Make It So: Interaction Design Lessons from Science Fiction

By Nathan Shedroff, Christopher Noessel

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Many designers enjoy the interfaces seen in science fiction films and television shows. Freed from the rigorous constraints of designing for real users, sci-fi production designers develop blue-sky interfaces that are inspiring, humorous, and even instructive. By carefully studying these "outsider" user interfaces, designers can derive lessons that make their real-world designs more cutting edge and successful.

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Editorial Review

Review
Designers who love science fiction (and don't we all?) will go bananas over Shedroff and Noessel's delightful and informative book on how interaction design in sci-fi movies informs interaction design in the real world. Many movie interfaces are remarkably creative, effective, and useful, and the authors analyze and deconstruct more than a century of cinema to find the best. With dozens of familiar examples, they illuminate some of the trickier aspects of designing how complex future systems interface with humans. You will find it as useful as any design textbook, but a whole lot more fun. --Alan Cooper, President of pioneering interaction design company Cooper, Father of Visual Basic, and author of The Inmates Are Running the Asylum

Shedroff and Noessel are leaders in their fields. Make It So is well-researched, pragmatic, and entertaining. The authors show us that science fiction can not only give us visions of the future but can help us design a better future as well. --Brian David Johnson, Futurist and Director, Future Casting and Experience Research, Intel Corporation

It has been both revealing and refreshing to see a book that, for the first time, so deeply explores the contrasts, connections, and influences from the realm of fantasy to the real. Shedroff and Noessel have created one of the most thorough and insightful studies ever made of this domain and from a unique angle, not only providing comprehensive coverage of the vast number of examples, but also drawing practical and valuable lessons that inform and can be applied to the problems we think about every day. --Mark Coleran, visual designer of interfaces for movies (credits include The Bourne Identity, The Island, and Lara Croft: Tomb Raider)

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About the Author

Nathan Shedroff is a seasoned, professional strategist and serial entrepreneur as well as a pioneer in the fields of experience design, interaction design, and information design. He speaks and teaches internationally, and his many books include Experience Design 1.1, Making Meaning, Design Is the Problem, Design Strategy in Action, and the upcoming Make It So.

Nathan is the chair of the groundbreaking MBA program in design strategy at California College of the Arts in San Francisco. This program prepares the next generation of innovation leaders for a world that is profitable, sustainable, ethical, and truly meaningful. The program unites the perspectives of systems thinking, design and integrative thinking, business models, sustainability, and generative leadership into a holistic strategic framework.

He holds an MBA in sustainable management from Presidio Graduate School and a bachelor's degree in industrial design from Art Center College of Design. He worked with Richard Saul Wurman at The Understanding Business and, later, co-founded vivid studios, a pioneering interactive media company and one of the first web services firms on the planet. vivid's hallmark was helping to establish and validate the field of information architecture by training an entire generation of designers in the newly emerging web industry.

Nathan is on the board of directors for Teague and the AIGA.

Christopher Noessel, in his day job as managing director at the pioneering interaction design firm Cooper, designs products, services, and strategy for the health, financial, and consumer domains, among others. In his role as practice lead, he helps manage the generator type of interaction designers, helping them build their skills and lead client projects to greatness.

Christopher has been doing interaction design for more than 20 years (longer than we've even been calling it that). He co-founded a small interaction design agency where he developed interactive exhibitions and environments for museums, and he worked as a director of information design at international Web consultancy marchFIRST, where he also helped establish the interaction design Center of Excellence.

Christopher was one of the founding graduates of the now-passing-intolegend Interaction Design Institute

Ivrea in Ivrea, Italy, where his thesis project was a comprehensive service design for lifelong learners called Fresh. The project was presented at the MLearn conference in London in 2003. He has since helped to visualize the future of counterterrorism as a freelancer, built prototypes of coming technologies for Microsoft, and designed telehealth devices to accommodate the crazy facts of modern health care in his role at Cooper.

Christopher has written for online publications for many years, and was first published in print as co-author of the interaction design pattern chapter in the textbook edited by Simson Garfinkel, RFID: Applications, Security, and Privacy. His Spidey sense goes off at random topics, and this has led him to speak at conferences around the world about a wide range of things, including interactive narrative, ethnographic user research, interaction design, sex-related interactive technologies, free-range learning, the Interface Parenthesis and the future of interaction design, and the relationship between science fiction and interface design.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Omar Yoder:

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Danielle Burdette:

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