Someone Else's Shoes - Using Role-Playing Games in User-Centered Service Design

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Laugh and enthused voices fill the big lecture room when four groups around the room play a Character Game; a game that combines elements from role-playing and personas. We have decided to share the user study results in a service design project within multidisciplinary group of people from three companies [designers, managers etc.] by playing a design game, a game in which the participants should step into someone else's shoes. We, the researchers who have developed the game, have been anxious about peoples' reactions but now we start to relax; the game seems to work after all. The atmosphere feels relaxed, the participants have taken the character's roles and vivid discussions and stories evolves as the game goes on. But will they gain the inspiration and empathy as we have wished for?

Through the Looking Glass – Introduction

In order to create positive service experiences, it is necessary to identify users' needs and wishes through user-centered design (UCD) processes and tools. However, in UCD, it has been noted that written user research reports do not meet the designers' need for inspiration in addition to information. Face-to-face meetings between users and designers, as well as creative user study methods, such as empathic probes, have been suggested as ways to overcome this challenge. (e.g. Mattelmäki 2006) Unfortunately, in many design projects it is not possible to involve the whole multidisciplinary design team to conduct user studies, but still everyone should adapt user insights in their work. This leads to two challenges: firstly, how to bring user perspectives into design / designers, and secondly, how to facilitate creative collaboration among different practitioners.

We are not the first ones to tackle with these challenges of finding approaches which support design empathy, ideation and decision making in UCD. For example *Experience prototyping* (Buchenau and Fulton Suri 2000) has been utilized to deepen designers' understanding about other people's experiences by trying things out by themselves. Similarly

many theatre methods, such as Forum Theatre, have been adapted to design processes (e.g. Mehto et al. 2006; Brandt and Grunnet 2000) to combine props and drama as a means to explore new design opportunities. Brandt (2006) proposes *exploratory design games* to build a common ground for collaborative design activities. According to her, the exploratory design games can be used to, for instance, conceptualize design, change perspectives, negotiate, and build scenarios. Besides using the notion of design games to create co-design sessions, many authors have underlined contextual approaches, either taking the collaborative events into the context under study (Binder, T. 2007) or conducting design experiments on the fly while users perform their everyday practices (Iacucci and Kuutti 2002; Vaajakallio and Mattelmäki 2007). While many methods rely on face-to-face meetings between designers and potential users, there are some methods that try to bring users alive in other ways. For example, *personas* (Cooper, 1999) are visual and textual descriptions of potential user characteristics, lifestyles, needs and limitations, and are often used to share user understanding within a design team.

In this paper, we present a new method for tackling these challenges, focusing on facilitating emphatic understanding of users in multidisciplinary projects. We are inspired by the use of game-like methods in design (Brandt 2006; Johansson 2005; Brandt and Messeter 2004), and Cooper's (1999) personas for sharing user data. In addition to design games and personas, we take advantage of a previously not often utilized source of innovation: tabletop role-playing games. We find the storytelling structure and role-taking in role-playing games promising for service design: the storytelling structure of the game evokes new scenarios and service opportunities as the story evolves, and role-taking provides an empathic approach to the user data.

The challenge of collaboration was evident in the particular service design case for which the method was developed. In addition to involving professionals from distinctive fields, the case concerned representatives from diverse stakeholder organizations. We consider that a role-playing approach provides a way to ease the articulation of different views. Moreover, stepping into users' shoes and seeing the whole service ecology from their perspective, helps to discover collaboration opportunities between different stakeholders in a service design project.

During the development of the Character Game, we had user data from an interview and observation study, which was conducted by a project partner company, KONE. In this paper, we provide one example of how the user data can be shared through the Character Game. The findings discussed in this paper are based on two Game sessions. A Game session has three main stages with an optional fourth stage for idea generation: 1) Introduction to the topic; 2) Warm-up exercise and game world creation; 3) The Character Game; and 4) Idea generation.

Our experiences show that the Character Game gives good motivation to dig in to the original ethnographic material of user studies in an emphatic and inspiring way. For service designers, the special benefits of the Character Game lie in bringing stakeholders around the same table, understanding users by highlighting empathy and inspiration, and finding relevant issues to inform design. The realization of the method presented in this paper can be creatively adapted to purposes of different projects. The development of the method was part of the on-going project called Extreme Design – developing extreme service design methods (2008-2010), which studies how design games and drama methods can support multidisciplinary service design.

