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Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

PDC Places: Landscapes of Participatory design in Ireland

Panel: Landscapes of Participatory design in Ireland

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Ireland has many established participatory design experts and enthusiasts, and a rich landscape of practice. PDC Place Ireland comprises of a series of panels, exhibitions, and workshops, and will bring together academics, research students and practitioners to explore current practices in participatory design enacted in Ireland and internationally. These events will map participatory research across a number of contemporary contexts including public health [5], architecture [6], policymaking [4], and disability [3].

CCS CONCEPTS • Human-centered computing, Interaction design, Interaction design process and methods, Participatory design

Additional Keywords and Phrases: Public Health, Policymaking, Disability, Sexual health, Architecture, Cultural Heritage

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1 Introduction

Our PDC Place brings together several strands of participatory design work within Ireland in recent years in order to collaboratively explore them with a critical lens: 1) mapping traditions of participation within disparate disciplines (e.g.,

cultural heritage [1], experience design [3, 7], architecture [6], public health [5], art [8], grassroot [2]); 2) critically interrogating the ways in which participatory design is done with participants with severe disabilities (e.g., low-functioning autism; late-stage dementia), as well as issues of selection and generalization biases of work only focused on high-functioning individuals; and 3) exploring the complex (socially, politically) area of sexual experience and sexual consent in light of increasing reports of sexual harassment and violence on Irish campuses (as well as worldwide). Finally, our PDC Place will spotlight student work from across Ireland, that adopt participatory methods to design with stakeholders or communities.

2 PDC Place Ireland activities

Below we outline the series of activities that will take place in the University of Limerick, Ireland from the 1-2nd of September.

2.1 Mapping traditions and practices of participation in participatory work in Ireland

In recent years, practices of public engagement and participation have gained interest in several different areas in Ireland. For instance, these practices include Public-Patient Involvement (PPI) in medical research [5], co-design in cultural heritage and architecture [1], community consultation for policy making [4], and the arts [8]. This panel gathers members from both academia and the professional and civic sectors to share their experiences and practical approaches to participation in various areas. We will work together, via a mapping exercise, to better understand the different traditions, practices, values and assumptions underlying our participatory work in an effort to move towards mutual learning, inclusion and cross-pollination.

2.2 Lost in Participation: exploring engagement with the invisible ones

Co-design with people living with dementia and people with autism spectrum disorders are both popular topics of concern for design researchers. However, we note that - within work with these populations - the vast majority of researchers work with people whose dementia is at an early stage, or whose diagnosis of ASD means that they are verbal and can function well in social situations. Moreover, work within these areas rarely notes that vast diversity of abilities and experiences exist within both conditions. At the same time, research on interventions, especially strengths-based approaches in both areas have promoted new possibilities for engagement even with low-functioning and advanced cases. How can these approaches help us to rethink what participation could be for people whose social and communicative abilities have waned or deteriorated? What can we learn from literature on interventions and strength-based approaches? How can a touch, a hum, or a sigh be considered as a participative act? This panel will invite experts in the area of design for autism and design for dementia to discuss this topic and generate new, critical questions for the claims we make within such design research.

2.3 Design for sexual health on university campuses: University of Limerick as a case example

This workshop will involve students in exploring design for sexual experience and sexual consent. We will base our design briefs on previous design research work surrounding consent education, and the results of recent surveys on sexual experiences across Ireland, but which reflect global trends. In Ireland, such surveys have highlighted concerns regarding sexual health and wellbeing and raised issues around sexual consent and have led to the design and running of educational workshops around affirmative consent. The workshop may involve (but not be limited to) a speculative design approach.

2.4 Exhibition of student works

Several of our students in final year projects across both University College Cork and University of Limerick, apply participatory design methods, tools and techniques in their design process. We will curate a selection of student works that fit PD and have the students attend the whole conference and present their works to the community. Such works may be totally digital, totally analogue, or a hybrid of both.

3 Conclusion

Through this series of events, will invite designers, researchers, and practitioners to critically reflect on current landscapes of participatory design in Ireland. We will share insights and questions relating to the principles and values guiding our work and generate further ideas to embed into our participatory practices.

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