The Experience of Computation

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Abstract: The field of Human-Computer Interaction has been undergoing an upheaval over the past several years. Traditional usability-based approaches have been joined by (or even supplanted by) new approaches based on social science and design traditions. These approaches seek to solve problems that seem beyond the reach of the older traditions, and to base the design of new technical artifacts on a broader footing that goes beyond simple measures of performance and effectiveness, focusing instead on the integration of technology use into social, cultural, and working worlds. In this new paradigm, a concern with the usability of artifacts becomes secondary to that of the experience of computation. This report explores some of the issues that lie behind this transition, and attempts to make the idea of the experience of computation more concrete by illustrating how a number of ongoing research efforts contribute towards it.