

# Interfaces

No. 47 Summer 2001

## Interaction

"This house believes that robots will have free will."



"Considerable interest was shown in forming a partnership between UK and Indian researchers and practitioners in the areas of HCI and usability."

without Frontiers

"HCI has significantly lacked that kind of proactive pioneer with a vision of a European umbrella, under which the many European strands of HCI could comfortably, and profitably, shelter."

"Cultural diversity makes it unrealistic for designers to rely on intuition or personal experience of interface design."



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## Views from the Chair

At the time of writing I am preparing for a meeting of the British HCI Group executive committee in Edinburgh next week. The executive consists of the twenty or so people listed on the back of this issue of *Interfaces* who volunteer their time to make the British HCI Group function. Your membership fees are used to pay for the typesetting and printing of *Interfaces* and for the administration of the membership list; pretty much all the other work is done by the executive. Mostly we coordinate this effort by email but three times a year we get together to discuss what needs to be done. As chair of the group this is my opportunity to get people to agree to do things and to deadlines they might balk at in the more rational atmosphere of an email conversation. The meetings also serve a time-honoured purpose as arbitrary deadlines without which stuff just gets put off indefinitely, and an opportunity to get together in the pub afterwards.

Next week we will be discussing our new web site UsabilityNews.com, the (happy) state of our finances, and ideas for new one-day meetings. We will receive reports of the progress in organising HCI'2001 (joint with IHM in Lille, see advance programme accompanying this issue) and next year's conference which is to be at South Bank University in London. We will also be making arrangements for the Annual General Meeting (to be held at the conference), where you elect a new executive committee for the coming year. Well, 'election' is probably an overstatement of what happens. I put up a list of people who have volunteered their services and the meeting indicates its approval. I hope and expect that most of the old committee will continue in their posts – but we always have room for new blood. Maybe you have some ideas about directions the British HCI Group should move in. Why not drop me a line and I will put you on the 'slate'. Our meetings are businesslike but informal and you get your expenses paid. You can make a difference.

**Andrew Monk**  
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## Editorial

Summer is always a good time to stretch your horizons a bit. This issue sets the scene for the British HCI conference being held this summer jointly with our French chums in AFIHM in the enjoyable and attractive city of Lille this September (IHM-HCI2001).

This issue is also a little late in coming to you because your editor has been riding two horses at once – also trying to complete the advanced programme for the conference that will hopefully accompany this (but, if not, will arrive a few days later!).

The theme 'Interaction without Frontiers' has been at the heart of HCI debate this year. In many ways, interaction and usability have always been about various forms of social inclusion – we have sought to break down the barriers between people and IT. More recently we have been able to take a far wider view of the nature of these barriers, and cultural, linguistic and physical ability issues have come to the fore.

In this issue we examine future and past contexts of this theme. Andy Smith supplies two articles – one report on Cultural Issues in HCI, the recent British HCI Group workshop, and another on the Indo British Software Usability Partnership. Taken together these set the scene perfectly for Lille, reaching across boundaries within, and between, cultures. Andy's insights certainly rang true in a recent

project here, where students created and evaluated a Sino-Scottish Site (see next issue). There is less of a gap than you would think between catering for, pandering to, and patronising other cultures in the name of usability.

Alison Crerar, in 'Feats and Frontiers', brought legendary figures like Minsky and Brady to Edinburgh at Easter. An entertaining description of what they and others have been doing for the last fifty years leads us to consider what we will say about these times in 2050. That is, if the free will of robots permits us!

Speaking of veterans, Alistair Kilgour's regular column continues to create the future for us from the lessons of the past. Meanwhile the delicately sturdy Cassandra Hall entertains with a desiccation of destruction metaphors. We have a profile of Judith Ramsay (the organiser of the new ScotlandIS Usability Forum) and a variety of book reviews for you as well. Lastly, we celebrate the life and work of Dr Sandra Foubister.

We are a little shorter than usual this issue. You're all being too shy with your writing talents. In the next two issues we will broaden our coverage. See the descriptions on page 7 for 'Learning and Doing' and on page 13 for 'Gadgets and Gizmos'. Please get the content rolling in for these or for any other aspect.

**Tom McEwan**  
Editor

### RIGHT TO REPLY

Make *Interfaces* interactive! We invite you to have your say in response to issues raised in *Interfaces* or to comment on any aspect of HCI that interests you. Submissions should be short and concise (500 words or less) and, where appropriate, should clearly indicate the article being responded to. Please send all contributions to the Editor.

### NEXT ISSUE

*Interfaces* welcomes submissions on any HCI-related topic, including articles, opinion pieces, book reviews and conference reports. The next deadline is **15 July**, but don't wait till then – 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 15 and sending it to the address given.

Cover photo: Tom McEwan

Deadline for issue 48 is **15 July 2001**. Deadline for issue 49 is **15 October 2001**. Electronic versions are preferred: RTF, plain text or MS Word (5/6), 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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# Cultural issues in HCI

*Notes from a British HCI Group one day workshop held at the University of Luton on 5 December 2000*

**Andy Smith**

Producing usable international software products is difficult and there are many examples of systems that have failed. The frequently used strategy of software developers – ‘testing’ the usability of the software themselves – is just not appropriate for international design. Cultural diversity makes it unrealistic for designers to rely on intuition or personal experience of interface design. However, designing multiple interfaces for different user groups adds significantly to the cost of development. There are, however, huge difficulties in user evaluation for both localisation and internationalisation within multicultural software development. In addition there are other multicultural issues, such as the fact that existing design guidelines are culturally biased and there are few sources for multicultural heuristics.

In response to these and other related issues, on 5 December 2000 the British HCI Group held a one-day workshop in *Cultural Issues in HCI*, which was hosted by the University of Luton. The goal for the workshop was to provide a forum for individuals interested in a wide variety of issues encountered when designing and developing interfaces and systems that are accessed by internationally and culturally diverse user groups. It was open to anyone with an interest in interface and systems design for diverse users, including academic and industrial researchers and practitioners working in the areas of interface, web and other information systems design.

In the event thirty people – roughly one third from industry and one third from academia – attended the workshop, which included seven ‘academic’ refereed papers and one keynote ‘practitioner’ presentation.

The first paper was presented by Elke Duncker from Middlesex University and was titled *Cross-cultural Use of Colours and Metaphors in Information Systems*. Elke reminded us that not only do end-users live in different cultures into which the designs need to be localised, but that system designers are also part of specific cultures. She discussed two case studies in the use of colour and metaphor. The first study investigated the fact that colour preferences within system designs often carry the characteristics of the cultural context in which they were designed. The second study traced cultural differences in the understanding of metaphors to the differences in the use of the real-world objects that are metaphorically used.

