

## **An Invitation to attend the next Usability NJ Meeting**

**Program:** **BILL BUXTON**  
Microsoft Research, USA



**When:** Tuesday, April 21, 2009  
6:30 PM – social hour – hors d'oeuvres and soft drinks  
7:00 PM – presentation  
8:30 PM – book signing - We will be handing out flyers from the publisher that will give people 20 percent off on Bill Buxton's new book. Bill will sign a bookplate that can be affixed to the book

**Where:** Computer Science Large Auditorium  
Princeton University  
35 Olden Street, Room 105  
Princeton, New Jersey 08542

**Directions:** <http://www.cs.princeton.edu/general/visit.php>

**Title:** **From the Materialistic to the Experiential: A Changing Perspective on Design**

**Abstract:**

**A Personal Mantra:** Ultimately, we are deluding ourselves if we think that the products that we design are the "things" that we sell, rather than the individual, social and cultural experience that they engender, and the value and impact that they have. Design that ignores this is not worthy of the name.

I will be talking about how we are in the midst of a transition from where we view design as primarily concerned with the material object (the device, dress, home, service, etc.) to a new state where our focus is on the experience that result from those same objects and services. One of the consequences is that great design (which equates to great experience) cannot be confined to, or the sole prevue of, any one department . be it design, marketing, or engineering, for example. Rather, in this perspective, design has to be viewed in a holistic manner, and executing great design must involve every person in the food chain that produces the product. This not only has deep implications on what designers do. It also compels us to rethink who or what is a designer, and who is not. In order to do great design in the future . whatever that may mean . implies that the most important thing that we need to design is design itself. And yet, the paradox is, this is the only way to save design as a distinct and critical profession.

## Biography:

Bill Buxton is a relentless advocate for innovation, design, and - especially - the appropriate consideration of human values, capacity, and culture in the conception, implementation, and use of new products and technologies. This is reflected in his [research](#), teaching, [talks](#), and writing - including his column on design and innovation for [BusinessWeek.com](#), and his 2007 book, [Sketching User Experiences](#).

In December 2005, he was appointed [Principal Researcher at Microsoft Research](#). Prior to that, he was Principal of his own Toronto-based boutique design and consulting firm, *Buxton Design*.

Buxton began his career as a composer and performer, having done a Bachelor of Music degree at Queen's University. He then studied and taught for two years at the [Institute of Sonology](#), Utrecht, Holland.

In 1975 Bill started designing his own digital musical instruments. This is what led him to the [University of Toronto](#), where he completed an MSc in Computer Science, and subsequently jointed the faculty. It is also the path that brought him into the field of human-computer interaction, which is his technical area of specialty.

From 1987-89, Buxton was in Cambridge England, helping establish a new satellite of Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (EuroPARC). From 1989-94 he split his time between Toronto, where he was Scientific Director of the *Ontario Telepresence Project*, and Palo Alto, California, where he was a consulting researcher at [Xerox PARC](#).

From 1994 until December 2002, he was Chief Scientist of *Alias/Wavefront*, (now part of Autodesk) and from 1995, its parent company *SGI Inc*. In the fall of 2004, he became a part-time instructor in the Department of Industrial Design at the [Ontario College of Art and Design](#). In 2004/05 he was also Visiting Professor at the [Knowledge Media Design Institute](#) (KMDI) at the University of Toronto. He currently splits his time between Redmond and Toronto.

In 1995, Buxton became the third recipient of the [Canadian Human-Computer Communications Society](#) Award for contributions to research in computer graphics and human-computer interaction. In 2000 he was given the New Media Visionary of the Year Award at the [Canadian New Media Awards](#). In 2001, *The Hollywood Reporter* named him one of the 10 most influential innovators in Hollywood. In 2002, *Time Magazine* named him one of the top 5 designers in Canada. Also in 2002, he was elected to the [CHI Academy](#). In October, 2005, he and Gord Kurtenbach received the "Lasting Impact Award", from ACM [UIST 2005](#), which was awarded for their 1991 paper, [Issues in Combining Marking and Direct Manipulation Techniques](#). In June, 2007, he was named Doctor of Design, *Honoris Causa* by the [Ontario College of Art and Design](#), in 2008 he became the 10th recipient of the ACM SIGCHI [Lifetime Achievement Award](#), "for fundamental contributions to the field of Computer Human Interaction," and in January 2009 he was elected [Fellow of the Association of Computing Machinery](#) (ACM), for his contributions to the field of human-computer interaction.

From 1998-2004, Buxton was on the board of the [Canadian Film Centre](#), and in 1998-99 chaired a panel to advise the premier of Ontario on developing long term policy to foster [innovation](#), through the *Ontario Jobs and Investment Board*. He is on a number of academic advisory boards, the [Department of Industrial Design](#) of the Technical University in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. Buxton is a member of the [Association of Computing Machinery](#) and the [Industrial Designers Society of America](#).

Outside of work, Buxton loves the outdoors. He is especially passionate about mountains, including skiing, climbing, and touring, both in summer and winter. This interest extends to the written word. He has [contributed to the literature](#) on mountain history and exploration, is an avid [bibliophile](#), and was one of the three jury members of the [2005 Banff Mountain Book Festival](#). In addition, he is an avid cyclist, and active in kayaking, SCUBA diving and windsurfing. He is an accomplished [equestrian](#), and in 1996 was awarded the *Veteran Rider of the Year* award from the [Ontario Horse Trials Association](#), and in 2000 was named to the [Talent Squad](#) of the National Eventing Team. Finally, he has a life-long fascination with both art and his wife, Elizabeth - who owns and operates a contemporary art gallery, [Gallery 888](#), in Toronto, Canada.

For more information, visit [www.billbuxton.com](http://www.billbuxton.com).

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