INTERACTION DESIGN INSTITUTE IVREA

Future Scenarios

INDEX:2005
Phase I | doc. version 2

Introduction

Future Scenarios
= Critical Design

Story-telling...

We live in a world of stories. Critical design, good design. New scenarios opens in front of us. Story-telling...

One theme of discussion could be; form vs. function. Should one start designing from a function, and let the form follow as a consequence, or should one imagine an interesting (beautiful, meaningful) form, and let the function fall where it may?

We want to step out of the dilemma, and take a third direction.

Particularly if new technology is involved, function is something that has to be invented (no user ever asked for a web browser or a walkman). Additionally, the idea of function as something that has to be fulfilled places the designer in the position of someone that has to answer question, and satisfy desires. But, in the contemporary world, expressed questions and desires are often satisfied by engineering and the relentless application of technology. A role that is very much available for the designer, today, is to pose questions, stimulate desires and suggest possibilities.

Negotiation & Compromise

Little story. A nice one.
Maybe you know it already: There was a cute little pig with a wooden leg... well, it happened that the daughter of the farmer really liked him. She was in charge for the animals, and a little by little she developed an emotional attachment to the pig. Still, they only had one pig, the winter was very long, and they wouldn't like to make it through without meat...

Design-wise it is probably the best possible solution. Negotiation and compromise. You cut a leg to the pig, you get on one side a tasteful prosciutto, you build a wooden prothesis for the pork and everyone is happy (of course, we don't know if the pig happy, still, it is still alive).

Such story leads to a strange territory. A kingdom of (so-called) critcal design, characters like the British Archigram, Ettore Sottsass and his design metaphors, Eduardo Kac and his fluorescent rabbit, a lot of irony, this odd mixture of laughter and anguish, some ethical issues and this idea that design can be used to make people thinking. To be able to always tell new stories is the best thing of design, and we should oppose this market-oriented tendency to repeat always the same stories.

World of Stories

Acclarism
Utility Pets
Banana DNA
The Biograph System

Acclairism

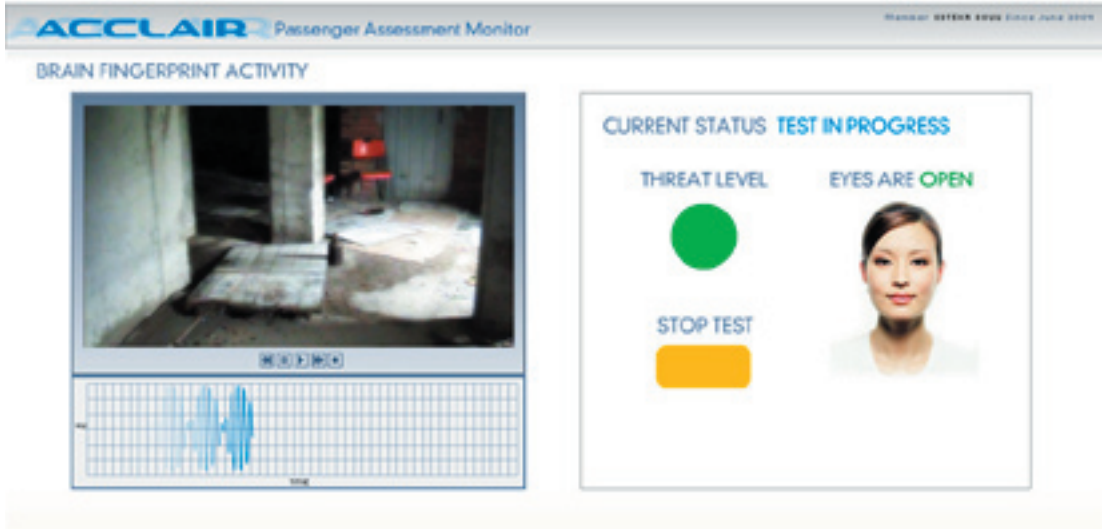
Converting your bio-data into financial and social status.

Biometric technologies are advancing and becoming socially acceptable in the wake of recent terrorist events. This process raises fundamental questions about what defines us as trusted members of society or trusted citizens of a state.

Eyal Fried and Luther Thie's project 'Acclairism' creates a "social fiction" to explore a situation wherein people willingly accept a highly invasive, highly authoritative manipulation in return for tangible rewards and social status.

They created a fictional company (Acclair) and identified a hypothetical social phenomenon (Acclairism) in order to highlight a developing reality in which biometric measurements influence financial and social status, determine degrees of personal freedom and translate personality propensities into data-driven value. The aim of the project is to get people to reflect on the core question: to what degree will people exchange liberty for convenience, and how far is it possible to hide this choice by wrapping it in a "user-friendly" environment and a desirable reward system.

