

Computers are machines. (What's new?) Humans are not – but they are treated as though they were. Computers react (to our commands, to instructions embedded in software, to data patterns, and to electrical power loss). Human beings react as well, but in addition, they anticipate. All computers are the same, or at least should be (if you are lucky). No two human individuals are the same. Then why does the HCI community lose sight of the distinction between humans and machines? How come the HCI community treats human beings as though they were all the same? And how come the HCI community, on behalf of the computer industry, takes it upon itself to program the human being to act as a machine, instead of making possible the highest degree of individualization? Machines can process huge amounts of data. No human being will ever attain the same performance. But machines cannot formulate the questions that machines are asked to handle. How come the HCI community reverses this condition by having computers ask (pseudo-questions, of course) and human beings mortified that they might not give the right answer? (Ever forgot your password?) Such questions, and others going a bit deeper, are my subject.



At the end of its infancy, digital technology deserves more than the baby-talk of parents so much infatuated with their offspring that they effectively block development.