

www.ctupa.org

NEWSLETTER

Our June Meeting

Showing off your creative skills in a competitive environment and getting paid for being the best!

Our next Chapter meeting will be held Thursday evening, June 25, 2009 at Open Solutions in Glastonbury, CT.

This month we will learn about a significant innovation in the delivery of graphical content. Glastonbury based TopCoder Studio essentially delivers on the promise of being a 'software factory' - where a global network of highly skilled graphic designers, compete in contests to create graphical treatments. TopCoder Studio's diverse client list provides the design community with an impressive array of design contests. The process used for evaluation, peer review - and holistically selecting winners is very compelling. In fact, the entire concept is "design meets social networking..."

TopCoder Studio is relevant to design managers as well as Usability practitioners. Beyond an

interesting demonstration, expect discussion about the future of design, design processes and the genesis of new designer communities.

As mentioned, the meeting will be held at Open Solutions, 455 Winding Brook Drive, Glastonbury, CT. Light refreshments will be available at 6:30, with the meeting starting at 7:00.



Presenting:
David Messinger,
Chief Architect at TopCoder



Additional Volunteers Needed!

We will need volunteers to write monthly newsletter articles, present at upcoming meetings and work on the Chapters social network for members. Please contact me to sign-up.

Herb Wexler,
Vice President CT UPA
herbwexler@optonline.net

July Meetings Announced...

Our July meeting will focus on Eye-tracking. Jennifer Knodler from SMI SensoMotoric Instruments Inc. will be leading a discussion and demonstrating how Eye-tracking technologies are being used by user experience teams.

If you have topics of interest, or would like to present at a future meeting - please let me know.

Michael Rawlins,
President CT UPA
michael.rawlins@gmail.com

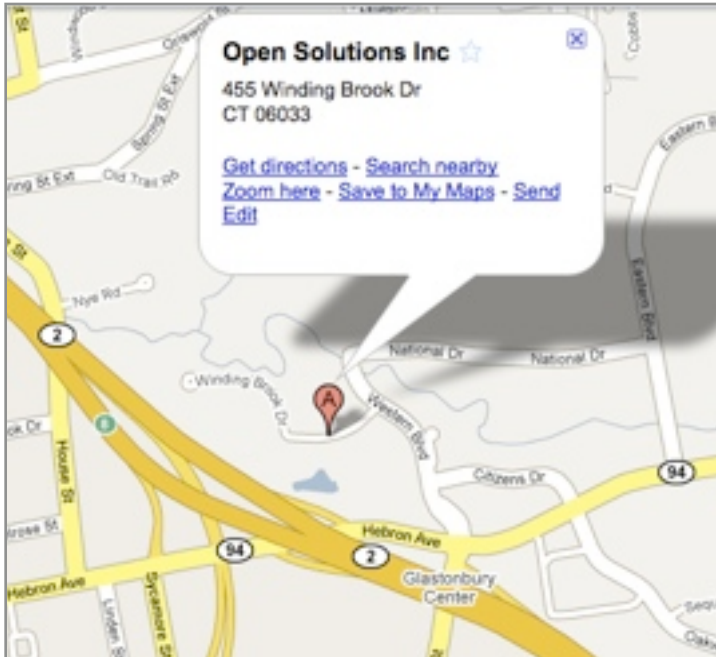


<http://www.ctupa.org>

June Meeting location:

Open Solutions, 455 Winding Brook Drive, Glastonbury, CT.

As is our custom, light refreshments will be available at 6:30, and informal networking will ensue until the meeting commences at 7:00.



<http://www.opensolutions.com>

New Committees Have Been Formed!

The chapter officers will be spending the summer planning for the balance of 2009. We will be spending time with those that have volunteered to chair (or sit on some key committees).

- Website update (seeking committee members)
- Membership Committee (chaired by Brandon Marino, Open Solutions)
- Newsletter Committee (Trina Hare, Open Solutions)
- Events Committee (Trish Palmer, Open Solutions)

If you are interested in participating on any of these committees, please let me or any of the other chapter officers know.

Michael Rawlins,
President CT UPA
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TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP - TCO

If you are making a major purchase it is good to look at the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). Instead of just comparing the purchase price of two similar items and buying the item with the lower price tag look at what the costs will be over time. For example when buying a car look at the maintenance costs, gasoline mileage, insurance rates and potential resale value. This is the true cost of each vehicle.

It is difficult to put a specific cost on usability. But over time a product that is easier to use will have substantially lower TCO. There is less training, fewer calls to tech support and staff are more productive. Many of these costs are doubled. When making a call to tech support you are either paying per call or pay a service contract but there is also the lost productivity of the person making the call.

