A Reflection on Human Factors/Ergonomics and Hurricanes

By Gemma Read, Monash University

On my return to Melbourne, Australia, from the HFES 2012 Annual Meeting in Boston, I had planned a weekend stopover in New York City. The weekend quickly turned into a week thanks to Hurricane Sandy. I know that some colleagues were in the same position, most of them also taking the rare opportunity for a short visit to NYC prior to returning to their homes.

We observed one of the world’s most populous cities experience a very unusual weather event, one that had already caused devastation in Jamaica and that threatened a large area of the U.S. east coast. The hurricane hit New York City, and more than 40 people lost their lives. The New York Stock Exchange was closed, the subways shut down, tunnels were flooded for days, there were widespread electricity and gasoline shortages, and the New York City Marathon was canceled. The disruption caused by the hurricane meant that I had a lot of time to reflect on some of the themes and discussions at HFES 2012 and how they could apply to the catastrophic situation in New York City.

New York: A Complex City

One of the key themes discussed at the Annual Meeting was how people understand and behave within complex systems. If we view New York City as a complex system, we can consider how the different parts of the system interacted—sometimes in unexpected ways. As in most large cities, there is a blend of modern and aging infrastructure that has evolved over time and was not necessarily designed to withstand unusual natural disasters. These circumstances affect the reliability of different aspects of the system and, in combination, can lead to catastrophic conditions. For example, following the hurricane, a hospital experienced a power outage caused by flooding. A backup generator was available, but it also failed, forcing the unplanned evacuation of patients. The mass evacuation of critical patients is challenging enough, but when it is completed in darkness, with roads blocked because of flooding and resources stretched to meet needs across the city, it becomes clear how many factors can combine to compound a critical situation.

We can also reflect upon the management and impact of the hurricane on New York City from different perspectives based on the different hierarchical levels within a social system: from the societal level, through the management of the many...
organizations involved in disaster planning and management, down to the individual members of the public affected by these events.

The Societal Perspective

At the societal level, decisions by government officials influence the consequences of a widespread event such as a hurricane. Through media reporting, we saw public officials activating prepared emergency plans, moving resources such as first responders to areas predicted to be worst hit, and providing information to the community about the risks and recommended actions to prepare for the worst. Decision-making at this level is complex and fraught with uncertainty. Officials who downplay dire predictions and plan for only minimal impact will find themselves quickly out of a job if the predictions prove correct. However, to take an overly risk-averse stance could lead to unnecessary interruption of people’s lives for which no one will be grateful. It can also lead to situations in which people become complacent about warnings, just like the townspeople who ignored the boy who cried, “Wolf!” In the midst of the presidential elections, one can only assume that the impact of any decisions on public opinion was an important consideration, at the federal level at least.

At the local government level, some tough decisions were made to pre-emptively minimize potential losses through, for example, closure of the subways to avoid equipment damage from flooding, and to shut off power to avoid infrastructure damage. These decisions traded short-term inconvenience for long-term viability of services. Although this was a source of frustration for many who experienced difficulty commuting to work and were living in inadequate conditions in cold temperatures, in general, the public seemed to accept these decisions as unfortunate but necessary.

The Organizational Perspective

At the organizational level of the system, we can reflect on the important role played by organizations that are responsible for forecasting weather. The level of accuracy of weather forecasting contributes to the uncertainty of political decisions surrounding extreme weather events and natural disasters. Forecasting is never certain, and the storm system that hit the east coast was complex and dynamic. Expert weather forecasters had to make sense of a wide range of weather-related data to try to predict how the hurricane would behave—in particular, when it would make landfall and how it would behave once it did. In making predictions, forecasters were required to consider not only the behavior of Hurricane Sandy but also how it would dynamically interact with other weather systems in the local area. The accuracy of the forecasts was formidable considering the complexity of the task.

Emergency crews who responded in the aftermath of the hurricane are required to operate under time pressures and uncertain circumstances. They are supported by the organizations that employ them and receive comprehensive training in their various areas of responsibility. As demonstrated in the field of naturalistic decision making, these first responders require experience to make good decisions and take appropriate actions in these types of high-stakes scenarios. Means of gaining experience that is transferrable when these unusual events strike must be a challenge for the emergency responders.

