



Product Design Technical Group Newsletter

Human Factors and Ergonomics
Society
Product Design Technical Group

Spring 2009

From the Chair

By Steve Belz

Hopefully by the time you read this, spring – or at the very least, its harbingers - will have found you. As the Northern Hemisphere begins its annual thaw and the days warm and lengthen I find myself pondering over a variety of issues from the tractable to the absurd. Recently, my thoughts have fallen somewhere in-between these extremes, and I have been considering the issue of design.

Specifically, Human Factors professionals, as a discipline, are remarkably poor designers.

There, I said it – but before you tune me out, please hear me out . I would love to be wrong, but I believe the evidence suggests otherwise...

Even the most forward thinking graduate programs fail when compared against our graphical and industrial design colleagues. The blank page is our profession's Achilles heel. Making something from nothing and developing distinctly differentiated design alternatives – distinct from the status quo and from each other – is tremendously challenging for many in our profession. Indeed, I have met only a handful of Human Factors professionals who are truly talented in this area.

**The blank page is
our profession's
Achilles heel.**

By contrast, Human Factors professionals tend to excel in evaluating design, an area which these very same colleagues struggle. Turn us loose on an existing design and we become masterful in our ability to articulate potential advantages and disadvantages of a particular design or set of designs. Unfortunately, in my experience, much of this discussion devolves to a discussion which is less about design (and the really creative ways to ensure the needs of our target demographic are met) and more about ensuring the requirements specified within style guide are met or that some minimum level of usability is achieved.

Please don't misunderstand me – style guides are important and achieving a minimum level of usability is certainly laudable – but is this really the best we can do product DESIGN?

Of course, it is usually about here that I am snapped back into reality by whatever bit of reality I had been ignoring while pondering these thoughts. But this is the question I bring to you – what can we do to improve our ability as designers? This is not rhetoric, rather I would like to use the PDTG newsletter as a vehicle for discussing this very issue through opinion editorials from you, our members. Submissions should be less than 500 words.

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HFES 53rd Annual Meeting — Catch the Excitement!

It's May and we already have a tentative schedule for October's annual conference. We'll start the week strong and finish it strong, with sessions all week long. Below is the schedule as of now:

Tuesday, October 20, 2009 10:30 am—noon

Product Design Key Note Speaker — Sparking Innovation: How User-Centered Professionals Can Get A Seat At The Business Strategy Table

Nelson Soken, Ph.D., of Medtronic will talk about using innovation as a competitive edge and how usability professionals can provide significant value to the business strategy while at the same time raising the visibility and influence of our unique set of skills. His book, just released in December 2008, is titled "Lead the Pack: Sparking Innovation that Drives Customers Wild." Co-authored with Wil Wengert, the book takes a deep look into the human psyche that makes it possible to identify future market offerings that customers often don't yet know they need.

Tuesday, October 20, 2009 3:30 pm — 5:00 pm

7th Annual User-Centered Product Design Award

Moderated by Dianne McMullin

Don't miss this presentation of awards to the winners of the Seventh Annual User-Centered Product Design Award. The winners will be announced, and they will provide presentations about the design of their winning product.

Tuesday, October 20, 2009 5:30 pm – 7:00pm

PDTG 2008 Business Meeting

The status and future plans of the PDTG will be discussed at this meeting. All PDTG members and non-members are welcome to participate in this discussion. Your presence and opinions are extremely valuable to the success of the PDTG. Refreshments and appetizers will be served.

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 1:30 pm — 3:00 pm

Development of the Boundary Zone Method for Generation of Representative Human Models

By Jung, K., POSTECH, Kwon, O., Samsung Electronics and You, H., POSTECH

Human Factors Considerations in Global Positioning System (GPS) Receiver Technology: Contrasting Military Technical Requirements with User Expectations

By Jex Courter, B., The Aerospace Corporation and Ellis, E., USAF

Iterative Qualitative Research Used to Inform and Validate the Design of a Commercial Floor Finish Applicator

By Conner, C., Design Concepts, Inc.

EMG and Heart Rate Used to Validate Ergonomic Benefits of a Bent-Handle Floor Finish Applicator

By Conner, C., and Irwin, C., Design Concepts, Inc.



HFES 53rd Annual Meeting — Catch the Excitement!, continued

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 1:30 pm — 3:00 pm, continued

Useful Field of View of Aging Drivers as a Product Design Tool for In-Vehicle Visual Aids

By Meza, M., Texas Tech University

Thursday, October 22, 2009 10:30 am — noon

A Multi-model Aid for Interface Design (MAID): Helping Designers Reason about Information Match. (Demonstration)

By Miller, C., Wu, P., Engstrom, E., Rye, J., and Walter, K., Smart Information Flow Technologies; Schreckenghost, D., TRAC Labs

User-centered generation of new product concepts: A case study of human factors and industrial design collaboration.

