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Interactive Systems Design, Specification, and Verification

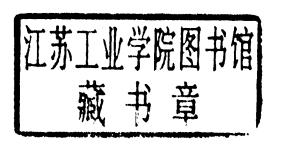
12th International Workshop, DSVIS 2005 Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, July 2005 Revised Papers



Interactive Systems

Design, Specification, and Verification

12th International Workshop, DSVIS 2005 Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, July 13-15, 2005 Revised Papers





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Preface

The 12th year of this workshop brought further development to familiar themes but also welcomed inclusion of less familiar topics such as "experience" and "quality-based design." The two keynote speakers, Cliff Jones and Peter Wright, described contrasting research and in so doing added zest to the meeting, emphasising the interdisciplinary breadth of the problems of interactive system design and verification. Cliff Jones, taking an approach that is familiar to the workshop faithful, discussed the role that a careful formal framing plays in specifying how an interactive system relies on its environment, including users. Peter Wright, in contrast, discussed the nature of human experience and how new conceptions of user experience can critically inform interaction design theory, principles and practice.

As usual, the submitted papers placed a strong emphasis on task representation as a means of modelling the requirements for the interactive system. CTT appears to be emerging as a defacto standard for describing tasks within this community and several papers describe model-orientated approaches based on task representation. Montero et al. address a broad framework rendered in terms of a tool, while Ponsard et al. give a specific example of model-based design and Nobrega et al. deal with the more specific issue of mapping CTT to UML. Other papers consider different aspects of conceptualising the design. Paterno and Volpe consider how to move from sketches or informal descriptions to task representations, while Paquette and Schneider deal with templates that ease the process of producing task descriptions. Naghsh et al. on the other hand consider annotations and paper prototypes. A further set of papers deals with the peculiar and novel requirements of mobile and migratory applications. Hence there are papers about platform fusion (Dupuy-Chessa et al.), a taxonomy of migratory user interfaces (Berti et al.). As usual there are papers that concern the modelling and analysis of properties such as moding (Gow et al.), menus (Zhang et al.), the verification of haptic algorithms (de Boeck et al.) and group interactions (ter Beek et al.).

Other papers hint at the more radical agenda suggested by Peter Wright's keynote address. The paper by Dix et al. addresses a framework for thinking about the design of computer interfaces that support performance. Two papers discuss how distributed cognition issues might be addressed in design. Blandford and Furniss's paper draws on claims analysis and distributed cognition, while Campos and Doherty fold an analysis of information resources into a formal approach. Finally, Lee et al. address an approach to measuring user preferences using utility trade-offs.

The workshop stimulated new ideas, working groups reflected on present and future issues in the community. We fully expect that the meeting triggered significant collaborations. The location of the workshop, the North East of England, is an area full of character and history. Overall the workshop was a rewarding and illuminating experience.

From the 60 or so papers that were submitted to the conference, the reviewers worked hard to get down to the 20 papers included in these proceedings. Submissions

came from a range of countries, including the UK, Italy, France, Belgium, Spain, Korea, Canada, USA, Portugal, Ireland, Brazil and Switzerland.

The papers are organised into six themes reflecting common issues and approaches explored by the accepted papers. In addition, four papers summarise break-out discussions. These centre on issues that the workshop participants chose as being important in future research that might be presented in later DSVIS meetings. In summary, we hope that the proceedings will give the reader a feeling for the values and goals of the community and provide a context that links all of the papers presented here.

Stephen Gilroy Michael Harrison

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User Experience and the Idea of Design in HCI

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Abstract. In this paper we argue that the idea of design in HCI is changing. For many years the design-as-engineering approach has dominated HCI research and practice, but now technological developments and new conceptions of 'the user' require more interdisciplinary conceptions of design. In particular, the turn to experience in HCI has lead us to consider a design-as-craft perspective which we exemplify in this paper by the work of digital jeweller, Jayne Wallace. But our aim is not to supplant one design perspective with an other. On the contrary, we argue that experience design requires a new form of radically interdisciplinary dialogue between different design perspectives that span the arts, sciences and humanities. However, such radically interdisciplinary dialogue is not without its problems and points of contention. We conclude by arguing that not only new conceptual tools but also new HCI curricula may be helpful in achieving this interdisciplinary dialogue.