Another type of organization that plays an important role by providing information to the community during disasters is the media, particularly television news crews. The presence of news crews in risky situations was fairly common during the storm, with reporters stationed on the ground providing regular updates on weather conditions and effects such as tidal flooding. I
noticed a number of reporters commenting on the behavior of residents who had not heeded warnings to evacuate the affected areas. They remarked that these people were not complying with the recommendations of officials and were putting their own lives and the lives of first responders at risk. I wondered if there was a contradiction here and if the reporters had considered the impact of their own presence on the risk perception of others. Surely if it was not safe, the reporters would not be out broadcasting? A few media teams explained that they had experienced tense moments when they found themselves in dangerous situations, such as when flash flooding cut off planned exit routes from some areas.

Although the media do provide a useful vehicle for communicating the seriousness of weather conditions, consideration should be given to balancing this public service with the need to model safe behaviors, in line with the recommendations of the authorities. This would also send a positive message to the reporters on the ground, that their employer places regard for their safety over commercial interests.

The Individual Perspective

At the individual level of the system, residents living in the evacuation zones made decisions. These decisions appeared to be influenced heavily by past experience. Many said that they had evacuated according to official warnings prior to the arrival of Hurricane Irene in the previous year, only to find that this upheaval had been unnecessary. In effect, they were punished through inconvenience for having followed the recommendations of officials. We heard during the Annual Meeting that people’s trust in warnings is very important to achieve compliance with those warnings. Thus, the quality of forecasting and the appropriateness of decisions about evacuation warnings are essential to avoid false alarms that erode confidence in their accuracy.

The Role of Human Factors in Natural Disasters

Management of extreme weather events such as hurricanes is different from the traditional safety management approach in industries in which human factors/ergonomics (HF/E) is usually applied. Human-made industries such as nuclear power, aviation, mining, and manufacturing tend to focus on controlling a hazard and preventing the release of energy that could cause harm. Powerful winds and other weather phenomena associated with a hurricane cannot be controlled by technology. Instead, we need to focus on mitigating the consequences by enabling societies to become resilient to disasters. This is similar to organizations becoming more resilient in order to cope with the variability of human performance in hazardous operations.

Further, HF/E traditionally focuses on workers. These are people who have chosen to be employed in a certain industry and who are trained and competent in performing the work. When dealing with natural disasters, it can be challenging to influence the behavior of the range of people who make up the general public, including the elderly, children, the homeless, and people with disabilities. This may require tailored approaches for different groups, rather than employing a single approach, which may be successful in workplace settings.

For me, the experience of Hurricane Sandy highlighted the central role of people in managing disasters. It reinforces the vital necessity of HF/E in disaster planning, management, and recovery. With predictions of increasing severe weather events caused by climate change, more HF/E input in this area might be needed. Although human societies may never be untouched by environmental disturbances, we might be able to mitigate their consequences and thereby minimize the tragic loss of life that occurs, the direct financial costs, and the less direct but nonetheless important negative outcomes, including those of a psychological, financial, and social nature. I look forward to seeing the positive impact our profession can have in this area.

Gemma Read is a PhD candidate at the Monash University Accident Research Centre, within the Monash Injury Research Institute. The Australian Research Council funds her studies as part of a wider industry linkage grant focused on applying system-based methods to improve safety at
Robert Hale, Under Secretary and Comptroller of the Department of Defense (DOD), addressed the defense budget and possible future changes in a speech at the Brookings Institution on January 7. During his keynote at an event titled “Defense Spending and U.S. National Security Strategy,” Hale outlined policy implications of an agreed-to $487-billion reduction in planned defense spending over the next decade and provided insight into DOD’s planning for possibly hundreds of billions in additional reductions if automatic spending cuts through sequestration take effect.

