Improving Introduction to Design: A Restructuring of Human Computer Interactions (CS 3205)
(Technical Report)

An Exploration of Cultures Importance in User Experience Design
(STS Research Paper)

An Undergraduate Thesis Portfolio
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by

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Socio-technical Synthesis: Improvement in UX Design and UX Design Education

My technical and STS research projects, although not directly related to each other, are connected by the topic of user experience (UX) design. The technical project was taken under because I could see the need for a redesign of the only UX course offered in the computer science department here at the University of Virginia. As an aspiring UX designer it was important to me to ensure that students are exposed to the best first impression of the field. In a similar vein, I was exploring topics in the UX field that I might be able to conduct some research in, both in order to gain personal knowledge and to also gain perspective on things that need improvement in its current state. It was only after encountering a video on the difference in web design between countries like the United States and Japan that I decided on the subject of exploring the implications of culture in UX design.

A literary analysis was conducted as part of addressing the chosen STS research question since it's been a topic that has been explored and written about by scholars in the community. Culture is, arguably, the basis of all human and social dimensions that touch modern technology. I thought it important to give a further analysis in the context of UX design because of the impact it could have on a large audience. As tech corporations continue to grow in this golden age of technology, their products are reaching larger, and sometimes global, audiences. As a UX designer it is important to explore what social and cultural differences these different countries have in order to ensure the delivery of a product that is liked by most. The most prominent STS theory that applies to this topic is value-laden design. When shifting audiences to those that do not directly align with a designer, implicit biases and understandings come into play if the designer does not put in an effort to acknowledge them.

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