Inter*faces*

No. 49 Winter 2001

Read all about it!

UsabilityNews.com goes live

plus

❖ *a forward look at on-line shopping...*
❖ *... and a sideways look at IHM-HCI2001*
❖ *views and reviews*

contents

View from the Chair

May You Retire In Interesting Times

Inverting an oriental curse, Andrew Monk has indeed stepped down in such times and bequeathed a healthy crop of new initiatives that will maintain B-HCI-G's pre-eminence within UK HCI. We must all thank Andrew for his steady stewardship over the last few years. Andrew will fortunately remain as our SIGCHI liaison, so he is not fully free of these interesting times.

The dotcom crash has been good for HCI. I have every sympathy for B-HCI-G members who lost jobs or clients in the crash, but HCI's prospects are now better than ever. The cost of poor usability has been transferred from end-users to website developers and owners, giving usability an immediate and inescapable bottom line impact. The e-world has to take usability seriously. It should take us seriously as well, but we may instead be trampled underfoot in the gold rush. Ergonomists, human scientists, tamed designers and humane IT experts risk being eclipsed by the shadow of con-artists.

There were never enough true usability experts to go around. Nature may abhor a vacuum, but the market can fill one faster than the laws of physics. If we are not vigilant, we may find our image undermined by impostors. More than ever before, we need to explain who we are, what we do, and what it really takes to do what we do. Prospective clients should be able to spot the difference between a genuine HCI expert and someone who's read Four Web Style Guides and the Eye-Witness Guide to Focus Groups.

We need to fight fire with fire. We must market ourselves to stop some marketing amateur doing it on our behalf. When Terence from Telford (age 19¾) sets up his web-design patterns site, we must provide a robust and authoritative alternative. When Patsy with her degree in post-modern studies sets up her interaction deconstruction site, we must underpin our consultants' listing with appropriate but realistic accreditation. Most of all, we must gather more frequently on-line and face-to-face to actively develop and disseminate our discipline.

We are in a good position to protect the good name of HCI and usability from the gold-diggers. Andrew has left us with UsabilityNews.com ready to launch, after an amazing start-up effort by Dave Clarke, Eamonn O'Neill, Nico MacDonald and Ann Light. Jonathan Earthy continues to advance our proposed lightweight accreditation scheme with due diligence and caution (if only everyone was like Jonathan!).

I aim to add further initiatives that will maintain B-HCI-G's pre-eminence, not to

preserve power and influence for its own sake, but to protect the vital diversity and inclusiveness of B-HCI-G. We are a complex and ever-evolving community, where lines are very hard to draw. Our strength lies in our diversity and we must debunk the spin of self-interested cliques who argue that our community splits neatly into (their) practitioners and (our) academics.

As the new chair, my first aim is to better understand our members to let us challenge such false stereotypes, recently imported into the UK. We will contact all members in the first part of next year. Please look out for our questionnaire and return it promptly. We must know who we are and to what we aspire to ensure that future B-HCI-G initiatives meet member needs.

My second aim is accurately to communicate our diversity and its benefits to the wider world. As a specialist group of the British Computer Society, we are, of course, strong on members with substantial software development expertise, but we have no 'typical' members. Instead, our members span from idealistic undergraduates to authors of leading text-books, from graduate trainees to the most senior corporate experts, from research students to HCI's leading professors, and from independent consultants to the ambitious entrepreneurs. We have many unique strengths, but no-one can benefit from them except through the active involvement of our members. Thus we need volunteers to work with Nico MacDonald to communicate our community's achievements.

My third aim is to re-establish member benefits that have slipped over the last few years. There is no doubt that we have not provided good support for practitioners in our meetings programme for several years now. We regret this, and our meetings programme must improve, but it can only improve through the active involvement of more practitioner members. If you have a meeting topic and some ideas about speakers, please contact our meetings officer, Bob Fields.

The expansion of demand for HCI experts, and attempts by some to further divide the UK community, present a welcome, refreshing and long overdue challenge for the British HCI Group. We can accept the challenge or retreat into obscurity. The Executive Committee have accepted the challenge, but they will only succeed with more extensive activity from our members. If you want to become a more active member, please contact me, or an appropriate member of the Executive. All Executive Committee email addresses appear on the back cover of *Interfaces*.

Let the Interesting Times roll!

Gilbert Cockton
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Editorial

This issue has been put to bed by Deputy Editor Alex Dixon and, as ever, Production Editor Fiona Dix. As I write, it's almost all done (!) but the sun is coming up and I go into hospital today for a while, and will be out of the game for several months. Alex has agreed to edit issue 50 if I'm not back in time. This'll be the big one folks – where we see if the original dreams from 1986 have been fulfilled, and where the next 15 years take us. Some big names are being assembled to contribute but none are more important than you. Send your thoughts on the current big 50 issues in HCI to *Interfaces* before Xmas, then you can settle back and write your papers for HCI2002 at the Elephant.

I'll be back. In some form!

Tom McEwan
Editor

INTERFACES 50TH ISSUE

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deadline: *15 January 2002*

NEXT ISSUE

Interfaces welcomes submissions on any HCI-related topic, including articles, opinion pieces, book reviews and conference reports. We look forward to hearing from you.

To receive your own copy of *Interfaces*, join the British HCI Group by filling in the form on page 23 and sending it to the address given.

with thanks to commissioning eds:
Vet's Guide: Alistair Kilgour, alistair@realaxis.co.uk
Learning and Doing: Alex Dixon, adixonhci@ntlworld.com
Book Reviews: Xristine Faulkner, Xristine@sbu.ac.uk
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Deadline for issue 50 is **as above**. Deadline for issue 51 is **15 April 2002**. Electronic versions are preferred: RTF, plain text or MS Word, via electronic mail or FTP (mail fiona@hiraeth.com for FTP address) or on Mac, PC disks; but copy will be accepted on paper or fax.

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and copy email submissions **to Fiona Dix, *Interfaces* production editor; email: fiona@hiraeth.com**

The future of on-line shopping
## A small survey

This article is based on work carried out by Imran Ibrahim for his BSc final year project. The questionnaire was done by final year students on a Human Factors unit, in December 2000, administered as part of an exercise, which included shopping for ten given items, at a given store. Since then, some stores have altered their sites. 50 usable questionnaires were returned.

Though most subjects used the Internet regularly, on-line shopping seems a relatively new phenomenon. Over 72% of users have "shopped only once or less in the last three months". There is not much difference between the sexes, as a large majority (80% female, 72% male) have never shopped on-line before. Considering 96% are familiar with the Internet, and 64% use the Internet daily, the number of on-line shoppers is small. Despite the arguments that Internet shopping is cheap and convenient, it is still far from widespread [2].

A more positive sign was that 78% said that they felt on-line grocery shopping had a future, although 84% said they would prefer shopping in a supermarket to on-line shopping. From the study there was a negative perception about on-line shopping; for example: fear of fraud, lack of communication between staff and customer, and delivery of goods. Shoppers like to go to the supermarket as a release from the stress and strain of work. For some it is their only chance to socialise.

Users were asked to complete a shopping list of ten items, such as wine, dog food and toothpaste – items chosen to give a realistic shop. If a product on the list could not be found, users were asked to find a similar alternative. The average time taken to find these ten items on all the shopping sites was seventeen minutes. We have no idea how this compares with a real shop at the supermarket. The major supermarkets have times that were comparable and the two lesser-known supermarkets have a slightly higher average. However, not all shopping lists were completed, and not all times were noted, so this figure is calculated using the available data.

The longest shopping time was 35 minutes on the Lobster shopping site. This was not surprising as the subject had never shopped on-line before and was not a frequent Internet user. The shortest time was 10 minutes on a number of different sites, but, again, this was not surprising, as the subjects were daily users of the Internet, though had never shopped on-line before.
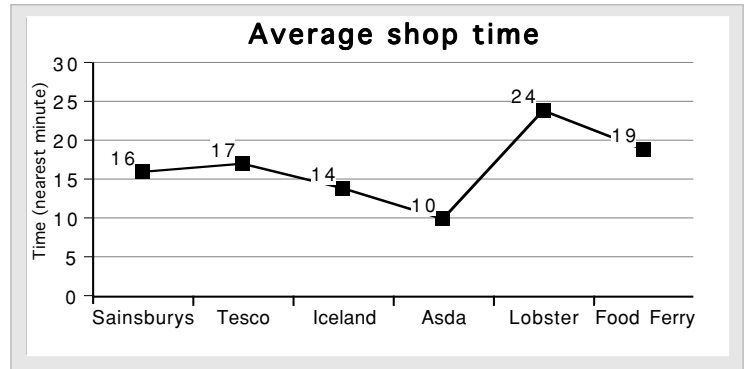
Two of the subjects who had never shopped online before or used the Internet and who both used the Iceland website completed the shopping list in under the average shopping time (15 and 12 minutes respectively). Credit for this has to go to the website for its ability to allow new users to the Internet to shop easily and quickly. A further look into the Iceland statistics shows that a lot of other subjects found the site comfortable and easy to use.

The majority of people said they felt comfortable using most of the sites. Most comfortable were Sainsburys and Food Ferry, with Lobster proving to be the most uncomfortable. An important feature on any site is the navigation. Most people find this is a cause for not wanting to continue. If they get frustrated having to work out how to use the site, then they are unlikely to return. All the sites had a

Imran Ibrahim and Xristine Faulkner
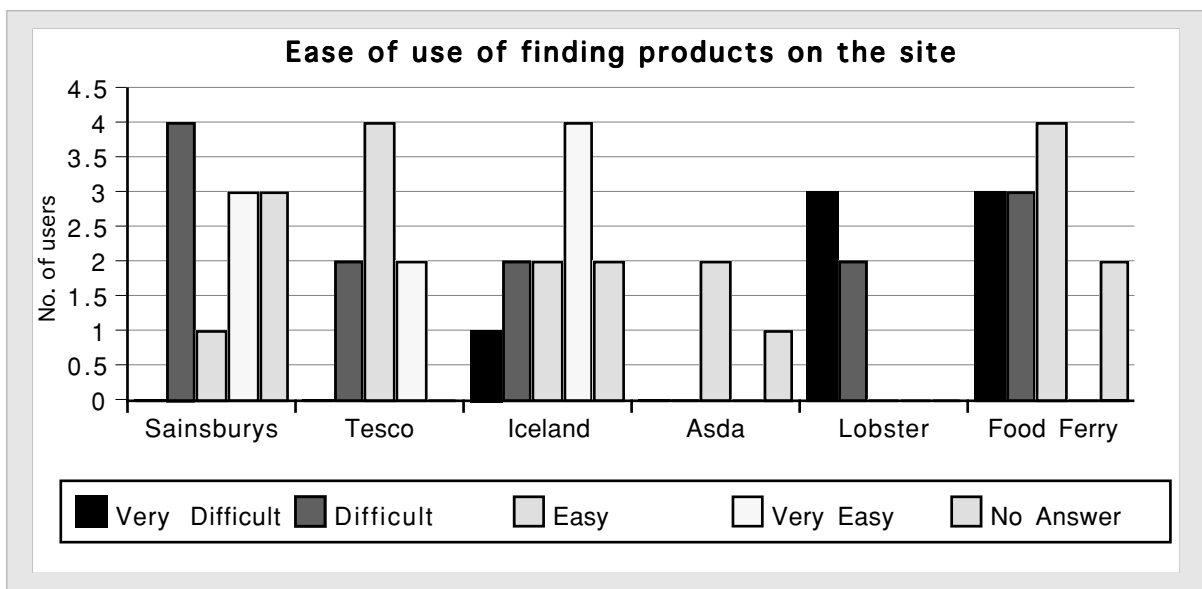
degree of difficulty when users were navigating them. The lesser-known sites (like Food Ferry and Lobster) are most difficult, probably because they have a smaller budget for their sites.