The Blue Pill or the Red Pill – Inspired by Role-Playing Games

One of the earliest definitions of role-play was "*A game of character development simulating the process of personal development commonly called life*" (Perrin et al. 1980). Since then it has gone through redefinitions without ending up being just one thing. There are many forms of role-playing games ranging from massive multiplayer online games to tabletop games. But they have some things in common: *The character*, which the player uses to interact with the game world, a *game master* who controls the game world, a *game world* in which the characters live in and *interact* with. They usually also have a strong *narrative* compared to other games. (Hitchens et al. 2009)

Role-playing has several forms; two examples of this variety are live role-playing and tabletop role-playing. Live role-playing resembles somewhat drama methods used in UCD (Brandt and Grunnet 2000) and service design (Holmlid and Evenson 2006) as it emphasizes bodily interactions. Tabletop role-playing games, instead, do not demand as much bodily engagement, since the players sit around a table, and the story is acted out mostly verbally. This was one of the reasons why we applied a tabletop format; we assumed that it provides easier framework for the participants to relax, and act in a new role. This could diminish the need for long warming-up tasks before the actual game.

Role-playing games in general have some features that we find promising when sharing user data among various participants, especially their narrative structure and role-taking. The narrative structure of the game evokes new scenarios and services as the story evolves. By taking roles everyone plays someone else than themselves - thus being able to express views and ideas that extend beyond one's professional role. The roles the players have in the Character Game illustrate possible users or 'characters' somewhat similar to personas. However, our focus was to evoke empathy towards users, not to present "hard facts", even though the characters were created based on the user study material, mainly interviews. In any case, role-taking makes the participant actively process the user data for the requirements of the game. This can be argued to provide a deeper understanding to the service needs of the users than a simple presentation of a user study.

We use the following concepts, derived from role-playing vocabulary, to describe the features in the Character Game: The concept of a *game session* includes the whole event, in which user perspectives are processed, and collaboration among the participants facilitated. In a game session, after a briefing to the topic, the participants *create a game world*: they use the image and text material provided to create a mind map that describes the environment where the game takes place. After that the Character Game is played. The last phase aims to build discussion around the presentation of either generated ideas or discovered themes.

From Chaos into Order – Preparations for the Game Session

Sorting the user study material for creating the Character Game.

Interviews and observations as source of user data

The case, in which the Character Game was developed, focused on senior houses and moving in and around the building. Thus, the user data utilised in the game focused on the same theme. The data was gathered by usability experts from our partner company, KONE, during February of 2009 and consisted of 28 interviews of people living in 7 different senior houses. The interviews were done as contextual inquiries, which were taped. Video cameras were not used to keep it more informal. In addition, in every house someone who knew the house well, e.g. a janitor, was questioned about the house itself. The recorded interviews were transcribed into a 40 page long document. The data was not produced specifically for the purposes of the game development, but for other occasions as well. One project researcher was present for 4 interviews. The houses were owned by SATO and were situated in Helsinki, Finland. The service level of the houses varied a lot; some of them were close to ordinary apartments while some were in the same space as a nursing home and thus had staff in it around the clock. Also, the physical health of the residents varied a lot, as their need for services; from people unable to move unassisted to active and healthy seniors.

Sorting Things

Before designing the actual game, the project researchers familiarised themselves with the material and break it down to smaller, more manageable pieces. In the first meeting, the usability experts, who had mainly conducted the interviews, and the project researchers discussed about the material and meaningful themes that it evoked. Going through the data gave insights of the content, as well as a rough understanding what could be made out of it. In the second meeting, three project researchers together with one designer from KONE started to dissect the material for creation of the game. In order to manage the huge amount of the material, everyone focused on different aspects of it; for example, social practices, encounters, surroundings, problematic situations and new ideas. These were written up on post-it notes and affinity diagrams were created from them. The affinity diagrams were further developed as the 'bases for the character templates' and other materials written for the game, such as, the opening scenes and the weekly schedules (described later).

As a parallel process to going through the material was the creation of the game rules and mechanics. In practice this meant that the project researchers together with representatives from KONE had several meetings; some focused on processing the data while others concentrated on the actual game and how it could turn out; what kind of roles players could have, what game pieces would support the game, how it would proceed, what was the beginning and the end of the game, etc. As an outcome from this process we, the project researchers with some help from the representatives from KONE, created a Character Game which main idea was to allow participants step into senior's shoes to experience the world from user's perspective. To support role-taking we provided quotes from the interviews, pictures from the environment, and weekly schedule about happenings in the senior houses. Moreover, we created character templates, which illustrated different seniors living in the senior houses but were open for the participants to come-up the personal details. These game materials, game rules and the two game sessions are described in more detail below.

