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People Are Talking! Projects Designed to Enhance Storytelling Within Communities

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发布时间: 2006-06-20

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People Are Talking! Projects Designed to Enhance Storytelling Within Communities
UPA06设计会议演讲稿

UPA（Usability Professional Association 可用性专家协会）于2006年6月12日至16日在美国科罗拉多州举办了一年一度的设计大会。来自10多个不同国家的600多名专业人士参与了本次美国UPA2006设计年会。本次会议的主题是--Usability Through Storytelling--。会议的宗旨是观察与分析用户的行为，探索与发掘相关故事，并应用到可用性的研究中。

作为会议中的一个环节，10-Minute Talk 演讲小组（Liu Wei 刘伟，Yin Yue 殷跃，Joi Roberts, Nicole Schadewitz, Pedro-Jorge Adler 和Carmen Broomes）于6月14日进行了他们参与的6个概念设计研究项目的陈述。这里是演讲稿及幻灯片，与大家分享。

ABSTRACT:
Six practitioners from a variety of creative disciplines have had the opportunity to develop storytelling-based designs for certain communities. During this session, the speakers will share their stories about the target users, the context of use and the storytelling installations they designed to help the users communicate their own stories.
GOALS FOR THE SESSION:
Attendees at this session will:
-- Hear stories about storytelling-centered solutions installed in a variety of communities
-- Learn how the target users perceived and received these installations
-- Gain design inspiration from the design stories shared.

Introduction
Many practitioners believe that the Interaction Design discipline is more about defining ways to support, enhance, even inspire, people-to-people communication than it is about defining interactions between people and their products. In the former perspective, the resulting product is a means to a greater end: connecting people. While in the latter, the product is the end. Regardless of the view that you subscribe to, storytelling is an integral part of our human experience and thus cannot go unaddressed during Interaction Design projects. For instance, the Society for Storytelling reminds us that --people have been telling stories for as long as we have had speech. Even after the invention of writing only a minority had access to the written word. Stories passed from lips to ears, changing as each teller forgot things, or deliberately left them out, and replaced them with their own inventions. . . . Even now we think in narrative and tell anecdotes, urban myths and personal stories almost without realizing it. Stories are learned image by image, rather than word by word, and are retold from the heart in gatherings with friends or in public performance.-- Expounding further, the Center for Digital Storytelling explains, --Every community has a memory of itself. Not a history, nor an archive, nor an authoritative record…A living memory, an awareness of a collective identity woven of a thousand stories.
With that perspective in mind, the speakers for this session will tell you stories about, well, Storytelling. More specifically, each presenter will describe a project that was designed specifically to engage people in the storytelling process, highlighting how

the solutions sparked people-to-people communication within public and sometimes not-so-public spaces.

Talk #1: The Design of a StorySpace in Split, Croatia - Nicole Schadewitz

With a different perspective on the issues impacting Sustainable Tourism in Split, Croatia, this design team believes that the solution to Sustainable Tourism is to focus on the communication between the locals and their guests, the tourists. By collecting public artifacts, conducting interviews with the residents of Split, observing them within their local environment, and continuously reconciling design constraints, the team was able to generate several concept alternatives to address the city's socio-economic needs.

Several concepts were explored, including the following:

-- A system for identifying and sharing key spots in the city was proposed as a means for introducing tourists to --hard-to-find-- local places. A general idea of changing the perception of a geographical place by changing its purpose for a certain period of time was actualized when they used a daytime market place as a venue for theater performances in the evening. And, finally a concept was developed to let locals and tourists collaboratively create a continuing story thorough interacting with e-boards placed throughout the city.

-- The perceived open-mindedness and hospitality of local people in Split, Croatia was used to explore a scenario of sustainable tourism through an exchange of local and personal knowledge with interested tourists. An online --dating-- service was proposed as a way to match locals and tourists who shared common interests. Travelers usually visit an online forum to inform themselves about the history, activities and sights they might revisit during their stay in a city. Local people enjoy meeting tourists for cultural and language exchange. A communication and knowledge area matching service would help both sides to profit from their mutual interests.

The aforementioned design suggestions were then united into a single video-photo story to convey the workability and interconnectedness of the communication concepts in real setting scenarios. A video-photo story was chosen to present the concept of a design space, suggesting that there is an imaginative space along certain design dimensions or constraints in which a variety of possible design solutions exist.

Talk #2: Mediating stories from past and present in order to dream about the future - Pedro-Jorge Adler

People like to talk about anything and everything but especially about themselves. The question is, --Who's Listening?-- After observing and interviewing the residents of Timisoara, Romania, it became evident that, in this city, there are more people willing to share their stories than there are those willing to listen. This presentation will discuss how a storytelling-based design was proposed to mediate communication between different generations and to engage their stories as part of their planning for the future.

The design challenge for the team included encouraging the --talkers-- to share their past, finding and engaging more --listeners-- and mediating the communication between both groups. In addition, it was important to find a way to bring the history of Timisoara to the present while motivating people to shape the city's future.

A meeting place was designed as a mediation space where stories would be shared between different generations. People from all ages came and shared their stories. Some wanted to talk about the past, others wanted to state their opinion about the present and both had ideas for changes they would like to see in the future. Older people were happy to tell about their memories; younger people were curious about images from the past and present and left messages about their impressions.

The designed space motivated people to share stories and post the following issues:
-- How were people motivated to talk about the past and the future?
-- Interaction media used and follow up ideas;
-- How could this experience become sustainable?
-- Two different orientations: informing the design team and informing the population (politicians).

The prototype was successful, however it was in a quite primitive stage, thus future iterations of this concept will bring new insights of how storytelling can inform Interaction Design in designing communication spaces. For instance, how can we design a forum, agora or event to enhance storytelling within communities?