The most important factor within on-line shopping has to be security – a lot of our users found this to be the main cause for not shopping on-line. In a study of on-line shoppers within the UK, 78% said that they felt security was their biggest concern when shopping on-line. From our study, 70% felt insecure about giving their details on-line. This matches the other study and shows that whilst it may be improving, there is a long way to go to convince shoppers that the Internet is secure. However, only 7% of subjects felt this area could be improved on the shopping sites. This makes an interesting analysis. Either users are unaware of potential improvements that could be made, such as face and voice recognition, or they may feel that, no matter how good security is on a website, there will always be doubt and therefore they would not shop on-line. As technology improves, there is little doubt that security will improve. However, whether this improvement in security tempts these apprehensive users remains to be seen.

Aspect	%
Colour	9
Delivery	16
Graphics	23
Help	19
Navigation	18
Promotions	8
Security	7

Table 1 Room for improvement

Table 1 shows which aspects of the sites subjects would have liked to change. Graphics got a large number of votes as subjects felt that there were not enough pictures of products. However, adding graphics can seriously slow down page delivery times and maintaining up-to-date pictures can be time-consuming, so it is understandable why shops haven't gone for that kind of detail. Other aspects include the *help* feature, which seemed to let down most of the sites. As the subject had the chance of buying a substitute product if they could not find the original product, the *help* feature would be an important tool in aiding this search. A large number of users felt this feature was not adequate. Either they weren't sure how to use it or it proved difficult to use.

Delivery is a major issue when considering grocery shopping. Fresh and perishable goods must be delivered without damage. For this reason, deliveries are constrained to local areas and therefore on-line grocery shopping remains available to only a few, mainly to ensure business viability. Whilst it remains a new phenomenon, the major supermarkets have decided to offer the service to a small area in the short term. If it is successful, then it will grow to allow the whole population to use the service.

There are mixed feelings towards the future of on-line shopping, with 56% believing it has a future and 44% thinking it has none. The vast majority still prefer to use the supermarket – only 4% said they preferred to shop on-line. "*Online grocery shopping doesn't have a future because people like interaction with other humans whilst purchasing goods*" and "*I like to feel and see food products, especially fruit veg & meat & dairy products*" were some of the comments made. However, 60% said they enjoyed the on-line shopping experience and 40% said they did not. It might be that it has as yet had insufficient time to grab hearts and minds. As more shops enter the market, perhaps that situation will change [1,3].

In terms of the usability criteria (of likeability, learnability, usefulness and effectiveness), most websites met the criteria. The large majority of subjects felt that most sites lacked pictures of products. Consumers like to be able to see and feel products before they buy. As there is no opportunity to 'feel' a product, they would like to see what products look like, especially if ordering something for the first time. A lot of the subjects enjoyed the novelty of online shopping, but felt that the future for grocery shopping is still in the balance. However, an important issue is that of security. A lot of subjects still felt unhappy about passing their details over the net even though the security has improved. More important, being able to 'feel' a product is still a major issue and one that online shopping will always struggle to overcome.

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2. Nielsen, J., Why People Shop on the Web, *Alertbox*, February 7 1999
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Imran Ibrahim
Xristine Faulkner

Call For Papers
Workshop on Physiological Computing at CHI2002
April 20–25th, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
http://www.acm.org/sigchi/chi2002/

Submission Deadline: *January 25th 2002*

The main goal of the workshop is to develop an understanding of how the availability of physiological information will affect the future of human–machine interaction.

Topics of interest include (but are not limited to):

Physiological sensing technologies • Development support for physiologically-enabled interactive applications • Physiological usability metrics • Affective Computing • Biocybernetic/ biofeedback systems • Healthcare applications

Further information from
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http://polo.lancs.ac.uk/workshop/

The Purple Press
The seedy underbelly of IHM-HCI2001

IHM-HCI2001 Lille September 10–14th

Tom McEwan

Some highlights and lowlights – much previously seen before in the seedy underbelly of any British HCI Group Conference – the renegade Purple Press.

The Purple Press almost didn't happen. After two days of gnashing teeth over ISP numbers that didn't work, an Azerty keyboard, French Windows and creeping health problems, your editor had finally got, by 5pm on the Tuesday, camera-ready copy. I came over to the EUDIL concourse, to where both the copying room, and the installations for Videos, Interactive Experience, etc., were. A few people were watching a screen – showing something I thought was a display of the consequences of some aspect of cockpit ergonomics. Of course, it wasn't.

That it was several minutes before I asked if this was real, brings home the shock and the disbelief that affected everyone – all of us stranded far from home, many with friends and family in the US. The local media played only the slightest snatches in English, before stretching my primitive French capabilities too far. Nothing could have brought home better to the English-speaking majority the problems of interaction across frontiers, than this simple linguistic challenge.

I looked at the puerile humour that passes your eyes below, and almost trashed it unseen. Yet it felt like the show had to go on. And it did. In the sessions, with a quiet dignity and determination that later we found out must have been a faint echo of that of the heroic rescue workers. And in some tawdry attempts at humour to keep our spirits up.

And I guess the more linguistically challenged of us put it all to the back of our minds until we could interact with media artefacts that we could understand. But as I walked back with my sheaf of Purple Presses, and I thought about system pre-emptive and user pre-emptive, I remembered how planes land themselves nowadays, with minimal pilot intervention. The system controls it all. How the hell are we still building planes and tall buildings that afford getting within a mile of each other?

The history of IHM-HCI2001

By Scantily Clad Emperor

Whose idea was this anyway? Glorious co-chairs Phil Gray and Alain Derycke picked up the gauntlet of the late-night notion of a cabal from both organisations at Interact'99, that we should bring our truculent tribes together in the name of European harmony.

Whether Phil, as one who is for long enough in, but not of Europe, truly knew and understood his target users at that point is open for debate. But together he and Alain brought AFIHM and BHCIG into far greater alignment than the UK and French economies, and created the climate for entry into a Euro-CHI.

Since 1999 we have seen blockades of Calais, rampant English euro-scepticism, Scotland's footballing achievements, and let's not mention Sangatte (*even if we are all looking for*

Interaction Sans Frontières). It's fair to say that our respective contexts are less aligned. The British aiment beaucoup French food, wine, countryside, culture, architecture (mais les gens?!). The French love British … (*fill blank space later?*).

But some world mind, some universal niceness of HCI people (cf Jakob's globalisation demo banner – "replace poor usability with something nicer") held sway and thus we gathered – over 350 of us from 20 different countries.

This is a tribute to the committee(s). Ostensibly one, we were in fact four or five factions, and it is to the co-chairs' credit that the illusion of solidarity was preserved until delegates had parted with fees. But the 35 names printed (inside both sets of proceedings, the CFP and the advance and final programmes – for we are shy and modest people) had worked together and individually, or not at all, to present a feast of interactivity.

Messrs David, Culwin et Derycke each dress in their own way appropriate to the relative climate

Sadly there was a change to the final programme on arrival. The first order of business was the ludicrously short lunchbreak – only 90 minutes. This was immediately stretched to a proper Pas de Calais two hours. How else was Fintan going to get home for a pint of Pride and a ploughman's?

"Usability for all", or "know your user"?

The first stirrings of a usefully polarised debate surfaced right at the start – at Didier Chincholle's tutorial on "Designing Highly Usable Mobile Services for Small Display Devices", on the Monday.

In the presence of several competitors, the man from Ericsson took us through the usability issues with WAP and mobile environments. In the main, this is a study of limitations, and familiar ground to those of us who grew up in the ZX81 era. But the social, domestic and fun aspects of WAP seem to have more relevance than any potential work or commercial benefits, in current WAP applications (a point reinforced by Ken Dye when he describes how users see the PC as where "real work" is done).

Didier identified that many current WAP applications have the usual collection of usability issues – navigation, structure, speed, user feedback, inappropriate layout, text and images. But it is the individuality of device capabilities and of users' needs that causes most problems.

We achieve usability (as does the web designer) by designing for specific user/device combinations. The choice of these must reflect the realities of the marketplace.

But hold on there! Is this not the diametrically opposite view from the idea of universal accessibility as defined by W3C? Can these two viewpoints be reconciled? Is this the fundamental dichotomy for the usability of HCI?

Tom McEwan & Lachlan McKinnon

Opening Keynote – Novel Solutions to Unique Problems?

Ken Dye of Microsoft, the opening keynote, gave us valuable insights into his DIY skills and techniques. Do not buy a used house from this man unless finding his most cherished screwdrivers is among your ambitions.

Openly modest about Microsoft's usability achievements and facing detractors head on, he provided a wealth of what he made clear was needed, instead of opinion – data.

The volume of work was astounding, and even cataloguing the 110,000 hours of video observations must be a mountainous task. The storage requirements, we learned, are fearsome too.

The conclusions, he points out, are far from overwhelming, and only serve to underline the inadequacy of the approach. Although discount usability evaluation is useful for identifying specific issues, the real problem is that knowledge workers generally use tools like MS Office to produce novel solutions to unique problems.

A question from the audience contested this – that knowledge workers have mainly mundane tasks to do and it is this that frustrates them. I had reached the same conclusion – Ken's example of the creative use of pivot tables to analyse problems is not only the use of a rarely accessed but useful component. It is the work of a more imaginative and committed member of the workforce than most.

Perhaps the real debate should be: what do we call knowledge workers who do not take this approach to work!

Other questions highlighted cultural differences between the US and the rest of the world – "is unlimited free choice desirable?", "where does Microsoft test usability?". Answering the latter, apparently US usability testing results can be reasonably easily localised for Europe, but not so for Asia. So about 15% is tested in Japan and other Pacific Rim locations.

Pluridisciplinary infiltration

Lab sessions demonstrate consistency

A mammoth pair of sessions looked at the overviews of no less than 19 different labs from several different countries.

