

By [Abigail Sellen](#), Technology News Editor

[The Evolution of User - Computer Interaction, the GUI 10 Years after Windows 7](#)

A Microsoft perspective

Microsoft is looking to the future of user - computer interaction and of the graphical user interface well beyond its next iteration of the Windows operating system, until 2020. Moving onward with the development of the Windows client, Microsoft is cooking Windows 7, the successor of Windows Vista. The latest Windows operating system, released to businesses in November 2006 and to the general public in January 2007, did manage to place itself at the center of a new user - computer interaction model via Microsoft Surface. With its surface computing product Microsoft took the natural user interface around the Windows operating system to the next level, as Surface is based on a copy of Windows Vista. Scheduled for availability in 2010, Windows 7 is bound to have an increased role in the Redmond company's vision of the natural user interface at the level of desktop, notebook, tabletop surface computer, tablet PC, etc. But Microsoft's vision of the evolution of the GUI and ultimately of the human-computer interaction model is much broader than Windows 7. The HCI 2020: Human Values in a Digital Age forum, held in Sanl￭car la Mayor, Spain, in mid-March was the stage where the next generation of human-computer interaction was placed at the centerstage. The Redmond company even made a report available offering a complex perspective over the evolution of user - computer interaction in the next 12 years. "Being Human - Human-Computer Interaction in the year 2020" can be downloaded from [here](#). "Computers have shaped so many aspects of the modern world that we wanted to explore how today's emerging technologies might shape our lives in 2020. Computing has the potential to enhance the lives of billions of people around the world. We believe that if technology is to truly bring benefit to humanity, then human values and the impact of technology must be considered at the earliest possible opportunity in the technology design process," revealed Abigail Sellen, senior researcher at Microsoft. Without a doubt the graphical user interface delivered by computers and operating systems today will be obsolete in 2020. Already emphasis is placed on multi-touch, gesturing, object recognition, as well as speech and even brain-computer interfaces. It all falls under the umbrella of natural user interfaces, a segment on which Microsoft chairman Bill Gates will focus after he will complete the transition out of his day-to-day role at Microsoft. "This report makes important recommendations that will help us to decide collectively when, how, why and where technology impacts upon humanity, rather than reacting to unforeseen change. The final recommendation is something towards which we should all aspire: by 2020 HCI will be able to design for and support differences in human value, irrespective of the economic means of those seeking those values. In this way, the future can be different and diverse because people want it to be," added Sellen.