Following this, Vanessa Evers of Boston Consulting Group in London and the Institute of Educational Technology at the Open University presented a paper entitled *Cross-Cultural Understanding of Graphical Elements on the DirectED Website*. Vanessa provided us with a cautionary note. Her paper investigated cultural differences in understanding elements of a virtual campus website. The findings showed that even though there are differences in the way subjects from different cultural groups understand and perceive graphics, these differences do not always coincide with behaviour that would be expected from their cultural value orientations. Mostly, other factors beside culture, such as the Internet context and the educational context of the website, influence the subject in their understanding of the graphical element on

the screen. The extent to which cultural variables are useful in interpreting user responses to interface design elements could therefore be more limited than was originally expected.

Vanessa postulated that these variables would be better used to form a description of the culture to be studied, which can be used as an aid in instrument development and cross-cultural data collection. An example would be to observe collectivist Japanese in pairs or groups and North Americans individually during data collection.

In the third presentation Tim French from the University of Luton presented a paper jointly authored with myself entitled *Developing Cross-cultural E-finance Web-sites*. In the presentation Tim showed how selected elements of the SMDF (Shared Meanings Design Framework) could be used to validate website design for trust, security and usability across cultural boundaries. The starting point for this work was the fact that the web page design of any international website is critical to the success of that site and to the meanings, both intended and unintended, it may be transmitting. E-finance sites have been shown to be particularly sensitive to issues of trust and security as well as to cross-cultural issues.

SMDF is based upon the semiotic paradigm and essentially consists of a carefully sequenced application of various semiotic enhanced (or semiotically focussed) techniques; the aim being to underpin website development from initial requirements elicitation through to post-implementation and review. Users can only fully trust a website if the site can be deemed to be semiologically valid. The attributes of a semiotically valid site may be difficult to quantify objectively. However, Tim felt instinctively that a truly culturally inclusive site is a quality site in the broadest sense of that term; by exhibiting *shared-meanings* quality. Such a site cannot perhaps ever be the subject of either rigorous proof or quantitative verification, but rather must remain an intentionally more elusive entity, embracing user, context and cultural dimensions. Tim hoped, nevertheless, to present some limited empirical evidence to support our approach in due course.

Simon Polovina of University of Hertfordshire presented a paper jointly authored with Bhavin Shantilal Khatri, also from University of Hertfordshire, and Steven Singh from 5volt.com, entitled *Culture and Web3D: Experiences in Building a Virtual Beer Festival Site in 3DML*. The paper investigated the techno-cultural issues surrounding Virtual Reality on the present-day Web, or ‘Web3D’, over the Internet, by developing as its illustration a particularly UK cultural event, the St Albans Virtual Beer Festival. This mimicked the actual, real beer festival that ran in September 2000. Given the planned cultural focus and the short turnaround of time available, Simon employed the semiotically inspired SMDF Framework (see above), and 3DML (an XML-derived Web3D markup language) to implement the Virtual Beer Festival rapidly.

The Virtual Beer Festival was analysed, designed, implemented and user-evaluated in three months, in time for the actual festival. As well as raising tremendous publicity for the real festival, the virtual site’s development raised

issues to do with the simple mechanics of building and using the virtual site, as well as addressing user diversity and culture. The paper offered valuable experiences from which future work on the topic of culture and semiotic in Virtual Reality can progress.

Lynne Dunckley of the Open University, in a paper jointly authored with myself, entitled *Cultural Dichotomies in User Evaluation of International Software*, proposed a novel way of addressing the problems of evaluating user interfaces for international systems. Although the need for effective evaluation is greater for international software, usability evaluation methods are subject to cultural bias and practical difficulties. The approach discussed adopting *cultural dichotomies* as end-points of various dimensions on which users differ. By adopting a partial factorial design strategy (along the lines of the LUCID interface design method) it was suggested that it was possible to increase the efficiency of user testing and focus resources by recruiting users based upon their underlying dichotomies, as opposed to recruiting users solely from one culture. These underlying dichotomies are found in many countries. Lynne described how we have applied the approach in a simulated case study to re-analyze the results from previous usability tests prior to an industrial-scale application. In the analysis both subjective factors, such as power distance, locus of control and individualism/collectivism, and objective factors, such as age, gender and mother tongue, were addressed.

After lunch the workshop was very fortunate to hear a keynote address from Richard Ishida, Globalisation Consultant at Xerox. Operating out of the Xerox Europe Technical Centre in the UK, Richard works with product development groups around the world, both internal and external to Xerox, and is a regular speaker at major globalisation and IT conferences. Richard was able to give an extremely interesting account of his experiences at Xerox with a range of interesting examples to illustrate and illuminate the issues and problems of localisation and internationalisation.

The sixth academic paper was presented jointly by Peter McKenna and Atif Waraich of Manchester Metropolitan University, and dealt with *Social Agency: the Perils of Constructing Gendered Personalities for Intelligent Agents and Avatars*. Their paper focused on intelligent agents and examined the ways in which new technology is being shaped by social and cultural assumptions, and the impact that it may in turn have on society. They examined why technology, at its current level of development, results in a semiotics of personal identity that encourages the use of stereotype and caricature.

Peter and Atif critiqued some of the traditional concepts and approaches used in HCI and suggested that they may not be appropriate to intelligent agents. Exaggerated or simplified features help to sustain believability – or at least the suspension of disbelief – and to establish and sustain recognition. Gender in particular provides characteristics that are both easy to represent, and easy to recognize. While developments in computer technology have allowed users

and programmers to experiment with identity and difference, stereotyped gender characteristics are prevalent among existing agents. An examination was presented of several “intelligent” agents whose framework is anthropomorphic, reflecting on the repetition of traditionally gendered characteristics, narratives and scripts within the emergent technology, and deconstructing the relevant contexts, situations, and behaviours. The general claims made for agents in terms of HCI metaphor – assistants rather than tools; engagement rather than interaction – were examined, and Peter and Atif explored the possibilities for new approaches where the development of agents can be socially informed, and result in products that are not stereotyped yet are recognisably “human”.

Finally, Trevor Barker (University of Hertfordshire) presented a paper authored with Janet Barker (Home Office) and Martina A Doolan (University of Hertfordshire) entitled *The Development of Multimedia Learning Applications for Use by Students in Different Linguistic and Cultural Contexts*. Trevor reported on aspects of the development, implementation and evaluation of multilingual, multicultural, multimedia learning materials. These materials were developed under the European Horizon project in order to support learners in the United Kingdom, Spain and Ireland. Horizon is a European-funded project whose aim is to increase employment opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Trevor presented a case study of how multimedia learning materials were specified in terms of learning content and structure and how social, cultural and linguistic aspects of the learning materials were specified and modified for international use. The establishment of teams to develop translation, implementation and evaluation strategies is reported. Each team produced a detailed report and agreed a delivery plan, including time scales. Examples of how prototypes were developed, implemented and evaluated in the context of their intended use were described in the presentation. Trevor addressed some of the many problems that were encountered during the project and a description of how these were resolved was also included.

