ENGAGING THE FUTURE

Keynote Lecture – Stuart MacDonald
Crossover - Collaborating for Success, Yunlin, Taiwan 12.04.13
2013 International Conference on Cultural and Creative Industries

ABSTRACT

Whilst design thinking and user needs and experience remain important to the debate about design and design as a driver of innovation, this paper suggests that greater attention should be given to the increasing importance of engagement. We need to understand more about how we engage with products, with services, how we engage in a social way, and the potential power of the design of that engagement. This paper therefore looks at design in terms of the social environment including social enterprise and innovation. It discusses the interfusion of design and other areas of knowledge including anthropology, sociology and new areas of practice like service design, including engaging a wide range of stakeholders. Emerging concerns for policy development are raised and new trends in the creative economy. Recent crosscutting practice in the UK is referenced, especially case studies where design is seen as solution to major social challenges – health, ageing, and urban/rural regeneration.

Keywords
Design, innovation, engagement, social enterprise, service design.

INTRODUCTION
Mass Creativity
Today it seems as if Design has come of age; everywhere, everyone is talking about design. It has come out of its designer ghetto and ready association with specific disciplines like graphic design or product design, to embrace wider strategies including the recognition of design as a driver of user-centred innovation by the European Commission (2009). The first decade of the twenty first century also saw the rise of Mass Creativity, a bottom-up movement that led not only the co-creation of new products like the mountain bike as described by commentators like Charles Leadbeater (2009) in his book *We Think*, but also helped people to become involved in the production of culture and meaning. Innovation had begun to be a popular past-time – consumers as innovators. And, central to this democratisation was design thinking.

As a style of thinking, design thinking is generally considered to be the ability to combine empathy for the context of a problem, creativity in the generation of insights and solutions, and rationality to analyse and fit solutions to the context. While design thinking has become part of the popular lexicon in contemporary design and engineering practice, as well as business and management, its broader use in describing a particular style of creative thinking-in-action began to have an increasing influence on twenty-first century education across disciplines. In this respect, it is similar to systems thinking in naming a

particular approach to understanding and solving problems. What also happened was that design thinking moved out of its economic silo and into the domain of social challenges. This evolution of design is well documented in the blogs of IDEO's Tim Brown (2009) and in the more scholarly publications of academics like Roger Martin from the Rotman School of Management, Toronto, Canada (2009). More recently, Nussbaum (2013) has challenged the efficacy of design thinking as not delivering on its promise to business, as a failed experiment, moving instead to a wider "creative literacy"; what he terms "CQ".

THINKING ENGAGEMENT

The aim of this paper is not to give a history of design thinking rather to focus on what commentators such as Nussbaum (2013) now consider the most important thing, namely, engagement. According to Nussbaum it is how we engage with products, with services, how we engage in a social way and the design of that engagement that is potentially so powerful. If the first ten years of the twenty first century was the decade of design thinking, arguably, this present decade may be the decade of engagement. This paper therefore looks at design and the social and economic environment, including creative entrepreneurship. It discusses the fusion of design and other areas of knowledge including anthropology and sociology, and the issues involved in new areas of practice such as service design and need to engage a wide range of stakeholders. In that changing context emerging concerns for Creative Industries policy development is raised as well as new trends in the wider creative economy. Importantly, the paper draws on recent crosscutting practice and experience in the UK, using especially case-studies and exemplars where design is perceived as the solution to major social challenges – health, ageing, urban/rural regeneration, arguing that there is substantive evidence of the power of engagement to be uncovered at the margins of art, architecture and design. And, in the same context, some key resources are pinpointed.

