

Cultures of mending: barriers and facilitating conditions

Workshop organisers

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Workshop description

Objective

The main objective of this workshop is to explore the social, cultural and economic conditions that facilitate repairing practice, as well as the barriers to the embedding of those practices in sustainable repair cultures. Discussion will consider the co-production of mending by individual and collective human and non-human agencies, and consider the durability of both the object and the value(s) and meaning(s) associated with it. In conjunction with practitioners, activists, and thinkers from diverse disciplinary background we seek to explore the practices and knowledge on the heart of mending culture; the meanings created and drawn upon; how such a culture is – or could be – produced and scaled up; and the most significant barriers to and facilitators of its long-term sustainability.

Methodology

The session will begin with short presentations by participants, who will have been invited to respond to three key guiding questions in advance of the workshop. These questions are:

1. What does 'repair' mean in the context of your research?
2. What are the implications or impacts of these acts/practices in the research setting?
3. How is repair facilitated or obstructed in the context of your research?

The presentations will be followed by facilitated discussion around the question: What can we take from these scenarios - in terms of outputs, learnings or experiences - to facilitate and consolidate cultures of repair?

Expected topics of presentations and discussion include the role of competences and skills; crafts and repair business; the politics of repair; design as a barrier and a trigger for repair; the influence of infrastructure availability; cultural and geographical determinants; resource scarcity as a trigger for repair.

Expected outcome

The main outcome of the workshop will be a formal 'working paper' exploring the barriers that inhibit the embedding of mending cultures, and the triggers and facilitating conditions of mending practices. The 'working paper' will include a 'map' of the places where mending is practised according to the workshop participants. The locations and scales at which they operate (e.g. individual products, business, politics), and connections between them (e.g. dependence, reciprocity, exclusion) will be highlighted. The paper will speak directly to design and production professionals, policy makers, academics and other third parties concerned with the contemporary situation and future of repair practice.

The 'working paper' will be produced by the organisers after the workshop, drawing directly on the roundtable discussion.

The cultures of mending workshop will be complemented by an online discussion forum hosted on the MEND*RS website (<http://mendrs.net>), based on 500-word discussion pieces and brief position papers written by workshop participants. These will feed into the 'working paper'.

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Policies for Longevity

Workshop organiser

Tim Cooper, Nottingham Trent University, UK

Workshop description

Objective

The aim is to consider the barriers to increased product longevity and explore the potential for public policy to overcome them.

Methodology

Tim Cooper will set the context and provide an overview of the many policy options, drawing upon a chapter entitled 'Policies for Longevity' in his edited collection *Longer Lasting Products* (Gower, 2010). The workshop will be structured around three approaches to policy: market-based, regulatory and voluntary instruments. Discussion will be led by a panel which will include:

Dr Catherine Cherry - School of Psychology, Cardiff University

Dr Naomi Braithwaite - Research Fellow in Product Lifetimes, Nottingham Trent University

Alan Crisp - Head of Product Design, Nottingham Trent University

Dr Matthew Watkins - Senior Lecturer, Nottingham Trent University

Sarah Clayton - Head of Products and Services, WRAP.

Examples of policy areas to be considered are suggested below, but workshop participants are encouraged to bring their own ideas for discussion. Both national and international perspectives will be covered.

Market-based instruments: Green fiscal reform is often considered an important strategy for a sustainable economy. Making materials more expensive and labour cheaper could change market dynamics such that repairing and upgrading products would become less unattractive in relation to replacement. Would removing VAT encourage repair, or would reducing national insurance and other taxes on labour be more effective?

Regulatory instruments: Is legislation needed to prevent products or components designed for unacceptable short life-spans from being placed on the market? The EU Eco Design Directive, for example, could be used to set standards relating to product lifetimes as well as energy efficiency. While industry often favours deregulation, some companies prefer the clarity and certainty that mandatory minimum standards bring about. Could requiring longer guarantees act as a lever to improve product quality? If so, could standardisation of components lower repair and maintenance costs, thereby benefitting producers and consumers alike?

