

[PDF] The Invisible Computer: Why Good Products Can Fail, The Personal Computer Is So Complex, And Information Appliances Are The Solution

Donald A. Norman - pdf download free book

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Author: Donald A. Norman

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Description:

Currently, computer users must navigate a sea of guidebooks, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and wizards to perform a task such as searching the Web or creating a spreadsheet. While Donald Norman acknowledges that the personal computer allows for "flexibility and power," he also makes

its limitations perfectly clear. "The personal computer is perhaps the most frustrating technology ever," he writes. "It should be quiet, invisible, unobtrusive." His vision is that of the "information appliance," digital tools created to answer our specific needs, yet interconnected to allow communication between devices.

His solution? "Design the tool to fit so well that the tool becomes a part of the task." He proposes using the PC as the infrastructure for devices hidden in walls, in car dashboards, and held in the palm of the hand. A word of caution: some of Norman's zealotry leads to a certain creepiness (global positioning body implants) and goofiness (electric-power-generating plants in shoes). His message, though, is reasonably situated in the concept that the tools should bend to fit us and our goals: we sit down to write, not to word process; to balance bank accounts, not to fill in cells on a spreadsheet. In evenly measuring out the future of humanity's technological needs--and the limitations of the PC's current incarnation--Norman presents a formidable argument for a renaissance of the information appliance. --*Jennifer Buckendorff* --This text refers to the edition.

From Publishers Weekly The personal computer industry is still in its "rebellious adolescent stage," says Norman, who asserts that it is time for it to "grow up" and "enter the... world of consumer appliances" "A convenient, versatile, pleasurable tools with potential to communicate with each other in a global information matrix. Norman (*The Design of Everyday Things; Things That Make Us Smart*), an established voice in the field, explains why and offers prescriptions for how such changes are to come about, together with specific ideas about what kinds of information devices might emerge. He synthesizes wisdom from the history of technology, industrial social sciences, product design and marketing to support his vision of information appliances. The key reform he advocates is human-centered product design emphasizing user experience in addition to technology and marketing considerations. Norman's provocative analysis is laced with analogies and anecdotes, and is augmented by 128 illustrations. Though all the subtitle's claims are addressed in distinct chapters, some portions seem superfluous. Because "usability often lies in the details," the argument can occasionally get bogged down in minutiae or broad-stroke summaries of motion study and other historical innovations. Stylistic glitches aside, however, Norman offers an enlightening and pragmatic account of the interrelated currents and riptides affecting product development in the computer/information industry. Readers who digest this analysis will be well rewarded. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the edition.

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