Talk #3: Communicating Recipes from the Past into the Future - Yin Yue

A personal story about a cooking recipe was the initial stimulation for the invention of a new, experimental and innovative recipe communication device called the Umami-E-Card and a supporting service, the Umami-E-Market. Situated in the context of southeast Europe, the design team used multiple user-centered methods to determine the requirements for communicating recipes from the past into the future. In iterative phases of low, medium and high fidelity prototypes a paper foldable card, called Umami-Card, was prototyped and tested.

This card captures different dimensions of recipe-mediation and carries the user through the entire cooking process. In the first dimension, the context of the dish is conveyed by a personal story about the origin of the dish as well as when and where to cook it. The second and third layers mention the ingredients in relation to the cooking process. And, the forth layer presents the finished dish.

When testing the Umami-Card prototype, it quickly became apparent that users were connecting personally with this object. Many expressed interest in annotating the content of the historical context, recipes and explanatory text with their own stories and experiences. No one could imagine giving the device away as a gift, let alone returning it at the end of the evaluation cycle. However, many users talked about exchanging content with other users or updating the device to include new recipe variations. To support this changeability, the idea of a tangible interface that is connected to Umami-E-Market, an Internet peer-to-peer sharing platform, came into being. A photo-scenario described the idea of a recipe database that collects the recipes from all over the world. In this use case people utilize a tangible interface, the Umami-E-Card, to up- and download data to and from the Umami-E-Market. This presents a way of saving the user's own experiences, allowing the communication and sharing of stories with other users thus prolonging the user's personal enjoyment of this object.

Talk #5: TIMP - A storytelling machine for Timisoara, Romania - Liu Wei

Tasked with challenge of designing the --future experiences of the past-- for the residents of Timisoara, Romania, the team followed a user-centered creative process to design a --time machine-- that would encourage residents, particularly young people, to explore and contribute to the historical narrative of their own city.

The city of Timisoara features many squares in its urban landscape. Of these, the most significant are the old Union Square, and the newer Opera Square, where the 1989 revolution resulting in Ceausescu's overthrow began. These locales are important aspects of Timisoara's history and thus have become critical components of the Time Machine for Timisoara (TIMP). By interacting with TIMP, local residents are encouraged to explore the hidden histories of the city, and to actively define a more desirable future for Timisoara. This tool offers its users a way to reconstruct the local and personal narratives lost during the communist era, when history was --standardized-- by the government.

The TIMP design consists of multiple telescopes. Each, when extended and manipulated, will display multimedia content on its

lens. How far the telescopic tube is extended determines the historical period covered. The degree to which it is twisted selects different but related subjective experiences from the same period. Four of these telescopes are placed in Union Square, each bearing different content through which people may actively navigate local histories and project them to listening devices on the other side of town. In the Opera square, others are listening intently to those stories using 'ear shells'.

While the users in Union Square are proactively surfing the stories of the past, the users in the Opera Square can only watch and listen to the spectacle. This deliberate splitting of the active and passive parts of the system acts as a metaphor for the creation and consumption of history, and the team intends it to act as a catalyst for action on the part of the young people for which it was designed.

Talk #6: Ajmo Splite: Tell Us What You Think! - Joi Roberts

A team of designers from a variety of cultural backgrounds and academic disciplines converged on Split, Croatia in the summer of 2004. The design challenge presented to this team was to engage Mobile technology as a means to address the need for sustainable tourism within the local community.

During the data collection and ideation phases, the team discovered that Split indeed suffered from the lack of sustainable tourism but that the problem was less about making tourists happy than it was about addressing the local community's capacity to support the needs of its visitors.

Sustainable tourism is greatly influenced by the economic health, the political landscape and the societal goals of the local community. The tourists can only experience what the local citizens project, purposely or inadvertently, towards them. With this shift in focus, it became apparent to the design team that there was a fundamental breakdown in communication between the members of the community and those responsible for the urban planning activities. The real design challenge became: In a city reeling from a recent war with residents who were fearful of organized community efforts because of their similarity to communism, how do you re-establish the flow of communication between the residents?

A safe mechanism for exchanging experiences, expressing concerns and giving voice to the overlooked members of society was desperately needed. The design that resulted was entitled --Ajmo Splite, Kazi Sto Mislis!-- or --Come on, Split! Tell us what you think!-- As a community communication system, Ajmo Splite enabled the locals to convey their concerns and opinions to one another as well as to influence decisions made by the local leaders and city planners.

Community leaders are able to pose a burning question to the local citizens. In response, the citizens can share their views on this topic by sending a message via their SMS-enabled mobile phone, the Split website, the centrally located city video kiosk or the children's physical interaction kiosk. To garner a sense of community and group identity, the messages received will be displayed on a strategically located electronic billboard. The same messages will also be logged and stored as data points for later access by the community leaders as a way to inform community action. Many of the impending issues affect children. So, their perspective will be included in this project as well. Lastly, the resulting data will be provided to the city planners who will utilize an urban simulation tool to forecast the benefits and risks of their proposed plans and communicate this information to the local citizens.

The installation was situated in the heart of the old city, which 1700 years ago served as the palace for the Roman Emperor Diocletian and in the years since that time has served continuously as a living institution in the city of Split. In the center of an old piazza lined with several outdoor bars and cafes (a sort of --see and be seen-- location for the locals), the Ajmo Splite input kiosk sat. Its output billboard was projected against the ancient walls of the building which housed a museum in Split. This installation offered the residents a discrete means for voicing their view points in a public space. It was the juxtaposition of new ideas and old history, discretion and exhibitionism, safety and risk which worked well in a city like Split.

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