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SEGR 5240

Essay 2

May 8, 2018

Brooks gives his opinions on the role of collaboration in design in Chapter 6 of The Design of Design. His ideas are similar to his ones discussed later in the book on what makes a great designer in that a designer needs time and space to reflect on his ideas. In the later chapters, Brooks discussed management and company red-tape being hindrances on a great designer. In this chapter he discusses collaboration being a hindrance, citing examples of individual ideas being more original and cohesive than group ideas. He discusses conceptual integrity as a consistency throughout the design that reflects the desires and needs of the user. In order to have conceptual integrity, you need to have a single person owning and driving the major decisions of the design. That doesn’t mean that multiple designers are a bad thing – it means that the final design should come from a single designer. Brooks discusses design competitions where multiple designers present their ideas to the stakeholders and the best idea emerges. Although a design comes from one mind, the overall product doesn’t get built by one set of hands, especially in this day and age when enterprises are so elaborate and skillsets are so diverse and specialized. The designer needs these skilled people to create his vision. That’s why it’s crucial for the designer to communicate his view so that everyone understands and buys into it.

How to communicate that vision is the topic of Chapter 7 where Brooks discusses telecollaboration and technological tools that help support communication between teams spread across regions, time zones (and maybe even languages with modern real-time translation tools). Although Brooks appreciates these new technologies, he still believes that face-to-face communication is irreplaceable. Effective teams need to find a way to meet face to face on a semi-regular basis. There are nuances and environmental cues that can’t be picked up on the same way in telecollaboration. One small criticism about this chapter is that Brooks’ view on video conferencing has become a bit outdated. Video conferencing, especially with regard to sharing content, has grown rapidly since 2010.