Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. Helen Keller

I welcome you to this issue of the *International Journal of Mobile Human Computer Interaction* with immense pleasure and pride—pride, that is, in the advisory team who work together to lend strength, passion, and inspiration to the evolution of this journal. The efforts of journal advisors oftentimes pass relatively unnoticed; their association with a journal is listed, but the true extent of their contribution and value often remains hidden. I am delighted, honored, and extremely grateful to have, working with me, a dedicated, talented, and truly motivated group of advisors—each committed to helping this fledging journal realize its potential.

This issue of the journal serves two purposes: (1) to introduce you to the journal advisors; and (2) to provide them with an opportunity to spark debate and to motivate readers to (a) identify research opportunities and (b) to contribute outstanding work to the journal. Let me first introduce the advisory team. The International Advisory Board members include: Anne Kaikkonen, Nokia, Finland; Fabio Paternò, CNR, Italy; Jakob Nielsen, Nielsen Norman Group, USA; Matt Jones, Swansea University, Wales; and Stephen Brewster, University of Glasgow, Scotland. The team of Associate Editors includes: Antti Pirhonen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Gary Burnett, University of Nottingham, England; Gitte Lindgaard, Carleton University, Canada; Janet Read, University of Central Lancashire, England; Jesper Kjeldskov, Aarlborg University, Denmark; Mark Dunlop, University of Strathclyde, Scotland; Roderick Murray-Smith, University of Glasgow, Scotland; and Russell Beale, University of Birmingham, England.

I recently asked the advisors how we can make the journal great—how we can realize our goal of *stimulating exciting research* in Mobile HCI and *soliciting high quality contributions* to the journal.
Amongst some other excellent ideas which you will see come to fruition as the journal matures, the advisors agreed that, for a fledgling journal (especially one in a discipline such as Mobile HCI which is, compared to others, in its relative infancy), it was important to essentially posit research ‘challenges’ to readers such that researchers gain a clear perspective on the goals and directions of the journal.

Given the range of research expertise represented by the journal’s advisors, I felt that to invite the advisors to submit position articles which outlined their personal take on the future of Mobile HCI as a discipline, and to suggest where we need to focus in the future (10 years, say) would generate a thought provoking and challenging issue for our readers. Hence, the concept of this particular issue came into being—that is, a collection of personal reflections on the future of mobile HCI, the challenges it presents, and the potential opportunities it offers: in essence, an opportunity to step back and reflect on or assess our position, achievements, and our future societal and innovative obligations as Mobile HCI researchers. All the advisors were invited to submit a position article; each submitted article was subsequently peer reviewed by the team of advisors and refined before being included in the journal.

I asked that, where applicable, the advisors be deliberately controversial such that this collection of position articles by eminent Mobile HCI researchers evokes thought and debate amongst our readers. My sincere hope is that the position articles presented here will collectively act as a catalyst for other researchers to take up the challenges presented—if they have not already—or to contradict/refute the positions presented, and to subsequently submit high quality, interesting work to the journal. Such submissions will, in themselves, continue the catalytic momentum which this particular issue is intended to spark.

In the first position article—entitled *What Does Mobile Mean?*—Russell Beale questions what we really mean by mobile human computer interaction. He argues that, to date, mobility has been defined by the portability of a device and that this has, in turn, defined the way mobile applications have been designed. Russell contends that the real issue is not device mobility but rather user mobility. He notes that when we consider users and their mobility, rather than focus on the technology itself, other interaction opportunities become apparent—a theme that is picked up in later position articles by Roderick Murray-Smith and by Gitte Lindgaard and Sheila Narasimhan. Russell suggests four characterizations of user mobility—the ‘modern worker’, the ‘migratory’ worker, the ‘nomadic’, and the ‘twitterer’—and elaborates on their implications for future mobile HCI design and research. He identifies some of the potential benefits and most effective uses of well designed applications for mobile users, some of which allude to the ethical dichotomy introduced by Antti Pirhonen and Elizabeth Sillence in the second article, entitled *Getting Connected—At What Cost? Some Ethical Issues in Mobile HCI*.