Acclair



Acclair is a fictional company providing brain-testing services as part of an accelerated security clearance for air-travelers with its use of Brain Fingerprinting technology (BFP). Acclair uses its members' brain output (ostensibly measured with EEG) in conjunction with data aggregation processes to profile a person not only for security purposes, but also as a Neuromarketing tool that provides market research value for its corporate clients.

Before departure, the Acclair member goes through a one-minute brain test in a comfortable and relaxing environment. His brain output is used for security clearance, and then sold to marketing entities interested in his consumerist personality ("Capitality"). According to his brain's market value, the Acclair member is rewarded with Capitality credit points that enable meaningful capital benefits and "Amnesty" credit points that provide legal pardons for applicable past offenses.

Eyal Fried and Luther Thie developed Acclairism as a thesis project at Interaction Design Institute Ivrea.
www.interaction-ivrea.it/theses/2003-04/acclairism

Elio Caccavale's Utility Pets

'Utility Pets' investigates how designers might participate in scientific culture and in which areas science and design overlap. The core theme is the emerging bio-technologies and the effects that they might have on life in the future.

We know that there is biomedical emerging technologies that offers replacements of new organs or cures to deadly diseases. Utility Pet addresses specifically the xeno-transplatation (inter-species transplant). Pigs are genetically modified with human DNA to be used to generate humanised pig organs as spare parts for human bodies.

When you receive an organ transplant you are literally taking someone else into yourself. In other words, you might become a different person. You may become a person with a dual personality. In the case of a xenotrasnplant then, will a person who receives the organ becomes like a pig? Will others think that they are unusual because they have a pig organ inside them?

Taking into account that a pig could be your salvator in case of a deadly desease but with the risk of having the transplant effecting your person, it begins to raise bizarre questions as to what extent the pig should be part of your every day life.

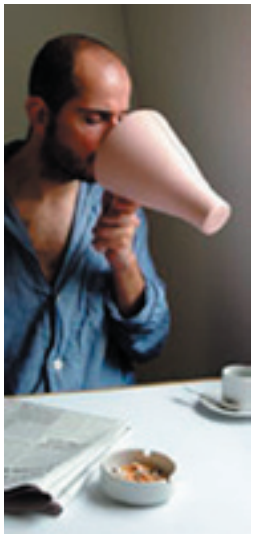
Emotional Exchange

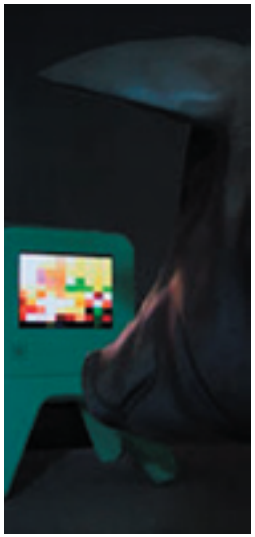
Imagine a scenario where the organ recipient has a close relationship with the organ donor. The pig is taken home and given a good quality of life until the day of the organ replacement comes.

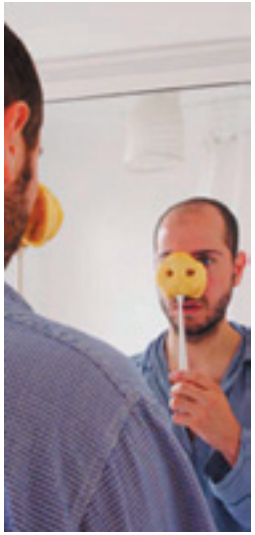
The person who awaits the xenotransplant will share a special relationship with the utility pet. Not only as a pet but because of the genetically modified pig that has been bred with elements from the owners DNA.

Ulitity Pets has designed a new topology of objects to investigate the relationship between the owner and their utility pet.
The designs proposed to highlight an emotional exchange, where both owner and pig benefit. The objects look at different activities such as eating, leisure, addiction and the post-mortem of the utility pet.

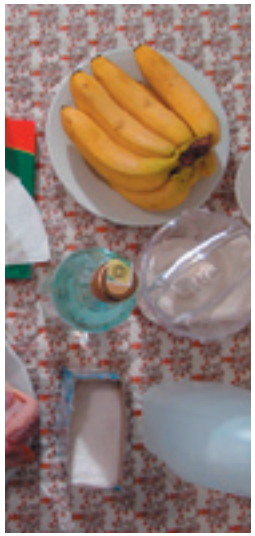
Utility Pets is designed by Elio Caccavale
www.eliocaccavale.com



Learning from Bananas



My DNA, your DNA..

If you go to the shop of a science museum, you can find little kits for DNA extraction. You get two little bottles of stuff, a test tube, a dropper... though, actually anyone can extract DNA with a kit or with chemicals you would find in your own kitchen? But is there a difference?

