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Service Design Meets Design for Behaviour Change: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract. There is a growing recognition about a need to influence and change user behaviours in their own interest to meet several social challenges, be it at the level of an individual or society. Designers intentionally or unintentionally end up shaping the user behaviour. Service Design and Design for Behaviour Change have significant congruence in terms of concern for value creation over long duration, dynamic usage contexts and accounting for diversity of users, among others. However, despite the affinity of these two fields, we do not come across works that demonstrate practice that blends both the fields or synthesised design knowledge base. Practitioners might be tacitly blending these two disciplines. This workshop aims to understand these practices currently, the challenges designers are facing and how they are addressing those. We hope to uncover this tacit knowledge, provide preliminary knowledge from the disciplines and synthesise through hands on work followed by collective reflection.

Keywords: Design · Service design · Behaviour change · Participatory design · Multidisciplinary team · Organizational design practices

1 Introduction

User activities and behaviours are “scripted” by the products they use. Therefore, designers intentionally or unintentionally end up shaping the user behaviour. There is a growing recognition that “designers are in the behaviour (change) business” [1]. This idea is not only relevant to products, but equally, if not more for services. Service design, which factors in longer span of user engagement has arguably great potential to influence user behaviour through the appropriately designed product-service systems. The need to influence and change user behaviours in their own interest while balancing the concerns of user freedom and privacy is coming to fore to meet several social challenges, be it at the level of an individual (e.g. health and well-being) or society (e.g. global warming). The overlaps and relationship between these two fields Service Design and Design for Behaviour Change is presented in Table 1:

Table 1. The overlaps between Service Design and Design for Behaviour Change.

	Service Design	Design for Behaviour Change
Complexity	Yes	Yes
Long temporal span (initiation to embeddedness in life)	For maximising the value	For stabilising the changed behaviour
Changing user goals and contexts from initiation to embeddedness in life	Yes	Yes
Effective design dependent on multiple fields of knowledge	Yes	Yes
Cumulative effect of individual experience “episodes”	Cumulative effect of encounters over time	Cumulative effect of instances of changed behaviour
Relevance for addressing individual well-being	Yes	Yes
Relevance for addressing social issues	Yes	Yes

Clearly, the two disciplines have significant congruence. There are several models [2, 3] and high level guidance for design for behavioural change [4–7]. Similarly, there is ample guidance in service design (e.g.[8, 9]). However, despite the affinity of these two fields, we do not come across works that demonstrate practice that blends both the fields or synthesised design knowledge base. This is one of the triggers behind the workshop.

Secondly, we find several instances where the merger of Service Design and Design for Behaviour Change would be critical to fruitful interventions for individual and societal well-being. The recent “demonetisation” in India, which invalidated over 80% of cash in circulation, followed by the intense drive towards less-cash economy is a case in point. The effective interventions in behaviour change in a wide variety of citizens in terms of demographics, literacy, and technology readiness would pose challenges in all sectors of the economy. These cannot be addressed by mere redesign of existing products – physical or digital. Thoughtful service design blended with design for behaviour change would be necessary. Challenges in individual and societal behaviour changes (e.g. sustainability, wellness ...) too calls for a similar approach.

2 Objective and Expected Outcome

It is likely that practitioners would be tacitly using design knowledge from behavioural change domain in service design, and vice versa. Intention of this workshop is to understand how it is practiced currently, the challenges designers are facing and how they are addressing those. It would be helpful if the practices are reflected upon in a group to make explicit that knowledge and design principles underlying the practice.

As well, it is hoped that applying the uncovered knowledge, albeit limited in scope due to the constraint of the workshop format, would nevertheless allow a degree of internalisation.

3 Intended Audience

This workshop is focused on service design practitioners (as well as aspiring service design practitioners) and researchers who are associated with designing and implementing services in any domain. Those involved in healthcare, social impact ventures and citizen services might be particularly interested. Since both service design and design for behaviour change require multidisciplinary participation, interested designers and practitioners from any discipline are welcome.

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