

Chapter 6 Collaboration in Design

In the past, design was usually done by one person. Over time, with the increasing complexity of technology, design tasks have shifted from a single person's work to teams' collaboration. An example mentioned in "The design of design" is the nuclear submarine, which is too sophisticated to be done by one person. In addition, rushing to release a new product for marketing is another factor behind this shift to team work, because no business has the patience to wait for a long time to get a new product.

Consequently, this collaboration results in extra costs. With collaboration, every person needs to take the less of the burden in designing a product. However, involving many people in one design always leads to more work. In team collaborations, design tasks need to be partitioned and assigned to individuals. This takes extra effort. Moreover, every member of the team must be consistent with the design idea and principles, which means that there will need extra learning and teaching efforts. During the design process, in order to ensure that every member is in the same direction, communication and management among teams exist throughout the project. Both are also the extra costs.

In the process of designing a product as a team, it is a challenge to achieve conceptual integrity. One important method to ensure conceptual integrity is to assign only one system architect with the most powerful authority to the project. This person must have much experience in this product and certainly care about conceptual integrity of the product. Another method mentioned in the book is assigning only one user-interface designer to the project. This person needs to have a lot of experience in not only product usage and listening skills but also users' tastes and preferences, which means that this person has to know what customers expect this product to do.

I entirely agree with the author that the trend of team design is inevitable in modern design due to the complexity of technology and market timing. In addition, several extra costs, such as partitioning, learning, communication, and management, arise and are unavoidable. Thus, the goal of maintaining conceptual integrity is a major challenge. Assigning only one system architect and only one user interface designer are the important methods to achieve this goal of conceptual integrity.

Chapter 7 Telecollaboration

Due to the emergence of team design, people need to find a way to communicate with each other. With the advance of technology, telecollaboration has been introduced into the process of the modern design. This makes it possible for global teams to work together on the same product. Some low-tech tools, such as shared documents, phone calls, and telephone-plus-shared document are already being used nowadays. Another important widespread communication tool is videoconferencing. Even though there are these new ways to communicate, face-to-face communication is essential, and many companies still keep this way in collaboration design.