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Assisted Services - Physical support or psychological blow?

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Keywords

Psychosocial, functional, interdisciplinary, sustainable

Abstract

Work by Yoxall (2010) and Light (2010) showed that the relationship between artefacts and their use is complex; often beyond mere functional and physical use to a wider psychosocial context. Lack of understanding of this psychosocial aspect of product or service use immediately compromises the product or services design and future success. Further, in attempting to alleviate one issue through improved design we may create others. There is then an inherent complexity in the provision of design solutions that could be specific for each design. That the design process is complex and is involved in attempting to provide answers to 'wicked' problems (Rittel and Weber, 1973) is well understood. However, little work has been undertaken investigating the relationship between design solutions (either artefacts or services) and their effect on wellbeing. To that end the authors have undertaken a number of case studies outlining the complexity of design solutions, the unintended consequences and the effects on wellbeing of the individuals studied. Further the authors attempt to develop enhanced design processes to understand the complexity of the design solutions proposed and improve their effectiveness. The three case studies will focus on assisted kerbside bin collections, assistance in opening food packaging and assistive utensils for eating.

The development of this understanding has required an interdisciplinary approach and has been a significant factor in arriving at the recognition of the importance of these psychosocial attachments. Hence this work examines these case studies in detail and examines the benefits and issues of interdisciplinary research activity.

A. Light and T.D. Anderson, "**Research Project as Boundary Object: Negotiating the Conceptual Design of a Tool for International Development**", Proc. European Conf. Computer Supported Cooperative Work (ECSCW 09), Springer, 2009, pp. 21–41.

Rittel, Horst, and Melvin Webber, "**Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning**", pp. 155-169, Policy Sciences, Vol. 4, 1973

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