

Interfaces

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Guerrilla HCI revisited

Editorial

John Knight

Reflective HCI was a theme of *Interfaces* a couple of issues ago. A number of contributors discussed how reflexivity provided valuable and new insights into practice. In some ways reflection brings HCI much closer to traditional design disciplines such as architecture than perhaps more practice-based initiatives such as developing and using design patterns do, for example. Reflecting on action is also a core component of a mature and considerate profession. Thinking about what we do individually and as a community of practice and sharing these thoughts helps to make our values explicit to ourselves and to others. So at a minimum level reflection gives us a design rationale, and at maximum our ethos or *esprit de corps* or something deep and meaningful anyway.

The theme of this issue would seem entirely contradictory to reflection. In particular this issue showcases projects and approaches that emphasise pragmatism in research and design and provisional statements as communication tools. However, I am glad to say that every part of *Interfaces* 75 is suffused with both reflection and the kind of pragmatism shown in guerrilla HCI. Gilbert shows the value of quick research, Milan Guenther describes how just one day spent shadowing users can provide rich insights and Ann Blandford and Richard Young show how a short engagement with our community can help us to really understand our values and maybe more importantly the way forward, including celebrating our diversity.



John Knight is a User Experience Manager at Vodafone and works on mobile phone and applications UI. He was formerly Director of User-Lab at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design and has worked as a freelance designer and researcher. John is also chair of IDEC4, which will be at NordiCHI 2008.

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Contribute to *Interfaces*

Interfaces welcomes submissions on any HCI-related topic, including articles, opinion pieces, book reviews and conference reports.

The deadline for issue 76 is **1 July 2008**

Forthcoming themes

Interfaces 76, Autumn 2008: **Gaming and HCI**. Deadline *1 July 2008*.

Interfaces 77, Winter 2008: **Social Networks**. Deadline *1 November 2008*.

Articles should be MS Word or plain text. Send image as separate files: these must be high resolution digital originals suitable for commercial printing, cropped if desired but not resized, and if edited, saved as tiff or highest quality jpeg. Please supply photographers' credits as appropriate.

Authors to provide a 70-word biography and a high resolution head and shoulders original digital photo. Photographers' credits will be printed if provided.

Send to John Knight, John.Knight@intiuo.com; 16 Combermere Road, Brixton SW9 9QG

This issue's guest columnists



Milan Guenther has worked for over seven years as an interaction designer in Europe. Currently, after returning from a year spent at Nancy Art School in France, he is doing his diploma thesis in communication design at the Fachhochschule Düsseldorf, in a design-led innovation project at SAP Research. Before this he co-founded a software company working on virtual communities and collaborative workspaces, and has designed various business information systems and enterprise software products.



Thomas Hirt studied Product Design at the Dresden University of Science and Technology. He is head of the Digital Communications department at ERCO Leuchten GmbH and a lecturer at Düsseldorf University of Applied Sciences, where he was visiting professor from 2003 to 2005. He has conducted workshops at Chinese universities and gives regular lectures at institutions such as the Management Circle, the DDV (German Designer Association) and the Design Center Stuttgart.



Nick Meara consults in user-centred design through his company Userhappiness. He is a big fan of participatory design and low-fidelity methods for getting the design right. In his spare time he collects and restores vintage computers and already has three. Two are the same, however. Anyone care to swap?
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David Travis holds a BSc (Hons) degree and a PhD in Psychology. His professional affiliations include membership of the British Psychological Society, the Experimental Psychology Society, the Information Architecture Institute and the UPA. His career spans three decades and David has carried out usability consulting for a number of clients and has delivered over 100 seminars for a range of organisations. He has written two books on usability.



Ann Blandford is Director of the UCL Interaction Centre. She views her research as being defined by the problems that motivate her – i.e. reasoning about people's capabilities and behaviours when interacting with systems in complex settings – rather than by particular theories, methods or domains: she prefers to work with whatever approaches best fit the problem. One day she'll work out how to express that more succinctly.

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Richard M Young is Manager and Visiting Professor at the UCL Interaction Centre. He is an unrepentant cognitivist, and his main interests in HCI are in the areas of user modelling, mental models, and errors.

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Paula Alexandra Silva has degrees in Communication Technologies (University of Aveiro) and Multimedia Technologies (University of Porto). She spent seven years teaching and working on UI usability, analysis, design and evaluation before studying for a PhD at Lancaster University under Alan Dix. Her thesis is on the BadIdeas method for supporting creativity and innovation in design. She now teaches HCI at the University of Madeira in a joint degree with CMU.

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This could be you...

Photo credits: page 20–21 Gonçalo Cavaleiro; page 25 David England.

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Deflections

Punch and Judy's Guerrilla HCI Book Club

Gilbert Cockton

For CHI 2003 Panu Kohonen and I introduced the CHI Fringe. I'm sure it was Panu's idea. Kia Höök made it happen, and by 2007 it had grown into alt.chi. I was recently teased for having papers in this and last year's alt.chis. The belief is that serious researchers don't do alt.chi. I don't mind whether you regard me as serious or otherwise, but do glance at the accepted authors for 2007 (www.viktoria.se/altchi/) or 2008 (www.chi2008.org/altchisystem/login.php?action=accepted).

alt.chi allows all sorts of rule breaking, including my insertion of:

Этой субъективной игре со временем, этому нарушению элементарных временных соотношений и перспектив соответствует в хронотопе чудесного мира и такая же субъективная игра с пространством, такое же нарушение элементарных пространственных отношений и перспектив,

which isn't the official ACM conference language of English. It's either about Bakhtin, or by him. I couldn't work out which in a short time with very limited Russian. I included an untranslated Bahktin (circle) quote for its typographically esoteric Russian, not to tease HCI's Bakhtin fans (after all, I happily shared an office with one). It would be totally opaque to most readers. If you can just transliterate, you'll see roots of English words ('perspective' / перспектив) or Bakhtin imports into English ('chronotope' / хронотопе).

My tease was aimed at a series of reviewers' objections to my use of OUP's *Very Short Introductions* (www.oup.co.uk/general/vsi/) as references in research papers. There's a knee jerk reaction here that these aren't proper books. Anyone who actually reads a VSI will realise that they are far better introductions than an obscure paper in an inaccessible journal. So, out came Mr. Punch's typographic cosh for a mild knock about. For the rest of this Deflections, it's over to the gentler long-suffering Judy.

When she's not being harassed by Mr. Punch, Judy will tell you that OUP have mostly got the pick of the best (e.g., Barnes on Aristotle, Belsey on Post-structuralism, Craig on Philosophy, Culler on Literary Theory, Heskett on Design). Books of 100–150 small pages are extremely difficult to write, hence a few do fall well short when no intellectual giant is available to author. Most however are absolute *tours de force*, and quick reads too. Unless I can find something better, a VSI is my default choice for referencing exotic fields for HCI readers, except where short and (well translated) originals are on the web (I've done so recently for Marx, Sartre and Vitruvius).

One may well ask why I need to reference such a wide range of exotic fields. The answer is that as HCI finally starts to get the balance right between H, C and I, it has to look beyond subfields of psychology and sociology to the full breadth of the human sciences (including politics and economics) as well as the Humanities (and in particular, philosophy), Media and the Arts (especially literature and fine arts). Microsoft's

recent HCI 2020 report (research.microsoft.com/hci2020) is called *Being Human*, and stresses the need for grounding design and research in human values. This is where my affordable and accessible endorsements come in. If we are to take the H in HCI as seriously as our colleagues in the Arts, the Humanities and the Human Sciences have done for millennia, then we must develop basic sensibilities across a range of disciplines. Far from being impossible, with good introductions, we can make quick headway. I have benefited during my NESTA fellowship from profound insights arising from reading basic introductory texts. While I could hamstring my opposition by citing obscure, esoteric and recondite originals, I feel that ease of use and learning has to extend to the literacy required for so called Third Wave HCI. I was thus very pleased to see Jeffrey Bardzell's similar generosity in his alt.chi 2008 paper on Interface Criticism, where he too used high quality introductory texts as references (as he also did in his public reviews).

Guerrillas are comrades who share. They have bases to return to after fighting for their cause. While other parts of this issue of *Interfaces* focus on the incursions of Guerrilla HCI, I am recommending some camp-fire reading. You'll find the *Very Short Introduction* series on offer in many UK bookshops (3 for 2), and translated into other European languages too (a CHI workshop photo alerted me to some Dutch ones). As we really go out into the world, people to people, we need to be receptive to a wide range of sensitivities to grow as Interaction Designers. Experimental psychology and/or ethnography were never enough, but could still fill a lifetime of study, leaving no time to design anything. We must be selective and make the best we can out of basic accounts, going deeper as and when it is needed and worthwhile. So, if you want to know more about aesthetics, emotion, art, ethics, economics, anthropology or philosophy, treat yourself to a little pocket-sized book from Oxford's VSI series. They are great 'spare moment' reads when travelling or in between meetings. There is even a *Very Short Introduction to Everything*, which it appears you can only buy as part of a boxed set. That will be my birthday present then.



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Knowledge Exchange. Gilbert has recently completed a NESTA fellowship, developing worth-centred approaches to interaction design, on which he presented at CHI 2008's alt.chi, Design Theatre and a panel.

View from the Chair

Global HCI

Russell Beale

One of the great advantages of being an academic is that, very occasionally, you get to go on sabbatical – a period of time when you can focus on your research to the exclusion of everything else. I am lucky enough to be on sabbatical at the moment, though my experience is not quite like that – I spent the first two months clearing the decks of projects to mark, papers to finish, projects to set up, administration to sort out, and so on, though a date with an airline ticket and a flight to South Africa put a firm stop to doing anything more.

I went to Southern Africa to try to understand more about HCI in the developing world – to see if we really could have any impact in areas in which computers are rare (and, when I was there, reliable electricity rarer still!). Since much HCI revolves around the latest technologies, and faster computers/broader internet connections/larger screens, what could it usefully contribute in a third world country? One thing I realised was that, since HCI is so intricately concerned with people and assisting them, it was the discipline above all others that would have something to say, if any of them did.

In places with intermittent power, limited communications, little media presence, and complex social relationships, interactive mobile systems can deliver a real and effective engagement with politics, social reform, justice, education, health

I came back recently, quite moved by my experiences. Many of the things I came back with are actually things that I had heard about before, but never given full credence to (or, in many cases, never thought enough about). A number of things are now clear to me.

The mobile phone is the computing platform for the third world. This is a significant fact, on many levels. Whilst desktops and laptops are rare, and the costs of running them significant, and the logistics in remote places more so, the mobile is almost as ubiquitous there as it is here. Many people have SIM cards – they may share phones, either within their own social groups, or via entrepreneurs in townships – and connectivity seems better than down the M5 here. Thus, people are, at least potentially, connected – and they have a platform that can compute. Designing for such an infrastructure is quite different to the usual systems we work on in the developed world – we (at least, I) often devise systems that have servers, internet connections, laptops, and people as integral parts: a mobile is another communication route, an adjunct to this other infrastructure. In the third world, all that ‘other’ infrastructure is not there – systems have to be designed just for the mobile, and other mobiles.

