Title: Connecting People through Ephemeral Social Networks

Speaker:
Dr. Alvin Chin
Senior Researcher
Mobile Social Experiences Group
Nokia Research Center, Beijing

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Venue: Room 603, Chow Yei Ching Building

Abstract:
We all are part of a social network, and many if not almost all, have heard of or are a part of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. We use social networks on a daily basis to connect with our family, friends and colleagues, to share content such as photos with others, to gossip, and to obtain real-time up-to-date information of the news and events that are most important to us. Social media pervades the web, and with the increasing number of social networking sites, people and content, we are encountering the same problems with e-mail: namely spam and relevance. How can I use the social network to meet what I want? What content should I be looking at and where, and who are the interesting people that I should connect with to grow my social network? In this talk, I will introduce three research areas that we are exploring which are creating applications that integrate physical and social context to improve social networking using what we call ephemeral social networks, improving people recommendations, and modeling user behavior in online to offline and vice versa. Then, I will talk about Nokia Find & Connect, a system for finding resources such as meeting rooms, desks and people and then connecting to the people through ephemeral social networks, through both an office and conference environment. I will present three case studies of Find & Connect, one from our office and two from a conference environment, present our results and compare the differences between the three environments. I will talk about our current research work on user behavior in offline and online environments, predicting geographic coincidences in a conference, and our new project on activity-based social networking. Finally, I will discuss about implications of our
work and future work for ephemeral social networking.

**Biography of the speaker:**
Alvin Chin is Senior Researcher at Nokia Research Center, Beijing working in the Mobile Social Experiences group, which is part of the NRC Growth Economies Lab of Nokia Research Center. His research involves examining how the mobile phone can be used for creating physical proximity social networks to capture and infer context for social activity and collaboration in real physical environments, designing rich user experiences to interact with others in an indoor environment as well as with other social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, and also designing improved people recommendation systems that take into account physical context. Alvin’s research objective is to bring social awareness to pervasive computing systems and applications so that they become easier to use and can assist in our daily lives, by creating a mobile social networking framework and platform. Alvin has Bachelors and Masters degrees in Computer Engineering from the University of Waterloo and a PhD in Computer Science from the University of Toronto. Previous to Nokia Research Center, he worked in industry researching emerging technologies in the wireless and pervasive computing area, especially Bluetooth and 802.11. His current research interests include social networking, computer-supported collaborative work, context-aware computing, and pervasive and ubiquitous computing. Alvin is an active user of social networking and Web 2.0 technologies, and is a member of various program committees such as IEEE SocialCom, ACM Hypertext, IEEE CPSCom, UIC/ATC, and MobiWIS, and workshop co-chair for MSM and PhoneCom. He is the Program Chair for IEEE CPSCom 2012 and PC member for ACM CSCW 2013. He is also an Associate Editor for the New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia journal. Alvin has published papers in conferences and workshops such as in Hypertext, SocialCom, CSCW, and UbiComp as well as in journals such as New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia and Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication. He also has a book chapter in Computational Social Network Analysis, and is an Editor of a forthcoming book called Mobile Social Networking: An Innovative Approach to be published by Springer. He has presented at both academic and industry events. He can be contacted at alvin.chin@nokia.com, and his web site is at http://research.nokia.com/people/alvin_chin.

**Organizer:** Prof. V.O.K. Li