From UXD to LivXD
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Living eXperience Design

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The 20th Century was one of the significant theoretical and operational developments for the design of artifacts. Its first half saw the creation and/or progress of a significant number of objects that have transformed our lives: the train, the car, then the plane and finally the space shuttle. All have reduced the concept of distance; household appliances have enabled entirely new forms of home management, and mechanization has revolutionized agricultural activity. These are just a few examples of a movement in which no sector has been spared.

The second half of the century was marked by the gradual emergence of cognitive artifacts: information, knowledge, and also communication, culture, entertainment and leisure. The “chatter of the mind”, the television (Missika and Wolton, 1983), has established a sustainable world of flows, a contemporary universe that is constantly evolving and renewing itself up to the recent transformations of the smartphone and connected networks. Control instruments have also impacted many areas, from medical diagnosis to security surveillance. Increasingly sophisticated help systems have been developed to support decision-making, from the most strategic to the most commonplace. Many observers still argue that a new world is opening up, even though the relevance of the statement does not always stand up to rigorous scrutiny (Jeanneret, 2000).

At the epistemological level, constructivism as elaborated by Jean-Louis Le Moigne (1995, pp. 46–66) from the disegno of Jean-Baptiste Vico draws a line of continuity from Leonardo da Vinci to our contemporary designers, in this, our most recent history of design. Recherches en design (“Design research”) (Leleu-Merviel and Boulekbache-Mazouz, 2013) has already outlined its features, particularly in the chapter “Les représentations en conception à l’ère du numérique : vers l’avènement...
Throughout the current century, engineering has been at the center of activity, with the engineer being the one who designs solutions. Through certain activity, an initial question finds a form of resolution through the production of a “suitable” artifact, that is, one that is appropriate. Everything can be accomplished in the closed design circles, without taking into account the user, their habits, desires, pleasures, etc.

If, in a somewhat caricature and coarse way, we can highlight a “turning point” at the turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries, it is that of this new consideration. It is worth discussing quality to begin with, which is defined as “the ability to satisfy expressed or implicit needs”. Even though we continue to think in terms of the functions to be performed, it is now the expectations and presumed uses that constitute the core of the specifications, after converting these “needs” into functions via functional analysis. We then see many “user-centered” approaches flourish, which radically reverses the point of view. The designation is sometimes a sincere desire, as the process remains largely unchanged, providing only a late “seat” to the association users in the methodological process. Nevertheless, a movement is underway.

It is once again epistemology that will provide an unprecedented scope to this inverted point of view. Through enaction, a theory outlined by Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana (1992), it is no longer possible to separate the subject and the artifactual object, because both are co-constructed together by self-possession in an environment where recursive loops and structural couplings are incessant: the interaction is permanent and inextricable. It is then positioned as a “primate”, first to all observable and conceivable, in the so-called Palo Alto school of thought (Winkin, 1981). Based in part on these theoretical foundations, Jacques Theureau (2017) founded an “activity theory” centered on enaction where the gaze moves away from the single artifact and embraces the subject, the object, the environment and the situation to constitute an “analysis of the activity”. “What is the action?” defines the horizon of relevance of this research program, the fruitfulness of which is well-known in terms of design. Today, as Francis Jauréguiberry and Serge Proulx (2011) noted, there are many approaches to studying situational activities by subjects located in an environment equipped with communication and information technologies. They unite to reconsider the conditions for observing uses and user figures.

This book opens another door to a new horizon of relevance: that of experience. When you are sitting alone in a chair and watching a movie, the activity is brief: you are sitting and watching. Yet, we live an existence that can be violent and
passionate, unforgettable even. We can come out of this temporary experience forever transformed. By placing experience rather than activity at the heart of the analysis, the scope of possibilities is extended in two ways: first, by taking into account situations where the action is reduced as in the example above; then by integrating artifacts without “objects”. When you listen to a poem by a great actor on the radio, where is the object? In the poem, in its reading, in the radio show, in the radio station itself? It is clear that an object-based approach fails to address a very common situation. On the contrary, thinking that we are creating not an artifact (whether material or symbolic), but an experiential situation offered to the user, raises some of the difficulties encountered.

The notion of experience has a heuristic interest because of its suggestive polysemy. A door opens onto a land where the senses and cognition, subjective experience and the acquisition of knowledge and skills, representations and procedures interact. The experience allows us to think dialectically about what is structuring in a situation, a device, a medium and what the subject invents by also experiencing it for themselves. This notion therefore goes beyond that of “use” and “reception” to extend towards practices and underlines the sensitive, cognitive and emotional dimensions of the construction of meaning. Placed at the heart of our relationship with the world and with ourselves, the experience leads us to reconsider separate research traditions – one on uses and the other on reception – to better understand new issues that transcend academic boundaries.