The consistency between presentations was most significant. Almost everyone had two key themes – the multi- (ou en Français: pluri-) disciplinary teams, and active research into the best ways to infiltrate the software engineering process.

It seems that HCI people are no longer prepared to sit in isolation criticising the failings of others after the event. No matter how good the pay!

Headset stuff

Losing something in translation?

Uniquely this year we were afforded the opportunity to be entertained by attempts to translate concepts from one

Cockton influences Dye's final menu for XP

culture into another. The space-age headsets collected from conference office MACC were the latter day equivalent of the fish in one's ear, and ensured raucous mirth whenever the translator said "the delegate has said something amusing, it would be polite to laugh".

They were fun, but my battery gave out half way through. Probably should unplug headset between sessions and over lunch. D'oh! Alistair Kilgour, however, fresh from six months of Open University Spoken French modules, had the whole thing upside down, listening totally en Français – and looking like he understood in French stuff that went over my head in English. But his acting skills were finely honed at Interact'99, so who can know for sure?

The capabilities of the translators were impressive; they gave the illusion they understood the most arcane topics. The lofty intellectualisms of Pierre Rabardel become poetic. I was touched by the symbolics of activity theory and ecological artifacts.

In their booths they provided visual entertainment too, with hand gestures that mutated to match the tongue of the moment. Even more amusing was the way they managed to shadow the more adventurous polyglots who veered between languages out of deference to each culture. And the winner of the "Eurovision Song Contest Presenter of 2002" competition had to be Jean Vanderdonckt from Louvain in Belgium. During his presentation of BCHI at the first Lab Overviews session, he moved effortlessly, indeed unconsciously, between French and English.

Conference Thoughts from Abroad

For Lachlan, it is far from over!

Tragically, I left without my Dinner!!! Which means that, on my return to Edinburgh, the traditional greeting of that fair city was particularly poignant!? (*Editor's clarification*: "you'll have had your tea" is the local idiom.)

However, my unfortunate but necessary early departure from the conference does give me an opportunity to reflect on the experience of two days in Lille. Firstly, I applaud the idea of bringing together the British and French HCI groups for a single conference this year. It is a bold experiment that I hope will provide the impetus for broader European collaboration and, potentially, for a future European HCI Conference. The title "Interactions sans Frontières" reflects both an aspirational ideal and the memory of a very silly television series, where groups of Europeans dressed up in daft costumes and got wet, cold and covered in bruises while trying to score points off one another. How much of the former is achieved, and how close we come to the latter, is, I feel, crucially bound up in the success of the dinner I have missed.

Over the last two days I have met colleagues old and new, enjoyed some interesting and lively discussions, listened to a

varying quality of presentations, but I don't feel the hoped-for interactions are happening yet. It is clear that the British and French HCI communities have shared and common interests, but there is also a significant cultural divide to overcome, not only in social interaction but also in the way we do our HCI business. I understand when Ken Dye says that Microsoft can use American usability testing for European products, but that is testament to the homogenizing influence of their software and to the failure of our respective communities to describe usability models that support and celebrate the cultural, technical and social diversity that is so evident throughout Europe.

One of the devices sans frontières that the local authorities have ready to keep the HCI hordes from running amok

It is a mystery to me that a nation that can force McDonalds to develop a special local menu, that can produce a computer keyboard that enables me to type in Polish without trying, is also willing to accept the view that Microsoft products produced for Americans are equally culturally relevant to French citizens. My view of the process of interaction between our two communities is that it should promote understanding of the diversity of our cultures, help us to learn how our colleagues go about their business, and thereby to find ways of working together, but should not be focused on eradicating that diversity and creating a homogeneous European model. I'm actually quite fond of the notion that, for me, France is and always will be a foreign country.

So I would argue that our interactions should be about establishing friendships and working relationships. The city of Lille has done its part, the reception was generous and welcoming, as Tom rightly pointed out in the Purple Press at the time. (Although I must confess that the sight of the giant models (see scary picture) guarding the interior of the Maine on Wednesday night brought back images of THAT TV series, and I had visions of teams of HCI'ers racing those models up and down the halls to stick giant Post-It notes all over the architecture (there's usability for you!!).

Our two co-chairs have sought to generate interaction – Phil with the sort of flawless French only attributable to the completely blind (and that without drink, as well!!) and Alain with the sort of heartfelt, spontaneous and completely unrehearsed bid for research funding we all feel the need to make sometimes!!?

So now it's over to the rest of us. I hope some of you made a start at the dinner (especially those who drank my share of the wine!) and that you will continue to do so in the ensuing months. We already have a French co-program chair for next year's British HCI conference and, as I said at the beginning, I hope these mutual joint activities will eventually lead to a full European HCI conference.

As always at the end of a conference, some of the questions I had at the start have been resolved, but now I have some new ones to ponder on:

- Will Phil invest in new glasses, or is his appearance of unseeming calm entirely bound up in a complete lack of close-up perceptual reality?
- If we give 3 year-olds mobile phones, how long before the "Active Nappy" (trade mark pending) that rings you at work to tell you it's full?
- Can Jan Borchers actually play a real instrument?
- Is Tom McEwan a repetitive strain injury?
- Will Fintan's desperate shirt ploy work, and more importantly will his "sports injury" heal in time for HCI 2002?
- Should we introduce naming conventions to remove all European genitalia from potential project titles?
- Will Gilbert find his evaluation Ferrari, and if he does will he ever let any of the rest of us have a go in it?
- How the hell do you find an invisible elephant?
- Stands the church clock at ten to three, and is there honey still for tea?

Some, all or none of the above will be answered at HCI 2002 at South Bank University in London in a year's time. I hope to see lots of you there.

À bientôt, mes amis. Vive les différences! Vive les interactions!!

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Digital Document Discourse Environment

What is D3E?
D3E is a tool for document-centric discussion. The document could be anything, from a research paper, to a policy proposal, to a multimedia student assignment. D3E makes it easy to transform an HTML file into an interactive document, tightly integrated with topic-specific or section-specific discussion threads

Why have we developed it?
D3E started as an action research project into the social and technical design of scholarly communication technologies (see our papers for details). D3E is, however, a generic web publishing tool that has proven to have wider scope.

How can I get it?
D3E is freeware, most of it open source. That means you can download it now.

Details, Demos, Documents + Downloads at http://d3e.open.ac.uk

D3E is a collaborative project between

Knowledge Media Institute / Learning & Teaching Solutions
The Open University, UK
http://kmi.open.ac.uk
http://www2.open.ac.uk/CES

Center for LifeLong Learning & Design
University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
http://www.cs.colorado.edu/~l3d

UsabilityNews.com is launched…

It's here at last – www.usabilitynews.com – the dynamic web resource you've all been waiting for! Bringing you all the latest news and views in usability and HCI, the British HCI Group is proud to announce its latest initiative in supporting practitioners and researchers in keeping up to date in this fascinating area. As well as covering announcements such as events, jobs and paper calls, the web site will also include hot news topics and opinion each week. Whether it be constructive remarks on the latest user interface adopted in Microsoft's XP, new guidelines on web accessibility or Jakob Nielsen's (often controversial) views on using Flash technology in web pages, if it is of interest to the HCI community, it will be here.

How did it begin and why?

It all started when Dave Clarke came up with the idea and raised it with the HCI Group team early this year, suggesting that there was a need for a focused "one-stop shop" website that offers timely, up-to-date usability news across the globe. For example, where do you go to find out what exciting news has happened this week in HCI? How do you find out what events are coming up in the next month or so? Where can you find the latest jobs in usability?

Where do I go to find out what exciting news has happened this week in HCI?

The group liked the idea, and thus the UsabilityNews team* was formed to help thrash out the ideas in more detail. A few meetings later, plus many an evening spent by Dave in his spare time designing and developing the web system over the Summer, and UsabilityNews.com was produced. Of course, a site is only as good as its content, and so an editor (aka Ann Light – watch out she'll be after an interview with you soon…) was recruited to control, research and write material for the site.

In September there was a pre-launch of the UsabilityNews.com site at the IHM-HCI conference in Lille, where it received some very positive feedback. On October 29th the site went live and the rest is history…

An invitation

The success of a resource like this relies not only on the editor to write topical material, but also on the contributions of you, the users themselves. This is a chance to put forward your views and comments on what interests you most. Have you an interesting point to make? Maybe you have been to a conference recently and would like to share your thoughts on the experience with others? Perhaps your company is working on a new mobile phone interface and would like to share your progress and gain some feedback? Maybe you simply have a usability job to advertise?

If you think you have something interesting to share, the time has come to stop thinking and instead put pen to paper (or should that be fingers to keyboard!) and contact the editor at editor@usabilitynews.com. Better still, go to www.usabilitynews.com and select the Contribute button to submit your thoughts online. Remember, we are not looking for lengthy articles; in fact, in many ways we want the opposite – short, concise and to the point summaries often fit the bill nicely!

We look forward to hearing from you all – lets work together to make this the most exciting usability resource on the net!

Dave Clarke and Ann Light

* The UsabilityNews Team
    Ann Light (*editor*)
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Issues for discussion on UsabilityNews.com this winter

- What is Usability, anyway? ... and how do you name a department that deals in it?
- Getting the Most out of Usability Labs: are they only there to impress the boss?
- Professional Identity: Training and Accreditation
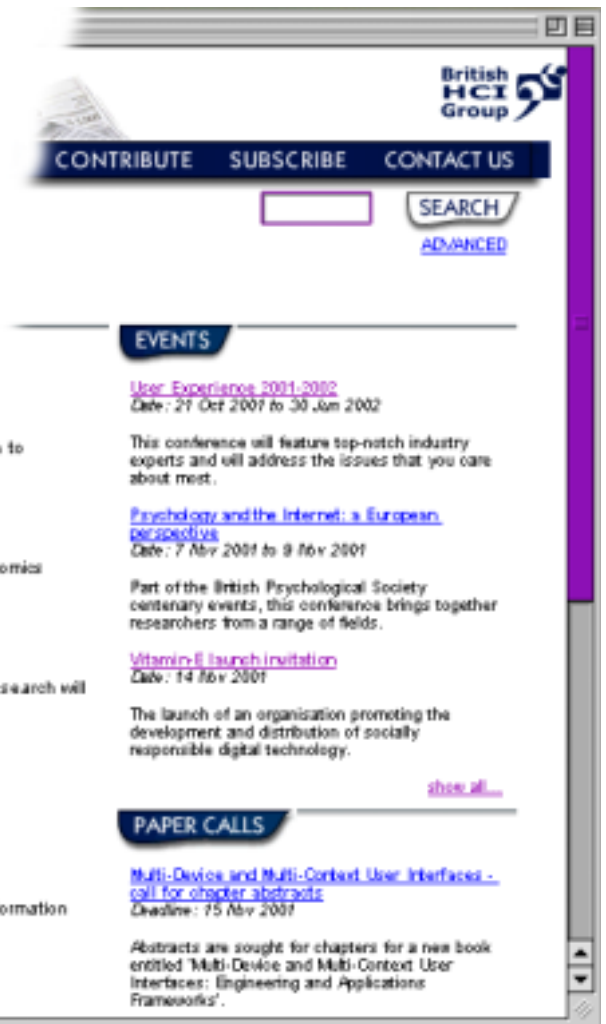
My PhD

Martha Hause

A column entitled 'My PhD' is very inviting to me. As well as reflecting the academic aspect of research, it also suggests a personal touch. My own PhD is personal not only because I have worked very hard on it over the past 3 years, but also because it encompasses several fields of computing that are personal interests. Although it is a Computer Science PhD, it interfaces to fields such as sociology, psychology, software engineering and HCI. My PhD has grown to be a big part of me, giving new light to the phrase, "we are what we eat"!

