

together. For example, Philips found that its multidisciplinary teams that were responsible for developing ideas and products for the future experienced a number of difficulties, namely that project team members did not always have a clear idea of who needed what information, when, and in what form (Lambourne *et al*, 1997).

ACTIVITY 1.1

In practice, the makeup of a given design team depends on the kind of interactive product being built. Who do you think should be involved in developing:

1. A public kiosk providing information about the exhibits available in a science museum?
2. An interactive educational website to accompany a TV series?

Comment

Ideally, each team will have a number of different people with different skill sets. For example, the first interactive product would include:

- Graphic and interaction designers, museum curators, educational advisers, software engineers, software designers, ergonomists.

The second project would include:

- TV producers, graphic and interaction designers, teachers, video experts, software engineers, software designers.

In addition, as both systems are being developed for use by the general public, representative users, such as school children and parents, should be involved.

In practice, design teams often end up being quite large, especially if they are working on a big project to meet a fixed deadline. For example, it is common to find teams of 15 people or more working on a website project for an extensive period of time, like six months. This means that a number of people from each area of expertise are likely to be working as part of the project team. ■

1.3.3 Interaction Design Consultants

Interaction design is now widespread in product development. In particular, website consultants, global corporations, and the computing industries have all realized its pivotal role in successful interactive products. The presence or absence of good interaction design can make or break a company. To get noticed in the highly competitive field of web products requires standing out. Being able to say that your product is easy, effective, and engaging to use is seen as central to this. Marketing departments are also realizing how branding, the number of hits, customer return rate, and customer satisfaction are greatly affected by the usability of a website.

There are many interaction design consultancies now. These include established companies, such as Cooper, NielsenNorman Group, and IDEO, and more recent ones that specialize in a particular area, such as job board software (e.g. Madgex) or mobile design (e.g. CXpartners). IDEO is a large global enterprise, with branches across the world and 30 years of experience in the area. They design products, services, and environments for other companies,