

CHI2011 Workshop Application

Joanne White,
PhD Student
ATLAS Institute
University of Colorado at Boulder

HCI, Politics and the City: Engaging urban grassroots movements for reflection and action

I have worked with maternity and breastfeeding advocacy in Australia. As a member of the Maternity Coalition (maternitycoalition.org.au), we organized a demonstration at the re-opening of Camden Hospital in Sydney in 2003. Camden Hospital had a record of low-intervention births in its birth practice, but they were stopped during renovations to the hospital. The protest was at the government-funded celebration of the hospital's reopening.

The demonstration involved us bringing approximately 20 birthing activists with their children and babies to the opening event. They stood outside the hospital, chanting crafted 'sound bite' slogans and waving placards for two hours.

The hospital's opening was that it was promoted as providing a much needed service to the local area – a key issue in the upcoming election. However, the hospital was opening without the reinstatement of its much-anticipated maternity services. This deception was so contrived the local Member of Parliament was photographed in the new facility next to a woman who had given birth that week – at a different hospital (however they did not state that was the case).

The demonstration was highly effective. I was personally interviewed by a number of media. We achieved our goals of

- a. highlighting the politicization of maternity services, and
- b. letting local women know maternity services would not be provided.

Background

NSW State Health Department report on the state of Maternity Services at Camden Hospital:
http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/2005/20050211_01.html

Media story referring to the 'fanfare' of the reopening:
<http://www.smh.com.au/news/Health/Maternity-unit-opened-with-fanfare-closes-with-regret/2005/02/11/1108061872409.html>

Personal Biography

I moved from Sydney, Australia to Colorado, USA in August 2008. As a PhD student in the ATLAS multi-disciplinary program at the University of Colorado, I am funded through computer science and the Project EPIC lab, working in crisis informatics. My masters degree was awarded through the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at CU in 2010, where my thesis looked at communities of mom bloggers and their involvement with the multinational, Nestle. I have a startup called TribeVibe (a social media analytics tool). I am a breastfeeding advocate, and mother of four. I blog at mediamum.net and my twitter name is @mediamum.