Consistent with previous statements by Obama Administration and DOD officials, Hale emphasized that the already adopted cuts can be absorbed without risking national security, but he cautioned that further decreases would be detrimental to American military supremacy. He revealed that DOD’s newest estimates pin potential cuts through sequestration at $45 billion for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2013, below previous estimates of $50–$60 billion resulting from policy changes through the recent tax legislation. Despite the lower-than-anticipated total reduction, Hale warned that DOD has little ability to allocate the cuts in a targeted manner and that effects could be magnified because of the condensed time frame in which they must be implemented. (Sequestration is now scheduled to begin in March, whereas FY 2013 ends on September 30, 2013.) He also indicated that DOD will prioritize funding for the war in Afghanistan if granted the flexibility to implement cuts, likely at the expense of what he called “investment” programs in the base budget. He repeatedly urged Congress to prevent sequestration entirely.

Defense Strategic Guidance Reductions

Hale stressed that strategic planning is necessary to ensure that the United States maintains its military superiority in the face of a new budget reality, and expressed confidence that the Defense Strategic Guidance announced by President Obama and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta last year is the right approach under the current circumstances. The Strategic Guidance would commit to reductions in total force size but seek a more agile and technologically advanced military to offset flat or declining defense spending. The Strategic Guidance also calls for a rebalancing of U.S. military presence toward the Asia Pacific, along with a continued focus on the Middle East, through an increased reliance on air and sea power rather than ground forces. During the Brookings event, Hale characterized these proposals as responsive to current threats and defended proposed cuts to some weapons programs and other operations accounts as necessary to protect those most critical to future needs. He also stated that DOD will continue robust investment in cybersecurity going forward.

Other DOD Cost-Saving Efforts

In addition to the Strategic Guidance, Hale emphasized that DOD will enhance efforts to make more efficient use of existing dollars. This includes canceling lower-value programs and continuing efforts to improve business practices at the Pentagon. Additionally, Hale spoke at length about both the need and the challenges associated with curtailing spending on military personnel, by far the fastest-rising component of the defense budget. Although statements from audience members and other defense policy experts participating in the event echoed the con-
cerns on personnel costs, it was widely agreed that the political difficulties of limiting benefits or increasing fees for service members will necessitate gradual and measured changes to these programs.

In return for reductions in overall spending and a continued effort to stretch existing funds, Hale called for stability in budget size and processes. He spoke about the difficulty of ensuring national security as defense budget authority is continually changing, and derided the loss of regular order in the budget process on Capitol Hill. Further, he expressed frustration with the legal, acquisition, and planning challenges stemming from continuing resolutions and the repeated threats of government shutdowns. To this end, Hale confirmed reports that the FY 2014 DOD budget request will be delayed, noting that DOD is not yet able to provide required information to the White House Office of Management and Budget. These sentiments are consistent with those relayed by President Obama, Secretary Panetta, and defense hawks on Capitol Hill in recent months. However, it remains to be seen whether Congress and the administration can reach an agreement to replace the sequester, given that deep ideological divides between Democrats and Republicans have thus far prevented comprehensive action to reduce the debt and deficit.

Current Defense Budget Issues

Following Hale’s remarks, a panel of defense policy experts from academia and think tanks dove deeper into current defense budget issues. The panel was composed of Peter Singer and Michael O’Hanlon of Brookings, former Deputy Secretary of Defense and now American Enterprise Institute Scholar Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Betts of Columbia University. Much of the discussion centered on broad defense policy issues (such as the fate of specific weapons programs, personnel costs, and challenges posed by a rising China) that do not directly affect the research community, but the panelists agreed that sustained investments in DOD research and development programs—including early-stage research performed at universities—is critical for ensuring that the military can combat future threats. Specifically, continued investments in research and technology were cited as necessary to prepare for those threats that cannot be anticipated.

Also of interest to the defense research community, the panelists spoke at length about cybersecurity as a rapidly increasing national security threat. However, they cautioned that increased quantity in money and personnel may not drive the increased quality in infrastructure and expertise that is necessary to protect the nation from cyber threats.

Additional information about the event, including an archived webcast, is available here.

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC, a leading Washington, D.C.–based government relations and consulting firm, represents the public policy interests of scientific societies and institutions of higher education. Lewis-Burke’s staff of about 20 government relations professionals work to promote the federal research and policy goals of HFES and the HF/E community.

