Individual Reflection – Researching the Future Everyday- Veerle van Wijlen (0992908)

Within this course I have investigated in-depth the paper by Kuijer [2], about automated artefacts as co-performers of social practices. In collaboration with fellow students, I have conducted a design research about the influences on practices, when automated artefacts learn (infinitely) through a thing-centered perspective in a future everyday environment. Here, I will reflect on the course, the three learning objectives referencing to my group project, and provide a critical view on how and why my future work as a designer / design researcher is affected by the content and approach of the course.

As a user experience designer and researcher, I have the vision to enhance empowerment and social integration of special need groups, enabling them to add value to others around them. My goal is to create safe spaces for special need groups through design, where they can be their best self. In order to achieve this I have always focused on *current* restrictions and needs within the *current* context of this target group, just as investigating design (research) opportunities for their *current* everyday life. To create design benefits in a relevant short time-span, in other words shape the present, due to this target group's vulnerability and high need for their inclusion, rather than asking questions through design about future everyday life. Therefore, I have always informed my design (research) with a combination of psychological knowledge (human-oriented) and self-gained empirical insights (context/design-oriented), rather than from social sciences (practice/technology-oriented). So, to be honest, when starting this course I did not know what to expect and how to apply the future everyday research approach into upcoming work. However, the approach taken in this course to engage with *future* everyday life, as 'designing to know' [3], gave me insight in the value of this particular process (will elaborate on more) to get a grasp of the unknown, familiarizing with a 'space for potential difference over the long-term' to co-shape the present as designer. In this way, researching the future everyday became for me a source for re-shaping the present.

Questioning changing roles of technology through social science concepts as inspiration for future everyday research
In this course I have learned to be able to start researching the future everyday, by familiarizing with present roles or perspectives of/on technology in *current or past* everyday life through readings of social sciences. Especially through investigation of social practice theory, I learned to use presented human-technology scenarios, concepts and questionings around practice contexts to imagine *future* scenarios for research and question potential societal impact. In-depth investigation of the paper by Kuijer [2], about the concept of automated artefacts as co-performers (as washing machines) in practices gave me insight in how this concept could be used as designers, to understand the changing role of these objects within object-human relationships and practices over time; affecting design practice in the future. I have learned everyday life basically consists of an interplay between all kinds of practice-as-performances in which designs and humans co-perform, different in order and each unique on a daily basis (in sequence), which designers can influence, even on a bigger scale, re-shaping practices as 'entity'. Moreover, it made me see the value of understanding a specific practice as designer, e.g. laundry, to question the changing role of technology in these practices, and from there influences on a societal change. In combination with philosophy of technology, as thing-centered perspectives and thing-centered ethnography [1], this gave me tools to approach researching changing roles of technology from the point of view of an object. This was a fully new perspective for me, that from my opinion enriched my human-centered and human-serving vision. In this way, I learned to create more innovative design research and question the unknown. For example, one of the questions I asked myself while reading the paper by Kuijer [2], was how increased automation of automated artefacts influences the equality and role distribution of human and washing machines within the practice of laundry and where the boundaries are in such a future scenario. Through re-reading the paper, I learned to refine these critical questions and

extract the ones worth to inspire a novel future world, to research changing roles of technology, and create a research question.

A 'future world' to inform the making and deployment of (digital) research products
At first, the creation of a future world to probe future scenarios to frame research related to technological and so societal change affecting future everyday life, seemed vague and rather cumbersome. Especially, when questionings about changing roles of technology inspired by social science was already transformed into a research question. However, this method gave me insight in a new way to research the role and implications of technology, especially future-related. Probing this world, helped me to get a grasp of this complex and

Future World

What is valued most in this world?
Communication and equal relationships concerning humans and automated artefacts

What are mainstream products/services?
Classes in communication for humans and objects. Families of products (can go well together concering communication) and generations of products

What is fashionable?
Certain product groups communicate well together and others don't always "like" each other. There are small in-home communities

What is entertaining?
Lifehacks on how you can easily train your devices

What are people afraid of in this world?
Human actions losing their value. Hacking of automated artifacts.

