By Bas Raijmakers, Andreas Sommerwerk, Julia Leihener and Indri Tulusan

How sticky research drives Service Design

»Anna has just arrived home. Her dogs lie flat-out on the floor, recovering from a few hours of running in the woods outside of Berlin, and Anna is getting ready to cook herself some dinner. "If someone rings me now, I wouldn't pick up the phone," she tells a small USB Video Camera, "but if one of my neighbours knocks on the door, I would invite them to have dinner with me.«

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The problem of lost shoes

How can we create an experience that is enjoyable and valuable for the people for whom we design? We all know it is of great help if, at the beginning of our endeavour, we put ourselves in the shoes of our future users and walk around in them to explore their context from their perspective. This type of ethnographically-inspired design research, and the insights that result from it should be present through the design process so the design team can not only be inspired by it, but also check if the ideas that they have still make sense in the users' world. This is where many practitioners in Service Design run into problems: the shoes that did such a great job allowing us to understand the future users' context during research are lost or no longer fit when the design process progresses. After a while, we miss a link to the initial research. So when the Deutsche Telekom Creation Center asked Spur and STBY to embark on a joint project in spring 2008, the key question was: how can we keep walking in the shoes of our users throughout the entire design process?

Text-message-prompted video probes

The Creation Centre in Berlin is a department of Deutsche Telekom that was set up almost two years ago to nudge service innovation projects inside the company to using stronger user involvement. It is at the Creation Centre where designers and company project managers step into users' shoes to explore their worlds.

In this paper, we describe one example project aimed at designing services to enhance community interaction, especially on mobile phones. The Creation Center started with extensive ethnographic research in collaboration with STBY and Spur, two companies focused

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on creating strong connections between research and design by doing design research themselves. On the client side, six product managers were part of the entire process, from initial research to concept development.

In order to make our design research as inspiring as possible, we recruited six urban participants, ranging in age from 26 to 55. We were looking for a variety of users who were socially active, with either digital or analogue tools. We developed a package of 'auto-ethnographic video probes' that we gave to the participants during a workshop. The package included a small USB video camera, with which we asked participants to record film clips over a two-week period.

Most successful was a video probe we triggered by text messages. We gave the participants 'tools' to highlight and comment on their surroundings, e.g. an arrow, a heart and an exclamation mark to point at things or to express like and an 'X' to indicate dislike. Over several days, we sent the participants text messages unexpectedly. Here is one message we sent:

"Hi, we're up to the last task: Suppose your friends could always see where you are and what you are doing, if you let them. Attach a tool to something you really don't want them to see. Please film your 3 clips, and talk about what you don't want to show your friends. Thanks a lot for all the films!."

Tools to comment while recording the videos

Auto-ethnographic video probes pack

Bas Raijmakers co-founded design research company STBY (Standby) in London and Amsterdam with Dr. Geke van Dijk. STBY focuses on social research for design and innovation for clients in industry and the public sector. Bas has a background in cultural studies and the early days of the internet industry. He holds a PhD in Design Interactions from the Royal College of Art.

The three clips mentioned in the message refer to a script we had developed beforehand and practiced in a workshop with the participants when we distributed the probes. The scripting was important because it limited our need to edit 250+ film clips into short films; one person spent only one day editing all of them. The script consisted of the user making two 360-degree shots, turning the camera first outwards and then to himself or herself, while explaining his or her surroundings. The third shot was a close-up of the object the participant chose in response to the text message prompt, with a voice-over explaining their choice.

What's nice about text messaging is that it is widely accepted as an "intimate" communication tool. The use of video and our request to talk directly into the camera builds on that intimacy. Both support the self reflection we wanted to encourage and fit well with the more pervasive societal practice of confiding in a video camera. The approach allowed us to get very close to the private sphere of the users. The text message prompts also allowed participant to stay in control of the situation and pause for reflection before answering, a type of control that is lacking in a one-to-one interview. At the same time, the data was more focused on the research questions than data from an open video diary, which would have been much harder to edit. The resulting short films proved to be very useful throughout the project. We kept making connections to the films at all stages of the design process. For this reason we started to call them 'sticky': the design research remained with us for a long time, which

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We asked this participant via textmessage what she would not want her friends to see at that moment. She was in the middle of the street, had to think about it, but then swung the camera around and took out her false teeth.

Use of video probes to communicate research and ideas in workshops

»How can we create an experience that is enjoyable and valuable for the people for whom we design?«

was important because we wanted to stay as close to our future users as possible.