ANNUAL MEETING

Submit Your HFES 2013 Annual Meeting Proposals by February 19

The deadline for submitting any type of proposal for the 2013 Annual Meeting, is February 19, 2013. Before submitting your work, please read the Call for Proposals thoroughly.

Papers that have been published previously or presented at another professional meeting may not be submitted. All research and analyses described in a proposal must be complete when the proposal is submitted. Papers that do not present completed work will be rejected. The sole excep-
Careers in Academia Versus Industry: A Panel Discussion
By Nicole Werner, George Mason University

Each year since 2003, HFES has offered Student Career and Professional Development Day, which enables students to meet with and learn from HF/E professionals and prepare for a successful career in the field. This is a brief summary of a panel discussion that took place at the HFES 56th Annual Meeting in Boston in October 2012.

Whether in a passionate panel discussion or in conversations over coffee or a meal, a common theme emerged during the Annual Meeting: Will there be a new generation of bright students interested in going into a career in HF/E-related academia?

Student Career and Professional Development Day tackled this topic with a panel entitled “Selecting an Academic versus Industrial Career in Human Factors.” I was fortunate enough to chair this panel, which consisted of Deborah A. Boehm-Davis, George Mason University; Valerie J. Gawron, MITRE Corporation; Richard Holden, Vanderbilt University Medical Center; Robyn Kim, Exponent Inc.; and Christopher Monk, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. One thing was clear by the end of this session—career options are not as clear-cut as they initially seem.

Graduating students have a number of options outside academia or industry, including government research labs, private research labs, and policy-related careers. It also became clear that selecting an academic career or a career in industry does not necessarily mean that you must be purely one or the other. For example, many professors serve as consultants in addition to their work at a university. Conversely, some of those who work in industry teach as adjunct professors. Further, those in some government or private research labs work collaboratively on research projects with professors and students at universities.

With all these choices, many students wanted to know, “How do I choose?” The theme that emerged was “To thine own self be true.” The panelists agreed that you must be honest with yourself about where your passions lie, what your goals are, and what you want out of life. Holden suggested considering what career you would choose if you were independently wealthy. Ask yourself what kind of legacy you would like to leave. It is important to consider the differences in what drives research in different fields. For example, Kim noted that in her industry job, research is dictated by the needs of the clients. In contrast, Monk, as a division chief at the Department of Transportation, is able to direct research policy.

Boehm-Davis pointed out that achieving tenure is not as elusive as it is made to appear. Panel members encouraged students to try different work settings through internships to not only find out what you want to do but also what you are not interested in doing. This led to the question of the fork in the road: Students wanted to know if, after choosing academia or industry, they would be stuck in that path. Panelists concurred that starting in an academic career makes it easier to switch to industry. This is because hiring in academia is largely dependent on a candidate’s publication record, and it can be difficult to publish in an industry position (though this depends largely on the industry). Industry jobs are not as dependent on publication, but employers will want evidence that you are a good communicator, both orally and in writing.
What’s important is to hone the skills necessary for the career you want. For example, a career in academia requires that you focus on publication in high-impact journals and build a teaching portfolio. A portfolio of your work is necessary for some industry jobs. The key is to find out what skills are essential for the career to which you aspire.

Students feel relieved after hearing the panelists’ parting words of wisdom: It’s a mixed bag, so go for it! Whether you choose a career in industry, in academia, or somewhere in between, the lines are blurred, and there is plenty of opportunity to explore areas beyond your specific career choice. So go out there, explore, and enjoy the process!

Nicole Werner is a fourth-year doctoral student at George Mason University under the advisement of Deborah Boehm-Davis. Her research interests include human factors in medicine, interrupted task performance, and multiple-task management.

INSIDE HFES

Space Still Available for MedStar-Hosted Tour and Workshop

The National Center for Human Factors in Healthcare, MedStar Institute for Innovation is hosting the HFES 2013 International Symposium on Human Factors and Ergonomics in Health Care: Advancing the Cause, which will take place on March 10–13 in Baltimore, Maryland. The host has facilities in Baltimore and will be conducting a site tour and workshop on Sunday, March 10.

