The personal cardset – a designer-centered tool for sharing insights from user studies

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Abstract. This poster presents a tool for presenting user experience information to designers, by guiding them in exploring, interpreting, and using users’ stories about their experience.

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1. Introduction

Generative participatory design techniques produce a wealth of user experience information by eliciting them to tell stories and explanations around product use. Written reports, the traditional means of reporting research, are not an effective means for communicating the outcomes to designers. The personal cardset was developed to overcome this. It triggers designers to explore and interpret the user data themselves, aided by suggestive guidance from the user researcher. In this poster we describe the cards and the ways design teams used them in a small experimental study [1].

2. Form of the cardset

The set represents each participating user through a card. The back of the card provides the transcript of that participant during the session. Themes addressed across participants are indicated by colouring. Below, visual associative ‘thumbnails’ represent anecdotes and explanations provided in the text, and encourage readers to search common patterns between the stories.

Figure 1. Generative tools group session, and the resulting cardset.

2. Form of the cardset

The front of the card uses summarizing devices for relating, selecting, and sorting. The participant is summarized by a (fictive) picture and name, a title quote and visual and verbal excerpts from his contribution. Interpretations from the researcher are presented through suggestive diagrams (Figure 3). For example, in the ‘shaving experience’ study, the circular diagrams indicate dimensions such as whether the motivations for shaving given by this participant referred to ‘social duty’ or ‘own pleasure’. The front side provides recognition and comparison at-a-glance.

Both sides of all cards are laminated and contain generous white space. The felt tip pens and sponge (see Figure 1) are included to encourage annotation and diagramming by readers.

Figure 2. Narrative side.

Figure 3. Summary side.
3. Designers using the cardset

We observed teams of designers using the cards during concept generation of new shaving products. Findings showed that designers used the cards in a variety of ways, making lavish use of the tabletop for laying out and comparing. The suggestive diagrams were used extensively, but little use was made of the felt-tip markers.

Figure 4. Collaborative organizing for overview, finding contrasts and similarities.

Figure 5. Sorting and comparing cards.

4. Conclusion

The cardset provides an effective means of giving designers access to (interpretations of) user data in an inspirational way. In future research we will focus on further developing user experience communication tools.

References