

Art of Service: Drawing the arts to inform service design and specification

Birgit Mager

Professor of Service Design, Köln International
School of Design
mager@service-design.de

Shelley Evenson

Carnegie Mellon University | School of Design
MMC 110, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15232
evenson@cmu.edu
412.268.4638

ABSTRACT / SUMMARY

Services are complex and specifying them is challenging. This paper suggests that service design and specification could be informed by a systematic study of notation and specification systems from other arts to create an approach to service scoring that would enable service designers to write and stakeholders to enact service performances with value and beauty.

INTRODUCTION

Services are complex. Specifying service encounters can be challenging because interactions in service are a “dynamic dance” between people and people, people and machines, and machines and machines. The choreography of different processes, among humans and machines often requires seemingly individual responses. In some sense, services may need to always be underdetermined, which is what makes the specification and documentation so challenging.

The reciprocal effect of these different dimensions in service organization and development is challenged by linear thinking and representational forms. Blueprinting, introduced by Lynn Shostack is one of the tools available in analysis and design that really attempts to address the multiplicity of dimensions [1]. Though an excellent tool, there is a need for more and better notation systems to capture the “soul” of the service, and communicate the facilitation of the experience, which is connected with the consumption of a service.

LEARNING FROM THE ARTS

Many expressive arts (music, dance, theater) have a long tradition of documentation with unique forms (and design languages) for authors to

express their intents of performance and at the same time enable others to “read” and express the performance without being over determined and with some relation to the author’s intent.

In the past 10 years some isolated attempts in Service Marketing and Service Design have drawn from art-similar models to further discussion, innovation, and tools generation in support of services [2]. Basic investigation into the possible use of the concept of genres and the application of style analyses and style charts [3], film-similar methods such as film scripts [4], descriptions of role, service acting and stage setting [5] have drawn from theory and have been tested in facets of practice. Concepts such as service production and service dramaturgy also reference front stage and back stage—terms that are found again and again in the description of services.[6, 1]

These terms rise from equivalent art movements, in which the participants are orchestrating experience as the experience happens over time. It seems that many art worlds parallel services in their dynamics and complexity—the multi-layeredness, interactivity, and animation or life of service systems, yet there is little collaboration between the arts and service design and development.

CONCLUSIONS

A systematic analysis of the art-similar thinking, representational forms, and notation systems as applied to the development and communication of service systems is needed. The origins, methods, and representational forms from different arts (such as theatre and film, dance and ballet, music and literature) should be explored, documented and analyzed in order to describe the

way it functions in the context of the art. Special attention should be paid to the attributes or qualities of “good form” for authors and performers. This is similar to the notation of design and object languages referenced in product design. [7,8] The results from this type of research, we believe, could provide the foundation for the development an approach to service scoring—a way for service designers to write and stakeholders to perform services that deliver both value and beauty.

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