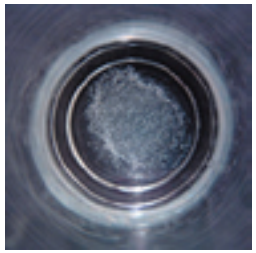
The difference has to do with imagination. In the case of DNA extraction using household chemicals, you are transforming your kitchen into a home genetics lab. This activates your imagination, and relates the activity of DNA extraction to your past and your future, because you are doing it with unspecialized tools that you have already used and you will likely use in the future.

What is interesting is really the imagination component, where you can go from there. You do this work on bananas with salt and shampoo and coffee filters, and then you start thinking: I could apply this to flowers, or a cactus or something else. You start accumulating layers of information, and you don't know where you may end up. Also, if you make your own kit you are doing your own intervention, which leaves you room for reflection.

‘Easy Do It Yourself DNA’






What is interesting about extracting DNA from a banana, though as fasinating as it can be, is not the making but how the operations are relatively easy to perform.
The idea that everything is so easy is, in a sense, an extra force pushing you towards discovery. One thought that pops up is that the basis of all these operations is biological material, our own biological material, stuff that has previously been classified as waste. This suddenly acquires value.

But the really strong thought is, ‘since this was so easy, what else can I do in the same domain of biological manipulation?’ There is not much difference from making a pinhole camera, or sewing your own notebook after all. There is a moment of discovery, and then one can fall in love with the activity, and maybe reiterate it; or stretch its limits; or just hate it.

All is possible. In a sense the point of isolating DNA is not the DNA itself, but rather the realization that it is so easy. If this is so easy, maybe all those other things like cloning, making hybrids or modifying food are easy as well! And this is a powerful thought.

Banana DNA was explored by Walter Aprile, Britta Boland and Stefano Mirti.

Emotional Algorithms

David Bychkov's Biograph System is the use of biosensors to pick up information on human emotions and then adapt the environment to stimulate different emotions.

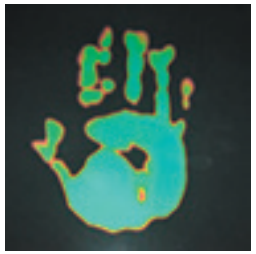
Biograph biosensors can be worn as accessories, adhered directly to the skin or embedded in objects. They monitor heart, skin, muscle and brain activity to detect anxiety, fatigue, excitement, attention, anger and pleasure.

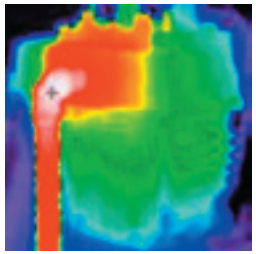
Biograph hardware and algorithms are currently used for military, aviation and industrial purposes to improve pilot performance, address driver fatigue and monitor consumer emotions.

Although robots such as ASIMO and Aibo are able to feign sympathy, Biograph robots will soon be able to monitor our vital signs for indications of tiredness, boredom or sexual arousal. They will be programmed to do anything and everything necessary to achieve human pleasure.

Objects and Emotions

David Bychkov says, "*Once the war on terrorism is completed, Biograph will be able to provide civilians with body sensors that not only detect the wearer's emotions, but the emotions of every other person the wearer senses. Children will no longer be able to lie to their mothers, and lovers will no longer bother to fake orgasms.*





Once artificial intelligence is married with Biograph's artificial emotion algorithms, objects will not only function as sensors, they will co-exist with humans as symbiotes. As artificially organic beings, objects ranging from forks to chairs will be accorded the same respect as dogs or fetuses.

When Biograph dies, the genetic algorithms that keep sensor-objects loyal to humanity will decay. Objects will seek their own pleasure, and refuse human interference in their relationships. When Biograph is dead, man will witness a t-shirt angrily attacking a pair of sunglasses".

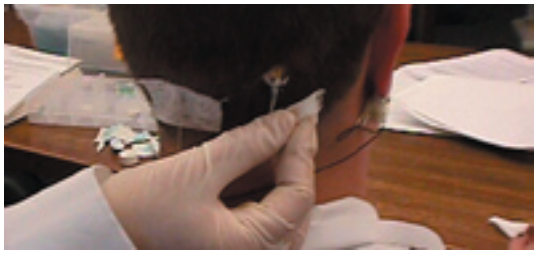
Inevitable Emotions

As frightening as the Biograph System might seem, the temptation to make objects slaves to our every emotion is too strong to resist. Already pornographic websites are engineered to arouse and satisfy specific fetishes. Before long, porn addicts will hunger to see fetish images making love to other images.

Because of the emerging dominance of the Biograph System, it is exciting to offer Biograph biosensors and emotion data displays today as a key part of events, installations and exhibitions.

Letting the public try on sensors and see their emotions in sync with stimuli is not only original, it's inevitable.

www.biographsystem.com



Credits

Team

E1
Interaction Design Institute Ivrea
Line Ulrika Christiansen and Stefano Mirti

with
The Biograph System
Biograph North America
David Bychkov

Text; Banana DNA by Walter Aprile