User Involvement in Design: Some Implications from the Field

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What is it to involve ‘users’ in the process of evaluation and related claims about participation, engagement and democracy?

What is the currency and role of ‘design’ and 'prototyping' in the project?
User Assemblages in Design: An Ethnographic Study

Two Case Studies
1. Abby, a housewife persona.
2. Prototyping a health technology.

Implications for Ranking, Rating, Reviews
User Assemblages in Design: An Ethnographic Study
6 month ethnographic study
of user-centered designers and user
involvement in design.

ANT inspired methodology: following users
variously enacted as
human/non-human entities.

Four substantive case studies
of design practice and the enactment of
users.

Concept of User-Assemblage
as key theoretical contribution.
Case Study #1
Revisioning the Housewife of the Future
Personas In Design Literature

Fictional figures representative of collectives.

Personas pre-exist specification and construction of a technology.

Personas are coded with cognitive, social, economic and technical qualities.
A visualisation of the KMS in a kitchen environment.

An advanced prototype of the KMS.
An advanced prototype of the KMS device.
Bringing a Gendered Persona into Being

Combination of two personas:

1. Microsoft Abby
2. Amiko

Focus group with housewives.

‘Soccer Mom’ political trope.
Co-Configuring

Persona -> system specification translations.

System specification -> persona translations.

Translations are an iterative process, locally enacted.

Ongoing change and mutual reconfiguration.
Staging

Presenting the KMS to stakeholders.

Simplified and crystallised version of the persona as a coherent vision of the future.

Messiness is bracketed out.

Rigid and coherent scripts of future domestic practices.

Powerpoint fictionalises process of design and future domestic practices.
**Staging**

Presenting the KMS to stakeholders.

Simplified and crystallised version of the persona as a coherent vision of the future.

Messiness is bracketed out.

Rigid and coherent scripts of future domestic practices.

Powerpoint fictionalises process of design and future domestic practices.
Abby constructed from existing products, failed projects, genderscripts and political trope.

Abby was a highly adaptable assemblage of socio-technical properties that are locally enacted to meet varying demands.

Persona facilitated multiple points of interaction and closure during design.

Abby resourced multiple interests: expectation work and technical work.
Case Study #2
Prototyping the Prospects of Obesity
The Daily Exercise Prototype

Figure 1. a) The Omron HJ-112 pedometer, b) the pedometer in use, and c) the Nokia 6600 mobile phone running Houston.

The DEP including a pedometer, mobile phone handset & exercise journaling software.
Distal Users & Inventive Risk Discourse
The Rationale

For people at risk of or suffering from obesity.

To motivate people to carry out exercise.

Any routine activity counts as exercise.
The global threat of obesity.

U.S Surgeon General.

U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The World Health Organisation.

Wednesday, 13 July 11
Futures

Uncontrolled propagation of obesity amongst populations.

The global threat of obesity.

U.S Surgeon General.

U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The World Health Organisation.

The Present
The global threat of obesity.

U.S Surgeon General.

U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The World Health Organisation.

Futures

Uncontrolled propagation of obesity amongst populations.

People managing obesity with the aid of ubicomp technologies.

The Present
Proximal Users
Multiple Sensor Readings

A visualisation of sensor data collected from students using the multi-modal sensor board.
Designers as Users
Concluding Remarks: Implications for Ranking, Rating & Reviewing
Representation

Expectation & Anticipation

Scale

Accountability