

What We Do and Who We Are

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Greetings from the SIGCHI Executive Council

The SIGCHI Executive Committee is excited to see the growth of the burgeoning HCI community in Africa. We celebrate your vision and commitment to building the profession of HCI in Africa and we congratulate you on your excellent organization of this first all-Africa HCI conference, AfriCHI. We look forward to watching as it blossoms thanks to your work and leadership and we hope to work together with you going forward.

It is very important to know that AfriCHI and the growth of HCI in Africa are important to SIGCHI. The Executive Committee sends these greetings and encouragement.



You're the future!

The creativity and energy Africa and Africans bring is incredible and African values are exactly what the world needs right now - and HCI can and should be part of the mix, showing the rest of the world what can (and should) be.

I hope that this Keynote can, in small part, support you as you chart the course of HCI in this new world.



**Thank you,
Gary**



One of my life goals is to get people in the Global North to recognize the contributions of folks in Africa (and Spanish-speaking Latin America) so that they take their rightful place in SIGCHI. Gary and I discussed having CHI in Africa as early as 2003 - and AfriCHI planning was begun at INTERACT 2013 where Gary played a large role. AfriCHI is, quite literally, a dream come true. I am sure that he is smiling down from Heaven on this amazing event. Thanks, Gary - for all you did and for your legacy.



- Lessons I've learned about what we do
- Thoughts I have about who we are
- Stories from the interstices

What I will be talking about today



in·ter·stices*

in 'tərstis/

noun

plural noun: **interstices**

1 an intervening spaces, especially a very small ones."sunshine filtered through the interstices of the arching trees"

"HCI/UX people sit in the interstices between designers and users"

* My favorite word



What We Do

- We are translators
- We learn from everything, everywhere
- We do not use black and white thinking
- We trust the human-centered design process
- We definitely have fun!



Who We Are

- Courage
- Curiosity
- Integrity
- Flexibility
- Empathy

There are many more attributes that define HCI people, of course - but these are 5 of the most important and the ones I'm going to talk about today



trans·late

trans 'lāt, tranz 'lāt/

verb

verb: **translate**; 3rd person present

- express the sense of (words or text) in another language.
"the German original has been **translated into** English"
"HCI people translate between Users and Designers"
- expressed or be capable of being expressed in another language.
"shiatsu literally translates as "finger pressure.""
"UX translates as 'user centered'"
- convert or be converted into (another form or medium). "few of Shakespeare's other works have been translated into ballets"
"User needs are translated into designs through HCD"





