

**INSTITUTE FOR PEOPLE-CENTRED COMPUTATION  
EVENING MEETING**

**22<sup>nd</sup> March 2007  
The Street Café, Frenchay Campus  
Bristol UWE**

**Programme**

18.00 Welcome

18.15 Presentation 1: **Risk Taking in Design – an investigation of critical decision points in new product development.**

Professor Bob Jerrard, Research Centre for Design and the Creative Industries.  
University of Central England (UCE).

19.00 Questions, Discussion

19.30 Presentation 2: **BioSensor Design: People-centred considerations** (provisional title).

Professor Lisa Hall, Institute of Biotechnology, University of Cambridge

20.15 Questions, Discussion

20.30 IP-CC update and general discussion.

21.00 Close

A generous buffet, wine and soft drinks will be available throughout the evening.

**Costs**

Free to all IP-CC members

Non-members:       £12.00.

12 month Membership available at £35.00 (Students - £20.00). Application forms at <http://www.ip-cc.org.uk>

## Presentation 1 Synopsis

### Risk Taking in Design – an investigation of critical decision points in new product development

Creativity and risk are inexorably linked; both infinite in their variety, they usually defy accurate description. The environment fostering the conception and development of new products is complex and involves creativity and risk at a number of levels in a wide range of situations. The literature on risk mainly concerns that which is calculable, normally in financial areas. Such calculations are inappropriate within a broadly creative environment (Jerrard, 2000), in recognition of the interdisciplinarity nature of design-based new product development (Jerrard, Trueman and Newport 1999). We seek to identify insights into risk assessment and decision-making by small companies as a new way to describe the design process

Risk is difficult to define and address, and while always linked to creativity, it may be dealt with in different ways. In essence, resolving risk issues requires decisions to be made and previous work (Horne Martin, Jerrard et al 2002) funded by the Design Council (Horne Martin, S., Jerrard, B., Newport, R. and Burns, K. 2002) identified *critical decision points* through case studies looking retrospectively at product development. This Major AHRC funded project looks at risk as it takes place in 'live' so as to identify the *critical decision points* while decisions are being made. We will be testing this model observing *critical decision points* as they happen.

This research is mainly focusing on human/non-measurable aspects of risk which are not usually 'calculated' by standard risk assessment tools and formulas. These are especially relevant in small and medium companies that do not have the structure a larger company has to perform such assessments. Many of these assessments are viewed in small companies as 'what feels right' and decisions are often made using 'gut feelings'. As it has been identified by the pilot case studies, the New Product Development process (NPD) moved from one domain of decisions to another and may be represented by a flow, with *critical decision points* appearing at intervals. This flow and the critical decisions did not follow the representative framework. NPD shown as a linear process with *critical decision points* logically spaced in along the way appeared inappropriate. The pilot case studies showed that the NPD process is neither logical nor tidy – a human-centred process is shown; for example, the participants did not necessarily know that a decision had been taken until later in the process. As a general rule, and as expected, financial risks tend to be a major concern closely followed by personal risks (Jerrard 2002). This study would enable those risks taken not known at the time to provide us with the company's risk assessment at the time so it may be compared to our overall assessment later. This proposal offers the opportunity to examine these issues as they happen.

The knowledge resulting from this research would contribute greatly to the companies studied as a reflective tool for their creative practice. It will also be informative to other small companies NPD process in reflecting their decision-making and risk assessments. The academic audience would benefit from the outcomes of this research as a further development to the knowledge in the fields of creativity, knowledge communication, designing and design management.

### Brief Bio

**Dr Bob Jerrard** is Research Professor in Design and Director of the Research Centre for Design and the Creative Industries at the University of Central England, Institute of Art and Design. His PhD and early work as a Research Fellow at the Royal College of Art centred on the specific problems faced by technology users in the creative industries. He has published widely on theoretical and social aspects of design and technology. He is a Council Member and Fellow of the Design Research Society, an Associate Editor of the Design Journal, a member of the Universities Association for Continuing Education and a

member of the Arts and Humanities Peer Review College. Bob is currently Principal Investigator of the major AHRC research project concerning Risk, Risk Perception and Design. He has directed major research into Fashion Culture and Consumption and Work-based Learning in Art and Design. He has supervised 12 doctoral studies in a variety of areas of design research and examined more than 30. He is a research consultant for a number of international publishing groups and several UK and overseas universities.

## **Presentation 2 Synopsis and Bio to follow**