This is how experience design is born. This expression emphasizes, from the outset, the purpose of the project as a “living experience” (Vial, 2015) and directs attention towards a “human ecology” where the subjects “interact with their natural and artificial environment”. According to the same author, design is undergoing a “semantic shift” that claims a communicative and social dimension. In this perspective, experiential design would aim to create experiential situations that would encourage the production of meaning, thus contributing to “creating the world” at the same time as “making sense”.

The “experience design” research program begins by identifying the principles that govern it. What are the theoretical concepts? And on which ontological assumptions are they based? These are the two questions that run throughout the chapters of the first part of the book. They determine the epistemological horizon of the proposed works and mark out general research areas to be explored.

Secondly, the theoretical support necessary for the rest of the scientific construction is constructed from the fundamental objects established previously. Based on the proposed approach, the methods, tools and the way they are mobilized constitute the methodological framework for a set of specific studies conducted in specific fields.
When it comes to field studies, it becomes clear that experience design knows few boundaries. Indeed, when you drive a car, you certainly move or travel, you drive a vehicle from which you expect an “appropriate”\(^1\) performance, but you also receive an experience. The moment you open the door of a store, an experience of the place, the moment, the buying situation begins. In a dwelling, a whole set of actions is carried out, but each of them is associated with one (or more) experience(s). An urban setting, a landscape, a museum, a creation, a book, a show, a festival, a trip, a meal, a vacation, hospitalization, a return to school, a teaching module, etc. everything is subject to experiences created and/or shaped by humans for humans. Their conception is in fact a matter of design. The diversity of situations thus leads to the extension of UXD, User eXperience Design, to a new concept: LivXD, Living eXperience Design, the design of life experiences. The main difference is that life experience does not necessarily include a digital device, and if it does, it is no longer a primary concern.

For each of these distinct fields, it is necessary to determine the observatory setup: protocols, instruments, data collection procedures, analytical methods, etc. Finally, the results and deliverables make it possible to accredit the productivity which results from an experiential approach.

This book is a collective production by the DeVisu laboratory\(^2\) (Visual and Urban Design). All the chapters in it have been written by the members of the laboratory and their partners. Following two joint seminars held several months apart on the concept of experience, we invited colleagues from the IMSIC laboratory (Toulon and Marseille) to contribute for two chapters that we have devoted to them. A third chapter has been entrusted to our historical partner, the Paragraphe laboratory at the University of Paris 8.

The common lines of research underlying the various chapters of this book are as follows:

1) How can we define the experience?

2) What characterizes the experience? How do we identify it?

3) What protocols should be put in place to capture the experience?

4) How can we receive feedback on the actual experience in comparison with the anticipated experience?

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\(^1\) That is, suitable.

\(^2\) EA no. 2445 from the Polytechnic University Hauts-de-France.
5) How does the designer’s thought express the future experience they are producing?
6) Do formal project representation tools influence future experience?
7) Can experience design be formalized and/or structured? And if so, how?
8) What significant difference and what new contribution justifies shifting from UXD to LivXD?

I.1. References

Part 1

Epistemology and Concepts
1.1. Introduction

The consideration of the future user in design begins with quality, which is defined as “the ability to satisfy expressed or implicit needs”. Even though we continue to think in terms of the functions to be performed, it is now the expectations and presumed uses that constitute the core of the specifications, after converting these “needs” into functions via functional analysis.

Quality is defined in several ways. According to ISO 9241-210 (2010), it corresponds to “a person’s perceptions and responses resulting from the use and/or anticipated use of a product, system or service”. In ISO 9000 (2015), quality is the “degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfils requirements”. It is sometimes defined as the set of attributes of an object. Compared to the previous definition, the differences are that:

– the term “inherent characteristics” has been changed to the more generic and neutral term “attributes”;
– anticipated use has been removed from the definition;
– the attributes are explicitly associated with any object.
As a result, although it is the first to take into account the future user, quality remains an object- or system-centric design. The first truly user-centered approaches started in the world of IT applications with the UI (User Interface) and UX (User eXperience).

This is where we will begin our journey towards the new LixXD concept, Living eXperience Design, that is, the design of life experiences.

1.2. The source of UXD

1.2.1. From design to user-centered design (UCD)

The term “design” refers to the conception, or even the translation of a concept, of an idea into a project, a drawing, a model or a plan, facilitating the realization or implementation of an object, whatever its nature: product, process, service, space, and network. In general, it can indicate both the purpose (the idea, the intention to achieve something, the project) and the drawing (the transcription and representation of the idea). Most often, the word “design” is followed by a noun or adjective that specifies the nature and purpose of the design (Laudati, 2016a).