Rules of Engagement - Game Rules and Material Description

The following is a list of materials that was created for the game and what they were used for.

Game rules describing the game and its mechanics. Also, it contained a short description about the senior house the characters live in the year 2012. It was transported away from modern day to give room for re-imagining happenings and technologies. This document was mainly a hand-out for the facilitators. It also contained a first scene which the facilitator reads out aloud to help the participants to get the ball rolling.

6 different character templates were created, which included traits and background, such as habits, personalities, disabilities and quotes from the interviews. There was a place for a picture and underneath a brief text that described a character and his / her motivations in life. Things excluded from the templates were gender, careers, family ties and other personal information that were left to the participants to decide in the beginning of the game. To give some randomness to the character creation eight random factor cards were created based on the background material. These were dealt to the participants when the game started. They contained some secret background to their character: "You have won the lottery" or "You have a bypass surgery scheduled in two months."

Cards with images of elderly people were given to choose from as an image to represent the character. These cards had a place to write the name of the character on them. They were placed in front of the player on the table to remind about who your character is. After the game the images were placed on the character templates to complete the character.

Images and quotes to build a game world of senior housing. This phase aimed at paving the path for actual game by visualising context, senior houses, and opening the discussion about the themes and issues related to senior housing. The created mind map may work as a game board or as a reminder during the game. Materials not used in the mind map exercise were left on the tables for the group to use as inspiration during the game.

The weekly schedule that presents possible situations that may take place in the senior houses. Aim of this document was to drive the happenings in the game. It also tells about the service level of the senior house the characters live in. Two different schedules were created with a large variety in service level.

Filling out the character template during a game session.

The First Game Session

The first character game was arranged in March 2009 and had participants from three companies (an elevator manufacturer, a construction company, and a housing manufacture). The venue was a large conference room. 17 participants were divided into four groups with a facilitator from Extreme Design project. The session was recorded with four video cameras for later analysis. The game aimed at; 1) bringing representatives from three companies together to find out possibilities for future service networks; 2) sharing gathered user data in an inspirational and empathic way; 3) identifying meaningful themes from the participating companies' as well as seniors' point of view; and 4) finding design openings related to the service design case. Tangible outcomes from the game session included several character templates filled by the participants and a list of concepts that could involve all the participating companies. Furthermore, we hoped it would be a memorable event that would gather different professions towards a common goal. Altogether it took three and half an hour including a brief sensitising task to tell a short personal story involving seniors and end discussions.

The Game

The sequence of the game is presented below. The players are divided into groups of 4-6 in a way that every group has people from different organisations and one facilitator.

1. The game starts with facilitator explaining the brief and the game.

The character templates are distributed. The participants are free to choose the one that interest them most. When this is done the random factors are given out to the players.

The players are given some time to make up their character; name, age, past, nature etc. and pick an image that illustrates her / him. It is not necessary to have every little detail filled in. There is time to do that during the game.

2. The players present their characters to the other players at the table.

3. The facilitator sets up the first scene.

4. The game continues so that everyone is the *director of the scene* at least once.

5. The game continues until the time comes to an end or the facilitator ends it.

The Director of the Scene

The director (not the same person as the facilitator) is in charge of *framing the scene* and deciding when to move on to the next one. Every one has their turn as a director. The director should follow the Weekly Schedule if he does not come up with a follow up scene. If the player does not come up with something for the scene then the turn is passed on to the next one. If it looks like no one comes up with anything then the facilitator should give a helping hand for the director. The director also decides what the possible non-player characters introduced to the scene, such as nurse or seniors' relatives. If required the facilitator can step in to be a non-player character.

Framing of the Scene

The framing should not be too difficult or elaborate. An important thing is to have an ending to the scene. As an example of a framing could be like: *"Ella and Aleksi are going to the pharmacy to get their medication. When they arrive at the elevator they notice it is broken. They try to figure*

out who to notify. The scene ends when they figure out who (for example a janitor) it is". The next framing could be something in line of *"Ella and Aleksi tries to find a phone to contact the janitor. They do get hold of him and he promises to come and see what is happening".*

Playing the Scene

After the framing is set the scene is played. The players describe their character's actions to fulfil the framing. The director decides when the scene is over and the turn is given for the next person to be the director and frame the next scene. The facilitator should ask clarifying and supporting questions.