1 Introduction

Fifteen years ago the idea of design in HCI was taken for granted and not a point of concern or discussion. Design meant the process of modelling users and systems and specifying system behaviour such that it fitted the users' tasks, was efficient, easy to use and easy to learn. In short, design in HCI was about engineering usability. Research agendas around this idea involved how best to model the user and to overcome the technical problems with specifying interactive programs in a way that promoted usability. The translation from the specification of user tasks to the specification of system dialogues presented significant technical interest and research opportunities but was not seen as fundamentally problematical. It was simple to see that designing the behaviour and visual appearance of a system to match the user's tasks, goals and action possibilities was a fundamentally sound proposition, which could be progressed not only as a human factors enterprise (task modeling, cognitive functional analysis, etc.) but also a formal software engineering enterprise [17].

But more recently various technological developments have led to a questioning of this idea of design in HCI. The confluence of information and communications technologies, and the reconceptualisation of interactive systems as new media [5] brings a much broader set of ideas about what it means to design an interactive system and indeed what it is that is being designed. Just consider for example, some common terms that permeate text books and research papers in HCI:

- User-centred design
- Dialogue design
- Information design
- Interaction design
- Emotional design
- Experience design

What is clear is that design has always been a central concern, but when Norman and others [23] introduced the idea of user-centred design there was little argument about what it was that was being designed-PCs and other desk-based computer interfaces. But the remainder of the list speaks to changing concerns. It appears we no longer design dialogue but interactions, information spaces, affect and now, user experience. Moving down the list also reveals differences in our understanding of 'the user'—the user as someone who engages in dialogue through to someone who has an experience with- or through- the technology. This raises the broader question of whether design means the same thing with these different conceptions of the user. Can we design experiences in the same way as we design dialogues? So the question is whether these changes to the focus of study in HCI have any implications for what our idea of design is or should be? Our recent research programme exploring theory and method for experience-centred design has led us to conclude that we need to change our ideas about design in HCI. Within HCI research there is a tendency to simplify accounts of the idea of design, the most common of which is a simplification to a single, linear developmental trajectory wherein one technique, tool or viewpoint, overwrites its earlier predecessor. For example,

- First came batch processing, then command line, then GUI...
- First came task analysis, then scenario-based design, then personae-based design...
- First came the user as human factor then as human actor then...
- First the user was a cog in a virtual machine now the user is a consumer....
- First came psychology, then ethnomethodology, then phenomenology...

These simplifications are often pedagogically useful but potentially misleading. It seems more appropriate (certainly as we view HCI practice as it is on the ground to-day) to understand these as coexisting perspectives, but where at certain times or in certain situations, one view, one metaphor, or one practice, is more central than another, one argument or one discourse is the dominant discourse for a while. Such a multi-perspectival view leads us to consider the boundaries between these accounts and encourages a dialogue between them. The quality of that dialogue will determine the effectiveness of our multi-disciplinary approach. A dialogue that tries to reduce ideas on the margins to more central ideologies will tend to stifle creativity, dialogues which at least for a time try to reverse centre and margin, or dialogues which strive to avoid replicating centre-margin distinctions, tend to foster creativity [1]. A number of different perspectives on HCI design already exist, ranging from engineering through to design as arts and crafts. If practitioners and researchers with these different perspectives can be helped to work together in some way then the new challenges of HCI

design will be more easily met. We want to argue that this can be best done by a kind of radical interdisciplinary research programme. By radical interdisciplinarity, we mean not just psychologists, electronic engineers and computer scientists talking together and collaborating, for these groups fundamentally share a common idea of design. We mean psychologists, computer scientists, and electronics engineers talking to visual and performance artists, industrial designers, product designers and so on. A kind of crossfaculty collaboration that Buchanan refers to as a liberal arts of design [7]. But in order for such radical interdisciplinarity to work and in order to be able to engage meaningfully and productively across these radically interdisciplinary boundaries we need a much deeper critical understanding of what design thinking or design practice is both within the discipline of HCI (which is broad enough as it is) and within these other disciplines. We also need to explore ways in which the difficult job of dialogue across boundaries can be achieved.

