"Universal Design: Is it Accessible?"
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Abstract

Designing products and environments to be useable by the majority of people is the underpinning concept of universal design. In some aspects, however, universal design fails to meet some of its own principles. This has resulted in a lack of understanding of the concept, which in turn, has allowed the terms "accessibility" and "disability" to inhabit the language of universal design. This means universal design is now bounded by concepts of accessibility, regulations and disability rights, rather than the intellectual challenges inherent in designing for the whole of the population bell curve. The universal design movement recognises that making headway is proving difficult and is seeking ways to improve its position. Market research, however, indicates universal design is now branded as a disability product and this has implications for consumers, practitioners, and for the universal design movement in general. Discussed are the influence of terminology on the direction and perceptions of universal design, and the dilemmas of applying a regulatory framework as an implementation strategy.

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