Service Design Research:
Which direction do we want it to take?

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Case background

Being a fairly young research topic, the structure and directions of research on service design is not definite. Service design research is currently evolving from the early efforts to establish the discipline towards a wide range of areas of inquiry. Blomkvist, Holmlid, & Segelström (2010) have provided an overview of peer-reviewed research publications published in 2008-2009 and identified two main approaches to service design research:

> *"There seem to be two main approaches to this early research on service design. One is to widen the scope of service design and integrate practices and ideas from non-design fields, such as marketing, leadership and engineering. The other is to challenge and explore the basic assumptions in service design and the methods inherited from other disciplines." (Blomkvist, Holmlid, & Segelström, 2010)*

Furthermore, Blomkvist, Holmlid & Segelström (2010) have identified five trends in research in service design. The trends were used to contrast recent research with older research which focused mainly on arguing for service design in its own right. The five trends are:

» **Design theory**: Exploring the fundamental questions of service design, the language of service design and co-creation.
» **Management:** Learning from and integrating with existing thought on services within services management/marketing.
» **Systemic approach:** Focusing on product-service systems with an engineering perspective.
» **Design techniques:** The tools and techniques used in service design projects.
» **Case studies:** The practice of service design researched through case studies.

A similar interpretation can be found in Sangiorgi (2009), and in suggestions for research needed (Holmlid, 2009; Kimbell 2009).

The workshop will introduce the participants to the frameworks above. After this the workshop participants will work collaboratively with identifying important research topics and directions, and to suggest a roadmap for service design research. The workshop invites practitioners and academics alike, in its discussions on which directions are desirable for future research on service design.

Take home

The participants will leave with an improved knowledge about current service design research, to be applied or built upon.

They will contribute to a joint research roadmap. The created road map will be a good source of reference for new research on service design and could be used as a starting point for further research cooperation and development projects. It will also visualize the current state of service design research in a clear way to those not participating in the workshop.

For researchers it will be a valuable opportunity to identify streams of research to follow in their future work. It also provides a particularly good opportunity to find new collaboration partners with similar research interests.

For practitioners it gives an easy and accessible way of getting up to date with current efforts in academia, and also influence researchers in their search for new fields of inquiry through their active participation.

References

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