It is probably difficult for a workshop organiser to successfully evaluate a workshop. However, in a discussion at the end of the workshop delegates certainly indicated that the event was highly worthwhile, and furthermore supported the ideas firstly of holding a second event in Autumn 2001 and secondly of forming a network of researchers and practitioners in the UK interested in *Cultural Issues in HCI*. My thanks go to the Programme Committee: Elisa Del Galdo, Lynne Dunckley, Kristine Faulkner, and Tim French, other additional reviewers, and everyone who took part and attended the workshop.

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# A.I. Symposium 'Feats and Frontiers'

Edinburgh 7 April 2001

Alison Crerar

Every year Edinburgh Branch of BCS organises an event in memory of **Sidney Michaelson** [1] who was one of the founding fathers of computer science at the University of Edinburgh. This usually takes the form of a public lecture during the Edinburgh Science Festival in April. In recent years invited speakers have included Igor Aleksander, John Koza and Rosalind Picard.

For the year 2001, the tenth anniversary of Sidney's death, we decided to hold an International AI Symposium entitled *Feats and Frontiers*. The idea was to celebrate some of the major achievements of Artificial Intelligence over the last 30 years or so, but not to dwell on the past. We wanted a lively event including outstanding contemporary research. Moreover we wanted a good mix of delegates from academia and industry: an opportunity for business people with problems to solve, to meet academics who might be interested in collaboration. Alas, I failed to motivate industry, so it turned into more of an academic event than had been hoped for.

About 50 delegates from around the UK took part. **Greg Michaelson** (Senior Lecturer in Computing at Heriot-Watt) opened proceedings with a short illustrated tribute to his father. This was followed by a keynote talk from **Marvin Minsky** from MIT Media Labs, entitled *How computers could get common sense*. Marvin was in great form and everyone shared a sense of privilege to hear him in the flesh. His talk was an intellectual ramble around his latest book, *The Emotion Machine* [2], interspersed with digressions both provocative and entertaining. He amused the audience by pulling out a camera from the internal pockets of his cotton parka (in which he keeps everything including his powerbook) and pretending to photograph us. The camera turned out to include a recorder which he

switched on "in case I say anything interesting"!

A number of nuggets were tossed at the audience during this talk, including ideas for research and some rather testy assertions such as "many people hold the mistaken view that the whole is more than the sum of the parts: it clearly isn't" and "the whole of robotics research to date has been a waste of time". This latter point, so strongly voiced, rather cut the ground from the next speaker but one, Ulrich Nehmzow, who leads the mobile robotics research group at the University of Manchester! During the day Marvin was always busy either



Marvin the Maestro

with his palm or laptop. No matter what the topic, he seemed to have gigabytes of information at his fingertips, always pulling up an apposite quotation or a caustic aside. The photograph shows the inimitable Marvin in full flood.

The second keynote was given by **Mike Brady** [3], University of Oxford. This was a densely packed and superbly illustrated overview of his seminal work on medical image analysis. Mike presented a fascinating account of the challenges presented by breast cancer and the ways in which his team is working to provide alternatives to mammography (which is only suitable for post-menopausal women). 3D modelling techniques are being used in a variety of innovative

ways to visualise tumours, to manage and measure them and ultimately to contribute to minimally invasive surgical techniques. The passion with which Mike pursues this immensely valuable work is palpable.

Continuing on the medical theme, **John Fox** [4], Head of the Advanced Computation Lab at Imperial Cancer Research spoke on *Publets: clinical judgement on the web?* In this talk he outlined work pursued over a number of years, which has come together in a theory of clinical decision making and plan management; an agent knowledge representation language, PROforma, based on this theory, and an architecture for supporting clinical care which interprets this language.

**Ulrich Nehmzow** [5] gave an excellent overview of the history of robotics, with emphasis on his team's interest in autonomous mobile robots. These are self-contained robots that operate without external connection.

**Juergen Klenk** from IBM Zurich [6] spoke on the topical subject of personalised applications on cell phones, but from the examples he gave it was clear that the killer app for this technology has yet to emerge.

**Kathryn Thornton** [7] from the Data Mining Group at the University of Durham presented research on a novel combination of techniques: the use of data mining with VR visualisation for managing ATM networks. **Harold Thimbleby** [8], who has written widely on ethics and the Internet, provided a very stimulating contribution, AI as applied ethics, which threw up many interesting and unexpected analogies between AI, HCI and different philosophical systems.

The only cognitive scientist among the speakers was **Mike Burton**, Professor of Psychology at the University of Glasgow, whose talk had the intriguing title, *What are faces made of?* He gave us an insight into the complexities of face recognition by humans, and demonstrated, by using the audience, how singularly poor we



are at matching the faces of strangers, even when the target face is presented along with a line-up of candidates. It turns out we can recognise known people from very poor face images and from very poor video of the body (even excluding the face), but are unreliable in identifying strangers even from high quality images.

Many interesting questions arise about how people do face processing, with implications for eye witness identification of criminals. Finally **Lyndon Lee** [10], leader of intelligent agent research at BT Labs, shared with us the topical world of agent-transacted internet auctions. This new paradigm proposes dynamic pricing, negotiated by agents, operating a range of bargaining protocols. Lyndon focused only on the technical issues, having no concern for the ethical consequences, "that's for others to work out", he said.

The formal part of the proceedings concluded with a debate. Getting this off the ground was no mean task. Can you imagine getting a bunch of



Mike Brady, Aaron Sloman and Mike Burton spoke against the motion

academics to agree what they will debate and who will propose and oppose the motion? The email trail this exercise generated, including debating the voting strategy, became a marathon in itself. However, we achieved agreement, and Harold Thimbleby, Chris Huyck and Yorick Wilks spoke for, and Mike Brady, Aaron Sloman and Mike Burton spoke against the motion *This house believes that robots will have free will*. The debate was chaired by Ian Ritchie (recent past

president of BCS) who skilfully kept the speakers to time. A vote was taken before and after the debate. Before, the Ayes had a big majority, but at the final count outcome was evens: a good way to end.

And for the finale, we repaired to the conservatory to enjoy a reception kindly sponsored by Orbital Software [11]. All in all a very memorable day.

**Alison Crerar** is Chair of Edinburgh Branch of BCS and a Senior Lecturer in the HCI Research Group at Napier University.

