

Position paper

Looking to service design for inspiration in designing for community appropriation

Designing open systems or adaptable products suggests you're creating flexible platforms of resources—in this case technologies for community appropriation—that could be aware of situations or context and continuously resonate with people's individual needs. My position is that we can learn from new approaches to service design for the design of these open systems or adaptive products.

Why services?

Services are delivered on the fly, they are (by and large) intangible, and the act of supplying the service is hard to separate from the consumption. Unlike products, no two service delivery experiences are alike.¹ These attributes reflect many of the themes outlined in this call. For example, because no two service delivery experiences are alike, the resources developed to support the service must account for new and unexpected interactions. Services are intangible (designing the immaterial), so service designers seek to create tangible tokens as reminders of the experience. Because service supply and consumption are inseparable users are active participants in the design and delivery of their services (the role of users as collective re-designers). Service design touches people, brand, artifact, environment and context. I believe that designing for community appropriation can benefit from methods used in designing for service.

Approach

The approach we have taken to service design is based upon our experience in interaction design and approaches developed and published by Birgit Mager from the Köln International School of Design, Sean Blair and Kevin Gavaghan from Spirit of Creation, Mark Jones from IDEO and live|work a service design firm in London. Many of these people have become active participants in an international service design network.

At CMU we have organized our approach within a conventional design process framework. What follows is a high-level view of that approach.

discover

- environment description and user and stakeholder needs identification (through immersive research)
- company/organization perception and core competency
- market conditions and brand audit

synthesize

- process mapping (stage 1 blueprint)
- stakeholder model and ecology
- customer typology (personas)
- definition of core competency and brand vision (or declaration) and cultural model

construct (service innovations)

- service moment concepts
- service string and event concepts (processes)
- draft experience strategy (values, tools, etc. across touchpoints)
- experience prototyping (enactments)

¹ C. Hart, Heskett J., and Sasser, W. E. *The Service Management Course*, N.Y.: Free Press, 1990.

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- refine (progressive resolution)
 - service moment concepts
 - service strings and event concepts
 - experience strategy
 - service blueprinting (requirements specification or documentation)
 - experience prototyping (enactments)
 - service testing
- release
- service performance development

Many of elements of this approach (in particular the immersive research and customer typologies) may seem familiar to interaction designers. These are some of the methods interaction designers bring to conventional service design. In services, designers must account for the complexity of service elements that are onstage, backstage, visible and invisible in the service experience. Methods that service designers use to address this complexity are service ecologies, service moments, experience prototyping, and service blueprinting.

Service ecologies are maps of the actors affected by a service and the relationships between them. Ecologies or mappings of the research findings reveal new opportunities and inspire ideas, and they help to establish the overall service concept.²

According to Mark Jones, a service moment is just a single event that occurs at a touch point such as walking up to a teller window. So there are many potential moments in a discrete number of touchpoints. Patricia Seybold's defines the term touchpoint as the types of media through which customers interact with companies and their representatives. Her explanation goes on to say that touchpoints include stores, telephones, mail, fax kiosks, and, of course, the web.³

Experience prototyping brings the service experience to life. First designers and then stakeholders in the experience act out the service experience with specific roles and rough props. This is similar to Brenda Laurel's Design improvisation. ⁴The goal is theatre that enables the designers to better understand the contextual level of the design experience. This is crucial since because experience emerges from the activity of persons acting in a setting and is embedded in context and ongoing social practices.

Service blueprinting was developed by G. Lynn Shostack. She states "a service blueprint allows a company to explore all the issues inherent in creating or managing a service." She goes on to explain that there are four aspects to the blueprint. They are process identification, isolation of fail points, establishing the time frame and analyzing profitability.⁵ We have extended this approach to include opportunities for service innovations that are derived from our immersion research. We hope to also include ways to evaluate the effects of design solutions, before they are enacted.

I believe all these methods can be directly applied to the design of similarly complex systems for community appropriation.

² <http://www.livework.co.uk/home/research0/glossary.html>

³ Seybold, Patricia *The Customer Revolution* Crown Publishing Group; March, 2001

⁴ Laurel, Brenda (ed) *Design Research Methods and Perspectives* The MIT Press; October 1, 2003

⁵ Shostack, G. Lynn "Designing Services that Deliver" *Harvard Business Review* January-February 1984 pgs. 133-139

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Current work

In my course we began with a service many of us had experience with. We looked at the experience of using CMU's East campus parking garage through the eyes of a variety of different constituents. The parking garage is a convenience for all who use it, but also contributes as the first tangible impression of the University's brand for first time visitors.