The workshop, “Human Factors and System Safety Engineering: A Primer for Health-Care Providers,” is tailored for members of the health-care industry with no human factors/ergonomics (HF/E) training. It will present a broad overview of HF/E, with heavy emphasis on examples from health care. Time: 1:00-5:00 p.m. Cost: $150.

Tour the MedStar Central Intravenous Admixture Center (CIVAC), an applied health-care environment, to observe examples of good and bad human factors designs, implications of poor design, and the environment. The goal of the tour is to demonstrate a sterile pharmaceutical compounding center where medications are mixed and prepared for patient administration. Time: 12:30-4:00 p.m. Cost: $100.

To add either event to your existing registration, please contact Kimberly Harrigan in the symposium registration office (714/957-9100, fax 714/957-9112, registration@meetingplanners.com) and provide your payment details. She will update your registration and send a confirmation.

Invitation for Submissions From the Specialized Events Committee

By Anthony D. “Tony” Andre, Chair, Specialized Events Committee

The Specialized Events Committee was formed to develop smaller events that promote our members, the Society, and the profession and that help to disseminate the latest in HF/E science, guidelines, and best practices in areas that represent current “hot topics” throughout the world.

The events planned by this new committee would generally be separate from our Annual Meetings and shorter in duration (one to three days), although an event could also be scheduled to precede or follow the Annual Meeting. Many of these events would take the form of workshops, one to two day summits, and mini-conferences. They are also intended to be focused events—typically on one topic or domain—and to attract attendees from both within our profession/Society and among industry professionals who could make use of our science, knowledge,
and techniques.

The HFES International Symposium on Human Factors and Ergonomics in Health Care, now in its second year, is an example of a larger specialized event, but we are equally interested in smaller gatherings. I am currently soliciting specialized meeting/event topics from members, using a proposal template. Please note that the proposed event on any proposed topic should, at a minimum, achieve the following:

• provide HFES members with opportunities to increase their visibility by disseminating their science or practice expertise to those outside our profession (end-users). Speakers need not be HFES members;
• be focused on a single topic or domain;
• be no less than one and no more than three days in length;
• not compete with the Annual Meeting program; and
• be low-risk from a financial perspective and enable HFES to make a profit (thus seeding more future events or other HFES initiatives).

I welcome your proposals. If you have any questions, please contact me directly.

**Reminder: Submit Nominations for 2013 HFES Awards**

HFES full members are invited to submit nominations for six Society awards, which will be presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting.

Nominees are not required to be HFES members. Submissions are due on or before **March 29, 2013**.

To nominate,

• submit the candidate’s résumé or curriculum vitae, a nominating letter, and at least two but no more than three letters of support from individuals who know the candidate well enough to assess his or her candidacy in terms of the award’s criteria; and
• send all nomination packages via e-mail to Lynn Strother. Please submit the package as a single file in PDF format.

For more information on the scope and criteria for HFES awards please view the **HFES Awards Web page**.

**Update Your Member Record for the Directory & Yearbook**

The 2013–2014 Directory and Yearbook, whether online or in print, is an important tool for connecting you with fellow members. **March 8** is the deadline for updating your member record to ensure that others can reach you.

To update (and renew your membership, if you have not done so already), please log in at hfes.org with your username and password. If you have forgotten your login ID, contact the Member Services Department at membership@hfes.org, 310/394-1811. When logged into your member record, on your Welcome page, select “View/change my membership information” and update your demographic information. This information helps HFES better understand and serve the needs of its members.

HFES publishes only the business contact address for every member; if a business address is not available, the home address will appear unless you have asked us not to publish it. (To omit your home address, please contact the Member Services Department.)
Members who prefer to conserve natural resources by accessing the membership directory exclusively online may opt out of receiving the printed version. If you prefer not to get a printed directory, please contact Member Services.

Entries Invited for Product Design Award
By Dianne McMullin & Stan Caplan, PDTG Award Committee Cochairs

The Product Design Technical Group (PDTG) invites you to submit a nomination for the 2013 Stanley Caplan User-Centered Product Design Award. The award emphasizes both product design and the methods used to specify and achieve the design. The award is now open to members as well as nonmembers of HFES and PDTG; any human factors/ergonomics professional, product designer, or product team may participate. Feel free to relay this information to potentially interested nonmember colleagues.

