

# The Idea Booth: A Design Case

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is a description of the design project that is the background for our submitted poster for the SIDeR conference 2014. The paper consists of an introduction, a description of our design process, final product and the poster..

## Keywords

Interaction design, user experience, library, participatory design, design process.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We are pursuing a masters degree in Information studies at Aarhus University. Our design project was made in connection with the course, "Design of Interactive Systems", on the first semester of the masters programme. The course has a theoretical and methodical view on interaction design, with an emphasis on the design process, rather than the quality of the product itself. The project elapsed from September to December in the autumn of 2013. Our study group consisted of Melisa, Christian and Simon.

In the design brief from our lecturer, we were asked to design an artifact that supports creative practice of work. Our lecturer told us about different projects that would be fitting to work with. One of them was a collaboration between Aarhus Public Library and Chicago Public Library. They had got an \$1 million dollar grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates fund to rethink of the role of the library's services and programs in an evolving world. The Chicago department of the design consultancy, IDEO, was hired to facilitate the project. We saw this as an exciting opportunity to kickstart our new project. We found it interesting to collaborate the library. We contactet Aarhus Public Library and got an invitation to a Make-A-Thon conducted by IDEO.

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## 2. THE DESIGN PROCESS

We chose, as mentioned, that collaboration between Aarhus Public Library, Chicago Public Library and IDEO. As the first step in the process, we ( Christian, Simon and Melisa) were invited to participate in IDEO's Make-A- Thon workshop at the library. IDEO 's had given Aarhus two subprojects out of 5, respectively: "Children and Families " and "IT in space". IDEO's role was to facilitate and guide in terms of structure and overall project management. Aarhus Public Library has previous experience in projects with user involvement, so the concept of allowing users to influence the design process is not new to them. So it was easy for the library to smuggle in our group into the process. On the day of the workshop, Simon joined "IT and space". Christian and Melisa joined the "Children and Families" group. The day before the library had held their first brainstorm and out of this they had worked on establishing the library's core values, generated personas, as well as ideas for projects by making how-might-we questions. The latter characterized the groups work on the workshop day the most. We chose later to implement the method in our own workflow (it will be explained below).

During the make-a-thon, we got many insights from both project groups. However, they did give a clear pattern. The librarians were very interested in knowing more about the extent to which users (the people of Aarhus) feel that they have influence on the library. Because among the librarians there was a broad consensus that the library belonged to citizens, or to which they expressed: "Citizens Library" .

The rest of the day passed with the two project groups working on their keywords in order to make a prototype. Both groups came up with two prototypes, both of which reflected on that citizens should be more visible at the library, and that citizens must perceive the library as being theirs. We decided that it would be more advantageous for us if we made a concurrent design process, rather than following their process.

### 2.1 DOCUMENTATION AND FURTHER KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE DOMAIN

The next day we agreed to use the physical facilities in the office to get an overview of the process and the future work. This documentation should primarily be based upon our blog<sup>1</sup>, but also in the form of a board with sticky notes. We talked about various potential design problems, issues, opportunities and challenges. Among these were:

- How to get hold of non-users
- What is the role of the library in Aarhus? According to the library and according people of Aarhus.

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<sup>1</sup> [http:// mcsdesignblog.wordpress.com/](http://mcsdesignblog.wordpress.com/)

- User-imprints. How do you get the people of Aarhus to feel that they have ownership of the library?
- Creative work practices we would like to design: how users can help to create a section of the library and thus make them feel that they have ownership of it.

In addition, we had a few days after a meeting with our lecturer, Peter Dalsgaard. We discussed different ideas of what our project should be defined to deal with. We have agreed that it would be best to work with user-imprints and the users' impressions of the library. Peter suggested further that, since we had gathered a lot of knowledge about the library during the work-a-thon, we should go directly to the exploration phase, and find a solution to how to support user-imprints in the library. Our thoughts about user imprints were further confirmed in an email correspondence with our contact person at the library, who stated that, the library has gone from being the librarians' room to being a public space. Therefore, the library has a desire to give the citizens the opportunity to put their imprints on the library. We found this dilemma interesting because the library's approach to innovation is centered around the users. Therefore, the user's voice is essential for innovation and would be the core of our future prototype.

