MODERATING 'DIGITAL OBESITY' THROUGH DESIGN
Preventing digital social greed in real-life social contex.

DHM310 - Constructive Design Research - Virginia Patricia Rispoli - S152855 - RESEARCH POSTER

01. The Research Question

Nowadays the interaction that occurs with technology is increasing more and more. You live with the feeling that technology is essential although it is not strictly necessary. By analyzing this phenomenon we see that the digital lives should lead to freedom and happiness, but we are simply becoming immobilized by the sheer amount of content and the fear of being off-line.
'Digital Obesity' [1] is the excessive use of social media. With a showroom approach [2] was analyzed the debate on the topic of digital obesity and the level of greed in personal phone usage in a social setting.
After a first experiment, the reactions obtained were taken into consideration for the creation of the new concept. Through the exaggeration of a detail we have created a project for that.[3]
The tactic used to spark the debate was to compare the audience directly with their addiction. To make the public aware of the consequences of what they have suggested, an intervention was organized during a student drink. The context in which it is shown the product becomes a showroom, where to provoke people to think about the issue. The public becomes a fundamental part of the concept.

Figures 1, 2: The social context and the misuse of our package.

02. The Design

Figures 3, 4, 5: The phone packages and the seal to close the package.

According to a quote found in the recordings made during a previous experiment ("*so it is like a smoking zone, but for phones*") a package for phones was designed, where to put the phone and forget about it until the end of the event in a social context.
The connection between the concept and the package of cigarettes has been chosen to maintain the provocative approach to the project. In this experiment the role of the prototype [4] was crucial, users found themselves confronted with an object immediately recognizable, where the only rule was to put the phone inside the box and enjoy time with friends.
To overcome the problem of different models of phones existing on the market different sized packages were designed to provide a suitable size for every phone. A seal to close the package was added in the making process of the concept: in this way, once the user opens his package, the seal is broken, and everyone can see that the package was opened.

03. The Data Collection & Analysis

The question with which it was carried out the work was 'how people will react?'. In order to analyze the tensions created around the project during the experiment, the team played the role of a Social-Media-Collective. Each member of the group gave the package to the people present, explaining them the concept. Using the method of intervention/experimet, the phone package was brought in the place of the debate. The Help Spot was a meeting point where to ask for explanations and where to have new packages for phone-addicted friends, where the audience could express ideas and opinions and share the experience of the use of the package with the group.
Through videos, audio-recordings and pictures of the experiment, the next analysis was brought into depht: the results of this action are interesting hint to refer to, in order to change the situation that the team was critical about.
To conclude, the research has provided the knowledge that nowadays the phone is a vehicle to start a conversation, to enrich a story with visual details and to feel more confident of the issues we are talking about, having the opportunity to show evidence immediate about the topics of the conversation.
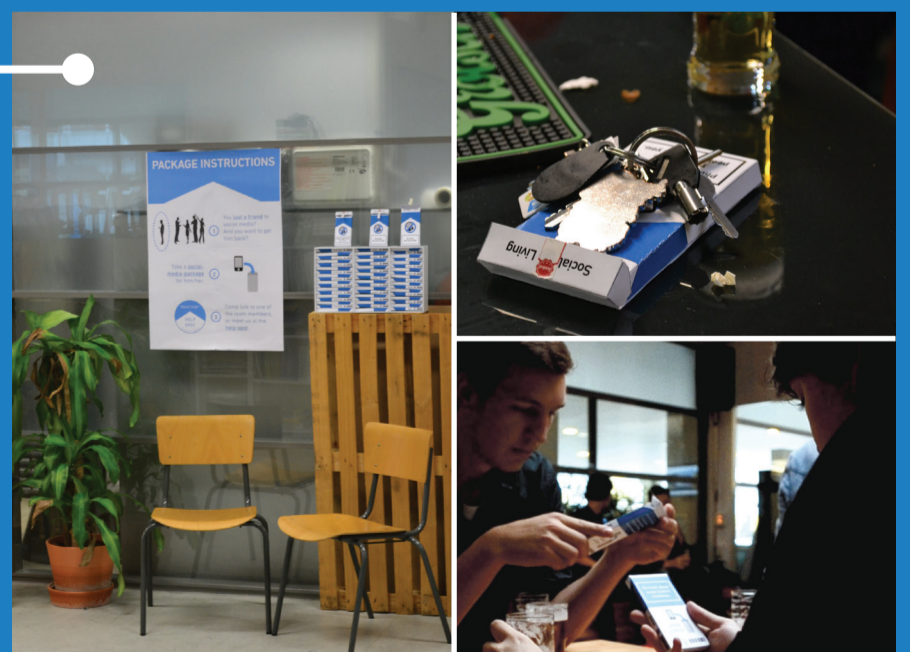

Figure 6: The "Help Spot" designed zone.
Figures 7, 8: How the audience reacted to the package.

References
[1] http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/digital-obesity-high-tech-health
[2] Koskinen, I. (2011). Design research through practice from the lab, field, and showroom. Waltham, MA: Morgan Kaufmann.
[3] Gaver, B. (2002) Presentation about Cultural Probes. Presentation, November, 2002, UIAH, Helsinki, Available at http://smart.uiah.fi/luotain/pdf/probes-seminar/GaverPROBES.pdf
[4] Wensveen, Stephan and Matthews, Ben (2014). Prototypes and prototyping in design research. In Paul A.Rodgers and Joyce Yee (Ed.), Routledge Companion to Design Research (pp. 262-276) London: Routledge