Documentation

For research purposes, i.e. developing the game further, the session was documented with one static video camera in the corner for every group. For design purposes, i.e. supporting recall and further development of the ideas discussed during the Game, after the session project researchers created a visual booklet with still images from the session, identified themes and generated ideas. The booklet was delivered to the participants. The content in the booklet came mainly from the facilitators' notes and the filled character templates.

After the game: Participants showing their characters.

Forward March - Game Session Facilitation from the Trenches

The second Character Game session was arranged with mainly the same game material, only a few changes were made based on our first observations. These changes are described and discussed below. The aim was besides sharing the user data within the KONE to learn more about the game setting and playing the game. Besides the facilitators, seven participants from Kone and two Extreme Design members participated in the game. The two facilitators of the game were the same as in the earlier workshop so they were more familiar with the material this time. Again the session was video recorded for further exploration.

Improvements made to the second game session

During making of the mind map everyone was told to stand up next to the material which was set up on a different table. This was done in order to activate every member of the group. In the first workshop there was a too much of delegating things in order to make the most out of the creation. The groups were so much different that no absolute truth can be said but from what we saw it had a positive effect on the activation of the group members. To speed things up the main headings were already put up there with a blue tack, and the amount of images was reduced from about one hundred to half of that.

In the first game session we had the *character name cards* as blank A5 cards where the participant could glue a picture cut from newspaper to present his character. There were some problems with this approach; mainly that the suitable images from newspapers tend to be small. For the second game we improved on this by printing images on cards that the participant could choose from. This way every group had the same amount of images to choose from. Also printing them two sided might have supported the role-playing; we noticed that people tend to turn their cards over every now and then to remind themselves how their character looks like or their name.

After the first game we were wondering how much the opening scene effected to the game. Thus, for the second game session we added a new opening scene to see how it would change the game. Now one group started with a dramatic scene involving a fire and the other one a social scene involving a get-together. Based on our observations we came to the conclusion that it did have some effect on how the players viewed the world through the character. Mainly it seemed to affect the topics that appeared to be meaningful for the characters; when the opening scene was about smoke in the corridor, safety became a central issue discussed throughout the game.

Even though framing of a scene was very rewarding it was hard for the players. As a solution for this we made *Situation Cards* for the second game. They were cards that were drawn before every framing to help come up with ideas for the scene. They were left very vague in order to leave room for interpretation. For example, "There is a stranger among you" or "A rapid change in your life". These were just aides; the framing did not have to come from these. 13 cards were made for variation which equals 2-4 rounds of framing turns on the table. This seemed to help the framing since now many framings were based on the situation cards.

Game material used in the Character Game.

After the Dust Settles - Feedback and discussion

Feedback from the sessions was gathered as email questionnaires with more than a dozen open questions. The questionnaire covered participants' familiarity with co-design and their opinions on usefulness of the game session for their work. For example we asked them to describe the game session with three words. Nine from roughly twenty participants returned their answers. In addition to participant feedback, there were several discussions between the project researchers and facilitators in which the game sessions were analysed and written up in memos. In this chapter we first discuss the participants point-of-view based on the answers given in the questionnaire, and then we will concentrate on the researchers' observations.

From the participants point-of-view

All returned questionnaires indicated that game sessions involving co-operation between different organizations and professionals were considered meaningful. Overall, the participants were familiar with working in workshops but only a few had experience with role-playing games. However, their answers to the questionnaire did not stand out from the non-gamers. Thus it seems that the Character Game may be equally demanding and rewarding for gamers and non-gamers.

The overall attitudes towards the game session were positive. The way the players described the overall feeling of the game sessions varied from being "relaxed", "open", "inspiring", "eyes-opening" and "positive". We didn't ask them to be more precise about what effected on the feeling; other players, earlier knowledge, facilitator's ability to lead the game, own professional role etc.

Even though senior housing was very familiar topic to most of the people involved in the sessions, the participants reported that they have not had many casual discussions about the subjects that emerged during the game and only a few had taken advantage of these in their work. One of the challenges of UCD mentioned in the beginning is how to bring user data to a design team. Some of the participants felt that they had learnt several new aspects of senior living while some didn't. This wide range of answers can be explained by a wider base knowledge of the subject: there were participants who had studied senior living before. Anyway, based on the questionnaires, the game was experienced more inspiring than just a presentation they were used to.

