PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES CONCERNING BODY SCANNING

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There has been a great deal of emphasis in recent years on mass customization and tech-nologies that will enable the U.S. industry to recapture business lost to offshore production. A significant component to the success of mass customization efforts will be accurate customer measurements. Technological developments in the area of 3-D body scanning appear to support mass customization efforts by providing accurate body measurements, very quickly, in a format that can easily inter-face with other essential technologies (such as CAD systems).
The purpose of this research was to explore the issues that affect consumer accep-tance of involvement with 3-D body scanning. An understanding of these issues could help the industry be more sensitive to the feelings and needs of the consumer, hopefully enabling quick adoption of the new technology.

Anthropometric experts in the US and abroad were interviewed to determine the processes used when measuring their subjects so that a cultural perspective on previous experiences might be obtained. Questions related to subjects' attitudes, comments, and behaviors during the measurement process were developed to get an idea of the issues that might impact the body scanning process.

A pilot body scanning study was conducted using a convenience sample of mostly college students. The subjects were unaware that their comments and behaviors concerning the scanning experience were being observed and recorded. We operated under the assumption that most of our college-aged subjects would be less inhibited and want to be involved in the new technology. Instead we found that most of our subjects suffered from some form of self-consciousness or embarrassment, without any correlation to true figure type.

The findings have significant implications which should aid in the reorganization of future studies and the acquisition of Body Scan data.

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