- [1] <http://www.cee.hw.ac.uk/~bcsed/michaelson.html>
- [2] <http://www.media.mit.edu/~minsky/E1.html> thru [E5.html](http://www.media.mit.edu/~minsky/E5.html)
- [3] <http://www.robots.ox.ac.uk/~jmb/>
- [4] <http://www.icn.ucl.ac.uk/members/Fox33/>
- [5] <http://www.cs.mon.ac.uk/robotics/nehmzow.html>
- [6] <http://www.zurich.ibm.com/>
- [7] <http://www.dur.ac.uk/k.e.thornton/>
- [8] <http://www.cs.mdx.ac.uk/harold/>
- [9] <http://medusa.psy.gla.ac.uk/~mike/home.htm/>
- [10] <http://www.labs.bt.com/projects/agents.htm>
- [11] <http://www.orbitalsw.com/>

**Photo credits:** Iain McGregor

## Usability News web site coming soon...

The British HCI Group are currently working on a brand new web site, appropriately called UsabilityNews.com. The site, which is due to go live in the Summer, will focus on the very latest news within the field of HCI and usability, including what's new in HCI, latest job postings, paper calls, along with usability events around the globe, such as workshops, conferences and seminars.

To ensure the site is as up to date as possible, the web site will be dynamically generated via a back-end database, and administered on a daily basis by a team of experienced editors. Anyone will be able to contribute a news article – all they will need is access to the web via a browser. All articles submitted will be edited by the editorial team, and published within a day or so.

This is an exciting development for the British HCI Group, with UsabilityNews.com likely to become a one-stop-shop for all the latest happenings in usability. Watch this space!

**Dave Clarke**

...And you can look forward to seeing all your favourite issues of Interfaces appearing gradually on UsabilityNews.com, as our already overworked production editor trawls through your heritage to create a series of online back issues. Watch that space! *Ed.*

## Learning and Doing

For the September issue (deadline 15th July) expect a return to coverage of student activity, with a new wave of 'My PhD', and a new feature - Group Projects. For the former (which was a regular feature of past issues) we invite those early in their research to define in 500–800 words, and in plain English, what it is they hope to do. You are writing for your friends to understand, not to impress your professors.

For the latter, supply 800–1000-word summaries of any group projects with a theme relevant to HCI. We don't want a project diary, nor a piece better suited to a conference short paper. But we are interested in how well you communicate to the reader what you found out about the state of the art, and your critical evaluation – of both your users and of the effectiveness of your project.

Student group projects have the capacity to mimic the processes of practitioners and often feature interesting research and conclusions. While not pure research, and unlikely to feature statistically valid conclusions, etc., the very act of getting your teeth into a project of some substance, in which you are seeking to create something lasting for your portfolio, has the potential to supply interesting insights. If nothing else, someone might read it here and offer you a job!



## Vet's Diary

Alistair Kilgour

Alistair Kilgour, in his latest veteran's column, sounds the clarion call for euro-usability – a process that might start in Lille this summer, and reach fruition in Zurich two years later. Or sooner if the TGV extensions continue to be built at such rapid rates!

### *Stars without stripes?*

Patriotism, said the great lexicographer, is the last refuge of the scoundrel. For the closet scoundrel from a small county, the pressing issue at the moment is one of size: towards what size of unit might you admit to harbouring such disreputable sentiments? Under pressure I have been known to confess to being a Scottish patriot – though some of the company that places me in still gives me serious pause. And yes, without too many misgivings, I could admit to being a British patriot. But European – could anyone be taken seriously who confessed to feelings of European patriotism? More and more it seems the answer might be yes.

Involvement in the joint Franco-British initiative which will culminate in the IHM-HCI 2001 Conference in Lille in September has reinforced my growing feeling that for HCI, as for so many other domains, our primary focus needs to be European for future strength and growth. Of course, North America will, for a long time to come, continue to be the major source of technical and applied innovation. But, as the quality of the technical programme at Lille will confirm, more and more of the innovation, insight and inventiveness in interactive devices, systems and applications is to be found in the laboratories and enterprises of Europe.

For almost twenty years there has been a European organisation for computer graphics – Eurographics. Why is it that, even now, there is no real equivalent for HCI? Lots of possible explanations spring to mind. It might be argued, for example, that computer graphics is a better defined and better understood discipline – though in truth it has always been an uneasy amalgam of physics, geometry,

and algorithm design. Also many of the pioneers of what we now call HCI saw themselves as practitioners of computer graphics.

A more likely explanation of the differences in the European consolidation of the two disciplines has to do with personalities rather than with the nature of the disciplines themselves. Computer graphics benefited in the seventies and eighties from the far-sighted and strongly Euro-centric vision of some of its pioneers, such as Jose Encaração, Bob Hopgood and especially David Duce. On the other hand, perhaps because it took longer in Europe for HCI to be recognised as a significant, distinct, professional discipline, and due also perhaps to the different culturally determined flavours which the subject took on in different parts of Europe, HCI has significantly lacked that kind of proactive pioneer with a vision of a European umbrella, under which the many European strands of HCI could comfortably, and profitably, shelter.

What about IFIP and its Technical Committee 13 on HCI? It might be argued that TC13 has fulfilled the function that "EuroHCI" might have exercised had it existed. It is true that IFIP is viewed in North America as a European organisation – which is one reason we are unlikely to see an INTERACT conference in a US city in the foreseeable future. But in reality IFIP is of course a global organisation – something like a United Nations of what is still quaintly called information processing. Although TC13 has been highly successful in promoting and supporting HCI in Europe, it suffers from the drawbacks of its strengths, namely that representation on its technical committees is not based on the size of the country or region represented, let alone on the strength of that country or region's research or practice in the technical area the committee represents. And apart from this, the remit of IFIP requires that it should avoid favouring or concentrating its activities in one geographic region. So, however it is perceived outside,

TC13 is not and cannot be a uniquely European champion of HCI.

The fact that INTERACT 2003 will be held in Zurich, at the beginning of September, presents European HCI with a great opportunity. A newly established "EuroHCI" could make INTERACT 2003 the target for its official launch – and might indeed seek joint hosting and badging of the conference (as SigCHI did with INTERACT ten years earlier). Thereafter EuroHCI could organise its own biennial event in the years between INTERACTs. It is true that in some European countries, *faut de mieux*, HCI enthusiasts have established local chapters of SigCHI. The reasons are understandable, but this kind of development could be viewed as a stop-gap, pending the emergence of a real European alternative.

These issues will be widely discussed and debated at IHM-HCI in Lille, in several forums as well as in many bars. This is a gentle plea for British readers, and the growing number of readers of *Interfaces* from other parts of Europe, to put the stars before the stripes, envisage (only Americans envision) a strong European future for HCI, and work together to make it happen.

