Rock the Research: Creating Effective Partnerships to Achieve High Impact

Abstract

Understanding the dynamics of research success can provide valuable guidance in the formation and management of effective teams. Research success begins with selection of meaningful and authentic problems in collaboration with partners who own such problems. The theory-driven design thinking, mixed research methods that favor real-world interventions, and rigorous repeated case studies can lead to high-impact research results, which also bring substantial societal benefits. Citation counts and other evidence lend support for these research strategies, but changing academic cultures to support them remains a challenge.

Author Keywords

Research, Partnerships, High-Impact Research,

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI):
H.4: Information Systems Applications

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Introduction

The remarkable growth of the Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) discipline and the User Experience Design (UXD) profession have produced astonishing impacts [1, 2, 3]. They have led to the emergence of widely used technologies such as web-based e-commerce, mobile devices, search services, and social media platforms, which have brought immense benefits for individuals, families, friends, businesses, communities, global markets, and governmental structures (Figure 1). They have also brought serious challenges from malicious criminals, promoters of hatred, cyberbullies, oppressive governments, and terrorists. The challenge we face now is to channel the successes of the HCI and UXD communities to pursue effective research and pro-social products that ensure positive outcomes at a global scale. It is our responsibility to work as best as we can to ensure that our work brings high benefits while reducing the potential for adverse outcomes.
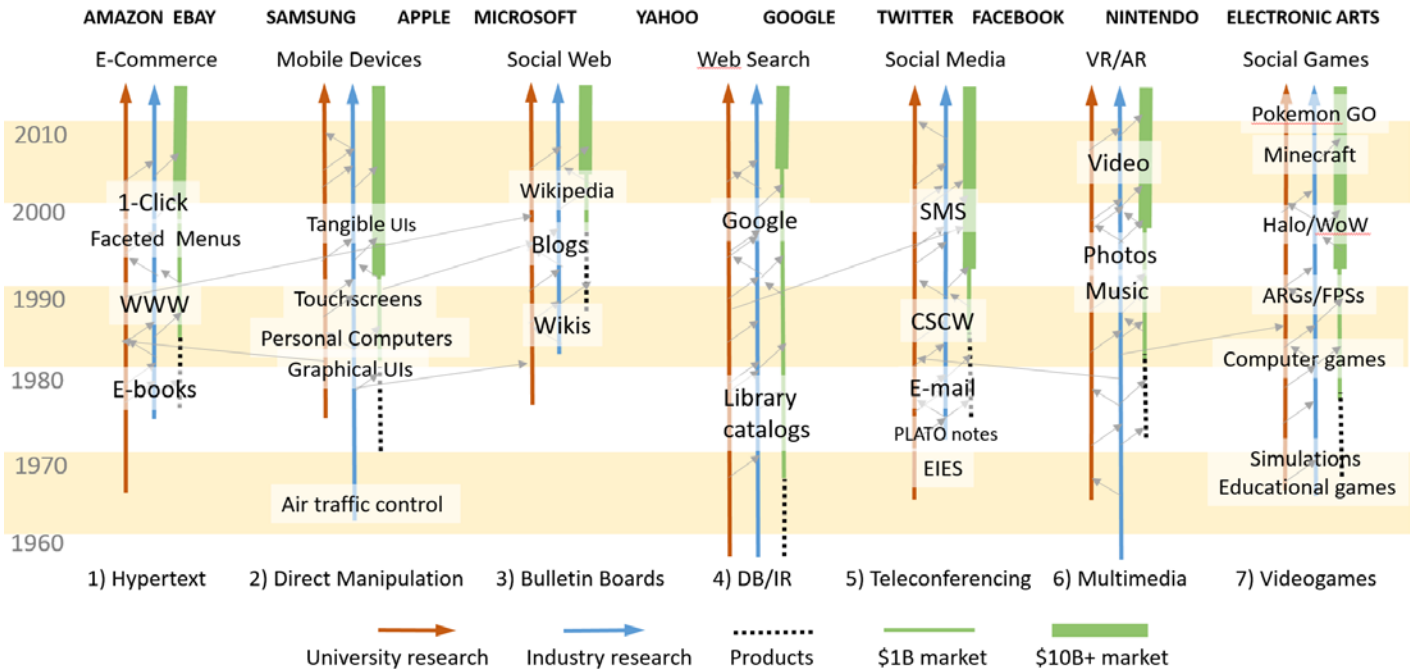
Figure 1: Human-Computer Interaction Research and User Experience Design have large economic impact enabling large companies to flourish [5]

These directions align with other efforts to shift research towards new forms that combine basic and applied methods [4, 5]. Citation counts and other evidence show that research papers that have practitioner co-authors recieve on average approximately twice as many citations as papers where

the authors are only academics. The potential reasons are that papers with co-authors with business and other professionals select more meaningful and authentic problems, can test hypotheses in real-world situations, have greater resources, and have more potent constraints that accelerate research [6].

Among the groups that are working to produce more favorable research outcomes is the Highly-Integrative Basic and Responsive (HIBAR) Research Alliance (www.APLU.org/HIBAR), which emphasizes projects that:

- seek both deep new knowledge and new practical solutions
- use both academic research methods and practical design thinking
- are led by both respected academics and real-world experts

While these themes are not a guarantee of success, they may help guide research teams to more high-impact outcomes.

The future is bright for HCI researchers and UXD professionals, with a wide variety of challenges that include healthcare delivery, energy sustainability, environmental preservation, and community safety [7].

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