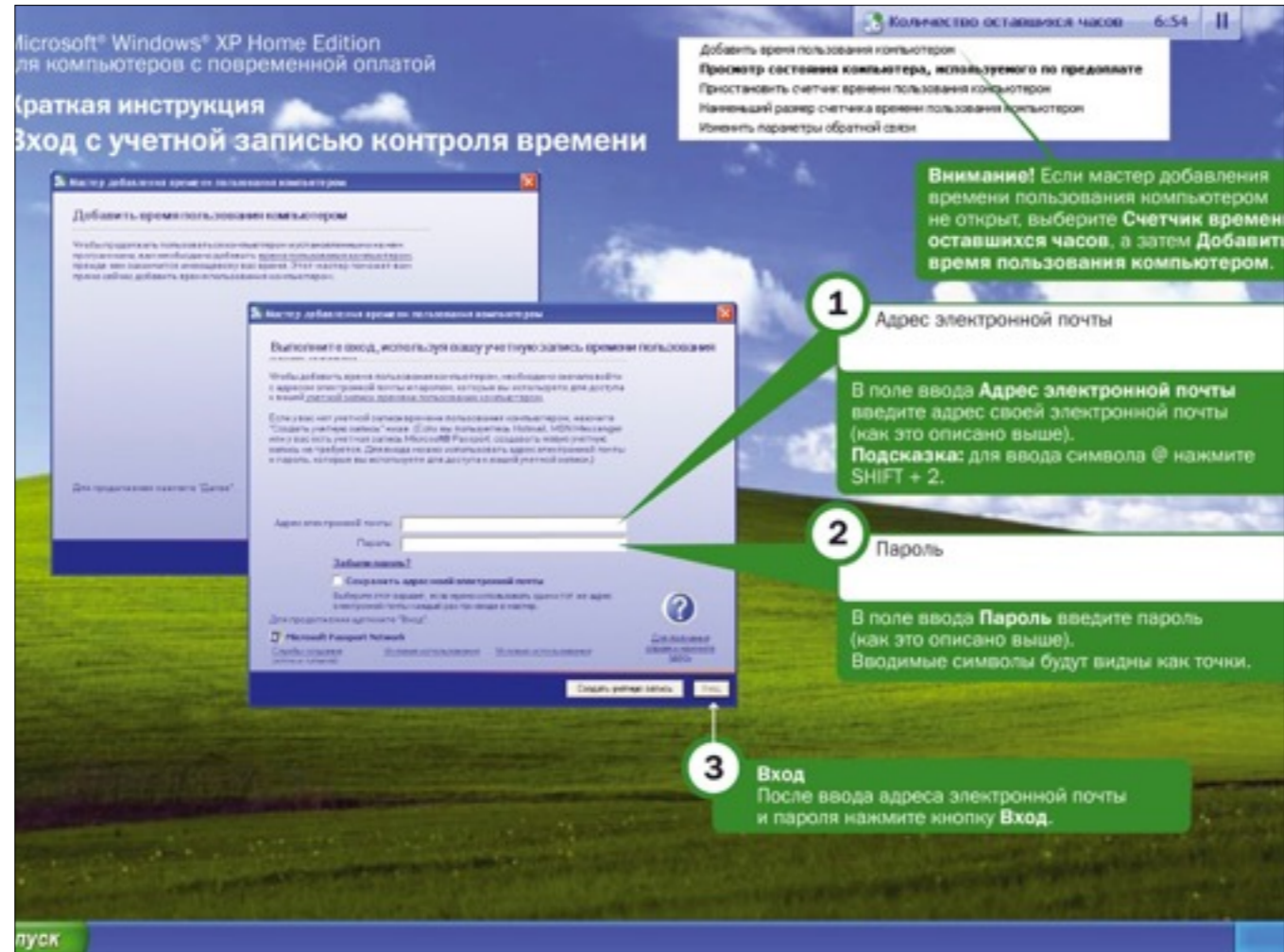
1. Monitors the customer's account status
2. Keeps the customer up-to-date on account
3. Limits the customer's



FlexGo OOBEx in Samara, Russia

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Translating with COURAGE: (Samara, Russia) FlexGo was Microsoft's attempt to help customers in lean economies to own a computer. The pay-as-you-go computing model enabled by Microsoft's FlexGo technology allowed customers to have a fully featured PC at home by paying only for the time as they use it through the purchase of prepaid activation cards or tokens. (Rent-to-Own analogy for furniture) Our job: An Out-Of-Box-Experience (OOBE) assessment in Samara, Russia. They thought it was just a quick validation.



BUT it turned out to be far more challenging than expected and led to important recommendations that called for Courage on my part

The participant set up hardware correctly and all was fine - until he turned the computer on

The End User Licensing Agreement (EULA) very confusing because the software used was, for the most part, not legal and therefore, didn't have a EULA (tech friend said to just accept it)

The same was true for legal Windows - it was unheard of, so he was unfamiliar with Activating Windows w/key

This required using an English keyboard (rather than Cyrillic one everyone had) and he didn't know how to switch

Setting up internet, setting up accounts in Russia Online and it went on and on - even technical people with in room helping (eventually it was just too difficult to watch)

—> ~4 hrs and never actually installed it.

The 7 Technical people in the room included:

technical friend (skilled in networking)

2 software engineers who worked on the project

UX Designer

me

facilitator

Translator



Translating between users and product managers requires **Courage**

“... It is the team’s consensus that the **seriousness of all of these issues together could have disastrous impacts** not only on Flex users, but also on Microsoft’s image within the Russian market.”

General Manager of Business Unit (shouting): “#*&\$^@!#%!”

Results: THEY NEVER SUCCEEDED which caused alarms to go off since FlexGo was already on sale in Russia.

It took COURAGE when the General Manager (top of the entire business unit) called and angrily demanded to know what I was talking about and how it couldn’t be true because they had shown the idea to lots of people and they loved it. (Classic, eh?)

I calmly explained, step by step, that had happened and he slowly calmed down. When he finally asked me what they should do, I had to tell him to pull the product in Russia until it could be redesigned (AND TESTED) They did.



