

Recap Inspiration session November 17th, 2016

Prototyping

Since 2014 Butterfly Works has been hosting inspiration sessions for ourselves and our network. It's all about more inspiration, new knowledge and getting excited to continue things just a little differently. This year we organised 3 sessions that represented the most important steps in our approach: design research, ideation and prototyping and testing.

The sessions are open for everyone. Want to receive an invite when we organise the next one? Sign up to our newsletter via inspire@butterflyworks.org

Prototyping

After our inspiration sessions on creative research and ideation, it was now time to focus on prototyping. Prototypes are cheap and quick versions of a final product that allow for testing certain assumptions. They are smaller in scope and therefore require less investment. Whether it is a paper prototype of a mobile application or an audio file for a digital teacher curriculum, we know that testing early drafts make the final product better.

The prototype wizards

We invited four creatives to share their thoughts on prototyping with us; the process they go through as well as the challenges they face. What are good prototypes for them and how do they use them? After their presentations they let us experience how they do prototyping and how it brings you in a different mindset.



Silvia Celiberti & Stratos Tzanavaris

Founders of Bomburo, Silvia and Stratos, introduced us to the importance of UX (user experience) prototyping and how it helps them to test and communicate their ideas.



Their session focused on the topic of reincarnation. If you would make an app which made it possible to reincarnate, what would it look like? What different reincarnation options would users have? Coming back as an animal, plant or a person? And in which location could they reincarnate? Within a couple of minutes different screens for the app were sketched and ready to be tested. Using the testing app 'Popapp' participants immediately tested the interactive user experience with each other. The first crucial elements came to light, such as the importance of the right speed at which screens switch. These specific requirements surface only through testing. That's why prototyping is an integral part of a designer and developer's work. Additionally, Bomburo involves their clients in every step of the way by showing them the prototypes and asking for input to ensure that the final product aligns with initial expectations.

Loes Bogers



Loes Bogers is a concept developer, creative facilitator and educator working at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. She worked with various international medialabs like Kitchen Budapest, the Patching Zone and Fields of View. She introduced us to 'problem prototyping'. Where prototyping normally is about creating to verify and falsify, problem prototyping is about creating to discuss.



Loes let us experience how prototyping the problem works by posing two problems; Trump as a president and the gender wage gap. Different groups had to make a game about each problem, to get a better understanding of what the problem actually entails and what the real issue at hand is. This resulted in a game called 'The Trump Tower' in which players have to bring down the structure. The gender gap problem kick-started a compassion game where the player switches gender.

Through this creation process Loes wanted to trigger a discussion, encourage critical thinking and make us fall in love with the problem, not the solution. Problem prototyping is not about finding the right solution, but about finding the right problem and making it tangible



Emer Beamer

Emer is one of the three founders of Butterfly Works, and founder of Designathon Works. She is a social designer and innovator for education with a particular focus on children to unleash their creativity to create a better world using new technologies.



Emer's session focused on 3D prototyping and how to use prototypes as solutions for social problems. With the materials at hand, the groups created a sustainable building, like an organic kindergarten or a recycled house. The group experienced how their thinking process was accelerated by starting with making something tangible. They did not spend any time brainstorming, but used the making process as a brainstorm.

Prototyping allows for this as materials are interchangeable, by which she means that once you call a piece of paper a wall, it really becomes a wall in the prototype. She explains that, using the making process like this, it is crucial to select the right materials as they steer what you ask your users to make.



Butterfly Works

Willem and Rianne from Butterfly Works organised a session on service prototyping in which the group had to create a new way to deliver a lesson. After a short brainstorm the group worked out a script for a lesson on body language, deciding on the message they want to convey. Then the scenario was acted out and filmed, using a voice-over to explain what the user sees on screen. Making videos is a great way to test how an interaction, like a lesson, should be organised. The video provides direct feedback on what happens during interactions, which is a great way to prototype services and interactions.

The Challenge

Having explored prototyping in all its glorious possibilities, it was time to round off on a competitive note. Who can come up with the best prototype in a very limited time? Participants were divided in five groups and each group would prototype an idea that would get people to move or exercise more in the office. Each group had different creative materials to make their ideas come to life. Some ideas that were prototyped included a Pokemon Go!-style game to keep everyone moving, and exercising while getting coffee.



The challenge also showed different forms of prototyping: 3d miniature models, cardboard products, paper prototype for mobile apps and a video of a competition. The challenge was won by the team who created a 3d miniature obstacle course with a climbing wall.



Conclusion

Prototyping offers the possibility to make something tangible in practically no-time, while also visualising ideas and making it easier to communicate them with others for feedback. The sessions showed how prototyping is most powerful when it is used as a discussion starter rather than a final check; a strong recommendation for everyone to do more prototyping earlier on.

Thank you for sharing and inspiring us! We hope to see you at our next inspiration session in the new year! Want to know more about our work or explore a collaboration? Go to: www.butterflyworks.org or send an e-mail to Merel van der Woude merel@butterflyworks.org



More about the speakers

Review their work through their websites or connect through email.

Silvia Celiberti & Stratos Tzanavaris:

www.bomburo.com & hello@bomburo.com

Loes Bogers:

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Emer Beamer:

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When

The next session will be held in the first quarter of 2017 from 15.00 until 17.00 with drinks afterwards

Where

Butterfly Works Studio
Ms. van Riemsdijkweg 57
1033 RC
Amsterdam