



DESIGN  
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Platform for Dutch Research in Design



# Usable Products instead of Dream Design

Design for Usability

## Design for Usability

### About

The Design for Usability project aims to improve the usability of electronic products by creating new methods for user-centred product development. Many existing methods do not take into account the hectic context of day-to-day product-development practice. In addition most existing methods are focused on the development of software, web pages and ICT systems, not on physical electronic products. As a result, these methods are often of little use to product developers. This project aims to overcome these limitations.

### Background

Electronic products for consumers and professionals are becoming increasingly hard to use. They get more and more functions, decrease in size, and function in networks of products. Also, globally dispersed teams often have to work in a context of extreme time pressure and budget constraints. Unless mitigated by advances in user-centred product innovation, these trends result in electronic products that are unusable by a considerable part of the population. From an economical point of view, the ability to make usable products provides companies with a competitive edge.

### Questions

In order to develop practical methods supporting the user-centered design of physical electronic products, we will first study the existing practice of user-centered product development. We will focus on the following questions:

- What are barriers and enablers for usability?
- How do user and product characteristics influence which

usability problems occur?

- What are the critical factors for usability-related decision-making?
- How do users change through interacting with products?
- How do designers deal with a great variation in users, environments and goals?
- How can teams become aware of usability-related knowledge they are missing and arrive at a shared view of product use?

### Results

The Design for Usability project will result in:

- A reference methodology for organizing product-development processes and organizations
- New methods for user-centred design
- New insights into issues obstructing the creation of usable products in product-development practice

These results are communicated through:

- Three Design for Usability symposia on World Usability Day (2009, 2010, 2011)
- A Design for Usability 'Methods & Tools' book, supported by content on the project website
- Workshops with product-development practitioners
- Scientific publications

### Facts

Project duration: January 2007 - December 2011

Funding: Agentschap NL (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation)

Program: Innovatiegericht Onderzoeks Programma Integrale Product Creatie en Realisatie IOP-IPCR (Innovation-oriented Research Programme Integral Product Creation and Realisation).



## Partners

- Delft University of Technology
- Eindhoven University of Technology
- University of Twente
- Philips
- Océ
- T-Xchange
- Indes

## People

### PROJECT LEADER

**Prof.ir Daan van Eijk**, Delft University of Technology, Industrial Design Engineering

### RESEARCHERS

**Ir. Mieke van der Bijl-Brouwer**, University of Twente, Engineering Technology

**Dr. Dipl. Des. Stella Boess**, Delft University of Technology, Industrial Design Engineering

**Dr. Henri Christiaans**, Delft University of Technology, Industrial Design Engineering

**Dr.ir. Ilse Luyk-de Visser**, Eindhoven University of Technology, Industrial Design

**Dr.ir. P.J.M. Sonnemans**, Eindhoven University of Technology, Industrial Design

**Prof.dr. Peter-Paul Verbeek**, University of Twente, Philosophy

**Dr.ir. Mascha van der Voort**, University of Twente, Engineering Technology

### SUPERVISORS (of PhD candidates)

**Prof.dr. H.J. Achterhuis (Hans)**, University of Twente, Philosophy

**Prof.dr.ir. Aernout Brombacher**, Eindhoven University of Technology, Industrial Design

**Prof.ir Daan van Eijk**, Delft University of Technology, Industrial Design Engineering

**Prof.dr.ir. Fred van Houten**, University of Twente, Engineering Technology

### PHD CANDIDATES

**Steven Dorrestijn (Steven) MA**, University of Twente, Philosophy

**Christelle Harkema, MSc**, Eindhoven University of Technology, Industrial Design

**Frederik Hoolhorst, MSc**, University of Twente, Engineering Technology

**Chajoong Kim, MSc**, Delft University of Technology, Industrial Design Engineering

**Jasper van Kuijk, PhD**, Delft University of Technology, Industrial Design Engineering

### GRADUATION STUDENT / ASSOCIATE RESEARCHER

**Tristan Weevers, MSc**, Delft University of Technology, Industrial Design Engineering

