Reflection 2

What is 'good design' in a product?

Good Design

Good design – although a simple statement – is a very complex idea. Good design means that a product useful and perfoms its desired objectives. These objectives usuallly fall within these criteria: performance [being the fastest or most efficient at completing a task], accessibility, and usability. A well designed product can be a product that performs better than any other such as a fighter jet that costs billions but cannot be shot down, or a formula-1 car that is able to break records. But these are only good designs in a given contect. A fighter jet is a poor choice for a commercial airline, and a formula-1 car would not do well in off-road scenarios. When you design a product you must take into account the context in which it wil be used. For example a well designed power-tool is only useful to someone that knows how to use it; it was designed for a professional in mind. Much like professional software is covered in options and setting which a professional will find indispensable, a regular user would be overwhelmed and find the product completely unsable. To design a good product you must also create something that is properly functional. A hammer made out of a rock and a stick may be able to hammer a screw, but I doubt anyone would constitute it 'good design'; it would create unecessary difficultly and perhaps cause damage to the wood being used. A product must be designed to accomplish its task effectively without negatively affecting the user experience. Good design also takes into account both time and money costs. Spending billions and decades to develop a product may create the best pen of all time, but this may mean that the product is now obsolete, or that the cost to research and/or manufacture the components is so high that there is no way that enough units will be sold to recoup the costs. Certain companies will develop technolgies that will not immediately recoup their development costs

because they know that they can improve on this technolgy and make it mass-market. An example of this is the techology used by car companies in their Formula-1 vehicles. These cars costs millions to develop and produce, and they are not for commercial sale. Instead the technolgy used to make these cars go faster, operate longer, and run more efficiently is refined and improved on, and eventually is seen in the mass-market cars.

Design challenges

In the last two weeks, we have refined our goals for this project and worked out a design based of this criteria. We have decided to focus on making sure that the Gather-Ring is interactive with the visitors.