

Designing for Services - Multidisciplinary Perspectives:
Proceedings from the Exploratory Project on Designing
for Services in Science and Technology-based Enterprises,
Saïd Business School

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Introduction

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This collection of perspective essays is a product of the exploratory research project on Designing for Services in Science and Technology-based Enterprises (D4S) – a multidisciplinary effort that ran from December 2006 through October 2007 at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford. As an exploratory project on a form of designing, it was a uniquely-designed research project, featuring two main areas of focus.

Bringing together design and enterprise

A first area of focus was on the designing that happens when practitioners within science- and technology-based enterprises work with service designers on projects to design (or re-design) their services. As pointed out in the perspective by Bruce Tether, this is an economically important area. The opportunities for service design are great, but so too are the challenges of applying design in a service context, especially when this takes place at the leading edge of science and technology.

There were three pairings of enterprises and design consultancies, as summarized in Figure 1.

Each pairing provided the opportunity for members of the enterprises to become familiar with service design approaches and techniques and for members of the design consultancies to test their craft in a new setting. Pairs were asked to define and agree how they wanted to use the six days the consultancies were paid to work with their paired enterprise. There was no expectation on the part of the researchers that the design consultancies would or could undertake a full design process in this time. Rather we hoped to learn from the ways the service designers and entrepreneurs went about their engagements with each other. Together, these pairings provided a focused “petri dish” of sorts to examine issues relevant to service design in this context.

Engaging a multidisciplinary community

The second area of focus was on how a multi-disciplinary community of practitioners, designers, and academic researchers evolved their understanding of the process and language involved in designing for services. Unlike most research projects, the design of the D4S project allowed our multidis-

Figure 1: overview of D4S projects

Enterprise - market - key people	Design consultancy - approach - key people	Base technology	Joint project	Service design proposals
Prosonix <i>Ultrasound process solutions</i> David Hipkiss Christian Jones	IDEO <i>Desirability, feasibility, viability</i> frame Fran Samalionis Neil Martin Anna White	Particle engineering technology based on controlled crystallization	Review of service offerings and exploration of new markets	- Developed a “service toolkit” with two areas to prototype: - <i>Business impact assessment</i> (viability focus) that could be used to facilitate customer engagement - <i>Future implementation scenarios</i> (desirability focus) explored using “adcepts” (advertising concepts) illustrating possible impact of technology
g-Nostics <i>Personalized medical treatment</i> Mark Tucker Pablo Toledo Mark Allman	live work <i>Service innovation & design</i> Ben Reason Chris Downs Paul Sims	Library of pharmacogenetic profiles	Examine NicoTest smoking cessation service trial within NHS	- Focused on customer journey and touchpoints in the trial service leading to recommendations for improvements to customer experience through redesigning some elements - Used sketching to generate new service ideas
Oxford Gene Technology <i>Micro-arrays for clinical research and diagnostics</i> Mike Evans James Clough Marcus Harrison	Radarstation <i>Design-led futures</i> process Ré Dubhthaigh Toke Barter	Micro-array fabrication based on ink jet in-situ synthesis (IJIS5)	Reviewed customer experience of existing service and touchpoints	- Synthesized several interviews to produce a customer journey diagram and developed two main profiles, “Newbie” and “Collaborator” - Developed proposals to improve touchpoints by making - process more visible; handholding; and extending relationships

disciplinary community to gather at regular intervals to discuss with the pairs the process that was underway. Figure 2 provides an overview of the timing of these project events. This element allowed a wider community to examine the petri dish at regular intervals and discuss the implications of what was transpiring. At three of these events the designers and enterprises provided accounts of their organizations and work practices and, as they began to work together, of what they were doing in their projects. At regular points, we asked the wider group, including the academic researchers, to reflect on what they were hearing and provide perspectives to help make sense of it. At the final event we asked a number of the academic researchers to offer reflections on the project drawing on their disciplinary lenses, which provide the basis of the essays in this volume.

By bringing into the research both practitioners who refer to themselves as service designers, as well as science and technology entrepreneurs who have designed and offer services, along with researchers from a range of disciplines with an interest in services, we understood from the beginning that the project would be exploratory as these diverse constituencies grappled with each other's motivations, worldviews, cognitive maps, practices, methods and language. The D4S project was designed to provide opportunities for the exchange and capture of such different vantage points – through such designed elements as reflective exercises, wall scribing, and the use of video documentary. The different members of this community will be described briefly in turn.

