Special Issue Editorial: *Designing for Services*

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Design is Invisible

In 1980, Lucius Burkhardt, the German sociologist and design dean in Weimar, published the essay "Design is Invisible" (Burkhardt, 1995). Relating his own research to Christoph Alexander's Pattern Language, he concluded that the main focus of design should not be materialization but rather the value of solutions. This was one of the first manifestations of a shift in design taking place over the last few decades. As a matter of fact, we can observe two such major shifts in the design world.

In the traditional world of product design, we can observe a shift from design being seen and used as styling via design as a process, towards design as a strategy. Companies have discovered that design is a crucial ingredient for innovation processes and that it needs to be anchored on a strategic business level. Design is invisible. It is about integrating the design approach deeply within organizations. At the same time, we can observe a continuous shift from the design of the tangible world to the world of interactions, moving from interaction to experience and then from experience to services. Our economy and our society have moved from the secondary to the tertiary sector, and design has created conceptual and methodological answers to this fundamental change. Design is now about strategies and structures, processes and interactions – about *services*.

Service design aims at designing services that are useful, usable and desirable from the user perspective, and efficient, effective and different from the provider perspective. It is a strategic approach that helps providers to develop a clear strategic positioning for their service offerings. Services are systems that involve many different influential factors, so service design takes a holistic approach in order to get an understanding of the system and the different actors within the system. Service ecologies and stakeholder maps visualize the system and make it an object to design. An interdisciplinary approach is a strong anchor for service design projects since it connects experts, users and stakeholders. Co-creation is one of the driving forces, involving users, employees and other actors in order to integrate the expertise of those that are in the heart of the service experience and mobilizing energies for change. Services are delivered and consumed over time. Service design looks at the experience by focusing on the full customer journey, including the experiences before and after the service encounters. Service design is creative and visual, it goes beyond the given and visualizes and orchestrates solutions that do not yet exist.

This issue of the *IJD* provides insight into fundamental research in the service design field. It does not attempt to give an introduction to service design, as that has been done well by other authors and publications such as *Touchpoint*, the international journal of service design and other publications (Mager, 2009, Miettinen & Koivisto, 2009, Schneider & Stickdorn, 2011). Likewise, this issue will not provide a lot of space for the explanation of basic methods; books and websites already provide a lot of insight (for example servicedesigntools.org). With the growing establishment of service design as an academic field, however, fundamental and applied research is emerging. The research priorities for service science that have been published in the *Journal of Service Research* in 2010 (Ostrom et al., 2010), based on research with 1,000 companies, defined service design as one of the nine most relevant areas for research in the field of service science. Some of the issues addressed for research in the field of service design were the integration of design thinking into service practices, processes or systems, and the systematic research on customer and employee engagement into collaborative service design. This issue of the *IJD* addresses some of these research challenges and by doing so is leading the way for influential research in this field.

This special issue consists of six articles and a case study report. Each of them contributes important insights into the understanding of designing for services, and the findings provide an important benchmark for subsequent research on related topics. Among the seven articles, three were presented earlier at the ServDes.2010 Conference held at the Linköping University, Sweden, and were further revised or modified to be included. To provide readers a quick overview of the seven articles collected, a brief summary for each of them is presented as below.

The first article, by Kathy Lo, posits service evidence as a form of relational communication which influences customers' emotions and perceptions of service experiences. Ms. Lo discusses relational messages in the design of service evidence based on insight from empirical research. Through the application of photo elicitation and in-depth interviews as the key research methods in

understanding hotel guest experiences for design opportunities, she proposes a framework to highlight three design strategies and three specific design emphases that conveys positive relational messages of care, importance, and trust. She suggests that design is not something which can only be experienced functionally, aesthetically, and symbolically, but also can be interpreted relationally. Finally, she notes that her findings may also have implications on product-service systems, self-service systems and remote services which are beyond the elaborate servicescapes.

