Legendary talk from IXD veteran Bill Verplank ——

1. Art, design, craft

The first part of the video explores the relationship between art, design, and craft. Verplank discusses how object-making combines art with design, emphasising the important role of craft. He argues that design must always serve a purpose or it is art. highlighting the essential role of craftsmanship. In this context, craftsmanship refers to the skill and quality involved in the execution of objects. Verplank shares personal anecdotes, including lessons learned from his parents and developing skills through hands-on work. He also discusses the use of force feedback and haptic technology in new musical interfaces, which allow for more intimate, direct interactions between humans and machines. Ultimately, Verplank explores how these interactions push the boundaries of musical expression.

2. The importance of sketchbooks

The second part of Verplank emphasises the importance of sketching as a tool for understanding and communicating complex ideas. He shares a personal experience of sketching during a flight from Frankfurt to Porto, where he used diagrams to represent the movement of the sun and his travel direction. He demonstrates how sketching helps him process and clarify concepts, such as the quick sunrise and the transition between day and night during a long flight. Verplank emphasises that sketching regularly with pencil is not only a creative practice, but also a way of thinking about things. He also mentions experimenting with different drawing tools, using Kandy crayons in addition to the most commonly used pencils.

3. The three questions of IXD

The thirdly part of Verplank discusses three key questions for interaction designers: " How do you do?, How do you feel?", and"How do you know? ". The first question focuses on the user's operation of the system. the second on their sensory experiences, and the third question focuses on understanding what users are thinking or perceiving. Verplank also explores dichotomies like buttons vs. handles and symbolic vs. analog control, highlighting how different input devices affect user interaction. Additionally, he

discusses the importance of combining both art and engineering in design and introduces the concept of feedback control systems in problem-solving. On this basis, he cited McLuhan's theory of 'the medium is the message' to emphasise that the reception of information needs to be done by the user and, using vending machines as an example, he explores how path-based and map-based interfaces influence user experience.

4. The history of IXD

The last part of the video discusses the history and evolution of Interaction Design (IXD), focusing on different types of thinking: kinesthetic, iconic, and symbolic. Kinesthetic thinking involves learning through physical actions and sensory experiences, iconic thinking relies on visual images, and symbolic thinking is based on language and mathematical symbols. Verplank highlights the shift in computing from symbolic interaction (e.g., command-line interfaces) to iconic interaction (e.g., graphical user interfaces). According to Verplank, the current trend is to explore kinesthetic and motion-based interfaces, such as game controllers and sensors, that engage users through their bodies. This evolution reflects a growing emphasis on user interaction rather than just visual or symbolic communication.