Design Challenges

To put design and social challenges into greater focus, the UK Design Council has now encapsulated its work into series of challenges like ageing, youth unemployment, crime and health, bringing, as it says in its mission statement "the transformative power of design to the things that matter". Importantly, the Design Council has also measured the impact of design on services and the return on investment. The Design Council is not working alone in the UK in this landscape; there are a wide range of bodies including NPOs, NGOs and private agencies. For example, the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA) has established a Public Service Lab, applying its expertise to find innovative ways of delivering public services in the belief that more effective solutions at cheaper cost will only come through ingenuity (2013). Most recently, NESTA has applied the term the term "systemic innovation" with reference to the challenge of ageing (Khan 2013). Equally, The Royal Society of Arts (RSA) - a charity that dates from the eighteenth century - has set up 2020PSH, a research and policy development hub that puts into practice a fresh approach to public service reform utilising the designation, 'social productivity'. As the appellation suggest this starts with

the citizen, not the service by focussing on how value is created in the interaction between citizens and their services, and builds citizen-shaped solutions to public problems that mobilise all relevant resources, whether public, private, formal, informal or virtual. In a similar way in the context of academe, the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design at the Royal College of Art undertakes design research and projects with industry that will contribute to improving people's lives. As its most recent Yearbook (2012) describes, its approach is inclusive and interdisciplinary, organised into three research labs:

> i) Age & Ability: design for a more inclusive society irrespective of age and ability;
> ii) Health & Patient Safety: creating safer and better health services;
> iii) Work & City: research into changing patterns of work and urban life.

By contrast, in terms of social innovation, Participle is a social enterprise based in London, working throughout the UK. Participle designs, develops and takes to scale innovative solutions to the most pressing social challenges of our time. Its mission is to transform the way public services are designed and delivered (Participle 2013).

These examples from different organisations form part of a growing trend, globally. In Scandinavia, for instance, Denmark's MindLab is a cross-ministerial innovation unit that involves citizens and businesses in creating new solutions for society. It is a neutral zone for inspiring creativity, innovation and collaboration. Mindlab uses this as a platform for co-creating better ideas. Its director, Baston has sought to demonstrate how co-creation and co-design can overcome barriers to innovation in order to deliver more value to citizens (2010). In Finland, Helsinki Design Lab (Boyer et al 2011) advances strategic design as a way to re-examine, re-think, and re-design the systems that we have inherited from the past. It advances knowledge, capability, and achievement in strategic design using a range of tools targeted on pressing social issues.

Participation Beyond Consultation

In all these examples, apart from the emphasis on design and/or innovation, what is key is engagement and, in addition, the focus on the front end of the process, however may be construed. Crucially, they all exhibit significant investment in going beyond mere consultation to ensure authentic participation. To overtake that goal each of the organisations above deploys a range of strategic tools such as: ethnographic research; cultural probes; video anthropology; co-creation workshops; visual diaries; and a variety of studio-related methodologies drawn from the design domain. In a sense, there is nothing new in this; prompted by the recognition of design's role as a driver of user-centred innovation, business has been interested in the "fuzzy" front end of designing for some time. What is new is the advent of three key increments. First is appreciation of the need when addressing social issues for a multi-disciplinary approach that can square up to complex problems. Depending on the context a project might variously deploy skills and expertise from different disciplines like psychology, anthropology, health or social science. Second is the involvement of methods from social innovation and social enterprise. Third, coupled with these two is the use of user-centric modes drawn from the

developing field of service design – customer journey mapping and customer profiles - to create novel transdisciplinary approaches. All of this has implications for education, the design profession, research and policy.

Service Design

Service design is a new discipline. The drivers are various like an ageing population, pressure on welfare budgets - better services at less cost, and social advances bringing more demanding consumers. It involves a higher level of user-engagement than traditional design. In product-focused organisations, design and innovation management is relatively simple. It generally happens in dedicated research and development teams. Managing innovation in service organisations is more slippery, because the important innovation that creates real value is found all over the place, in other words, at all the different touch points where employees interact with customers, users and internal stakeholders. This where design is really important, not only as a driver of user-centred innovation, but as a key way of modelling engagement to get the prerequisite level of participation, as the following examples of service design from a variety of different public sector contexts attempt to demonstrate.