My PhD study is drawn from the Runestone Project, an international collaboration between Uppsala University in Sweden and Grand Valley State University in Michigan, USA. The Runestone Project began in 1998 as a three-year project sponsored by the Swedish Council for Renewal of Undergraduate Education. The success of the three-year trial means that it is still running and achieving its main goal of offering international experience to the students of both universities. My study concentrates on the project during the year 2000, which involved a total of ninety-three students, 47 from Uppsala University and 46 from Grand Valley State University.

The Runestone Project is incorporated in courses at both universities where students must complete a software development project, working in teams of 5–6 people. There were sixteen teams, and every team has members from each university. The students work closely with their foreign counterparts, communicating via email and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). Other communication channels were available to them, but IRC was used for regular team meetings, and email was used for everything else. Web pages were used – initially to introduce individuals and then to post project documentation for the entire team. All communication, email, IRC and web pages, was saved in files by the students, with the understanding that the teachers would not have access to this information until after the final marks were given. The students were asked to complete other information such as project logs, an initial questionnaire and journals.

My study interest is to understand what makes good team building of software and what characterises high performance groups in terms of software development in a distributed group environment in Computer Science. This I am hoping to achieve by, among other factors, looking at the communication that was saved by the students and identifying the software development process (if any), and by looking at interaction types and looking for communication factors which contribute to high/low performance. In order to look for interaction patterns in the communication, I first needed some way of looking at the types of communication. My research showed that many previous studies had used *sets of categories* to analyse group communications. I chose to develop my own set of categories because I wanted not only something more suitable to the task at hand (software development) but also something that would include the group development in a remote environment.

Having created and validated the categories, I began the lengthy task of coding (assigning categories to phrases) the email and IRC communication of 8 teams. The 8 teams were chosen as being the 4 top performing and the 4 low performing groups. My PhD is currently at the point where I have done some minor analysis but still have more to do before I am able to reach any definite conclusions. There are several issues I am currently analysing, such as category *patterns* throughout the project timeline of 8 weeks, the *amount* of communication of each team member versus the role they played and the use of *email vs. IRC* in each team.

Very early analysis suggested that the low performing teams had a higher percentage of email vs. IRC, with the opposite true for the high performing teams. Having completed the coding of all teams, this still seems to be true however the differences are not that great. My next step will be to do some significance testing which may give me more insight into this issue.

Although this is very much my PhD, "no man is an island" so I must recognise the support, guidance and immense patience of my two supervisors and my husband. I am also very grateful to the other Runestone researchers and to the students and staff who took part in the Runestone Project.

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2nd International Symposium on Smart Graphics
June 11–13 2002
IBM T.J. Watson Research Center, Hawthorne, NY, USA
In cooperation with AAAI & Eurographics

SG2002 welcomes submissions from cognitive scientists, psychologists, graphic designers, human-computer interaction, computer graphics and artificial intelligence researchers and practitioners.

Invited Speakers
Ben Shneiderman (University of Maryland, USA)
Jock Mackinlay (Xerox PARC, USA)
For a full description of the scope of the Symposium, and details of previous events see the website:

http://www.smartgraphics.org/

Submission Categories
Full papers
Short papers
Demonstrations
Statement of Interest

Important Dates
Submission Deadline	February 18 2002
Notification of Acceptance	March 18 2002
Camera-ready copy due	April 1 2002
Smart Graphics Symposium	June 11–13 2002

View from industry

Netusability product review

Alex Dixon

We welcome a variety of viewpoints direct from industry in *Interfaces*. These can be written by the company, or their representatives, and are subject to normal editorial interference! Netusability asked Alex Dixon to create this on their behalf, and what I find significant here are two things, both related to subjects of Ken Dye's keynote at IHM-HCI2001. Firstly that either the method or the population tested, or both, produce different conclusions about usability than Microsoft's own testing on behalf of the same demographic user group. Secondly that the integration of video recording with other data produces evidence that is far easier (or even possible!) to manage. Ken's keynote highlighted the vast amount of video produced in testing and the challenges in archiving, never mind benefiting from, the information contained.

I first encountered Netusability when I visited the Internet World show earlier this year. I was given a five-minute demo of their website testing software, which both intrigued and impressed me. They have produced a set of testing and analysis tools that seem to provide a rapid and convenient way to record, review and analyse real users' experiences when using any website.

Some months later, at the IHM-HCI Conference in Lille, Richard Jacques and Hernan Savastano of Microsoft presented their short paper on "Remote vs. Local Usability Evaluation of Web Sites". Jacques and Savastano reminded us that Microsoft spends a lot on usability testing. They gave us a glimpse of the extensive usability lab testing facilities at their Seattle headquarters, and they told us that they frequently recruit new test subjects to work with new software. Through its extensive local testing in Seattle and elsewhere Microsoft has become highly proficient at developing user-friendly software.

To find out more about how remote testing compares with local testing Jacques and Savastano decided to evaluate users' experience with the Microsoft Office Update site. They were interested in comparing the results from their traditional, established, lab-based web user testing with the results of remote web user testing. For their evaluation they chose the service provided by Vividence, a company that recruits a large pool of test users who are willing take part in tests from their own homes.

For the team at Microsoft the benefits of remote testing are:

- the testing service is provided by an intermediary so Microsoft can remain 'anonymous'
- they can test with diverse and distributed populations, and with niche populations
- there is an opportunity to understand real world contexts
- they can get results from a large number of participants – from 25 to 400 people
- results are available very quickly – within two to three days.

In their comparison of 12 local testers and 25 remote testers, Jacques and Savastano found that for both groups the task completion success rate and time to achieve a successful result were very close. However, whereas the local testers did not give up on any tasks, the remote testers gave up on 20% of tasks. There was also a difference in the rating of overall satisfaction: local testers gave an average rating of 5.4 on a 1–7 scale, compared with an average rating of 4.2 by remote testers. See the paper[i] in the proceedings for a discussion of these results.

In conclusion, we were told that the results from local and remote testing are generally similar, that remote testing is good for benchmarking and competitor testing, but that it does not offer a substitute for being with the test participants. Jacques and Savastano let us know about further remote testing tools that they may use in the future: Netraker's remote testing product which lets you view the user's desktop, and also Netusability's testing product which videos users during the test session.

Now I knew it was time for me to find out more about Netusability's testing software, so I went to their London offices to take a closer look.

What does Netusability offer?

Netusability has created a website testing tool – Netu Lab – that records all of a user's interactions with a website, videos the user, and records all the system actions during the session. When the test session is complete you have a full record of what the user did, what they saw, how they looked, what they said, and optionally any comments the observer made. This record is available for analysis immediately.

Netu Lab's key strength is its integration of the different types of recorded information. The outcome of a test session is a set of result files that include video and audio recordings of the user, all their interactions with the system, and lots of website statistics like page load time, page view time, number of links on a page, number of clicks on a page and so on.

Preparing for a test

We created a new test in a few minutes using the wizard, which lets you create a test with three clicks of a mouse. You are then ready to start recording a user.

To develop a test with more thorough control, use the standard interface rather than the wizard. You create a project and then create the test within your project. You can specify questions that precede the test to collect demographic information about your test participants. You can develop a scenario with introductory text to prepare your test participants and announce and define the tasks that they will be required to perform. You specify the starting url for the test. You can add questions that follow the test to collect feedback.

You can reuse these elements in another project. So for example you might develop a standard demographic questionnaire that is used for all tests run by your company. This can be imported into further tests that you develop.

Although it is possible to create a test very quickly, it is worth putting time into the design and creation of a test. The

questionnaires use the five-point Likert scale, and so care is needed in wording questions to elicit an appropriate positive or negative response. The questionnaire needs to be robust. You might spend up to a day and a half developing a test that you will run for a day with six or seven users.

Recording test results

Once you have developed the test it is self-contained and self-running. However, you can also have an observer with a machine that is linked to the test machine.

The test participant will need a fairly high spec machine – a Pentium III or better. Add a small clip-on camera. Clear the cache – if this is unacceptable, create a second user profile for the test. There is a proxy that monitors the interactions between the client and the server. This means that you can limit the bandwidth to mimic different modem speeds, and adjust the latency to mimic different network traffic loads. Of course, you also need an internet connection.

During the test the user only sees the browser window, which starts the test by displaying the questions and instructions that you defined.

The test administrator can watch the user's progress at their own PC. The observer can enter comments about the user's experience. The observer might make a comment when the user is especially frustrated or pleased. These comments automatically become bookmarks in the recorded output file, which makes it quick and easy to find these points in the test during playback and analysis.

During the test some bookmarks are created automatically in response to user or system actions. For example, when a user jumps to a new page or a file download has finished.

Note that the observer need not be a usability specialist. You might have an overseas office where there are no usability specialists. You can send them the developed test scenario and anyone can administer the test because it runs autonomously. The local administrator can greet the test participants and show them to the test PC where they will find the self-contained test ready to run. When the tests are complete they can send you the test result files. You need to think through the pros and cons of not having a usability specialist to administer the tests.

Reviewing test results

The test results are available for viewing immediately after the test. Netu Lab has a number of windows for viewing the results. One shows the captured web page. Another shows the video of the user's face. Another shows the urls that were visited, test statistics such as maximum page load time, graphs of any of these statistics, and a log of significant points noted by the test observer. There are also controls for starting and stopping the replay, and fast forwarding to certain points in the capture.

You can locate a particular point during the test in different ways. You can retrieve the bookmarks made by the observer when, say, the user was frustrated. Or you can search the video for a time when the user smiles. Or you can select a jump to a new url from the list of user actions. When

you select one of these points, all the other recorded data remains synchronised. So for example selecting a user's action 'jump to new url' also advances you to the corresponding web page view and to the frame of video when the user made that jump. You can start the playback from that point to see what happened next.