What do they want to know about?
Troubleshooting for device. How to maintain a good relationship between objects.

What is in the news?
Bad treatment objects. Non-sustainable use object. Security breaches of devices.

What are people laughing about?
Incapable products. In-home miscommunication fails.

Main Quality of this future world
Objects are equals to each other and humans in learning and can in this way learn form each other

unknown future, its variety of characteristics, to create a thing-centered perspective on the role of automated artefacts, even beyond technology. In this way, I learned to frame a specific 'what-if' question and scenario to inform the making and deployment of a digital research product, in our case a video. Through reading and applying the concept of 'designing to know' by Wakkary [3], I learned to provoke questions with design rather than providing a solution. Creating this video together with my team mates, made me reflect on what exactly we wanted to research and know about this future scenario, in our case the 'influences' of automated thing-centered learning artefacts on practices. Moreover, I got insights in how to create a thought-provoking video scenario and video content that clearly enabled our participants to emerge in the thing-centered perspective of the objects, within a specific practice context (kitchen practices), and elicited questions portraying signs of 'infinite' learning and humor. For example, by showing 'things-communications' as "Oven-Integrating Spanish airfrying manual" and "Oven-Vamos encender los airfryers" to provoke questions about the role and impact of these infinite learning objects, going too far, on and in *future* everyday practices.
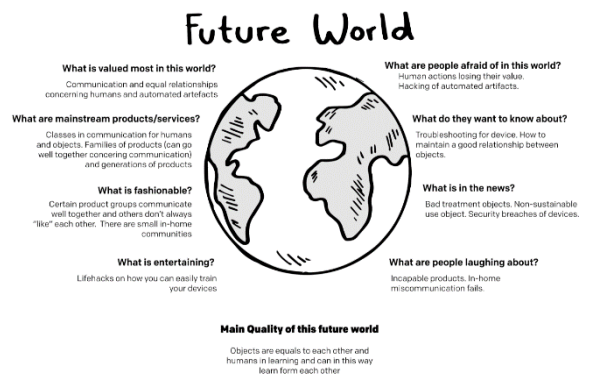
Relevant deployment with research product to create knowledge contribution
One of the most valuable experiences during this course was the deployment of the research product, video, during an online focus group session. I found it very interesting to create a presentation structure to impart participants in the thing-centered perspective related to our future scenario; select open-ended questions that enabled us to answer the research question; and find a way to let participants reflect on the broader impact of changing technology through proposing the idea of the use of incremental spatial scenarios. Next to that, I learned to interpret the found themes after focus groups analysis into valuable knowledge contribution for design practice. Even though, the research was centered around implications of changing technology on future everyday life, I learned this could inform present ways of design to re-shape the present as a designer.

In conclusion, the approach taken in this course to research and understand the changing role and impact of technology in *future* everyday life, as 'designing to know' [3], gave me insight in the value of this particular process to get a grasp of the unknown, familiarizing with a 'space for potential difference over the long-term' to co-shape the present as designer. In this way, researching the future everyday became for me a source for re-shaping the present. Moreover, working on this new type of research within a group challenged me to do research from another perspective, more thing-centered and design practice focused. This helped me to gain insights into other ways of research, related to changing human-object relationships and impacts over time, rather than single human-object interactions. This gave me insight in researching complex matters of future everyday life and transforming that into implications for current design practice.

Appendix A: References

1. Elisa Giaccardi, Chris Speed, Nazli Cila, and Melissa Caldwell. 2016b. Things as co-ethnographers: Implications of a thing perspective for design and anthropology. Design anthropological futures 235 (2016).
2. Lenneke Kuijer. 2019.Automated Artefacts as Co-performers of Social Practices: Washing Machines, Laundering and Design. Springer International Publishing, Cham, 193–214. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92189-1_10
3. Ron Wakkary, Doenja Oogjes, Sabrina Hauser, Henry Lin, Cheng Cao, Leo Ma, and Tijs Duel. 2017. Morse Things: A Design Inquiry into the Gap Between Things and Us. In Proceedings of the 2017 Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (DIS '17). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 503–514. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3064663.3064734