'User Experience' Design
A new form of design practice takes shape

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ABSTRACT
This paper outlines my professional background and interests in the 'user-experience' field. I summarise my current relevant responsibilities related to my employment as a specialist in 'user experience' design and my SIGCHI activities. I also summarise some observations on the emergence of 'user experience' as a focus for the professional practice of interactive system design and observations on some directions for the future.

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Position paper

ACM Classification Keywords
User Experience, User Interface design, Interaction design, Usage centred design.

INTRODUCTION
'User experience', in the context of the professional practice of interactive system design, encompasses the notion that many aspects determine the type of experience that comes from using a device, product, system or service (all of which I will refer to as the 'design'). It also encompasses the notion that many aspects can be designed to generate positive results for the users of a design. This notion is rooted in, and extends, a long tradition of usage focused design in the areas of Ergonomics/Human Factors, Usability Engineering, Human Computer Interaction, Interaction Design. 'User experience' design is an understandable extension of these traditions and brings a more holistic perspective to how people need to be considered in relation to the ways we use technologies. In recent years a more diverse array of human behavioural specialists such as anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, have also begun to play a significant part in developing the field.

Interest in the field is being fuelled by the rapid and unprecedented growth in the use of interactive systems that employ computational technologies. The use of such systems is becoming embedded in the way we live our lives in so many diverse ways.

Interest in 'user experience' is also being driven by the aggressive way in which businesses worldwide are seeking commercially viable applications including, among many examples, IT at work, WWW, mobile telecommunications, audio-video entertainment, digital imaging, etc. And many corporations are also looking for new 'competitive edges', and for new ways to satisfy consumers and customers. Whilst the origins of these drivers are the wealthy western and eastern advanced industrialized societies, we also see the rapid emergence of other major markets, most notably India and China.

PROBLEM?
Why is 'user experience' such a 'problem'?

The way we traditionally design as professionals and as societies is challenged by the combination of 1) the diverse ways we are making use of computational technologies, and 2) the importance of adapting the technologies to the way we behave as individuals and as social beings in our various contexts. These developments are stimulating new perspectives on design and research that are emerging from many overlapping interests in the fields of marketing, technology research and development, design practice, the human sciences, and the social sciences.

These trends are creating significant challenges for the various professional societies that currently represent significant parts of the communities interested in 'user experience'. Whilst the traditional fields of interest remain relevant, interest in 'user experience' is throwing up new foci of attention that are not readily covered by existing professional societies. The emergence of 'user experience' has parallels with the emergence of HCI as a specific field in the 1970s' and 80s'.

The emergence of 'user experience' challenges the current professional societies to examine the relevance and scope of their 'domain of concerns and interests'. The development of recent conferences on the subject as well as this Development Consortium bear witness to the view that the

current professional societies do not offer the type of representation desired by many professionals. Therefore it is timely that the topic of 'user experience' and how it is professionally represented needs to be addressed.

SOLUTION?

We need to take a medium to long term view of the issue. 'User experience' is not a 'passing phase'.

The Development Consortium can make a valuable contribution to helping us understand the nature and scope of 'user experience' research and design. In short help us define the 'market'. The main issues to consider include:

- what is the scope of the 'field' and the nature of the need?

- who constitute the 'user experience' research and design community?

- what type of professional backgrounds are most closely associated with 'user experience' research and design, and what are they generally employed to do?

- what are the differentiating characteristics of the community compared with comparable professional communities?

- what type of events; conferences, professional meetings, workshops do 'user experience people' want to participate in?

One workshop will not provide all the answers. Many of the answers will only become apparent as the field evolves and 'finds its' feet'. But the Development Consortium can make a valuable contribution by generating a shared understanding of the field as we see it today. This will enable the various professional societies to evaluate their own positions and to address the extent to which they should (or should not) cater for 'user experience' interests currently and in the future. Correspondingly the output of the workshop should also help clarify whether there is a need for an additional professional society, and what form such a society might take.

In the shorter term I anticipate many opportunities for inter-society cooperation will emerge from the discussion, and, not least, opportunities to develop a mutually beneficial programme of conferences.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND, EXPERIENCE AND INTERESTS

Some 30 years ago I began my career in Ergonomics (= Human Factors), first working in applied research and then shifting focus to the application of usability engineering principles to the design of consumer products and systems. I worked with designers of various persuasions including Software, Engineering, Industrial, Product, Interior, and Graphics. Since 1986 I have worked for Philips Electronics, initially as manager of the Human Factors Group in Philips Design where, together with various colleagues, we pioneered the development of interaction design and usability engineering in Philips. Currently I work in our Corporate Applied Technologies Laboratory, developing a Usage Centred approach to our advanced software development projects. Philips is one of several examples of corporations that are taking up 'user experience' (or similar themes) as a critical commercial issue for the coming years.

I am also an active ACM SIGCHI volunteer. Currently I am the SIGCHI Adjunct Chair for 'Specialised Conferences' (all the SIGCHI conferences other than CHI) and a member of the SIGCHI EC. Most of these conferences involve cooperation with related societies in one form or another. I have also been active in various SIGCHI conferences including the following. I was Co-chair of Design Briefings for CHI 1997. I co-chaired DIS 97. I was also a member of the DIS 2000 organising committee, which involved contributing to the development of the 'design case study' format. The format aimed at developing a way of documenting practitioner work. As a result I also contributed to the 'design case study' format used for DUX 2003. I have been, and remain, a strong advocate of developing effective practitioner involvement in SIGCHI.