CASE STUDIES

Cranhill Water-tower

Elements of what is being described in this paper were acted out when the author was director of the Lighthouse, Scotland's National Centre for Architecture and Design, where Service Design, design thinking and co-design were located within an educational approach that put participants and expert practitioners on the same level. One of the most interesting examples of co-creativity in this context was the Cranhill Water-tower Project (MacDonald 2003). Cranhill is a large post-war social housing estate in Glasgow and like similar places in the City is dominated by a huge Brutalist water-tower. These towers are hated by local people but loved by architects. Local people asked if something could be done with the water-tower to improve the environment, and that simple request kicked off one of the most interesting public design programmes ever, with local people, including young people, working with architects and designers to produce a genuinely transformative design that, as well as changing attitudes to place, attracted a nationwide publicity to an area not accustomed to receiving a positive press. It became a model for other parts of the city and further afield, as well as becoming the inspiration for an innovative on-line education programme part of suite of web-based tools. It is very much a living project and its modernist form is now used as the logo for local action groups and media and is an authentic demonstration of the importance of an awareness of symbolic value and the significance of meaning within place. It is also an example of a site of empowerment. Most, importantly, its legacy contributes to an enduring local identity.

Pidgin Perfect

The name of this group of ex Strathclyde University architecture students, Pidgin Perfect, is a play on patois and good English and so literally brings together different languages,

people and ideas. They are also part of the legacy of community lighting projects like the Cranhill Water-tower project. They work with communities to make changes in their communities, putting the community at the heart of place-making projects. What is different is that they use fun ways to get everyone working in the community like tea parties, jam making sessions and pop-up cinema.

Behind this, however, is a serious service design proposal that at once demystifies the design process whilst offering a clear seven stage means of engagement that is being used increasingly by local authorities to help consultation. Pigeon Perfect took part in the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale and their practice has been described in that context as "primarily concerned with conversation and engagement" (Gillespie 2012).

Pidgin Perfect collaborate with another group called Ice-cream Architecture. Travelling ice cream vans are the life-blood of many outlying communities in Glasgow. They are mobile shops that sell everyday necessities such as milk and bread as well as ice-cream. In fact, they has been the subject of a film by Bill Forsyth, *Comfort and Joy* about ice-cream wars in the city. By using a travelling van or shop Ice-cream Architecture aim to reach out to neighbourhoods and suburbs to break down barriers that are not only spatial but also professional. The van offers a focus, a space and, quite literally, a vehicle for connecting up people and ideas on the margins of architecture. Architecture and Design Scotland (2011) has described both Pigeon Perfect and Ice-Cream Architecture as part of "The New Wave: The Community Consultant". Community engagement has now become an essential part of regeneration. The community views design practices, which show an enthusiasm to roll up their sleeves and engage people on a more meaningful level, designing playful workshops with adults and children, more favourably.

CROSSCUTTING EXEMPLARS

The following three different examples pull together service design, social innovation within a multi-disciplinary approach. The first is a community project based in a rural area. The second is centred on a vocational education college, and the third is located in the context of mental health and which I will focus on in some detail as it pulls together different strategies and methodologies, especially engagement in a very sensitive context.

Mapping the Future

The locus of this project, which was commissioned by Community Learning Development in Scotland, is Campbeltown in the rural West of Scotland. Campbeltown has a particular challenge; once the centre of the whisky industry, it has become a centre for the manufacture of wind turbines, which has changed the town's economy and its identity. Townspeople have a low awareness of this change with consequent loss of identity and social confidence. So, creative practitioners and local people were brought together to address the challenge: "how do you create a new identity that can contribute to community well-being and individual confidence?"

The aim was that young and old would work together; elders have a vast local knowledge, the young have an intuitive understanding of contemporary technology, and practitioners would bring their insights. Through co-design workshops a new identity would be created for the town that could be communicated on a variety of media platforms: graphic, screen, mobile, web and social networking sites. Cultural and industrial heritage will be interconnected with contemporary technology and different age groups would learn to appreciate each other's assets. Panel, a creative practice with wide experience in design and community projects, worked with the author to design and deliver the workshops. In addition, the workshops provided a platform for intergenerational learning through the sharing of knowledge across a range of physical and digital media. The project sought to find ways to encourage skills development and digital engagement specifically for the older generation and encourage exchange of knowledge with the younger generation.