2 Design-as-Engineering

One perspective on design that has held a central position in HCI at times is what we have termed the design-as-engineering perspective but which some authors have referred to as the conservative view of design [12]. In this account design is seen as going from a fixed problem statement (or requirements specification), to an abstract specification of the solution that is then refined down into an actual implemented solution through a sequence of well-prescribed steps. The design problem, which is seen as given when design begins, may be broken down into smaller parts in order to divide and conquer. This breakdown is followed by a synthesis stage in which solutions to problem parts are aggregated into an overall design solution. This approach is at the heart of most software engineering and formal approaches to system design. Within this approach the emphasis is on proceduralising as much of the design process as possible to ensure knowledge is independent of individual designers and hence the process is replicable. Fallman [12] describes it as the conservative account to emphasise the idea that system properties and behaviours specified first at the abstract level are conserved throughout the subsequent refinement steps. Fallman describes the approach thus:

"According to this account of design, the design process is supposed to progress gradually from the abstract (requirements specifications) to the concrete (resulting artifacts). Progress is achieved through following a sequence of well-described, discrete and rational and structured methodological steps. A good designer in this tradition is someone who is able to follow prescribed action. This tends to de-emphasise the role of the designer, striving towards a disembodied design process built on structured methods and externalised guidelines rather than on the skills and judgment of individual designers." p. 226.

Within HCI, the kinds of approaches to design that seem to fit this account very well are exemplified by methodologies such as MUSE [19] and approaches to usability engineering proposed by both Nielsen [22] and Whiteside et al [28]. Within the more formal software engineering world of HCI, the engineering account is exemplified by approaches to specification based on abstract modelling of the user and the system

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followed by refinement through to implementation, in which users goals are refined into task sequences which are then mapped to dialogues. Even some scenario-based design view of design [24]. The key features which unite these under the engineering approach are

- Representation of the user or use context as a fixed set of well defined goals, tasks, or needs
- Relatively abstract representations of typical users
- Adherence or orientation to a task or scenario procedural methodology
- An attempt to encapsulate usable design in terms of principles, guidelines or methods that can be re-produced by engineers who are not HCI specialists
- A tendency to see usability as a property of the interface
- An attempt to control the interaction with the user through design

The design-as-engineering approach to HCI can be highly successful. Particularly where the domain of application is well regulated, relatively closed and the user's role and goals in the system can be well defined and adequately captured in for example, a task analysis of tractable size. In these situations there are relatively uncontentious criteria as to what counts as an improved design [16]. But there are limits to this ap-proach and there are other disciplines which offer equally valuable perspectives on HCI. One new area of HCI research that offers challenges to the design-as-engineering approach, and illustrates the value of different perspectives is experience design.

3 The Challenge of Experience-Centred Design

Experience is becoming an increasingly important problem for HCI research and over the last two or three years much has been written about not only what 'user experience' is but also how to design for it. For some, the shift towards placing experience, 'felt-life', and technology at the centre of our theorizing and design practice has led to an exploration of quite radically interdisciplinary literature (E.g. [9, 13, 20]). As an example, our own approach takes its inspiration from the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey [11] and also the philosophy and literary theory of Mikhail Bakhtin [21]. Briefly our account can be characterised by three themes:

- 1. A holistic approach to experience wherein the intellectual, sensual and emotional stand as equal partners in experience
- 2. Continuous engagement and sense making wherein the self is the centre of experience, is already engaged in experience and brings to a situation a history of meanings and anticipated futures in order to complete the experience through acts of sense making
- 3. A relational or dialogical approach wherein self, object and setting are actively constructed as multiple centres of value with multiple perspectives and where an action, utterance or thing is designed and produced but can never be finalised since the experience of it is always completed in dialogue with those other centres of value.