

# Design by Actualization

A manifesto on the creation of interactive artifacts for human use.

## INTRODUCTION

Human relationships with interactive objects are often extremely complicated. This degree of complexity means that their design and creation requires a careful approach.

The following is a collection of working principles which can help to create the conditions for success.

A common theme is *actuality*, i.e. working with the concrete realities of a given situation. This is in opposition to approaches which feature abstract documents, visualizations and plans.

## ON GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

**Real objects** are more valuable than abstract documents

Make as few documents as possible that describe what you plan to do. Concern yourself with making tangible things.

**Outcomes** are more valuable than a fixed scope

Remain flexible. Success should be defined by real outcomes for people, not how closely you adhere to a checklist of features.

**Open collaboration** is more valuable than protection from change

Embrace changing requirements and needs. Use them to create better outcomes. Abandon protection mechanisms designed to prevent this.

## ON STRUCTURE AND TEAMS

**Bottom up teamwork** is more valuable than top down genius

Decentralize thinking and decision making. Remove hierarchy as much as possible. Provide physical spaces that let teams work together effectively.

**Diverse skills** are more valuable than specialization

This applies to individuals and teams. Assemble versatilists in small, multi-disciplinary teams.

**Focused effort** is more valuable than multi-tasking

Solving short term problems by dividing peoples attention has a long term cost which is easily overlooked.

## ON METHOD AND PROCESS

**Open-minded study** is more valuable than expert hypothesis

Learn the realities of a new design problem through first hand contact with people. Prior knowledge and assumptions can be misleading and obscure new ideas.

**Iterative evolution** is more valuable than a linear plan

Design your process to be iterative. Avoid predicting the future with detailed plans. Instead, react to reality as it unfolds.

**Structured creativity** is more valuable than sporadic brilliance

Ideation is a learnable, reproducible skill. Rather than leaving it to chance, use structured situations and techniques to enable it.

**Prototypes** are more valuable than mental visualization

Don't attempt to accurately visualize complex objects and interactions. Learn by making mistakes in the real world rather than aiming for perfection in the abstract.