

Language, Poetry and Interaction Design

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Overview

:: Examining Poetry
:: Thinking About Language
:: Understanding Interaction Design

:: Poetic Interaction Design

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'This music crept by me upon the waters'
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
O City city, I can sometimes hear
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street
The pleasant whining of a mandoline
And a clatter and a chatter from within
Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls
Of Magnus Martyr hold
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

The Waste Land. T. S. Eliot. 1922.

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I heard some music on Queen Victoria Street.

Sometimes, I can hear noises

And other stuff

near this bar on Thames Street.

The bar is really cool.

The Waste Land, Abridged. J. Kolko. 2006.

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What of Poetry?

Poetry is about sensing, seeing, and feeling.

'This music crept by me upon the waters'
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Perhaps Usable, Useful and Desirable is Not Enough.

A marriage is not usable.
Art is rarely useful.
Sadness is not desirable.

**Life is not usable, useful or desirable.
Life is poetic.**

What if our creations resonated poetic, too?

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A Poetic Interaction

A product that affords poetic interaction generally has three traits:

- :: It has a high degree of visual refinement
- :: It is honest
- :: It demands mindfulness

*(don't forget the warning:
Highly Subjective Material Ahead!)*

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1 | A High Degree of Visual Refinement



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1 | A High Degree of Visual Refinement



1 | A High Degree of Visual Refinement

- :: A sense of follow-through: attention to detail.
- :: Respect given to material, form, color, texture, placement, size, weight, composition

Consider your surroundings. Do they exhibit a high degree of visual refinement?

(look closer)

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1 | A High Degree of Visual Refinement

Why aren't there more products that exhibit a high degree of visual refinement?

- :: lack of "seeing"
- :: cost

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1 | A High Degree of Visual Refinement

:: lack of "seeing"


Can you tell which line of text will offend a graphic designer?

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1 | A High Degree of Visual Refinement

:: lack of "seeing"

Can you tell which line of text will offend a graphic designer?



:: Developed around 1989 by Birmy
:: Licensed to Microsoft, and became the default font from Windows 3.1 and up



:: Developed in the 1950s by Haas Foundry
:: Iconographic of Swiss design in the 60s

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1 | A High Degree of Visual Refinement

:: cost

"Companies like Dell balk at the notion of paying **even a cent more per unit** for a premium surface treatment - even if that coating or treatment will double the life of the product. Companies like Apple and Motorola reject the commodity-driven market and pass the extra cost of these coatings on to their customers, who gladly pay the extra cost."

Justin Petro
Director of User Experience, Design Edge

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2 | Honesty


honesty in a culturally relative, rather than axiomatic, sense

- :: integrity to the business vision
- :: integrity to materials
- :: integrity to the end user

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2 | Honesty

:: integrity to the business vision



Strategic decision is made

Decision is disseminated to general managers of business units

Individual projects are assigned to product or project managers

Specific tasks are assigned to individual contributors


Project or product manager shepherds individual efforts in a certain direction

Product ships or launches

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2 | Honesty

:: integrity to the business vision



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Product ships or launches

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2 | Honesty



"Microsoft's overall strategy is to take XML and build it into a framework we call .NET, where **getting information from all your different devices whenever you need it is very straightforward**, so that if you have multiple PCs you're not taking your Office settings and having to manually move them between them"

Bill Gates, May 2001



2 | Honesty

:: integrity to materials



2 | Honesty

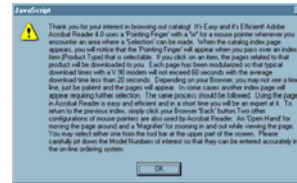
:: integrity to materials

"a simple, flowing wood-grained graphic ... a linear Medium Oak wood grain framed with Light Ash surround moldings"



2 | Honesty

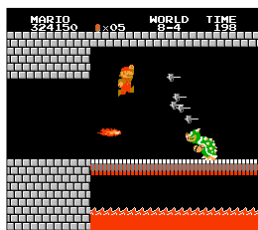
:: integrity to the end user



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3 | Mindfulness

Awareness of "the now": **Interaction that demands attention.**



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A Poetic Interaction

A product that affords poetic interaction generally has three traits:

- :: It has a high degree of visual refinement
- :: It is honest
- :: It demands mindfulness

These are closely linked with language.

