

Francis Lam

Scenario: A relaxing Sunday

It is a normal Sunday morning. Jonathan, a 28-year-old media artist, wakes up at around eleven with a satisfying smile. Unlike the rest of the week that he was awaked by an actuated alarm bed, today he has enjoyed a quiet and comfortable sleep before he opens his eyes. The bed connects to his digital schedule and calendar, and then estimates the best time (if no explicit alarm time has been set) to wake him up by deliberate vibrations. However, it decides not to disturb him today. Jon wants to stay in bed for a while to think, relax or try to re-visit the dream that he just had. He designed a pillow that collects his brain signals while he is dreaming throughout the night. The video projection on the ceiling shows whimsical and peaceful motion graphics that are generated by those signals to help him lighten up his mind and be ready for a brand new day.

Thirty minutes later Jon gets up. Coffee and today's news headlines have been "downloaded" into his info-mug when he steps out from the washroom. In the dining room, he takes a sip of his favorite latte with a piece of headline news being shown on the nearest display unit, which is the dining table in this scenario. Jon navigates through the news excerpts while consuming the coffee slowly; but the news seems unable to catch his attention. When Jon finishes up the coffee he notices today's weather information appeared on the bottom of the mug - a sunny day! He would like to meet up with his friend for a casual lunch.

Jon has an array of block-shaped sculptures stretching out from the wall of his huge living room. They are connected to his close friends' availability level. The blocks are actuated to move inward and outward subtly providing an ambient overview of people's activity level. At a glance, Jon can see who is available and ready for communication. He then pages his friends by giving a slight push to the blocks that have an active signal. While waiting for the reply, he runs for some home errands.

When he comes across a digital photo frame that sits on top of the working desk, Jon remembers that he took some pictures at an art exhibition yesterday. The photos were downloaded to the photo frame from the digital camera through the wireless Home Area Network when Jon returned home last night. The frame is now blinking to indicate new unviewed photos; he picks it up and navigates the photos by squeezing the pressure sensitive left and right rims. Meanwhile, the central voice and auditory system establishes a communication channel when Raymond responds to Jon's page.

Raymond cannot have lunch with Jon as he has already had it at his mother's place. Jon feels a bit depressed but his attention is immediately moved to a photo that he is looking at. It is a photo of a young lady standing in front of an artwork; she is their former classmate whom Jon met in the exhibition. He wants to send Raymond this photo, as he knows that Raymond once had a crush on her. Jon can send the photo that he is touching to Raymond through the Human Area Network in where the photo frame, his body and the ground form a transmission path.

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After their conversation, Jon feels quite hungry. He decides not to call up for anyone but enjoy a quiet afternoon with himself. He has heard from his friends that there were many decent and special restaurants around District C, so he wants to give a try today. He does not wear the augmented-reality glasses (ARG) when he heads out, because he does not want to be loaded with extra information on a relaxing Sunday. Or perhaps he wants to be more adventurous. If Jon was guided by ARG, he could have arrived District C an hour earlier. Nevertheless he is contented that he is able to find the way in such an impossibly complex transportation system.

Departing the metro station, Jon finds his way to the restaurant area. Without ARG's assistance, he seeks help from the local people. Thirty minutes later, attracted by an intense smell of some pork-based noodle soup, Jon enters a little Japanese noodle restaurant. Without the help of the ARG's restaurant recommendation system, he gives a bet on his basic instinct. He orders a spicy BBQ pork noodle and a set of meat dumplings. The table and utensils are RFID tagged so that the staff can cope with customers' real-time reactions and provide just-in-time service. The restaurant owner notices a signal from Jon's table - his cup is empty. It is then refilled before Jon asks for more water due to the spicy soup.

After having his late lunch, Jon rambles around the city. He feels relaxed and comfortable without having digitally overloaded.