By Caplan, S., Usability Associates

Integrating Creativity in IT Product and Service Development into Ergonomic Design Practices.

By Zeng, L., Proctor, R., Salvendy, G., Purdue University

Development of a comprehensive usability evaluation system based on user needs.

By Lee, W., Jung, K., Park, J., Kim, S., Yoon, S., Kim, M. and You, H., POSTECH

Friday, October 23, 2009 8:30 am—10:30 am

Discussion Panel: Practical Tips for Designing a Usability Evaluation Environment: What Equipment and Software Do You Really Need?

Andre, T., TIER 1 Performance Solutions; Brandt, J., AT&T Labs; Capra, M., HumanCentric, Collingwood, I., Amberlight Partners Ltd; and Proctor, C., HumanCentric

Friday, October 23, 2009 10:30 am — noon

Inclusive Indoor Play: Children at Play.

By Endicott, S., Kar, G., Mullick, A. and Topping, M., Georgia Institute of Technology

Inclusive Indoor Play: Children's Drawings.

By Topping, M., Mullick, A., Endicott, S. and Kar, G., Georgia Institute of Technology

Inclusive Indoor Play: Play and Playthings.

By Mullick, A., Topping, M., Endicott, S. and Kar, G., Georgia Institute of Technology

Emotrace: Tracing Emotions through Human-Product Interaction.

By Lottridge, D., Chignell, M., University of Toronto

Gathering user feedback from internal sources to supplement formal usability studies.

By Kelaher, D., Smith, J. and Windell, D., International Business Machines



PDTG Business Meeting Minutes

Below are the minutes from our business meeting held on September 23, 2008 at the HFES conference. Stan Caplan filled in for Pat Patterson, Chair PDTG, who could not attend the conference.

Welcome Everyone

- Introduced student non-members and encouraged them to join PDTG
- Introduced Executive Council
 - Jean Schiller
 - Andrew Morton
 - Jay Pollack
 - Dianne McMullin
 - Steve Belz (in absentia)
- Introduced Andy Le Cocq, founding chair in 1975

Program Chair Report – 2008 meeting

- Jay Pollack filling in for Steve Belz
- 20 submission with 10 accepted and presenting
- 1 panel discussion
- 2 posters
- 1 special session---PDTG User-Centered Design Award
- Reviewers were thanked
- Members were encouraged to submit papers for next year
- Members were encouraged to nominate products/designers for the award
- No Chautauqua this year
 - Will try to arrange one for next year
 - Anyone having ideas or wanting to help, please volunteer
- Chautauqua
 - Chautauqua is an institute of learning
 - Simply put, it is what we make it
 - Interactive event
 - Field visits
 - Speakers
 - Chautauquas in Baltimore and San Francisco were both sold out events

Treasury and membership report

- Stan Caplan
- 543 members making PDTG the 3rd largest group
- Membership up 4% from year ago
- > \$14,000 in treasury

Technical Council Report

- Jean Schiller attending in Pat's place
- Objectives of the Tech council
 - Policies for the technical groups
 - Support of the technical groups
 - Support of HFES



PDTG Business Meeting Minutes, continued

Technical Council Report, continued

- \$50,000 in treasury
 - Number of ways in which money is used by the technical council
 - mentor/mentee lunches
 - Junior faculty event
 - Website for the TG chairs

PDTG Election status

- Call for nominations results
 - PDTG chair: 3 nominations
 - Secretary/Treasurer: 1 nomination
 - Program Chair: 1 nomination
- Many people were nominated, 5 accepted nominations
- Ballots will be sent out in the next 2 weeks via regular mail and email

Newsletter Editor

- Jean Schiller
- 2-3 newsletters per year
- Newsletters sent by email or by regular mail if preferred
- Coverage of events, messages from the chair, jobs, articles, conference events
- If you wish to submit anything for the newsletter, please talk to Jean
- Would like to do interviews of members — request for volunteers to help with this
- Would like to have summaries of student research — request for volunteers to help with this
- Would like to have book reviews
 - Another opportunity for volunteers
 - Perhaps PDTG could help defray the cost of the book?
- Any feedback on newsletters, please talk to or email Jean
- Back issues of the newsletters on the website

PDTG Website

- Andrew Morton
- Can access the website <http://www.hfes.org/pdtg/>
- Also linked through the HFES website