Design for the third world is not design for the first world with a few tweaks. The different infrastructures first dictate this – but equally, there are many here who design purely mobile systems, and so there has to be more. And there is: social circumstances are very different, different social issues and responsibilities abound, and the role of technology is not necessarily seen so positively as it is in the first world. This has led to the excellent work of those engaging in designing for the developing world.

HCI can make a difference. I have always believed this, only now I do more so. In places with intermittent power, limited communications, little media presence, and complex social relationships, interactive mobile systems can deliver a real and effective engagement with politics, social reform, justice, education, health; I have seen projects delivering just such changes, and they are having a remarkable impact.

All this may be familiar to you – in some ways, it was to me – but it’s a little like a famine – we know about it, we sort of understand it, but we don’t tend to do that much about it – a feeling of impotence, or disconnectedness, tends to make us push it to one side. We may make the odd payment to a charity, or get involved in Comic Relief, but the concepts don’t hit home too strongly. But when you visit, when you see the vastness of the place, meet the people, understand more about the social and political situation, then the same truths hit home much more personally and strongly. The great thing is, *we* can make a difference; even stuck in our comfortable western world, we can join in with development projects, can give time to work with burgeoning IT initiatives in the developing world, can give expertise to transform people’s lives. And what more can you ask for: research that has an effect?

Acknowledgements

Thanks to EPSRC and the Royal Academy of Engineering for their support.



Russell Beale leads the Advanced Interaction Group in the School of Computer Science at the University of Birmingham. His research focus is on using intelligence to support user interaction. Before returning full time to academia and research in 2003, he co-founded, ran, or worked for various internet-related companies.

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Rapid user-centred design for mobile enterprise applications

This is a summary of a design and research project carried out earlier this year within the Department of Design at the University of Applied Sciences in Düsseldorf. The University and LG Mobile initiated a project to develop innovative design concepts for future scenarios of mobile interaction. Students were drawn from the Interaction Design Course and the work done in small groups. The early stages of the project included generic research, and one of the findings from this was that there is a lack of well-designed mobile products and services for business users – especially SMEs and smaller and niche concerns.

This insight triggered the idea of designing a mobile user experience to support sales staff. The sales perspective was chosen to illustrate the concept of a holistic solution for a specific business problem and also to provide a realistic context for designing a mobile product. I started work on the project by considering and documenting the main drivers and constraints for design which became key design principles throughout the project.

Context

Business users are likely to use work-related mobile products and services within a wider business process context. This business process also probably has strong dependencies on other processes including those that are automated via IT systems and those with people. Therefore, we can see that the context of use is a highly collaborative one and any successful application will need to support joint working not just in a technical sense but at the interface between people and technology.

Adoption

It is a common misconception that if enterprise software is bought and rolled out by a company then users will adopt it because they have to. However, there are countless examples of the reverse where products are rejected or ignored by the intended audience because of usability issues, missed user or business requirements, and/or an overall lack of a positive experience with the product. While there are many 'expert' products in the enterprise market these require a lot of training and therefore any solution must be usable for a wide range of users from initial use onward.

Buy-in

Corporate cultures together with individual personal styles and ways of working play an important role in business. This makes the need to support customisation for the business and the end user imperative. At a deep level this means that the solution must be flexible enough to be deployed in radically different situations and companies and also that end users can feel that the application fits with their functional and emotional needs. Without this buy-in users will never fully adopt new products and services and use them to their best advantage, and application suppliers will have to build bespoke systems for every client.

Coherence

The business scenario impacts on all aspects of the design and a thorough analysis has to go hand in hand with user experience design in order to create a coherent model. A coherent model is one that seamlessly integrates all related activities, tasks, media and devices in order to be effective, efficient and satisfactory in use.

The client – ERCO Lighting

We chose to work for a lighting company who were fortunately also keen to work with a University. ERCO is a German company specialising in producing engineering hardware and software for architectural lighting. The company's motto is "we sell light, not illumination" and in order to deliver this the company uses highly skilled architects to act as on-site lighting consultants rather than using traditional salespeople and just selling lights. The company was ideal to play the role of a customer as they demand both a standard solution framework (to minimise cost) and at the same time a large extent of customisation of the product (to meet their specific business needs). This partnership enabled us to focus on the creation of an efficient way of doing business and necessitated exploring how to best deal with on-site visits, accommodating varying user needs and corporate cultures. We then chose to directly engage with a potential key user from ERCO in order to understand the end-to-end sales process.

Requirements gathering

Due to the nature of the design problem and our own values we chose a user-centred design process, but tailored this to the practicalities of the project, which were short timelines and limited resources. In detailed user interviews, we gained many insights about working practices including key tasks and priorities that our solution had to support. A holistic view of all user activities was important to avoid restricting our thinking about alternatives, and to help us to really think outside of the box to find the best ways to support users' needs in a mobile and collaborative context of use.

Because we did not want to interfere too much with the business and take up too much time with ERCO staff, we restricted ourselves to spending one day with one user. Of course, ideally we would have had a much deeper and long-term engagement with users but even one day provided a wealth of data and in fact gave enough insights to deliver something very different from what previously existed. Spending a day observing our key user in his work environment, travelling to different locations and watching the sales representative interacting with clients not only provided a lot of valuable data, but also inspiration for different design ideas.

The experience also revealed a lot about the wider business context, which provided direction for designing a mobile sales solution in general, not just for the specific needs of

ERCO. Most important was how such a solution could support consultants when interacting with clients. In addition, it was clear that the system had to facilitate simple parallel usage and orchestration of different software and hardware including spreadsheets, email, telephone, documentation and even route navigation, and accessing web resources.

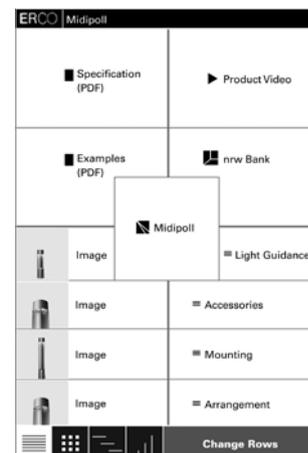
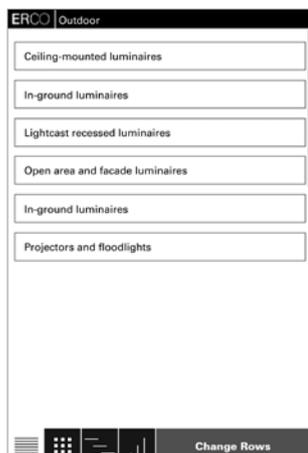
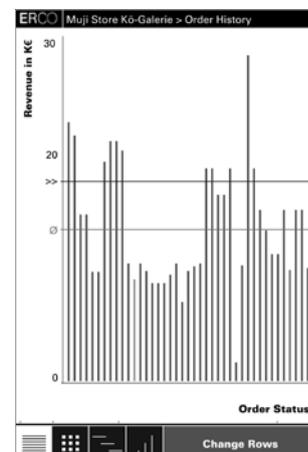
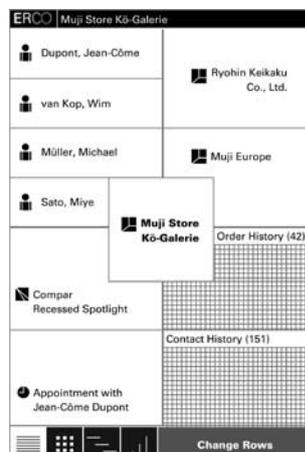
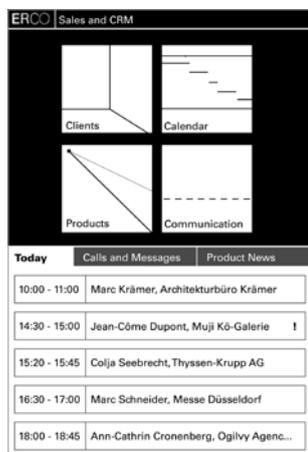
From our one-day shadowing exercise, we quickly discovered how little time was spent on value-adding work in sales and how much time and effort was spent collecting and adjusting data in various different media, devices and systems. Another opportunity for innovation emerged from analysing the current management of sales prospects, related client information and pending orders. Immersing ourselves in the salesperson's work made us realise that there was a large gap between our mental model of sales meetings and the reality.

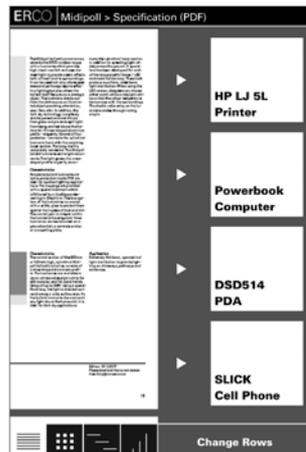
Customers demanded a lot of professional advice, which turned the ERCO sales representative into more of an expert adviser than sales operative. It was not just our conception of the tasks and activities that changed but also the impact of the huge variations in the context of use. Among the locations that salespeople worked in were some unfinished sites with-

out electricity, chairs or windows – our device had to function even in such a use context. Lastly, we also looked at the systems through which sales are processed and the desktop solutions that were in place to support this. Considering these two contexts of use enabled us to develop a deep understanding of the problem space and also candidate design concepts for improving on the current situation.

Analysis

Collecting the findings from the shadowing activity resulted in a huge amount of data and required a lot of interpretation and synthesising, a process that quickly felt overwhelming due to the increased complexity we had discovered simply by spending one day with our prototypical user. Taking all of this into account to create a simple but adequate solution became the key design challenge. In order to communicate our understanding we created various abstract models to analyse the current way of working and to discover opportunities for major improvements.





Design

Even before becoming familiar with the various user and business requirements, we started to create simple schematic drawings, paper models and rough mock-ups of early design ideas, to illustrate concepts and to directly map the research findings to concrete solution approaches. By creating an early vision of the design including detailed graphic elements, we could quickly define a visual direction and ensure a consistent graphical implementation of our interaction models and interface concepts, even though these designs in the end had almost no functional features in common with the final prototype that had gone through all the iteration and validation phases.

This activity was done in parallel with the creation and detailed specification of the business scenario. By mapping these two different approaches in stories and storyboards, we could locate missing pieces and create a consistent abstract model of objects, tasks and views for the interaction design and the information architecture of the application. Doing this together also helped to prioritise the different components by considering the various user and business needs at the same time. We iteratively refined these models to the point where we could extract candidate user interface solutions as well as final versions of the underlying functionality and system dependencies.

Participatory design and user testing

The prototypes that we developed were used for a constant, iterative validation and refinement of design concepts through user testing in order to address potential usability flaws, and to find the best solution among several alternatives. The fact that these prototypes were quite simple and rough supported the open exchange of thoughts, because it was clear that the users' comments could improve the design without causing too much effort.

As well as user testing we included shallow participatory design sessions. Here we asked participants for their input by getting them involved in sketching screens, illustrating processes, performance diagrams, and data representations, which provided an additional source of ideas that were very close to our business user's mind, and which directly impacted on the concept.