**Alistair Kilgour**  
[alistair@realaxis.co.uk](mailto:alistair@realaxis.co.uk)

So, HCI veterans Europe-wide, this is your chance to take up the gauntlet in response to Alistair, whose unchallenged residence in the Vet's chair suggests that none of you consider your venerable HCI wisdom equal to his – *c'est incroyable!* – but how else are we to interpret the ringing silence from out there...?





## 'The undiscovered country from whose bourne it's all too easy to return...'

Cassandra Hall

Cassandra gets physical with her trashy ideas, but in so doing discovers that her family values include a disinclination to airing one's British Linen in public. More howling from her next issue.

So, an American judge is doing for the users what HCI experts have failed to deliver. A recent freebie newspaper announced that an American judge had ruled that when a file is deleted it should disappear from the system. How strange, that something so profound shouldn't be slapped all over the daily newspapers and shouted on News at Ten. How odd, that Government publicity machinery hasn't made promises that all deleted files will henceforth be rounded up in Cambridge for final annihilation by Stephen Hawking. Hawking has finally discovered the real purpose of black holes is a rubbish tip for unwanted files and life is nothing but God's desk top, courtesy of Windows (Second Coming). And how amazing that the Nielsen-Norman circus hasn't ground to a halt, gobsmacked by the simplicity of this sound-bite from a mere judge.

It scares me how little even computing students know about what happens to a deleted file. I've been asking students for years whether or not a deleted file is deleted and have received replies ranging from 'of course it has' to 'what does it matter?'

What does it matter? If I place washing in the washing machine and it reaches the end of the programme, I expect it to have been washed. When the TV says it is tuned to Channel 4, I take it for granted it is there. When the toaster pops up toast, I know it is done. I get on a train marked Southampton and I expect it to at least have a stab at getting me there. Oh foolish me, a deleted file isn't really deleted.

Steve Draper once questioned the process of "Save". He looked at the extra mental activity it took to save at odd intervals to ensure "Save". I seem

to remember he went on and on about the extra time it took and how much thought it required to remember to save at frequent intervals.

Steve's paper made me realise three things. First, no wonder I'm stressed and exhausted, I do half of my word processor's work myself. Secondly, if I cut down on how much time I saved files I could solve the final problems of physics. And thirdly, isn't it amazing what HCI people do with their time? I mean, how amazing that someone has gone to the trouble to work all that out. A bad night on TV and many tantalising problems get solved. You'd think someone would do something with it. But they haven't. Steve Draper isn't working for M\$, nor has he been knighted. Though I bet he could take up a lot of dinner party, talking about "save functionality". In fact, maybe the answer to all interface problems is to make sure that the BBC continue to show complete drivel, thus driving HCI academia to research.

But actually "Save" isn't that lethal. So if it doesn't "Save", a few pages of deathless prose might be lost but at least you kind of know where you stand, or don't stand. If I write something, think better of it and delete it, I do actually want to know that someone won't grab it out of the wastebasket (electronic or not), iron it and use it against me at some later date. As for commerce and industry, how can they possibly resell computers or give them to schools if they can't be sure that deleted files really are deleted?

My father has just bought a new computer but he refuses to get rid of the old one. He is too scared about what will happen to his precious data. I've tried very hard to explain I can clear the computer of anything he doesn't want left there but he is traumatised by having tried repeatedly to get rid of Freeserve from his system and still having it pop up, uninvited, at unpredictable times. I'm thinking of asking Steve Draper to figure out how long it'll be before my parents need to move to a bigger house.

And before any readers start speculating on how far I am my

father's daughter, just think of how the many systems represent deletion and how new users must try to make sense of them.

Take the wastebasket. If you put something in the real wastebasket then as long as the wastebasket hasn't been emptied you can get it out again. If it's been emptied the chances of getting it back are slim. Though I saw a film once where the hero got back from the council crushing machine a precious jewel. But actually, I'm not convinced that just any old person could do that and only James Bond or Indiana Jones would come back with the jewel in their hands, or teeth in Indiana Jones's case. So, the concept of delete provided by a wastebasket metaphor is of pretty permanent loss once the bin has been emptied.

A recycler, on the other hand, suggests that it'll be made into something else. Maybe my application for promotion will come back as my resignation letter thus saving time. And then there's incinerators... And yes, that file has gone, for good. Burnt to a cinder. Though actually, I vaguely remember that Hercule Poirot once managed to read a note that was burnt to a cinder. But again, he's pretty special and maybe doesn't count. And how about a shredder? I read somewhere that reconstruction of shredded documents is relatively easy if a bit dull.

So, to sum up, as a novice user of a deletion metaphor I would rate gone-ness, according to how gone the file is from most gone to least gone: incinerator, wastebasket, recycler, shredder.

The truth is all metaphors act the same and a deleted file is not really deleted until you empty the recycler, or the wastebasket or shake out the shredder. Even then all that is really gone is the pointer to the address so a good recovery package like Norton's Utilities for example, will get the darling back for you. Indeed, after an afternoon of experimentation with some accidentally deleted files I can confidently tell you that the more you don't want to get the file back the easier it is to recover. (This is all to do



'The undiscovered country from whose bourne it's all too easy to return...'

... continued

with the second law of thermodynamics, so don't worry your pretty little heads about it, just believe me).

Just imagine the hard time we'd give Shakespeare if we knew that 'To be or not to be' had started off as 'I can't quite decide whether to top myself or not?' Or we could see in their awful glory the several attempts that we know Coleridge must have had to write Kubla Khan. Some things are 'not meant for human eyes' as Muir so aptly puts it.

The mental effort involved in all that juggling with reality really worries me. What are users meant to make of it? And why hasn't anyone sued Bill Gates for every cent he has? Why has it taken this long for an American judge to get excited about it? In comparison with the sort of nonsense they usually get excited about this is actually very important.

And is it good to offer us these conflicts with reality? I find myself sometimes puzzled by the fact that there is no undo button on physical actions I have carried out in the real world. A friend of mine said she'd love an undo button on life. The idea horrifies me. Some of us would never get off 'start' but at least one eminent HCI'er I know would be replaying their life with the artificial intelligence assistance turned off having found it too easy the first time.

Yes, yes, yes, it's nice to get a second chance about things (and people) we have disposed of. But sometimes 'gone' really should mean gone, forgotten and lost forever. Amen.

## Indo British Software Usability Partnership

... linking India and the United Kingdom in human-computer interaction and usability...

Andy Smith

### Background

The British Human-Computer Interaction Group is joining forces with the Computer Society of India (CSI) to support the effective development of sound usability principles in Indian academic and commercial information technology activities.

The whole idea started when I was one of the contributors to the UK Government's 'Get Connected' IT seminars in India during April and again in November 2000. Considerable interest was shown in forming a partnership between UK and Indian researchers and practitioners in the areas of HCI and usability.

