

It's time to put the user back into system design

Understanding your users. That is the key to designing successful systems according to a new book, *Foundations for Designing User-Centered Systems*. It describes the basic physiological, psychological and social factors that underpin *why* users do what they do. More than that, it explains *how* these factors can affect system design.

Foundations for DUCS (for short) is the culmination of almost 90 years combined experience of its co-authors: Prof. Frank Ritter (College of Information Sciences and Technology, Penn State), Dr Gordon Baxter (Systems Engineering Group, School of Computer Science, University of St Andrews) and Dr Elizabeth Churchill (Director of HCI at eBay Research Labs). Between them, they have designed, developed and conducted research into interactive systems in domains as diverse as aviation, consumer Internet, health care, eCommerce, industrial process control, and enterprise systems.

Building on the authors' interdisciplinary backgrounds in computing science and the psychological sciences (cognitive science, psychology and human factors), *Foundations for DUCS* presents the fundamental knowledge that will help readers understand their users' capabilities and limitations, the tasks those users will perform, and the context in which they perform those tasks. By explicitly considering how to apply this knowledge to system design, readers will be able to readily comprehend the practical implications of what they have learnt. Applying the lessons from *Foundations for DUCS* will help readers to design interactive systems that are more usable, more useful, and more effective.

Springer will be launching *Foundations for DUCS* at the end of April in Toronto at CHI, the pre-eminent conference in Human-Computer Interaction. Dr Baxter said: "It was a real challenge to produce a practical resource that would be useful to students of human factors/HCI *and* software engineering, as well as appealing to both academics *and* practitioners. The testimonials we've received from leading lights in all areas of our target audience suggest that we've met that challenge, with Ian Sommerville (author of *Software Engineering*) recommending it 'to *all* engineers', highly respected Human Factors expert Peter Hancock saying that 'Even if only a proportion of designers and users read this book we will be so much better off.' and IBM Distinguished Fellow and Chief Architect, Richard Hopkins noting that the book 'has given me access to a variety of new techniques and an extended vocabulary that I look forward to introducing my design teams to.'"

Foundations for DUCS is available now via SpringerLink:

<http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-1-4471-5134-0>. The print version is due for publication on 30th April, 2014 by Springer.

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