Voluntary instruments: Consumers evidently want more information in order to identify products that have been designed for longer life-spans than the norm. To

what extent could labelling in some form influence their behaviour? Should companies offer to provide the technical information necessary to identify and replace faulty parts to community groups and other social innovators who seek to extend the life-span of faulty products?

The discussions will be recorded and help to shape a Green Alliance policy seminar to be held in London in the coming year. Potential research topics will also be identified, with a view to developing collaborative bids for funding.

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Integrating design for clothing longevity

Workshop organisers

Angharad McLaren, Research Fellow in Design for Clothing Longevity, Nottingham Trent University, UK

Stella Claxton, Senior Lecturer in Fashion Marketing, Management & Communication, Nottingham Trent University, UK

Professor Becky Earley, Professor of Sustainable Textile and Fashion Design, University of the Arts London, UK

Workshop description

Key research question: How can design strategies for clothing longevity be placed at the heart of the clothing industry?

The DEFRA funded Clothing Longevity project at NTU aims to explore the technical, behavioural and strategic obstacles to implementing innovative and sustainable product development processes that could extend clothing lifetimes. It seeks to identify the knowledge, skills, processes and infrastructure that could support wider adoption of design for longer lasting garments.

Design strategies to support this are being identified through academic research into both the technical and social aspects of garment longevity, such as increasing the durability of garment construction, creating adaptable garments for changing body shapes or low wash options (Laitala & Boks, 2012; Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011). The Textiles Environment Design (TED) centre at Chelsea College of Art supports designers in taking a systems thinking approach to sustainable fashion and textile design, considering the production, use and end-of-life phases of products. It has also been recognised that design for longevity should be considered as an essential element of the entire fashion design system (Goworek et al., 2013), playing a role in business strategy, marketing practices, and testing procedures.

In smaller fashion companies, the creative control of designers leading their own brand has been identified as a key factor in the successful integration of this strategic systems level thinking to promote sustainability and lead to longer lasting clothes (see for example: Niinimäki & Aako, 2014; Miller & Moultrie, 2013). However, significant barriers have been identified in achieving integration within the complexities of the global fashion industry. From small local brands to multi-national high street giants, what role can academic research play in further exploring and overcoming these barriers, better understanding and explicating the role of practice based design knowledge, and ultimately placing design strategies for clothing longevity at the heart of the fashion design industry. The outcomes of the workshop will help to understand the links between these different areas to propose where the focus of new collaborative research should lie.

Methodology

The workshop will be chaired by **Dr Lynn Oxborrow** Project Manager of the Design for Clothing Longevity Project at Nottingham Trent University, with an invited panel consisting of:

Professor Becky Earley, *Professor in Sustainable Textile and Fashion Design, University of the Arts London; and Director of the University's Textile Futures Research Centre (TFRC), UK.*

Sass Brown, *Acting Associate Dean School of Art and Design, Fashion Institute of Technology, USA.*

Dr Mark Sumner, *Sustainability, Retail & Fashion Lecturer, University of Leeds, UK.*

Dr Alison Gwilt, *Reader, Fashion & Sustainability, Art and Design Research Centre (ADRC), Sheffield Hallam University, UK.*

Dr Vanessa Brown, *Senior Lecturer in Design and Visual Culture, Nottingham Trent University, UK.*

Following a panel discussion, panel members will facilitate discussion around each of the following themes¹:

Theme 1: The Agency of Design

- What are the decisions a textile and fashion designer makes (when working within a fashion company), and what capacity do they have in influencing the longevity of the garments they design?
- What other elements in a company impact upon design for clothing longevity e.g. buyers, technologists, commercial drivers, sustainability/ CSR policies?
- Where does the control lie? What is the agency of design in the clothing industry?
- What changes need to be made in order to design for longer lasting clothes?
- What tacit knowledge is employed in a designers decisions? How can this tacit knowledge be explicated to benefit clothing longevity e.g. understanding yarn/ fibre qualities and textile structures that will be most resistant to pilling?

