Socio-Cultural Fiction Prototyping in Design Thinking

Keywords: design thinking, cultural products, prototyping

1. Workshop Organiser/s

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2. Context of Workshop

In the phase of observing in design thinking and gaining insights from e.g. consumer observation (ethnographic approach), we want to explore if there is another possible access to the inner dreams, wishes or desires of consumers. We want to explore if the analysis of cultural products (e.g. literature and movies) can shed light on these dreams, wishes and desires.

Science fiction prototypes (SF prototypes), narratives based on science and technology, have been identified as a means to develop new products, services, and business models in light of their potential of enhancing creativity. Science fiction (SF) prototyping uses fictional stories about the future to investigate the implications of science and technology not yet feasible at present. This approach in particular allows to focus the design thinking process on the future.

We argue that the value of SF prototypes can be extended by complementing them with socio-cultural fiction (SCF) prototypes. This links the technological perspective to socio-cultural innovation. Further, while referring to prototypes derived from cultural products, it can be assumed that these prototypes through the processes of diffusion and normalization have become part of the world of the customer which then can be addressed through new products or services.
3. Planned Activities and Expected Outcomes
In the workshop we want achieve two things:

1. We want to explain the theoretical considerations underlying the concept of socio-cultural fiction (SCF) prototypes
2. We want to engage with the participants in the development of prototypes based on an excerpt form a novel. This shall allow at the end of the workshop to collectively reflect on this approach and to also assess the future of potential of this approach.

4. Intended Audience
The workshop is intended for practitioners who have an interested in predictive design research from various backgrounds but also for researchers who are working on understanding the process of design thinking.

5. Length of Workshop
The workshop has a length of 1.5 hours.

6. Space and Equipment Required
The workshop does not require special equipment. Space should be sufficient for breakout groups.

7. Potential Outputs

1. General understanding of how cultural products influence the social construction of reality.
2. Understanding how cultural products can be used in design thinking process, assessment of advantages and disadvantages.

About the Organisers:

Jan Oliver Schwarz is a Professor at the Academy for Fashion and Design in Munich, Germany. His research interests are future-oriented strategy development, trend management, scenario planning, design thinking and the usage of cultural products in management.