The final design solution

Our solution combines a mobile device with a network infrastructure service and an enterprise software component. All elements the user interacts with are tailored to the underlying hardware, a modern and not too small touch screen with fast and reliable network access. The solution provides access to all critical data and necessary transactions independently of the user's current location. The concept also incorporates some key innovations for sales management that could only have emerged from the user-centred design approach we took. One defining paradigm is a network-based information architecture that shows all related data as linked objects and uses multiple views to support different aspects of the business tasks.

Depending on the current context of use the visualisation provides an overview of a customer's projects or their contacts in order to review the order history in a highly integrated way. For example, the user can quickly access relevant goals and performance indicators or share a document with the client *in situ* and these differing views are easily switchable. This means that sales staff can contextualise what they are doing moment by moment with the company's strategy, be more efficient, focus on value-added work and hopefully have a more interesting and fun work life.

Using standard components we were still able to offer a large degree of customisation for the enterprise customer and the end user, which was one of our initial guiding principles. By customising the product's visual appearance, integrating assets such as product catalogues and marketing material, and using it as a demonstration and communication tool for clients, the solution thus becomes a key element in the company's communication strategy as well as business process. So in the ERCO scenario, when the sales representative uses the solution it supports the whole customer journey including preparation before a customer visit, sharing of product sheets and development of tailored solutions whilst in conversation, and finally the processing and monitoring of sales.

Conclusion

In this project, we learned many lessons about user-centred design in general, about mobile applications and about design for business users in an enterprise context. The resulting concept is a big step forward to innovative usage of mobile user interface capabilities and shows that to do this successfully we need to think about the users, the device and the ecosystem that technology and mobile activities exist within. We received many positive reactions from LG Mobile as well as from potential users and customers of such a solution, which has the capability to create a real competitive advantage for the customer.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to John Knight for helping write up this project and Markus Luedemann for initiating it.

Usabilatte to stay

Eight tips for running café usability sessions

Nick Meara

A few years ago I read an article that changed the way I do usability testing. In the June 2004 Gotoreport [1], Erik Burns introduced café usability testing: recruiting and running usability tests with participants in local cafés. This was a revelation to me. Even though I was using ‘discount’ methods and didn’t maintain a formal lab, Erik’s technique for selecting participants *in situ* offered an opportunity to streamline the whole recruitment process. I could get feedback on designs more quickly and economically, and pass the savings on to colleagues and clients. I ran my first café usability session in 2005 and I’ve been hooked ever since.

If café usability’s new to you and it sounds like a useful technique, then here are a few tips to get you started and hopefully avoid some of the common pitfalls.

You can run café usability sessions anywhere

You don’t need to restrict yourself to cafés. Conferences, trade shows, events, museums, canteens, showrooms, student unions, user groups; wherever you think you’ll find people who match your target audience.

I’ve offered chocolate, Gmail accounts, ice lollies, champagne and vouchers as well as the old workhorse, hard cash

The bigger your recruitment sign, the better

In café evaluations you’re recruiting participants on the spot. If you’re on your own, your main tool is usually a sign offering an incentive. A4 desk signs are OK in public spaces where you need something inviting yet unobtrusive, but if you really want people’s attention you can’t beat a big poster. Position yourself next to a wall and stick the poster above your table (provided you’ve got permission, of course). Your sign does all the hard work and you can focus on the evaluations.

Get creative with your incentives

A big poster means you’ll get people’s attention, so now you need to concentrate on how you’re going to entice them to participate: the incentives. There’s less rigmarole for participants in café evaluations than in standard lab tests. You can be more adventurous and, um, budget conscious, in the kinds of incentives that you offer. The original article talked about free beer; I’ve offered chocolate, Gmail accounts, ice lollies, champagne and vouchers as well as the old workhorse, hard cash. People tend to respond well to something a bit out of the ordinary, so go wild!

Position yourself where your participants are

This may seem obvious because you’re out in the field already, but your location in the chosen venue can really affect how

many people you recruit. If possible try to visit the site beforehand to get a feel for busy times and places. Flexibility is the key; if you’re not seeing enough participants then it may be time to move.

If you’ve got help, recruit people away from your base

Take turns to go around the café/conference/canteen/hall/ wherever and ask people if they’ve got a bit of spare time. Print some cards or simple paper leaflets with your company name, where you’re located in the venue and an outline of what you’re doing. Hand these out to people as you go around. At conferences, for example, there are often lulls early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Visiting other vendors’ stands and telling them about your evaluations can provide extra participants during these slow times.

Run your evaluations in public

I’ve seen some correspondence lately suggesting that you recruit people in public areas, but conduct the sessions somewhere private. Informality is the key to this technique. Running your sessions in public keeps it that way. Once you’ve withdrawn to another room you may as well be back in the lab, never mind that now you’ve got to manage participants in a separate room as well as maintaining your recruitment setup.

Listen first, then ask

Café evaluations are conducted away from the lab, so this is a great opportunity to let your users lead and observe their behaviour. Try Mark Hurst’s listening lab approach [2] rather than using pre-defined tasks. Talk to participants to discover what they would normally do on a website or application like yours. Note their answers and then ask them to try some of these tasks with whatever artifacts you’ve got (full site on a laptop, prototypes, etc.). If there are specific areas that you want to test, throw in a few exercises of your own, but leave these until you’ve had a chance to see the participant’s usual behaviour.

Allow for more time, but don’t count on it

I usually ask for 20 minutes of people’s time, but the informality of café evaluations is infectious. Once participants have started they’ll often give you far longer. Have a few standby tasks or questions ready to make the most of each session. As with all research, though, respect for the participants is paramount and that extends to their time. If you’ve asked for 20 minutes then that’s what you should aim for. (You’ll be surprised at how much you can achieve in just that short period.)

- 1 Burns, E. (2004) *Want Free Beer* [Internet], Gotomedia. Available from: http://www.gotomedia.com/gotoreport/june2004/news_0607_wantfree-beer.html [Accessed April 2008]
- 2 Hurst, M. (2003) *Four Words to Improve User Research* [Internet], Good Experience. Available from: <http://goodexperience.com/2003/10/four-words-to-improve-user-res.php> [Accessed April 2008]

Case study: guerrilla interaction design of an Intranet

Introduction

I started this article with the aim of summarising a project and illustrating some of the guerrilla HCI methods I used. I have not deviated from this goal, but the article has certainly grown, although this added depth has been useful to me and hopefully you too. It is not often that practitioners get the time and space to reflect on what they do but the exercise of reflection spurred by writing this article has shown how valuable an activity this is.

Design problem

I worked on a short project (two weeks) for a large public sector organisation that wanted to redesign their Intranet. It was an interesting project and especially so given the underlying design problem that centred on the failure of the Intranet to engage with its audience. There were plenty of other problems too, such as poor accessibility, complex CMS and deep navigation but these paled into insignificance when compared to the lack of love users had for it.

Everyone in the organisation knew the Intranet was bad, so I did not have to prove this but rather find a solution. Remedying the lack of attachment and involvement signalled that this was not just an interface problem but a deeper organisational one. So an implicit part of the brief was to shift the organisation toward a more user-centric philosophy, the rationale for this being that increasing engagement was built upon empowering the Intranet's constituency as a whole, rather than a subset who were either technically savvy and/or relatively powerful in the organisation hierarchy.

Everyone in the organisation knew the Intranet was bad, so I did not have to prove this but rather find a solution

Low engagement was also reflected in the structure of the organisation. Departments tended to be inward looking and work in silos. This was clearly reflected on the Intranet whereby different departments defined themselves with varying degrees of clarity and panache and also sought to control ownership of their patch, often in competition with others to the detriment of the user experience as a whole. This led me to the realisation that part of my role was to create a positive narrative of how the Intranet had failed and what measures were needed to bring a happy ending without apportioning blame to the current situation.

It quickly became clear that the Intranet had a double life. For most users the Intranet was in essence an online phone-book. For a minority of users (mainly in comms and marketing) the Intranet was the oracle through which the organisa-

tion communicated its wisdom. Through my work and to the chagrin of management, I found that the majority of users did not want the Intranet to be used for cascading vision statements, but really wanted a good address book and access to tools that would practically help their day-to-day work.

Forensics

As on most projects, I had limited time and resources. Actually, I was the resource and so I really had to up the ante. Rather than planning I got stuck in and tried to talk to as many people as possible. I talked to anyone and everyone and if I were being smart I would call my approach something like a 'forensic' one rather than an *ad hoc* one. In either case, the situation meant that I was less interested in measurement and getting proof than I would be in more purely 'usability' focused projects. Instead of proof, I concentrated on gaining insights, reflecting these back to stakeholders and rooting out problems, often proceeding on hunches, and grabbing at any old anecdotal piece of evidence, sometimes coming from just one person.

Working 'forensically' I did not care much about whether my findings were generalisable or representative as I found the more extreme results the most useful to design from and I only had one Intranet project. While I wanted to really understand the design problem personally, I did not have the time or motivation to communicate this understanding quantifiably, but rather kept ideas and insights in the form of notes that were certainly biased, but useful summaries and calls to action for design that anyone could understand.

The Wall

I tried to socialise my findings as they emerged simply by sticking the notes I made onto whiteboards (The Wall) and changing them, chucking them and adding to them. The wall became not just my own working knowledge of the emerging solutions and problems but also communicated it in real time to the team I was working for. At one level the wall was my daily progress report, and later on I used the same wall to map all of the content and functions from the research stage and developed a number of alternative approaches to delivering it. Rather than building up libraries of use cases and UI specifications, I just collected hunches and potential solutions such as:

Q Everyone wants to own the homepage

A The homepage is strictly and impartially managed and balances messages and tools

I singularly failed to have detailed demographics on the user groups involved or statistical analysis of any data at all but as an exercise in reflective action it worked. The test of this approach was that I could increasingly predict users' attitudes

and the problems they faced (even including ones that they personally had not encountered) more accurately and more frequently as the project went on. On the other hand this approach may have appeared unstructured and a bit haphazard to those around me. Fortunately the client was happy with the deliverables, but it might have turned out differently.

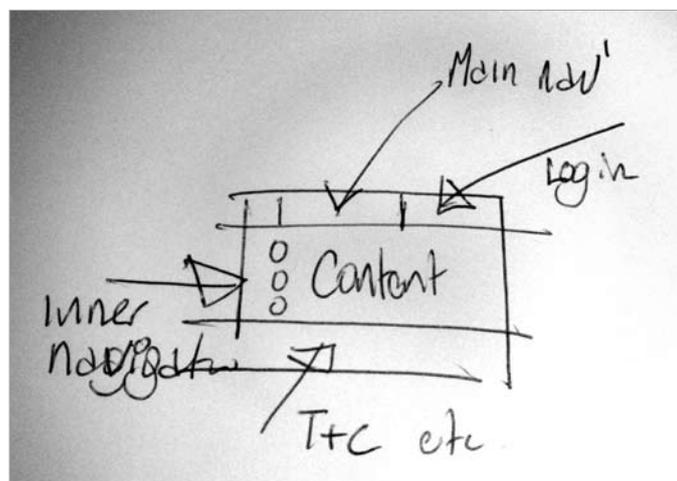
Clouseau, Columbo or chaos

Partly because of the brief I found myself in a slightly odd position in being both researcher and designer. OK, I am not big on titles and I was the only person on the project doing the work. But despite often high levels of stress this turned out to have positive effects, and in particular knowing that I would have to implement any research findings ensured that I focused only on what could be useful and provide actionable results. As well as focusing the research, this role also shifted my work from producing a static final design solution or requirements to more of a provisional statement of current knowledge of the design problem to get feedback.