In his article, Simon Clatworthy presents a development process of AT-ONE touch-point cards. Mr. Clatworthy addresses two main research questions: 1) What is the role of touch-points in innovative service development? 2) How will the cards work in a workshop? He argues that the development of the AT-ONE touch-point cards is related to the fuzzy front end of the service innovation projects, as well as to the work of cross-functional development teams. In addition, he identifies seven aspects of touch-point innovation relevant to the performance of cross-functional teams at the early stages of the new service development process (NSD). Lastly, he proposes a card-based toolkit consisting of six tools that enable and encourage these seven aspects. This article demonstrates that the use of the cards to facilitate team building brings forward a cross-functional team for collaboration.

The third article, by Daniela Sangiorgi, offers valuable insights into exploring the relationships between service design and some social change issues, as well as discusses the notions of transformative services and transformation design. This analysis breaks new ground in spelling out the impact of social change on service design. Additionally, Ms. Sangiorgi identifies seven key transformative principles: 1) active citizens; 2) intervention at community scale; 3) building capacities and project partnerships; 4) redistributing power; 5) designing infrastructures and enabling platforms; 6) enhancing imagination and hope; 7) evaluating success and impact. She further suggests that designers need to become more reflexive to what concerns their work and interventions while the societal transformation is becoming increasingly explicit. This article helps to reflect upon the still-open issues concerning service design and offers a useful and challenging new way of viewing them.

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Lucy Kimbell reviews a broad and heterogeneous body of research on service design from a multidisciplinary viewpoint which includes perspectives of design, management, and service. Ms. Kimbell proposes a four-quadrant grid approach depicting two primary dimensions of understanding service design. One of these dimensions concerns the ways of thinking about design, and the other concerns the ways of thinking about service. She also presents an ethnographic study of three firms of professional service designers and details their work in three case studies which illustrate the potential of service design and highlight a distinction between service design and designing for services. This article enables us to track, step by step, how design, management, and service co-evolve over time, and through doing so provides a solid foundation for further research on designing for services.

The fifth article, by Marc Steen, Nicole De Koning, and Menno Manschot, deeply examines the benefits of co-design during the design process in service design projects. Steen et al. highlight three types of benefits: 1) benefits for the service design project; 2) benefits for the service's customers or users; 3) benefits for the organization(s) involved. These three benefits were based on three service design projects. This article gives us a much better sense of the broader perspective of how to develop different value propositions and how to identify the key service actors for support and resources in service design projects. Furthermore, Steen et al. suggest that people involved in the co-design process should first clearly define the goals of the service design project, and then concentrate on the activity-goal alignment with the associated benefits.

The sixth article, by Seunghae Lee, presents a holistic conceptual framework for discovering the relationship between healthcare servicescapes features and customer responses, such as perceptions, emotions, satisfaction and behaviors. Following this, a field survey, structured interviews, a questionnaire survey, and analyses are conducted to test the framework. Seunghae Lee further classifies servicescape features into two main categories – ambient conditions and serviceability – which are related to the satisfaction with the facility, perceived quality of care, and approach behavior. Seunghae Lee makes an important contribution by offering a rare empirical insight into the effect of the servicescape features on customer responses in the healthcare service sector.

The final article, by Mike Lin, Bobby Hughes, Mary Katica, Christi Dining-Zuber, Paul Plsek, provides a very detailed and real-life case study report on ways to effectively implement service design concepts in large, complex organizations. Many are aware of a well-known prototyping service design project called the Nurse Knowledge Exchange (NKE), initiated by Kaiser Permanente with IDEO, which focuses on improving the process of information exchange between nurses as handing off the care of their patients from one shift to another. In this article, Lin et al. further demonstrate a continued nurse shift change project, named the Nurse Knowledge Exchange *plus* (NKE*plus*) created in 2009, within four medical-surgical units of two Kaiser Permanente hospitals located in Sacramento and Santa Clara, Northern California, USA. Lin et al. suggest that the change management principles can be treated as an avenue to design a more human-

centered process for implementing NKE*plus*, and highlight four aspects of the implementation: 1) designing examples for building relatedness; 2) designing to encourage conversations around possibilities; 3) designing for action; 4) designing for acknowledgement and accomplishment.

The route towards service design will not be short and even, but the work done by the authors in this special issue indicates that it has become less winding. It is hoped that this special issue will stand as a small but firm step in that direction and that these articles included will provide a stimulus for those who are interested in or involved with service design to develop or continue their appreciation of and enthusiasm in this field.

Acknowledgments

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