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Assignment 6

1. While there seems to be a direct relationship between “fun” and deep engagement, the term first begs for clearer definition. As illustrated in the Funology readings, there are a plethora of interpretations of fun ranging from physical, to psychological, ideological, individual or social. Similar to deep engagement, fun too consists of many different types of experiences. Where fun may conjure images of playful interaction and activity for the reader, on further though it might also include more pensive and internal states. It is first important to make clear that while “fun” is about enjoyment, amusement, or pleasure, there are many different ways of having fun from drawing with crayons, digging holes in the ground, reading or conducting research. As pointed out by Noel Coward, the boundaries between work and play are more confused such that work is more fun than fun. Fun also resembles our initial findings about deep engagement; it includes: surprise, challenge, unpredictability, anticipation, attention-holding, provoking, and arousing emotions. While there is a relationship between fun and deep engagement, it isn't a 1:1 relationship.

2. We need to understand emotion better if we are to make lasting positive emotional experiences through design.

Don Norman's focus on emotions developed in response to a general lack of understanding about it within the design community. The design processes that he subsequently founded were in part based on his interest in emotion, culture, and people's concern about self image. His approach separates design into three distinct parts that address emotion in different ways. Behavioral design addresses those concerns largely covered in HCI such as usability in which emotion is “expectation driven”. Issues of controllability and system feedback are of primary focus in this area. Visceral design includes appearance, in which emotion is “perceptually driven”. Reflective design includes cultural considerations and learned behavior in which emotion is “intellectually driven”. The specificity with which this approach addresses emotion is necessary if we want to develop applications that are truly engaging.

Another perspective is offered by Marc Hassenzahl who emphasizes the connectedness of emotional and cognitive experience. The current trend within HCI to overemphasize emotion as the next hottest factor of good design has introduced a separation from cognitive design that Hassenzahl points out is not to our advantage. Furthermore, the preoccupation with product-based emotions of “attraction” builds design promises that are unlikely realized because products can not in themselves create sustainable emotions. Lasting positive emotion can only be achieved if user needs are met. This is best accomplished by differentiating between the many kinds of needs that users have including: manipulation, stimulation, identification and evocation needs which manifest in situations of use.

3. The constant evolution of design processes and the further emergence of user experience based design raises the question about what role usability plays in securing all that design has to offer. Usability was a concept that emerged out of human computer interface design and has continued to grow in tandem with the overall field of hci; it has necessarily outgrown earlier notions of efficacy and has come to include much larger areas of concern such as affect. While principles of usability in its original sense are still valid, they are superseded by larger goals formed out of an expanded notion of user experience.