Contextual blah blah

Talking to lots of people in the first couple of days enabled me to develop understanding quickly. I did impose some structure on this but only after I had a clear notion of where the project was going and what issues needed a story to support them, and I used rapid contextual interviews to do this. These interviews sounded a bit like what you would find in something by Beyer and Holtzblatt. They took a maximum of half an hour, were semi-structured, and took place *in situ*. The contextual element was critical because I learnt and communicated back to the project sponsors critical facts and insights: for example, the Civil Engineers often worked off site (sic), and most users were forbidden to use the internet and had monitors the size of car wing mirrors.

I tried to be impartial but in some cases got very chatty with the interviewees, some of whom became more than



sources of data: they were co-designers and champions of change. The results of this contextual research indicated which parts of the Intranet were used and also valued, missing content and functions, problems encountered by users and important user scenarios. I also collected more subjective feedback such as war stories of the critical incident type which gave me some good inputs in terms of the key use cases and also exceptions to 'normal' usage.

I tried to socialise my findings as they emerged simply by sticking the notes I made onto whiteboards (The Wall) and changing them, chucking them and adding to them.

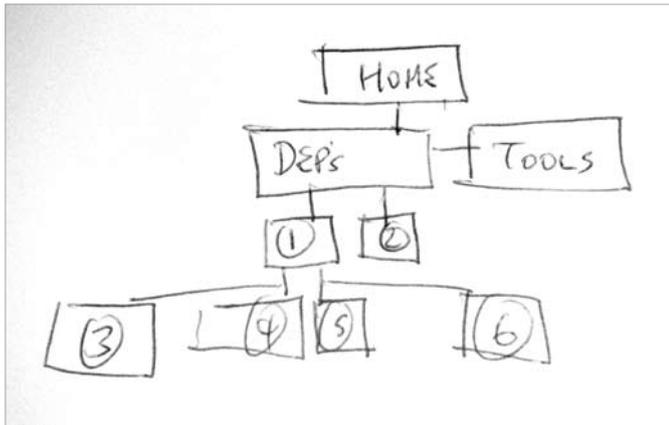
Power prototyping

Partly because I am technology phobic and partly because I had to work quickly I chose to use PowerPoint as a prototyping tool in the project. This was a big step: I hate PowerPoint probably more than I hate Excel, which comes out somewhere near the pain of giving away a 'Ready, Steady, Who' EP to a 'friend' over twenty years ago. Why does PowerPoint reformat things when you copy and paste them (from other Microsoft documents!) and why is it so difficult to position things; it's an application created to inflict RSI. Anyway, as you can tell I am no fan of PowerPoint but as a quick prototyping tool it has some good qualities, including:

- It's easy to make on the fly changes;
- Everyone understands the semantics of a presentation, everyone uses it, can open it and change it themselves;
- You can print it, beam it and collaboratively work on it; and
- You can even use it for clickthroughs and animations.

Exemplary personas

Using PowerPoint really helped develop and share my evolving knowledge of the design problem and also share and iterate provisional design solutions with users. But I also needed to keep a focus on the design problem and the real user in the project. Again, taking the analogy of forensics, I needed to build a photofit image of the archetypal user and their motive for using the Intranet. It was clear from the outset that stakeholders had very stereotypical characterisations of the Intranet's users.



Rather than trying to model every user, or even show the average one, I took the most extreme ends of the user profile based on the contextual interviews I had carried out. In order to calibrate this extreme, I also took someone in the middle for good measure and so I developed profiles for three archetypal users. The first was the CEO for a local authority, the second the woman from the motor pool and the third was a middle ranking IT professional just out of college.

Did I create fully blown personas for these people? Did I visualise them at all? Did I validate them or specify what they ate for breakfast? Err... No, actually I built up a personal knowledge of these people and would think "what would the motor pool woman think about this?" I did not share the personas around too much either but answered questions about the design and research findings through them. It still amazes me today that just these short sentences conjure up memories of the composite of people they represent. In this project, personas were a mythical pragmatic tool for answering questions and making trade-offs without constantly bothering the real people who were usually busy doing their day-to-day work.

Critical scenarios

While I could skip real personas I could not design anything without some user needs and use cases. Rather than trying to document every function and user requirement I decided to take just a few critical ones and exaggerate their impact, and I also tried to think of ways that I could really deliver these functions optimally. This was important for driving design, but also for communicating the real user needs of the application rather than the perceptions of what was needed. So for each persona I developed a single critical scenario of use. Of course I did not ignore other users and use cases but these were intentionally sidelined, although I had done some sanity checking that these other needs and functions were unlikely to break the proposed design solution as in some way or other they were subsets of the main scenarios for each persona.

Taking a step back it was clear that the Intranet facilitated communicating information and delivering useful tools and functions, and acted as a repository for knowledge and documents; and it turned out that each persona also exemplified one of these needs. The CEO wanted to use the Intranet for

rebranding the organisation, the motor pool woman wanted to check the insurance records on ten vehicles and the IT clerk wanted to book a room. This information was enough to steer the underlying interaction paradigm for redesign, and it worked because everything fitted under the pillars of communication, information and tools. At this stage I had core requirements and could develop alternatives without being hindered by the feasibility of implementation; partly because building the thing came later and was out of my direct control, but also because delivery required organisational change first in order to understand the underlying problem and resource a deeper change than changing the CSS files.

Scenarios were also useful in a more implicit way in understanding the organisational changes needed to deliver an engaging Intranet. Those who had used the Intranet for many years had seen it become bogged down by irrelevant content, so that disenchantment had taken root. Furthermore, it was difficult for many people to see beyond the current situation, and so extending scenarios into the future helped to understand current problems and also to drive design and frame the organisational changes necessary to deliver a real improvement. For example, I used 'what if' scenarios to explore content management with teams:

What if every page on the Intranet had to follow an agreed template with, for example, contact information?

What if each team had an Intranet champion?

Validation: real or probable

I did not carry out any formal lab testing of the prototype. Instead I used the participatory design sessions to validate design decisions and make iterations based on user feedback. This meant that there was a quite high probability of user acceptance of the final design. I did carry out some group 'crits' of the design, however. I intentionally recruited mixed groups to do this with enough representation from different teams in the groups to ensure everyone had their piece. Rather than measuring usability, I was more concerned with highlighting the organisational challenges and implications of the design. This was also partly why I steered away from lab testing because an Intranet is a living application that needs to be validated in use. I think I provided a good starting point though.

Conclusion

At the end of the project I delivered the key screens for a redesigned Intranet including a template homepage, address book and department page. As well as wireframes I also delivered a roadmap for implementing the redesign based on a user-centred design process where my work was the initial input in a much larger engagement and design process. Lastly, I distilled my main findings into a set of principles, which I published in the Society for Public Information Networks magazine, promoting UCD and highlighting the challenges.

Experiencing design

One's own experience

Robert St Amant

Every year I greet a new group of computer science students who have signed up for my HCI class. By the end of the semester, most of them will have a reasonable grasp of the basics of HCI, and some of them will become quite enthusiastic about the topic. This year, the projects turned in by students, working in teams, included a voice-controlled video game, a gesture-controlled Web browser, a social networking application for gamers, and a variety of personal information organisers, on the desktop as well as on cell phones and other mobile devices.

Over the past ten years or so I've noticed students becoming more interested in applications that push the bounds of what is currently possible, generally targeting what Jonathan Grudin calls *discretionary hands-on use* in his article 'Three Faces of Human-Computer Interaction' (*IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, 2005). That is, students are less interested in building a better calendar system, financial planner, or electronic voting ballot; they look to applications and devices that fit into the natural and often optional activities of our everyday lives. How can I contact my friends? Could I play a familiar game in a different way? What would people like to do with their phones that isn't easy to do now?

In some of these applications, the context of use is critical. Surprisingly, it's not always easy to translate experiences with the real world into insights about the design of interactive software. I'll ask my students, "Have you ever heard the phrase 'stupid user'?" (Everyone has.) "Have you ever put salt in your coffee instead of sugar, because the paper packets look similar?" (Many have.) "Did you think of yourself as a stupid condiment user?" More detailed examples touch on similar ideas:

I work as a technician in a veterinary hospital. We give puppies a vaccine called DHLPPC, which requires booster shots later. Some dogs have an allergic reaction to the Lepto virus (the 'L' part of the vaccine), so later shots use the DHPPC vaccine (without the 'L'). The problem is that both vaccines come in bottles that are the same size and have labels that are almost identical, except for tiny print on one reading 'without the Lepto virus'. The wrong vaccine can be deadly, but the labels make it really easy to make a mistake.

I work in a bank as a teller. Sometimes I'll go to the vault to pull out a stack of bills, which are wrapped in straps. The straps are coloured and labelled with the total amount in the stack. The problem is that some of the straps are wrapped around different denominations of bills, but they're coloured the same and have the same total dollar value. So if I'm in a hurry, I might want \$1000 in \$50s but I'll get \$1000 in \$100s by mistake, because it's hard to tell the difference between them when I'm rushed.

The shower faucet in my bathroom has a lever with a circle going around it. There's an 'Off' label at the bottom. A blue arrow labelled 'Cold' curves up on the left side, and a red 'Hot' arrow continues downward on the right. The problem is that the lever must be turned in the direction opposite the arrows to turn on the water, and the labels are just relative – you turn one direction for colder and the other for hotter water. But if you just position the lever over the 'Hot' label, only cold water comes out.

A few of the high-fidelity prototypes turned in by students will inevitably include labels and icons that are too small or too similar to distinguish at a glance. This often happens with simulations of handheld devices, which may include closely spaced icons and small text labels. Adequate, in some cases, for a mouse-driven desktop application, but prone to error on a touch or handheld keypad interface. (Occasionally a touch screen interface will be simulated to include roll-overs, in which an icon changes its visual appearance when the pointer moves over without selecting it. The developers are usually surprised that they hadn't realised that touch interfaces aren't well suited for this type of feedback.) Misleading icons and text are just as common, when students haven't thought hard enough about the mental models that users may bring to the use of their application.

These are straightforward problems that are well addressed by formative evaluation techniques in HCI, and students in my class usually find the results compelling: "One of the users we worked with said that our prototype didn't have X. It actually did, but none of the users could find it." To those who still wonder whether the attention to usability issues is worth the effort, I can say, "Imagine building an application that turns out to be popular with, say, 10,000 users. Now think about the last thing that you used – a faucet, a plastic container, even a toy – that was a bit too complicated and took you an extra five seconds to figure out. If you could save five seconds for every one of your application's users, how many hours of your individual effort would it take to balance that out?" It's not a perfect argument, but it does bring home the amount of leverage that good design can apply.



