

## Short description of one of the research areas in the group of Media technology and Interaction Design at Royal Institute of Technology, KTH

### Position statement of the team Socio-technical design practices

Socio-technical design practices is not a new design paradigm, rather it is a widening of the usability agenda encompassing the situatedness of the development of technology. The focus of our interest lies in sensemaking, the understanding of how different stakeholders make sense of human centredness. In our view, usability must become more holistic. There are several areas where we find inspirations and situations of collaboration: socio-material practices, organizational theory, media science, management information systems, science and technology studies.

Our standpoint is to work close to practices of technology development and use. We want to bridge the scientific knowledge to the knowledge in practice. Change processes are in focus and areas of interests are enabling and empowerment, but also a critical view – who empowers whom, and who become disabled? It is important not to be limited to the critical analytic stance but continue to act and create.

Even though we are situated in a technical university, we want to keep a critical stance and not blindly promote technology, but rather look at the utility, value and efficiency. Conceptual design should inform the socio-technical design. How can we work strategically with the sociotechnical design practices and change the world?

### Examples of Projects active in the team

#### Human rights as a driving force for innovation

The consortium consist of partners from the region in west Sweden, Gothenburg univ., Blekinge technical college, KTH and a number of companies.

The starting point for this project are the concrete requirements from the society on equal access to the societys different arenas. At the same time there is an emerging awareness among the trade and the industry and the players in the society that their operations should be made more accessible to all people in our society. Human rights is emerging as the political frame within which more and more choose to handle questions concerning accessibility, equality and diversity.

Questions about accessibility and human rights might be the base for new innovations in companies and organizations.

Via this project we will, by using human rights as a driving force, develop innovative products, services and environments that build on needs from diverse categories of users/customers. One aim of the project is new businesses so that a broader range of groups can take part of the new products, services and environments which can give a more sustainable society.

### UsersAward Research Panel

The UsersAward Research Panel (UARP) was formed in 1998 to act as a quality assurance resource for the UsersAward project, an initiative from LO (Swedish Trade Union Confederation) to do for workplace software, what the TCO (Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees) had done for hardware – to implement a quality label based on the satisfaction of end-users using the software in their daily work. With researches participating from KTH, Uppsala, Linköping and Gävle universities, yearly Users' IT Prize Contest have been arranged between 2000 and 2010. Eight User Certified certificates have been awarded to software packages that have met, and exceeded, the expectations of users in their respective application domain. And a series of national surveys of user satisfaction in industry, health care and banking have been performed. The methodology for quality assurance has been used in German studies (Jochen Prümper) and, as of this writing, the panel has discussions with Danish (Christian Nøhr) and Finish (Hannele Hyppönen) researchers on if, and how, it could be incorporated in software certification programmes being planned in their respective countries. Two international research workshops have been performed (UITQ 2005 and 2007) and in 2011, the UsersAward Living Lab was formed to facilitate European cooperation between researchers interested in taking part in User IT Quality assurance initiatives (<http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/livinglab/users-award-living-lab>).

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Media technology and Interaction Design

[http://www.kth.se/csc/forskning/mid?l=en\\_UK](http://www.kth.se/csc/forskning/mid?l=en_UK)

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