Called the 'Indo British Software Usability Partnership' (IBSUP), the initiative is being led jointly by myself and Sanjay Prasad, who is Vice President of the CSI. Sanjay is based in Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay. There is also a small steering group of UK and Indian members, with the UK representatives emerging following an earlier news item on the HCI News Service.

Of course, in Europe, the USA and other places, usability is often seen to be 'mission critical' to the quality and success of IT systems. In addition HCI is a standard part of degree courses in computing throughout Europe and the USA. Usability 'engineers' are common in Western software development companies. In India, on the other hand, usability does not enjoy by any means the same profile. Very few university courses address HCI in their curricula. Although the Indian IT industry is massive, and growing fast, the emphasis is very much on technical programming skills, mainly being outsourced from the USA and Europe.

The main aim of IBSUP is to share research expertise in usability and interface design and to assist in the embedding of effective usability procedures in the Indian software industry. In addition it plans to identify and address Indian cultural requirements for interface design, thereby assisting in the provision of

local software for Indian computer users.

### Seminars – call for participation

The first main event organised by IBSUP will be a series of focused seminars on usability and human-computer interaction to be held in India during September 2001. At the time of writing it is planned to hold three seminars in both academic and commercial environments in both Mumbai and Bangalore. Dates have been provisionally set within the period 9th – 15th September. The event is being financially supported by the British HCI Group and other sources of funding are being investigated. It is hoped that economy flights and hotel accommodation will be provided and that between three and five UK presenters will take part together with Indian colleagues.

Researchers and practitioners in HCI/usability are invited to submit proposals for contributing to the seminars. There is considerable flexibility at this time but basically what we are looking for is a one-hour seminar focusing on an aspect of HCI/usability that will be relevant and interesting for a mixed IT academic/practitioner audience. It is not meant to be a research oriented conference, rather a means of 'spreading the word' to those new to usability HCI. If you have any ideas please contact [andy.smith@luton.ac.uk](mailto:andy.smith@luton.ac.uk). Informal expressions of interest are requested as soon as possible and final proposals before 29th June 2001. Final contributors will be selected by the Steering Group.

### The future

The IBSUP feels that improved usability within the whole Indian IT industry will improve the global competitiveness of the Indian IT industry. An enhanced understanding of the cultural requirements for usability will ensure more effective systems that are localised for Indian users. IBSUP plans to address both these issues.

Following the seminars it is hoped that membership of IBSUP will grow,



particularly in India, and that activity will increase considerably. A range of other activities and events could follow. A discussion group is being established that will link UK and Indian IT personnel on HCI and usability issues. Watch the HCI News Service for updates.

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## Book Reviews

**Kristine Faulkner, Iain McGregor**

*Sorting Things Out  
Classification and its Consequences*  
Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star  
MIT Press  
ISBN 0-262-522950-0, £12.50, 377 pages

I guess I have to start by saying it is difficult to know how to classify this book. As the authors don't know how they would classify it either, I don't feel too bad about having finished it and still not knowing where I'd put it on my shelves. It is an extraordinary text, and I mean that in a challenging and positive way. It would appeal to anyone who is stuck with the chore of having to classify things: scientists, librarians, information systems designers, historians, medics. Sociologists and psychologists would have a field day looking at the impact and motivations for classification.

This is an impressive attempt to explain the purpose, psychology and problems of classification. I decided to read and review it because, like many others in HCI, I resort to classification to make life simpler. I teach user classification with only the slightest apology and with the assumption that students won't be shocked by my desire to put things into convenient groups. This book has made me think very seriously about the process of classification and its consequences. All the time I have classified users, interface types, tasks, etc., I have wondered really what it meant, but this book has made me more aware of the dangers than I maybe was hitherto.

It is an impressive book. Don't be put off by the unfortunate and rather stupid typos in the first page of the introduction! My heart missed several beats at that. I feared I was about to be subjected to something sloppily and hastily written, but the rest of the book allayed those fears. It is thoroughly, painstakingly researched. It is written with a humour and affection that is very, very appealing. The asides, well separated from the rest of the text, are interesting and give examples of what the text discusses.

It isn't a book I can recommend generally to HCI practitioners and teachers. It certainly isn't a book for students. I would recommend dipping into the book rather than reading cover to cover as I did. There are sections about medical classifications which although interesting have less bearing on what we might be doing in HCI. The sections on why we classify, the classification according to race and the theory and practice of classification are probably the most

useful for HCI practitioners. What this book did do for me is to make me aware of the impact of my classification and how once I have formed those classifications how difficult it is to rethink them. In fact, classification has a huge effect on the way in which we view material. It makes life easier for us as the classifying individuals but quite often the effect it has in reality is much more profound than we might believe at first glance.

This would be a nice addition to the library and at £12.50 is cheap enough to put it there without feeling guilty. Anyone who enjoys challenging preconceived ideas too, would undoubtedly derive plenty of argument from this book. Incidentally, some of the asides about the Web, newsgroups, email and computer use make very interesting, and sometimes entertaining, reading.

*User Centred Web Development*  
Jonathan Lazar  
Jones and Bartlett  
ISBN 0-7637-1431-3, \$34.95, 293 pages

This is a nice book for students. It covers the area in a no-nonsense and clear style. There are even bits of discussion about Java code along the way. I must admit, I like books written by people who understand code. It seems to me that perhaps they are able to build the things as well as talking about building the things. The case studies are very thorough and useful and show students exactly what the author means. I've noticed that what makes sense to us as lecturers and developers is quite often way outside the experience of students and they do need examples of even the most simple of ideas. This book is good for doing just that without being condescending.

The coverage is wide and there are interesting discussions along the way. I found plenty to entertain me and bits I could argue with as well. The argument for involving the user was clearly and convincingly put. Lazar explains what not involving the user will do and leaves very little room for excuses. There are pictures and diagrams. I'm afraid that like Alice I can't help thinking that a book without pictures is less interesting than it might be.

I rather hoped that Lazar might be a replacement for Nielsen, whose *Designing Web Usability* I reviewed and raved about some time ago. I still feel irritated by the price of that book, especially since I found out that New Riders is an offshoot of the ubiquitous Pearson circus and I can't help thinking that they have no need to ask such a price. (And I couldn't make bits of their website work, when I was trying to get them to send me a book about web design, so I'm not going to be reviewing that one, I guess!).

However, sad to say, you still need to buy Nielsen, though this book does have a number of strengths that you might like to consider before your students spend their money on Nielsen. For a start, it's probably a bit more student-friendly and certainly it is better organised for a student to read. Lazar references properly too, which Nielsen doesn't bother to do. I'm a little concerned about what Lazar references and hope that he gets to look at a bit more than his references would suggest. However, this feels in some ways more of an 'academic book' than Nielsen and, as much as I admire Nielsen's work, I am fed up with him for the lack of referencing. I can't help feeling it sets a bad example. But



Lazar has a realistic list of references, all of which students would be able to find.