Theme 2: Consumer Research and Design

- What are consumers' attitudes to and expectations of clothing lifetimes? What do we know? What do we need to know?
- Is a user-centred design approach viable in the fashion industry – how can better understanding of user needs, wants and desires lead the design of longer lasting clothes?
- Can garments be designed to change consumer behaviour and extend the life of clothes?

¹These questions will be developed in line with emerging findings from the Clothing Longevity project and in consultation with the expert panel. There will also be space for delegates to contribute their own questions.

- What do we lose if clothes last longer? How can it be replaced?

Theme 3: Business, Branding and Marketing

- How can design for clothing longevity be integrated into industry as a business strategy? Can reduced consumption be encouraged while maintaining a profitable business?
- What alternative business models would support longer clothing lifetimes?
- What marketing practices would help to promote, encourage and support longer lasting clothes?

Theme 4: Critical Path Management

- Can the product development, buying and production management processes be managed more effectively or in a different way to enable design and testing for longer clothing lifetimes?
- Can technology be better utilised to reduce lead times at various stages of the process?
- How can consideration of the potential lifetime of a product be integrated into quality assurance and testing procedures?

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Knowledge exchange for product longevity

Workshop organisers

Angharad McLaren, Research Fellow in Design for Clothing Longevity & Lecturer in Textile Design, Nottingham Trent University, UK

Stella Claxton, Senior Lecturer in Fashion Marketing, Management & Communication, Nottingham Trent University, UK

Dr Natalie McCreesh, Lecturer in Fashion Industry, The University of Huddersfield, UK

Dr Chris Jones, Lecturer in Social and Environmental Psychology, The University of Sheffield, UK

Workshop description

Knowledge Exchange is described as a two-way flow of ideas between academia and research users in business, public and the third sectors, encompassing complex and diverse activities which can deliver economic, societal and cultural benefits (RCUK, 2015). Of particular benefit in areas of applied and user-inspired research, it offers the opportunity to gain insights, test practical applications of research and gain knowledge of practical problems useful for research and teaching through interacting externally on a wide range of people based, problem solving and community based activities (Abreu et al., 2009). With transformative potential, it can make scholarly research lively, dynamic and meaningful to a wider audience:

"By creating this dialogue, research can more effectively influence policy and practice, thereby maximising its potential impact on the economy and wider society." (ESRC)

This is especially important in the field of design and research for product longevity, to ensure measures have a positive sustainable influence. The workshop will focus on Knowledge Exchange through collaborative research to support design for product longevity, with the aim of identifying interactions with industry, public and third sector organisations that could provide reciprocal knowledge benefits in overcoming major industry and consumer barriers to extending the life of products.

Methodology

The workshop will begin with a presentation of the Trading Approaches to Nurturing Sustainable consumption in Fashion and Energy Retail (TRANSFER) project recently undertaken at The University of Sheffield. This research focussed on the challenges of reducing consumption whilst maintaining growth by facilitating Knowledge Exchange between the fashion and energy industries and engaging consumers through participatory activities (see project outline below).

The project's knowledge exchange aims will be presented, reflecting upon fostering a more complete understanding of how initiatives in both sectors can be successfully designed and implemented in order to have maximum impact on the behaviour of consumers (e.g. energy use and clothing purchase practices).

This presentation will be followed by group ideation sessions to generate ideas for future knowledge exchange research projects through collaborative multi-disciplinary research to support design for product longevity. Key barriers and knowledge gaps in the field will be used to structure idea generation, with groups undertaking three activities:

- **Collective Perspectives:** What is the background knowledge and understanding of the group? Where do they feel the key issues lie?
- **Concept Mapping:** Groups will cluster around key issues they feel most passionate about and develop ideas for KE in this area, using creative ideation methods and a canvas framework developed from ESRC Knowledge Exchange tool kit to define the purpose, identify potential partners and consider research users' needs.
- **Plenary Session:** Groups will share key ideas resulting from the workshop.

