

# ABSTRACT

User Experience is a concept that extends traditional usability by providing a holistic perspective on the user's interaction with technology. It is seen as an important part of successful product design (ISO 9241- 210, 2010). Strong competition fosters innovative user experience design and the development of new design techniques. One of the pillars of user experience are emotional reactions to a product (Thüring & Mahlke, 2007). Surprise is an emotion that has proven to be beneficial for the user-product relationship. The goal of surprising users is to generate pleasant feelings and ultimately 'produce' satisfied users. Surprise offers designers the possibility to create pleasant user experience through positive, as well as negative experiences during interaction. Setting a product apart from others by creating strong experiences and emotions through surprise could separate success from failure. In summary, surprising users by using unexpected product features has proven to be beneficial for product user interaction and user experience. To investigate these effects for digital interactive products, three laboratory studies were conducted. The thesis aspires to shed light on the creation of surprise, the bipolar valence of surprise and its effects on users, as well as the use of different contexts of use. Several aspects of surprise were systematically varied and their effects on user experience ratings of the products were investigated. Valence, as well as frequency of surprise was investigated in two different contexts of use. Results indicate that surprise is a promising design tool to enhance product evaluations and product success. Furthermore, the frequency of surprise has an influence on its effects. Nevertheless, it is a difficult emotion to design. Many factors complicate the use of surprise as a design feature and must be carefully studied. Designers need to know about the intricate interplay of these factors and should try to gain insights into the minds of their prospective users before and during the design process.