



Design impulses: artefacts, contexts and modes of activities

Mette Agger Eriksen
& Per Linde

Malmö University, SE
<mette.agger@k3.mah.se>

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abstract ° full paper

Design-artefacts are not interpreted in isolation but in various contexts and as part of various modes of activities. This paper aims to provide a broad methodological framework emphasizing careful combinations of artefact, context and mode of activity to create powerful design impulses in interdisciplinary it-design research teams. Critical evaluation of examples from the project *PalCom: A new perspective on ambient computing* serve to illustrate the effects and dynamics as well as challenges generated through such careful interventions. We focus on interdisciplinary and participatory design in the domain of hand surgery rehabilitation, which is used to inform and challenge the overall design of an open software architecture for 'palpable computing' within the PalCom project. Four typical design artefacts - 'Native' artefacts, Fieldcards, Mock-ups and Prototypes - and their use in different contexts as part of different modes of activities are discussed to draw out the design impulses they provided for the ongoing design work in the project. The paper concludes by discussing the possibilities and difficulties of providing constructive design impulses by carefully manipulating combinations of artefacts, contexts and modes of activities.

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