

Designed for Co-designers

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ABSTRACT

How to design and manage products, services and experiences that are to be completed and built upon by users or customers? How can we design for co-designers? This workshop will bring together examples and studies of recent trends in user generated content, open platforms for exchange of products, ideas and media, end user customization and other open models for innovation [4]. This is a full day workshop that invites case studies, methods, stories and critical analysis on this topic to generate a deeper understanding of its relevance to contemporary participatory design. The discussion will focus on methods, challenges and advantages for intentionally supporting end user innovation through design.

Keywords

Innovation, end user, open source, co-creation, co-design.

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.2 [User Interfaces]: Prototyping, Theory & Methods, User-Centered Design.

BACKGROUND

The tradition of participatory design is to ensure that intended end users are engaged in the design process and bring with them their tacit and contextual knowledge to help shape the design towards the most useful and meaningful solution possible [5]. This process acknowledges the expertise of users and brings it early in the process. However, changes in information and communication technology, consumer culture, communities of interest, manufacturing processes, global economies and markets have brought new opportunities to the forefront.



The concept of a product being ready and complete and then purchased by a customer, is no longer the only valid model. Instead, many companies are creating strategies to create and manage a mode of continuous user driven innovation and make profit from it through co-design platforms and collaboration with lead users.

There are many studies and examples of innovative products and services that have grown to become what they are, not by a conscious design process (participatory or other) started by an organization, but by some form of horizontal and sometimes, collaborative endeavor [6]. Such examples include e.g. innovative social practices like a collectively organized way to walk children to school [2], new forms of sports and sports equipment, as well as new media genres like the weblog and associated software tools.

With the help of new technical infrastructures (social software, open APIs, rapid prototyping, cheap media production capabilities and devices) many communities, companies and organizations have implemented (or stumbled upon) new processes of design and innovation, and new business models that allow users and customers to build and shape their own innovative products and services. Thanks to those favorable conditions there is today an increasing amount of platforms, templates, and toolkits for customizing, designing, buying and sharing "products", ranging from digital media like videos and music samples to t-shirts, shoes and furniture that would not have come to be, had end-users themselves not been involved in creating them.

RELEVANCE TO PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

The participatory aspect of design has escaped out into the wild, where the borders of design and production are increasingly blurry and people follow their interests and passions into progressively niche markets and unique products.

This phenomenon of open products, open source and user generated innovation [6] is not of merely customization or personalization, because all of these actions take place after a company has decided what the basics are, and which products and services and experiences they are willing to

hand over to end users. What seems to us is that these emerging processes of innovation both confirm many of the empirical findings of participatory design projects and pose new and interesting challenges for its practice.

What are the design strategies required to engage with products, services and experiences that are to be completed and built upon by users? How can we design for and with co-designers? How to scale up participation and what are the favorable conditions? What social and ethical considerations are involved? What methods and practices might be involved when development and use become connected? What are the characteristics of markets, companies, communities, products, services and experiences that cater this phenomenon? We invite the community to reflect and explore on this emerging trend by collecting examples, sharing experiences and mapping their implications on (but not limited to):

- Openness in the products and process: Designing so that end products can still be co-created / co-designed when in use: old fashioned construction bricks mixed with software to construct robots, packed in a kit designed with the help of a handful of customers (Lego's mindstorms new series [1]). A virtual world that gives its users (referred to as "residents") tools to add to and edit its world and participate in its economy where the majority of the content is resident-created and they retain its copyright (second life [3]). New types of engagement with media and social issues via web services built by APIs from other web services.

- Platforms that enable creative users to share and communicate: places to design, distribute and sell own creations – without the traditional investments (Spreadshirt, Threadless, blurb, Zazzle, Ponoko);

- infrastructures that enable users to share, produce, mix and distribute new contents (YouTube, WordPress, Blogger);

- new ways to collaborate with various kinds of potential customers such as lead users.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

Interested Audience

This workshop will bring together interested audiences in the topic, PD practitioners and researchers from academia and industry involved in design, marketing, production and research. To enable lively and productive discussions, the desired number of participants is minimum 10, maximum 20.

Before The Workshop

Interested applicants will submit via email a short (4 pages) position paper documenting a case study or example, specific methods or tools for supporting; or critical analysis and challenges to this phenomena (deadline for submission is August 8th). The workshop areas of interest includes (but are not limited to): (i) consumer products; (ii) user generated content and media; (iii) social innovation in services, practices and processes. Submissions will be

reviewed by the workshop organisers and an external review committee. Reviewers will comment on the appropriateness of the paper for the workshop and the usefulness of the qissue presented as an aid to discussion among attendees. Presenting authors will be notified by August 25th, and asked to prepare a short presentation (5-10 minutes). All attendees will have access to a website where to download position papers and other materials for preparing a list of questions to achieve lively discussions (available after August).

Important Dates

- Deadline for submission of position papers: August 8th 2008 (to: francesca.rizzo@polimi.it)

- Notification for Participants: August 25th 2008

- Workshop: September 30th 2008

During the workshop

The workshop will begin with a general presentation that will cover background concepts and topics to frame the session. This will be followed by participant's presentations and a joint session to identify topics (using matrix and visualizations). Before lunch there will be a quick warming up and brainstorming exercise where a small case simulation will be carried out that could help map out the topics identified against a concrete case. The afternoon will start with concentrated work in small teams. Each working group will document their discussion in a commonly agreed format. The workshop will conclude with a joint session to share insights and prepare a summary as well as discuss possibilities for future events. At the end of the workshop participants will be provided with a written summary of the workshop discussion.

After the workshop

The documentation and results of the event will be edited for inclusion in the SIGCHI Bulletin. A discussion list for participants to remain in contact will be created. Organizers will work with interested participants on the issues raised at the workshop for further dissemination for example in a special issue for a journal, and conferences (e.g. DPPI 09).

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