
Book Review

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Cultural Ergonomics: Theory, Methods and Applications

**by: Tonya L. Smith-Jackson, Marc L. Resnick and Kayenda T. Johnson
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FL 33487, USA, 213pp
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The book aims to provide a wide set of theoretical underpinnings as well as a wide set of examples of application of cultural ergonomics to design and evaluation. As culture is pervasive and bounds human interactions and cognition, the relevance and importance of culture to ergonomics is unquestionable. The book carries a reflective over-tone, and provides valuable confirmation to the understanding of the current situation in a globalised world, albeit rife with tensions, many of which rooted in cultural differences. The book editors participate as co-authors in six of the book's ten chapters, and the result is an application oriented coherently structured book written by a team of 15 authors, including the editors. The application areas included range from consumer products to forensics, encompassing human-computer systems, warnings, occupational safety and health, military and disaster management systems. With such a big group of authors, and diversity in application areas, the book provides stimulating reflective insights based on the authors' previous experience in several research and practice domains within the human factors and ergonomics discipline. The book is hence highly informative and potentially beneficial not only to practitioners, but also to researchers and graduate students, who are cheered with a 13 goal preliminary research agenda presented by the editors as authors, to guide future research in the domain of cultural ergonomics. Paradoxically, it is the theoretical part of the book that has less novelty to offer, as most theoretical approaches presented have been around for long, making the book feel in this respect a bit like 'old wine in new bottles', as the theory and methods presented are mostly well-known within the discipline of human factors and ergonomics. This notwithstanding, the book has the merit of joining what previously were apparently dispersed theories under one big umbrella, in the shape of a broad framework for articulating culture in ergonomic evaluation and design, as well as raising awareness of the ergonomic resonance of disregarding fitness to culture in systems and product analysis and design.