Designing for a Sustainable Future

Daniela Busse  
SAP Labs, LLC (Palo Alto)  
3410 Hillview Ave.  
Palo Alto, California 94304  
daniela.busse@sap.com

Eli Blevis  
School of Informatics and Computing  
Indiana University – Bloomington  
919 E 10th St, Suite 239  
Bloomington IN USA 47408

Catherine Howard  
Jump Associates  
101 S. Ellsworth Ave., Ste 600  
San Mateo, CA 94401

Brinda Dalal  
PARC (Palo Alto Research Center)  
3333 Coyote Hill Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94304 USA

David Fore  
Cooper  
100 First Street, 26th Floor  
San Francisco, California 94105

Lara Lee  
Jump Associates  
101 S. Ellsworth Ave., Ste 600  
San Mateo, CA 94401

Abstract
In 1987 Brundtland defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." [1] The simplicity of this statement is seductive - but what really constitutes sustainable development, and defines the role of user experience research and design within it, is at best elusive. This workshop aims at bringing together experts and researchers in User Experience and related disciplines for a hands-on discussion of questions, insights, and approaches in designing for a sustainable future.

Author Keywords
Design, Research, Sustainability

ACM Classification Keywords
H5.m. Information interfaces: Miscellaneous.

General Terms
Design, Human Factors, Management, Theory

Introduction
The role of design (or HCI and other related disciplines) in Sustainability has been debated in various (online and offline) venues, including most recently at CHI 2009 in Boston, where a full-day workshop and two paper sessions on Sustainability brought together experts and practitioners from diverse backgrounds to discuss what “sustainable design” might mean in different contexts, and what our profession(s) can do to contribute to the drive towards a more sustainable future.

A distinction was made between different ways of how sustainability might be a factor for Design or User Experience as a discipline: there might be sustainable design practices (e.g. by default looking for sustainable materials in the context of e.g. architecture and construction).

There might be sustainable products that design contributes to as a discipline (such as the design of the Floodplains website [2]). In order to make these products more successful and ensure uptake, an improved user experience and better design can do its part to help with that. Finally, design or user experience approaches (such as design thinking, ethnography, user empathy, holistic analysis) can help conceive of novel or improved products or experiences that address sustainability goals, and ultimately help us meet our own needs while also not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (such as “glowing” power cords, or staircases measuring up against elevators in speed & energy use [3]). For each of these three definitions of how design might contribute to Sustainability, there might be success metrics – mostly still to be defined – of what exactly constitutes a sustainable product, process, or experience.

Workshop Goals
The goals of the workshop are to:

• Bring together a diverse community of people from industry, academia, and individuals who are interested in the topic of sustainability
• Provide a common understanding of sustainability
• Provide an opportunity for people to come together to share their knowledge, experience and passion on the topic of sustainability
• Encourage collaboration through a research question challenge and discussion throughout the workshop

Crossing the Chasm(s)
We would like to invite participants from a broad range of disciplines to attend this workshop and help us address these discussion points creatively and collaboratively. This includes User Experience (User Research, Ethnography, Design, Interaction Design, HCI, etc.), Product Management, Social Science, Philosophy, Engineering,
professionals from start-ups, non-profits, or think-tanks serving ‘green’ or other sustainable causes, anyone with a relevant interest or contribution to spark the debate, to further our insight, and to enable effective action.

A Design Agenda for Sustainability
The longer term goal of this workshop is to contribute to a Design Agenda on Sustainability, an opportunity for our discipline(s) to take a stance on their vision of how they want to contribute to a sustainable future, and strategies on how to get there.

About the Organizers
Daniela Busse is a UX Director at SAP Labs (Palo Alto) and has spent the last 13 years in the fields of User Research, Product Definition, and Design & Innovation Planning, informing enquiry, ideation, and productization. Her current focus at SAP Labs is Research for Sustainability, on topics such as Energy and Carbon Management, Carbon Labels, business design for sustainable enterprises and hospitals, and UX strategy for sustainable design. In her past, she led a product definition, user experience, and agile prototyping team as part of a global innovation group in the Office of SAP’s CEO, and prior to that had worked closely with product planning and development as part of the Microsoft Office Design Group. She received her M.A. in Psychology and Computing Science, as well as her Ph.D. from the University of Glasgow (UK).

Brinda Dalal is a social intrapreneur and research scientist at PARC (Palo Alto Research Center), who helps companies drive technology innovation. She co-founded the Clean Technology Initiative at PARC in 2003, which spawned projects ranging from efficient solar PV to erasable paper. Brinda obtained a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge. Since then, she has been working in high technology, most recently on mobile phones and the future of work.

Catherine Howard, ethnography practitioner at Jump Associates, has conducted ethnographic and design research in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Japan, Canada and the UK for some of the world's leading brands. Before joining the growth strategy business, she wrote and produced several documentaries for PBS and A&E Networks, including PowerShift, an award-winning educational film about energy and sustainability. Her recent academic work examines the role of photography in self-representation among indigenous communities. She holds an MA in Material Anthropology and Museum Ethnography from Oxford University, and a BA in Cultural Anthropology from UCLA.

Eli Blevis serves on the faculty in the Human-Computer Interaction Design program of the School of Informatics at Indiana University, Bloomington. Dr. Blevis' primary area of research, and the one for which he is best known, is sustainable interaction design. This area of research and Dr. Blevis' core expertise are situated within the confluence of human computer interaction as it owes to the computing and cognitive sciences, and design as it owes to the reflection of design criticism and the practice of critical design. Dr. Blevis has published more than 50 articles and papers and has given several invited colloquia internationally on sustainable interaction design and the larger context of notions of design.

David Fore. For the past 12 years, David Fore has led the design consultancy at Cooper, where he developed many of the Goal-Directed® methods now commonplace throughout the industry. Software systems he has designed have helped a broad range of people, from factory workers to physicians, golf course superintendents to telco network planners, epidemiologists to ordinary people who can’t be bothered by rude software. His practice now focuses on Ecologic Interaction Design, which defines system design problems in the larger context.

Lara Lee manages client relationships and is a member of the senior leadership team for Jump Associates. Lara has built Jump’s sustainability practice, helping organizations to pursue strategies of natural reinvention by matching their unique strengths to the real needs of people and the world. She is a frequent speaker at sustainability, marketing and innovation forums and is one of a handful of people worldwide ever recognized by BusinessWeek as a Master of Innovation. Prior to joining Jump, Lara served as Harley-Davidson’s Vice President of Enthusiast Services, starting new businesses, launching new services, and leading growth in international and domestic markets. Lara holds dual master’s degrees in business administration and international affairs from the University of Pennsylvania and the Wharton School and holds a bachelor’s degree in Chinese language from Brown University.

REFERENCES