Robert St Amant is an associate professor in the computer science department at North Carolina State University. The work in his lab is a blend of human-computer interaction and artificial intelligence, with an emphasis on planning concepts. He's interested in building intelligent tools to help users with complex tasks.

Robert St Amant
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UK HCI research: a living community

Do HCI researchers in the UK constitute a 'community', or are we merely a set of individuals and local groups with pairwise-overlapping interests but no overall structure or coherence? If we *are* a community, what kind of a community are we, and should we be taking steps to identify, clarify, and strengthen our community? If we *aren't* a community, should we be trying to build ourselves into one?

During 2007, a series of events took place to discuss these and related questions. This article reports briefly on those events, summarises the issues that arose from the discussions, and ends with some recommendations. More information about the meetings themselves, including lists of participants and many of the presentations, can be found at <http://www.future-uk-hci.org.uk/>

If we are a community, what kind of a community are we, and should we be taking steps to identify, clarify, and strengthen our community? If we aren't a community, should we be trying to build ourselves into one?

The events

The first event was a one-day meeting in London on 17 April 2007, attended by 20 invited, senior HCI researchers. Gerrit van der Veer (Open U, Netherlands) gave an invited presentation on *Coping with Moore's Law and more: HCI research in a moving world*. Russell Beale talked about the recent international review of computer science research from the perspective of the British HCI group. And Stephen Payne gave us his thoughts about interdisciplinary challenges and opportunities for HCI. The afternoon included a breakout into three working groups, on respectively *research challenges*, *interdisciplinarity & community building*, and *quality & excellence*. The day ended with a report-back and plenary discussion.

Two months later, a two-day workshop was held in Loughborough at the Burleigh Court conference centre (a venue which worked well). The 27 participants included both established researchers and early career researchers in HCI (ECRs: lecturers and post-docs early in their research careers). The workshop focused on the future structure of HCI research in the UK, and the opportunities for ECRs to play their part in it. The programme included a mix of invited talks and breakout groups, where ECRs and established researchers worked, partly separately and partly together, to identify and discuss key goals and directions and likely challenges and opportunities for UK HCI research. The workshop was intended to

provoke further discussion among the research community, with specific consideration given to the role of ECRs and the development of their career paths.

The final events took place during the HCI 2007 conference at Lancaster, 3–7 September 2007. A tutorial was given on the theme of *Snakes and ladders: Some rules of the funding game*, based on the view that, although research funding can be something of a lottery, one's chances are improved by understanding the explicit and implicit rules of the game. A panel was organised to discuss the topic of 'Coherence, Community and Strategy in HCI'. Its premise was that the HCI research community appears fragmented, with different approaches, values and assumptions. In that context, the panel was invited to consider: *What are the markers of a healthy discipline, and how can we promote the health of HCI?* While none of the discussions resulted in clear conclusions, there were some important emerging themes.

Emerging themes

Several themes arose repeatedly in discussion at the various meetings. Here we focus on three of those: the interdisciplinary nature of our community, ways to develop the leading researchers of the future, and how to recognise and nurture quality in research.

Community and interdisciplinarity

One theme was the interdisciplinarity inherent in the HCI enterprise, and its impact on the HCI community.

The London meeting exposed a paradox in the nature of the UK community. Participants all seemed pleased to see each other, and the nature of that pleasure was in several cases expressed as "Great to meet you again – haven't seen you for 15 years!". But what sort of community are we, if (some of) the senior figures hardly ever meet? It was also a little surprising, because in some cases person X regularly sees both person A and person B, and is amazed to learn that it's so long since A and B last met. Perhaps the answer is that we inhabit some kind of strange and interesting sociographic structure, say with 'one degree of separation', such that for any two people A and B, even if they rarely meet, there's at least one other person X who sees both of them frequently.

Whatever the truth of that speculation, it is unarguable that the HCI community, such as it is, consists of individuals with widely differing skills, backgrounds and training, carrying out a wide range of different activities. It includes hardware engineers devising new interaction devices; social anthropologists performing ethnographic analyses; cognitive scientists running experiments on the nature of human error; and many, many more. And we also work in many different contexts, whether these be defined by technologies (e.g. Ubicomp or Virtual Reality), user groups (e.g. older users or children) or application areas (e.g. games or command & control systems). Such diversity, at the very least, poses a challenge to the coherence,

identity, and perhaps existence, of an HCI research community.

Despite all this divergence, it was agreed that there is such a thing as the UK HCI community, held together primarily by shared values, even though members of the community employ different methods, work with different technology, and apply HCI in different content areas. The core shared value is a concern with developing interactive technologies that, in some way, improve the quality of people's lives. The boundaries of what counts as relevant technologies are fuzzy. One of the discussion groups in Loughborough generated some thought-provoking examples: for instance, is the design of better milking machines an HCI problem (happier cows means happier farmers)? The consensus on that one was no, even if the milking machine were computer controlled: HCI is concerned with humans and their interactions with technologies that (in some way) compute, and usually with the design of those technologies.

The scope of HCI seems to expand inexorably: from cognition and computation through work studies, emotion, experience and play to aesthetics, physicality and marketing, and who knows what next. The adoption of new concerns signifies a healthy recognition of the many factors that contribute to the experience of interacting with and through technology, but also brings risks of factionalism that can weaken the impact of HCI on research and practice.

Consider, for example, different research cultures that can be described loosely as *qualitative* and *quantitative*. The quantitative researcher may dismiss qualitative research as being 'unscientific' and 'lacking in reproducibility', while the qualitative researcher considers quantitative research to be irrelevant to real-world design problems. But if both approaches are applied to the same broad problem, they can work in complementary ways, with the qualitative approach finding what things to measure and the quantitative approach measuring those things systematically. There are similar tensions between practice-oriented researchers whose primary concern is to 'make a difference' and theoretically oriented researchers who are more interested in better understanding the problem.

Especially at the Loughborough workshop, it became clear that one of the side-effects of a large, multi-partner research project such as Equator (<http://www.equator.ac.uk/>) is to nurture and bind together a sizeable fragment of the HCI community. Long after the project has officially ended, there still exists a group of researchers, spread through the community, who have worked together, have shared experiences, and know each others' styles, strengths, and weaknesses. Like the EU-funded Amodeus project more than a decade earlier, a large project like Equator leaves a legacy of senior people, together with a number of originally junior people who often quite rapidly move to senior positions, who form a network that serves as a skeleton that can strengthen the overall community. It could well be that, looking back later, we will see these large projects as major influences on the eventual shape of HCI research in the UK.

Early career researchers

An explicit aim of the Loughborough workshop was to consider the role that early career researchers (ECRs) can play in the development of the HCI community and the furtherance of the HCI research agenda. ECRs are the next generation of senior researchers, with a role to play in setting the research agenda and defining the future of HCI.

Discussion, perhaps inevitably, focused on the difficulties faced by new lecturers in the field. Young academics face a variety of pressures – to establish their teaching, to engage in administration, to undertake research, to win funding, and to build their reputations – not all of which are fully under the lecturer's control, and all of which compete for his or her necessarily finite time and effort. The situation is particularly difficult if a lecturer fails to get a First Grant or similar source of funding. The ECR is then at risk of being trapped in a vicious cycle, where having no funding means that little or no research gets done, and consequently few or no papers are published and the ECR fails to build a reputation...

Difficulties in obtaining funding are not exclusive to ECRs in HCI: they are faced by most researchers at all levels within all research communities. However, the multidisciplinary and rapid changes in both technology and concerns (as discussed above) present particular challenges, and arguably opportunities, for ECRs in HCI.

On the 'challenge' side, whereas most established researchers received their early research training within a relatively mature discipline (psychology, computing or, surprisingly often, mathematics), ECRs have typically been trained in a multidisciplinary environment, giving them a broader but less deep foundation. They have also grown up within a different technical milieu from earlier generations, so they have experienced technologies, whether gadgets, social networking sites or computer games, differently from their more senior colleagues. The research problems that are seen as most pertinent by ECRs may be different from those recognised by the people who typically do the bulk of the reviewing of journal papers and grant proposals. The rapid changes in technologies, and the multidisciplinary education, can make it difficult for individuals to develop their own identities, to build a substantive and credible research portfolio that is forward looking without simply following fashion and ignoring earlier foundational work. Conversely, these challenges can also represent great opportunities: many ECRs can see research problems in new ways and create research agendas that those working within established traditions may neither recognise nor comprehend.

There is clearly no simple solution to these problems. Some of them are experienced across all disciplines while others are peculiar to fast-paced multidisciplinary contexts. Partial remedies may take the form of careful mentoring within the researcher's own department or institution (where the mentor is someone other than the ECR's supervisor or manager), and

support from the HCI community by way of improved reviewing practices – a topic to which we now turn.

Quality

To foster an effective community with such a degree of diversity and rapid changes of context requires special care. Major issues arise when it comes to questions of assessment, such as when reviewing research proposals. A theme that emerged from the London break-out sessions and was further developed in a Loughborough working group, is the question of ‘quality’ in HCI research. What constitutes quality in HCI? How is it appropriately assessed? And what can be done to raise the quality of work done within the UK HCI research community?

There is sometimes an unfortunate tendency among referees to negatively assess (or ‘rubbish’) proposals that follow an approach or adopt a methodology other than the referee’s own. The perceived result of such negative reviewing is that HCI proposals tend to receive low ratings compared to other areas of ICT. HCI as a whole thereby receives less funding, and we all suffer the consequences. A better and more constructive way to review is for referees to be generally more positive, and more willing to call the glass half-full rather than half-empty, i.e. to give appropriate consideration to the strengths of a proposal rather than focusing exclusively on what’s wrong with it. If HCI is to develop as a community, it needs to be recognised that no one kind of research is inherently better or more valuable than another, and all are needed to ensure the health of the discipline.

In discussion, it was concluded that high quality research should have three properties. It should be *rigorous*: the research should be well conceived, well conducted and clearly presented; it should be reproducible where possible, and inspectable or testable where not (e.g. case studies). It should have *impact*: it should be taken up and used by the HCI community. And it should have *significance* for other disciplines, whether HCI’s own parent disciplines or others in which it is being applied.

There is perceived to be a tension between rigour and practical significance, with many of the more highly cited papers actually representing work of low rigour. The challenge for the HCI community is to recognise and support work of high quality and to work together for improved rigour, impact and significance.

In terms of reviewing practices, each piece of research needs to be judged on its own merits: not “would I have done it this way?” or “would I have asked that research question?”, but “is this a useful research question to ask?” and “is the research method well designed for answering that question?”. As a UK community, we need to recognise, value and publicise our strengths, and continually work to improve the overall quality and impact of our work. As referees, we need to assess the appropriateness of the approach for the work being proposed, rather than dismissing a methodology as “not what I’d do”.

Conclusions and recommendations

Inevitably, this account has missed some lines of discussion, and focused on areas of agreement rather than differences, but we hope that it provides a useful record of some thinking

within the UK HCI community. The series of events we have outlined resulted in a series of recommendations addressed to various audiences.

