
MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT September 27, 2011

The iXL Learning System: Putting User-Centered Design to Practice

Presented by Fisher-Price, Inc.

Dr. Kathleen Kremer, Senior Manager of Child Research
Donald W. Stucke, Jr., Principal Designer

Organized by Western NY Chapter

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

Abstract

In our talk, we focus on the design and development of the Fisher-Price iXL Learning System, a “smart device” for children aged three to seven. This toy serves six functions: as an interactive story book, a game player, a notebook, an art studio, a music player, and a photo viewer. We will address how we came up with the idea for this product, some key challenges we faced given our target age group and product sector, and methods we used to test with young children throughout the R&D process. The iXL Learning System was a 2011 finalist for the Toy Industry Association’s Preschool Toy of the Year and Educational Toy of the Year. We attribute much of its success to testing as early as possible, iteratively, and often to ensure that our team continuously made the best design decisions.

About the Speakers

Kathleen Kremer, Ph.D. is Senior Manager of Child Research at Fisher-Price where one of her roles is supervising user-experience research for such categories as Preschool Learning, Preschool Electronics, and Creative Activities. She also serves as a company-wide expert in child development, curriculum, gaming, and interface design. Since joining Fisher-Price, she has helped develop over one hundred interactive toys, software, and other entertainment products for children and their families. These products include the Smart Cycle (2008 Toy Industry Association Most Innovative and Best Educational Toy of the Year) and the Kid Tough Digital Camera (2007 Toy Industry Association Electronic Toy of the Year). Prior to working at Fisher-Price, Kathleen was a scientist at Educational Testing Service, where she designed and evaluated computerized instruction and assessment tools. She has also worked as a consultant on formative and summative evaluations of various educational television programs, such as *Between the Lions*, *Sesame Street*, *NOVA*, and *Newton’s Apple*. Her publications span a number of topics, including early literacy, television comprehension, math instruction, and causality. Kathleen received her B.A. in Psychology from the University of Minnesota, her M.A. in Experimental Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, and her Ph.D. in Experimental Child Psychology from the University of Minnesota. Her favorite childhood toy was the Fisher-Price Play Family School with *wooden* figures.

Donald W. Stucke, Jr. is a Principal Designer at Fisher-Price, where his recent works focus on Preschool Learning and Electronics. Additionally, he has been involved with a number of other product categories at Fisher-Price over the last ten years, including ViewMaster 3D, Creative Activities, and Active Gear. Don’s professional experience also includes developing housewares for World Kitchen & Corning Glass, luggage for American Tourister, and outdoor power equipment for Craftsman and Homelite. Don holds a BFA in Industrial Design from the Rhode Island School of Design and was Vice-Chair of the Central New York Chapter of the IDSA. His favorite childhood toy was the Evil Knievel Stunt Cycle.

About the Sponsors

High Tech Rochester is a non-profit whose mission is to be a **catalyst** for entrepreneurship and innovation-based economic development, by applying **business expertise** and **network connections** to aid in the formation and profitable growth of companies in the Greater Rochester, NY Region. HTR provides a suite of services including: Technology Commercialization for very early stage opportunities, Business Incubation for high-growth-potential startups, and Growth Services for existing businesses seeking to improve their top and bottom line performance.

Usability Associates helps clients to create compelling products having a superior user experience. UA achieves this by employing various methods for user research, usability design and evaluation at all stages of product development.

Details

DATE/TIME: September 27, 2011 @ 6:00pm – 7:00pm. Come at 5:30 for networking and light meal.

PLACE: Multi Media Center Room at Lennox Tech Enterprise Center, 150 Lucius Gordon Drive [See map](#).

COST: Members & Students – no cost; Non-members - \$5 payable at the door.

RSVP required-limited seating: Contact Mark Johnson at mdjohnson62@gmail.com by Sept 23.