Contextual Design: Defining Customer-Centered Systems (Interactive Technologies)

By Hugh Beyer, Karen Holtzblatt

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This book introduces a customer-centered approach to business by showing how data gathered from people while they work can drive the definition of a product or process while supporting the needs of teams and their organizations. This is a practical, hands-on guide for anyone trying to design systems that reflect the way customers want to do their work. The authors developed Contextual Design, the method discussed here, through their work with teams struggling to design products and internal systems. In this book, you'll find the underlying principles of the method and how to apply them to different problems, constraints, and organizational situations.

Contextual Design enables you to
+ gather detailed data about how people work and use systems
+ develop a coherent picture of a whole customer population
+ generate systems designs from a knowledge of customer work
+ diagram a set of existing systems, showing their relationships, inconsistencies, redundancies, and omissions

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- Sales Rank: #238615 in Books
- Published on: 1997-09-15
- Released on: 1997-09-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.12" w x 7.25" l, 1.81 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 496 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
There's certainly no shortage of software design methods: most demand total allegiance, and many claim to be the only true way to delivering useful and maintainable software systems in a timely manner. *Contextual Design* describes another worthwhile software engineering method, one that places the user (or customer) at the forefront of the software design process from beginning to end. This method seems to be a particularly worthwhile addition to the literature.

Contextual Design begins with *contextual inquiry*, where software developers interview users and attempt to understand the way they work. Such "customer empathy" is central to the Contextual Design process and a total understanding of "work" within organizations is the mantra here. The book describes how, later in the process, software developers step back from the user data and do an "affinity," which is an overall analysis of hundreds (or even thousands) of individual facts. *Contextual Design* then explains the additional steps required to build systems using this method, including building models for flow, sequence, and artifacts, and establishing the cultural and the physical environments for a system. After getting an overview, developers consolidate these initial models, get more user input, and then design user interfaces.

This book, written in a clear, informal style without excessive jargon, reads very much like a book on business motivation. Various practitioners of Contextual Design offer short testimonials on the software design method.

Review
"If necessity is the mother of invention, then if you don't know what the users need you can't invent. Karen and Hugh present a step-by-step way to uncover, understand, and use those needs. If developers are not already using techniques like those presented here, they should read this book carefully to see what they are missing."
?-Dan Bricklin, co-creator of VisiCalc

"Hugh Beyer and Karen Holtzblatt are widely recognized as the foremost experts on contextual inquiry, and they have packed what they know into a book of both substance and intelligence. It has been a long wait but worth it. The book lucidly shows how to capture the real requirements of customers and how to tailor designs to fit their needs. If you care about your customers and want to create products they as well as want, then you need to understand contextual inquiry and contextual design. You need this book."
--Larry Constantine, Principal Consultant, Constantine & Locwood, Ltd.; Professor of Computing Sciences, University of Technology, Sydney (Australia); Author of Constantine on Peopleware and Software for User

"For many years, Beyer and Holtzblatt have been pioneers in the field of human-computer interaction, showing how the context of computer use can be (and needs to be) the central focus of analysis and design. This book conveys the understanding and wisdom that they have gained from their experience in contextual design in a form that is accessible to students and design practitioners. It will serve as a guide and handbook for the next generation of interaction designers, and as a result we can expect the usability and appropriateness of computer systems to be greatly improved."
--Terry Winograd, Stanford University

From the Back Cover

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brian Crafton:

Now a day individuals who Living in the era exactly where everything reachable by match the internet and the resources inside can be true or not call for people to be aware of each facts they get. How many people to be smart in getting any information nowadays? Of course the solution is reading a book. Reading a book can help men and women out of this uncertainty Information specially this Contextual Design: Defining Customer-Centered Systems (Interactive Technologies) book because this book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the data in this book hundred per cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you may already know.

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Spent a free time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you need to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book is usually option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the e-book untitled Contextual Design: Defining Customer-Centered Systems (Interactive Technologies) can be excellent book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

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