The first, and possibly most important, conclusion from the events is that there is indeed an HCI community, even if its members don’t necessarily see each other from one year to the next. There is a high level of mutual respect and acceptance of diversity of research styles, but we need to continually reflect on our practices in terms of valuing diversity while also nurturing quality. The discussion on quality identified demands on authors, reviewers and organisations soliciting reviews:

Authors need to articulate clearly the rationale behind the research method adopted and demonstrate rigour in their work. They also need to be able to identify and communicate the contribution of their own work, and know which audience (peers, practitioners, user community, etc.) they are writing for.

Reviewers need to put aside any prejudices about methods and assess the work on its own merits or, if unable to judge it adequately (due to differences in research culture), to decline to comment.

Organisations (including funding bodies, journals and conference organisers) need to recognise that there are different research cultures, as represented by what kinds of research questions are considered and what methods are adopted, and that reviewers need to be selected to have relevant expertise in the methods being proposed.

HCI researchers as a body would benefit from discussion and identification of a set of core topics and skills, as an essential part of creating and defining our community. We need to value quality of work from across the continuum from science to engineering, and from computer science to social science.

While all HCI researchers face challenges, there are some that are particular to ECRs. Funders such as EPSRC and ESRC have recognised some of the general challenges facing ECRs, and developed funding schemes particularly targeted at this group, but there may be room for further developments – for example in developing mentoring schemes or building more explicit constructive criticism into the review process. ECRs may also take time to reflect on what forms of support they would find most useful, such as mentoring or peer support networks. Individual situations vary widely, but we could all be considering what additional support might be effective within our own institutions.

During the meetings, there was general enthusiasm for more ‘community building’ activity. Inevitably, once participants returned to the everyday pressures, and hopefully pleasures, of research, teaching, etc., that enthusiasm got swamped. If we value community, we all need to take time to reflect on what characterises that community and how we can contribute to its development. We need to work together to deliver research that is rewarding, and that has an impact, whether on other research or on practice.

Acknowledgements

The events were funded by EPSRC through the Equator project. We thank Tom Rodden and EPSRC for making these discussions possible, Romy Beattie for assistance in organising the meetings, and all speakers and participants for their contributions.

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This issue of the Elsevier journal, *Interacting with Computers* (*IwC*), contains a provocative set of papers making up a Special Issue on the topic, 'On the Abuse and Misuse of Social Agents'. An introduction by the Special Issue editors, Sheryl Brahmam and Antonella De Angeli, sets the scene for investigation, discussion and two responses to a 'Call for Action'.

Future Special Issues

There are three forthcoming issues, all in preparation at the moment and due to be published in 2008. Look out for email alerts:

- Enactive Interfaces, edited by Chris Raymaekers
- Physicality and Interaction, edited by Alan Dix and Devina Ramduny-Ellis
- Brian Shackel Memorial, edited by Donald Day, Jan Noyes & Gitte Lindgaard

Some online journal features

You may not know of these links to up-to-date information on *IwC* but do have a look and, to support us and to aid our publicity, add them to your email signature.

TOP 25 Hottest Articles

http://top25.sciencedirect.com/?journal_id=09535438

This is a list, updated every three months, showing the most downloaded articles published in the journal. It provides a good indication of what's hot, what's being cited, and what you really ought to read. Oddly enough, its not always the most recent issues that attract attention.

Articles in Press

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09535438>

These are peer reviewed accepted articles to be published in a future journal issue. As soon as a submission is accepted, it is available online. You can then access the article as a full download or just preview it. Although Articles in Press do not have all the bibliographic details in place, they can be cited using the year of online availability and the given DOI.

There are three types:

- (a) Accepted manuscripts: these are articles that have been peer reviewed and accepted for publication. The articles have not yet been copy edited and/or formatted in the journal house style.
- (b) Uncorrected proofs: these are copy edited and formatted articles that are not yet finalised and that will be corrected by the authors. Therefore the text could change before final publication.

- (c) Corrected proofs: these are articles containing the authors' corrections and may, or may not yet have specific issue and page numbers assigned.

Stop Press

Most cited award

Elsevier have created a most cited award for their journals and *IwC* will be included this year for the first time. Papers for this distinction are determined solely based on the highest number of cites, excluding self-citations, received for all journal articles published between the years 2005–2007 [data culled from SCOPUS reports (www.scopus.com) created on January 15, 2008]. You may have noticed a banner at the Morgan Kaufman/Elsevier booth at the CHI conference, promoting this achievement.

The winning paper under this criteria for *Interacting with Computers* is by our own Xristine Faulkner and Fintan Culwin so many congratulations to both:

When fingers do the talking: a study of text messaging
Interacting with Computers, Volume 17, Issue 2, 1 March 2005,
Pages 167–185
Faulkner, X.; Culwin, F.

If the award had been extended back over the years to find the most cited ever paper published in *IwC*, it would be the early excellent paper by Noam Tractinsky which started off a whole new research field. We published that back in 2000.

What is beautiful is usable
Interacting with Computers, Volume 13, Issue 2, 1 December
2000, Pages 127–145
Tractinsky, N.; Katz, A.S.; Ikar, D.

Reviewer acknowledgements

We currently list by name every person who has reviewed for the journal in that year in the last volume of each year but have now introduced a 'best reviewer acknowledgement'. Rewarded by a free Elsevier book up to \$200 in value and with a certificate of merit, I am pleased to say that these names are also on the promotional banner, and I heartily thank the individuals concerned.

Simone Barbosa (Brazil); Effie Law (Switzerland); Paulus Vossen (Germany); Ling Chen (China); Joely Gardner (USA); Martin Beer (UK)

Honourable mentions also go to:

Lynne Baillie (UK); Ann Blandford (UK); Stephanie Buisin (France); Noelle Carbonell (France); Jesper Kjeldskov (Denmark); John Knight (UK); Catherine Weir (UK); Martina Ziefle (Germany); Juergen Ziegler (Germany)

Register with us as a potential reviewer, as well as an author: <http://ees.elsevier.com/iwc/default.asp> and <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09535438>

Games usability trainers play

Userfocus is a usability consultancy and usability training company that helps organisations reduce costs and increase profits by helping create great customer experiences. Our clients are typically blue-chip organisations like eBay, RBS and Hewlett-Packard who want help improving the usability of their web site, intranet or handheld gadget. Unlike competitor companies, our consultants are experimental psychologists, which means we provide rigorous insights into audience expectations and behaviour. About 70% of our consultants' time is spent on usability consultancy and about 30% of their time is spent delivering and running training courses.

Most of us look back fondly at our university days. Think about yours for the moment. What good memories come to mind?

If your experience is anything like mine, then I can guarantee one thing you're not visualising right now: a university lecture. There is lots of evidence that lectures are a poor way to transfer skills and knowledge from the brain of an expert to the hands of a novice (Meier, 2000). The chances are that you did most of your best learning when you were actively engaged in project work, discussion or private reading. If you can recall any of your lectures, these were probably the lectures that were dramatic or unusual in some way: lectures that were more learner-friendly than traditional face-to-face instruction.

This isn't just a problem for universities. At Userfocus, we run dozens of short courses on usability. These vary from half a day to two days. If delegates leave our training courses unable to put what we've taught them into practice, they won't come back.

So if lecturing isn't the answer, what is?

Nowadays, any trainer worth his or her salt uses 'Accelerated Learning' (AL) techniques. Unlike a traditional lecture, a training course that uses AL techniques will begin with a short activity that connects learners to the training material, to the trainer and to the other delegates. Concepts are split into short lecture segments of 10–15 minutes with short review activities after each segment. Delegates get the opportunity to review the information and practice their new skills in pairs or small groups. Finally, the trainer encourages the delegates to describe how they will apply the skills they have learnt. These training methods increase interest, motivation, learning and retention. For a good summary of this approach, see Bowman (2005).

One misconception is that AL is all about playing games (reinforced by the fact that one of the more famous books in the area is called *Games Trainers Play*). This has now got a bit clichéd, and was famously satirised in the episode of 'The Office' when an outside facilitator visited Wernham Hogg to educate the Slough branch about customer care. (David Brent railroads the seminar, ending up singing 'Freelove Freeway'). Although AL incorporates instructional games, it's important that the games are directly relevant to the training goals, and not just about filling time.

To give you an example of the way this works in practice, here's a specific activity that we use on one of our training courses to help people learn about usability heuristics. Feel free to adapt this game for your own training, or use it with your user experience team during your next team meeting. We based it on the framegame 'Thirty-Five' by Sivasailam Thiagarajan (2003).

Guideline Gallop

What is Guideline Gallop?

Guideline Gallop is a way for delegates to both generate and evaluate usability guidelines. Each delegate creates a usability guideline on an index card. They then move around the room, swapping their card with other delegates. After several swaps, the trainer blows a whistle and delegates award points to the guidelines on their cards. Delegates swap cards again and the process continues until each guideline has been evaluated five times.

What does Guideline Gallop achieve?

The game creates a lot of energy and activity in the training room, which in turn creates a good atmosphere for learning to take place. The game also gives delegates the opportunity to get to know each other. By evaluating several guidelines, delegates learn what makes a good and bad usability guideline.

Getting ready

Supplies

Prior to the seminar, purchase a stack of 3 x 5 index cards (you'll need one card per delegate). Delegates will also need a pen and pencil and you will need a timer and a whistle.

Setup

The room needs to be large enough to accommodate movement with enough space for people to move between tables, chairs and walls as they exchange cards.

Group size

The group size can be small (from 6 delegates) or large (to over 40 delegates). If you have fewer than 6 participants, see the 'Variations' section at the end.

Time

About half an hour.

Guideline Gallop Instructions

- Show delegates a slide with a typical usability guideline. For example, you might have: 'Help users recognise, diagnose, and recover from errors: Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.'
- Give each delegate an index card and ask delegates to create their own guideline for making an

interface usable. Tailor the question to the domain of interest: for example, 'What makes a web site usable?' or 'What makes a mobile phone handset usable?' Tell delegates that other members of the class will evaluate their guideline, so they should write legibly. Allow two minutes for this activity.

- Ask delegates to get out of their chairs. Tell them to move around the room, holding their card written side down, swapping their card with other delegates' cards. Tell participants not to read the guideline but to continue swapping cards. After several exchanges have taken place (about 30 seconds), blow the whistle and ask participants to pair up with someone nearby.
- Tell each pair of delegates to work together and review the usability guidelines on their two cards. If delegates find they have ended up with their own guideline, instruct them to remain objective and behave as if they are seeing it for the first time. Tell delegates to allocate seven points between these two guidelines to reflect their relative usefulness. For example, they could award 4 points to one guideline and 3 to another, or 5 and 2, or 6 and 1, or 7 and 0. When ready, ask delegates to write the score points on the back of each card. Allow two minutes for this activity.
- Tell participants to move around and continue to swap cards. After a few exchanges, blow the whistle and repeat the scoring process. Repeat the process of swapping and scoring until each guideline has been evaluated five times.
- After the final round, instruct delegates to return to their seat and total the points on the card that they are holding.
- Use the points tally to identify the best guidelines.

