Project 6453: a Multi-touch Interactive Table in a Concept Showroom

Abstract
This project realized a multi-touch interactive table designed for 4 people use at the same time, which integrates USB, Bluetooth, and e-mail functionality to serve as an on-site information and social platform in a concept showroom in Taiwan.

Keywords
Multi-touch, interactive table, showroom, kiosk.

General Terms
Design, Human Factors

Introduction
In the March of 2009, NIKE Taiwan Inc. invited us to design an information kiosk and embed it in their newly opened concept showroom NIKE 6453, a place serves as a gallery as well as a new inspiration for social exchange and Taiwanese pop culture.

Following the positioning of the showroom, the purpose for this kiosk would not only be to communicate brand image, entice people to access relevant detailed information about the products and concepts, but also facilitates social interactions. Hence, we’ve designed the kiosk in a form of an interactive table, which can be used up to 4 people together without interfering with each other. The novel visual interface for the table was designed not only to reflect upon this 4-people use feature, but also to deliver the young and experimental spirit of the brand and the showroom [1]. The multi-touch surface [2] makes people access product information in an intuitive and fun way, whilst the USB, Bluetooth, and e-mail functionality feature in-depth communication capability, which enable visitors to download and share product information with their...
Combined these features makes the interactive table more functional, evocative, and socially-related.

**Visual Interface Design**

In the earlier design phase, we studied Optical Art (Illusions) in art history and believed that the idea of impossible spaces and Ying-Yang will give an evocative visual and sensual experience as well as solve the issue of building a coexistent reading experience for multiple users and negotiate the balance of limited screen territory, multi-touch sensing, and visual elements.

After rounds of sketches and prototypes, we developed another visual system and focused on the conjunction between content containers. Then we learned that we needed to create visual components as a glue to make four containers connected and relevant. Thus, the rest of UI fell into place naturally.

**User Interactions**

At the opening party, about 100-150 Taiwanese artists, including actors, actress, singers and TV program hosts were invited to come and tried out the interactive table. These people were considered not only celebrities in pop culture but also opinion leaders among young creatives. By observing conversations and activities around the table in, we experienced valuable user reactions.

What we have learned from this is to see the timeline of evolving learning and network effects. In most design pitches, designers are willing to take a risk to bring new functions to clients but usually fail to express the actual needs and values in context. The network effects are hard to measure but if we look at this project in a larger scales such as narrative environment, social positions and the power of blogging, it indeed is a function worth to try and fail for another inspiring use of USB beyond transferring files.

**Conclusion**

We believe that the experience in this project has shown a lot of possibilities in different aspects for further explorations. The interactive table we have designed could serve 4 people use at the same time without interfering with each other. It did more than showcasing information but also enticing people to touch and explore it. The interactive table also provides a social space for people to experiment with their personal devices. It acts more like functional furniture that serves not only informational but also social purposes in the showroom, which performs quite different from traditional information kiosk.

In the realm of interactive agency, we shall not consider project outcomes as a solid and single design object. In fact, due to the nature of interaction design, designers should help clients to foresee the emerging needs of living content and platform in a social-related project. Although it’s budget-dependent and project-by-project, it’s designers’ job to reveal core values of a true interactive design agency.

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**Citations**