Consideration is limited to products, software, or systems that are purchased for use in the home, in the workplace, or while mobile, including consumer, commercial, and medical products but excluding military equipment or systems. The product or system being nominated must be operational and capable of being marketed with no more than minimal changes. Products must have been on the market for fewer than three years.

The winning product or system will be recognized at the 2013 HFES International Annual Meeting on October 1 in San Diego, and the awardees will be asked to present a talk on the product and methodology. The awardees will also be expected to submit a paper to Ergonomics in Design within two months of the meeting.

Call For Nominations

The deadline for submitting nominations is May 10, 2013. Nominations should be submitted electronically to Dianne McMullin. You may submit a nomination for either your own work or the work of others. Nominations should adhere to the format described in detail on the PDTG Web site. Failure to follow the format may result in disqualification. Nominators are strongly urged to address the judging criteria. Complete submission details can be downloaded here. Additional information, including past winners, can be found on the PDTG Web site.

Judges’ evaluations will be based on information provided in the submission, so be sure that your submission clearly and concisely describes how your submission meets the criteria. The submission should not be treated as a marketing tool; statements about a product’s quality should be substantiated by documenting results or a clear rationale that explains the how and why.

To aid in the final decision process, judges will have the opportunity to submit questions to nominees via e-mail. Be sure to designate a member of the nominating team who will be available between June 13 and July 27 to respond to judges’ questions.

The winner(s), and any honorable mentions, will be determined by the panel of PDTG judges in early August.

Questions about the 2013 PDTG User-Centered Product Design Award may be directed to Dianne McMullin.

Call for Judges

We are looking for PDTG members from a broad variety of backgrounds in product design to serve as judges. The new process for selecting judges is detailed on the PDTG Web site. To volunteer, please contact Stan Caplan.
Find the Right Employee With Online Career Center Add-Ons

Employers can purchase additional services to bring more visibility to their job postings in the HFES Career Center. “Talent Blast” combines sophisticated posting optimization and targeted ad campaign management to hundreds of additional job sites, and “Featured Job” puts your open positions on the job seeker’s main page while being featured in the search results.

The Career Center database has more than 1,400 registered companies that have posted jobs in a wide range of HF/E areas. Only HFES members can post résumés and search for jobs. Take advantage of this valuable member benefit!

In Memoriam: John Barnett

HFES member John Barnett recently passed away at the age of 59. After a career as an Air Force navigator with the strategic forces, during which John earned a Master of Human Resources, he retired and returned to school. John received his PhD in human factors psychology in 2000 from the University of Central Florida. Immediately after graduation, he joined the U.S. Army Research Institute in Orlando.

Early on, John made significant contributions to the study of training and usability issues that were a direct consequence of the digitization of Army communications systems. He was also instrumental in studies on the effectiveness of automated aids for after-action reviews for large-unit exercises. Later, his Air Force experiences spurred a series of reports aimed at sharing lessons learned regarding digitization from the other services focused on how those lessons could be applied by the U.S. Army.

In recent years, John made further contributions to training usability with his research on wearable versus desktop simulations for training dismounted combatants. In addition, John became a Certified Professional Ergonomist in 2005. Another of John’s enduring contributions was his mentoring of Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area Research Fellows. He ensured that the Fellows were very involved in Army technology-based training programs and contributed to every phase of the research process. As a result, many of these professionals continue to conduct outstanding research in a wide range of professional careers, which is a testament to the time and effort John put into shaping their research philosophy and work ethic.

John is survived by his daughters, Elizabeth and Jennifer. John was always a calming presence and will be remembered as a great friend and highly respected colleague.

-Michael J. Singer

OTHER NEWS

Student Conference a Great Success

By Beth Blickensderfer and Antoine Juhel, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

In April 2012 the Human Factors and Applied Psychology (HFAP) student conference took place at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) in Daytona Beach, Florida. The conference featured close to 30 student lecture and poster presentations, a keynote address, a panel discussion, and social/networking time. The event, sponsored by the HFES Council of Technical Groups (COTG) and the Virtual Environments Technical Group (VETG), is summarized here.
Student Presentations
For most students, participating in a professional conference for the first time can be challenging. HFAP offered a friendly and constructive environment in which students could present their research and receive advice prior to presenting at a larger conference such as the HFES Annual Meeting. We believe that after navigating successfully through a submission, review, and presentation process that is modeled on those for the HFES Annual Meeting, students will be better prepared and more confident to submit their work for that and other conferences.