Participants will learn about principles of Knowledge Exchange, hear about research led by Knowledge Exchange principles in practice, and generate ideas for potential future Knowledge Exchange projects to support their area of product lifetime research. It would be of interest to conference participants from a wide range of backgrounds to develop ideas, network and contribute to collaborative research proposals.

TRANSFER Project Outline

The Trading Approaches to Nurturing Sustainable consumption in Fashion and Energy Retail (TRANSFER) knowledge exchange project was established to facilitate knowledge exchange between energy and fashion retailers regarding the promotion of sustainable consumption. Energy and fashion retailers face the common challenge of encouraging the reduced consumption of a saleable product in order to promote sustainability and conform to existing and emerging legislation, while simultaneously maintaining growth and financial prosperity. The project is led by **Dr Natalie McCreesh**, Lecturer in Fashion Industry, University of Huddersfield and **Dr Chris Jones**, Lecturer in Social and Environmental Psychology, The University of Sheffield.

The aims of this research were twofold:

- To bring together representatives of the energy and fashion retail sectors, with academic experts in psychology, management and fashion, to exchange best practice around the promotion of sustainable consumption to consumers; and
- To investigate how efforts to promote sustainable consumption within these sectors is received and responded to by consumers.

Please visit <http://www.shef.ac.uk/cees/projects> for more information.

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Reasons why drivers scrap cars and the implication for vehicle longevity

Workshop organiser

Dr John G Rogers, Research Fellow, University of Bath, UK.

Workshop description

There is evidence that cars should last 180,000 miles but most are scrapped before that. The decision to scrap a car appears to take place coincidentally with the market price of the car drops to below 10% of its new value. It is not clear if it is the low value that dissuades owners from repairing older cars or if it is the lack of a market for older cars that causes them to be scrapped. There is very little information in the literature on car scrappage with a general assumption that they wear out (Kagawa, 2013), which as they are repairable is normally understood that they are uneconomic to repair. However the situation may be more complex (Nieuwenhuis, 2008), as demonstrated by the difference in the fraction of cars over ten years old in similar countries (Belgium 27.6% and Demark 40.8%) (ANFAC, 2013). If we want drivers to use their cars for longer we need to understand the reasons why they scrap them.

It is likely that the decision to scrap a car is influenced by more than one factor. Up to know there is little literature on the reasons why people scrap cars. Thus, the object of the workshop is to identify the likely factors and try and estimate the relative frequency of incidence where the factor plays a significant role in the decision to scrap a vehicle.

Methodology

A short presentation will be given using MOT and car registration data and information from (Rogers & Rodrigues, 2015; Rogers et al., 2015) to show that the scrappage rate does not indicate an age limit and that the apparent distance limit is seldom reached.

The participants will then be asked to group into tables. They will be given a speculative list of possible factors that may influence an owner to scrap a vehicle. Through facilitation, participants will be prompt to mention other possible factors that were not considered in the following list.

- cost more to repair than vehicle worth
- has been unreliable in the past
- getting old / high millage so likely to become unreliable in near future
- can't afford to fix it
- too much trouble to sell it as a running car
- too costly to market

- looking tatty / dated
- poor image
- partner / family pressure
- poor performance compare to newer models
- poor economy compared to newer models
- lower level of accessories compared to newer models
- niggling minor faults
- good deal on replacement vehicle – car scrappage / minimum part exchange price schemes

After, participants will be asked to consider each factor and estimate from their personal experience how common that they thought the factor would influence the decision to scrap a vehicle would be. Each factor should be ranked as being considered almost always (>90%), frequently (90% - 65%), sometimes (65% - 35%), rarely (35% - 10%), almost never (<10%). Participants will then be asked to see what could be done to address some of these factors to encourage drivers to keep their cars longer.

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Rethinking waste

Workshop organisers

Tristan Schultz, Lecturer in Visual Communication Design and Design Futures, Griffith University, Aus.

Bec Barnett, Researcher, Griffith University, Aus.

