Interaction design

...is about shaping our everyday life through digital artifacts – for work, for play, and for entertainment.

Gillian Crampton Smith, Designing Interactions

Designing interactive products to support people in their everyday and working lives.

Preece et al., Interaction Design

Interaction design is the art of facilitating interactions between humans through products and services.

It is also, to a lesser extent, about the interactions between humans and these products that have some sort of "awareness" – that is, products with a microprocessor that are able to sense and respond to humans.

Dave Saff, Designing for Interaction
Interaction design

Interaction Design is the professional discipline that defines the behaviour of interactive products and how products communicate their functionality to the people who use them.

Good interaction design makes products ranging from computer software to clock radios to cars more useful, usable, and desirable.

www.ixda.org

Why interaction design?

Interaction design isn’t just about fixing problems

Interaction design is about making interaction richer, deeper, and better

What makes a technology like Internet useful?
- the collection of servers, fires, and hardware?
- or instant messaging, social networking, games…?

What is design?

Design is to design a design to produce a design

John Heskett

People have pre-conceived ideas about design
- it is about how things look!
- it is about styling and decoration!

With art—if you like, you can be really weird. But in design you have to think about what other people will like.

Ghislie, age 10, www.design-council.org.uk
What is design?

When you go to design a house, you talk to an architect first, not an engineer. Why is this? Because the criteria for what makes a good building fall substantially outside the domain of what engineering deals with. You want the bedrooms where it will be quiet so people can sleep, and you want the dining room to be near the kitchen. The fact that the kitchen and dining room should be proximate to each other emerges from knowing first that the purpose of the kitchen is to prepare food and the dining room to consume it, and second that rooms with related purposes ought to be closely related in space. This is not a fact, nor technical item of knowledge, but a piece of design wisdom.

Mitch Kapor, A Software Design Manifesto

Common elements of design

1: Focusing on users
Designers are advocates for the users
Users only care about their tasks and goals
Users don’t care about the company that makes the products!

2: Finding alternatives
Design isn’t just about choosing from amongst existing options
Design is also about creating new options
Existing options may all be undesirable

3: Relying on ideation and prototyping
Finding solutions through brainstorming
Building models and testing solutions
Considering every prototype is “a solution” not “the solution”
Common elements of design

4: Addressing constraints
Designers always work within constraints
- these include, financial, material, goals, etc.
Constraints may lead to better creativity

5: Creating appropriate solutions
Solutions are only appropriate
- to a particular project
- at a particular point in time
Solutions need to be appropriate to the situation

6: Incorporating emotion
Emotion is not an impediment to logic or making the right choices
Designs without emotion are lifeless
Emotion needs to be thoughtfully included in design decisions

7: Collaborating with people
Few designers work alone
Design is almost always a team effort
Diversity of team members is crucial
8: Drawing on a wide range of influences

Design relies on many different perspectives
It is often multi-disciplinary
Need to draw inspiration from different ideas

All related disciplines

Major related disciplines

Interaction design disciplines

Interaction design brings together elements of
- communication (graphic) design
- industrial design
- user interface design
- and others

Each of these has a different focus
- they are complimentary to one another

Primary concern: graphic designer

Concerned with making something cool or interesting happen on the screen of a device
Primary concern: interface designer
Concerned with the communication between a person and a device

Primary concern: interaction designer
Concerned with the conversation back and forth between people and devices across time