Matt Jones and Gary Marsden wrote their leading book about mobile interaction design in 2006, more than 5 years ago. Their book was written at a time before capacitive touch devices colonized the high end mobile device market. It is pretty clear that technological advances in the past 5 years have made great leaps; so, does this book give any useful guidance to the design of mobile devices, applications, or services today?

What has changed during the past 5 years since the Mobile Interaction Design book was published? Apple came to the market with their capacitive touch phone in 2007 and changed many paradigms in mobile design; Google brought the Android operating system to the market, which spread widely into many mobile phones across multiple device manufacturers. Both companies have successfully managed to engage vast numbers of developers to develop applications for their mobile platforms. Multiple network operators (or carriers) have changed their business models to support more flat fee data plans and lowered data prices which has made access to the Web more reasonable. Also WLAN or WiFi accesses are commonly supported by smartphones today, and that too makes it possible for end users to browse online without getting huge bills. The year 2006 was the first year when mobile phone penetration exceeded Internet penetration in North America. This sounds like a small thing, but is likely to have influenced the mindset of people and how mobile phones are perceived. The improvements in technology have made it possible to have better graphics on mobile devices and more fluent transitions – all the things that make user interfaces beautiful. At the same time, the difference between high end and low end mobile devices appears bigger than ever before.

With so many changes in technology and business models and designs, a 5 year old book on mobile interaction design sounds a pretty old one! It may be getting old, but Mobile Interaction Design by Jones and Marsden delivers lots to take with you even after five years. Yes, some of the examples and visuals do look old today, but at the same time they are examples of old projects which provide a picture of the advances that have happened in the short time.
since the book was published: not all visuals, therefore, even need updating. Furthermore, many of the pictures show how the reality looks from the viewpoint of low-end devices – and that is good to keep in mind when developing for mobiles. The book does cover many “new” technologies too - like touch screen interactions. Believe or not, Apple did not invent capacitive touch devices – there has been research related to touch interaction for quite a while!

*Mobile Interaction Design* consists of three parts. The first part of the book builds the framework for the overall topic; it discusses the characteristics of mobile devices and handles justification for proper processes and the importance of design focus. These are always valid issues, regardless of the domain. The main text defines issues that can be used in any domain; the example stories link the discussion to mobiles and cover a wide range of topics relevant to mobile issues. Therefore, these in themselves, are still very much worth reading.

The second part of the book handles process descriptions from innovation to evaluation. It names some practices and methods that can be used when designing for mobiles, but obviously cannot dive into details with methodology description. Again there are examples, exercises and stories to help the reader understand the main points.

The third part of the book focuses on practical instructions, guidelines, and best practices. Some of them can be deployed in any domain, but some are very mobile-specific tips and hints. Before I joined my first industry position, I worked on a traffic psychology research project; I was not aware of HCI practices, even though in my work I used similar methods to those that are commonly used in HCI. I just did not know that these methods had specific names in this domain. Subsequently, I have learned that most methods and practices can be used in all areas where humans are interacting with man-made systems – no matter if they are buildings, roads, or technical gadgets. The key in using the methods in the right way is in understanding context. In addition to the generic guidelines, *Mobile Interaction Design* provides information that helps in understanding mobile contexts, together with the possibilities and restrictions related to them. There is obviously no single set of conditions that can be identified as the “mobile context” - the places and situations and motivation of users vary so much!

It would be relatively easy to look around you and base mobile design decisions on how you do things yourself and how you see people around you behaving. That way of making design decisions is surprisingly common! One of the best things in *Mobile Interaction Design* is that it talks about how simple things can be perceived differently in different countries. *Mobile Interaction Design* is one of the few books handling topics related to emerging markets, and it does this in such a way that the issues discussed seem so obvious and natural – even if in real life decision-making situations they are not.

If anyone has ever heard Matt Jones talk, or read his articles, they will know that he always tells interesting, often personal, stories which all deliver a key message related to technology development or provide deep insight to users and how technology can be perceived. Gary Marsden’s stories are different; they, too, are based on personal experience, but Gary’s stories always make you question your perception of the world – he tells how people he meets in his everyday life see the world differently. In this book there are some excellent examples on cultural issues that elaborate on this message; however, the story that stopped me in my tracks and made me question my perceptions is not in the book...so I take the liberty of telling the following story because it will not spoil your reading experience but will, hopefully, encourage you to think and reflect on the issues of personal perception as you read the book. Gary told a story years ago about his student who always texted her mother in English, even though the native language of this student and her mother was not English. She had explained that the phone's hierarchical structure made her think in English! The lesson of this tale...if we design devices and software based on what is natural to us, it may lead to consequences...
we cannot know beforehand. Localization is not only about translating language, but it is much more.

Even after five years, I found this book interesting and worth reading, and could identify many guidelines that are still valid. *Mobile Interaction Design* is structured so that it is easy reading. It remains a useful addition to your library…but, at some point a new edition would not be a bad idea.

*Anne Kaikkonen, PhD, works as a user experience product manager at Nokia’s MeeGo organization. She has worked at Nokia as a usability specialist, user researcher, and in product planning for 13 years. Mobile Internet services have been her main interest during the Nokia years. Before Nokia Anne worked at Fujitsu Computers, ICL Personal Systems, and Helsinki University. Anne is involved with multiple HCI conferences, like MobileHCI, CHI, NordiCHI etc. and is a peer reviewer for multiple HCI journals.*