Steam Button of an electric iron

Original design

The Steam Button is a frequently used button. The user presses the button to cycle through the 3 states that control the amount of steam that the iron can spray.

Problem 1: Unclear representation of current state, and state changes
Problem 2: Pressing of Steam Button hindered by 2 other buttons
Problem 3: States change in fixed sequence; inconvenient if user switches between “LOW steam” and “HIGH steam” often.

Improved design

The user rotates the ridged Steam Wheel to change states.

Problem 1 fixed
Clear representation of current state, and feedback of state changes

Problem 2 fixed
Steam Wheel and the other buttons no longer blocking each other

Problem 3 fixed
Quick and flexible ways to change states

Similar widgets
1. “Cold/hot air buttons” on hair dryers
2. “Mode dials” on digital cameras
3. “Jog dials” on VCRs