

LibraryCrunch

Service for the Next Generation Library: A Library 2.0 Perspective by Michael Casey

[« Explore Your Inner Librarian](#) | [Main](#)

Why Nobody Likes a Smart Machine

[Why Nobody Likes a Smart Machine](#), by John Tierney:

Dr. Norman, a cognitive scientist who is a professor at Northwestern, has been the maestro of gizmos since publishing "The Design of Everyday Things," his 1988 critique of VCRs no one could program, doors that couldn't be opened without instructions and other technologies that seemed designed to drive humans crazy.

Besides writing scholarly analyses of gadgets, Dr. Norman has also been testing and building them for companies like Apple and Hewlett-Packard. One of his consulting gigs involved an early version of this very technology on the shelf at Best Buy: a digital photo frame developed for a startup company that was later acquired by Kodak.

"This is not the frame I designed," Dr. Norman muttered as he tried to navigate the menu on the screen. "It's bizarre. You have to look at the front while pushing buttons on the back that you can't see, but there's a long row of buttons that all feel the same. Are you expected to memorize them?"

He finally managed to switch the photo in the frame to vertical from horizontal. Then he spent five minutes trying to switch it back.

"I give up," he said with a shrug. "In any design, once you learn how to do something once, you should be able to do it again. This is really horrible."

[Full article.](#)

Posted by Michael on December 18, 2007 06:00 AM | [Permalink](#)

→ [TrackBack](#)

→ [Post a comment](#)

(If you haven't left a comment here before, you may need to be approved by the site owner before your comment will appear. Until then, it won't appear on the entry. Thanks for waiting.)

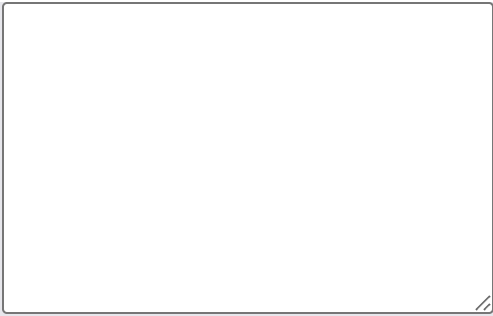
Name:

Email Address:

URL:

☐ Remember personal info?

Comments:



Preview

Post

