DeThinkingService
ReThinkingDesign

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Workshop Day 2

Applying design thinking and methods to services.

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Workshop summary

To introduce and explore the value of visual design methods to engage service users and providers, and used to investigate and develop service design proposals. This hands-on workshop will allow participants to experience using visual design tools and methods to develop proposals in response to a service design brief.

Workshop structure

The workshop will be broken down into bite-sized elements, each taking time to explore part of the service design process.

» Gathering and making sense of research data: user research, investigation of current service.
» Understanding the users, providers and relevant stakeholders: developing profiles, personas, visualising user journeys, mapping relationships.
» Generating insights; visualising opportunities; making service propositions.
» Prototyping and testing to obtain user and service provider feedback.
» Sum up and discussion.

Applying design thinking and methods to services

Researching the problem

We have all travelled to attend this conference so, using our recent experiences of the transport systems, we will explore the design and use of tools to extract and gather service-user and service-provider information. These methods and tools help service designers engage more usefully with user groups and enable them to extract the key data and insights that will later inform their design proposals. We will discuss the importance of tailoring tools to the project and to the people we are engaging.

Figure 1 - User engagement tools



Mapping and evaluating the service experience

Having gathered copious amounts of data from users, service providers and other stakeholders, we have to make sense of the information. We will explore mapping user comments and research in a way that is quick and easy to visualise; helping us understand user needs, for decisions to be made quickly, insights to be generated and opinions formed.

Figure 2 - Visualising the data
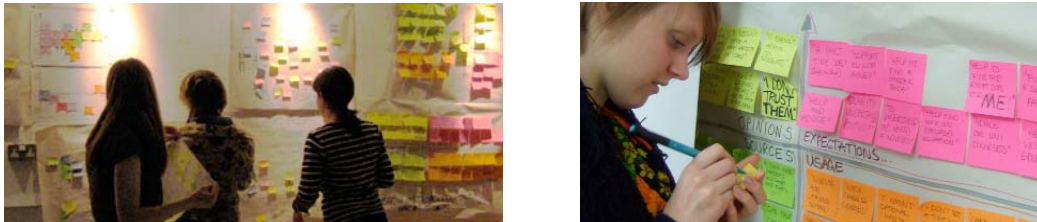
Mapping users' experiences of a service as journeys through time can highlight the points of interaction and areas where there are problems. These mappings identify points in time and space where users and the service interact (touchpoints) and can also be used to illustrate the quality of the interaction.

Figure 3 - Mapping the user journeys and interactions
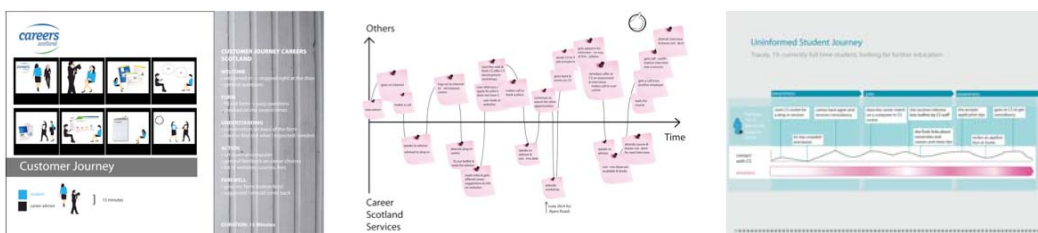
Some services might deliver a *simple* outcome – a telephone conversation, a train journey, etc. – however, the relationships and interactions between the various stakeholders can be quite complex. To understand these complexities, we will illustrate the interactions, experiences and relationships involved in a service, visualising systems of interactions and relationships using schematic illustrations and diagrams. Visualising interactions and relationships in this way enables us to see patterns and opportunities within the data.

Figure 4 – Visualising pathways, interactions & relationships

Different users are likely to access a service in their own way, exhibiting alternative journeys through the service. We will look at the design of tools that investigate and communicate these different pathways, interactions and relationships. These tools can also be used to explore concept ideas and refine our understanding of elements of the service.

Developing service design proposals

Making sense of the research gathered is one thing, but it has to be used to generate proposals for a new service provision. Turning the analysis from what we know about the current situation, to what should be done to improve it. The design tools developed in the early stages can be used to help create 'what ifs' – what if this or that relationship was changed; what if we rephrased the problems and opportunities as user desires and expectations, etc. From the insights gained from our research and critique of the current service we will attempt to create new service propositions. To test our proposals, we will explore how elements of the service propositions might be prototyped to assess and refine the design.

Figure 5 – Developing proposals with user group assessment and feedback of service prototypes

Communicating the outcome and group discussion

Being presented with a voluminous report does not encourage ease of comprehension and dissemination of the contents within the client's organisation. The written meaning of the document can often be misinterpreted, or requires lengthy explanations to avoid it. There is nothing better than to be shown how something looks, or works – it aids not only comprehension but also, and perhaps more importantly, it triggers awareness of how it can

be implemented by each stakeholder and how it might fit into their organisation. By presenting the service proposals visually, the client can imagine how elements of the proposal might be used, or modified if necessary, to suit their needs. The client can be inspired by elements of the proposal, or select what they need. The important thing is that the client feels empowered to act on the ideas presented rather than feeling dictated to.

We will discuss how service proposals might be presented using visual examples of what could be. User-provider scenarios; videos of a typical user journey; web pages and graphics are mock-ups; diagrams of user and stakeholder relationships; etc. Physical tools provide the client with the opportunity to explore their use with colleagues. All this serves to provide examples of what the service provision might look like and how it might be implemented. The client is provided with a proposal and visual aids that help to communicate with colleagues the directions that can be taken to achieve the goals set by the original brief.

Reflections

From our experience of developing a service design element to the product design programme at Glasgow School of Art, I will be sharing some of the insights and techniques we have learned in the process. We have seen the value that visually trained and user-centred designers can bring to the discipline of service design. However, these students also have to be trained in the use of user research techniques and social science methods to produce meaningful service proposals. The students' understanding of the user-service relationships in a social context combined with their ability to visualise potential solutions makes for a valuable combination.

The importance of generating specific tools with which to engage user groups was found to be invaluable and helped create dialogues with user groups that might have been difficult using regular interview techniques. Not only did these tools help visualise the discussion with users, but they also helped the communication of the findings later. Visualising the research and evaluations at various stages using storyboards, relationship maps, diagrams, etc., was important to share thoughts and ideas amongst the designers as well as to easily present these ideas to the client for updates on progress. Creating visual representations of the data gathered helped generate insights and uncover opportunities.

Presenting the service proposals in a visual manner through illustration of user-service relationships, storyboards of user journeys, prototypes of graphics, web sites and touchpoints, etc., provides the client with a proposal that is easy to digest and disseminate. The clients are provided with visual aids with which to generate ownership of the proposals within their organisation.

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http://www.gsa.ac.uk/gsa.cfm?pid=130

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http://www.plan.bz/

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