**Response to**

**‘Co-experience: user experience as interaction’**

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(1 May 2022)

“Co-experience: user experience as interaction”, by Katja Battarbee and Ilpo Koskinen, addresses a missing perspective that occurs in the existing approaches to user experience design (UX). The new perspective calls co-experience is proposed to improve the existing UX design. Co-experience advised designers should also focus on studying user experience instead of solely focusing on sociology, individual measurement, or existing framework. “emphatic understanding rather than a factual explanation” (Segal and Fulton Suri 1997, Koskinen et al. 2003)

1. **Three existing approaches of user experience design:**

I believe the main point that the authors are trying to deliver is the lack of experiences created together while focusing on individual experiences’ measurement. The three approaches that the author mention are the measuring approach, the empathic approach, and the pragmatist approach.

* The measuring approach is built on the theory that experiences can be measured via emotional reactions and is mainly used in the development & testing. This method uses human body reactions (chemical reactions and electrical reactions) to experience in terms of emotion. However, a standard evaluation system for user experience does not exist with this approach. (Battarbee and Koskinen 2004)
* The empathic approach’s goal is to understand the user’s desire experiences and design the concepts and products to support them. This requires the designers to observe and feel for the user (Makela and Fulton Suri 2001, Kankainen 2002). The goal of this approach is to inspire designers rather than create creating measurable test-case (Battarbee and Koskinen 2004)
* The pragmatist approach defines subconscious experiences are fluent automatic and fully learned; cognitive experiences require effort, focus, and concentration (Battarbee and Koskinen 2004). I agree with this statement since humans tend to react to what they used to do automatically. For example, the back and forward button on the web browser (on pc or laptop) is stay on the top left corner (Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge) of the navigation bar. If I design a new version of Edge and shift the button anywhere else, this will frustrate all my users. Humans are used to what they used to do, and I believe inconsistent in design is not a good idea.

In my experience, the three approaches have their strengths and weakness. Also, they are mostly applied for measuring individual experiences and lacking measuring the reactions of group interaction.

After the measurement of the individual and generating measurement data, designers (or their data analyst team) may use some methods (outlier, average…) to analyze their data and come up with design decisions. However, measuring the individual and analyzing their data will be different from group experiences. A good example of this is when I decide to buy my first iPhone. I used to refer to cheap phones over expensive ones. I used to believe the phone is mainly used for communication but not anything else. I shop and work using pc or laptop. Due to advice from friends and family, I get exposed to iPhone7. The convenience, design, and security of the iPhone satisfy my expectation. Since then, I have never gone back to other phones.

It is hard for me to distinguish the major differences between the three approaches. I believe they are similar in some ways: measure emotion, reaction to deliver better usability. Therefore, I agree with the author that we can use the measuring approach and the empathic approach as special cases of the pragmatist approach.

1. **Introduce co-experience to the pragmatist perspective:**

According to Battarbee and Koskinen in 2004, co-experience means the change of an individual experience when he (or she) emerges with social interaction. I strongly agree with that statement. I would like to my experience with the iPhone product above. Also, the author claim that there are three types of migrations that generally happen, they are:

* *Lifting experiences:*

People believe some experiences are meaningful for them. Thus, they want to share their experiences with others. This is also a very good way of advertising. I would like to refer to my experience of building Luxe Nails Fort Wayne. We start with 5 people and no customers. In the beginning, due to a tight budget, we did not spend any money on advertising services, but I focused on customer relationship development (Battarbee and Koskinen 2004).

The lifting experience tends to emphasize and focus on experiences that are emotionally strong and stand out as memorable.

* Reciprocating experiences:

The recipients acknowledge a similar experience and agree that the experience is meaningful for them (Mauss 1980, Licoppe and Heurtin 2001, Koskinen et al. 2002, Ch. 7, Taylor and Harper 2002). In a community, this can largely impact the users’ experience. E.g., when iPhone fans share their positive experience in an Apple community, others will have more trust in iPhone.

In another example of the author, a young man sends the same picture (his picture) to 2 different persons because he received a positive response from the first receive. That is exactly what I will do when I get a compliment for something.

* Rejecting and ignoring experiences:

The author states that some good experiences for one may be rejected by others. In my option, this is very true. When I say something and get a rejection, I tend to ignore the receiver.

The author was successful make me feel co-experience plays an important role in UX Design. When people act together, “they come to create unpredictable situations where they must respond to each other actions creatively” (Battarbee and Koskinen 2004). In the life cycle of an experience, we need to pay attention to co-experience (cf. Rhea 1992).

I agree with the author that the study of co-experience is the study of social interaction on how people give meaning to things, and how they understand them in the group. Moreover, it should happen in the real world than in a laboratory.

The author also argues that roles and identities may be made relevant in interaction, but they are resources people can use rather than features that explain co-experience (Battarbee and Koskinen 2004).

1. **Conclusion:**

I strongly believe there is enough evidence to prove that co-experience is an important element that can attach to the pragmatist approach. We make the claim based on one simple observation: “people create, elaborate and evaluate experiences together with other people, and products may be involved as the subject, object or means of these interactions.”. Neglecting co-experience may limit the understanding of user experience. There are a few points of co-experience that the author mention and I also agree with them:

* “User Experience can only be understood in context”
* New technologies are adopted in social interaction where the norms for behavior are constantly developed and accepted
* Rules are never absolute or complete

(Battarbee and Koskinen 2004)

In conclusion, empathy is the key, and designers need to focus on creating an empathic understanding rather than a factual explanation (Segal and Fulton Suri 1997, Koskinen et al. 2003). Moreover, people’s interactions and collaborations are relevant for studying user experience.

Reference:

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