



National Capital Region Chapter of the
ACM Special Interest Group on Computer Human Interaction

Buddy, can you spare the time? How technology affects the economy of attention

Presented by **Professor Warren Thorngate** of the CURE Lab at Carleton University

What?

Attention, as Herbert Simon has noted, is a limited resource. The exchange of attention for information defines communication and provides the conditions for an economy of attention based on principles rather different than those taught in traditional economics courses. Some of these principles allow us better to understand the recursive evolution of information, communication and attention technologies. The principles assist us in producing, distributing, and consuming information, as well as distinguishing between Information that reduces the demand for additional attention from information that increases it. This talk outlines some of the principles of attentional economics and samples some of the implications for Computer Supported Cooperative Work.

Who?

Following an unsuccessful career as a classical guitarist, Warren Thorngate received his BA in Psychology and Mathematics from the University of California, Santa Barbara, then fled to Canada to obtain two more psychology degrees at the University of British Columbia, specializing in the study of human decision making and social behaviour. He spent over a decade developing and evaluating computer mediated communication and information science projects in Latin America and Iran, including the creation of Internet facilities at the University of Havana. While working on these projects, he became a founding member of the National Capital Freenet, Opera Lyra and the Computer User Research and Evaluation (CURE) group at Carleton University. He is currently a visiting professor at Carnegie Mellon University, writing a book on the economics of attention which will include ideas from this presentation. A variant of the presentation was recently given as a keynote address to the Association of Computing Machinery conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work.

Where and When?

The meeting takes place on Wednesday, March 21, 2001 at 7:00 pm in the Conference 2 Boardroom at the Nortel Skyline location.

Directions and a map can be found at www.capchi.org

Note: All attending will be required to register with security. Please arrive 5-10 minutes earlier to allow for registering. The meeting fee is \$5 for non-members and free for CapCHI members (\$20 / year).