When you play back the results you see the user's expression, hear what they said, see the cursor movement and mouse clicks that they made, see the contents of the browser window exactly as the user saw them. This comprehensive display gives a very full sense of the user's experience.

Netusability has created a proprietary digital video format. It is this video format that makes it possible to skip through the video output quickly. It also keeps file sizes to a workable size, needing only 80MG for an hour's testing.

With their integrated video, Netusability has minimised the time-consuming task of co-ordinating captured video with the record of system and user events. Using Netu Lab you can produce an hour-long video of test results in about 40 minutes; producing the same one-hour results video by editing traditional video tapes can take as long as 12 hours.

Sharing test results

When you have reviewed the highlights from your testing you can select the moments that are most important for your audience. You might want to show programmers that a particular feature is difficult to use, or marketers that some feature causes confusion and dissatisfaction. You might share a fuller version of the test results with a fellow usability specialist who works in another office. You can select highlights from all of your users and create a single results file. You can distribute this file to anyone along with the free distribution program for viewing results. The recipient can then watch the recording and skip through some sections and repeat the sections of interest to them.

This provides a powerful way of sharing the experience of observing a test session with a large number of people. If you

can't take the people (programmers, managers, marketers) to the lab, you can now take the lab to those people's desktops.

Conclusion

Netusability's Netu Lab provides a fast, convenient and effective way to create tests, and manage the results and material from traditional lab tests. Netu Lab has a set of reporting tools that you can use to quickly create customised reports. You don't need separate video equipment – just a clip-on camera. You can even dispense with the lab itself!

We know from Microsoft's investigation that remote testing produces meaningful results, but the main disadvantage of remote testing is the lack of knowledge about what the user was doing, saying, feeling and thinking during the test. Why did that 20% of users abandon their

tasks? Netusability seems to have a potential answer with Netu Lab, which records what users do and say during their test session. The current version supports "remote attended testing" which requires someone to set up the test machine, but soon there will be a version that supports "remote unattended testing", which does not require a local test administrator. This promises to provide the missing link for remote software testing, allowing testing to evolve beyond the confines of Seattle, or wherever your usability team and labs are based, without losing the benefits of observed and controlled testing.

i *IHM-HCI 2001 Volume II*, p. 91

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Commissioned by Netusability
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BCS liaison report

Alistair Kilgour

Alistair Kilgour flies the BHCIG banner at a transitional moment for the British Computing Society. BHCIG members who are also in BCS will be aware of the great changes that are taking place. It is useful to see how BHCIG fits into the picture – we are one of the largest BCS Specialist Groups (SG – that's UK English for SIG!).

At the Lille conference it was noticeable how much greater store is placed in the rest of the EU on professional status, such as C.Eng., and how this shapes the debate about accreditation and education.

Plainly the standing of all of us can only be enhanced by constructive engagement with the new BCS structure.

On 1st October 2001, I represented the British HCI Group at the last meeting of the British Computing Society Technical Board – this is being replaced by the BCS Member Services Board, as part of the modernisation of the BCS. In the new structure, there will be a *Specialist Groups Assembly*, reporting to the *Member Services Board*, replacing the old *Specialist Groups Congress*. The full terms of reference are still under review.

Funding has been agreed for a *Specialist Group Support Manager* based at Swindon, and to be advertised shortly. Given the size and activity of BHCIG, clearly it would be useful if someone with some HCI background were to be appointed.

A *Specialist Groups Executive Committee* will handle the day-to-day business, between the twice-annual meetings of the Assembly. At the meeting, since the number of nominations matched the number of places available, all nominees were elected, these included: Keith Armstrong-Bridges, Max Bramer, Mike Funk, Howard Gerlis, Peter Golden, and Bryan Layzell.

Nigel Morgan, Technical Manager at BCS HQ, presented the structure and technical background for the new branches and SG website. SG secretaries will be able to maintain membership lists in a secure section of the website, and generate mailing labels, etc., as required. This will not be mandatory, but it is hoped most groups will find it

convenient. There is a *Services* working party advising on the website design issues, among other things, and I believe that the HCI Group and the Internet Group are represented on this. The *XML UK* Group will become a BCS informal affiliate group. There will be a new *Women's SG* – the exact title and remit will be decided. A proposal for a new *Games SG* was accepted.

It was reported that auditors had again expressed concern about the relatively large balances held by some SGs. The concern is in regard to possible questions from the Charities Commission. Several representatives of SGs in this category emphasised that substantial working capital was essential to underwrite major undertakings such as annual conferences, without the need, as in the bad old days, of formally seeking an advance from BCS central funds.

I think this point was well understood, and I believe there is no real threat to the independence of SG treasurers. But to reassure auditors, each group would be well advised to state with the annual accounts how they plan in the next two to three years to use the surplus to the benefit of members, and to further the aims of the society. It was agreed that all SGs would be notified of this requirement before the next accounts are due.

The *BCS Publications Board* will be restructured as the *Knowledge Services Board*. It was reported that *Computer Journal* is in a healthy state. [So of course is *Interacting with Computers*, though that was not reported. The HCI Group is one of only three SGs which have their own academic journal.]

Lastly a guidance paper for SGs on sponsorship, from the BCS PR company BCLO, was supplied. The recommendations add little to BHCIG existing practice in respect of seeking conference sponsorship, but the consolidation of best practice is welcomed.

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Book reviews

Xristine Faulkner

This is a hefty book, sort of along the lines of the *Readings in HCI* books, if you remember those. It is not a book for the faint hearted, people with lives, or those who like an easy read. It is a real academic text, an academic's text, with contributions from all over the world and some from people who have been so quiet that I thought they had been abducted by aliens… However, it is a very serious contribution to HCI literature and has some interesting ideas to put forward.

Stephanidis kicks off the book with a section on *User Interfaces for All: New perspectives into Human-Computer Interaction*. He says this is a *chapter*, which confused me a lot and I spent a while wondering whether or not chapters are what edited books have, or if a collection of themed essays still counts as chapters. I'm still not sure. However, you can blame Bowker and Star for that. He sets the scene, provides some history and brings us up to date. It is the equivalent to an introduction and sets the stage for the rest of the book. As with all the essays there follows a hefty list of references. This book has been very carefully researched and the academic content is impressive.

The book is divided into sections with somewhat terse and bewildering titles but if you ignore the section titles and look at the contributions, the world starts to look a lot more familiar and reassuring. And there are a couple of contributions I got really excited by. For example, it's lovely to see someone looking at the sociology of HCI design, which Michael Pieper does rather nicely in *Sociological Issues in HCI Design*. There is also a contribution from Marcus on the effect of culture on interfacing. Again, it is good to see a much wider approach being taken to HCI design. Vanderheiden and Henry in *Everyone Interfaces* explain how looking at interface problems in different ways can help to provide interfaces for everyone, despite what at first might look like a very daunting prospect. I like the way that they treat interfaces as no longer something merely for the computer, but as something that has much more profound effects upon our daily lives. I guess they are taking for granted the merging of interfacing and product design.

Some of the chapters would be ideal for undergraduates – Benyon et al on *Individual Differences and Inclusive Design*, for example, makes nice reading and should shake up some preconceived ideas. Bevan's *Quality in Use for All* should also get them thinking. Waern and Höök have an essay that should make students think beyond the most obvious psychological implications.

But I can't help feeling that some of the contributions, worthy and useful though they are, will date this book pretty quickly. Is that why it's so expensive or what? I also dislike the way that 'for all' seems to be attached to some titles. It's nice that there is an awareness of the necessity to design for everyone but I find it irritating when it's added to a title as if it's an afterthought. It made me think that someone had gone through the essays afterwards and penned it in just in case

anyone should accuse them of being exclusive. However, to be fair, most of the essays have obviously been commissioned but one or two have been adapted from elsewhere.

My other gripe is that there are several contributions by the same people. I didn't want to be biased about this so I took Norman and Draper off the shelf to see if the first real HCI collection had the same problem and sure enough Norman figures 4 times (but does anyone mind about that?), and Bannon twice, as does Lewis. Draper only once and I was impressed by his modesty. However, there's more of this quadrupling up in *User Interfaces for All* leaving me with the ironic feeling that books entitled *User Interfaces for All* are somewhat eclectic in their contributors. And some of the essays are written by so many people, that I couldn't help thinking they must have done one sentence each.

All in all, this is a worthy and sizeable contribution. I have to say that I don't like books of essays. In fact I hate them. They always remind me of those selection boxes of chocolates which come ready picked and have only three that you like and a lot that no one seems to like, not even the dog. As much as I raved over some of these essays and I'm very, very pleased to have the book on my shelf because of those gems, there were some I didn't like. This wouldn't matter normally, but this is an expensive book so unless you are much better paid than I am, or haven't spent all your money on a holiday, I should persuade the library to buy a copy and borrow it. Don't ask students to buy this. They will have to go without food and mobile phone calls for months and actually most of it requires more background than many undergrads have. Graduate students should be reading it, though, and the fact that some of it will puzzle them may make them do some further reading.

Incidentally, Stephanidis does a brilliant summary of all the contributions at the start of the book. So, you can save yourself a lot of hassle and trouble by reading his synopsis and then just going for the essays that will be useful to you.

There is one charming touch, and that is all of the contributors list where they work and their email address. I enjoyed a happy 5 minutes saying over to myself, "Fancy that! So, that's where they are."

Quick! Grab your Christmas list back from the nearest and dearest and write this one on. For anyone fascinated by electronic games (and apparently one or two people aren't) here is a gorgeous, sumptuous visual feast of a book from MIT Press. It's in coffee table format, so ideal for browsing, and sampling; but the history of gaming is there – all the favourites from Ping Pong to Pac-Man.

Van Burnham is a game freak and proud of it. She has gathered together a wonderful Odyssey through gaming history and resurfaced those very exciting beginnings of electronic games. This is an extraordinary book of love, a sharing of an obsession and, turning the pages, you can't help

but be enthralled by the journey and her devotion to it. She has been shaped by games, and catalogues that shaping.

This isn't an academic book in the sense that we think of academic books but it is a serious documentation of video gaming history. I enjoyed reminiscing about the games of the past and thinking what that legacy has meant for now, when games are incredibly sophisticated but not necessarily any more fun.

This isn't a stocking filler, it's too physically heavy for that, but it is a book that you'll have fun flipping through and sharing those 'Do you remember that!' moments with. There are interviews and sketches and pages about all the great game machines. You'll love it! It's as visually exciting and colourful as the games themselves and captures the incredible diversity there was in the video game.

