Cross-dressing and border crossing: exploring experience methods across disciplines

Ron Wakkary, Thecla Schiphorst, Jim Budd
School of Interactive Arts and Technology
Simon Fraser University
Surrey, BC, Canada, V3T 2W1
{rwakkary, thecla, jbudd}@sfu.ca

AUTHOR KEYWORDS
design methods, concept design, experience design, interaction design, interdisciplinary methods, interdisciplinary collaboration, experience prototyping, experience modeling.

INTRODUCTION

As designers of interactive systems (spaces, process and products for people), we find ourselves stretching the limits of methodological structures that enable us to explore, build, communicate, and prototype experience. We argue that designing experience requires a 're-dressing' of methodological practice, and that HCI can benefit from drawing on methodological frameworks that traditionally fall outside of its purview. Domains such as performance, theatre, dance, architecture, conceptual design, industrial design, and visual art each contain rich knowledge and rigorous methodologies for constructing experience. Each of these domains defines experience, experience qualities and attributes, and defines affordances for enacting [and re-enacting] experience as a fundamental methodological tool in the respective discipline.

We invite participants from multiple disciplines across and within HCI, including kinesiology, performance, visual art, architecture, anthropology, organizational research, computing science, visualization and engineering. Participants are expected to be practitioners exploring unique methodological frameworks for designing technologically mediated experiences that live in technologically mediated environments. Participants will be expected to share, explore their methodologies for constructing and designing experience. Our fundamental assumption is that experience matters. We assume that an understanding, exploration and sharing experience design is central to HCI. Building experience is an interdisciplinary practice, and we invite participants to share and explore the diverse practices that contribute to the evolution of methodologies for designing experience.

GOALS OF THE WORKSHOP

The focus of this workshop is to cross boundaries, assume other roles in order to experiment methodologically and to establish a new common knowledgebase aimed at design and human experience. We see this as a step toward establishing a community of practice within HCI. We propose the following key issues as points of departure and exploration during the workshop:

- In today's HCI landscape, experience is felt, defined and modeled across multiple media and disciplinary domains, and environments. This provides a scope challenge that requires creative solutions derived by a diverse community of practice.
- Members of this community can engage each other in a cross-disciplinary dialogue around the task of creating positive "user experiences".
- In doing so each practitioner sits at the experience design table with a slightly different set of assumptions, knowledge, methodology and context around what it means to consider user experience.
- The considerations related to user experience in each discipline are unique and valuable in their own right. It is important to recognize this and embrace alternate perspectives.

THE WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

The workshop will be divided into three main parts with the key goals of finding a more common language around problem setting, hybridizing practices for the development of criteria for new methods, and reflecting on the cross-disciplinary practices of each team.

Part 1. Problem setting: Organizers and participants will present and review several of the experience scenarios. Activity and discussions will center on developing a set of shared analysis and language for defining and problem

setting interaction experiences. In addition to discussions, organizers expect group activities in the form of role-playing, re-enactments and re-articulations as a form of analysis.

Part 2. Practice and play: Teams will brainstorm, bodystorm and "prototype" new methods that could address the understanding of the experience articulations that emerged in part 1. The activities will shift from structured "brain/bodystorming" to open ended development of a method within a condensed period of time. The activity will end with a "swapping" of methods to be used by another team to address the problem situations form part 1.

Part 3. Reflection and mirror-gazing: A key goal of the workshop is to identify criteria for new methods while also identifying the rich and diverse set of practices that can be pulled in within HCI in order to respond to experience interaction situations. Teams will be asked to discuss and report out on three key items: criteria for methods, identification of the intertwining of practices within their methods and methods from other teams, identify key disciplinary and non-disciplinary connections within the teams and in other teams. The workshop in plenary will discuss the reports as a possible group report that identifies issues of methods, cross-disciplinary knowledge sets, and key relationships and connections that could form the basis of a community of practice centered on human experience.

RELATED LITERATURE

Terry Winograd was among the first to identify a design practice whose outcome and focus was a qualitative process rather than a "thing" or an object [15]. He labeled this new practice as "interaction design". Winograd identified the need to focus on the perceptual and psychological aspects 'of human experience by rooting interaction design equally in graphic design, psychology, communication, linguistics and computing science. A key genesis point in the evolution of "experience" as a design concept is the work in the 1930s of the industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss [3]. Dreyfuss' work in ergonomics lead to the publication of the "Measure of Man", an extensive database of human measurement to facilitate the design of products tailored to a 'standardized' human body. In the late 1960's ergonomics split into the related science and kinesiology based field of human factors, the political and social movements in Scandinavia that became known as participatory design [4, 8], and the cognitive science and design methodology of user-centered design [11, 12]. Design experience was seen in surprisingly different lights, one functional the other social and political. Enabling the audience experience was also a key goal of theorists and practitioners of the fields of performance and theater, namely the Russian, Vsevolod Meyerhold [1], and later the work of theorist and theater director Jerzy Grotowski [6]. This tradition directly informed the concepts of interactive design from the early work of Norman Bel Geddes [9] to today's interactive technology experiences and environments [2, 10]. In the field of computing science, particularly in the field of HCI (Human Computing Interaction), experience design is viewed as an extension of user-centered design methods [7, 14]. This approach has a particular focus on the "User Experience" aspect of design, in particular, quantifying the interactive experience as a means to determining standards for interface and interaction design. On a methodological note, some of the framework of this workshop is indebted to the work Donald Schön and Henrik Gednryd [5, 13]

REFERENCES

1. Cooke, C. *Russian avant-garde art and architecture*. Academy Editions and Architectural Design ; Distributed by St. Martin's Press, London New York, N.Y., 1983.
2. Dodsworth, C. *Digital illusion : entertaining the future with high technology*. ACM Press ; Addison-Wesley, New York Reading, Mass., 1998.
3. Dreyfuss, H. *The measure of man : human factors in design*. Whitney Library of Design, New York, 1967.
4. Ehn, P. Scandinavian Design: On Participation and Skill. in Winograd, P.S.A.a.T.A. ed. *Usability: Turning technologies into tools*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992.
5. Gedenryd, H. How Designers Work *Cognitive Studies*, Lund University, Lund, 1998, 226.
6. Grotowski, J. *Towards a poor theatre*. Odin Teatrets Forlag, Holstebro, Denmark, 1968.
7. IBM. What is user experience design?, IBM, 2002.
8. Levinger, D., Participatory Design History. in *PDC 98 Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference: Broadening Participation*, (Seattle, Washington, 1998).
9. Marchand, R. The Designers go to the Fair, II: Norman Bel Geddes, The General Motors "Futurama", and the Visit to the Factory Transformed. in Doordan, D.P. ed. *Design History: An Anthology*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1995.
10. Murray, J.H. *Hamlet on the holodeck : the future of narrative in cyberspace*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997.
11. Nielsen, J. *Designing web usability*. New Riders, Indianapolis, Ind., 2000.
12. Norman, D.A. *The psychology of everyday things*. Basic Books, New York, 1988.
13. Schön, D. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books, New York, 1983.
14. Shneiderman, B. and Badre, A. *Directions in human-computer interaction*. Ablex Pub. Corp., Norwood, N.J., 1982.
15. Winograd, T. From Computing Machinery to Interaction Design. in Metcalfe, R. ed. *Beyond Calculation: The Next Fifty Years of Computing*, Springer-Verlag, 1997, 149-162.