Review

Reviewed Work(s): The UX Book: Process and Guidelines for Ensuring a Quality User Experience by Rex Hartson and Pardha S. Pyla

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so, use his methods, and you can easily adopt his suggestions to your own research.

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The UX Book: Process and Guidelines for Ensuring a Quality User Experience

Rex Hartson and Pardha S. Pyla. 2012. Waltham, MA: Elsevier/Morgan Kaufmann. [ISBN: 978-0-12-385241-0. 938 pages, including index. US$89.95.]
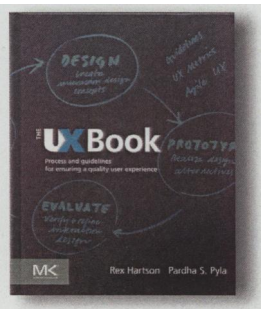
In this excellent new book, Rex Hartson and Pardha Pyla bring UX (user experience—the broad view of what started out as usability and usability testing) up to date. Just as the STC special interest group has changed its name from Usability to Usability and User Experience, Hartson and Pyla realize that we have moved from "make this easy to use" to "let's understand the users' world and find a way to make it better for them." Their view of UX includes the traditional attributes of usability: effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction. It also includes newer views that expand UX to social and cultural interaction, value-sensitive design, and emotional impact (joy, fun, aesthetics).

The UX Book is a worthy successor to the pioneering book on usability and user interface design that Hartson wrote with Deborah Hix in 1993. Hartson's new co-author, Pardha Pyla, brings up-to-date experience as Senior User Experience Specialist and Lead Interaction Designer for Mobile Platforms at Bloomberg.

In The UX Book, Hartson and Pyla take us through what they call "the Wheel," (p. xii) a very logical iterative process for user-experience design (analyze, design, prototype, evaluate). They expand each element of their Wheel through several chapters of practical explanation and examples.

After more than 600 pages on the process, Hartson and Pyla add more value with chapters on special topics such as agile development and a long chapter on guidelines. They preface the guidelines with a discussion of cognitive science principles. The authors present each guideline with explanations and examples, as well as remind readers that context always matters. Stating guidelines is easy. Knowing when and how to apply them in a particular context is not always easy. The UX Design Guidelines chapter with its more than 100 pages could have been an excellent book in itself.

Hartson and Pyla have achieved a remarkable synthesis of textbook and trade book. The UX Book is extremely practical, written in a conversational style, with a running case study, and many pictures and examples. It is also deeply grounded in theory and research. Descriptions of relevant research with citations lead to 23 pages of references. These research descriptions and references add credibility and value to the very practical process the book teaches.

For instructors or for self-study, The UX Book includes exercises that are called out briefly in context and described in detail at the back of the book. A companion Web site offers more help to instructors.

This comprehensive book brings together and updates so many of the books that have been part of any UX practitioner's library that it could be the one book you now need to understand and practice UX design. Despite the book's length, a detailed table of contents and a 32-page index make specific topics easy to find.

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Janice (Ginny) Redish is President of Redish & Associates in Bethesda, Maryland. Ginny is an STC Fellow and former member of STC's Board of Directors. Her latest book, Letting Go of the Words – Writing Web Content that Works, (2nd edition, Morgan Kaufmann/Elsevier, 2012) gets rave reviews at book sites and in blogs.