There were some odd bits of grammar that irritated me but I fear my age is beginning to tell and that other people's grammar is now even more laid back than mine. But Lazar takes the reader along at a good pace. He has a nice tone and a good feel for the subject. I'm not sure that I can agree with it all but it is an entertaining book to read. I got through it in a couple of hours without feeling over-taxed. Mind, I was trapped on a plane from Charlotte to Gatwick. However, I did have a Terry Pratchett novel with me which remained untouched so either this is a good book or Terry Pratchett is in trouble.

Incidentally, Jones and Bartlett are new to me. I was given my copy at SIGCSE by the very charming and very knowledgeable guy on their stand. I must say I was impressed by their enthusiasm and the speed at which they contacted me in my other role as committee member in charge of exhibitions for ITiCSE. They've also got a nice website that works and works quickly and a sales team who are on the ball and more importantly on the planet.

No, sadly, Lazar hasn't weaned me off Nielsen, which I still consider to be the web usability bible. But I'm reluctant to ask students to buy Nielsen and I'm happy to recommend this one to them. If what you want is a book about involving users and how to go about the task of doing that with some design tips on the way then this is the book. Tell your students to buy this one but keep the Nielsen for yourself. The NATFHE action is over; there must be a huge pay rise on the way.

**Xristine Faulkner**  
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*Making Use: Scenario-Based Design of Human-Computer Interactions*  
John M. Carroll.  
Originally published 1998,  
republished MIT Press December 2000.  
£27.50 cloth

As Professor of Computer Science, Education and Psychology, and Director of the Center for Human-Computer Interaction at Virginia Tech, Carroll has grown up with HCI. Joining IBM in 1976, hearing the remark that "success in the field of computing depended upon the scientist's tolerance for ambiguity", he took it to heart, although it took him a further ten years to make sense of it.

The book starts baldly, stating that "Computers are badly behaved because they are badly designed." (p. 1). Going on, he describes the dilemma of the smoke and mirrors image that an HCI practitioner engenders, when confronted with the reductionist if/else culture of systems design. HCI research can appear to be a pinch of this and a measure of that, very much a sorcerer's brew, formulated to fit the

current situation. Carroll argues that unless we formalise an approach, then systems design will always be seen as a black art.

He proposes the use of an ever-present design practice, a contemporary of computing, that of *Scenarios*. Scenarios were first utilised by the Rand Corporation in the late 1940s, although at the time it was as a strategic planning technique. Scenario-based design systematically studies real-world uses, eliciting sound reasoning, rather than the traditional opportunistic discoveries associated with incomplete formal use cases.

A scenario 'concretises' a set of requirements through "observing, describing, inventing and developing" (p. 14). It can never discover all of the requirements, as only a fully functioning system can elicit the infinite number of the requirements users might have of any complex system. You can only build it and then log and analyse the results.

Just like maps, the only accurate description of a system is the system itself. But scenarios can be re-used and updated, without ever having to be cast in stone. They are always focused on human activity, but mostly they "stimulate the imagination". They are qualitative, informing us of what people need, want and wish to do, allowing for the frailties of distraction and forgetfulness.

There are five stages in a scenario-based requirements process: Early Vision, Ethnography, Claims Analysis, Activity Design and Prototyping, and seven methods suggested by Carroll, all of which are explained with great clarity in Chapter 10. These are: Ethnographic Field Study, Participatory Design, Reuse of Prior Analyses, Scenario Typologies, Theory-Based Scenarios, Technology Based Scenarios, and Transformations. These can be used in any combination and are not intended to reinforce the apparent difference between technology-driven and use-case design, but rather to provide a variety of viewpoints to complement techniques already used.

Carroll takes us through three projects he worked on – Raison d'Être, a Video Information System, MiTTs (Minimalist Tutorial and Tools for Smalltalk), both for IBM, and a Virtual Physics Laboratory for high school and middle school teachers. These make for fascinating reading as it is rare to find system development documented in such a readable manner.

The MiTTs project threw up many points; two of the more obvious were associated with the blackjack game used as a basis for the lessons. First, that knowledge can never be assumed to be universal. A few of the intended students, IBM Smalltalk programmers, had to be taught how to play blackjack before they could even start the lessons, an issue previously overlooked. Secondly, that we can all be easily distracted. The blackjack game had to be made less attractive in order to prevent the programmers playing the game and ignoring the lessons.

As a student, my first encounters with HCI were from wading through Dix, Preece and Shneiderman. I wish that I had discovered Carroll. Chapter 2 'What is Design?' should be required reading for all computing undergraduates, with



Chapter 11 'Getting Around the Task-Artifact Cycle' being a set text for their lecturers.

Carroll is concerned with the user's needs, rather than making life easy for the designers and technologists trying to bridge the gap between the informal and the systematic. How many of us have read ISO 9241-11? There is little doubt that software/hardware is becoming more complicated, making usability even more difficult to quantify. Scenarios successfully marry the present with the future, allowing the 'what if', before everything becomes trapped into the dreaded, supposedly extinct waterfall.

Carroll acknowledges that his theories are untested and uses his examples to illustrate where he is coming from, rather than eliciting a definitive proof. But if proof were needed, a senior engineer at NASA informed Carroll that "scenario-based design would be the key to developing the commercial aircraft concept for the next-generation space shuttle" (pp 16-17).

Well, that's sold it to me! But Carroll has a get-out clause: "we should remind ourselves that high-falutin' theory has rarely delivered substantive guidance to design." (p 225). I think I'll print that out for my wall.

Look out for:

- *Usability engineering: Scenario-Based Development of Human Computer Interaction*. San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann.
- *Human-Computer Interaction in the New Millennium*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley / ACM Books.
- *Scenario-Based Design: The State of the Art*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

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### Gadgets and Gizmos

Oct 15th might feel a little early to be thinking of Christmas, but that's your deadline for a special feature for our December issue. We are wanting reviews of all manner of seductive technology, done to an evaluation framework of your choosing! Whether it's PDAs, Minidisk players, Flash memory devices, our readers deserve to hear your insights about the various toys you have bought recently.

Let's face it, we are all tempted by the same toys, but if we buy presents for our partner, parents, or kids we don't want them to be unhappy with our largesse on the grounds of usability of all things. And if we treat ourselves, we might as well not make the same mistakes someone else made. But if there is something out there that is a dream to use, we all want one.

