Things to Know About UD

These are a few things to keep in mind when thinking about Universal Design. "10 Things to Know About Universal Design" was curated by the Center for Excellence in Universal Design.

http://universaldesign.ie/what-is-universal-design/the-10-things-to-know-about-ud/10-things-to-know-about-ud.html

1. **Universal Design strives to improve the original design concept by making it more inclusive.**

It is a misconception that Universal Design results in a 'diluted' product that meets the needs of many people, but only to a limited degree. It does not involve a series of compromises to the detriment of the original design concept.

Universal Design promotes as inclusive a design as possible. However, features that enhance access or use by some people, should not hinder or diminish the user experience for others.

2. **Universally Designed products can have a high aesthetic value.**

A product that is designed with function only in mind is not guaranteed to be attractive. Universal Design does aim to maximize the accessibility and usability of a product, so functionality is important. But Universal Design is not design based on functionality alone. A designer must also appreciate that the usability of a product can be influenced by its appearance.

The aesthetic usability effect suggests that people tend to find designs easier to use if they look easy to use. This is regardless of whether or not they actually are more usable!

3. **Universal Design is much more than just a new design trend.**

Universal Design is not a design style or trend. Rather, it is an approach to designing that can be applied to any design style or trend. It is an orientation to any design process that starts with

considering the needs of the user. Fashion, style, and personal taste can still influence the appearance of an accessible and usable product.

4. **Universal Design does not aim to replace the design of products targeted at specific markets.**

Universal Design does not aim to replace products that are currently available on the market. Designs targeted at a specific demographic (for example, designs aimed at teenagers) will not be adversely affected by a Universal Design approach. On the contrary, it could ensure that these products are designed to be as accessible and usable as possible by the target market at which they are aimed.

5. **Universal Design is not a synonym for compliance with accessible design standards.**

The term Universal Design has been incorrectly used as a synonym for compliance with standards for accessible design. Equal rights and disability legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Accessible design standards promote compliance with this legislation, by providing designers with specifications and minimum requirements which must be adhered to.

Firstly, Universal Design is not only applicable to the needs of people with disabilities, but to everyone, regardless of age, size, ability, or disability. Secondly, Universal Design is not a list of specifications; it is an approach to design that considers the varied abilities of users.

6. **Universal Design benefits more people than older people and people with disabilities.**

A common misconception regarding Universal Design is that it benefits only a few members of the population, such as older and disabled people. On the contrary, Universal Design aspires to benefit every member of the population by promoting accessible and usable products, services, and environments.

No person operates with full capability for every activity for the duration of his or her lifetime. Accessibility or usability can be affected by, for example, a medical injury or condition (temporary, long-term, or permanent), unfamiliarity with a product or environment, a lack of understanding (e.g. In a foreign country), a physical attribute (e.g. Height, size), and so on.

A Universal Design approach aims to provide a design that takes into account these physical, behavioral, and other, factors. It appreciates that at some point, during some activity, every person experiences some form of limitation inability. However, it should be added that a

hypothetical person who does not experience a disability (in the widest definition of the word) during his or her lifetime will also benefit, at the very least from the positive user experience of simple and intuitive design.

7. Universal Design can be undertaken by any designer, not just the specialists.

Universal Design is not necessarily a specialist subject. In truth, it can be applied by any designer. The first step is to adopt a user- or person-centered approach to designing. This requires an awareness and appreciation of the diverse abilities of people.

8. Universal Design should be integrated throughout the design process.

Universal Design is not an add-on design approach. It cannot effectively or efficiently be applied at the end of the design process. It should be integrated into the design process from the very beginning.

9. Universal Design is not just about one size fits all.

Universal Design has been mistakenly described as the search for a one-size-fits-all design. Universal Design does encourage designers to consider the wide-ranging abilities of their users. And where possible, an optimal design that caters to as many people as possible should be sought after. But a more universal solution can also incorporate, for example, customizable features that can be adapted from user to user, smart features that learn a user's preferences after multiple uses (most relevant to ICT), and specialized solutions to meet particular needs.

The aim is to provide the same (or equivalent) experiences, activities, and services to everyone. It is accepted that these may have to be provided through slightly different routes or interfaces, but designers should strive to create a design that does not exclude or segregate.

10. A Universally Designed product is the goal: Universal Design is the process.

Universal Design is a process, not an outcome. It is not assumed or expected that a 100% universal solution will be achieved, or is achievable, for any given design. Rather Universal Design should be a goal that a designer strives to achieve.