

HKES Seminar

IMPROVING HEALTHCARE FOR EVERYONE

Prof Harold Thimbleby

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Date: 26 November 2013 (Tuesday)

Time: 7 – 8 PM

Place: B6605, Academic Building 1, City University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Bad design causes problems. One in ten hospital patients suffer from errors in their care, and for many the error started or ended with a computer. A drug overdose, for instance, might have been delivered by a computerised infusion pump. More people are dying in hospitals from preventable error than from AIDS, cancer and road accidents.

The speaker will give examples of how systems (from handheld calculators to radiotherapy systems) make healthcare unnecessarily dangerous. Too often, bad design leads to nurses or others being blamed for the problems. But the problems are avoidable. We will discuss principles for improving systems, as well as ways for procuring systems with better designs.

The talk will be of particular interest to human factors specialists, particularly anyone with healthcare concerns ... people who want to understand the way errors can be caused and prevented, and for those who want to help improve things too. The talk also will be of interest to manufacturers and designers — people who build medical devices or any sort of interactive system.

Speaker Bio



Prof Harold Thimbleby is a well-known speaker and has given over 500 talks in 28 different countries. Ten years ago one of his students was involved in a road accident and was in intensive care connected to many medical devices. One of them had a piece of paper stuck to it that said “do not press any buttons.” This opened his eyes to the design problems in hospitals! Harold is now an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and a Fellow of the Edinburgh Royal College of Physicians.

Harold wrote the MIT Press book *Press On*, which has won two international awards. Harold is also 28th Gresham Professor of Geometry and a past Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award holder. See <http://www.harold.thimbleby.net> for more details.



Unfortunately, many people die from preventable errors - errors that need not have happened - in hospitals. The number of unnecessary deaths per year is higher than the number of road deaths from car accidents.

This photograph shows Prof Harold Thimbleby in a road accident. It was taken to help communicate the scale of the problem.

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