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Creative Technology

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Reflection of Week 1

When it comes to technology, I always recognise it as something that some electronic elements embedded in a small green dull circuit board which doesn't fascinate me at all. It's also my misunderstanding that these kind of things are only appeared on engineer students' courses which our art school student don't have to tackle with. Fortunately, we have got Jon Rogers and Martin Skelly with us in this module, who made technology creative and funny to learn, overwhelming my former recognition of it.

I have not expected that the first thing Jon taught us was branding ourselves, but it turned out to matter significantly. The surroundings, tidiness, atmosphere are all essential elements influencing our abilities of creativity and innovation. After several brainstorming, we picked up "HUBMO" as our studio name, which means a space of creation. I really like this because it can be taken apart into "hub" and "mo", seems like our studio is a hub of all the inspiration, innovation and creation sparking and sharing all the time.

To get started with Arduino, we learned several examples to use Arduino board to controlled a LED or a buzzer with the help of Sean, who taught us the foundation knowledge of how Arduino works. It's really funny playing with such technologic elements, especially making things controlled even by us who have little knowledge of programming, thanks to Arduino which gives us such a platform to prototype our ideas. However, the following days turned out to be very intensive engaging with the Arduino kit under the ambitious aim of having 50 sketches by this week.

The theme "CONNECTED HOME" which Jon asked us to explore was not unfamiliar to us. However, it's also difficult to consider from both biggest and tiniest view to come up with some

inspirations and innovations. Brainstorms were used to give “home” a definition and a direction for us to dig deeply. Instead of traditional family home, my group explored the shared home such as flat or hostel. We listed the daily things in our ordinary life and conflicts remained to solve. That’s where my inspirations came from. With the knowledge acquired so far, I came up with several ideas tackling with the information transition between flatmates including sounding waste bin which can remind flatmates cleaning it based on a light sensor and buzzer, a quiet pillow that can let others know you are sleeping or not and so on. What I want to achieve was that connecting our every day interactions with our surroundings with the communication of information. Finally I ended up with a singing curtain that will sing a melody every time when you open it in the morning and close it at night, seems like it was saying “good morning” and “good night” to you.

At the end of week, we had several teachers and PhD students come to our studio to talk to us with what we had done so far. I spoke to them with my singing curtain and singing zipper idea. Surprisingly, they gave me some very useful ideas to proceed my prototype. They suggested me to add more interaction with people and social connectivity in the final form of product. Such as we can use the zipper to express our mood to others or let the curtain broadcast the news of your friends from facebook, which makes the interaction more emotional.

The first week oriented me in the right direction of which way I am going to. Kickstarting the work with Arduino made me think about the relationship between technology and design in the Internet of Things, especially in the scenario of connected home, where technology plays an amazing role, but where people are in charge and have ownership.