Aesthetics of Interaction Reflection

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INTRODUCTION

The course, Aesthetics of Interaction has taught me about the importance of product interaction and the intuitiveness of a product. While previously, I thought aesthetics was mostly about the appearance of a product, I have now learned that, as a designer, I should also take into consideration the aesthetics of product interaction.

REFLECTION ON THE READING MATERIAL AND PRESENTATIONS

The paper 'Interaction frogger: a design frame-work to couple action and function through feedback and feedforward' [2] helped me have a better understanding of how to analyze the interaction between the user and the product. The tangible approach addressed in the paper was put into practice during the course. We created tangible objects which we could interact with in order for us to discover the intuitiveness of the interaction between the user and the product. We experienced applying the knowledge from the paper into our final design and made sure to incorporate feedback and feedforward. By consciously applying this when designing I became more aware of their importance.

Additionally, the paper taught me about different terms like 'coupling' and 'feedforward,' which are terms I had not heard of before but I feel like I have applied in previous projects. By knowing terms like this as well as their meaning and importance, I can be more aware of the different design mechanisms during my future projects, which can result in more structure and confidence in my work.

The second article 'Interaction relabeling and extreme characters: methods for exploring aesthetic interactions' [1] was interesting too. As described in the introduction, this course has shifted my perception of the term 'aesthetics,' which was mostly because of this paper. The paper taught me that aesthetics consider appearances, actions and roles. I also taught me about the two methods of understanding design possibilities: 'interaction relabeling' and 'extreme characters,' which have made me aware of product interactions and product roles in society. These methods will help me generate ideas and become more aware of a product's role in future projects.

PERSPECTIVE ON THE AESTHETICS OF INTERACTION

The course has made me aware of aesthetics of interactions. I have previously been interested in the usability of a product but found it difficult to design this myself. I mostly focused on the appearance of products regarding aesthetics and would then do user testing in a later stage of the design process. Now, I feel like I have the knowledge and tools to design a product where the usability plays a key role. What I mean with this is that the user will be able to understand a product's possible functions by exploring and experiencing a product. Eventually, I want to be able to design products that are easy to use, functional, intuitive, engaging and look attractive. I believe that this course has helped me make a few steps towards this goal by teaching me about the things previously mentioned.

In my opinion, the link between form and interaction is incredibly important. I experience it myself with the products I use and have become more aware of these experiences because of this course. My coffee machine, for example, I enjoy using. It gives me feedforward by having clear buttons and it gives me feedback when I push one of those buttons by using lights, sounds and touch. It makes use of the concept of affordance, which means it uses colors, materials, shapes and signs to suggest the usage. It is intuitive, quick and looks attractive.

On the other hand, I also have an oven which I do not enjoy using. It is not clearly mapped and half of its functions I have not yet used because I do not know how to operate this product. The oven is functional and looks attractive. However, due to its lack in intuitiveness and usability, I have negative experiences when using it.

These experiences have made me aware of the importance of aesthetics of interaction.

DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF THE READING MATERIAL AND PRESENTATIONS UPON YOUR DESIGN AND DESIGN PROCESS

I learn the most when I can put newly gained information, from for example reading material and presentations, into practice. By doing this, we can experience the statements from the papers by ourselves and learn the importance of certain methods. For example experience prototyping, which was an important part of our design process when designing our prototype.

To find an interesting, interactive and creative concept we tried to apply the knowledge we had learned during the course. We discussed the feedback and feedforward our prototype should have as well as how the function and action should be coupled to have an intuitive interaction with the prototype.

The concept we chose was an alarm clock which would not wake you up aggressively, but naturally. When your alarm goes, plants and leaves wake the user up by touching him/her. The user experiences the feeling of the leaves, the natural smell of the plants as well as the sounds the leaves make when touching the user's skin. To set the alarm, the user waters the plants. He/she takes care of the plants to make sure the plants care for him/her by waking him/her up.

The feedback we received during the presentation was that we could give the user more information, like the current time. Which is something we would include if we were to continue with the projects. Over all, I am satisfied with our result and believe we achieved our goal of finding and creating an interesting, interactive and creative concept.

Figure 1. Our prototype in use during the presentation

VIDEO LINK

Our video can be found on vimeo with the link: https://vimeo.com/264010013 . In our video we show the contrast between a chaotic, busy day and the natural and relaxing alarm clock.

REFERENCES

1. Tom Djajadiningrat, Bill Gaver, and Joep Frens. 2000. Interaction relabelling and extreme characters: methods for exploring aesthetic interactions. In *Proceedings of the 3rd conference on Designing interactive systems: processes, practices, methods, and techniques* (DIS '00), Daniel Boyarski and Wendy A. Kellogg (Eds.). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 66-71. http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/347642.347664

2. Stephan Wensveen, Tom Djajadiningrat, and Kees Overbeeke. 2004. Interaction frogger: a design framework to couple action and function through feedback and feedforward. In *Proceedings of the 5th conference on Designing interactive systems: processes, practices, methods, and techniques* (DIS '04). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 177-184. http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1013115.1013140