SUSAN L. K. GORBET

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I am fascinated by the challenges of turning cutting-edge technology into products and experiences. I draw on my design, psychology and computer science background to make technology work for real people. I enjoy leadership roles in creative, dynamic organizations where the strategic importance of good design is part of the culture.

STRENGTHS

- Leadership and strategic vision focused on the user experience.
- Creative approaches to new technology design challenges.
- Strong conceptual design and interface architecture skills.
- Engaging public speaking and teaching presence.
- Enjoyment of mentoring and an ability to help others discover a passion for design.
- Clear communication with both engineers/programmers and artists/designers.
- Experience in cross-cultural interface design and team dynamics.

DESIGN BACKGROUND

Creative Technology Designer
Gorbet Design, Toronto, Ontario   October 2001 – present

Co-founded a small design firm specializing in concept, research, analysis, and design of creative technology projects. We design technology-mediated experiences including installations, products, web sites and art.

User Experience Director – www.snapfish.com
Snapfish Corporation, San Francisco, CA   April 2000 – April 2001

Directed the creative team for www.snapfish.com, an online photo developing, sharing, and printing website.
- Led a small team of designers, writers, and a producer to deliver 7 major product releases in 10 months.
- Inherited an awkwardly designed site, then steadily increased key business metrics by improving the user experience in quickly implementable pieces.
- Drove design directions and project priorities based on the user experience impact on company strategy.
- Provided creative direction for all website projects, improving brand, visual, and interaction consistency.
- Defined the interaction, including flowcharts and page schematics, for multiple new site features.
- Led site-wide re-architecture with an external team, while continuing to provide design direction for ongoing internal projects. Created extensive documentation and recruited a creative director to execute the re-design. Doubled or tripled many important metrics upon the launch of the new design.
- Snapfish was voted users' favorite photo site in a PCData survey in February 2001. Snapfish surveys have returned increasingly high ease-of-use ratings from current users.

Director, User Interface Design – www.excite.com
Product Design Group, Excite@Home, Redwood City, CA   December 1999 – April 2000

Led the User Interface Design team for www.excite.com, providing interaction design and usability testing to the Excite Studios organization.
- Successfully re-organized UI designers into a central group, boosting the visibility of designers, growing the demand for interaction design, and increasing the strategic involvement of design.
- Worked with senior management to create design directions and assign priorities to projects based on company strategy. Moved designers from quick consulting to dedicated product design to increase the long-term benefits of design efforts.

- Constructed process documentation and standardized design process across the company in cooperation with Creative and Technical Directors.
- Guided team methodology to deliver a re-design of the excite.com site architecture.
- Taught a well-reviewed basic interface design concepts course to a class of excite.com product managers.
- Tripled the number of usability tests able to be performed in a year by replacing an ineffective third party with an internal lab, restructuring user test methodology and hiring a testing lab manager.
- Mentored junior designers in process and methods through weekly meetings, design reviews, and facilitation of product team communication.

Senior Interface Designer – Next Generation Web Applications
Excite Extreme, Excite@Home, Redwood City, CA   March 1999 – November 1999

Designed web application interfaces for Excite@Home's advanced technology group.
- Evaluated new technologies, companies, and product ideas
- Defined lightweight experimental products implementable in 1-2 months. Used schematics, flowcharts, drawings, and documents to communicate with producers, engineers, and designers.
- Designed single page interface to 3D fashion application, resulting in great user feedback and client delight.
- Hired testing company, wrote test plan, and oversaw user testing in London for UK teen girl web site. Wrote 11-page preliminary analysis that gained wide circulation because readers called it "enjoyable".
- Created and handed off the schematics and flow chart for a virtual makeover application that were used without modification 3 months later.

Interface Design Consultant – Web Portal Personalization
Zip2, Mountain View, CA   November 1998 – March 1999

Designed layout and flow for login and user personalization of Zip2's next-generation Web portal applications.

