We are definitely living the web era where we are all increasingly becoming users of applications with web interfaces. With the continuing advancements of ICT, these applications increase in number as well as complexity. But what about usability? Although the concept is not new and its importance has been long recognized, a lack of usability can be noticed in the web environment. This undoubtedly calls for a thorough understanding of how usability, both in theoretical and practical aspects, can be integrated into web development.

I was really glad to read “Integrating Usability Engineering for Designing the Web Experience: Methodologies and Principles” and realize that it skillfully addresses this issue and in many ways fills the existing gap.

Having the responsibility for the past three years of the organization of the “Usability and Accessibility Days” in Athens, Greece (http://www.media.uoa.gr/usability), I have come to believe, as it is clearly put in a chapter of the book in hand that “usability is not only an add-on or a final result in the design process but it is embedded as a main concern within the design process itself”.

The book provides a holistic perspective regarding usability and the web, covering a wide range of topics along four main axes. First, it explores how usability methods can be integrated in the web development process. Second, it presents the relationship between usability and accessibility. Third, it shows how usability principles and practice can be informed by various disciplines and applied in various domains. Finally, it examines selected examples of innovative usability methods and techniques.

I believe that the book will be valuable to researchers as well as practitioners in diverse fields, as the web constitutes a key means for any ICT-related activity. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did.

Professor Michael G. Meimaris  
Director, Laboratory of New Technologies in Communication, Education and the Mass Media  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens  

Athens, October 2009

Michael Meimaris is the founder and director of the New Technologies Laboratory in Communication, Education and the Mass Media of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Athens. He is currently the Director of the University Research Institute of Applied Communication. He has been awarded Chevalier de l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques of the French Democracy. He has studied Mathematics at the University of Athens and Data Analysis at the University of Paris VI - Pierre et Marie Curie. His scientific interests involve the application of New Technologies in Communication, Education and the Mass Media, the New Technological Communication Environment and its design, Open and Distance Education, Digital Game-Based Learning. He is a member of the International Committee and President of the National Committee of the Möbius Awards, member of the Scientific Board of the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme Nord of France, as well as of C.I.T.I. of the University of Lisbon.