



VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN SECTION NEWSLETTER

IEEE Region 3, Council 09, Section 65

January 2006

Thursday, January 19, Clarion Hotel, Roanoke, VA

Why are Users so Dumb?

Practical Usability Analysis for Product Improvement

Dr. Myke Gluck

Professor of Computer Science

Virginia Military Institute

Abstract

The issues of usability and usefulness of products are increasingly important factors as similar products are used by very diverse populations. Using several case studies of bad design, this presentation will demonstrate unused principles of design and testing that may well improve product effectiveness. Further, many product designers tend to have a very limited view of users: Designers frequently do not exploit the extensive role users may play in product development. Usability analysis strongly suggests alternative views of users and provides instruments and methodologies for achieving the goal of enhancing the effectiveness of products of all kinds. Examples of such alternative views of humans and methodologies for exploiting them are illustrated in this presentation.

Speaker Bio

Myke Gluck has a BS in Mathematics from the University of Michigan, an MA in Mathematics from the University of

Oklahoma, and a Ph.D. in Information Science from Syracuse University. He spent almost ten years working for the US Air Force as a Software Engineer involved in independent verification and validation of real time flight software. Subsequently, for nine years, he directed a usability research laboratory at Florida State University specializing in spatial analysis and mapping product design. He now teaches computer science and does research in interface design concentrating on mapping as well as computer forensic products at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, VA.



Professor Myke Gluck

Date: Thursday, Jan. 19, 2006

Location: Clarion Hotel, Roanoke

Social: 6:30 PM

Dinner: 7:00 PM

Talk: 8:00 PM

Cost: Member or Guest \$15.00

Student: \$ 8.00

Reserve by 4 PM , January 16

Dr. Jan-Helge Bohn (540) 231-3276,

bohn@ieee.org

Directions to

Clarion Hotel Roanoke Airport

2727 Ferndale Drive NW

1581 Exit 3 Hershberger Rd West

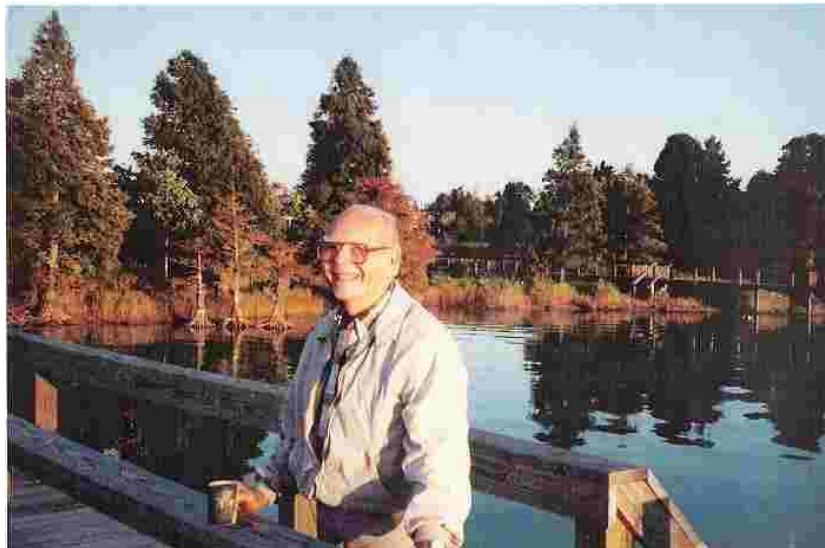
1st Rt. onto Ordway Drive,

¼ mile, Rt. Into Parking Lot.

Senior Members

Congratulations to Amy Bell, Charles Johnson, Eunice Santos, and Craig Woolsey who were elevated to Senior Member in November. Members who have been active in the profession for more than 10 years are encouraged to apply for Senior Membership. See www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/smp/rogram.html

In Memoriam
K. Reed Thompson
1931-2005



We are saddened to note that Kenneth Reed Thompson, a former Chairman of the IEEE Virginia Mountain Section died on September 27, 2005 after a prolonged fight against prostate cancer. In addition to serving in all of the officer positions in VMS, Reed continued his IEEE leadership activities in Region 3, serving as Director in 1982-1983, and on the Executive Committee from 1984-2004. He received the IEEE Centennial Award in 1984, and the IEEE Region 3 Outstanding Service Award in 1986.

