

Chatterbox:

The members of our group had studied NetCalc and Groove during our first project. For the second project we decided to work on a system that the whole class was familiar with and thus chose the PhpBB2 bulletin board, the one on which our CSCW forum is based. We felt that a forum combined with a chat-room would help people to obtain information faster than the current method of posting a topic and then waiting for a reply. People can chat in forum topics that pertain to their interests and thus can meet people with similar interests. We also decided to incorporate some additional features to the bulletin board software as well. But implementing a chat room presented us with more problems similar to those encountered during our TappedIn session.

The features that we decided upon for the board were:

- Permitting only the moderators to completely delete or edit a post that has been made (moderators would not be able to edit their own posts). All other users would be allowed only to “Strike-Out” what they had previously posted. This would help in making the discussions more similar to spoken conversations – “What has said has been said”.
- Agreeing (or disagreeing) to a post. This can be done in a private or public fashion. The public mode would carry a greater weightage than the private one. This feature would let people express support for an opinion, disagreement with a viewpoint, or validate a post as true.
- The chat-room can be shown or hidden as required. The chat room would have a members list (the names of the members currently logged in to the forum) and a chat window that allows public chatting. A user can start a new topic or reply to an existing one. The chats would be color-coded by topic and responses can be made to any of the topics being discussed (chosen through a drop down menu). A private messaging feature would also be available.