According to Findeli (2005), the concept of design, from a theoretical point of view, has evolved in three chronological phases, characterized by their main objectives and by an interpretative paradigm corresponding to a specific disciplinary framework:

– the first phase, dating back to the beginnings of modernism, focused on the aesthetics and constructive characteristics of the object, resulting from the design process. The applied arts and engineering sciences determine the interpretive paradigm of this period;

– the second phase, starting in the 1950s, focused on the logic of design processes and the environments in which products must operate. The disciplines concerned were thus those relating to formal logic and cognitive psychology, the environment, ergonomics, sociology, etc.;

– finally, the third phase, the 1980s/1990s to the present day, focuses on stakeholders, that is, on the actors, in particular on users (UCD, user-centered design). Designers no longer design a simple object, but lifestyles, based on an understanding of user behavior. The user is no longer a simple consumer, but actively participates in the design (service design). Anthroposocial sciences, including information and communication sciences in their interpretative and qualitative capacities, take up these theories centered on actors, their interrelationships and uses.
From a pragmatic point of view, the ISO 13407 standard on design methodology facilitates the implementation of UCD, defining the requirements that a project must meet to be considered human-centered: it must meet the needs and expectations of users and not technological desires.

More recently, user-centered design has been oriented towards user experience design (UXD), which corresponds to users’ responses and perceptions resulting from the use or anticipation of the use of a product, service or system.

1.2.2. What is UXD?

It was towards the end of the 1980s that “user-centered design” appeared in the digital world. It is based on four main principles (Drouillat, 2017):

– the consideration of the user, their tasks and their environment from the product design stage;

– the use of active participation from the design phase, in order to respect the needs and expectations of the task;

– an adequate distribution of functions between the human and the system;

– recursivity in the design process, following a principle of successive iterations until the identified needs and expectations are met.

Donald Norman, promoter of “user-centered design” with Stephen Draper, writes:

I invented the term because I thought human interface and usability were too narrow. I wanted to cover all aspects of the person’s experience with the system including industrial design graphics, the interface, the physical interaction and the manual. Since then the term has spread widely, so much so that it is starting to lose it’s meaning. (Drouillat, 2017)

Based on these premises, Donald Norman, Jim Miller and Austin Henderson, and also Apple, broadened the perspective by introducing the concept of User eXperience (now abbreviated to UX) in 1995, in the article entitled “What you see, some of what’s in the future, and how we go about doing it: HI at Apple computer”. Elements of user experience (Garrett, 2011) articulates, for Web professionals, the notion around five frameworks (Drouillat, 2017):

– the surface, that is, the visual design of the interface;
the framework, that is, the specific organization of the information and elements of the interface;
the structure, that is, the organization of pages and navigation at the device level;
the scope, that is, the functional perimeter;
and finally, the strategy, that is, the needs and expectations of the users and the objectives of the project.

Figure 1.1 illustrates Garrett’s approach, structured in five layers, from the most superficial to the deepest, and weaves the level of the interface with that of the underlying architectures. This schema is in line with the new job of “User eXperience Architect” promoted by Norman et al. in 1995, at the same time as the term “design” appears incidentally at all levels of the graphic.

Figure 1.1. Garrett’s model. For a color version of this figure, please see www.iste.co.uk/leleu/livxd.zip
1.2.3. The UXD approach in practice

UXD will develop and become very popular, even though it is more often used as a selling point than as a real revision of approaches. Nevertheless, there is a large number of sites, more professional than scientific, that provide practical advice for developers to implement UXD. Let us take, for example, among others, the CREADS website, which is self-positioned as a “design tribe”.

It states that “designing UX” involves answering three questions:
– What is your UX strategy?
– What user experience are you trying to implement?
– How do you think you can do this?

Therefore, implementing UXD is a four-step process:
– analyze the situation;
– design the user experience promise;
– validate the process;
– develop the solution.
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Figure 1.3. UXD in four steps

Figure 1.4. UXD in eight components. For a color version of this figure, please see www.iste.co.uk/leleu/livxd.zip
And UXD development itself is divided into eight components:
– content strategy;
– information architecture;
– visual design;
– interaction design;
– user interface;
– typography;
– usability;
– functionality.

1.2.4. Assessment

The two major revolutions introduced by UXD in the development of computer applications consist of:
– going beyond the UI (interface design) to take into account the whole experience of use more broadly;
– no longer pretending to design a product, object or application, but thinking that you are designing an experience for the user.