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Review of *Baroque Organ Works* – a CD Sheet Music product
Stella Mills

Introduction
Those people attending conferences in the last few years will be familiar with papers provided on a CD-ROM and, while I am not aware of any in-depth study comparing the usage of such with that of paper-based Proceedings, it is likely (at least from my own experience!) that the CD sits on a shelf (just as the paper-based version does) and is consulted for a paper when required. This, of course, begs the question of the users' needs and the task sequence that a user will follow in order to complete a goal. With academic papers, for example, most users will want a complete record for posterity and will only consult the Proceedings to view papers that impinge on their particular topic of research at any one time. (They may, of course, want to view their own paper too!) Thus an index is essential in both formats and in a CD an easily used printing facility is essential too.

Extending the concept of archiving conference papers and other material on CD to include musical scores is interesting, if only because it is new. Consequently, CD Sheet Music is to be congratulated on providing a facility which minimises storage while utilising a PC or Apple Macintosh and its peripherals and also gives the musician an easily accessible library of music relatively cheaply. *Baroque Organ Works* is one example of many CDs ranging from opera to orchestral scores. There are, however, differences of usage between that of academic papers as described above and musical scores and it is now time to consider the needs of users who are practising organists.

An Organist's Goals
When an organist (or any other musician) purchases music, the first essential (as any good teacher will tell) is to buy a good edition, hopefully at a reasonable cost. There has been much discussion (particularly relating to Bach's works) as to whether an editor should add any expression marks and other details of their own to the original score and it is generally accepted that where this happens the editor indicates clearly what is the composer's original score and what are additions. This is good scholarly practice and is replicated in other areas of manuscript publication such as mathematical papers. In music, however, there are added difficulties if copies of manuscripts are used as these do not always tally in every detail, thus making the editor's job much harder than that of editing scientific papers.

Once bought, the copy is used probably every day and scribbled on as comments and notes are recorded for future reference. The erasing of pencil marks is also utilised as fingerings are changed and phrasing altered. The organist will almost certainly want to carry the music from organ to organ and will also want easy page-turnings – all of which indicates a usage far removed from that of papers from a more usual archive.

Baroque Organ Works
From the discussion above, the CD in question has to satisfy the needs of the organist if it is to be successful. Although the source of the music is not indicated, the edition seems to be satisfactory in that little editorial addition is used and the music prints out fitted to the size of the paper. This is achieved through Adobe Acrobat Reader and although it can be viewed easily, the music cannot be edited before printing. The pieces are clearly indexed and from scratch. This author achieved a printed copy in about three minutes. Of course, printing is only on one side of the paper and binding would be needed for more than a few pages. However, the music is paginated clearly and turn-overs were not too precarious in the pieces reviewed. Portability of printed unbound copies could be tricky but a CD of the complete organ works of Buxtehude, Froberger, Handel, Pachelbel and Sweelinck has to be considered extremely portable! The cost of the CD at around £22.00 for over 1,100 pages of music is very reasonable indeed.

How well, then, does the CD satisfy the organist's long-term needs? The usage of the printouts will depend on the quality of the archive's editing and on the quality of printing the organist uses as copies may fade with time or become runny if carried from car to church in a rain-storm. Providing that these logistics can be overcome and satisfactory binding is used, the CD should give faithful access to works that in total may be beyond the organist's financial reach in other versions. Thus, CD Sheet Music must be heartily congratulated on producing collections of

... Review of *Baroque Organ Works*

classical music that makes its access so much more easily obtainable. I can strongly recommend the CD for study and practice and I look forward to other composers' works appearing soon.

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Stella mediates some manuscripts without scores of sheets! What will the activity theorists make of this?

What the editor's ceilidh band needs now, of course, is a nice little CD-based e-Reader that has a telescopic stand and an automatic page-turning facility, with touchscreen annotations that can be networked to nearby devices. (I suppose it would help if more than the fiddler could actually read music). Who knows, maybe someone will build this into a virtual fridge one day. But I do know that, since I bought my first drum machine in 1983, I have made, played and created less music per £££ with technology than with acoustic instruments – and all of it down to interface issues.

We all know of Gilbert Cockton's fascination with wind, and Phil Gray's ensemble just playing music all day? How much does what we do in music shape how we consider systems design?. As we switch off from theory and act as real users with real obsessions, what lessons can we teach ourselves – for example, if we freeze when the red record light goes on, how must users feel when faced with similar well-meaning prompts.

So articles please on "making sweet music together" – motivational, collaborational, inspirational interfaces.

Multimodality: a step towards universal access
call for papers
Deadline: 31 Dec 2001

Springer's International Journal *Universal Access in the Information Society (UAIS)* is publishing a special issue on

Multimodality: a step towards universal access

Contributions are solicited in, but not limited to, the following topics:
- Design and implementation of novel interaction devices, modalities and forms of multimodality
- Ergonomics and human factors of media, modalities and forms of multimodality
- Design theory, software architectures, and support tools for multimodal HCI
- Methods, techniques and instruments to assess the utility, accessibility and usability of novel modalities and forms of multimodality
- Modeling user diversity in the usage of novel medias, modalities and forms of multimodality
- Modality adaptation, Adaptable and adaptive multimodal HCI
- Multimodal interaction with computer-mediated virtual spaces
- Tools, techniques and methodologies for multimodal corpora (creation, analysis, etc.)

Important dates
Deadline for submission of papers: December 31, 2001
Notification of acceptance: March 15, 2002.
Deadline for submission of camera-ready version of accepted papers: June 30, 2002.
Expected publication date of the special issue: second half of 2002.

To download the full call with information about the aims and scope of the special issue and submission instructions, visit http://link.springer.de/link/service/journals/10209/uaiscall.pdf

How all occasions do inform against me...

Cassandra gets Potty about gremlins, before the flood of merchandise leaves the toyshelves.

Clearly every piece of presentational equipment was spell-bound by the late-summer wit and wizardry of the IHM beauxbatonistes™ and the BHCIG hogwarters™.

Despite everything, she still seems entranced by the experience - enough to come back next year!

Some of us can be forgiven for thinking that the gremlins were on holiday in Lille during September and having nothing better to do decided to pop along to the IHM HCI conference and with a vengeance. I guess it was too much to resist and, if I were a gremlin, I'd more than likely do the same thing. Let's face it, a whole conference named 'Interaction without Frontiers' and full of so-called HCI experts – no self respecting gremlin could resist that. Every gremlin in history would have to be there showing just how good gremlins are at making boundaries where you least expect them.

Now, gremlins are something I'm used to. They pop up all the time and try to make me look foolish but a lifetime of battling them has left me astute and prepared. Besides, it's not so much what you do with a gremlin but rather what you don't do. Give me a gremlin and my immediate reaction is "what fool designed that?".

But HCI people, it seems, are on the side of the user, just so long as the user isn't themselves. With every technological failure there came apologies, not on behalf of the daft designer and the weedy and unreliable technology, but on behalf of the user. "I'm sorry!" they said when PowerPoint ensnared them. "I'm sorry" they repeated when microphones didn't.

Oscar Wilde once said, "One would have to have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing". You'd need a harder heart than that not to laugh at HCI experts grappling with miscreant technologies and acting as if they'd designed the whole lot en masse, prior to catching the then gremlin-free and working train into Lille.

Best of all I loved the PowerPoint failures. And it was nice and apt that some wit with a foresight and sadism I never thought I'd see in the HCI community – which one student volunteer described to me as kind and thoughtful – invited Ken Dye of Microsoft. Gosh, now that was a good keynote. Ken Dye was almost convincing as the apologist for MS. I nearly gave up hating them. I even thought about mentioning Bill Gates in my will and going to MS empathy classes to get over my loathing of them. I was almost convinced by the "We're doing the best we can" bit. I wanted to lead the cheering and say: "It's OK, I'll try harder. I've been sullen and treacherous. I love Big Brother MS. Forgive me for saying nasty things about you."

And Ken's PowerPoint slides actually worked. Each one slid away to be replaced on cue by another, perfectly formed and legible. The background was just that and you could see all the words. Well, all but one slide, which wasn't really that legible at all - not even to him, but even so, it was impressive. Mostly PowerPoint slides are anything but legible. They're there to act as subdued lighting. But Ken was in control of

that technology. That guy had beaten it into submission. And for the space of an hour I believed that PowerPoint was a useful tool and could be utilised to make real presentations to real people and it actually fulfilled a real need and wasn't just there because some clever MS person saw it as a money spinner.

However, once Ken Dye finished, reality reasserted itself and sanity returned. The gremlins, having been bribed into silence by Ken, returned in full force. Speaker after speaker couldn't work PowerPoint. One tried to show us a previous slide, lost the place and had to be rescued by a Student Volunteer who in turn had to be rescued by another Student Volunteer who knew how PowerPoint worked. They used up two and a half minutes of a 15 minute speech like that.

Speakers had gone mad with the technology, using animations and gimmicks which stopped me from listening to them, so fascinated was I by the slides and whether they would work or whether I would be able to read them. Alas, mostly they didn't work. Quite often reading them made me forget why I was there in the first place and caused me to make notes about getting my eyes tested again. But the apologies were profound and inventive.

Oh frailty, thy name is HCI. We are amazed by users who try desperately to make our fragile technologies work, and who tell us it's their fault not the system's, but actually I thought we at least would know better. Alas, alas, alas, we don't.

Microphones failed with a reliability that was fantastic. Anything that unreliable borders on the statistically improbable. Laser pointers wouldn't point. I watched in amazement as one presenter had PowerPoint slide failure followed by three microphones failing. The chair, with the world-weary competence that only comes from working at a university where there are insufficient resources and a load of students they could do without, rose above the technology, never apologising once for the failures, but clearly with a mind on how to press on regardless, placing her trust in Student Volunteers, good acoustics and a generous and kindly audience. I just wish she'd followed me home on the Eurostar and organised that as well, since the gremlins left Lille with the HCIers and even got through immigration without any passports.

I overheard Ann Blandford tell one chair to allow five minutes for hand over. This was the time needed to start slides, wire up the speakers till they looked like Christmas Trees and get everything going. We used five precious minutes on technology every time we swapped speakers. Ken Dye may not be bothered by the possibility of wasting twenty odd minutes here or there, but I am. I once listened to a presentation scheduled for fifteen minutes that involved a one and a half minute swap between a PowerPoint presentation and an OHP which the speaker did four times. Six minutes of precious time was used on technology.

All of the failures were technical ones. No student volunteer, speaker, interpreter, chair nor member of the audience failed. Some of them showed a perseverance bordering on the manic. The failures were all of technology

either being fragile or being so opaque that users had not the slightest notion what was happening or whether indeed something had gone wrong or was just a bit slow in happening.

Technology is meant to be supportive, it's meant to help. When a chair has to ask the people at the back to wave if they can hear, there's a problem. When slides become more important than the speaker, there's a problem. To put it more bluntly, we have to remember that technology is the tail and we must stop allowing it to wag us.