Design of Engagement
Great stress was placed on the design of engagement and participation, for example, the use of local facilitator, using focus groups as a preparatory strategy, and developing supportive resources and co-creating the project brief. The participants, whose ages ranged from 12 to 60+ years, were invited to create a new map for Campbeltown that would be formulated by layering each of their own personal journey maps. The map would be presented online and contain: Journeys, Photographs and Video (past and present), Stories, Memories and Soundscapes. The main focus of the workshop was to create a new map for Campbeltown based on a series of structured fieldtrips. Each participant was invited to document his/her own personal journey of Campbeltown. The process of researching and making the map allowed the participants to gain a positive understanding of Campbeltown's changing industrial and social heritage. The workshop culminated in an informal event designed to celebrate a positive identity for the town. The learning and materials developed within the project was harvested and finessed into a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) package for community learning practitioners (MacDonald 2010).

CODID (Co-design in Dundee)
Despite sometimes been seen as a Cinderella, further education colleges, as they are called in the UK, because of their close linkages with their local communities, have increasingly become involved in ambitious Creative Industries projects. Dundee College, one of the largest in the country, is a case in point with a custom-built Creative and Digital industries Centre, and which is at the centre of several international initiatives ranged on the Creative Industries, including the European funded Creative City Challenge. This project focuses on the promotion of creative enterprises across the sub-sectors of the Creative Industries with the aim of analysing challenges and barriers confronting the creative sector in the North Sea Region of Europe.

CODID, 3 Aims

In this context the project CODID – Co-Design in Dundee, was commissioned by Dundee College in the context of Creative City Challenge and located in the current policy frame of creative industries in Europe. Drawing on trends in the contemporary Creative Industries, DID aimed to utilise service design as an approach alongside the power of design and social media, and combined with enterprise, to co-create a new identity for Dundee. The goal of the project was threefold, to develop:

1. A unique curriculum package for students transferable to post school creative education across Europe and which embodies the latest thinking in design and enterprise education, and the application of social media and new technology.

2. A continuous professional development (CPD) package for teachers and lecturers focused on the novel aspects of embedding co-design within a vocational educational setting, including innovations in the application of contemporary social media to aid planning and evaluation as well as communication.

3. A broader concept of innovation, that is, stimulating skills development and economic growth through a service design approach.

Design of Engagement
Set in the context of the local creative economy, the project encouraged the participants - students and teachers working in the area of textile design and creative professionals - to work alongside one another by organizing themselves into collectives to explore their city from various viewpoints; environment, music scene, street style and urban eccentricities to stimulate thinking. Key focal points were reflecting on one's own design knowledge and skills; relating those to the identity of Dundee, thinking about potential customers; and design entrepreneurship and marketing. These viewpoints were then integrated into a design brief. Analysing this brief together allowed all the participants – student, teacher and practising designer to investigate the local creative sector. By breaking down the brief into a manageable workload, costing out the financial implications of the project and gathering their sketches and ideas into a presentation pitch, students learned skills of entrepreneurship alongside the process of design. Importantly, the brief was co-authored with students and tutors. The participants also scoped out and researched varying design opportunities either as sole traders or as designers in a textile business or fashion house. They reported on how different design environments require varying skills and requirements. The participants then formed a design collective in which they worked together variously to co-create solutions to the design brief 'Design In Dundee''. In turn, they: developed a brand; logo; marketing materials for the collective; and their own fashion items. They learned how to be designers but also how to work together as a team towards one goal. In addition, participants used design thinking to help innovate ways of displaying their work in the City, asking members of the public to wear their items in iconic areas of Dundee.

CODID and Social Media
As part of the programme participants were also asked to explore the potential of social media as a marketing and promotional tool for their design work. They created blogs

using the City as a backdrop for their photography and also explored and tried out street-style reportage formats for the blogs - a guerrilla-style marketing promotion. Key also was the role of creative practitioner mentors in the form of local designers who visited the studios and workshops adding to the authenticity of the experience, enhancing the CPD element of the project. In that context, all of the elements of the DID project, the co-design process and the outcomes including digital imagery, blogs, graphic and other work were harvested and developed into a hybrid package for students and teachers, that is, simultaneously a flexible learning tool and staff development support.

