Call for Papers

Designed for Co-designers Workshop

In conjunction with PDC 2008 Bloomington, USA, 1–4 October 2008.

WORKSHOP BACKGROUND

The tradition of participatory design is to ensure that intended end users are engaged in the design process and bring with them their tacit and contextual knowledge to help shape the design towards the most useful and meaningful solution possible. This process acknowledges the expertise of users and brings it early in the process. However, changes in information and communication technology, consumer culture, communities of interest, manufacturing processes, global economies and markets have brought new opportunities to the forefront.

The concept of a product being ready and complete and then purchased by a customer, is no longer the only valid model. Instead, many companies are creating strategies to create and manage a mode of continuous user driven innovation and make profit from it through co-design platforms and collaboration with lead users.

There are many studies and examples of innovative products and services that have grown to become what they are, not by a conscious design process (participatory or other) started by an organization, but by some form of horizontal and sometimes, collaborative endeavor. Such examples include e.g. innovative social practices like a collectively organized way to walk children to school, new forms of sports and sports equipment, as well as new media genres like the weblog and associated software tools. With the help of new technical infrastructures (social software, open APIs, rapid prototyping, cheap media production capabilities and devices) many communities, companies and organizations have implemented (or stumbled upon) new processes of design and innovation, and new business models that allow users and customers to build and shape their own innovative products and services. Thanks to those favorable conditions there is today an increasing amount of platforms, templates, and toolkits for customizing, designing, buying and sharing "products", ranging from digital media like videos and music samples to t-shirts, shoes and furniture that would not have come to be, had end-users themselves not been involved in creating them.

This workshop is willing to generate a deeper understanding of this shift in the design paradigm towards the customer-generated innovations.

WORKSHOP TOPICS

What are the design strategies required to engage with products, services and experiences that are to be completed and built upon by users? How can we design for and with co-designers? How to scale up participation

and what are the favorable conditions? What social and ethical considerations are involved? What methods and practices might be involved when development and use become connected? What are the characteristics of markets, companies, communities, products, services and experiences that cater this phenomenon?

We invite the professional as well as the academic communities to reflect and explore on this emerging trend by collecting examples, sharing experiences and mapping their implications on (but not limited to):

- Openness in the products and process: Designing so that end products can still be co-created / co-designed when in use: old fashioned construction bricks mixed with software to construct robots, packed in a kit designed with the help of a handful of customers (Lego's mindstorms new series. A virtual world that gives its users (referred to as "residents") tools to add to and edit its world and participate in its economy where the majority of the content is resident-created and they retain its copyright (second life). New types of engagement with media and social issues via web services built by APIs from other web services.

- Platforms that enable creative users to share and communicate: places to design, distribute and sell own creations – without the traditional investments (Spreadshirt, Threadless, blurb, Zazzle, Ponoko);

- infrastructures that enable users to share, produce, mix and distribute new contents (YouTube, WordPress, Blogger);

- new ways to collaborate with various kinds of potential customers such as lead users.

These are some of the questions that this workshop would like to collect, expand, and reflect upon.

WORKSHOP SUBMISSION

Interested applicants will submit via email a short (4 pages) position paper documenting a case study or example, specific methods or tools for supporting; or critical analysis and challenges to this phenomenon.

At least one author of an accepted paper must register for the PDC conference (http://pdc08.informatics.indiana.edu/) and for the workshop (40 $). Accepted papers will be published on the workshop website one week before. A summary of the workshop will be submitted for SIGCHI Bulletin and might be integrated in a forthcoming volume (ISBN).

All attendees will have access to a website for downloading position papers and other materials for preparing a list of questions to achieve lively discussions (available after August).

Workshop Organisers

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Important Dates

August 8th, 2008 (5:00 pm PDT): paper submissions (at: francesca.rizzo@polimi.it)

August 25th, 2008: authors notification

September 10th, 2008: final versions