In their article, Antti and Elizabeth discuss the impact on our culture of large scale deployment of mobile applications. In this deliberately controversial article,
they ask whether we, as a research community, need to take more of an active role in discussing the ethical issues associated with the technology we research and develop—that is, to consider more fully the ethical problems resulting from the rapid penetration of mobile applications. They argue that many of the research techniques we currently adopt, whilst contributing to the *usability* of a product, tell us very little about the more complicated ethical issues involved. From “roasting our brains” to being “chained” to our work to the dissolution of family life, Antti and Elizabeth explore the broader societal impact of mobile technologies as they affect our welfare. They suggest that the term ‘human’—as currently used in ‘human computer interaction’—is misleading and that current trends in our discipline could be better reflected with more appropriate wording—e.g., *user* or *consumer* rather than ‘human’. They suggest that we should reserve the term ‘human’ for research motivated by a desire for better understanding of humanity, and thus the construction of a better world; in effect, they soberingly remind us that as the designers and practitioners of today we are “creating all of our tomorrows”.

Taking a different perspective to the previous article, Roderick Murray-Smith (in *Empowering People Rather than Connecting Them*) considers the ways in which mobile technologies can *empower* rather than simply connect users. He argues that the emergence of modern technologies, such as increasingly sophisticated sensors, create the potential for novel interaction paradigms as well as scope for instrumented usability evaluation techniques. He suggests that, with additional sensory perception embedded in mobile technologies, interesting and unpredictable social behaviors will emerge. Your take on the ethical quandaries presented by Antti and Elizabeth will color whether you believe this to be potentially good or bad, but Roderick makes a compelling argument for research that will lead us towards an environment which is controlled by those who inhabit it and which, in turn, empowers rather than enslaves its inhabitants. Envisioning future interaction akin to dancing—“a sympathetic ebb and flow of control between the user, their mobile device, and the broader environment”—Roderick examines the future of location-based interaction, and highlights some of the research challenges that need resolution in order to progress.

In *Mobile Internet—Past, Present, and the Future*, Anne Kaikkonen asks what we learned from the first years of WAP and whether or not it constitutes a valuable step on the path towards effective web access on mobile technologies of the future. She raises the questions of when we need mobile-tailored content as opposed to full web content, as well as how best to design websites that accommodate access on both desktop and mobile computers. She metaphorically maps full web browsing on a mobile device to free diving, browsing mobile-tailored websites on mobile devices to snorkeling with occasional deeper dives, and internet use via mobile applications as snorkeling in a swimming pool. Related to Russell Beale’s suggestion that we should be designing for the mobility of *users*, Anne stresses the importance of...
developing web content that is tailored to suit mobile use; she suggests that most users access the web on different devices (e.g., desktop PC and mobile device) and so there is a need to support user mobility by making browsing compatible based on, and across, devices and contexts. Anne, like Antti and Elizabeth, reflects on the need for our discipline to consider what people do (in terms of web access) and why rather than just the usability of devices and user interface designs; she also touches on concerns about the social dichotomy of being ‘always connected’ versus an individual’s need for personal privacy or space. Linking the articles of Roderick and Antti and Elizabeth, Anne discusses the ability for our mobile devices to gather information about our physical environment but leaves us with a cautionary reminder of our obligation to “think about, and evaluate, the potential side effects on people’s lives of the systems we create”—stressing that it is our responsibility to do our utmost to minimize the negative without compromising on the positive.

Gitte Lindgaard and Sheila Narasimhan—in their article entitled Mobile HCI: Thinking Beyond the Screen-Keyboard-Mouse Interaction Paradigm—draw on elements inherent in all of the preceding articles and encourage us to think beyond that to which we are accustomed and to explore the possibilities offered by mobility, mobile technologies, and people on the move in terms of developing novel interaction paradigms. They suggest that the range of possible applications which could ultimately make our lives easier are limited only by our imaginative understanding of problem spaces and the potential to combine existing, and invent and validate new, methods of interaction. They note that, for mobile user interfaces, user safety must be of concern despite its seemingly direct contradiction of the accepted goal of engagement. They go beyond the use of sensors as discussed by Roderick to explore the future for sensory substitution—e.g., for visually impaired users—in addition to discussing the complexities associated with designing user interfaces for other special needs user groups, such as illiterate adults. Complementary to the evolution of interaction techniques is the need to evolve data collection and usability evaluation methods for mobile systems; arguing that there is a place for both lab and field studies in Mobile HCI, Gitte and Sheila encourage us to consider how best to adapt, substitute, or replace investigative methods that “maximize our understanding of contextual constraints on users, usability, and usage patterns”. They urge us to be inventive in our approach to interaction design as well as to invent “novel approaches to understanding users, designing for users, and evaluating the fruits of our collective labor”.