Examining TCO is useful when purchasing a product but is also important when you are producing a product. Every aspect of your product or service should be examined for ways to reduce the TCO for your customer. The best way to reduce the total cost of ownership is to constantly get feedback from the customer. Even in progressive companies this is a low priority. For example customer training is considered a success if the trainer covered all the material in the allotted time. Rarely is any measurement done to see if the customer understood the material. A test at the end of the training is useful but it is more important to measure if the customer uses the

product the way intended by the designers.

A company's income is directly tied to the value the customer receives. The greater the value to the customer the more the company can charge. If a large portion of that value is eaten up by additional costs such as training or lower productivity, the customer will be less willing to pay for the product. Reducing TCO to the customer also benefits the company producing the product. Not only will there be fewer calls to tech support but there will be higher client retention and more referrals. The lower the TCO for the customer the more room for profits to the producing company.

Herb Wexler,
Vice President CT UPA
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REVIEW: BOSTON UPA MINI-CONFERENCE

The Boston UPA's Mini Conference took place on May 26th at Bentley University in Waltham, MA. The conference drew over 400 attendees, was extremely well organized and covered a wide range of topics related to Usability and Design: http://www.upaboston.org/miniconfог/schedule_details.shtml. The conference was an excellent value for the low registration fee, and I highly recommending attending next year's.

Below are the highlights from the more interesting sessions I attended:

Building Robust Personas

Jared Spool discussed building robust personas that relate to a specific function being developed. Some strategies he discussed for doing so include:

- Developing questions that relate to the subject's: tools, physical environment, experience, input and outputs, goals, relationships, process and constraints.
- Testing the questions before using them.
- Collecting data including pictures of the interviewees and environment, post it notes, etc.
- Writing a summary for each person
- Analyzing the data. One method he discussed was creating playing cards with a picture of each person and comparing and contrasting two cards at a time. Next, develop of list of attributes from the comparison. Then, assign graphical scales and map where the people fit on the scale.
- Build the personas based on all of the above, making sure each sentence relates back to the functionality being developed.

URLS to related materials (purchase required): www.uie.com/reports/recruiting_without_fear and http://www.uie.com/reports/field_study_handbook/.

Sketching the UI: Generative Design Techniques for Evolving Concepts

Sarah Bloomer's presentation focused on the importance of sketching as a method of generating multiple ideas for a given project after providing research and then narrowing in on the correct one. This contrasts with an iterative approach which refines a given design over time. Sarah also discussed Generative Design including co-creation with users. This can include involving users in the sketching process as well as providing them with design probes or kits with materials that would allow the user to participate in designing a product or solution.

Related Snippet: http://sarahbloomer.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=53&Itemid=7

Adaptive Path article and sketchboard templates: <http://www.adaptivepath.com/ideas/essays/archives/000863.php>

Connecting with Developers to Expand UX Influence

Natasha Lloyd of SAP Business Objects described her experience at SAP establishing a usability special interest group. This team is made up of developers and the user experience expert. It meets once a week for an hour, alternates which team member leads it and has varied topics including: product demos and reviews, book discussions and user experience topic presentations/discussions. The ultimate goal of the group was to have the designer and development team members speak the same language and to increase Development focus on usability concerns. The group has been successful for Natasha and has received excellent reviews from the participants.

Presentation: <http://www.natashacorner.com/upaboston09/slides.pdf>

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Improving Healthcare Experiences: Creating the Design Standards

Amy Cueva of Mad*Pow and Claudio Luis Vera of studio:module. This was an engaging discussion that covered:

- The challenges in the US healthcare system: closed/proprietary standards and codes, and non-integrated systems.
- Its need for user and patient centered design: analysis of some known patient experiences and current patient health record solutions such as Google Health and Microsoft HealthVault.
- The inherent dangers in not addressing that need (<http://www.syleum.com/2009/03/17/healthcare-data-model/>).
- The challenges to adoption from both the practitioner and patient perspectives.
- The opportunity this presents for our discipline especially given the current government funding being allocated to improving healthcare systems.
- A vision of the future of UX in healthcare systems: see the later design options presented in the presentation.

Presentation: <http://design.studiomodule.com/miniupa/>

Healthcare UX LinkedIn Group: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1996303>

Bentley Usability Lab Tour

William Albert of Bentley University provided a tour of Bentley's state-of-the-art Usability labs. Key features included:

- A smaller, single participant lab with a dual purpose control and observation room.
- A larger lab that can accommodate three participants or focus groups of up to 10 people. This lab pipes the audio and visual from the lab to a 25 seat observation room which can also serve as a larger focus group room.

- Fail safe technology in the control rooms including three methods of recording a session and a backup power generator.
- Multiple videoconferencing methods for streaming the session.
- Multiple, participant focused cameras as well as document and device cameras.
- High fidelity microphones for improved audio.
- A dedicated machine and monitor for a note taking observer in each control room.

Lab website:

<http://www.bentley.edu/usability/facilities/index.cfm>

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