► Richard Anderson

► Jon Kolko

Interactions: Experiences, People, Technology

Our world is at the point of major change, fueled by the increasing capabilities of technology, the imminent entry of enormous powerhouse countries into the global economy, and the potential for catastrophic environmental and cultural flux on both a local and global level. The opportunities are tremendous, yet the future is also murky in its uncertainty: As we begin to design products, services, and systems for this dynamic future, the speed, complexity, and impact of our actions grow to an unprecedented height and the feeling of anxiety begins to build.

This point of precipice is one that can be bested, but it requires a dramatic shift in the way we understand and think about our lives and jobs. Any individual focus on product, research, or technology will be seen as a narrow and limited view. Our intellectual emphasis and our creative energies must now resonate on a cultural level, and on an emotional level, and on a responsible level. Words like “culture” and “emotion” and “responsibility” are scary, as they are subjective and ethereal. But there is an associated word that is less scary, one that readers of this magazine understand, value, and share. This was the word that John Rheinfank, Bill Hefley, and Brad Myers chose when they began this magazine in 1994, and it speaks to the philosophical “solution” to the challenges we face in the coming years.

We see a world rich with culture, emotion, and human connections. The human-built world can afford a sense of beauty, sublimity, and resonance, and through our advancements in technology can come advances in society. At the center of these advances are interactions—conversations, connections, collaborations, and relationships—within and across multiple disciplines, with and without technology.

We are proud to take editorship of *interactions* at this pinnacle moment in human history. Our goals for our three-year tenure are simple and straightforward:

1. To increase the relevance of this magazine to practitioners focused on interactions.
2. To ensure that the contents of the magazine are deep, diverse, and of global relevance.
3. To place an emphasis on the people, technology,

and experiences that merge in contemporary culture to create meaningful, positive interactions.

To achieve these goals, we’ve assembled a wonderful team of designers, social scientists, engineers, professionals, and academics who are engaged in the creation and development of appropriate and innovative products, systems, services, and experiences. Additionally, we’ve tapped into the historic expertise of a number of leaders in our industry. We’ve also developed, and will continue to extend, the *interactions* website in order to support the work in the print magazine and to allow for a more robust conversation between our readers and ourselves.

We encourage you to visit <http://interactions.acm.org> and begin to respond to some of the copy in this issue; both online and in print, you will find a number of themes that indicate some of the challenges facing interactions practitioners in the near future, with the reflections and thoughts of both special guests as well as regular contributors.

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Elizabeth Churchill has spent her extremely active career in industry, academia, and research and has a particularly strong intellectual approach to understanding the problems facing practitioners as they strive to develop interactive products. Her examination of the relevance of language in design hints at a new liberal underpinning to the work of technologists. This is reinforced by Alex Wright’s discussion of the use of oral culture, as he looks at the rise of social networking colloquialisms in our digital communities. Aza Raskin is also exploring the semantics of language, and he reflects in this issue on some of the distinctions between the landmark work of his father, Jef Raskin, and his own work on linguistic command line interfaces.

Gabe White has provided a succinct case study of his work with Motorola in developing telephone interfaces for developing nations. Gary Marsden’s forum continues to explore the larger theme, as he examines the challenges facing businesses that intend to offer products and services to developing nations. Eli Blevis sets the framework for an ongoing contribution to the magazine on sustainable design, and Allison Druin begins to examine whether the

appropriateness of design is different for those either early or late in life.

The enterprises that drive these social, political, and culturally relevant products require a new leadership and a new understanding of user-experience practitioners. Secil Watson shares her pragmatic experience in building a customer-experience culture at Wells Fargo; Paul Burke shares philosophical insights into his time spent developing a forward-thinking design consultancy; Stefana Broadbent shares the process—and some key findings—of insight generation for which she has been responsible over the past three years at Swisscom; Dennis Wixon describes some of what can be done to increase the impact of insight generation on design; and Terry Winograd describes the origins of a new program for students of business and engineering management at Northwestern University to enable them to benefit more from design and designers in the workplace.

Steve Portigal has keen insights into the irony and humor present in our culture and has spent his career researching and understanding the peculiarities of human behavior. His work in this issue calls out the potential absurdity of one of our primary design tools and raises a larger question regarding the methods and processes we use on a daily basis.

Hugh Dubberly's cover story investigates the process of innovation used by companies striving to cash in on the developing global marketplace. He has worked to develop a model of innovation and presents both the outcome of that work as well as the process of investigation. His visually rich material dramatically alters the way we think about innovative product development, at the same time hinting at a visual method of problem solving and concept exploration that can serve as a method of design synthesis in understanding and resolving other design problems.

Don Norman continues as chief *interactions* curmudgeon, reminding us that innovation is not always wanted, while Peter Froelich and colleagues illustrate an area of innovation oft subjected to such criticism. Glenn Kowack visits Jonathan Grudin's Timelines forum with an insightful early history of one of the

most influential innovations of our lifetime.

Fred Sampson returns to *interactions* in a new role, overseeing what we intend to be a much broader and more purposeful collection of reviews and previews. Fred's review of Alex Wright's *Glut* richly extends the author's own contribution to this issue.

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We hope you enjoy our first issue of *interactions*, and we hope you share our vision for the future of our profession and industry. We are humbled by the scope of the challenges facing our many disciplines in the years to come, but these challenges are equally rich with potential and excitement. As we investigate the work, methods, and reflections of our colleagues, we hope you will join us in forging deep human connections, in developing rich dialogue, and in building bridges between seemingly disparate topics: We hope you will join us in developing *interactions*.

—Richard Anderson and Jon Kolko
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Richard Anderson is a "user experience" practice, management, and organizational strategy consultant with international management, cross-organizational development, and more than 20 years of experience. He started and directed the Experience Center at Viant, as well as the user research and experience strategy discipline at Studio Archetype and Sapient. Via various consulting, advisory, and employment roles, and his workshops, courses, conference programs, and more, he has helped move "user/customer experience" into a position of greater influence in numerous companies. At CHI 2007, Richard received SIGCHI's Lifetime Service Award for extensively facilitating and spreading the development of the field via his leadership contributions to BayCHI and to other chapters of SIGCHI around the world.

Jon Kolko is a senior design analyst at frog design. He has worked extensively in the professional world of interaction design, dealing with complicated technological constraints in order to best solve the problems of Fortune 500 clients. His expertise extends into supply chain management, demand planning, and customer-relationship management for clients such as Bristol-Myers Squibb, Ford, IBM, Palm and other leaders of the Global 2000. The underlying theme that unites his various projects concerns the creation of solutions that are useful, usable, and desirable. Prior to working at frog, Jon was a professor of interaction and industrial design at the Savannah College of Art and Design, where he was instrumental in shaping the interaction and industrial design programs. He is the author of the text *Thoughts on Interaction Design*.

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