It isn't our fault that systems fail. Systems do fail. They are fragile. But it is our fault that people blame themselves for the failure. Stop doing that! When something doesn't work the way it should work, it isn't your fault. The fault was made a long time previously and by someone else. Blame the designer, blame the one who stripped away the usability evaluations, blame the shipping too soon, blame the economics, the youth of HCI, blame anything but yourself as a user. You do users no favours. Remember, HCI experts are users too!

Unless we are prepared to say "I can't work this system because it is badly designed", what hope does anyone have of finding the courage to say it's not my fault, this system is bad. How can we hope to get our users to be honest to us if we can't be honest with ourselves?

I have to add an aside because another HCI foible rose its very amusing head at IHM HCI – the Swiss Army Knife. I saw three. One was used to open bottles on Tuesday night. It did it badly. Another was used by some HCIer who had some complex problem with his watch that I never did rightly understand and I'm not convinced he did either. It seemed to involve magic. And the third was a real treat. It contained a tiny screwdriver evidently used for tightening up screws on spectacles. Lovely, I thought, knowing how irritating a loose screw can be. Very useful, I said, until I realised that the owner didn't wear glasses. Still, if you ask me nicely, I'll tell you the owner's name and all you loose screws can follow her around at HCI 2002. Orderly queue, mind, no pushing and shoving.

Incidentally, IHM HCI 2001 was a truly excellent conference. Even gremlins couldn't spoil that.

Intelligent User Interfaces
ECAI2002 15th European Conference
on Artificial Intelligence
Call for papers

ECAI2002, the 15th European Conference
on Artificial Intelligence, has an area devoted to
Intelligent User Interfaces (in all their various forms)
and User Modelling.

Paper deadline is **18th January 2002.**
The conference web site is at
http://ecai2002.univ-lyon1.fr

Profile
Fintan Culwin

Fintan Culwin has become a fixture at South Bank University as he is unable to find another University that is located on the 172 bus route and, despite living in London, has an aversion to travelling by tube. Technically he is a reader in software engineering education, but after intimidating successive heads of school and deputy vice chancellors he is left alone to do whatever he likes. This has included statechart notations of user interface design, the pragmatics of initial object oriented software development education, effective use of web technologies in education and, most recently, plagiarism detection and visualisation. After a particularly heavy night's drinking with the HCI Exec at HCI 2000 he was invited to become conference chair of HCI 2002. Our interviewer caught up with him at his favourite pub where he was enjoying a pint of his favourite beer.

What is your idea of happiness?
A good pint of Fuller's London Pride in a decent pub

What is your greatest fear?
Metrication

With which historical figure do you most identify?
John Bird Fuller who in 1845 was a co-founder of Fuller's brewery

Which living person do you most admire?
A G F Fuller

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?
Spilling my pint of Pride when I have had too many

What is the trait you most deplore in others?
Other people spilling my pint of Pride when they have had too many

What vehicles do you own?
None – you can't drink and drive

What is your greatest extravagance?
A half pint of Pride on a Friday evening after work

What makes you feel most depressed?
When the pub runs out of Pride

What objects do you always carry with you?
A Palm Pilot containing a list of all the pubs on the 172 bus route that serve Pride

What do you most dislike about your appearance?
For some reason I seem to have put on a few kilos around the waist

What is your most unappealing habit?
Eating scampi fries whilst drinking a pint of Pride

What is your favourite smell?
Challenger and Northdown hops

What is your favourite word?
Pride

What is your favourite building?
The George in Keyworth Street

What is your favourite journey?
From my office to the George – about 200 m

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
When I was young I had an unfortunate experience with Tetley's Bitter in Yorkshire. But since I have moved to London I have started a much more mature relationship.

Which living person do you most despise?
The Chancellor of the Exchequer

On what occasions do you lie?
When anyone asks me how many pints of Pride I drink in a week

Which words or phrases do you over-use?
Pride and London

What is your greatest regret?
Not discovering Pride until I was nearly 40

When and where were you happiest?
In the George in Keyworth Street in 1990 when I first discovered Pride

How do you relax?
A pint of Pride

What single thing would improve the quality of your life?
Reduced beer taxes

Which talent would you most like to have?
Brewing

What would your motto be?
Whatever you do take Pride

What keeps you awake at night?
Indigestion and flatulence

How would you like to die?
Pickled in Pride.

What irritates you the most?
People who suggest that I am obsessed by Pride.

How would you like to be remembered?
As someone who lived the proverb that 'Pride goeth before a fall'

Vet's diary

The story continues …

Alistair Kilgour

> Our resident eminence grise goes to See(heim). And what do we see? We see the same criminally ignored bright ideas coming back in new formalisms all the time.
>
> But we'll know for sure after January 18th 2002

In the last issue I referred briefly to the place of scenarios as a possible link between the Use Case in UML, and scenario-based design in HCI. I was very pleased to receive, shortly after this was published, a note from Dan Diaper, enclosing a copy of an extended review he has written of Jack Carroll's recently reissued *Scenario-Based Design* book (and reviewed by Iain McGregor in *Interactions 47*). Dan's article will be published in the next issue of *Interacting with Computers*, and I can't possibly do justice to it here — I recommend everyone to read it for themselves.

His central theme is the connection between *scenario-based design* and task analysis — which of course has been an abiding interest of Dan's over many years, and to which he has made many significant contributions. Dan argues that the informality and fuzziness of scenarios can be a weakness as well as a strength. He quotes Carroll's observation that "scenarios can evoke much more than they literally present". But of course the extra that they evoke is bound to be different in different readers, depending on their background and experience. Hierarchical task analysis offers greater precision, and the use of scenarios can be viewed as complementing task analysis, rather than as competing with it.

As is highlighted elsewhere in this issue, the next issue of *Interfaces* after this will be number 50. For that issue Dan will take over this column (though he says he is not ready yet to be considered a veteran!) for a personal retrospective on the rise, fall, and renaissance of task analysis. Task analysis also featured strongly in the excellent tutorial on HCI and UML given at IHM-HCI 2001 in Lille by Birgid Bomsdorf and Gerd Szwillus from Paderborn. In their review of proposed, or already-implemented, extensions aimed at enhancing UML's support for user-centred design, tools and formalisms for expressing hierarchical task analysis took centre place. Before attending the tutorial, I had imagined there would be more emphasis on new ways of exploiting existing aspects of UML, such as state-charts and activity diagrams.

I was so impressed by Gerd and Birgid's UML tutorial that Tom McEwan and I have invited them to contribute to the one-day symposium on usability and UML, which we are planning (now confirmed to take place in Edinburgh on January 18th 2002), and I am delighted to say that they have accepted. Further details of the meeting are given elsewhere in this issue, but be sure to put the date in your diary — registration details will be on the HCI Group website from early November, and also that of our collaborators at ScotlandIS.com.

To whet your appetite, and in an attempt to place some of the issues in historical perspective, I would like to round off this rather thinly disguised commercial by putting to you a question from a recent TMA (Tutor Marked Assignment) from the Open University M301 module ("Software Systems and their Development") for which I am currently a tutor. Q5 of TMA05 includes the question,

> *Describe the three design philosophies which govern the construction of interaction diagrams.*

(This is in the context of an order processing and customer management system for a cardboard-box manufacture and supply company, which is described in detail in the assignment and forms the basis of a majority of the questions.)

Without access to the course materials, you may find it hard to guess what three philosophies the question is aimed at eliciting. But in fact what the question is really about, is system architecture, specifically how best the non-interactive parts of the system should be organised to deal with messages from the user interface. (The design of the user interface itself was not directly addressed.) Put in this light, you may find it easier to tease out some options, but even then the recommended answers may not be what you would have thought.

To quote from the sample solution, the *first* suggested philosophy is as follows: *"The user interface sends all messages to a single object in a class by itself"* (not to say, in a class of its own). This one at least may sound a teeny bit familiar — we may not be a million miles here from the good old Seeheim model. Could it be that the User Interface Management System is alive and well and living in philosophy one?

In the old days when the Seeheim model was still revered, but object-oriented methods were approaching rapidly over the horizon, many of us wondered how the two might be combined. One idea current at the time was to slice the Seeheim model horizontally into strips — so that we had lots of separate little parallel (and possibly communicating) Seeheims (Seeheimschen?). It didn't take long to realise though, that this was really just a reincarnation of the Smalltalk's "Model View Controller" architecture (recently reincarnated yet again — and done right this time — in Java). A more powerful and sophisticated version of basically the same idea was Joëlle Coutaz's PAC (Presentation-Abstraction-Control) model — which incorporated among other things a proper handling of hierarchy. However, these approaches to partitioning the UIMS — previously seen as by its very nature monolithic — had one major characteristic in common: the "abstraction", or "application interface" was an entity derived from the application domain.

The *second* philosophy the TMA question was getting at is similar, in that it is based on slicing up the monolithic single object control layer, though not on the basis of application-derived entities. To quote again from the sample solution, *"The user interface sends a message to the object which models the actor which initiates the use case"* — got that? An "actor" here models a user role — this doesn't have to be filled by a human user, though it usually is. So the basis, in

this philosophy, for the partitioning of the UIMS is *user roles*, rather than application abstractions. In systems like the customer and order management system underlying the TMA question, roles such as *customer* have to be modelled anyway, so it is a small step to add the functionality needed to respond to messages (i.e. in this case *events*) from the user interface. However, in systems such as editors or word processors, which were commonly the focus in the days when UIMS ruled the world, user roles were seldom if ever explicitly modelled. So here is an example where the object-oriented design perspective is encouraging (at least if philosophy two is adopted) explicit modelling of the user — a pleasing irony.

In the case of the *third* philosophy, the irony is even sharper. What could it possibly be, you may be wondering? It turns out to be even more radically user-centred than philosophy two. To quote for the third time from the sample solution, *"The third philosophy involves having a separate class for each Use Case"*. Wow! Is that user-centred or is that user-centred? Explicitly modelling high-level tasks (which is what Use Cases effectively constitute) is attractive from many points of view — for example, in enabling intelligent context-sensitive help, and allowing the possibility of meta-dialogue between user and system about the task in which they are both involved. And although hierarchical subdivision of use cases is not supported in any meaningful way in UML, hierarchy is explicitly modelled in the class diagram, which could perhaps offer a route to modelling hierarchical task analysis within the existing range of UML formalisms.

I am grateful to the M301 team leaders Ray Weedon and Pete Thomas, and in particular to Benedict Heal and Steve Armstrong, the originators of this part of the M301 material, for introducing me to this novel (to me) way of looking at system architecture, and for permission to quote from their M301 tutor notes. It would be great to hear from the many of you out there for whom none of this is new at all — indeed, probably old hat. But if system architecture still seems exciting to you, and whether you regard UML as a curiosity, a panacea, or an abomination, I hope you will come to Edinburgh on January 18th to discuss and debate these issues with some real experts. Au revoir till then.