Workshop description

Discussions surrounding the lifetimes of designed 'things' often focus on emotionally durable design, sustainable consumption and design for disassembly all of which fail to fully recognise that the *'waste problem is one of thought and cultural categorisation rather than of materiality'* (Fry & Willis, 1996. p7).

When this is recognised, the question becomes about how can we design emotionally durable products, how products can be disassembled at the end of their lifetime, and how design can encourage practices of repair, care and bricolage. These questions are still found in industrialising and semi-industrialised countries, but increasingly absent in industrialised ones (Strasser, 1999). The objective of this workshop is to provide the opportunity to rethink waste and begin to design in a way that enables this rethinking, by redirecting our current unsustainable trajectories.

Methodology

Participants will be encouraged to explore in more detail the contribution that design has made to selected waste streams, through a process of Cognitive Redirective Mapping (see figure 1). Cognitive Redirective Mapping takes into account the effects of the past on the present and the future that is gathering and coming towards us, as well as the use of design fictions. Waste streams will be traced forward to consider how they will be in the future, as we are increasingly threatened by a changing climate. Alternative futures scenarios will be imagined using what the participants have learnt about the current directionality of waste. Participants will work together in a group to map the histories, present and futures of waste and to develop preferred future scenarios.

The role of longevity will be explored throughout this process in a number of ways. The nature of the cognitive redirective mapping method thinks, in its reflection on the past, present and future in its complexity, in relation to time and longevity. This manifests illustratively, on paper, a relation to longevity that remains at the forefront of participants' minds. Furthermore, in looking to the past the cognitive redirective mapping process will look at how human relationships to material things have changed overtime, how historically there were enduring relationships to material things and in what form these relationships were present. Contrasted with today and the absence of longevity in our relationships with 'things' the cognitive redirective mapping process will look at the future that this behaviour is

taking us towards and, in turn, alternative future scenarios where longevity of 'things' is once again valued.

Participants will finish the workshop with a comprehension of the gaps between the way we currently think about waste and the way we need to think about waste if we are to have a future with a future. From this position participants will be able to begin to develop designs that are able to fill this gap redirecting the way we think about waste. These designs will consider the role of longevity in creating this change. Beyond this, participants will walk away with a process of design thinking-in-action that provides the opportunity for them to deal with increasingly complex social matrices and communicate this effectively to designers and non-designers. The workshop and outcomes will be documented and developed into a paper submitted to journals such as Design Philosophy Papers.

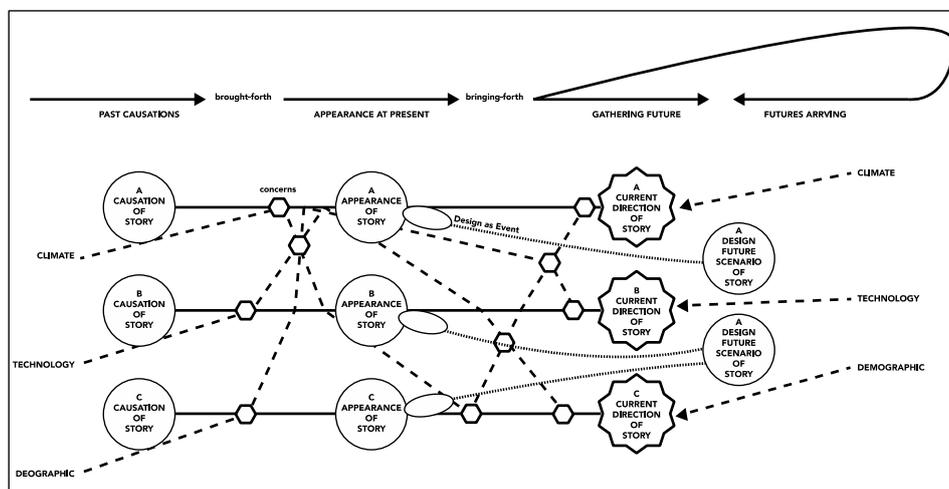


Figure 1 Cognitive Redirective Mapping technique (Schultz, 2015)

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