



Design and the Social Sciences: Making Connections (Contemporary Trends Institute Series)

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The social sciences have a distinctive contribution to make to the understanding and handling of design issues, both in product and systems design and in the design of the built environment. The role of cognitive psychology, particularly ergonomics, to the design process has traditionally been well appreciated. Because it provides important insights into the way people process information cognitively, it is a powerful tool for the design of usable products, buildings and systems.

This book explores the disciplines of social psychology, sociology and anthropology, which provide techniques for investigating the relationships between people and design, in assessing the role that products and the built environment play in peoples lives and in setting product requirements based on this understanding. These include ergonomic user requirements, such as usability and accessibility, and also functional and aesthetic issues which will determine the overall quality of a design in terms of how it is experienced. This means looking at the functional and ergonomic properties of a design and going beyond to issues relating to the fit of the design to the lifestyle and aspirations of those who experience it.

Written by specialists working at the front line in the consumer product industries - as well as by designers and applied theorists - the book describes new ways of understanding product development, innovation and design. Methods for the incorporation of user population in the design process are discussed and notions of use and experience, instead of forms and materials, serve as a basis to present the design of consumer products under a totally new light.

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