We Learn from the World

- Global Study of Education
- Using Lead User Research methods
- **Global Lead User Exploration**
- Curiosity embodied

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In Lead User Research, a method described by Erick Von Hippel - you find and study earlier-than-early adopters

For this project, we targeted:

Schools

Educators (all levels)

Administrators to a lesser degree

All over the world, for 1-2 day long visits

It was challenging to use Lead User Research methods - but extremely useful and worth the time to perfect them.

This process requires that the researcher be Curious.



One example of the places we visited was the project: Mobile and Immersive Learning for Literacy in Emerging Economies, that was done in India - e.g., here. It was a language learning project (Matthew Kam's dissertation) at rural school in southern India outside Mysore. Matt and his team developed immersive games (based on ethnographic study of school-yard games) that ran on Motorola Razr phones to help the kids learn English. It really worked as witness the kids asking ME questions, such as "What color is that cow?"



Curiosity about the method which itself required curiosity to implement

We visited schools in the USA, India, South Africa, Australia, UK, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and China.



We Learn from the World

- Acknowledge your ignorance, examine your biases, assumptions and basic world view
- Learn from all your own and others' experiences
- Everything can be inspiring - even things that are technological (e.g., patterns in Kente cloth, etc.)
- Share your story so the world can learn from you (and then listen to the world's response)
- Collaborate with allies who can help you grow (and then help mentor others)



NO Black & White Thinking

- Black & White Thinking = closed, yes/no, narrow interpretations
- Behavior is just too complex and requires nuanced thinking to understand it
- You still need to be concise and clear - but still represent the complexity of the data
- **Integrity** comes when you challenge this type of thinking - in yourself and others



Research on use of mobiles for money transfer, safety in townships in South Africa, using ethical research practices - e.g., I worked collaboratively with local team, involved Gary Marsden as an advisor, and shared scrubbed data with him as possible, used informed consent of participants and consciously managed the discussions to demonstrate my role was to listen, not to judge. We did visits in Khayelitsha (Xhosa settlement) and Mitchell's Plain (Coloured settlement.)



My role was to challenge black-and-white thinking and to keep the conversations from negative personal judgements...



as well as from fairly global negative reactions to the environment



or laughing at people



This was not an issue in the rural visits because the team member who attended was far more sensitive and saw the richness of our observations so black-and-white thinking was not an issue there.

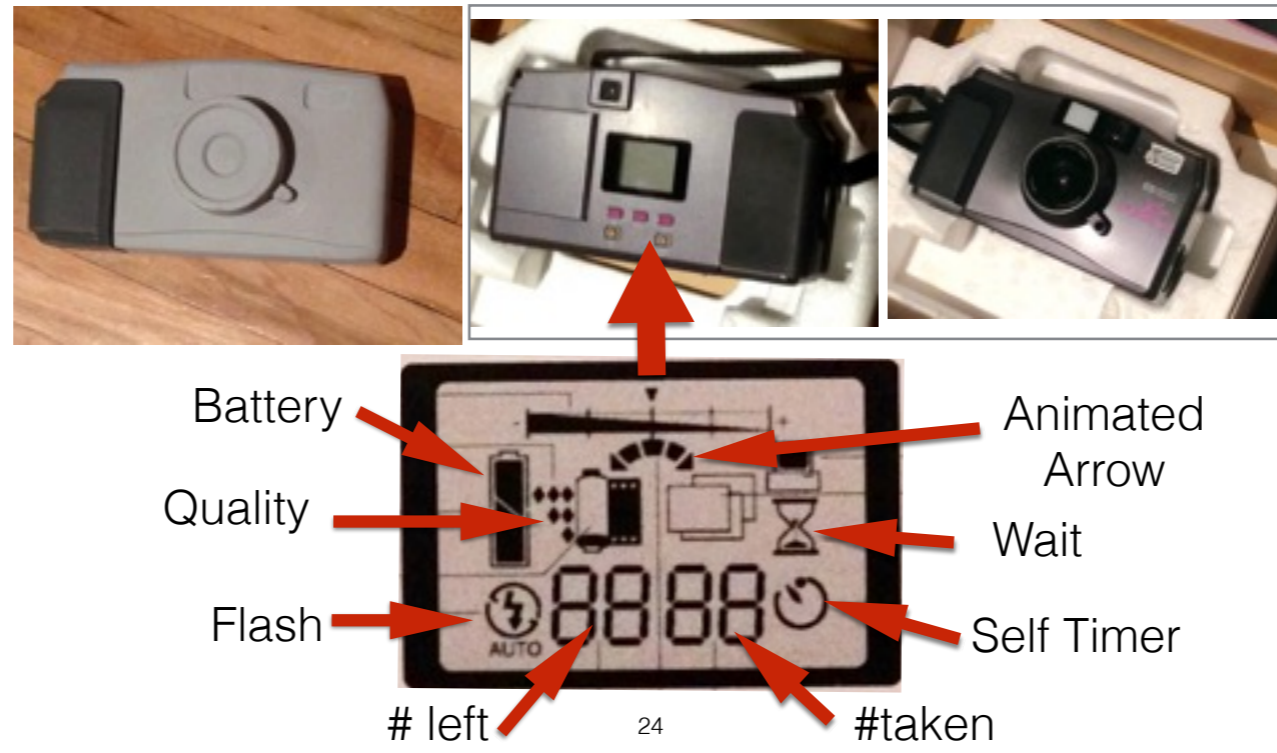
It took integrity to keep the observations of the team useful and not pejorative (especially when there was pushback) and to help them see the nuance rather than engaging in black-and-white thinking.