Supporting Mental Health
Self-Directed Support – A New Approach
This was a cross-agency, multi-disciplinary project involving the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS), the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland's (CCPS) Workforce Unit, Loretto Care and Creative Frontline. The challenge was to design a new approach by collaborating on the design of a new evidence-based approach to delivering Self-directed Support (SDS) for people with mental health issues. The team from the partner organisations worked with service users, support workers and other statutory agencies to develop a pilot project based at a mental health organisation, Loretto Care. The pilot project lasted from November 2010 until September 2011. Overall the project used the Design Council's Double Diamond to help organise the process and focus and on the engagement of services users, care staff and other key support organisations. Most important, however, was user-involvement, working with people in supported residential accommodation, who had been moved from hospital accommodation into specially designed residential accommodation. A co-design approach was used with care staff members, and a range of other methodologies brought together in a multi-disciplinary way from action research, service design and social innovation.

Design Principles
Taking the above context into account four design principles were developed:
i) Innovation.
In the public sector innovation can be seen as the process of creating new ideas and transforming them into social value. Design is the link between creativity and innovation, between the service and the user. This project offers a practical demonstration of how this can be done based on an authentic situation.
ii) Capability
To be innovative a service and the people who both work for and who benefit from it need to develop the right capabilities. Co-design as deployed in this project is a capability that involves users of the service in meaningful, practical ways to actively explore improvements.
iii) People and Culture

Services and organisations don't innovate, people do. In the public sector meeting the challenges of personalisation means going beyond the rhetoric of user-centeredness to achieving an atmosphere of trust in which people can be allowed take risks and make errors. Risk is a strategic issue. The assets created by this pilot can support the creation of such an environment.

iv) Leadership

To lead to innovating transformation and social value using the tools of co-design and co-creation takes courage. Sometimes that can mean challenging the very service or system to which one is accountable. At the same time leading the development of an environment of innovation in which users are central can in itself be highly motivating.

Designing Engagement

Equally important and part of the thinking in this project was how we were advancing over traditional models and to visually demonstrate this for the partners and stakeholders and in that vein service design methods were involved. For example, graphics were used as much as possible, namely, to demonstrate the range of issues affecting mental health. The care provision landscape was also mapped out as another way of seeing the issues involved. In terms of research, to find out how users experienced the care service, a range of methods was used including cultural probes. Likewise, a visual format to guide discussion with users was prepared that also served as a way of ensuring evenness in asking questions. Client profiles were additionally built up in 1-2-1 sessions with clients (workshops were inappropriate in this context) to help the research. And, again, borrowing from service design, client journey maps were developed to inform the research process.

All of the information was collated and presented to the stakeholders using different formats: formal report, including the materials drawn from the study; PowerPoint presentations; and co-design workshops with care staff and other professionals (Macdonald 2012). Disseminating the results also meant using the ideas from the project to stimulate other ideas and, through a workshop with care and other staff, a whole range of ideas, many related to the user-centred development of Apps, came forward. Importantly, this initiative about delivering a service – Self Directed Support in the very complicated field of mental health - is a continuing project as part of IRISS' Embedding Innovation focus (2013).

CONCLUSION

Lessons Learned

In addressing today's major challenges like health or regeneration, because they are complicated as they involve human beings, a wide range of issues arise, particularly around engagement. These have been separated into four areas: the profession; academe; research; and policy.

Profession

    i)   Time commitment: as demonstrated by these examples engagement is time consuming and cannot be scrimped. The lesson from the mental health context is that ensuring the participation of stakeholders is key and requires judicious planning. Engagement needs to be designed.

    ii)   Enlisting a multi-disciplinary range of skills and expertise also requires time as does building the team once those capabilities are in place.

    iii)   New business models may need to be developed for practising designers to work effectively in this field.

