

Malmö University
Interaction Design Master's KD637A
Thesis Project II

Examination Report
Susan Kozel susan.kozel@mau.se
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Anaëlle Beignon

“Design for Obsolete Devices”

SUMMARY

This Interaction Design Thesis Project II addresses the topic of obsolescence from theoretical, political and practical perspectives.

The theoretical context is constructed by reference to a range of relevant interdisciplinary and design sources but the framing of the work is solidly Interaction Design (the objects may be obsolete but the people who use them are alive and deserve to be taken into consideration, p15). The research questions address access to public services and the design of infrastructure to challenge obsolescence processes.

The practical case studies evaluate access to Swedish Public services (Skåne Transport System, and the Malmö Health Care System), leading to design contributions that redesign the infrastructure for access, and providing a ‘Phonebook’ (a registry of shortcuts to online systems) for new arrivals.

COMMENTS

Beignon posits an implicit spectrum posited between dysfunctionality and obsolescence, with most of the design processes addressing degrees of dysfunctionality regarding sustained networking, or access to the public services. Hidden assumptions behind access are opened: device functionality, network access, time available to make systems work, and implications for personal finances. This points to a solid political and social critique of areas that tend to be addressed purely in terms of technological efficiency.

The broader context is one of ethical responsibility and sustainable practices situated “outside the dominant model of the use of technology.”

This is very good work. It is an intelligently argued and effectively implemented design project that is located in an important area, both theoretically and in the wider world. It reflects ethics, sustainability and a fundamentally practical set of life processes of people (particularly foreigners but not exclusively) living in Sweden.

FORMAL ASSESSMENT per LEARNING OUTCOMES

Repertoire and theory

1. Building a comprehensive overview of existing canonical examples, best practices and academic state of the art in a chosen subfield within interaction design.

Yes, this is well done.

2. Displaying ability to critically position, contextualize and motivate design activities within a chosen subfield within interaction design.

This is very well done.

Skills and techniques

3. Displaying ability to plan, execute, frame and re-frame design activities at advanced level in the chosen subfield, individually or in small teams, within the time and resource limitations at hand.

Yes, this is very well done.

4. Displaying ability to choose techniques appropriate for advanced-level design work and execute them appropriately.

Yes, there is evidence of a well executed design process based around appropriately selected methods and techniques. The design processes are well supported by diagrammes.

5. Displaying ability to perform, document and communicate design activities as part of knowledge construction within the framework of interaction design research.

Yes, there is evidence of this.

6. Displaying ability to publicly communicate, display and discuss the work verbally, in written form and in other forms of expression appropriate for the chosen subfield and the nature of the work.

The project was well communicated in written form and satisfactorily in oral form. Some small 'formalia' edits are recommended to this version of the text prior to archiving:

1. title page: Grammar error in title: insert an apostrophe so it reads "public service's" (possessive form) or restructure the sentence: "the digitalization of Swedish Public Services"

2. title page: No need for word count

3. throughout: use S for Swedish, not s

4. p45 typo at significant point near bottom of page: should it be "second word for each of the trajectories" not second world (after McQuire)

5. p50 use plural form "Appendices" not singular Appendix.

Reflection and criticism

7. Displaying ability to critically reflect upon the design-based research methodology applied, including identification of needs for further knowledge and learning.

Yes, there is evidence of this.

8. Displaying ability to assess advanced-level design work.

Yes, there is clear evidence of this.

9. Displaying fair ability to assess the academic value of knowledge contributions in interaction design research.

Yes, there is evidence of this.

GRADE

Pass "G"