User-Centered Design Award

- Dianne McMullin co-chair with Stan Caplan
- Winner: WT500 Wearable Product Family, Motorola, Inc. Innovation and Design Group
- Honorable Mention: PeachTree Accounting 2007, Sage Software User-Centered Design and Usability Team
- Ideas to increase number of nominations
 - UDA
 - IDSA
 - Press releases in conference city announcing the award
 - Design web blogs
 - ID Magazine/Newsletter
 - ID PDTG blog



PDTG Business Meeting Minutes, continued

IDSA/PDTG Social

- Networking event immediately after the business meeting
- Many thanks to Dave Miller and Jean Schiller for setting this up
- Thanks to the sponsors:
 - PDTG
 - Usability Associates
 - Design Science
 - Tenor Design
 - IDSA-National
- Held at the Garden of Ono

Discussion on how we use PDTG money

- Jointly sponsor speakers for regional professional chapters
- Help with speaker funding for student chapters, particularly HFES speakers bureau
- Think tank, help for small businesses with patents, start ups, etc.
- Workshop support
 - Many companies don't support workshop attendance with dollars
 - Help with free or cheaper workshops, such as workshops on prototyping or a design boot-camp
- Scholarships for students to attend the Chautauqua
- Scholarships for students with papers at HFES
- Have our own conferences on product design
 - Seed money needed to hold conference
 - Used to be every 2-3 years
 - Last conference in 1990
 - Downside, many companies only allow 1 conference per year
 - Downside, sometimes these conferences make money
- Web seminars with a guest speaker

Discussion on how we use PDTG money, continued

- Speakers at local meetings taped and put on web or broadcasted at time of presentations
- Web seminars so people can participate live and via the web
- Excitement over this idea
- Provide stipend for books used in book reviews for the newsletter

Additional Announcements

- Invitation to those not involved to get involved!
- Membership forms in the back of the room and on the website
- Congratulations to Sue Hallbeck, PDTG member, elected to HFES Executive Council



Job Opportunity at ForeSee Results

ForeSee Results is currently seeking a Usability Auditor to conduct usability audit reviews aimed at improving the interface of websites to enhance the user experience. The Usability Auditor participates in all phases of the usability audit review delivery process—from conducting in-depth usability audits to delivering results verbally and in written format to the client. Specialized training will be provided by ForeSee Results.

Responsibilities

- Review satisfaction data and communicate with Satisfaction Research Analysts to determine area of focus for usability audit
- Conduct usability audits and write up expert usability evaluations
- Create slide presentations to support audit reports
- Deliver audit findings to client via PowerPoint presentations
- Conduct usability reviews of prototypes, including wireframes and requirements documents
- Management of usability audit database application
- Conduct ad hoc research regarding usability principles and best practices
- Act as internal resource regarding usability and the Usability Audit Review service
- Maintain ongoing professional development to stay current with key thinking in the field

Required Skills

- A minimum of 2 years of relevant usability experience in an online environment
- Bachelor's Degree in Human Factors, Usability Human Computer Interaction, or other related discipline
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Proven ability to work effectively as a team member
- Ability to quickly learn and adapt in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to work with minimal supervision
- Ability to work well with a variety of high-profile clients
- Good analytical and quantitative skills and the ability to make sound recommendations
- Keeps up-to-date with industry research and developments
- Solid interpersonal skills and presentation skills, including the ability to communicate in small and large groups as well as virtually
- Ability to clearly convey methodologies and report findings verbally and in written form
- Must be self-motivated, energetic, self-directed, extremely detail-oriented, well-organized, display effective time management skills, and able to multi-task
- Ability to create deliverables that are simple and direct
- Proficiency in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook
- Experience with virtual meeting software tools, Visio, and SnagIt preferred

Find out more about ForeSee Results at www.foreseeresults.com. Apply by emailing your resume and salary requirements to: servicesresumes@foreseeresults.com.

We're on the web!
<http://www.hfes.org/pdtg>

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Coming Events

HCI International 2009 — 13th International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction, July 19-24, 2009. San Diego, CA. <http://www.hcii2009.org/>

IEA 2009: 17th World Congress on Ergonomics, August 9-14, 2009. Beijing, China.
<http://www.iea2009.org/>

MobileHCI 09. 11th International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction with Mobile Devices and Services, September 15-18, 2009. University of Bonn, Germany. <http://www.mobilehci09.org/>

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Europe Chapter Annual Meeting, October 14-16, 2009. Linköping, Sweden. <http://hfes-europe.org/>

HFES 53rd Annual Meeting, October 19-23, 2009. San Antonio, TX.
<http://www.hfes.org/web/HFESMeetings/09annualmeeting.html>