Embedding design in the public sector; Changing our thinking
Square peg - Round hole

Embedding design is not simply shoving in designers

“Being on the inside of an organisation gives you a greater chance of changing things; of ‘embedding’ the changes so they still happen when you’re not there.”

Emily Campbell, RSA Design and Society: What is Embedded design? Transcript, p2
Skills Development Scotland
Four-into-one

“When Skills Development Scotland was launched in April 2008, it marked the start of a step change in the delivery of careers, skills and training services in Scotland.”
You don’t have to be good with numbers to work in finance

Kristofer Leyden thinks that the most surprising thing about his job is how little he needs to know about finance
Procurement vs Problem Solving

Buying solutions off the shelf?
Opportunity for change: Doing more for less

“We need to be conscious that today’s problems are just not going to be addressed by yesterday’s ideas and yesterday’s solutions”

Alisdair Darling, Budget Report 2009
Beginning of a journey
Insights into conditions for embedding design

Skills Development Scotland
Learndirect Scotland
April-May 2008
SDS staff shadowing project

Careers Scotland
Nov-Dec 2008
SDS staff shadowing project

SDS MyCoach
Mar-May 2009
SDS staff shadowing project

SDS Internal Comms
Feb-Mar 2010
SDS staff shadowing project

CPD: GSA service design training to SDS staff, 2010.

student internships

MyLearningSpace development

... a multi-channel approach to service development & delivery
Toolkits
They’re not the starting point

“A tool does not make a profession...If I was to give you a stethoscope, it doesn’t mean that you are a doctor. In the same way if you receive, or even trained in using, design tools, it doesn’t necessarily make you a designer.”

Professor Irene Mcara Mcwilliams, thesis interview conducted by Sarah Drummond
Where does this fit?

We need to create circumstance for design to exist.
Longevity Interventions are short term and not sustainable
This is more mindset than tools

“…it is more about teaching a mindset and an approach than specific tools and techniques”

Andy Polaine, “Interdisciplinarity vs Cross-Disciplinarity.”
Creation of SDS
Changing the DNA

SD&I (service design & innovation) team created
• mindset
• behaviour
• culture
• systems
• practice
Strategic and particular
Balancing - delivery
‘My World of Work’
Balancing - embedding

‘This is service design’
Being a think and do tank
Deliver back upstream
The Barriers
Institutionalised culture and mindset

“What do our frontline staff and customers know?”

closest to understanding user needs and day to day operations
‘Expert knowledge’ + ‘Tacit and explicit knowledge’
Business vs. Design

“be like a designer” is tantamount to saying ‘be less productive, less efficient, more subversive, and more flaky”

Roger Martin, The Design of Business
Breaking barriers
Getting out there, doing small projects
The Barriers

It’s all a bit fuzzy

“Most managers are trying to design variance out of the system and cannot handle a process which starts off not knowing where it will eventually get”

Roger Martin, The Design of Business
The Barriers Difficult for designers

- Aesthetics
- Short attention span
- Don’t understand system/language
- Working against the current
- Not having space (metaphorically and physically) to design

“The design studio provides a context where this visible thinking becomes “visible learning” for others. The studio is socially and aesthetically immersive – a changing environment where ideas, thoughts and models are created and shared. The environment is messy, rich and stimulating. In other words it is like the real world. It is not at all like “the paperless office”, the permanently clean desk, or the knowledge-management system in a computer database. The “database” for the artist and designer is the physical and cultural environment, and the creative processes in the design studio reflect and affect the “actual studio” of the real world.”

Irene Mcara Mcwilliams, Impossible things? Negative Capability and the Creative Imagination
Embedding plan Is consulting over?

“You can’t just have one part of the organisation understanding how design thinking can benefit their work: the whole organisation needs to know it.”

Tony Coultas, Head of Service Design and Innovation, thesis interview conducted by Sarah Drummond
Getting together
Capability and understanding
Seeing design

“First of all, design cannot be seen”

Peter Gorb, The Design Management Interface
Artifacts
Creating Interactions
Improving Capabilities
SD&I Team CPD

"Quote"
Improving Capabilities
Whole organisation CPD
Supporting Projects
Not just focusing on tools
Looking at core skills not methods
Teaching staff to draw
SD&I 2.0

Internal capacity

“re-imagaine the internal design function as an independent design studio”

Martin Neumeier, The Designful Company
Internal Capacity
Being useful
Embedding Plan
Increase Understanding and Capabilities
Briefs not policies

All about projects
Building from within

CPD
Everything they do
SD&I recognise they need help but do also need to ‘do it ourselves’
Do design from inside and outside
Seeing the big picture

Government Design challenge Working strategically
Dealing with the detail

Small steps make change
Design alters behaviour
Design DNA

Extrapolating from design
How best can designers exist and flourish within the public sector?
We might not fit in
But just do it anyway
Thank you
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Books
Godin Seth. (2009) Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us. Great Britain: Plakus Books
Illich Ivan. (1973) Tools For Conviviality. Great Britain: Calder & Boyars

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