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Language, Design and Experience

Language, Design and Experience are deeply related.

- :: John Dewey
- :: Richard Buchanan
- :: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
- :: Shelley Evenson and John Rheinfrank

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Language, Design and Experience

:: John Dewey



Art as Experience (1959)

- :: aesthetic experience is grounded in "commonplace" experience
- :: there is a distinction between the "art product" and the "work of art"
- :: the viewer does not passively receive art
- :: the "work of art" implies a relationship between audience and artist

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Language, Design and Experience

:: John Dewey



"Experience does not go on simply inside a person. It does go on there, for it influences the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose. But this is not the whole of the story. Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had"

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Language, Design and Experience

:: Richard Buchanan



Declaration by Design: Rhetoric, Argument, and Demonstration in Design Practice (1989)

- :: design encompasses some aspect of rhetoric or argument
- :: as technology becomes more influential in driving product development, rhetoric becomes more important

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Language, Design and Experience

:: Richard Buchanan



"Design is not a trivial aspect of the development of information technologies; it is the central discipline for humanizing all technologies, turning them to human purpose and enjoyment. In creating interactive digital environments, the designer's stance is grounded in effective communication"

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Language, Design and Experience

:: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi



Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention (1997)

- :: "flow": a vivid awareness of the moment but an almost total lack of awareness of the surrounding environment, task and self
- :: creativity for the sake of creation
- :: balance between challenge and skill

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Language, Design and Experience

:: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi



"The idea is to be so .. so saturated with [the act of creation] that there's no future or past, it's just an extended present in which you're making meaning"

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Language, Design and Experience

:: Shelley Evenson & John Rheinfank



Design Languages (1996)

- :: meaning is built into objects
- :: objects express themselves to people
- :: artifacts become a means of communication

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Language, Design and Experience

:: Shelley Evenson & John Rheinfank



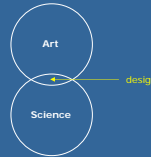
"Doing design requires more than making meaningful objects; it requires crafting whatever it is about objects that lets them participate in the creation of meaningful experiences ... According to this view of meaning, the sense of an object cannot be separated from the experience that the object simultaneously sits in and helps to create"

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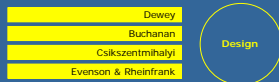
Poetry Requires a Discipline Mindshift

Traditional view of design:

A new view of Design:



Poetry Requires a Discipline Mindshift



Why Strive for Poetry?

Poetry is hard to read, and poetic experiences are hard to create. Why strive for poetry?

- :: Poetry is a differentiator: \$!
- :: Usability may soon be a commodity
- :: "Usable" is often synonymous with "Boring"

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Why Strive for Poetry?

:: Poetry is a differentiator: \$!



Bentley | Arnage T Series
MSRP: \$199,999.00



Chrysler | PT Cruiser "Woody"
MSRP: \$16,000.00

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Why Strive for Poetry?

:: Usability may soon be a commodity

"Managing innovation better may be the only way to avoid the abyss of commodity hell!"

Jeffrey R. Immelt
Chairman of the Board and CEO
General Electric Company

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Why Strive for Poetry?

:: "Usable" is often synonymous with "Boring"



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When to Strive for Poetry?

Maybe your toothbrush shouldn't be poetic.

:: "Experiential" vs. "Goal Directed"
:: Entertainment, Education, and Emotional

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When to Strive for Poetry?

:: "Experiential" vs. "Goal Directed"



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When to Strive for Poetry?

:: "Experiential" vs. "Goal Directed"



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When to Strive for Poetry?

:: "Experiential" vs. "Goal Directed"



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When to Strive for Poetry?

:: Entertainment, Education, and Emotional



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When to Strive for Poetry?

:: Entertainment, Education, and Emotional



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When to Strive for Poetry?

:: Entertainment, Education, and Emotional



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In Conclusion

Life is frequently poetic.

Shouldn't we make things that resonate poetic, too?

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Summary

:: Examining Poetry
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:: Poetic Interaction Design

- :: It has a high degree of visual refinement
- :: It is honest
- :: It demands mindfulness

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