We Trust the HCD Process

- HP's first Digital camera - **1996**
- “Point and Shoot” film camera was mental model
- Could only use one word = Auto
- Design required in under 1 month
- To do the design so quickly, using relatively unknown paper prototyping techniques required **flexibility**.

Trust the HCD Process



Had to cue the user to the fact that this camera could erase and that it could change the resolution of photos yet to be taken.

We did 80 turns of the design in under a month using paper prototypes (Post-Its) of the interaction of the display.

Ultimately, this design emerged (All segments of the LEDs are shown here but only the actual numbers would show here)

The interaction was as follows:

- When taking a photo, arrow animates from left to right as long as “wait” flashes. The number remaining (“in the film can”) decreases by one, while the number taken increases by one.
- When deleting a photo, arrow animates from right to left as long as “wait” flashes. The number remaining increments by one; the number taken decreases by one.
- When changing quality level, the number remaining decreases to reflect the number of pixels pictures will take at that quality level, but the number taken stays the same.



We Have Fun!

- Unexpected
- Delightful
- Sensory
- Humorous

And with a pedagogical point!

And we're empathetic to our colleagues, classes, and peers.



Done with a real container of jelly beans of many colors

Nostalgics

Seek tastes evoking childhood memories

Sensation Seekers

Seek unusual, stimulating tastes

Sophisticates

Seek adult flavors

Colorfuls

Attracted to strong vibrant color rather than taste

Traditionalists

Attracted to simple fruit flavors

















Esthetes

Strongly attracted to interesting color and appearance

Exotics

Seek tastes that evoke other parts of the world

These were the 'behavioral segments' that had been identified previously.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Nostalgics | Grapefruit | Sizzling Cinnamon | Tutti Frutti | Margarita |
| Sensation Seekers |  |  |  |  |
| Sophisticates | Caramel Corn | Peach | Lemon | Cantaloupe |
| Colorfuls |  |  |  |  |
| Traditionalists | Cherry | Kiwi | Pina Colada | Peanut Butter |
| Esthetes |  |  |  |  |
| Exotics | Mango | Cappuccino | Licorice | Coconut |
| |  |  |  |  |

Our job was to map specific jelly bean flavors to segments. Rapidly becomes clear that there is not a fixed one-to-one relationship. Plus, the segments are regionally biased - e.g., Mango flavor is “Exotic” in Minneapolis but “Traditional” or “Nostalgic” in Nairobi



We use games to give students a chance to observe. E.g., here, one team plays UnoStack, while the other observes.