Designing Mobile Phones for Children—Is There A Difference? Janet Read certainly thinks so as outlined in her position article which looks closely at the differences between children’s and adults’ use of mobile phones and the associated implications in the design of these devices. As mobile phones are increasingly appropriated by younger and younger users, Janet argues that the design of mobile phones needs a re-think in order to best meet the needs of
this new user group. In her work with children as technology users, Janet is clearly taking up the gauntlet laid down by Gitte and Sheila in terms of better understanding her users, and focusing on how we can better design for them. She acknowledges that the mobile phone is “simultaneously lauded as a great device and reviled as a destructive irritation”; in discussing the potential benefits of mobile phones—both from a future technological perspective and from the perspective of parents who are pro such technologies—Janet notes that “there is a very fine line between being in touch with a child and the child being surveilled”, an issue which clearly links the discussions of Russell, Antti and Elizabeth, and Roderick. As a proponent of the capacity for mobile phones to benefit children, Janet considers that such technologies for children should be designed to meet their needs and, to this end, presents a series of design ideas to address some of the most serious and common problems with their current design.

In his article entitled SatNav or Sat-Nag? A Case Study Analysis of Evolving HCI Issues in In-Car Computing, Gary Burnett also imbues many of the elements concerning the meaning of being mobile and the ethical issues associated with user interface design (as per the previous articles by Russell and Antti and Elizabeth, respectively)—in this case, specifically those associated with designing in-car systems where safety concerns dominate. Gary introduces the 4 primary tensions inherent in the design of any in-car system, reflecting on their respective impact on the methods, tools, and user-interface design practice employed in this domain.

Using a case study which focuses on the design of a vehicle navigation system, Gary eloquently illustrates the tension between avoiding driver overload but, at the same time, avoiding underload; the latter has ethical implications in terms of drivers’ over reliance (and propensity to blindly follow the guidance of a navigation system irrespective of its accuracy) on the information provided by a navigation system as well as drivers’ over reliance on such systems to the extent that they are becoming increasingly less able to form useful cognitive maps—an inability that negatively impacts drivers’ navigational ability, their flexibility in navigational behavior, and their social responsibility. Gary suggests that, to date, the styles of user interface (for navigation systems) recommended by the research community have actually “exacerbated” problems of driver safety and traffic efficiency; he therefore strongly encourages us to undertake novel studies in this research space.

The final article—entitled Paper Rejected (p>0.05): An Introduction to the Debate on Appropriateness of Null-Hypothesis Testing—by Mark Dunlop and Mark Baillie serves as a timely cautionary and thought-provoking caveat to researchers motivated to make a dent both in the topics highlighted in this issue of the journal as well as the myriad other research avenues of Mobile HCI as a discipline. Deliberately controversial, this article introduces the mobile HCI community to the ongoing discussion on the perceived limitations of p-based null-hypothesis statistical testing—a practice which has been seriously criticized in other domains, some going so far as
to advocating a ban on the use of such techniques. Mark and Mark introduce the key problems associated with the reliance on such statistical methods, reflecting on the severity of the problem within our own discipline—i.e., the extent to which we are “statistical sinners”. They provide some suggested solutions, but principally encourage researchers and reviewers alike to read the deliberately short, and therefore manageable, bibliography presented in the article.

As I hope you will agree, the position articles comprising this issue of the International Journal of Mobile Human Computer Interaction are, in their treatment of the varied yet related subject matter, thought provoking, stimulating, encouraging, and best of all, demonstrative of the passion and dedication of the journal’s advisors. As I said previously, I hope that these articles act as motivating catalysts to encourage you to further explore your existing fields of research with renewed vigor and/or different perspectives, to let your imagination lead you to new and exciting possibilities for interaction with mobile technologies, and to reflect on how you can best consider the ethical ramifications of what we, as a discipline, deliver, and then to act upon these considerations. I would like to close by thanking everyone who is involved with the evolution and development of the journal—although the advisors have been highlighted in this issue, I would also like to recognize the efforts and invaluable contribution of the journal’s board of reviewers and, of course, the essential contribution made by the authors of published articles.