## 2.2 BRAINSTORMING

We kick started the idea phase by experimenting and discussing with different design problems and design solutions. Our main interest was to find a way to let users contribute to the library and engage them in developing the library. Our main weapon of choice was the classic brainstorm method, with additional affinity diagramming, which involved organizing sticky notes. We also made storyboards to illustrate the concepts, which made communication easier.

The brainstorming session helped us moving forward in our ideation phase. However, the greatest progress came after a design challenge conducted by our lecturer, Peter Dalsgaard. We went through multiple, short exercises. The focus was on ensuring that we got to test the various methods of through hands-on work. Design Space Morphology was clearly the method that moved us forward the most. We had found a feedback box at the library, in which people could leave a piece of paper with their feedback. It looked very old and boring, and was hidden in a corner where no one could see it. We decided to redesign it into something more fun and engaging. Instead of typing the feedback on a piece of paper and put it in the box, you should have opportunity to give feedback more directly and more emotional through audio recordings. This would invite library users to provide feedback through a megaphone-like object, that would record the message.

|    | A          | B    | C                              | D                       | E           | F       | G                  | H             |
|----|------------|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1  |            |      |                                |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 2  | Materiale  | Form | Lokation                       | Situation               | Interaktion | Indhold | Formål             | Oplevelse     |
| 3  | RFID chip  |      | Indgang                        | Ankomst                 | gæst        | Kort    | reservationer      | Effektivt     |
| 4  | Tryksensor |      | Indgang                        | Afhentning              | gæst        | 90-7"   | reservationer      | Udvalgte      |
| 5  | Skærme     |      | Indgang                        | Lån                     | Minik       |         | reservationer      | Udvalgte      |
| 6  |            |      | Afhentningssted                | Aflevering              | Kropsalg    |         | Gå til arrangement | Underholdende |
| 7  |            |      | Afleveringsterminal            | Informationsagende      | Agende      |         | Fortybetale        | Inspirerende  |
| 8  |            |      | Lånterminal                    | Materialisagning        |             |         | Aflever            |               |
| 9  |            |      | Læsesal                        | Læsesal                 |             |         | Låne               |               |
| 10 |            |      | Børneområde                    | Print og scan           |             |         | Låne               |               |
| 11 |            |      | Læsehjælpe                     | On-site arrangementer   |             |         | Vidensdeling       |               |
| 12 |            |      | Musikafdeling                  | Lektier og studiehjælpe |             |         |                    |               |
| 13 |            |      | Fortybetalsområde              | Udforskning             |             |         |                    |               |
| 14 |            |      | Stoppområde                    | Social Interaktion      |             |         |                    |               |
| 15 |            |      | Computeren                     |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 16 |            |      | Arkivet                        |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 17 |            |      | Lekticafé                      |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 18 |            |      | Fantasyafdeling ("specialrum") |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 19 |            |      | Hylder                         |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 20 |            |      | Glasmontre                     |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 21 |            |      | Reoler                         |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 22 |            |      | Vægge                          |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 23 |            |      | Udklædningsstrel               |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 24 |            |      | Udstillingstal                 |                         |             |         |                    |               |
| 25 |            |      | Konferencsale                  |                         |             |         |                    |               |



After class we discussed how we could give the users this kind of experience. It should be easy and fun for users to give feedback. In that way, the users could share their idea before they left the library or forgot it. We came up with a fitting design problem: How can we invite users to express their ideas, while making it easy for the library to capture these ideas for further development? To constrain the scope of the design further, we used User Experience Goals to identify different qualities we wanted the design project to live up to.

| Desirable             | Undesirable    |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Motivating            | Boring         |
| Engaging              | Time consuming |
| Supporting creativity | Ridiculous     |
| Fun                   | Frustrating    |
| Surprising            |                |
| Unexpected            |                |
| Quick                 |                |
| Accessible            |                |
| Transferability       |                |