Academe

    i)   It follows that emerging designers interested in working in this area require a broader skill set than that traditionally delivered. Experience of working in multidisciplinary teams and greater contact with professional designers needs to be embedded in design courses in a way that goes beyond mere enhancement.

    ii)   There should be a focus on "employability" and preparation for the real world and its challenges that includes, for example: live project work, Internships and work experience drawn from the challenging contexts of our time.

Research

    i)   Engaging in this area can be radically different from the traditional business of design. Social challenges cannot afford or sustain experimentation or failure; solutions have to be "business ready". Studies are required that illuminate this issue.

    ii)   Likewise measuring impact and adducing criteria is an issue with a concomitant need for feedback within short timeframes.

    iii)   Cross-disciplinary research programmes should address global challenges.

    iv)   And, a range of models is needed that demonstrates effective ways of designing engagement in the context of public service improvement.

Policy

    i)   Recognition of design as a driver of social as well as economic innovation.

    ii)   Positioning design for an innovative public sector.

    iii)   Embed design in government – local and national.

Designing Engagement: Design Principles

Lastly, in recognising the importance of designing engagement, it may be useful to provisionally adduce some design principles. These have been delineated in terms of Thinking, Tools, Multidisciplinarity and Process.

Thinking

Combining design thinking with empathetic modes of thinking from social innovation and social enterprise.

Tools

Combining, for example, design ethnography, cultural probes, video anthropology, co-creation/co-design, visual diaries and in-studio methodologies with, from service design, personal journey maps, customer profiles and prototyping.

Multidisciplinarity

Drawing upon the knowledge, skills and expertise of, for example, anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

Process

Going beyond consultation to participation.

References

Anon (2012), *Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design Yearbook 2012*, London, Royal College of Art

Architecture and Design Scotland (2011), The New Wave: The Community Consultant, available http://www.ads.org.uk/access/features/the-new-wave-the-community-consultant-2 (Accessed 04.03.13)

Baston C. (2010), *Leading Public Sector Innovation; Co-creating for a Better Society*, Bristol, The Policy Press

Boyer B., Cook J. & Steinberg M. (2011), *Recipes for Systemic Change*, Helsinki, Helsinki Design lab

Brown T. (2009), *Design Thinking*. available at: http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/inspireslearning/entry/spatializing_design_thinking/ (Accessed 03.03.13)

Commission of the European Communities (2009), *Design as a driver of user-centred innovation*, Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels

Design Council (2013), available at: http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/challenges/ (Accessed 03.03.13)

Gillespie N. (2012), Foreword, in Charley J. (2012), *Critical Dialogues*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government

IRISS (2012), Embedding Innovation, available at http://www.iriss.org.uk/project/embedding-innovation (Accessed 04.03.13)

Khan H. (2013), *Five Hours a Day: Systemic Innovation for an Ageing Population*, London, NESTA

Leadbeater C. (2009), *We Think*, *Mass Innovation Not Mass Production*, London, Profile Books

MacDonald S. (2003), The Lighthouse and Scotland's Policy on Architecture, in Ford H. and Sawyers B. eds. *International Architecture Centres*, London Wiley-Academy

Macdonald S. (2010), Mapping the Future, available at http://www.cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/Ideas_Academy/Challenging_Practice/items/mapping-the-future (Accessed 04.03.13)

MacDonald s. (2012) Mental Health and Self Directed Support, available at http://creativefrontline.com/projects (Accessed 04.03.13)

Martin R. (2009), *The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage*, USA, Harvard Business Press

Nussbaum B. (2013), available at: http://www.core77.com/blog/conferences/harvardxdesign_2013_bruce_nussbaum_on_apple_the_importance_of_ritual_and_indie_capitalism_24278.asp (Accessed 03.03.13)

Nussbaum B. (2013) Creative Intelligence: Harnessing the Power to Create, Connect and Inspire, USA, Harvard Business

Participle (2013), available at: http://participle.net/about/our_mission/ (Accessed 04.03.13)