The framing of the scenes were considered the most difficult part in the game, even though we tried to ease in the second session by providing the random factor cards. Providing more input and guidance from the facilitator or making the framings as a group could make the task easier. In any case, we consider the framing as an integral part of the game since it forces the participant to process the events from the characters point-of-view. Therefore, we don't want to give the participants ready-made scenes, but instead, we encourage them to come up with the scenes they find relevant and interesting to play. In any case, the balance between the players input and the facilitator's guidance needs more consideration in the future games.

From the creators and facilitators point-of-view

Even though the participants came from different companies and professions, everyone was able to participate in an equal manner in a game session. Since the Character Game involves story telling, everyone can take distance from their day to day personas. Also, the game

session forced the participants to change their point-of-view by looking through the lenses of a senior. A Character Game opened up the participant to the world of users, their values, needs, and problems. However, since almost every participant had an idea what senior living is like, more detailed analysis is needed to be able to say to what degree prejudice and assumptions were played out in the Character Game. Anyway, the characters didn't become over acted caricatures but felt credible everyday people. When role playing, the participants can get out of the role which they play in the organization, thus supporting possibilities to propose ideas other than those excepted for a person in a particular position.

Although the character game is easily duplicated, creating the material for the first time takes resources. For the senior living case an estimate would be 60+ working hours, divided between several workers and several days. This excludes the time used for the interviews and transcribing those. This will, of course, go down with experience and ready templates. We assume that if the creator of the character game would be an active participant in the user study, it would speed up the game design, since then he would be familiar with the material from the beginning. Since one character template was built up from one interviewed person, the number of interviews could be cut down to minimum, meaning the amount of needed characters in the game. This would diminish the time needed to interpret the user data.

From the facilitator's point of view the character game was two folded. On the one hand it gave a structure and tools to lead the session. On the other hand it demanded sensibility to realise when to stop the game, how to encourage the participants to take new roles, and ability to maintain the flow when it was reached. However, the game rules and material supported facilitation; in all of our games, both more experienced facilitators as well as the ones without any experience, managed to do it well.

Summary: Service Design through Role-Playing

We have developed a table-top role-playing game for the purposes of service design, to support, firstly, the sharing of user data for developing an understanding of users to inform design, and secondly, to discover collaboration opportunities within diverse stakeholders. The strengths in the role-playing approach, compared to exploratory design games or personas, are the storytelling structure and role-taking. The tabletop format further provides a tangible approach to user data. The character game forced the players to take a new perspective on the subject by highlighting users' point-of-view. The observation that different opening scenes led different discussions, proposes that the first framing should be considered carefully. This is not a surprise nor is it a weakness if we are aware of it when planning the game and when analysing the outcomes from it.

The *storytelling structure* of the game and active processing of the user data enforced the players to think the service needs of the users from several angles and also outside of their own profession, thus revealing new service networks. When the participants generated stories that were partly based on their own past experiences, and partly prompt by the game material, the co-created stories included several design openings; new scenarios and services were "produced" as the story evolves. Many themes such as feeling safe, me and others, and aesthetic usability were identified as starting points for the new concept ideas and service opportunities. Since the project didn't end up with any design outcome (yet), we can't say if the character game effected on the actual design or not.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Creating a Character Game

The Character Game is a method for sharing knowledge and empathy from user study results. It also helps in creating personas and scenarios. It is useful when you need to communicate user perspective to a group of people. Every group needs a facilitator and 4-6 players.

The Character Game is a played in a game session that has the following steps:

1. Introduction

2. Warm-up

3. Create the game world

4. Play the Character Game

5. Reflect

6. Analyze

This guide is divided into chapters based on these steps of the game-session. In every step there is description of the needed materials.

The material that can be used to create the game can be gained by many ways e.g transcribed interviews.

Remember to give enough coffee breaks between steps, this can be a exhaustive session.

1. Introduction

As the first step the topic is introduced to the players. Also have the participants introduce themselves in order for them to feel more relaxed and get to know each other.

Material: A video or powerpoint containing visual material from the research. It sets the mood and helps with giving the participants a common starting point for the rest of the steps.

