ME 214: Good Products, Bad Products

Assignment:

   Video Observation

Due:
    Thursday, January 17th, in class

This assignment is based on the development of the elliptical fitness machine by Precor as presented in class on January 10.

You may work individually or in groups of 2-3. Groups are recommended but not required.

1) Pick some consumer product of interest. A good choice would be a product like sports equipment or a cooking tool that involves lots of human - product interaction in its use.

2) Shoot video of various people using the product in an appropriate environment.

3) Edit your video down to a 30 second clip which may include voice over commentary, spontaneous user commentary, and/or music. Be sure your video includes a title bearing your name(s). Print a VHS or mini-DV cassette copy to turn in.

4) Write a short paper (1-2 pages) discussing the insights you gained into the quality and use of your product. Suggest product improvement ideas based on you observations. Write about the video observation process discussing your methods, the strengths and weaknesses of video observation as a design tool.

5) On Thursday, January 17th bring your video to class. We will show them and discuss both the insights gained into product quality and the process of video observation in the service of product quality.

As regards equipment, I am assuming that each individual/group has access to a digital or hi-8 home video camera. I recommend editing in iMovie unless you already have experience with another editor. Meyer Library’s Multimedia Studio offers video editing facilities to all Stanford students. Visit Meyer early to find out about hours and available equipment. You may also visit the Multimedia Studio website, which offers information and computer reservations, at http://acomp.stanford.edu/studio/index.html.

Ideally you would shoot with a mini-DV digital camera that supports "fire wire" downloads to your computer. Ideally you would turn your video in on a mini-DV cassette.

Meyer Library offers excellent technical assistance. Rebecca McKinney has experience with video and editing and would be pleased to offer support.

Dave Beach will conduct an optional video editing tutorial Monday, January 14th, Noon, Room 556 Terman. The demonstration will cover shooting, downloading, cropping, transitions, titles, printing. The demonstration system will be a mini-DV camera, an Apple G4, and iMovie.