Debrief – Making the activity more than a game

- What makes a good guideline? Encourage delegates to identify what was 'best' about the winning guidelines: for example the best usability guidelines are usually based on research and the guidelines are clear, concise, relevant and actionable.
- How can we balance the need to make a guideline precise with the desire to have a guideline that applies to a broad range of situations and interfaces?
- How can we judge the relative importance of guidelines? This is a good place to discuss the 'relative importance' and 'strength of evidence' measures in usability.gov's *Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*.
- How do expert guidelines compare? Show Nielsen's ten Usability Heuristics and ask delegates to compare them with their own guidelines.

- What are the limitations of guidelines as a usability evaluation technique?

Tips and variations

- Instead of asking participants to write their guidelines, give each person an index card with a prepared usability guideline (e.g. Nielsen's heuristics, Shneiderman's 'golden rules' or the dialogue principles in ISO 9241-110).
- If you have a small group (say two), mix each participant's response with four other prepared cards and give the set of five cards to another participant. Now ask each participant to compare each card in her set to every other card and distribute 7 points as in the original game.

This game is taken from our training course, 'How to Carry Out an Expert Review'. We have a full curriculum of 30 courses covering user experience immersion, user experience design, user experience research and user experience management. You can download a brochure describing these courses from <http://www.userfocus.co.uk/pdf/UTCBrochure.pdf>

Further reading

- Bowman, S. L. (2005). *The Ten-Minute Trainer: 129 Ways to Teach It Quick and Make It Stick!* Jossey Bass.
- Meier, D. (2000). *The Accelerated Learning Handbook: A Creative Guide to Designing and Delivering Faster, More Effective Training Programs*. McGraw-Hill Professional.
- Scannell, E.E. and Newstrom, J.W. (1980). *Games Trainers Play*. McGraw-Hill Professional.
- Sivasailam 'Thiagi' Thiagarajan (2003). *Design Your Own Games and Activities: Thiagi's Templates for Performance Improvement*. Jossey Bass.

About the author

David Travis holds a BSc (Hons) degree and a PhD in Psychology and he is a Chartered Psychologist. His professional affiliations include membership of the British Psychological Society, the Experimental Psychology Society, the Information Architecture Institute and the Usability Professionals Association. His career spans three decades as a researcher, consultant, author and business executive.

David has carried out usability consulting activities for a number of clients and he has delivered over 100 seminars in usability for a range of private and public sector organisations. He has written two books on usability (*Effective Color Displays: Theory and Practice* and *E-Commerce Usability*).

<http://www.userfocus.co.uk/>

<http://www.userfocus.co.uk/training/curriculum.html>

Memories of a lively conference: HCIED 2007

HCIED is an annual international conference of Human-Computer Interaction Educators that brings together industry and academia. HCIED grew up from Interaction's HCI Educators' workshops, run by the Education and Practice sub-group. It is now jointly facilitated by Interaction and IFIP 13.1. The first of the conference series that went international was held in Limerick in 2006, and the third in the series was run in Rome in April 2008.

In 2007 it was held in Aveiro, Portugal, on the 29th and 30th of March, and the topic of the conference was 'Creativity3: Experiencing to educate and design'. While it has been argued that creativity is an innate human quality, it is also true that expanding our experience by employing creativity and increasing our repertoire of design solutions can substantially improve our ability to develop innovative HCI design solutions.

Creativity, education and design are big issues, and so the goal of HCIED 2007 was to explore and extend the reach of these concepts in HCI education, focusing on the creation of vivid and compelling learning experiences. It sought to forge a better understanding of creative processes and abilities and to nurture creative, free-thinking mindsets.

The conference gathered 34 researchers, academics and designers from 12 different countries: Portugal, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Lithuania, Italy, Iceland, Sweden, Greece, Ireland, South Africa, United States and Canada. The event was organised in collaboration with Interaction, IFIP TC.13, IEETA, GPCG and Microsoft. Sixteen papers and four posters were presented during the conference and there were also two keynote speakers.

The opening keynote, by Saul Greenberg, covered 'Enhancing Creativity with Toolkits'. Interface toolkits in ordinary application areas let average programmers rapidly develop software resembling other standard applications. In contrast, toolkits for novel and unfamiliar application areas enhance the creativity of these programmers. By removing low-level



Figure 2

implementation burdens and supplying appropriate building blocks, toolkits give people a 'language' to think about these new interfaces, which in turn allows them to concentrate on creative designs. To illustrate this important link between toolkits and creativity, Saul described example toolkits constructed to serve several novel domains, such as distributed groupware, video-based media spaces, single display groupware and digital tables, and physical user interfaces.

Gerrit van der Veer gave the second keynote titled 'Between the Ivory Tower and Babylon – Teaching Interaction Design in the 21st Century'. The discussion centred around the use of the label 'design', a term that has been used in many different contexts to refer to many different things. Academic and technical experts discuss analytic methods, formal models, generic tools, and design patterns. Arts and crafts disciplines focus on novel ways to enrich people's environments and to stimulate, change or surprise their users. Gerrit showed how knowledge, methodologies, and inspiration from various disciplines can be combined to form a common ground for educating interaction



Figure 1



Figure 3

designers, in a time when both consumers and the industry are demanding two potentially contradictory goals: designs which are both usable and exciting.

Alongside these more conventional activities, the conference also included an ITeach/Microsoft workshop, in which Portuguese professors shared their HCI teaching experiences and also featured a visit to the Fábrica da Ciência, a science museum. There participants spent an afternoon building and racing Lego robots and making and trying their own toothpaste (Figures 1, 2 and 3).

The conference dinner was especially memorable. It featured a live demonstration of cooking as a design activity. Three culinary experts with diverse backgrounds were recruited: a professional cook, a macrobiotic cook and a housewife (Figure 4).

They prepared the workshop participants' desserts during the main course of dinner (see below). Although the ingredients were exactly the same, the results were as different as can be, exactly as this short article would be if it was written by another author. Just as in any design process!

With thanks to:

- Interaction: www.bcs-hci.org.uk
- IFIP 13.1: www.hcieducation.org
- IFIP TC 13: www.ifip-hci.org
- IEETA: www.ieeta.pt
- GPCG: www.gpcg.pt
- Microsoft: www.microsoft.com



Figure 4



My PhD

The impact of analogies on Design Decision Making



Stephen Hassard is a research student, as well as Demonstrator, at the UCL Interaction Centre under the supervision of Professor Ann Blandford and Dr Anna Cox. His background is in Organisational Psychology, Business Information Systems, and Administrative Studies with a BA (Hons) and a BSc from the University of Winnipeg. His research is focused on examining the influence of analogies on the decision making process of Interaction Designers.

Motivation for my research

When I was a kid I was always doodling and designing things (mostly new superheroes and warp-drive starships!). School and university seemed to lead me down the scientific path, but I always remained fascinated by art and the creative process. Maybe it was inevitable that, early in my PhD, I became intrigued by the idea of applying a scientific perspective to something as creative as the design process. To me the whole notion of design seemed to be so 'black box'. The scientific side of my mind wanted to open up this box and see what was inside. I wanted to gain an understanding of the cognitive processes that are involved in design and the design process. At the start of my research I had a series of lofty questions running through my head: "What is going on in a software designer's head when he/she is putting together a web-page?", "How do creative individuals come up with the ideas that they do?", etc. These were pretty ambitious questions to try and answer. As happens to most students, sooner or later, reality sets in and I settled for a question that was slightly more answerable: "How do Interaction Designers come to the decisions that they do when they engage in the creative process?".

Design Decision Making

To gain an initial understanding of the decision-making process that Interaction Designers utilised, I interviewed six Interaction Designers with varying backgrounds and levels of experience about the types of decisions that they dealt with in one of their latest projects. In each interview I asked them to bring with them a screen-shot of an interface they had recently worked on and to then walk me through the decisions that they had to make. The common themes which arose from these interviews led me to a model of the design process that involved three stages: firstly, the use of an example to narrow down the problem space, secondly, the modification of that initial example in the context of the problem constraints, and finally, the mental simulation of the feasibility of the decision.

To illustrate how these three stages function, I've included a brief summary of the process that one participant relayed to me.

Interaction Designer X was working on the development of the search function for a digital library application. As a way to cope with the complexity of designing the interface for the search function, he latched on to the idea of developing a sleek and slim search interface like Google (stage 1 – Analogy selection). When he started to develop this idea further, he realised he would have to modify this original idea given the limitations of the programming language infrastructure, as well as the fact that the information needed for the search engine to work properly was more detailed than what was needed in a traditional Google search. What he then proposed was a search bar that would offer modifiable suggestions to narrow down the ambiguity of the search terms (stage 2 – modify original analogy based on constraints). Some problems with the design became apparent when he imagined himself as the user and how he would interact to accomplish his goals (stage 3 – mental simulation). Assessing how the interaction would work from the user's perspective led him to a drastic redesign which better suited the constraints of the situation.

The finding that I found most intriguing in this initial study was the impact that selection of the starting example had on the entire decision-making process. It occurred to me that, while it might be very helpful to start off with an example in mind, it could also be counterproductive if a designer fixated on it and subconsciously refused to consider more potentially productive possibilities. For example, in the narrative above, the analogy with a Google search was an interesting and logical place to start. However, it only became apparent much farther down the design process road that such a minimal search interface would not suffice for the digital library, and that some major design refinements would be needed.

Design Fixation

I decided to build upon this idea, that a starting example might well be a double-edged sword, and explore how these potential benefits and penalties might play out in the design decision-making process. To further develop our understanding of this impact, I'm using a phenomenon known as Design Fixation (DF). Design Fixation was introduced by Jansson and Smith in 1991 in a study in which they demonstrated that an initial graphic example can severely affect the types of solutions that designers ultimately produce. Jansson and Smith found, for example, that if they gave designers an inherently flawed example along with the statement of the

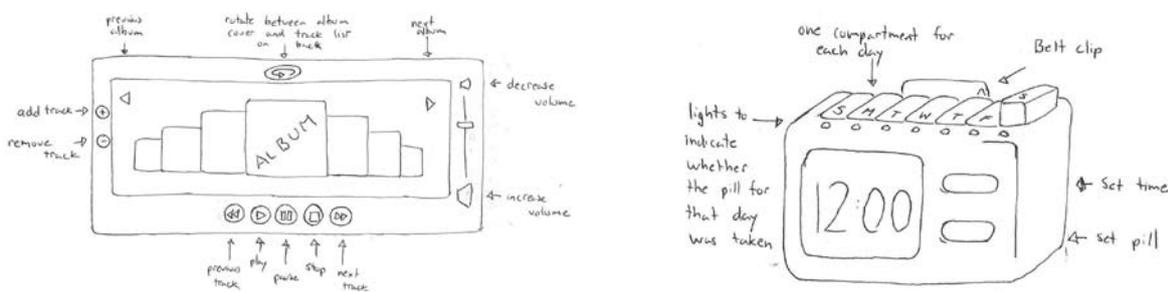


Figure 1 Flawed examples given to the 'Analogy Selection' group

design problem, the designers would fixate on the example and incorporate elements of it into their solutions, regardless of whether these elements were relevant or not.

