

COMPUTER SCIENCE  
SEMINAR

*Computing and Autism: A role for technology and technologists*

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**Abstract:** Within the past two decades, autism has gone from being a hidden condition to a rather prominent phenomenon. Almost everyone knows someone impacted by autism, and I am no exception. I have two boys on the autism spectrum, and this experience has driven me to consider how information technology research can play a role in understanding and supporting the many challenges individuals and our society faces. In this talk, I will give an overview of my research in this area. This is not simply a feel good story of one researcher doing work to benefit himself and others. It is a story of how to connect life's real challenges to the work computing researchers do without having to sacrifice a career, or the career of others. I will present a human-centered research agenda with deep ties into areas of computer science, an agenda I hope will cause others to rethink how to motivate their own work. Gregory Abowd is a Distinguished Professor in the School of Interactive Computing and the W. George Professor and Director of the Health Systems Institute at the Georgia Institute of Technology. His research since 1994 has been in the area of ubiquitous computing, and he has attempted to create living laboratories of this third generation of computing in offices, classrooms, and homes. Some of his major project efforts are Classroom 2000 and the Aware Home Research Initiative. Over the past decade, he has focused on problems relating to home and health, with a particular emphasis on technology and autism. He is an ACM Fellow and member of the CHI Academy. In 2007, he received the ACM SIGCHI Social Impact Award and in 2009, he received the ACM Eugene Lawler Humanitarian Award.

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