to these systems?

# preliminary findings about perception //attention // preattentive processing

based on psychology studies

- influenced by previous knowledge and memory

# preliminary findings about perception //attention // preattentive processing

based on psychology studies

- influenced by previous knowledge and memory
- influenced by the nature of the information



**thank you**  
**merci**

**mauro pinheiro**

**Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES)**

**Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)**

Brasil

[mauopin@pobox.com](mailto:mauopin@pobox.com)