2. Warm-up

The participants are divided into groups of 4-6 and have an facilitator assigned to them. The first step as a group they present a short story or anecdote relating to the topic. Every player writes these their own story on a paper or post-it note and they are put up on a wall so everyone can see them.

Material: Pen and paper or post-it notes.

3. Create the game world

The game world is a combination of a mind map and a mood board. It is constructed from images and quotes that are pre-selected from the background material. This is a group task that helps setting the environment where the happenings take place. It also tells about the common values of characters and their surroundings.

Material: This map should be visible to the participants during the whole session so the images used should be large enough to be seen from across the table or if constructed on the wall then from there. Constructing it on a big sheet of paper makes it much easier to take away and analyze later. The amount of material that is pre-selected should not be too much; otherwise it is too difficult to sort through it. To speed up the step many ready keywords can be placed on the sheet to guide the creation. Blue tack, tape, sharpies and scissors are also required.

4. Play the Character Game

4.1 Materials

Here is presented the materials needed for the game itself. These are the basic ones needed but depending on the subject other materials can also be incorporated to guide game play, like in game schedules or questionnaires.

4.1.1. Brief

A short text describing the game rules. It will also tell about the world and surroundings. It is good to transported away from modern day to give room for re-imagining happenings and technologies. This is meant only for the facilitator

4.1.2. Character Sheets

6 different character templates are created based on the material from previous studies with room for interpretation. The template contains a short description about attitudes, traits and background.

The first couple of lines on the character should be enough to tell who it is, these are read aloud before distributing them.

4.1.3. Character Name Cards

Every group should have a pile of cards with images of possible characters on them. An area for writing their name on them should also exist. It is good to make them as big as possible and have some kind of a stand they can be put on so everyone can see them. The images can be from the background material or from some other source, main thing is that everyone around the table knows every character by appearance and by name. It helps if the name is written with a thick sharpie so it can be seen across the table. Also if these are created by computer every group can have the same images instead of seeking out and cutting them from magazines. If possible, make them two sided with the same image on both sides. Then the player would not have to flip the card every time he wants to look at it.

4.1.4. Random Factors

Randomness and a playful element is added with Random Factor cards. They are cards that are dealt to the participants after they have chosen their character to play. They can contain personal things that can affect how the character sees the world, for instance a sickness or lucky happening no one else knows.

4.1.5. First Scene

As the first scene is directed by the facilitator, it is good to have it written on the brief. The aim of this is to give an example how it is done and ease the participants into the game. It should be something that easily involves every character and gives a happening that they can discuss later on in other scenes. It can be in nature for instance dramatic or social.

4.1.6. Situation Cards

Situation cards exist to help the framing of scenes. A card is drawn before every framing. They should contain hints about possible happenings and steer the game in a direction wanted by the facilitators. It should be very vague in describing the scene and only hinting at something in order to give room for interpretation. These are drawn but the framing does not need to be from them. 12 should be enough, it equals 2-3 rounds.

4.2 The Game Rules

At least 90 minutes should be reserved for the game. This equals 2-3 rounds.

1. The game starts with facilitator explaining the brief and the game rules.

2. The character sheets are distributed. They may be changed between players at this time. When this is done the random factors are given out to the players. They draw them at random but may discard and draw new ones until satisfied.

3. The players are given some time to make up their character, their name, their past, their appearances, their nature and so on. It is not necessary to have every little detail filled in. There is time to do that during the game.

4. The players go around and present their characters to the other players at the table.

5. The facilitator sets up the first scene from the brief.

6. The game continues from that with the turn to be the director of the scene going clockwise. Remember to pick up a Situation card.

7. The game continues until the time or story ends.

4.2.1 The Director of the Scene

The director is in charge of framing the scene and deciding when to move on to the next one. Every one has their turn as a director. The director should follow the Weekly Schedule. If the player does not come up with something for the scene then the turn is passed on to the next one. If it looks like no one comes up with anything then the facilitator should give a helping hand. The director also decides what the non-player characters does during a scene. If required the facilitator can step in to be a non-player character.

4.2.2 Framing of the Scene

The framing should not be too difficult or elaborate. As an example of a framing could be like:

"Ella and Aleksi are going to the chemists to get their medication. When they arrive at the elevator they notice it is broken. They try to figure out who to notify. The scene ends when they figure out who it is". The next framing could be something in line of "Ella and Aleksi tries to find a phone to contact the janitor. They do get hold of him and he promises to come and see what is happening"

4.2.3 Playing the Scene

After the framing is set the scene is played. The players describe their characters actions to fulfil the framing. The director has the final word in disputes. He also decides when the turn is over and the turn is for the next person to be the director and frame the next scene. The facilitator should ask clarifying and leading questions.