Alistair Kilgour
alistairk@blueyonder.co.uk

Breaking down the boundaries between design and HCI

Over the last few years there has been an increasing focus within HCI on design and the design process. Alongside this it has become more important to effectively involve the range of people who are part of the process of creating interactive systems (from information designers to organisational managers, product designers to systems engineers, interaction designers to usability experts, and social scientists to product strategists) in the challenge of successfully meeting the needs of users – and delighting them.

At the British Museum in June next year *Designing Interactive Systems (DIS2002)* will pick up where last year's event in New York left off, bringing a broad focus into a single conference, and providing a venue for serious reflection on practice.

As with the previous DIS conferences, the goal of DIS2002 is to better understand the practice of designing interactive systems, and how it can be improved. The conference will seek to extend our collective knowledge by sharing experiences of what works, and how the best outcomes can be achieved.

Conference submissions ranging from design exhibits to academic research papers are invited, as well as proposals for Tutorials, Workshops, Master Classes and Post-Graduate Symposium. In a novel attempt at more effectively sharing the new insights, questions, and answers thrown up by the conference in a way that can assist other practitioners, exhibits, papers and keynotes will be collected in a professionally designed and edited publication.

Plenary speakers at DIS2002 span its areas of interest: Ideo's Bill Moggridge, home grown RCA researchers Tony Dunne and Fiona Raby, and seasoned IBM Almaden veteran Tom Moran. DIS2002 will also feature an education panel with John Maeda, Associate Director of MIT's Media Lab, and Gillian Crampton-Smith, director of the recently inaugurated Interaction Design Institute Ivrea), a Design Exhibition moderated by Maeda's colleague Ben Fry, a Student Design Competition convened by S. Joy Mountford, an Interactive Exhibition overseen by Elizabeth Dykstra-Erickson, and a tour of London design studios.

DIS2002 is held in cooperation with the British HCI Group and its members are encouraged to respond to the call for participation.

Nico Macdonald
nico@design-agenda.org.uk

Designing Interactive Systems 2002
takes place at
The British Museum in London
from
25–28 June 2002

Deadlines for submissions
Papers, Exhibits, Design Cases – **14 December 2001**
Tutorials, Master Classes, Workshops and
Post-Graduate Symposium (which will take place on
Tuesday 25 June) – **31 January 2002**

More information and submission details can be found at
http://www.sigchi.org/DIS2002/

The 16th British HCI Group Annual Conference

incorporating

European Usability Professionals' Association Conference 2002

South Bank University
Elephant and Castle, London
September 2 to September 6 2002

Located in the rapidly regenerating Elephant and Castle area of London, South Bank University will host the 2002 British HCI Group conference. The local organisers, Fintan Culwin and Xristine Faulkner, have been involved in the annual HCI Educators' Workshop which was held at South Bank in 1999 and 2000. The attendees at those workshops reported that they had an interesting, challenging but also a fun time: experiences which we hope to repeat and increase in September 2002.

The conference theme 'memorable yet invisible' was chosen with the Elephant (and Castle) in mind. As the largest land animal, elephants are memorable because of their size, yet from close up they become featureless and not directly perceptible. Systems are also very visible when considered from a distant perspective but, because they are so pervasive, they can disappear from consciousness when users become immersed within them. Like an elephant stepping on your toe, a system's true nature may only become apparent when it does not do what you would want it to.

Although proposals that directly address the conference theme would be most welcome, as is usual, proposals addressing any topic within, or related to, HCI in general are equally welcome. Submission categories include full academic papers, short late-breaking papers, workshops, panels, tutorials, papers and interactive experiences.

This year the conference will be co-located with the first European Professionals' Association Conference. Usability issues have always been, and will always be, a feature of the HCI conference but, fuelled by the growth of Web hosted interactive services, a new community of usability practitioners has emerged. A large proportion of this community has had little or no contact with the British HCI Group and a feature of the conjoined conferences will be to allow the two communities the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas for what promises to be a rewarding and exciting experience. There will be one registration process and one registration fee for both conferences and delegates will be able to attend both the EUPA and the HCI tracks.

Apparently some people regard the area as a cultural desert but in fact the south bank of the river Thames boasts a large number of interesting venues just a few minutes' walk away from the university. These include Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the English Youth Opera (based at South Bank University), both of which we hope to include in the social programme. And the university buildings offer some surprising and spectacular views. This area of London also contains some of its finest pubs serving some of the best beer in the country. As the locals say: 'If you are coming to London you will have to take some Pride in the city!'

After HCI 2001 in Lille, HCI 2002 promises to be equally innovative in bringing two different communities together for a common event. We hope that you will be part of it.

Submission Deadlines

HCI 2002

Full papers and tutorials: 16 January 2002
All other submissions: 1 May 2002
Notification of acceptance
Full papers and tutorials: 8 April 2002
All other submissions: 1 June 2002
Camera ready for proceedings
Full papers and tutorials: 13 May 2002
All other submissions: 17 June 2002

EUPA 2002

Tutorials: January 16th 2002
Presentations: Febuary 28th 2002
Panels: May 1st 2002
Workshops: May 1st 2002
Notification of Acceptance
Tutorials: April 8th 2002
Presentations: April 8th 2002
Panels: June 3rd 2002
Workshops: June 3rd 2002
Camera ready copy for proceedings
Tutorials: May 13th 2002
Presentations: June 17th 2002
Panels: June 17th 2002
Workshops: June 17th 2002

Visit the web site for further information about all aspects of the conference

www.hci2002.org

Themes

HCI2002

Submissions in all areas of HCI and usability are invited, but we strongly encourage ones addressing the new challenges posed by our theme, "Memorable yet Invisible".

Suitable topic areas include, but are not limited to:
interactive system design • interaction tools & techniques • users with special needs • design issues that address questions of the memorable and the invisible • mobile interaction • virtual reality and multimedia • social and cultural issues • theoretical aspects • the psychology of programming and general computer interaction

EUPA 2002

European UPA 2002 is being organized in conjunction with HCI 2002 by the UK Chapter of the Usability Professionals Association. We are looking for submissions related to topics including but not limited to:

Specific usability issues (planning, requirements, UI design, evaluation, implementation, etc.)
Methods or techniques (usage, discussion or critique)
Innovative usability methods
Issues related to usability such as accessibility and social acceptability
The role of usability in the product lifecycle
Business case studies
Influencing management
Usability tradeoffs
Usability consultancy
Presentation of a design
Overview of a concept or philosophy
Unsolved problems
Stimulating ideas from experts in other fields
Input to the creative design process

ScotlandIS Usability Forum

One-day Symposium: Usability and UML
co-hosted by the British HCI Group and ScotlandIS

Friday 18th January 2002
St Trinian's Room, St. Leonard's Hall, Pollock Halls, Edinburgh

http://www.dcs.napier.ac.uk/~mm/usability_and_uml_symposium_2002/

10.00	Registration & Coffee
	Demonstration of UML tools
10.45	Introduction and welcome, on behalf of BHCIG and SUF
	Alistair Kilgour (BHCIG) & Judith Ramsay (SUF)
11.00	Introduction to UML and its Relation to Task Modelling
	Gerd Szwillus, University of Paderborn
	Birgit Bomsdorf, FernUniversität Hagen
12.00	UML for Engineering Interactive Systems
	Philippe Palanque, University of Toulouse 2
12.30	Lunch
	Demonstration of UML tools
13.30	From UML to UIML: Bridging the Interface Gap
	Dave Roberts, IBM
14.00	UML, ethnography and design
	Rob Procter, University of Edinburgh
	Dave Martin & Mark Rouncefield, Lancaster University
14.30	How Tools Can, Do, Might and Should Affect Modellers' Use of UML
	Perdita Stevens, University of Edinburgh
15.00	Coffee
15.30	Using UML to Model Multiple Users and Collaborative Tasks
	Pete Johnson, University of Bath
16.00	Considering Extensions to UML
	Lachlan Mackinnon & Pauline Wilcox, Heriot-Watt University
16.30	Panel Discussion: Can SE and HCI be integrated through UML?
17.00	Finish

Abstract

The Unified Modelling Language (UML) is now widely used in support of a range of object-oriented systems design methodologies across a wide range of domains. The diagrammatic conventions of UML include modelling of users (as "actors") and high-level tasks (as "Use Cases"), but support for user-centred design is indirect rather than direct. Recently designers with a concern to give usability at least as much importance as correctness, robustness and efficiency in the design process, have pioneered novel ways of adapting or extending UML for more effective support of the user-centred design process. In addition, designs for UML support tools have been proposed and in some cases implemented, to assist designers in more effective application of the full range of modelling conventions which UML already offers.

This meeting brings together some of the pioneers in facilitating the effective use and creative enhancement of the UML. Speakers comprise an international blend of experienced and imaginative users, tool designers, and researchers helping to consolidate the position of the UML as a central underpinning of the whole range of object-oriented system design and implementation methodologies. The meeting includes an introduction to UML for HCI practitioners, by the presenters of the acclaimed tutorial at the Lille IHM-HCI 2001 conference in September. As well as a new insight into the background and provenance of the UML, delegates will gain an understanding of how to apply and adapt UML in support of design for usability. A range of existing support tools will be described and demonstrated, and in the closing session the potential of UML as a basis for integration for current software engineering practice, and HCI design for usability, will be discussed.

Arrangements

The ScotlandIS Usability Forum was set up earlier this year by Judith Ramsay at Nickleby in Glasgow, as the expert group for Usability, one of several such groups within the Scottish I&CT trade body ScotlandIS – which itself has around 600 member companies and organisations, and organises dozens of networking, training and conference events each year.

This is the first formal event by SUF, since the launch which attracted about 50 people – most, perhaps, already BHCIG members from several other ends of the industry as well.

Costs are:

- £70 plus VAT (£82.25) for paid-up BHCIG and ScotlandIS members
- £100 plus VAT (£117.50) for everyone else

and include a delicious lunch. The venue, St Trinian's, is indeed the original site of the eponymous school, (see http://www.orsoc.org.uk/conf/previous/or41/belles.htm for more on that!) and is located in the shadow of Edinburgh's extinct volcano, Arthur's Seat, at the top of Dalkeith Road, a 10–15 minute bus ride due south of Edinburgh Waverley Station.

British HCI Group – Application Form 2001

Please print or type

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

Title .... First Name .... Last Name ....

Work Address ....

....

Tel. .... Fax. ....

E-mail ....

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) ....

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

....

....

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 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 the membership secretary, Peter Wild (peter.wild@acm.org; Fax. +44(0) 1895 251686).

Membership Fee

Membership classes and fees for 2001 are:

BCS Member £25 ☐   Non BCS Member £30 ☐   Student £10 ☐   £ ....

Corporate £195 ☐ 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.

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