

"ProductWorld", An Interactive Environment for Classifying and Retrieving Product Samples

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Abstract

This paper describes an application named ProductWorld, an interactive computer environment for classifying and retrieving image samples of existing products, aimed at supporting (industrial) designers in the conceptual phase of their design process. The development of ProductWorld is directed from the perspective of the designer as an active 'classifier' and 'retriever' of products. On the input side, adding content is entirely based on visual assessments. The user has to place samples in a circular display in such a way, that their relative positions express their perceived similarities regarding a given criterion. Once the samples have been classified, the designer can navigate through the set of samples, interactively selecting samples, and adjusting the weight of criteria, bringing about new groupings of the samples on the display. Again the designer's attention is drawn toward visual similarities, by interacting with the structured collection.

ProductWorld was evaluated in a small user test, in which designers were given the task to design a portable MP3-player for girls, age 12 to 14. Before as well as during their design work, they made use of ProductWorld. The results of the user test indicated the program to be highly useable and appreciated by designers.

Keywords

Design tools, Classification, Industrial Design, Typology

The Role of Industrial Designers Involved with Ecodesign Strategies in the Japanese Companies

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to research and analyse the role of Industrial designers involved with ecodesign strategies in the Japanese companies and discuss their attitude toward environmentally aware product development.

According to the survey results: the ecodesign strategy adopted by companies for a new design concept developed from a designers' view was characterized with a focus on development of environmental improvement of product. It did not reveal a radical design concept nor new design concept development.

Its implementation was characterized in a short-term strategy.

For both strategic and operational designers the majority of companies have not implemented training and education in ecodesign. They did not consider EMS - Environmental Manager System as an important topic and did not show strong interest in any strategic level in their response. The designers were optimistic on the relationship between establishing of local community and environmental activities by the companies. Half of those designers affirmed that their companies have promoted environmental activities in the local community.

Keywords

Ecodesign, Industrial Design, Sustainable Development