The result of the brainstorming and User Experience Goals form became three ideas we wanted to work on. We started to build them immediately, as well as two different storyboard scenarios. After building all three mock-ups, we decided to go with the idea booth. This idea consists of isolated booth, like a photo booth or a voting booth. If a user got an idea, she could go into the booth. The booth contained chair and a video camera that would record the user giving feedback. The user could take some photos inside the library first, which she could show while explaining her idea or feedback. The video recording would be saved as file for later viewing. We considered whether it might be a good idea to show the footage a place in the library for others to see and vote by giving it a like or a dislike. We made a more realistic prototype. We wrote to our contact person and asked if we could test our prototype in the library. Our contact gave us green light and said that we could use the foyer for three days.





### 2.3 TESTING AND REFLECTIONS

Testing our prototype went well. The library staff was incredibly helpful. The first day went by preparing our prototype and was ready to take our first volunteers. We only got 2-3 people through the idea booth on the first day. We spent a lot of time on the day work improving communication between product and user. We made our signs better and got our hands on some coffee and candy that we gave to the users. The second day more people came and shared their ideas in the idea booth. We confirmed that the concept had potential, and that it was relevant to focus on new ways to support the development of the library based on the users' ideas. However, almost no one took pictures to show in their recordings. The point of the picture was to help users communicating their ideas. We believe that they had not understood what the idea was about, or that taking a picture took too long. Not everybody liked being recorded. The young participants were more likely to let themselves be filmed than the older participants, with some exceptions. Several of the elderly would rather talk to us. If the problem is fear of the camera, it is critical to inform users that the footage will not be abused and only used to enhance the library's potential. The last day of the prototype testing went smoothly too, but there were not as many people as on day two, and most people just told us their ideas at left. A couple of users would like to watch other peoples videos and share their own. The next step was to develop a user interface that could support that. We worked on that for a couple of days before the end of the project. Our lecturer invited us to reflect on what would happen to the videos after they were recorded. Since the librarians are fond of user involvement, we thought it would be fitting, if they could invite users for a workshop. Therefore it should be possible for the users to leave their contact information with the video, which also should be possible with the new interface.

### 3. FINAL PRODUCT

The library wished to involve the users more in the development of the library. We decided to find a solution to this problem. The product consists of a small room, like a photo booth or a voting booth. Inside the booth is a interface that allows the users to share their ideas and feedback for the library by recording a video. The curtain isolates the user from the rest of the library, and gives her opportunity to express the idea in an private environment, in the middle of the busy library. For our prototype, we used a MacBook Air with the Photo Booth application to record the video, because it is easy to use and could help us testing our idea. However, we learned from the users that the interface would need more functionality in order to meet their needs. This included watching other peoples videos in order to get inspired and evolve other peoples recorded ideas. These needs has to be supported by the interface. It should be possible to watch all the videos and

make a response video. The connections between the videos should be expressed visually on the interface, which would get a better overview of the ideas. The user should be able to leave her contact information, so the library could give her an invitation to a workshop, where the librarians and the users can evolve the ideas into concepts and implement them together.



### 4. THE POSTER

The poster consists of pictures from different phases in the design process and a short description of the project. The top-left picture is a storyboard scenario that describes the concept. The following three pictures were taken at our prototype test at the library. The first (top-right) shows the setup. The information on the wall to the left showed how to use the system. The idea booth can be seen in the background, to the right. The middle-left picture shows a person interacting with the system. Next to this are six pictures from the users' recordings in the booth, that show what the recordings look like. The bottom-row consists of pictures from our office. The bottom-left picture is a physical overview map, that visualizes our process we also included our sketches and notes from the proces. The bottom-right picture was taken during the ideation phase and illustrates our brainstorming session.

### 5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our thanks to ACM SIGCHI for allowing us to modify templates they had developed.

## **6. REFERENCES**

We have chosen not to refer to any theory because we only made a poster and it is the first time we are submitting some kind of academic paper