Chapter 4

OVERVIEW OF MAINSTREAM WEARABLE DESIGN

Operational: adj. Of or relating to an operation or a series of operations. Inertia n. Resistance or disinclination to motion, action, or change

4.1 WHY THE BAD EXPERIENCE WITH ELECTRONIC DEVICES?

When was the last time you curled up with a PC and really experienced its start up process; feeling a sense of excitement as the startup progress bar moves toward the other end; relishing the opportunity to have some down time while the machine loads and configures your setup options. And, as the startup process nears its conclusion, basking in the richness of its startup screen with its solid blue (or green) background or soothing image. You reflect that the experience was well worth the two to three minutes delay before it became ready to do what you had in mind in the first place.

Or remember when you appreciated the opportunity to test your eyesight by trying to read a web page with blue text on a black page background (see Figure 4-1). The chance to exercise your eyes was surely worth the effort and delay it imposed on trying to read the article.

And finally, I’m sure you remember when you proudly carried your first cell phone. It was easy to impress your friends since they were sure to see it on you, given its size and bulk. The discomfort and inconvenience getting in and out of the car while wearing the phone on your belt was definitely offset by the status it afforded you. Plus, the fact that it kept constraining your movement constantly reminded you that you had such a marvelous device.
You miss all that with these new phones that are so small that you can hardly tell you are wearing them since they cause you no discomfort.

Yeah, right.

The truth is, you never appreciated any of these experiences. With the possible exception of the very first time they occurred, they were to you unnecessary inconveniences, if not sources of outright frustration.

What each of these situations has in common is that in each you had a specific task you wanted to accomplish (your primary task), such as reading an email, or ordering a product, or being able to talk to a person separated from you by a distance that made face to face conversation impossible.

However, in each of these situations, your primary task had nothing to do with these devices. The devices were simply the mechanism you chose or you were required to employ to perform the task [1]. That is, you did not want to use the device for the sake of using and enjoying the device itself.

Yet in each case the device (PC, cell phone) or service (web page) made you take notice of it. It made you switch your attention from your real task to the task of getting the PC ready for use, compensating for the deficiencies in the design of the Web page, and accepting the constraints and discomfort as you went about your daily activities wearing the phone in order to have it there when you needed it.