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## Our Symbiotic Life

Through their article “Our symbiotic life”, authors Budinger and Heidmann successfully provide to greater audiences the material necessary to meditate on the changes happening in our world both by the way they approach the subjects and the messages they vehiculate, without however providing strong scientific evidence.

While they are not providing solid scientific proof to accompany their scenarios, the use of prototyping compensate by bringing credibility to their remarks. Indeed, while the level of fidelity is not optimal, the prototypes bring a truthful representation of what could be created, while relying on simple, common knowledge of science which is accessible and relatable to many. Prototyping allows, like mentioned in *Prototyping for Physical and Digital Products*<sup>1</sup> to get user feedback to then make your project stronger and more reliable, while allowing a deeper understanding of the project to the researchers.

The authors successfully bring awareness to a greater audience on many levels throughout their project. A major problem in our society right now is the lack of access to scientific work that are able to bring people to another level of understanding of the problems currently affecting our world. Indeed, like mentioned in the article *Accurate science or accessible science in the media - why not both?*<sup>2</sup>, “Most scientific articles are aimed at an audience of other experts in highly specific fields, making them ill-suited for popular consumption”. These researches are often too complicated for the common public to understand or simply inaccessible to them, bringing them to think of huge problems such as climate change as inaccuracies. However, by use of design fiction, *Our Symbiotic Life* is able to remedy to this situation. Indeed, when using this kind of narratives, it is much easier for more people to visualize the problem and start thinking about it more seriously. Much like the Netflix series *Black Mirrors* tries to do, this research allows the reader to imagine what our world could become in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> “Prototyping for Physical and Digital Products,” O’Reilly Media, 2019, accessed on December 5th 2019, <https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/prototyping-for-physical/9781492042440/ch01.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Accurate science of accessible science in the Media - why not both?,” The Conversation, 2019, accessed on December 5th 2019, <http://theconversation.com/accurate-science-or-accessible-science-in-the-media-why-not-both-59871>

Throughout their article, the authors bring up many important subjects that media often lack to document and the scenarios they created are perfectly targeted and honest, which is often greatly appreciated. For example, in scenario number one, the authors agree that in the world they describe as a participatory society, the decision making process would be longer and they admit a bit further that their work doesn't provide the solutions to changing our current global mindset but simply try to provide the tools to initiate the reflexions about them. The scenarios are perfectly aimed to raise awareness on important subjects in relation to some of the greatest problems our society is facing: environment, bad political leaders, consumerism. The information provided by the media on these problems could be uncomplete or simply non existent, sometimes due to security or political reasons. For example consumerism is not really discussed in popular media, it might even be "encouraged" in a way because "advertising's 'central function is to create desires that previously did not exist'"<sup>3</sup> and it is everywhere in the media. By using realistic, interesting contexts like the four proposed scenarios, these problems seem more approachable. For example, in the third scenario "On Demand", the authors managed to have a critical approach to our environmental or consumption habits without being too accusatory to the population, therefore keeping them on their good side while still expressing their underlying message.

To conclude, *Our symbiotic life* is a truly clever approach to provide accessibility to greater audiences and vehiculate important messages. Using prototyping, design fiction and discussing subjects that are not mentioned enough in the medias are efficient ways to reach the viewers and spark their reflexions on important subjects. TV shows like Black Mirror are contributing to this rise of awareness, but could there be other ways to make it even more graspable for the audience such as, for example, immersive exhibitions in which the users can experience these problems in real time?

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<sup>3</sup> Dyer, "Advertising as communications," 1.

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