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Media Release

STOP YELLING, we're talking online :)

29 May 2007

How is online language different from face-to-face language, and how is the enormous popularity of social networking websites such as MySpace and Facebook affecting how we communicate?

On Tuesday 5 June, Dr Barbara Kelly of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Melbourne will give a talk on *Linguistics and the development of community in computer mediated conversation* at Macquarie University. The event is organised by CSIRO and HCSNet, the Australian Research Council Network in Human Communication Science.

Kelly will discuss her analysis of online conversations over a six-month period from different message boards occurring within a large multi-national organisation, particularly focussing on the use of non-standard written linguistic features which suggest more casual, face-to-face-like interactions. These include omission of pronouns and copulas, non standard punctuation such as <!!>, <@?@>, stylistics including emphasis markers such as *really* and capitalisation to indicate YELLING.

Kelly's study shows that participants who exhibit the most frequent uses of these non-standard linguistic features are those who have the most dense social networks within the online community in which they are posting. That is, they have links to several other participants in the system either through other online communications or through face-to-face communication. Furthermore, users who have dense relationships with other users in one message board and use non-standard linguistic features in that system exhibit little use of non-standard language in their postings on other bulletin boards in which they do not have such dense social networks.

Dr Barbara Kelly is a lecturer in the School of Languages and Linguistics at the University of Melbourne. She obtained her PhD from the University of California, Santa Barbara, focusing on language development through gesture. During this time she carried out fieldwork resulting in a grammar of Sherpa and a love of Tibetan salt tea. She has had a teaching position at Stanford and has also worked in the Social Computing group at IBM, and at Lexicon Branding, Inc which created such brand names such as Pentium, Powerbook, Blackberry, and Zune. Her primary research interests focus around social interaction and social intelligence in online communities.

What: Linguistics and the development of community in computer mediated conversation by Dr Barbara Kelly, University of Melbourne

When: 11am, Tuesday 5 June, 2007

Location: CSIRO Conference Room, Building E6B, Macquarie University, North Ryde, Sydney

Contact: Cecile Paris, Cecile.Paris@csiro.au

Seminar URL: <http://www.ict.csiro.au/HAIL/Abstracts/2007/BarbaraKelly.htm>

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