Kenneth Reed Thompson was born on February 20, 1931 in Alma, Georgia. He obtained the Bachelor of Electrical Engineering degree in June 1953 and the MS Electrical Engineering degree in June 1954 both from the Georgia Institute of Technology. At Georgia Tech he was in ROTC, and received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Signal Corps in 1953. He served 8 years in the Army Reserve, culminating with an honorable discharge as a First Lieutenant in 1961.

Reed began his 40 year career with the General Electric Company in Salem, VA in June 1954. At GE he was a Test Engineer from 1954-1958, Systems

Engineer from 1958-1961, and Senior Systems Engineer Digital, Systems from 1961-1966. He was Manager, Process Automation Engineering from 1966-1969; Manager Metal Rolling Engineering 1969-1971, and Manager Metal Rolling Control Engineering, Drive Systems Department from 1971-1978. He was responsible for innovative development and design of early punched card controlled systems and later computer controlled systems for these industries. He was Manager, Metal Industry Engineering from 1978-1984; Manager, Advanced Systems Engineering from 1985-1987; and Project Manager, Large Sheet Mill control and automation projects from 1984 to his retirement in 1994.

Reed was awarded 7 US patents, 2 French patents and one patent each from the UK, Sweden, German, Italy, and Japan.

He participated in work of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association on industrial control and programmable control where he represented GE on five standards committees. Reed was a member of the National Society of Professional Engineers, The American

Association of Iron and Steel Engineers, and the General Electric Management Association.

His long history of service and contribution to IEEE at Section, Region, and Institute level demonstrated his professional dedication. In addition to his Virginia Mountain Section and Region 3 activities, Reed served on the IEEE Board of Directors from 1982-3, and on IEEE-USAB Board of Directors from 1982-1984. He also served on many IEEE committees, and was an ABET Electrical Engineering Program Evaluator from 1984-1987. He authored many technical publications within GE and for IEEE.

In April 2005 Reed was nominated for IEEE Fellow with the proposed citation: "For sustained exemplary engineering contributions to the field of industrial controls and service to industry, the Institute, and the profession." Reed was elected an IEEE Fellow but notice of the election was not received until after his death. Reed's wife Margaret and his sons Larry and Fred with their families will travel to Memphis, TN. to attend SoutheastCon 2006 during which time Reed's family will accept the Fellow Award for him.

News from the IEEE History Center

Oral Histories (taken from a report prepared by Robert Colburn of the IEEE History Center)

The IEEE History Center has developed more than 400 oral histories, more than half of which are in documents that can be downloaded from

http://www.ieee.org/organizations/history_center/oral_histories.html

These include the IEEE Merger History Interviews, which were conducted in 1979 to capture the details behind the merger of the IEEE's predecessor societies: the American Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Institute of Radio Engineers. Another collection, the Japanese Oral History Interviews, was a joint project between the IEEE History Center and the history committee of the Institute of Electrical Engineers of Japan to capture the reminiscences of prominent Japanese engineers.

With engineers from all over the world represented, the IEEE History Center's oral history collection reflects the IEEE members' technical and geographical breadth. Among the histories in the center's collection are those of the radio pioneer Alfred Goldsmith an Institute of Radio Engineers founder, and Russian television innovator Vladimir Zworykin. Those interested in early computing can learn about it through the words of German computer trailblazer Conrad Zuse and Italian microchip inventor Federico Faggin. If you're curious about the entrepreneurial spirit, you can read the oral history of William Hewlett of Hewlett-Packard or of implantable pacemaker inventor Wilson Greatbach. Internet enthusiasts can peruse the tales of Internet pioneers Vinton Cerf, Robert Kahn, and Leonard Kleinrock and British World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee.

