

## Simply the best - Gorgeousness in the user interface

There we were at Nordichi2004 when, empowered by the Nordic liberalism, we began to debate the usefulness of gorgeousness as a desirable aspect of an interface. This debate began with the definition of usability and the premise that user satisfaction is important. Satisfaction said we! Who is happy with a satisfactory interface, surely we all want more! At that point, gorgeousness didn't seem too extreme a notion; the HCI community has already embraced seductive interfaces, has studied captivation, and has defined funology; and so the possibilities for gorgeousness seemed worthwhile pursuing.

But what might be a gorgeous interface? That is a difficult one to call, surely gorgeousness is in the eye of the beholder and of course, this is the problem with all subjective measures. As we debated this point in a Finnish eating place, the night was drawing in and so, somewhat weary, and unsure whether or not such an interface existed, we turned our attention to the conference delegates. This was it! A scale of gorgeousness was within our reach, and shortly, after some discussion and soul searching, we pronounced Jan Gulliksen to be 'most gorgeous HCI delegate in attendance', presented the award to him, and moved on! (You may like to quiz us at British HCI to find out who came 2<sup>nd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup>!)

Frivolous and amusing though this may be, in a world that is chokka with award events, best continuous drama (used to be soap), best plastic product (Lego won this one), and most original website, it seems timely to consider how we might rate our members (indeed ourselves) (gorgeousness aside!). It is traditional to present a 'best paper' and 'best reviewer' award at conferences, and anyone who has attended the big American conferences cannot help but be inspired (?) with the award ceremonies that they put on! So if we were to have a British HCI award ceremony, what might be up for grabs?

Of course, this brings us around to value. We might want to ask the question 'what is the value of a HCI delegate to a conference?' Is it task based; the ability to write a good paper, the ability to influence governments, the ability to hold an audience or work a room? Or is it about potential; what the delegate knows, who the delegate knows, what the delegate promises? Maybe it is all about appearances; how wacky or how organized the delegate appears, or simply how gorgeous! If we were to have a most valuable delegate award would it be given to a presenter? Would it go to an organizer? Would it go to the most gorgeous delegate, or would it go to the one who brought in the most money!

And this brings us full circle, Edinburgh will be my 5<sup>th</sup> British HCI conference (I am only a novice!), but at each of these, were I to give the award, it would be given for different reasons and to different individual. There is no best delegate!

Best question (judged by the presenters)  
Most friendly (to people on their own!)  
Most helpful (to newcomers)  
Least critical (of the organizers)