Keynote Address and Panel Discussion
The goal of these sessions was to increase awareness and understanding of HF/E topics and to motivate students to attend the conference by offering the opportunity to hear a presentation by a premier HF/E professional. Because this conference is typically held on a university campus, the keynote address also helps to increase HF/E awareness among students from many other disciplines (e.g., engineering, business, and various aspects of aviation), who are invited to the keynote address. John Flach was the keynote speaker for the 2012 conference. Past keynote speakers include HFES President-Elect Francis T. Durso and Secretary-Treasurer Scott Shappell.

The 2012 panel consisted of three HF/E professionals (from industry and academia) and an Air Force colonel. John Flach, Wright State University; Col. Stephen P. Luxion, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps; Amanda Bond, General Dynamics C4 Systems; and Seve Benincasa, TASC, Inc., discussed “Successes and Challenges in Interface Design for Complex Aviation Systems.” Both the keynote address and the panel discussion give students the time to learn from experienced professionals and ask questions in an unintimidating environment.

Reception and Awards
The conference concluded with a reception. Awards were given as an incentive for students to present high-caliber work; the best undergraduate and graduate presenters received $100, and the best overall presenter received $150.

Participants in HFAP have represented a variety of universities, including ERAU, Flagler College, Florida Institute of Technology, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University of North Florida, University of South Florida, University of West Florida, Rollins College, Stetson University, the University of Alabama at Huntsville, and the U.S. Military Academy.

The 2013 conference is scheduled for April 5. Abstract submissions are due February 15. For more information, please visit the conference Web site.

Dieter W. Jahns Student Practitioner Award
Submissions Invited

The Foundation for Professional Ergonomics welcomes submissions for the 2013 Dieter W. Jahns Student Practitioner Award. Named in memory of Dieter W. Jahns, a life-long advocate of the practice of ergonomics and a leader in ergonomics certification, the award is given to a student or group of students for a project that demonstrates the major practice areas of ergonomics: analysis, design, and evaluation.

The purpose of the award is to advance professionalism in the field of ergonomics by recognizing educational activities that demonstrate how professional ergonomists serve to make our lives at work and at home healthier, safer, more productive, and more satisfying. This award is open to MS or PhD students in ergonomics and ergonomics-related programs worldwide. Students who have completed graduate degrees in the past year are also eligible.

The submission deadline is May 31, 2013. The award and cash prize of $500 will be presented at the Board of Certification in Professional Ergonomics Reception during the 2013 HFES
Annual Meeting, in San Diego, California. The winner will be notified on July 31 and need not be present to accept the award.

Submissions can be made individually or as a group. Complete details on criteria and format can be found at www.ergofoundation.org. Submissions should be sent electronically to Robert Smillie.

**New AHRQ Guide To Be Presented at HFES Health-Care Symposium**

A new guide funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) presents suggested recommendations for designers and developers of consumer health information technology products. “Designing Consumer Health IT: Lessons From the Design of Consumer Technologies—A Guide for Developers and Systems Designers” includes recommendations that can be used as general guidance for designers and design teams (i.e., topics that can be applied to the process of designing and developing a product) or topics that can be specific to a design phase (idea generation, identification of end users, testing, and commercialization).

The guide presents results of an environmental scan and “gray” literature review and includes expert interviews to improve consumer health IT design in order to increase its effective use. The guide is available here. The AHRQ program manager for this study, Teresa Zayas-Caban, will discuss the report and its findings at the 2013 International Symposium on Human Factors and Ergonomics in Health Care: Advancing the Cause in Baltimore, MD.

**CALENDAR**

**February 2013**


**March 2013**


**2013 Symposium on Human Factors and Ergonomics in Health Care: Advancing the Cause**, March 10-13, 2013, Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Baltimore, MD.


**May 2013**