The design consultancies

Taking part in the project were consultancies that represent some of the leading practitioners working in the emerging field of service design. IDEO is a major international consultancy with roots in product and industrial design and more recent initiatives in service design. The IDEO designers used

a framework of examining “desirability, feasibility, and visibility” across their paired enterprise’s current and potential offerings.

UK-based live | work was established specifically to focus on the area of service innovation and design. In their work with their paired enterprise, live | work designers used ideas of the customer journey, touchpoints, stakeholder maps and the service ecology.

London-based Radarstation offers consultancy that focuses on a “design-led futures” approach. Its designers examined the current touchpoints offered by its paired enterprise and made recommendations for improvements. Ben Reason of live | work and Anna White from IDEO provide perspectives in this volume on their approaches to service design and their engagement in this project.

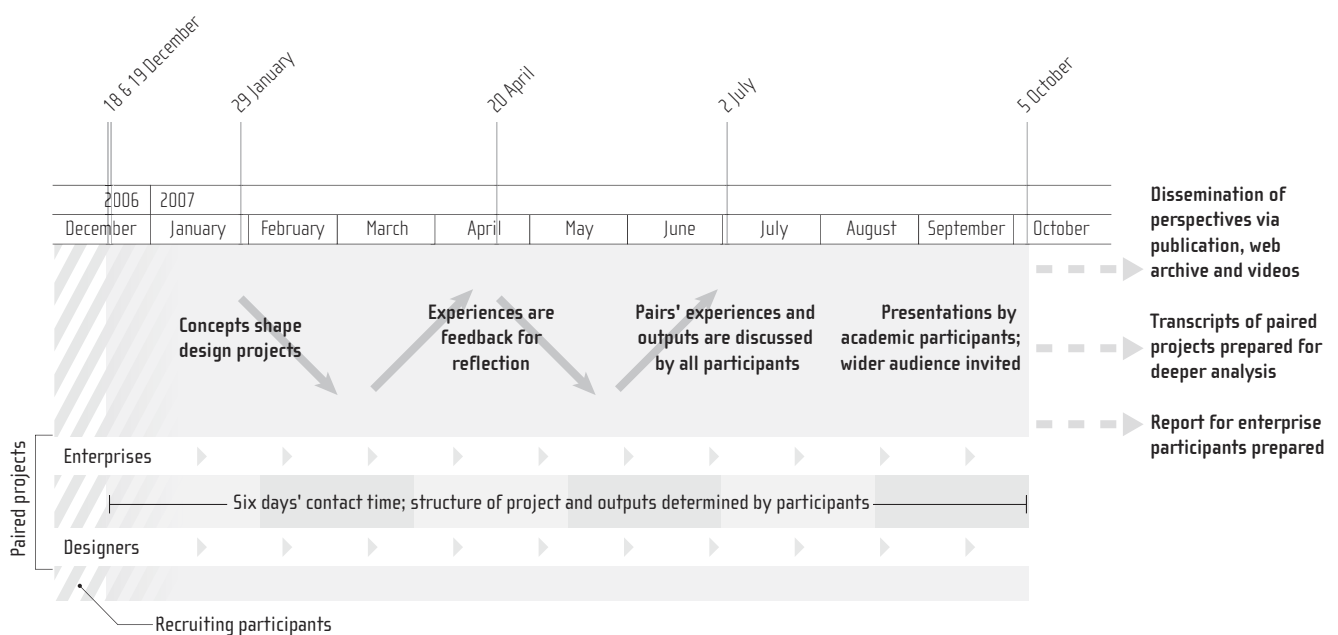
The enterprises

We had three Oxford-area enterprises that represented a variety of leading edge offerings. Prosonix is a leader in ultrasound process solutions, often applied to the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. g-Nostics is a firm that uses genetic profile technologies to offer personalized medical treatment; the service of interest for the project was a trial within the National Health Service of a smoking cessation service delivered via pharmacies. Oxford Gene Technology is a leader in microarrays that help in providing clinical research and diagnostic services. These three enterprises presented complex bundles of potential or existing product and service offerings – some business-to-business, some aiming directly at end users – that provided unique settings for considering both the challenges and opportunities for service design.

The academic community

We engaged a broad section of the academic community, both within Oxford and beyond, as listed elsewhere in this volume.