Producer/Designer – Online 3D Community and www.cosmosoftware.com
Cosmo Software, A Silicon Graphics Company, Mountain View, CA   November 1997 – July 1998

Led Moscow-based technical and artistic teams in the design and architecture of a multi-user 3D online service.
- Designed an innovative approach to social 3D, resulting in aggressive interest from many large web community service providers.
- Pulled together a cross-cultural team of engineers and designers in spite of scant resources.

Stepped in on short notice as the *cosmosoftware.com* producer.
- Worked to improve morale and processes by initiating productive communication and giving more responsibility to individuals.
- Increased web traffic on site by mentoring re-design of Cosmo home page.

Interaction Designer – Cosmo Player 2.0
Cosmo Software, A Silicon Graphics Company, Mountain View, CA   August 1996 – November 1997

Designed the new interface for Cosmo Player 2.0, a browser for viewing 3D on the Internet.
- Defined the innovative behaviors, interaction, and look of the new interface. Researched academic work, competitors, and 3D games to understand and improve on 3D navigation.
- Led engineering team to refine and simplify the design through initial user testing and extensive prototyping.
- Managed and art-directed a graphic design contractor to create the final artwork on a tight schedule.
- Mediated highly-charged discussions between engineering, marketing, and design to forge consensus around the new interface of Cosmo's flagship product.
- Received excellent product reviews and an enthusiastic consumer response to the interface.
- SGI filed six patent applications as a result of this work.

Interaction Designer – Interactive Television
Interactive Digital Solutions, Silicon Graphics, Inc., Mountain View, CA   March 1995 – August 1996

Designed interactive television video-on-demand and information-on-demand applications for the Japanese market, working closely with a content creation team.
- Defined all user interactions for the applications. Created drawings, diagrams, specifications, flowcharts, and prototypes to communicate with artists and programmers.
- Ensured Japanese enjoyment and usability of the applications by work with cultural experts. Communicated extensively with Japanese clients, creating consensus on vocabulary, cultural, and general approval issues.
- Ran usability tests in Japan and California. Wrote the test scripts, coached the bilingual test administrator, kept informal running transcripts during tests, and wrote the preliminary results reports.
- Co-inventor on a patent filed in Japan by NTT for the video-on-demand interface.

Software Designer
New Media Division, Oracle Corporation, Redwood Shores, CA   March 1993 – March 1995

Designed and implemented an interactive television fashion application in conjunction with a graphic designer.
- Created two immediately intuitive interfaces – using touchscreen and remote control – for use by thousands of consumers per day at Disney's Epcot Center.

Research Assistant
People, Computers & Design project, Stanford University, Stanford, CA   September 1991 - 1993

Designed and rapidly prototyped interfaces to very large information spaces in Professor Terry Winograd's research group. Explored the conceptualization, organization, and sharing of online information.

Internships
Rapid Ethnography: Lucy Suchman, Ph.D. Xerox PARC, Palo Alto, CA   Summer 1992
Visual Programming: Ken Kahn, Ph.D. Xerox PARC, Palo Alto, CA   Summer 1991
Medical Interface Design: Bonnie Weber, Ph.D. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA   1990 - 1991

PUBLICATIONS AND TALKS

Basic Principles of User Interface Design. Class for Excite@Home product managers. November 1999.
Navigating in 3D: The Design of Cosmo Player. Invited talk at the Swedish Interactive Institute. September 1999*.
Tips & Tricks for 3D Navigation. Article for vrml.sgi.com. December 1997
Interfacing the VRML World: Designing Cosmo Player 2.0. Interview with vrml.sgi.com. August 1997
Inside Oracle Card 2.0: Taking Advantage of New Functionality. Oracle Magazine. Fall 1993

EDUCATION

Stanford University
2 years toward a Computer Science Ph.D. 1991-1993   Concentration in Interface Design
Winner of National Physical Science Consortium Fellowship

University of Pennsylvania
Computer and Cognitive Science Dual Degree 1991   Bachelor of Applied Science, Computer Science
                                                          Bachelor of Arts, Psychology

ALTERNATE FASCINATIONS

Writing, interior design, origami, technology art, travel, jewelry design, skiing, scuba.