SERVDES 2023

COPPE | UFRJ Universidade Federal Do Rio De Janeiro
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Livework

Finding the balance between technology and culture: A service design dilemma

Convenor Name	E-mail	Affiliation	Workshop role
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Abstract

Services exist at the core of local communities and culture. The people and their practices in the local communities have always nurtured services. Decades back, when there was no mention of service design, the local ecosystems were thriving with human-centric and sustainable services. The dynamic nature of the culture kept changing the local ecosystem, where some services survived while others vanished. Technological growth also significantly impacted the local communities and associated services.

The workshop aims to explore the multicultural perspectives on hyperlocal services, focusing on the tension between humane values and technology advancements. It allows participants to push and pull the strings of human touchpoints and digital/tech touchpoints with informed cultural relevance.

The participants will discuss and propose answers to the guided questions during the workshop. The discussion will be fostered by a series of activities on the related topic. Participants will also be stimulated to reflect on how emerging technology and cultural practices can find the right balance to deliver hyperlocal services in the future and how it changes the way service designers should consider cultural forces and their role in the design process.

Keywords: Hyperlocal Services, Local ecosystem, Service design, Culture

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Workshop description

The hyperlocal services take shape with the culture and communities around them. It is a magnificent exchange of values in many aspects. However, the entire ecosystem is subjected to change in all directions. Cultural influences change, and culture evolves as political, social, economic, and technological forces reshape the cultural landscape (Usunier & Lee, 2005). Technology is catching pace with each passing day. Businesses are leveraging technology to become efficient, cost-effective, and quick-serving. Amidst all the changes, we want to explore the relationship between cultural and technological influences on hyperlocal services.

The key questions:

1. How might we understand the impact of cultural and technological influences on hyperlocal services?

2. How might we reimagine the local services of the future with the right balance of cultural relevance and technology?

3. What is the role of a service designer/ researcher in creating hyperlocal service experiences?

Service design talks about connecting the dots, aligning stakeholders to a common goal, and keeping customers at the core. There are sections of society with no understanding of present-day service design yet perfectly crafted hyperlocal service experiences. The diverse cultures of developing countries like India and Brazil have many hyperlocal services functioning in different geographies, sustaining and contributing to their ecosystems. Service design is not only focused on designing solutions that respond to current problems but is used to create an environment to assist/empower stakeholders to continuously respond to environmental changes as well (Burn, Cottam, Vanstone, & Winhall, 2006; Sangiorgi, 2011).

The services in local communities took shape over time with genuine needs and a purpose to help. The community and cultural practices guide the curation of service experiences. Value co-creation is established on a foundation of multiple networks, and it is challenging to build a relationship of trust (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

The social effort is targeted to solve commonly recognized problems that existing businesses and technological solutions have failed to address (Mulgan, Tucker, Ali, & Sanders, 2007). The services are flexible and adapt to the environment sooner or later. The innovation is more community driven to serve in such ecosystems. More diversified industries or local economies are likely to be more innovative because they have a greater opportunity to combine previously unrelated ideas and products (Goetz, & Han, 2020). This workshop intends to decode the "moments of matter" of such services while balancing the cultural and technological aspects.

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Session set-up

The workshop involves a series of activities to decode the local services and play with various influences on them. It is an exploratory set-up with a safe space to bring multicultural perspectives from the participants.

Workshop plan-

1. Introduction: An overview of the workshop and introduction with ice-breaking activities. The intent is to set the context and let participants pick a service to work on throughout the session.

2. Case study presentation –Present a case study that helps participants with multiple components and touchpoints of their service.

3. Cultural relevance of the services- Participants identify the impact of culture on their hyper-local service example through a guided activity.

4. Understand the impact of digital/ human touchpoints– Participants identify the impact of technological advancement on the existing service through a guided activity.

5. Propose a fine balance of digital and human– Participants understand the impact multiple factors create on their chosen service and create a balance through the guided activity.

Takeaway and documentation– The artifacts (service map) by participants capture the takeaway from the workshop. The intermediate activities are documented in physical as well as in photos.

The workshop will be facilitated by two convenors

1. Convenor 1 (Shagun Bajpai) will focus on the presentation and delivering the instructions to the group.
2. Convenor 2 (Saksham Panda) will facilitate and guide the group with activities and ensure work progress in time.

Space requirements

1. Room with tables and chairs where one large group can sit and discuss.
2. A projector for delivering presentations.
3. Five soft boards/ white boards for smaller groups to write and discuss.
4. Stationery- Pens and markers, A4/A3 blank white sheets, and Sticky notes.

References

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Convenors bio:

Saksham Panda: Saksham is a Service designer focusing on end-to-end experiences, services, and systems. He mainly works at the intersection of design, research, and strategy. His diversified background in engineering, product design, social innovation, and now service design drives him to explore and keep innovating for a better future.

Shagun Bajpai: Shagun is a User Experience Researcher bringing meaningful outcomes by translating insights into actionable design directions. Her work ranges from craft communities to Artificial intelligence. Her deep understanding of human behavior and passion for design-led businesses allow her to draw interconnections among cultures, innovative businesses, and evolving technology.