What vital interviews did you fail to record because the record button doesn't let you know if it's on or not? What problems did you have getting your contact list off the desktop and into the PDA? Did those digital pix of your friend's wedding afford an instant web-site before they came back from honeymoon?

Feel free to point us to the long-established references in ergonomics, HCI, whatever, that you might think by now would be common sense. Hopefully you have got the idea by now – scenario-based!

### Dr Sandra Foubister 1947–2001

Friends and colleagues will be saddened to hear of the death on Saturday 28th April of Dr Sandra Foubister, after a long struggle with cancer. Sandra bore her illness with amazing courage and cheerfulness.

Sandra's interest in HCI came quite late in her career. She studied psychology at Edinburgh University in the late 1960s and was subsequently a postgraduate Research Assistant. She next trained as a music teacher at the then Napier College and taught in secondary schools in the Lothians. In the late 1980s, she took an MSc and PhD in computer science at York University, achieving her doctorate in 1995.

She moved to Heriot-Watt as a Research Associate in 1991, and worked on several projects, including the Ceilidh Project with Greg Michaelson and Alistair Kilgour in the Computing and Electrical Engineering Department, and HIPERNET and LEVERAGE, two projects looking at language learning over networks in Europe, with Terry Mayes and Patrick McAndrew at ICBL. She then contributed in a major way to the MANTCHI project (which was a joint project between Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Napier and Heriot-Watt Universities), for which she was mostly based at Napier, working directly with David Benyon and Alison Crerar.

Sandra's interest in HCI developed while she was working on the Ceilidh project, and in 1996 she became a member of the HCI Group Executive Committee, with main responsibility for meetings organisation. She fulfilled this role with great energy and commitment till she first became ill in 1999. Sandra also contributed significantly to the organisation of several HCI conferences. In particular she was tutorials chair from HCI '95 until '98.

Apart from her work, Sandra's major interests, which she pursued with single-minded dedication, were cats and competitions. One of her dreams was to move to a cottage in the country and breed cats commercially. On the competition front, she applied all her intelligence and formidable determination to the chase, and was successful remarkably often. Within the last ten years she won a car and several exotic holidays, plus numerous other smaller prizes.

All who knew Sandra will have fond recollections of her directness, optimism and commitment, both to friends and colleagues, and to her deeply held interests. She will be sadly missed.

*Alistair Kilgour contributed the above tribute, with contributions from many friends and colleagues, including Stella Mills, Ian Benest, Terry Mayes, Greg Michaelson, Patrick McAndrew, Gilbert Cockton and Alan Dix.*

*Following a moving funeral service on a bright sunny afternoon on May 8th in Edinburgh, Alistair adds the following: "The thing that surprised (and affected) me most was the playing of a recording of Sandra singing 'I know that my redeemer liveth'. She was not religious so far as anyone knew, but she was a great singer and could have achieved fame if she had followed it up professionally. Instead she became a music teacher – until computers lured her away from music."*





## Profile

### Judith Ramsay



Judith Ramsay is a Senior Consultant with Nickleby HFE Ltd in Glasgow, Scotland. Her interest in HCI started with her PhD entitled "Measuring and facilitating human-computer interaction" which she did under the supervision of Keith Oatley and Steve Draper. Following completion of her PhD in 1992, Judith was awarded a Royal Society European Fellowship to carry out research in Germany, where she evaluated an information system for intensive care, and provided input to its

redesign. This work was published in *Behaviour and Information Technology*, 1997, Vol 16, No. 1, p. 17-24.

Judith then moved to Copenhagen to join the Danish leg of the AMODEUS II Esprit project for the last eighteen months of the project, after which time she moved to London to work with Jenny Preece at the Centre for People and Systems Interaction on how interrelating social, psychological and technical factors influence computer-mediated communication.

In 1997, Judith joined Nortel Networks as a User Experience Specialist, where she acquired significant knowledge in telecommunications, the internet and IP networks. Her work involved the application of behavioural principles to the design and development of internet services and applications. In particular, she worked on the visualisation of network management software, the development of services for e-commerce and mobile commerce, and frameworks for application service provision.

After her three years with Nortel, she returned home to Glasgow to join Nickleby, with whom she has set up SUF (ScotlandIS Usability Forum), an expert group for the Scottish usability community. This got off to a flying start on 10th May 2001. Nickleby's website is at <http://www.nickleby.com/>.

*What's your idea of happiness?*

A night of unbroken sleep

*What is your greatest fear?*

Anything bad happening to members of my family

*Which living person do you most admire?*

Julian Simpson

*What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?*

Letting other people think they are right when they are not!

*What is the trait you most deplore in others?*

Unnecessary negativity

*What vehicles do you own?*

Several pairs of shoes and a pair of legs

*What is your greatest extravagance?*

Organic Saint Vito Chianti ... mmm!

*What makes you feel most depressed?*

The random and unfair events that life can visit upon people like illness and death

*What objects do you always carry with you?*

Credit cards, Palm Pilot, keys, pain killers

*What do you dislike most about your appearance?*  
I'm just not tall enough

*What is your most unappealing habit?*  
Saying "yes" too readily

*What is your favourite smell?*  
Real coffee brewing

*What is your favourite word?*  
Julian

*What is your favourite building?*  
The Tate Modern

*What is your favourite journey?*  
Glasgow to Newcastle

*What or who is the greatest love of your life?*  
Julian

*On what occasions do you lie?*  
To avoid unnecessarily hurting people

*Which words or phrases do you most overuse?*  
"Exactly!"

*What is your greatest regret?*  
Losing my father

*When and where were you happiest?*  
Around 1995

*How do you relax?*  
By remembering what's important in life

*What single thing would improve the quality of your life?*  
More free time to clean my kitchen!

*Which talent would you most like to have?*  
To be all things to all people

*What keeps you awake at night?*  
Stabs of anxiety induced by whatever the topic of the week happens to be

*What journey do you dread?*  
Any trip involving the Northern Line

*What is your favourite day out?*  
A visit to Kew Gardens and the Serpentine

# British HCI Group – Application Form 2000

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 2000 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.

Please send me Vol. 12 (2000) of *Interacting with Computers* (£50) £ .....

Please send me Vols 11 & 12 of *Interacting with Computers* (£100) £ .....

Please send me a free sample issue

## Payment

Please enter the total amount for membership and subscriptions £ .....

I enclose a cheque/postal order (in Pounds Sterling only please), made payable to British HCI Group  
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Expiry

The information provided on this form is to my knowledge correct and I agree to the conditions stated.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

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Send completed forms and cheques to:

HCI Membership, British Computer Society,  
1 Sanford Street, Swindon, SN1 1HJ, UK  
(Tel. +44(0)1793 417417)

Queries about membership can also be e-mailed to: [hci@bcs.org.uk](mailto:hci@bcs.org.uk)



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