



The Association for Computing Machinery  
Advancing Computing as a Science & Profession

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## ACM COUNCIL ON WOMEN HONORS INNOVATOR IN COMPUTER HUMAN INTERACTION FOR ADVANCES IN DISTANCE COLLABORATIONS

### UC Irvine's Olson Named "Athena Lecturer" for Research on How Remote Collaborators Succeed or Fail

**NEW YORK, March 1, 2011** – The Association for Computing Machinery's Council on Women in Computing (ACM-W) <http://women.acm.org> has named Judith S. Olson of the University of California, Irvine as the 2011-2012 Athena Lecturer for her internationally acclaimed research on the factors which determine the success of teams that collaborate from remote locations. Her work combines computer science with social sciences to develop a rigorous foundation for driving technical and social innovations, which can create widely effective, usable collaborative systems. The Athena Lecturer award celebrates women researchers who have made fundamental contributions to computer science. It includes a \$10,000 honorarium provided by Google Inc.

[http://women.acm.org/participate/awards/athena\\_announcement.cfm](http://women.acm.org/participate/awards/athena_announcement.cfm)

Bridging computer science and psychology, Olson's pioneering studies on interactive computer systems that enable long-distance collaboration have provided evidence and insights into what can be done to improve the quality of teamwork. In her most cited paper, "Distance Matters" published in 2000, she identifies four concepts that determine the success of distant collaboration projects. They include the characteristics of the people involved as well as social factors like the readiness of co-workers to collaborate and share information, and the suitability of the workplace technologies.

Olson also pursued a theoretical framework for her findings on distance collaborations in a Science of Collaboratories project, which resulted in a Theory of Remote Scientific Collaboration (TORSC). Her research, which combines knowledge of the scientific literature with observations from field studies, proposes a set of success measures and analyzes factors that affect those measures. In her chapter in *Scientific Collaboration on the Internet*, published in 2008, she proposes to extend a theory of remote collaboration from scientific research to corporate distributed teams. Her current work focuses on verifying the theory's components and helping new scientific collaborations succeed.

Olson's research has resulted in a relationship with physicians at Children's Hospital near Irvine, CA who are practicing telemedicine. These doctors, who use a combination of videoconferencing and

robotics regularly to treat patients in remote locations, are partnering with Olson to develop a deeper understanding of how these mediating technologies impact patient/doctor perceptions and interactions.

The Donald Bren Professor of Information and Computer Sciences at UC Irvine since 2008, Olson was previously Professor Emerita at the University of Michigan, where she held the Richard W. Pew Collegiate Chair of Human Computer Interaction, and was Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the School of Information.

Olson was named an ACM Fellow <http://fellows.acm.org> in 2008. With her husband, she holds the Lifetime Achievement award from the ACM Special Interest Group on Computer Human Interaction (SIGCHI), presented in 2006. A graduate of Northwestern University, Olson received a B.A. in Psychology. She was awarded a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of Michigan, and was a Postdoctoral Fellow in Cognitive Psychology at Stanford University.

The Athena Lecturer is invited to present a lecture at an ACM event. Olson's lecture will be delivered at the ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work, February 11-15, 2012, in Seattle, WA <http://www.cscw2012.org/>.

Each year, the Athena Lecturer honors a preeminent woman computer scientist. Athena is the Greek goddess of wisdom; with her knowledge and sense of purpose, she epitomizes the strength, determination, and intelligence of the "Athena Lecturers." The 2011-2012 Athena Lecturer award will be presented at the ACM Annual Awards Banquet, June 4, in San Jose, CA.

#### **About ACM**

ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery [www.acm.org](http://www.acm.org), is the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting computing educators, researchers and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field's challenges. ACM strengthens the computing profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

#### **About ACM-W**

ACM-W is the ACM Council on Women in Computing <http://women.acm.org>. It celebrates, informs and supports women in computing, and works with the ACM-W community of computer scientists, educators, employers and policy makers to improve working and learning environments for women.

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