Figure 2. multidisciplinary conversation – five events at Saïd Business School

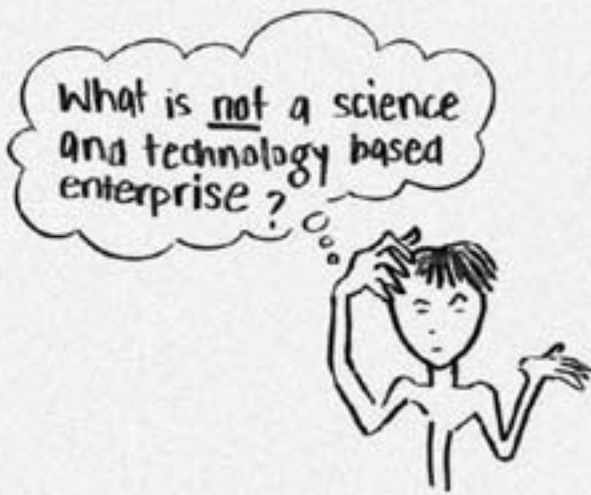




Project workshops at Saïd Business School



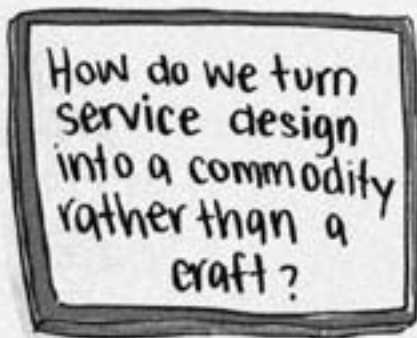
Close-up from scribing at workshop



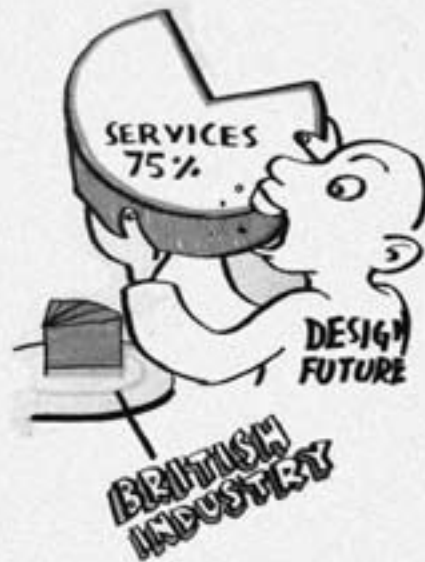
Scribing: Sefi Amir



Scribing: Sefi Amir



Scribing: Sefi Amir



Scribing: Josh Knowles

Customer Service vs. Technology product:



Scribing: Sefi Amir

Terminology Landscape



Scribing: Sefi Amir

Participants came from several management disciplines grounded in the social sciences, including strategy and innovation, operations management and service operations; from design research including interaction design; and from emerging interdisciplinary areas of study such as complexity science. A number of these colleagues have provided the perspectives gathered in this volume, which we hope provides the opportunity to reflect on the designing of services enacted in the study. The contributions draw on the disciplines represented among project participants; with different colleagues we would of course have a different volume. The value of these ideas is that they have emerged from a multidisciplinary conversation generated from observing together what happened in this exploratory context. As such the D4S project provides a contribution complementing other efforts to understand and describe the emerging field of service design.

A platform

This study has provided a platform for further research in service design, especially that which is coupled with leading edge science and technological innovation. Within the multidisciplinary engagement we were able to explore the use of service design methods, the evolution of a service design vocabulary, and the types of issues – such as complexity, scalability, quality, and interdisciplinarity – important in this domain. There is much opportunity in this emerging field. Academic research into the emerging field of service design as practised by consultancies such as IDEO and live | work has so far been limited. As described elsewhere in this volume, hours of footage of the engagement between designers and enterprises has been collected and will provide the groundwork for further research on the designing of services. The project has provided a platform for the future work to be undertaken among the different academic communities that gathered together over the course of eight months to discuss designing for services. For now, please join with us in considering the varied perspectives generated among this community, as we look forward to the developments to come in this interesting and challenging domain.

Designing for Services is supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). The AHRC funds research in the arts and humanities, from archaeology and English literature to design and dance. AHRC Research Centres provide a focus for collaborative research in areas of strategic importance. For further information on the AHRC, please see www.ahrc.ac.uk



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