Inspiration

Equally important as making research part of design is the reverse: bringing design into research. Design was very present in the probes, e.g. the heart, exclamation mark and cross, and the film scripts were designed so we would get stories, not just videos. As design researchers, we were aware we would need to inspire and motivate the participants to make our approach work. The resulting films inspired the design team during subsequent stages of the design process. Also important: the probes triggered a flow of ideas from people who were not trained as designers, namely the product managers on the project team. The movies inspired the creation of insights, opportunities, ideas, and concepts. 'Being there' with the people for whom we designed, through the films, was very valuable. We got access to our participants' intimate moments, for instance when they were alone at home, too tired

to talk to anyone else, or right after they spent a relaxing hour in the bathtub. One of the participants even took out her false teeth to show us what she did not want her friends to see. The movies gave us undigested reality and many surprises. The raw, first-hand quality spiced up our creative process and was the main reason the research remained "sticky" through the process. We could say inspiration flowed two ways: first from designer to participant through the probes and then back from participant to designer through the films.

Evidence

Besides providing strong inspiration, the films played another role: they served as evidence for the insights, opportunities, ideas, and concepts we invented during the design process. This evidence was particularly strong because it came from the people for whom we were designing the services. Insights, opportunities, ideas and concepts always run the risk of being too bland if they are not firmly rooted in everyday life. The films offered these essential connections. Some films were quite emotional, e.g. the relaxation

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03-09	04-09	04-09	05-09	05-09	06-09	06-09	07-09	08-09	09-09	10-09	...
Text Message Triggers	Home Interviews	Insights Workshop	Ideation Workshop	Analysis Process	Prioritization Workshop	Focus Workshop	Experience Prototype	Management Kick Off	SixSigma Workshop	Prototyping Kick Off	Implementation Process

Sticky Research throughout the whole project process

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of someone at home alone, cooking dinner after a long and tiring day, and they created an emotional attachment with the ideas. These are moments when it suddenly becomes easy to step into the shoes of a future user; you see the situation in front of you, in the film, and you can imagine how your idea would work in that situation. Since we had many films, we never had to depend on a single example for support. The films not only helped us immerse ourselves in a specific context, but they also helped to immerse our ideas into these scenarios.

Communication

Ideas only become valuable for the user and for a company if they are implemented. For implementation, innovators need to convince many people from other departments their ideas are worth expending time and effort on. This is difficult. We needed to interest these people in our process, our research, and our ideas. Here again, the movies helped. They showed how we started our process, they illustrated the opportunities we identified, and they showed why the ideas were relevant and served actual needs. At the end of the day, the films showed real business opportunities that

could generate revenue in the future. The movies were sticky not only because of their intensity – but also because they provided an easy-to-understand language for people from different professional backgrounds with different perspectives on and interests in the same topic, here enhancing community interaction via mobile phones. With the films, anyone can step into the shoes of our users quite easily; even after the design process is finished. It is very valuable that the movies helped us reach not only the minds but also the hearts of the decision makers.

We discovered video probes prompted by text message provided shoes we could wear through the entire design process and were easy for others to wear later when they sought evidence to support design proposals. The films helped us to keep our users' daily lives, with all their idiosyncrasies and routines, stuck in our minds during the design process and in the communication of our results. Using video probes, we were better able to develop services that created value not only for our companies or clients but also for our eventual users. 卍

Service-dominant logic and design for service

Recent work on services in management provides an important resource for developing knowledge about design for service. Building on work in services marketing, economics, and sociology, Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008a) identify a shift from a goods-centred model of exchange focused on tangibles towards a "service-dominant logic" focused on dynamic relationships and processes. This essay explores the implications for design for service.

Vargo and Lusch revisit early developments in economics and find that the emphasis on value-in-exchange obscured value-in-use, leading to the still-dominant idea that units of output are products (or services). In contrast, drawing on their reading of Adam Smith and others, Vargo and Lusch argue that the fundamental basis of economic activity is the exchange of service for service (cf Ramírez 1999). They define service as "the application of specialised competences (...) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself" (Vargo and Lusch 2008b: 26). While their work is rooted in marketing's concept of the market, their definition does not assume services are exchanged for profit. Instead of seeing services (in the plural) as what products are not, the concept of service (in the singular) foregrounds the application of one's resources for the benefit of another. This can be achieved with goods, which Vargo and Lusch see as a distribution mechanism for service provision (2008a), but the fundamental exchange is service for ser-

vice in a dynamic process. Instead of value being embedded in objects through a value chain, value is created through exchanges of service in value constellations (Norman and Ramírez 1993) or value-co-creation systems (Maglio and Spohrer 2008). For Vargo and Lusch, the "service economy" is not new; all economies are service economies.

This definition highlights the role played by customers in co-creating value in the exchange of service. Instead of the production/consumption dyad in which value is consumed (Ramírez 1999), service-dominant logic sees customers, end users, and other stakeholders as always involved in co-creating value. Customer value-creating processes are dynamic, interactive and non-linear (Payne et al 2008). Situated in day-to-day, often mundane experiences, services are co-created in practise through the embodied doings and sayings of end users (Schatzki 2001).

What do these concepts mean for the design for service? To open up this enquiry, we propose a definition: Designing for service is the