

## Meta-Design

1. The main idea of this article is that in order for end-user design to be effective in the future, it will have to adopt a system of collaboration, or meta-design between groups of end-users. In this way, evolvable systems can be created which allow modifications to be done when necessary.
2. I find meta-design to be interesting because it is where I spend a lot of my time online. Websites such as Facebook and Myspace, although not very “beneficial” to one’s life can help pass time or allow you to see any social implications within your social circle. Some websites that are actually beneficial could involve Flickr, which I find to be a really interesting site. Users from all over the world can share their photographs and other users can critique them on what is needed or how they can improve their photography skills. Another interesting feature is that there are “groups” that one can join. These groups are made of other people who share the same interest as you, and from there you can get more subject specific critiques etc.
3. The only major technical challenge that I see for meta-design would be its relatively steep learning curve. One has to be fairly adept to using the internet. It’s almost a technological problem within different generations of people. For example, my generation and some of the younger and slightly older ones have a good grasp on how to navigate through the jumbled and slang terms of internet communication today. All of my friends and most of the people in my age group all know how to use Facebook, Myspace etc. without any hesitation. Take someone like my mother or father and they would be completely lost. They wouldn’t know what a “private message” is, what it means to be “poked” on Facebook or what it means to be “tagged” in someone’s album.

As far as the social challenges associated with meta-design, the only one that really stands out to me that I have experienced is the will to be different and unique. In other words, people don’t want to conform to what the society is doing around them. They don’t want to follow trends and be part of one. An example of this is Myspace. Several of my friends refuse to make an account. When I ask them why that is they all reply “because everyone has a Myspace.” This to me says that they want to be different. They want to set the trend and be the one who is followed.

This action could also be examined as being a way to receive attention on the other hand. By not making an account one is seen as almost an outcast. As a result, the people in this person’s social circle will confront them and attempt to persuade them in becoming a part of the “community.” Which is just what the “outcast” was looking for, attention.

4. One example of meta-design that isn’t computer related is this job that I was looking into my freshman year (the exact name of the company escapes me.) This company was a phone service. Let me first start this off by saying I think the whole thing was a scam. One of my friends called me and asked if I wanted a job that pays well without a lot of work. I said yes and we went to a meeting. The first thing I noticed when we pulled up was the cars that were in the parking lot. A brand new Porsche 911 Turbo, a new Corvette and several Lexus LS series and a few Mercedes

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were all parked next to each other. Off the start it seemed suspicious. Continuing, the person who contacted my friend receives  $x$  amount of money for “recruiting” new employees. When starting the job, new workers spend \$400 to get the training required to basically sell the phone service to people within the new employee’s social group. Once the training is completed, the employee then recruits new people and gets paid  $x$  amount of dollars for how many people they can get in the business. Basically the higher up you are the more money you get for what other people do, its basically a pyramid scheme where no one really loses money but seems to just gain it and increase the size of the company.

5. As I mentioned earlier, Flickr allows people to view and critique other’s photos from all over the world. It enables people to tag others photos and show what they like, or dislike about the particular photograph. Users can also view a global map by which they can see where and when people took different pictures, they can then click the specific location and see the pictures from the photographer. By allowing users to have so much freedom, it helps build Flickr’s community as a whole.