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ON THE MOVE

Creating Domesticity through Experience Design

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a summary of the Ph.D. project about home and mobility. The project concerns design for mobile life and through various prototypes it is an investigation of how to support the act of home making away from the primary home.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

H5.m. Information interfaces and presentation

General Terms

Design, Experimentation, Theory

Keywords

Home, mobility, modern nomads, interaction design, design research.

1. INTRODUCTION

As globalization grows people are getting more and more mobile. Many people travel around the world and have several houses or stay at hotels on a frequent basis. We call these people modern nomads. Research by anthropologist Ida Winther indicates that people are not place-less nomads[1] but rather that people make home locally through different tactics to establish comfort and develop 'homing strategies' in the middle of changeability. Inspired by this perspective, the challenge of the increasing mobilization and globalization is to develop strategies for making home not physically attached to the primary home. These findings call for new inventions in the field of mobile HCI. We identify areas within Mobile HCI that have not yet been designed for and design for some of these areas through a selection of prototypes.

2. RESEARCH SUMMARY

The Ph.D. has the title "On the move –creating domesticity through experience design". It runs from April 2008 to February 2012 and it is an industrial Ph.D. in cooperation between the high-end a/v company Bang & Olufsen and Aarhus school of Architecture. My professional background lies within interaction and industrial design. The Ph.D. project is a part of an interdisciplinary project called Mobile Home Center.

The project scope aims to investigate domesticity for the modern nomads, being people with several homes or frequent travelers. With offset from user studies and ethnographical work we will create concepts and prototypes to investigate how to create a sense of domesticity while being away from the primary home.

My research question is at the moment "*How can we design interactive artifacts/services that encourage the modern nomad to be homing outside the house?*"

The doctorate is placed in the field of research-through-design[2], as we will build prototypes and demos for testing the concepts and theories about domesticity and mobility for today's global experience society. It is founded on people centered design, and I will therefore conduct various user studies throughout the project with both inspirational approaches and more engaging approaches such as participatory design.

The process of the Ph.D. is divided into three stages:

1. Understanding the existing situation of extreme mobility through user studies and development of a new terminology within the field
2. Prototype development of products and services
3. Evaluating the prototypes in terms of the first findings

We started out with anthropological studies of people with several homes. This was done to learn about the experienced long distance commuters and mapping their tactics for home making. An essential paper on this is being published at the conference of MobileHCI 2010. The results from these studies inform the designs of the prototypes. We have developed a series of prototypes and more are under progress. I will be able to present some of the designs at the Doctoral Consortium.

3. FUTURE WORK

One of the prototypes being designed at the moment is an interactive experience between home and car. Mobile HCI is therefore of highly relevance to give impact on the execution of this design process.

Next steps in the project is to design the last prototypes and have the existing prototypes be experienced and tested in various ways to find the potentials and the failures for future development for the relevance of research and industry.

4. REFERENCES

- [1] Winther, I. W. (2009): Homing oneself – Home as a practice. Haeccelty papers. Vol. 4 issue 2. Sydney University Press, Australia.
- [2] Ludvigsen, M. (2007): Designing for Social Interaction. Doctoral thesis. Aarhus School of Architecture