Summary of User-Driven Design
By Laurie Jones

Description
User-driven design is a design process in which users are involved development from beginning to end in order to create a product that is both usable and useful to them [1]. Users have a very active role in this design methodology, and the product evolves from their needs [2]. Often this approach provides designers with insights that they might not have had on their own. User-driven design projects begin with understanding who the stakeholders are and what they need from the project [2]. While the project is being developed, feedback is obtained from users at every stage, thus allowing the designers to address problems and concerns before the final product is released. For example, researchers at Lancaster University created a system for supporting informal interactions between group members in different geographic locations using a user-driven design approach. They started by implementing a simple system in an office and observed how the workers interacted with it. This revealed both design flaws that needed to be fixed as well as potential features that could be added to the system to make it more useful [3].

Background
User-driven design is closely related to design methods such as participatory design and user-centered design. These methods have roots in the field of Human-Computer Interaction, and many projects employ user-driven design methods. Several academic papers have been written detailing how a user-driven approach was used to design a particular system. In addition to the system mentioned previously, examples of user-driven design projects include a system for managing physicians’ rounds in a hospital [4] and a web-based workgroup support system [5].

References
http://www.stickyminds.com/sitewide.asp?Function=FEATUREDCOLUMN&ObjectId=5058&ObjectType=ARTCOL&btntopic=artcol
http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/347642.347804
[5] Romano, N, Nunamaker, J and Briggs, R User driven design of a Web-based group support system. HICSS 1997,