5. Reflect

This step can be handled in several ways depending on how much time is at your groups disposal. Here are two ways presented.

5.1 Structured discussion

If you are pressed on time during the game-session a fast way to do a structured discussion is to give every participant three post-it notes and instruct them to write on every note a new thing or topic they learnt. "What new information did you learn today, new insight to the topic. What do you want to tell everyone else." After this the participants presents their findings one at a time around a large sheet of paper and make a affinity diagram on the fly. If there are a lot of participants then this can be done in smaller groups of 10-15 persons, but the people that played together are broken up so different viewpoints come up.
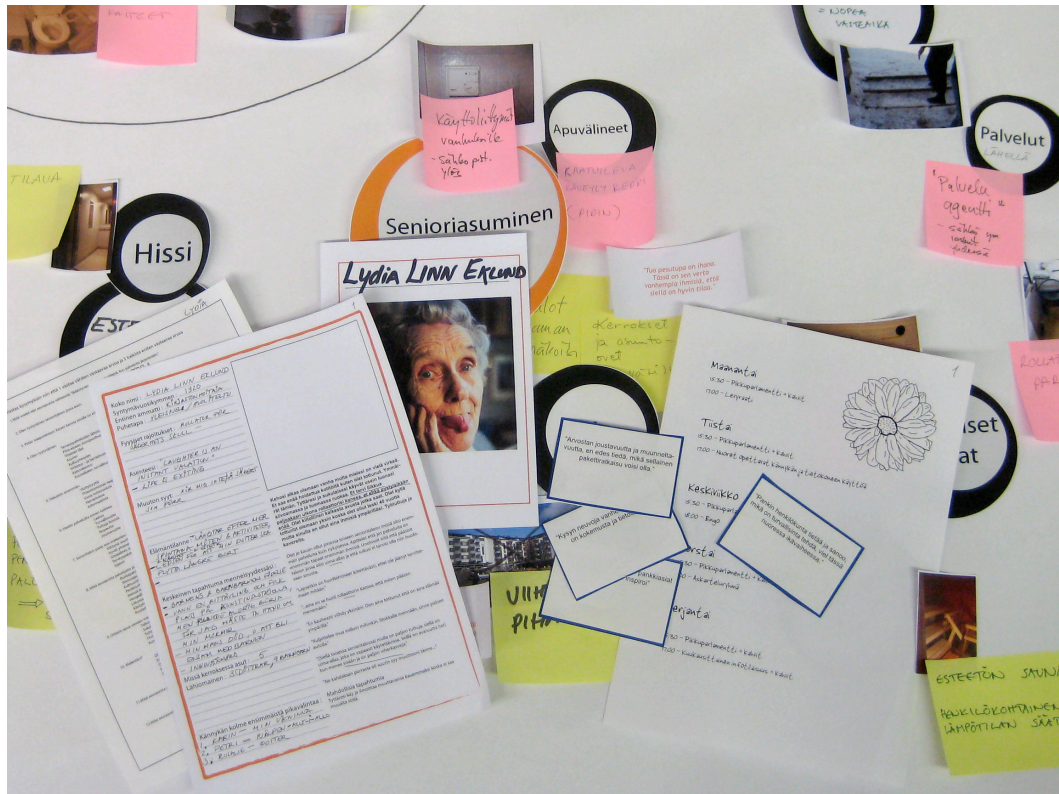
5.2 Idea Generation

If the group is very diverse and you have time at your disposal a task to create new concepts from what you have just learnt is a good option as a last step. The groups stay together and think of three different topics or problems that came out during the game session and then try to create some kind of a concept to remedy it. If the group is made of people from different companies then a restriction that the solution has to involve every company is preferred. It opens up the participants to think of solutions that can be solved through a joint effort.

5.3 Wrap up

A final discussion is preferred, as is in every workshop.

6. Analyze

Analyzing the game session should be done within a couple of days of the event so to remember things better. Good methods for this is affinity diagrams or writing out the stories and characters created. These can later on be created into scenarios and personas quite easily. If these findings are presented to the same people that participated it is good to incorporate as much material from the game as possible to get them to reflect on the game session even later on.

Used game material