Students were organized into 4 to 5 person teams. The class consisted of undergraduate and graduate students from design, engineering, hci and business. Each team used a simplified version of the process outlined above. To begin the project, the student teams conducted immersive research to understand all the stakeholders. They were trying to understand the needs of a person that purchased a yearly permit as well as that of a distinguished visitor. In addition, they discovered differences between parents visiting with prospective students or those visiting during special events and those of a student who is an experienced non-permit visitor just wanting to park for the afternoon.

Their challenge was to find ways for an inflexible physical structure (and rather inflexible parking process and staff) to morph and change to respond to the changing demands presented by the various constituents. Through the process the teams found many opportunities to improve the parking experience with little to no change to the physical structure. Many of the ideas could be implemented through simple SMS or web interfaces. Concepts ranged from finding ways to share yearly permits (to make the spaces that are reserved even if unused available for student parkers) to creating complete "visiting experiences" for distinguished visitors and parents with prospective students shopping for a school. These visiting experiences began with a person's first contact with the university online, continued through their visit and ended with a follow-up email when they returned home.

Future work

I would like to take this work into two different contexts. The first context is healthcare. This is an environment where the quality of experience often dramatically influences quality of life, especially in terminal illnesses. Unfortunately, I've had a recent experience that profoundly changed my ideas about healthcare and made it clear that this was an area in need of improvement.

The other context I hope to explore is financial services. I've worked with many financial institutions in the past and their "siloed" approaches to service design often get in the way of an integrated and fulfilling service experience for their constituents. It is a business arena that is highly competitive and therefore ripe for innovation.

Rich Robinson did a talk a few years ago where he said it was all about "access, confidence and trust". Clearly in either healthcare or financial services access, confidence and trust are key issues. I think in design for service or community appropriation these are some of the most important ideas.

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Bio



Shelley Evenson is currently an Associate Professor in the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University. Shelley teaches in the area of interaction design. Shelley has worked for more than 25 years in multidisciplinary consulting practices. Her work focuses on tapping into the needs of constituents, defining the best opportunities to respond to those needs, quickly prototyping the response and iteratively reshaping it based on feedback. Prior to CMU, Shelley was cofounder of seeSpace and Chief Experience Strategist for scient. Her client engagements have included CIBC, Texas Instruments, Williamsburg Institute, Apple Computer, Xerox, Diamond Technologies, Bank of Montreal, and Kodak. Her current interests include design languages and strategy, experiences that skill, organizational interfaces, design for service and what lies beyond user-centered design.

Appointments

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| 2003—present | Associate Professor, School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University, |
| 2004—present | Courtesy appointment, Human-Computer Interaction Institute, Carnegie Mellon University |
| 2000—2001 | Adjunct Clinical Professor, Technology and eCommerce Program, J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, |
| 1997—1998 | Nierenberg Chair of Design, School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University |
| 2003 | Advisory Board Member, Human-Computer Interaction Institute, Carnegie Mellon University |

Design research and development related positions

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| 1999—2002 | Chief Experience Strategist, scient |
| 1997—1998 | Design Director, Digital Knowledge Assets, |
| 1996—2003 | Partner, seeSpace, |
| 1994—1996 | Director, Doblin Group |
| 1981—1994 | Vice president, Fitch (co-founder of exploratory design lab with John Rheinfrank) |

Description of relevant research

In 2002 my partner, John Rheinfrank and I delivered a talk called “From static to adaptive worlds”. In this talk we put forth a framework for thinking about ability centered design and the role participation would play in these new adaptive worlds. We suggested that ability-centered design will mean that now you’re creating flexible platforms of resources that could be aware of situations or context and continuously resonate with people’s individual abilities. We also suggested seven themes to consider in ability-centered design. This presentation is available upon request.

In the fall of 2004, I designed and delivered a course on designing for service. Designing for service touches many of the dimensions we outlined in our earlier work on adaptive worlds listed above. Through the course I am developing a process for designing for service that integrates conventional business perspectives on service design with methods for interaction design.

I’m also continuing my work in interaction design with a focus on interfaces for learning.