

# From Activity Theory to Design Practice\*

Larry Constantine  
Constantine & Lockwood, Ltd.

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## **Abstract**

*What is the proper focus of interaction design? Is it more about people or about the activities in which they engage? Psychologist and usability guru Donald Norman has argued that to create better tools that support user performance, designers need to turn to activity-centered approaches grounded in activity theory. To put activity theory into practice, an appealing but loose conceptual framework needs to be transformed into a systematic discipline. Activity modeling is a disciplined approach that focuses on the simple representation and organization of those elements of human activity that are most relevant to informing and guiding an activity-centered design process. This keynote will introduce activity modeling and show how it fits in the larger visual and interaction design process.*

## **Biography**

*Larry Constantine, IDSA, is an internationally recognized leader in design methodology and product usability. He is an award-winning designer specializing in interaction design and techniques for enhancing user performance. A persistent innovator with patents in human-machine interaction to his credit, he is co-inventor of essential use cases, regarded by many as a best practice in user requirements definition and task modeling. With Lucy Lockwood, he developed usage-centered design, the widely practiced model-driven process based on essential use cases. One of the pioneers of modern software engineering theory and practice, Constantine is the originator of many widely used models and techniques, including dataflow diagrams and the quality metrics of coupling and cohesion. His notational innovations have been incorporated into modern object modeling techniques, including the Unified Modeling Language.*

*An award-winning author, he has published more than 175 papers and 17 books in both the human sciences and information sciences, including the classic text, *Structured Design*, written with Ed Yourdon, and the award-winning *Software for Use*, written with Lucy Lockwood. His papers have been widely reprinted and his books have been translated into nine languages. In wide demand as a presenter and teacher, he has taught in 18 countries around the world and has keynoted numerous international conferences. His clients have included such major international technology leaders as McKesson, Siemens AG, Pitney-Bowes, DaimlerChrysler, Lockheed, Nortel Networks, IBM, CAP Debis, SAP, Dow Jones, and Canon Information Systems.*

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