

While everything, technically, is an experience of some sort, there is something important and special to many experiences that make them worth discussing. In particular,

the elements that contribute to superior experiences are knowable and reproducible, which make them designable.

These elements aren't always obvious and, surely, they aren't always foolproof. So it's important to realize that great experiences can be deliberate, and they are based upon principles that have been proven. This book explores the most important of these principles.

The design of experiences isn't any newer than the recognition of experiences. As a discipline, though, Experience Design is still somewhat in its infancy. Simultaneously having no history (since it is a discipline only recently defined), and the longest history (since it is the culmination of many, ancient disciplines), Experience Design has become newly recognized and named. However, it is really the combination of many previous disciplines; but never before have these disciplines been so interrelated, nor have the possibilities for integrating them into whole solutions been so great.

Experience Design as a discipline is also so new that its very definition is in flux. Many see it only as a field for digital media, while others view it in broad-brush terms that encompass traditional, established, and other such diverse disciplines as theater, graphic design, storytelling, exhibit design, theme-park design, online design, game design, interior design, architecture, and so forth. The list is long enough that the space it describes has not been formally defined.

The most important concept to grasp is that *all* experiences are important

“Experience is what separates the girls from the women . . .”
—*Where the Boys Are* 1960, Glendon Swathout

experience design

and that we can learn from them whether they are traditional, physical, or offline experiences; or whether they are digital, online, or other technological experiences. In fact, we know a great deal about experiences and their creation through these other established disciplines that can—and must—be used to develop new solutions. Most technological experiences—including digital and, especially, online experiences—have paled in comparison to

real-world experiences and have been relatively unsuccessful as a result. What these solutions require first and foremost is an understanding by their developers of what makes a good experience; then to translate these principles, as well as possible, into the desired media without the technology dictating the form of the experience.

This book contains real-world, “offline” examples to counterbalance the online examples so that we can learn from them how to create more successful experiences in new media.