About us, with us:
The Fluid Project’s Inclusive Design Tools

Colin Clark, Lead Software Architect
Inclusive Design Research Centre
OCAD University

Dana Ayotte, Antranig Basman, Jutta Treviranus, co-authors
An open community for designers, users, artists, testers, accessibility experts, thinkers, and all the other people who don’t usually fit into open source.

fluidproject.org
The Fluid Project

- Founded in 2007 to address the systemic usability and accessibility challenges of open source software and the open web
- Diverse activities: standardization, software development frameworks, reusable UI components, and design methods
- Driven by an inclusive design approach; users should be in control of adapting and personalizing their software environments
Inclusive Design is design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference.
The Challenge of Design Tools

• Design tools are too often influenced by industry-driven or medical science research methods

• People with disabilities are too often excluded from the design process and the resulting user experience; assumptions —“we know what’s best for you” mentality and professionalism divide
“HCI has an unusually narrow focus. Much of the rhetoric is about empowerment and the sovereignty of the user... [However], it should be asked what model of a persona, what 'human,' is engineered by HCI.”

Matthew Fuller, *Behind the Blip* (12)
“User” “Modelling”

- Personas typically “blur” individuals by representing multiples as one—they’re static.
- Industrial design literature emphasizes using personas to reduce diversity and avoid edge cases.
- However, we are all multiplicities: dynamic, evolving, and with changing needs and preferences under different circumstances and in different environments.
- And edge cases are a key driver of innovation and usability.
Inclusive Design Mapping Tool
(user states and contexts)
USER STATES & CONTEXTS

COMMUNICATION

SUSAN
LAUREN
PETER
ALBERT
LIZ

COMPLETE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS
“There is a large and growing body of evidence that users don’t know what they want, don’t know what the medium is capable of delivering, and are... quite incapable of imagining something new, useful, desirable, or innovative. What’s more, there is ample evidence that the users are entirely ignorant of their inabilitys, yet will happily give their flawed answers with unequivocal emphasis.”

Alan Cooper,

“If users could lead innovation, they wouldn’t be users”
“The person formerly known as the 'user'…”

Elizabeth B.N. Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers,
“Co-creation and the new landscapes of design.” (1)
Elizabeth B.N. Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers, “Co-creation and the new landscapes of design.” (3)
"Tools are intrinsic to social relationships. To the degree that [an individual] masters his tools, he can invest the world with his meaning; to the degree that he is mastered by his tools, the shape of the tool determines his own self-image. Convivial tools are those which give each person who uses them the greatest opportunity to enrich the environment with the fruits of his or her vision. Industrial tools deny this possibility to those who use them and they allow their designers to determine the meaning and expectations of others."

User-Continued Co-Design

• Not an instrumental process like typical design methodologies
• Dynamic, opportunistic, flexible
• “What role would you like me to play in this process?”
• Technical tools to give users the ability to adapt, customize, and remake their software environment
design criteria

ideas

concept

prototype

product

fuzzy front end

personalization, end-user development, and user-continued design
Material software aims to give individuals the power to...

- Change the user interface to suit them
- Combine, alter, and mix up different user interfaces
- Break the assumptions built into what they use
- Share their work with a community
- Be part of an on-going creative process
Questions?

Colin Clark
ccclark@ocadu.ca
fluidproject.org