Message from the Chair

It’s my pleasure to begin my first Message from the Chair section with the announcement of the newly created EDTG list-serv (hfes-edtg@hfes.org). I hope the list-serv will be another tool for the TG to renew interest in environmental design issues in and outside of HFES. If you know of any upcoming conferences, workshops, exhibits, tv shows, etc... that may be of interest to our members, please feel free to send this information to the list-serv.

Other updates include adding past newsletters to our TG website www.humanics-es.com/ed-tg.htm. My second order of business includes re-vamping our website to coincide with the upcoming redesign of the HFES site. We are looking for one or two members to help with this process and possibly become the next TG webmaster. Please contact me if you wish to volunteer.

The TG had 139 members as of March 15, 2005 including our newest officers: Program Chair ConneMara Bazley; Program Chair-elect - Nancy Stone; Newsletter editor- Jay Brand; Webmaster - Rani Lueder. Thanks to everyone who participated in the election process. We

Employing User-Centered Design in Educational Environments

Nancy J. Stone

When designing educational environments, we often consider how best to design the classroom; however, it is also important to consider the spaces used by students and faculty for eating or reading, or the common spaces used when waiting for classes. If students can become involved in the development of these common spaces, we can thus acquire input from the users. In addition, it may also be possible to include students in the design process. Nearly four years ago when I was teaching my undergraduate Human Factors course, the university was building a new science building that would house Psychology. Fortunately, my students were able to design the common spaces and present their results to the architects and other faculty whose departments would also be in the new building. Not only was this a great experience for the students to design a new space, but they also contributed invaluable input as users. In turn, some of these students experienced the results of their input when we occupied the new building.

To complete this project, rather than merely seeking the students’ ideas, the architectural designers gave my students the blueprints to all the common spaces in the new science building. Designing these common spaces became part of the students’ final project. This experience benefited from the fact that throughout the semester, the students had worked in various teams to complete a number of assignments, and this process allowed me to place students in groups with compatible members for this special design project. Al-

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User-centered design, cont.

I also solicited input from the students regarding with whom they would or would not work best. This method tends to increase the level of teamwork. The fact that the students’ input could potentially impact the design within a new building which they might use also seemed to motivate them.

Finally, the students presented their final presentations to the architects and other faculty impacted by the new science building; this also seemed to motivate them to be well prepared. Although these students may have experienced more stress due to the potential audience for their final presentations than those in previous years, they presented thorough, well-prepared designs.

We have been in the new science building about two years. As I walk through the various floors of the building, I am pleased by the impact the students had on the final design. In particular, the students suggested seating outside the classrooms, a design suggestion used by other departments as well. This, of course, reduces the number of students sitting on the floor between classes—a common sight in another building. Also implemented was the students’ recommendation to include a map and a campus phone on each floor in an easily accessible location. These are just a few of the students’ suggestions that were implemented and that I see on a daily basis.

The Architecture of Hospitals, April 13-14-15 2005, University Medical Center Groningen, Hanzeplein 1, Groningen, the Netherlands
www.thearchitectureofhospitals.org

The OPWG’s (Open Plan Working Group) Corporate Consortium XII, April 21, with the TFM Show; Chicago, IL, USA, April 20-22. The OPWG is a research group concerned with improving the open-office concept through building performance & occupancy quality research. NBBJ’s Telenor project in Norway; Francis Duffy of DEGW; and Adrian Leaman of Usable Buildings Trust, UK, will be featured. Contact Sherry Role, sherry@orfieldlabs.com, 612.721.2455


4th World Congress on Design and Health (WCDH 2005), July 6 –10 2005 Frankfurt, Germany, www.designandhealth.com/conf/8395@WCDH%20LO.pdf

Organizational Design and Management Symposium, June 22—25, 2005, Maui, HI. odam2005@cqpi.engr.wisc.edu, http://cqpi2.engr.wisc.edu/odam2005/


The following graphs are based on a convenience sample of 416 “young” and 407 “old” employees from approximately 10 corporations in the United States, including both public and private firms. Mean ages were 29.5 and 47.4, respectively. The “youngest” and “oldest” quarter of employees included 241 and 238 participants, with mean ages of 26.3 and 51.6, respectively.

Together, these data argue against the widely held notion that—compared to their older counterparts—younger employees need and want more open work environments. Instead, they suggest that both younger and older workers rate privacy levels in various types of office almost identically, and when intentionally younger and older groups are compared, this result does not change; both older and younger workers still prefer more enclosed offices compared to more open alternatives. (We will make ever more provocative claims until you respond.)
Press Release

To test the claim that designing environments according to the seven Principles of Universal Design makes them more usable for everyone, a multi-year "Buildings in Use" research project conducted three case studies.

These studies of an office building in Manhattan, a series of fast food restaurants in upstate New York, and public streetscape and hotel settings in Las Vegas examined people's experiences with universal, accessible, and inaccessible design. The data from these case studies were broadly supportive of the claimed benefit of universal design. They were also encouraging for the continued development of universal design as a design philosophy.

The Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDEA Center) currently has a free two-disc DVD boxed set on the "Buildings in Use" research project available upon request and is anticipating an online version summarizing the project. There are also numerous other videos, reports, and articles on the work of the IDEA Center - all of which can be found at www.ap.buffalo.edu/idea/.

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Message from the Chair, cont. from page 1

are still seeking one or two additional Newsletter Editors. Contact Jay Brand (jay.brand@haworth.com) for more information.

The TG organized two sessions during the HFES 48th Annual Meeting. One session was on Universal Design and was co-sponsored by the Product Design TG. See page 4 for a follow-up to one of the presentations on Universal Design. Of course, I also encourage you to look-up all the published papers in the 2004 proceedings.

I'm looking forward to serving as TG chair. Please feel free to contact me With suggestions on how the TG can better serve its members.”

—Michele Marut michele.marut@biw.com

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