IEEE Milestones Program

The IEEE established the Electrical Engineering Milestones program in 1983 to honor significant achievements in the history of electrical and electronics engineering. In 2000, the name of the program was changed to IEEE Milestones in Electrical Engineering and Computing, to make clear that achievements in all IEEE fields were eligible for recognition. Currently there are over 60 milestones around the world, three of which are in Region 3 (Southeastern U.S.) Milestones are proposed, nominated, and sponsored by an IEEE Organizational Unit (OU)—such as an IEEE Section, Society or Chapter. After recommendation by the IEEE History Committee and approval by the IEEE, a bronze plaque commemorating the achievement is placed at an appropriate site with an accompanying dedication ceremony. The program is administered for the IEEE History Committee by the IEEE History Center.

The three milestones in Region 3 are Electronic Technology for Space Rocket Launches (1950-1969) Canaveral section in Florida), First Central Station (for incandescent lighting) in South Carolina in 1882 (Coastal South Carolina Section), and the Richmond Passenger Railway in 1888 (Richmond Section).

From IEEE USA

WASHINGTON (15 December 2005) -- IEEE-USA commends Senators John Ensign (R-Nev.) and Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) for introducing the National Innovation Act of 2005 today on Capitol Hill. The legislation includes provisions that will strengthen U.S. competitiveness in the 21st Century.

The National Innovation Act responds to recommendations in the National Innovation Initiative Report "Innovate America" published by the Council on Competitiveness in 2004. The Act focuses on three primary areas: increasing investment in basic research;

improving science and technology talent; and developing a robust innovation infrastructure.

The legislation would, among other things, establish a President's Council on Innovation; make permanent the Research and Experimentation Tax Credit; nearly double research funding for the National Science Foundation by FY2011; authorize funding for new and existing Professional Science Masters Degree Programs; and encourage the development of regional clusters of technology innovation. For a summary of the legislation, go to <http://lieberman.senate.gov/documents/bills/051215niasummary.doc>

IEEE Foundation Announces 2006 Application Deadlines

The IEEE Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the IEEE, will accept unsolicited applications for new and innovative projects that seek to improve the worldwide technological literacy of society from childhood through adulthood in three cycles in 2006.

Projects should:

1. Improve primary and secondary math and science learning,
2. Prepare pre-university students to consider engineering as a career path,
3. Increase active interest in engineering and science,
4. Preserve the history of IEEE associated technologies,
5. Tap the technological expertise of IEEE members.

Applications are due approximately two months prior to each of three IEEE Foundation Meetings. Specifically, for the March 2006 meeting: application deadline is 7 January 2006; for the June 2006 meeting application deadline is 15 April 2006. and for the November 2006 meeting: application deadline is 16 September 2006.

To learn more about the IEEE Foundation's grant guidelines, and for an online application, visit <http://www.ieeefoundation.org>.

**Virginia Mountain Section
Future Meetings**

Thursday, February 16
Undergraduate Student Paper Contest

Thursday, March 16
Spouses Night
Alaskan Travelogue
Dave Geer and Gail Gray

Thursday, April 20
VMI and VT student report and
demonstrations from the hardware
contest at IEEE Southeastcon

The February, March, and April
Meetings will be at the Clarion Hotel
Roanoke.

Following are the results of the election
of VMS officers and Executive
Committee Members. Officers will be
installed at the January 19 VMS
meeting. (Ira Jacobs declined election
to the Executive Committee but will
remain as Newsletter Editor.)

2006 VMS OFFICERS

Chairman: Jim Squire
<mailto:squirejc@vmi.edu> 464-7548

Vice Chairman: Jan Helge Bohn
[mail to:bohnh@ieee.org](mailto:bohnh@ieee.org) 231-3276

Sec./Treasurer: Wilbur Dale
[mail to:dalewn@vmi.edu](mailto:dalewn@vmi.edu)

VMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chris Bonadeo
cbonadeo@primephotonics.com
David Geer dgeer@ieee.org
F. Gail Gray fggray@vt.edu
Patrick Schaumont schaum@vt.edu
Junior Past Chairman: Cy Harbourt
<mailto:cdharbourt@ieee.org>

VMS Chapter Chairs
**Computer, Control Systems, &
Industrial Electronics:**
Sandeep Shukla shukla@vt.edu

Status of other Chapters, and
appointment of Committee Chairs to be
decided at subsequent Executive
Committee meetings

NEWSLETTER

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Contact Newsletter Editor to be added to
the VMS listserv

WEBSITE

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