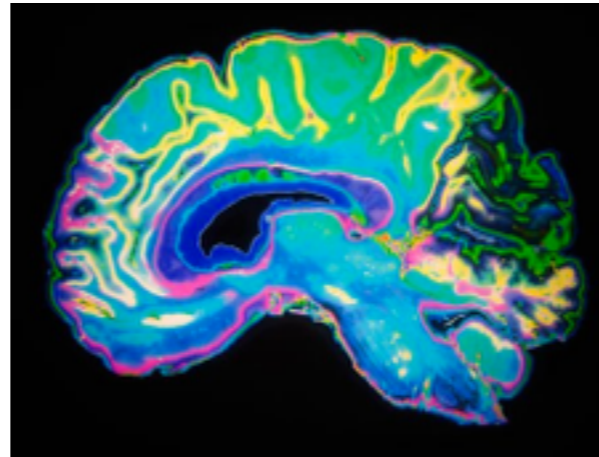


But it's also fun for US! (and our teams)

These are all taken from the study of MILLEE in the school in India. We had a lot of fun together.



Fun!



Lights up your brain (literally!)

Functional MRIs show widespread activation with fun activities



Now, let's go up a level

Our hearts are what make the real difference - they enfold both what we do and who we are - and it is our hearts which we must trust (and nurture) the most



In the African context, we need to take these ideas and make them our own as they fit HERE:

- In some cases, this will be “reaching back to the past to bring it into the future” like the Sankofa symbolizes
- In some cases, this will mean modifying something - maybe a course? maybe a process? maybe a tool? - so that it fits into the African context
- In some cases, it will mean inventing something altogether - and there are SO many wonderful examples of this we’ve heard about and will hear about at this conference

It’s important that we embrace our African roots and let our heart inform us as we find that next dream, and that next step to reach it.



- Lessons I've learned about what we do
- Thoughts I have about who we are
- Stories from the interstices

So I have covered this today



Audience participation summary....

But we're going to do a participatory summary
See



This is the Call and **response!**

I say: *If the user can't use it,*
You say: *then it doesn't work at all!*

I say: *If the user can't use it,*
You say: *then it doesn't work at all!*



From the USA where I live today
Comes another visit from the Other Dr. Dray.
Last time I rapped 'twas 'bout ethnography
but this time is different as you shall soon
see

To tell you again 'bout my favorite lessons
Things I have learned about our profession
Things learned from life and not conference sessions
This rap's a wrap up of this expression:

*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*



You and me, we translate
That's lesson number one
'Tween many different people
and it's often lots of fun
But it also takes quite a lot of skill
At least if we're going to translate well.
It takes quite a lot of intelligence BUT
Not just the head kind, but both head and gut.
So we need to be sure to take care and help each other
'coz we all need support and it's really not a bother
(Some of these rhymes may sound a tad cheesy
but please forgive me, this rappin' it ain't easy)

*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*



We must learn from the world
That's lesson number two
Which means that you can learn from me
And I can learn from you
And too from places far away
Tho' sometimes that is harder
But if we learn from everything
It's bound to make us smarter.

*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*



Number three is 'bout our thinking.
Black and white will just not do.
For the world is more complex and more nuanced
and so you must find ways to make things clear
certainly that is true.
But oversimplifying? That we must not do.
To take complexity and tame it and to make it understood
Is a skill that's not the same as simply stating that it's good.
For, though pundits may not see it, when they oversimplify
Our profession is diminished In their audiences' eyes
Which can make it that much harder
To make traction where they've been
So I cannot state it stronger:
this kind of thinking is a sin!

*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*



And now for the next: In the process we must trust
For with people at the center and our teams onboard we must stay focused on the process
For we know that when we're through
Our product will be better because that is what we do.

*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*



Our final lesson's easy: For when all is said and done
We work and learn much better when we are having fun
This goes as much for us as it does for our teams
And our students and all others, even bosses and deans.
Indeed, this rap's an expression of this thought
For though some think a woman of my years should not be caught
A' rappin' to an audience of younger folks, it's true
This rap's been a lot of fun for me,
And I hope for you.

*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*



Now to master these 5 lessons so that they're your very own
Takes a person who is clear about the values that they own.
Our profession makes a difference, 'coz of who we are right now
Showing courage, curiosity, integrity (and how!)
We can flex, we're empathetic, and our work inspires us
to higher heights and deeper thoughts and a perspective we can trust!
But the things that are most crucial are our hearts so deep and full
Here in Africa, you know this - you can demonstrate for all!

*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*



I hope you will take these lessons all to heart
And put them into practice so that you can play your part
So I leave with one last thought I hope will help you to recall:
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*
*If the user can't use it,
then it doesn't work at all!*



Thank you for your attention
(and for all you do and all you are!)

Now let's show
the world!

