# The Reality Cluster - Realtime Multimedia Communication with Persistence

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## Abstract

The behavioral and cognitive principles of collaboration are well understood, i.e. how people negotiate common meaning in order to work together. During the implementation of collaborative systems, however, the significance of these principles in human-computer interaction are often shadowed by the low-level challenges of building networked applications. The REALITY CLUSTER project explores the question "What if building networked applications was easy?" by utilizing new technologies recently introduced by Macromedia and the Flash 6 plugin.

The REALITY CLUSTER allows multiple users to manipulate a graphical representation of both real-time and stored information in a common repository. The user interface for REALITY CLUSTER borrows principles found in information visualization literature to show relationships between multiple nodes of information while providing users with both focus and context in navigating the nodes. Each node may consist of either recordings or real-time channels for video, audio, text, and static graphics. Hopefully, the REALITY CLUSTER prototype will open web developers to new perspectives in designing web applications. We believe that these technologies from Macromedia, combined with strong grounding in HCI principles and software engineering, will fulfill the promise of a truly disintermediated network communication.