While this experiment illustrates the potential danger of an over-reliance on an initial example, the study of this phenomenon has not been problem free. While the phenomenon of Design Fixation has been replicated several times in Mechanical Engineers, replication outside of this professional domain has been problematic. Before we can view this phenomenon as central to our understanding of the impact that previous examples have on the decision-making process, we need to know whether DF is common to all design disciplines, or whether it is discipline specific. Can we, for example, replicate DF in Interaction Designers? In the past, studies that have tried to show DF in other design disciplines have been less than successful, possibly due to problems in the study design; for example mismatches between the type of problems presented to the designers, and the design discipline. A study which showed that DF was apparently not as strong in Interior Designers as it was in Mechanical Engineers, for example, may simply reflect the fact that the Interior Designers were given Mechanical Engineering problems, as opposed to Interior Design problems.

To examine this question, I presented Interaction Designers with several design problems from two different design disciplines, namely Interaction Design and Mechanical Engineering. Participants were split into a control group and an 'Analogy Selection' group. The control group was given one design brief focusing on a Mechanical Engineering problem and another design brief focused on an Interaction Design problem. The 'Analogy Selection' group were given the same briefs, each accompanied by an inherently flawed example of a potential solution. Figure 1 shows two examples that were given to the subjects. The subjects were then instructed to create as many designs as possible over the next hour in response to the design problems they were given. Each design that is created will be analysed to see if any of the flaws from the initial graphic example appear. While the data is still currently being collected, we are hypothesising that Fixation will be at its strongest when the discipline of the problem and the discipline of the designer match up, i.e DF will be at its strong-

est in the Interaction Design focused problems and weaker in the Mechanical Engineering focused problems.

Where to go from here

While the second study will hopefully show the effect of DF in a more open ended task, I'm hoping to apply this same paradigm to a more closed ended decision task. This will probe the question of whether or not the presence of a faulty analogy can affect the evaluation of several alternative solutions. Once the potential impact that DF can have on the Design Decision Making process is understood I hope to examine ways of mitigating the problem of DF. Is it possible to keep the advantages of using an initial analogy to quickly streamline the problem space while controlling for the adverse fixation effects? This question in tandem with the first will provide the field with a solid theoretical understanding of the impacts that analogies have on the Design Decision Making process but also provide concrete techniques that designers can use to maximize the benefit of these analogies.

References

Jansson, D.G. & Smith S.M. (1991). Design Fixation. *Design Studies*, 12, 3-11.

If you are a PhD student just itching to tell the world about your research or if you've enjoyed reading about some of the emerging areas of research that the My Phd column has recently discussed then we would like to hear from you. We are currently accepting one to two page summaries from PhD students in the UK and across Europe with a focus on being open and accessible to everyone in the HCI community.

If you would like to submit or would just like more information please contact either Stephen Hassard or Eduardo Calvillo using the contact information contained below.

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and

Eduardo Calvillo, e.calvillo@ucl.ac.uk

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hci2008

Culture, Creativity, Interaction

Liverpool. 1st - 5th September
www.hci2008.org



The HCI2008 programme is developing with a broad selection of workshops, tutorials and full papers. We hope our offerings will entice you to the web site, to make your selections and register. The early bird discount deadline is 2nd August!

Conference themes are more of an aspiration than a brief to authors but we think that you will find plenty of culture, creativity and interaction during your experiences at the conference.

Starting with workshops, we have a full programme of workshops, on the 1st and 2nd September, of interest to the HCI community.

Monday 1st September

Workshop Title	Workshop Organisers
HCI Education Commons	Janet Finlay, Sally Fincher
User Centered Design using efficient Low-Cost Methods	Andreas Holzinger
Whole Body Interaction 2	David England
HCI and the Older Population	Joy Goodman-Deane, Suzette Keith, Gill Whitney
First International Workshop on using Ontologies in Interactive Systems	Matt-Mouley Bouamrane, Saturnino Luz
HCI for Technology Enhanced Learning	Willem-Paul Brinkman, Charles van der Mast, Annette Payne, Joshua Underwood
Evaluation Instruments for Creativity Support Tools	Celine Latulipe, Michael Terry
Critical Issues in Interaction Design	Mark Blythe, Jeffrey Bardzell, Shaowen Bardzell, Alan Blackwell
Aesthetics, digital technology and collaboration	Tommaso Colombino, Antonietta Grasso, David Martin, Jacki O'Neill, John Bowers

On the web site www.hci2008.org you will find links to web pages for each workshop plus deadlines for the submission of position papers.

Tuesday 2nd September

Workshop Title	Workshop Organisers
Upcycling for Physical Computing	Jennifer G. Sheridan, Nick Bryan-Kinns
Provoking Creative Design: Making it Scale	Neil Maiden, Sara Jones
Emotion in HCI – Designing for People	Christian Peter, Elizabeth Crane, Marc Fabri, Harry Agius, Lesley Axelrod
Workshop HCI for Medicine and Health Care (HCI4MED)	Andreas Holzinger, Russell Beale, Harold Thimbleby
Innovations in measuring accessibility: theoretical, cultural and practical perspectives	Ray Adams
The challenges faced by academia preparing students for industry: What we teach and what we do	Lidia Oshlyansky, Paul Cairns, Angela Sasse, Chandra Harrison
Creating Creative Processes: A workshop demonstrating a methodological approach for subjects between the Sciences and the Arts	Carola Boehm
HCI and the Analysis and Design of Services	Peter Wild
Designing for people who do not read easily	Caroline Jarrett, Katie Grant, William Wong, Neesha Kodagoda
E-health	Elizabeth Sillence, Linda Little, Pam Briggs

There is more culture to be experienced in the Social Programme of the Conference. On Tuesday night we will have an informal drinks reception at the Tate Liverpool and a chance to visit the permanent collection. On Wednesday we join with our colleagues from (re)actor3 for an evening of live media art entertainment. You can find out more on the (re)actor3 website www.digitalliveart.co.uk. For our conference dinner we will visit the Maritime Museum at the historic Albert Dock and have the chance to learn about the history of Liverpool.



Returning to the conference programme, our opening keynote speaker is Prof Yvonne Rogers, Open University, UK and our closing speaker is Prof Paul Dourish, University of California, Irvine. In between we have a programme of full papers, short papers, student papers, panels, industry papers, posters and exhibition.

Visit the web site to view the advanced programme as it evolves and to register for workshops, tutorials, the conference and book accommodation. We look forward to seeing you in Liverpool in September!

David England
Chair, HCI2008



Profile

Fausto Sainz talks to John Knight



Fausto Sainz was born in San Sebastian, in the north of Spain. He obtained a degree in Psychology from Universidad del País Vasco, in his home town, and a MSc from Sussex University. He researched and spent a fabulous time at Liverpool John Moores University in Liverpool where he obtained his PhD degree.

At the moment, seduced by the sunshine and the tapas, he lectures HCI at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid where he moved in 2005. His interests are mainly in the development of interfaces for those less favoured, the aesthetics aspects of HCI, ubiquitous computing, and intelligent homes.

What is your idea of happiness?

Everyone happy (must be in the 32nd century considering the slow evolution of humans). Failing that, spending relaxing time with those I love, or just trekking.

What is your greatest fear?

Pain

With which historical figure do you most identify?

Nero? now, seriously, nobody, although I would not mind being like Alexander

Which living person do you most admire?

My cousin Nelida

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

Talking too much

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Talking too little

What vehicles do you own?

Jaguar XJ6

What is your greatest extravagance?

The car

What is your favourite possession?

An 18th-century book

What is your favourite piece of music?

It changes constantly

What makes you feel most depressed?

Mainly poverty and any kind of violence around the world

What objects do you always carry with you?

Always – only a ring, I don't like to depend excessively on material objects

What do you most dislike about your appearance?

Bags

What is your most unappealing habit?

Too many to list!

What is your favourite smell?

The sea, hyacinths, Sunday roast lunch

What is your favourite word?

Beautiful

What is your favourite building?

Family home in the countryside

What is your favourite journey?

To the countryside

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

Undecided...

Who would you invite to dinner if you could invite anyone?

Vélazquez

What or who annoys you the most?

Lack of respect

Which words or phrases do you over-use?

I'm not aware of any one, perhaps "you know how to do it"

What is your greatest regret?

Too many

When and where were you happiest?

In direct contact with nature when I am in love with that person

How do you relax?

Reading (anything) in bed

What single thing would improve the quality of your life?

A bigger flat

Which talent would you most like to have?

To play the piano

What would your motto be?

Another one gone

What keeps you awake at night?

Only too much coffee during the day

How would you like to die?

In my sleep

How would you like to be remembered?

As somehow helpful

British HCI Group – Application Form 2007–2008 Please print or type

www.bcs-hci.org.uk

Contact Details (Give a personal contact when asking for Corporate Membership)

Title First Name Last Name
Work Address.....
.....
Tel. Fax.
Email.....
Nature of the work you do:
Home Address.....
.....
Please send mailings to: my work address ; my home address .

Membership Status

Current British HCI Group Membership No. (if applicable).....
Current British BCS Membership No. (if applicable)
Student status (if applicable, e.g. Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate)

Professional Interests (please indicate up to six areas of professional interest)

.....
.....

Membership Directory

Do you wish your contact details and professional interests to be listed in the Membership Directory sent to all members of the group? (We will NOT use your home address, unless that is all you have given us.) Yes No

Getting Involved...

We are always looking for people interested in contributing to HCI group activities by, writing for *Interfaces* magazine, helping run the annual conference or joining the executive. If you are able to contribute in this way or if you have ideas for 1-day meetings or new activities please contact Janet Read (JCRread@uclan.ac.uk)

Data Protection Act

The data on this form will be treated as confidential to the BCS. Names and address may be used, under our strict control, for mailings judged by the British HCI Group Executive to be of value to the membership.

Membership Fees 2007 – 2008

BCS Member £30 Non BCS Member £35 Student £10 Corporate £235

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Corporate membership entitles the organisation to 8 copies of *Interfaces* and other mailings; membership rate for any 4 individuals at British HCI Group events, as well as a free one-page entry in the membership handbook.

Journal Subscription to 'Interacting with Computers'

The HCI Group manages a journal, *Interacting with Computers*, published quarterly by Elsevier Science. Members may subscribe to this journal at a reduced rate (£55.00). Vol 20:1 is published in the winter of 2007/2008.

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Queries about membership can also be emailed to: hci@bcs.org.uk

The British HCI Group is served by Sub-groups comprising representatives from a broad range of academic and industrial centres of HCI interest. The Sub-groups are committed to promoting the education and practice of HCI and to supporting HCI people in industry and academia. For contact details of the persons in each Sub-group, please select from the following:

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HCI2007 Chairs Tom Ormerod & Corina Sas

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Interfaces magazine

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UsabilityNews: www.usabilitynews.com

HCI2008: www.hci2008.org

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