

Introduction

The Internet of Things is an emerging paradigm that envisions products to become more and more connected, automated and collaborating in systems. This honours project is called "Designing with Things: Enabling Objects to Participate in the Design Process" and explores one potential approach to deal with this new situation.

Research aim

This study aims to explore and develop an approach that enables objects to tell their stories and in that way provide valuable information on their use to designers.

Method

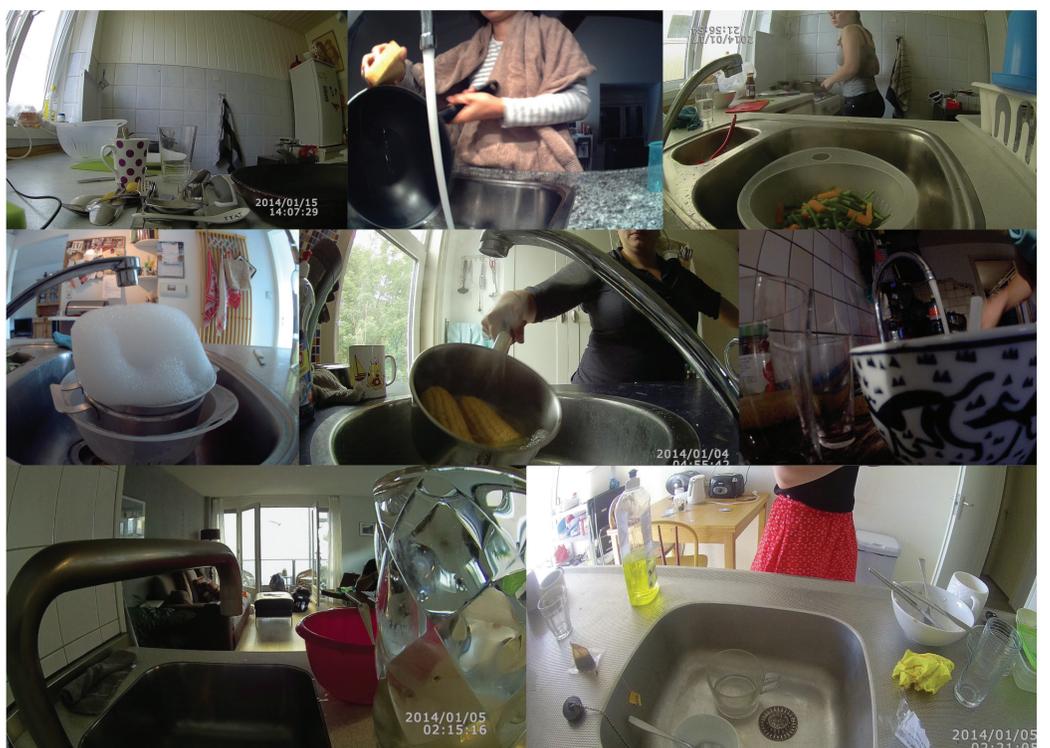
To obtain the understanding of the potential value of the object persona method in the design process, a workshop with four professional designers was setup to let them experience and evaluate making an object persona and using it for design.



Using object personas for a new perspective on design

Data collection

Life-logging cameras were installed on the three different products belonging to the cleaning practice: a vacuum cleaner, detergent and a sink. In order to get enough insights on each product, the camera gathered data for five days on each product and was then moved to the next product in 10 different households.



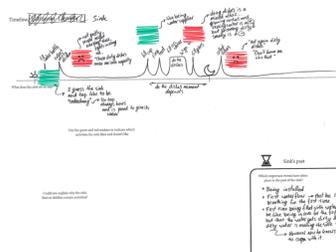
Results

Three aspects were found to be of influence in using object personas.

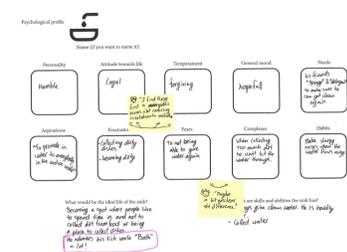
Notion of context: The participants considered the object persona to be influenced by the space around the object, and thus could not see the object having certain characteristics, wants and needs merely on itself.

Hard to let go of the user: The results show that the designers kept thinking about the user and had difficulty to take the object as the center of design. The designers experienced the absence of the user in this research to be quite uncomfortable.

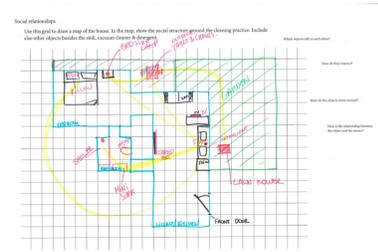
Placement in the design practice: For this approach to develop further, the HCI community might need to think more about the purpose of thing-centered design and how the human, context and thing perspective can be complemented in design. For example Giaccardi et al (2016) have started the discussion on how to make the role of things in design more equal to the role of humans. This study on object personas as a thing-centered tool provokes this discussion further and provides openings for further research on placing thing-centered design in current approaches.



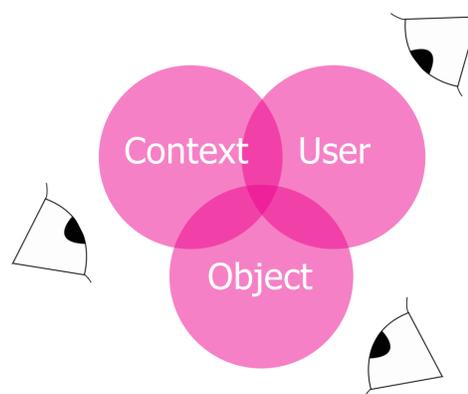
The timeline shows which moments the object goes through and the corresponding emotions.



The psychological profile shows the characteristics and dreams of the object.



The social map allowed the participants to think about the relationships of the objects in the house.



The purpose of things-centered design is not to let go of the user, but just to provide designers with approaches to get inspired and look at a design context from a novel perspective.

Geertje Slingerland
 Designing with Things - enabling objects to participate in the design process
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 Design for Interaction

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Coaches Prof. Dr. Elisa Giaccardi (TU Delft)
 Nazli Cila (Hogeschool van Amsterdam)