However, it is clear from its short history that the founding fathers did not embarrass themselves with theoretical definitions about “experience”, pretending that this concept made sense, and that trying to define it at the very least was quite useless. In fact, there are more practical tips for developers to implement UXD than there are theoretical articles about it.

Moreover, as we can see, the first meanings of UX are strongly linked to the design of digital devices, and they relate to digital interactions as well as the forms, figures and functions of the interface. They are therefore initially reduced to man–machine interfaces¹, and take as their objective usability and ergonomics. However, they are rapidly expanding to integrate all aspects of interaction – beyond interfaces – and now extend to considering the user’s reactions, and even their emotions which are felt in the absence of an observable behavioral response, as discussed in the following.

¹ Human interface research and application as indicated in the second line of (Norman et al., 1995).
1.3. Beyond digital devices: from experience design to life experience design

As its title, *Design visual et urbain* (Visual and urban design), indicates, one of the specificities of the DeVisu laboratory is to associate media devices, and in particular digital devices, with the consideration of the places and spaces in which all forms of interaction take place. In this perspective, this means to a large extent integrating places and spaces within the framework of experience designed by UX.

1.3.1. The framework of the experience: spaces and living spaces

We have seen that consumer objects are becoming supports and interfaces, calling more and more for digital technologies. These sensitive objects allow individuals to interact with their social and spatial environments (iPods, ATMs, interactive terminals, maps, interactive plans, etc.). The interface is not only a surface on which information can be exchanged and functionalities activated, but it also represents the structure according to which this information and the functions are organized and provide suggestions for their use in a given spatial environment, thus triggering new practices. The added value of the product or service offered via the interface is not linked to its performance value, but to its ability to evoke unique and memorable experiences in a defined place, whether physical or virtual.

We are therefore witnessing a progressive shift from the concept of experience design through the *use of a device* (primarily functional use) to experience design through *practices in a given socio-spatial context*. The practices refer to a “life experience” that translates into different forms of appropriation of this context: not only functional, but also perceptive, cognitive, symbolic, affective, emotional, etc.

It is therefore essential, in order to obtain better understanding of the different modalities of life experience, to understand how the spatial framework in which this experience takes place is constituted and how the reciprocal interaction (individual/space) takes place during the experience. We then formulate the hypothesis of a sensitive (and sensory) experience of space on the part of the user, thanks to or through which mediation takes place, that is, the meaningful connection between the individual and the perceived and/or experienced space. From the moment this space, defined by its ontological and measurable characteristics, becomes meaningful, it becomes a “place”. In other words, a place is a space that is perceived, experienced and felt by the observer, depending on his or her experience of it. This experience can take place in a physical or virtual location.
The spatial experience, whatever the scale of the physical space (room, dwelling, street, neighborhood, city), or the size of the virtual space (extension of the network), is above all a cognitive, then a semantic process, based on a multisensory perception and on a progressive and iterative learning process. This means that through the experience that the individual has of and in space, they acquire knowledge through sight, touch, hearing, smell and wandering. Through perception, the individual acquires the spatial data that he or she conceptually structures in order to be able to interpret and understand them. By “spatial data”, we mean:

– in the physical space, any element (static and/or dynamic) constituting an urban space: buildings, public spaces, people, transport, activities, services, etc.;

– in a virtual space, any element (static and/or dynamic) constituting the informational trace of a navigation space: a geo-referenced point on the territory or on an interactive map (monument, metro station, etc.); a fragment of history; a piece of augmented reality; a virtual room in a museum; a room in a 3D model, etc.

The perceived data are then interpreted as units of meaning, founding the identity of the place. The process of semantization, according to the theories of symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1959; Le Breton, 2004; Mead, 2006), allows the individual to appropriate the data perceived through their own sociocultural codes at a given time.

The way in which the individual appropriates a situation or a place is reflected in the awareness of a social, cultural and spatial belonging, which has an influence on the behaviors adopted. In virtual space, for example, the sense of belonging to a group, to a community, is much stronger than that of belonging to a place.

Thus, the experience, which can be individual or shared, is informed by the user’s memory, knowledge and expectations, by determining their conduct, actions and practices. Through the actions accomplished, being accomplished or in the planning stage, the meaning of a space for a subject occurs. Experience is not a single, static and fixed process, but is dynamic and continuously renewed, as well as the meaning constructed from each experience.

1.3.2. The practices of the places: living experience and visit experience

We have begun the previously announced shift from experience design through use, to a design of life experience, that is, through all kinds of practice in various places.