Attention and Interruption

MICHAEL BERNSTEIN
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cs376.stanford.edu

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Why study attention?

- Understand: how is technology impacting our ability to get things done?
- Design: help people manage their attention

Attention

Task Switching

- Method: observation of 14 knowledge workers
- Research question: how do they organize their work and tasks?
- Results:
  - Switch tool every two minutes
  - Switch task every three minutes
  - Switch working sphere every ten minutes

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[González and Mark, CHI '04]

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The cost of multitasking
[Ophir, Nass, Wagner, PNAS '09]

- People who self-report as **high multitaskers** are actually **worse at multitasking**

- Proposed mechanism: worse at filtering out irrelevant stimuli

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  - Longer task focus

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  - Longer task focus
  - Less stress (as measured by heart rate monitors)

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  - **25 minutes** before resuming

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[Fogarty et al., TOCHI '05]

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