A Critical Review of Kolko, 2017, The Divisiveness of design thinking, ACM Interactions.

Introduction

Kolko explored the relations between value and working of design thinking, by discussing necessary abilities and design thinking that designers and design companies are benefited for. This critical review will recap Kolko's article and evaluate some splits of values of design thinking which author talked.

Summary

Kolko describes his exploration of views of design-thinking value by seven sections. In the first section, he introduces the "bottom-up" model can encourage different people, who are related to the same design process, to be able to participate together. In the second section, Kolko emphases the "problem solving" is an important skill to design a better-quality product. In the third section, he describes the testing development from the 70s to 80s and shows the importance of testing with real reactions which got from real people. In the fourth section, he mentions that use design thinking skills with a large of life experiences can help designers make innovations. In the fifth section, he talks that designers need personal views and use design thinking flexibly, not just do design thinking. In the sixth section, he uses some critiques from some sources and mentions people need to treat design thinking as a tool to help customers' needs, instead of using design thinking as a consulting business. In the last section, he presents his confidence in the better development of designing thinking.

Evaluation

In this article, the author has sufficiently explored the divisiveness of design thinking by histories, quotations and self-view. In the first section, he mentioned the “designers need humility” that is a necessary skill, the following sections are also related to helping readers gain empathise and favourable impression from customers. These sections can be summarised by Dam and Siang’s 5 stages of design thinking: empathise, find a problem, ideate, prototype and test [1]. In the PP2 course, Kolko’s view on design thinking gives a comprehensive understanding and brings the 5 stages framework to the real examples. During the “making sense of world” section, he describes modelling a problem needs to be treated as an optimisation. This is interesting, during the following PP2 project, we can try to use this idea. Hacker, Sachse and Schroda said, for engineering product, using an optimised procedure in design thinking can result in a reasonable working period and better sub-results [2]. Since faults are easily happened in producing engineering products, a function-oriented approach can save a lot of time [2], as Kolko discussed in the fifth section, designers need experiences, this is a good strategy to train people in finding and fixing solutions quickly. During the last section, either for consultation or companies who adopt design thinking, the values of it are giant. It is the good sign that means the design thinking is powerful in influence. This article uses the first six sections to show the design thinking is an essential skill for every designer, the advantages of design thinking are convincible; every chapter is related to each other. The author also shows his conclusions of value split and trust in design thinking in the final part.

Conclusion

In sum, this is a convincible article for people who are in designing or engineering fields. Even the design thinking is used to be a consultation services, but it is still good to use.

References

[1] Rikke Dam and T. Siang, "5 Stages in the Design Thinking Process," 2018. The Interaction Design Foundation

[2] W. Hacker, P. Sachse, and F. Schroda, "Design Thinking - Possible Ways to Successful Solutions in Product Development," in *Designers*, London, 1998, pp. 205-216: Springer London.