A novel methodology for practise based design?

[1] [2]

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Integration of design and research calls for new approaches that combine active, creative engagement with systematic academic discipline. Integrating reflective practice, agile project management, innovative research, and speculative design encompasses a variety of robust frameworks to inject new knowledge through the process of making. This conceptual article demonstrates how such frameworks converge to produce significant research processes.

Emergence of Practice-Based Design Research

Every approach to research and design starts at some fundamental and axiomatic ground or belief. While most approaches will gravitate toward enumeration and quantification, some have an inherent focus on information and systems at and/ or around the intersection of learning and design. This design-centric focus will necessitate emergence as a primary quality. [1] The most desirable outcome depends on what is done and said after the event. In contrast to Bring Design Out, which has observable goals, this does not have mainstream as the goal. Discreet sensors have been deployed purposely. The unit of success is transformation by new insights and practices that feed into theory and practice.

Creative research makes the case for considering practice as a method of investigation. Artifacts created during this process are not just outputs but deeper forms of understanding.

Prototypes made within iterative cycles are meant to trigger deep thoughts and assist in tackling intricate design problems[1] . (Kara, 2020)

Reflective practice

The most important element of this framework is relative to Donald Schön (Schön, 1983), whose focus on reflective practitioners is paramount. Reflection happens in different ways:

Reflection before action

This involves identifying the planning goals, which the challenges of the last iteration might inspire. It will identify the scope and ideate actionable concepts. Reflection before action is added as a response to the criticism of Greenwood.

Reflection in action

Real-time alterations of methodologies within the crafting moment reflecting on processes in order to improve them over time through continuous repeat. It involves making parts, such as drafting prototypes and adjustments.

Reflecting on the action

Test parts according to the set parameters and analyse how the project moves. How did the process go? Moreover, do we have any critical incidents? In this case, cycles of reflection ensure that knowledge is created and utilised during and after the research activity.

Figure 1: Reflective practice

Agile Methodology

Agile methods make practice-based design research intended relatively free-flowing. It permits rapid testing of concepts while adapting, receiving feedback, and moving towards achievable goals. Regular reflection meetings serve as milestones to check the progress made[1]. (Clesham, 2024)

Speculative design

A process becomes more comprehensive when it is integrated with futurism. Researchers can venture into other possible futures by reframing ideation phases with "What if?" questions. During the "make" phase of design, speculative prototypes act as tools that provoke discussions for a particular issue. These tools can be imagined in several ways. (Neeley, 2024)

Conclusion:

Outputs

From this procedure, the outputs produced are the following:

1. Possible self-reported barriers have been gathered during the two or more cycles of self-reflection.
2. User needs are gained from the reported interviews and the witnessed analysis.

3. User-centered design expectations as gathered from out-there prototypes and speculative designs.

All these stated above ensure that the outcome of the practice-based research has both theoretical and practical relevance.

Concluding remarks:

Practice-based design research shows how unclear situations can be used as opportunities rather than obstacles to developing new ideas actively. It is an iterative approach that enables practitioners and scholars to reflect on and integrate agile practices, creative research, design, and speculation all at one go. It also provides the possibility to shift in an agile manner while contributing significantly.

In Figure 2, as you can see, this synthesised methodology is not one that follows a straight path; it is a cycle that expands through reflection and iteration. It illustrates a refined answer and device for a challenge of multifaceted or complex nature in not only architecture, landscape drafting, graphic arts, and the like but also other fields.
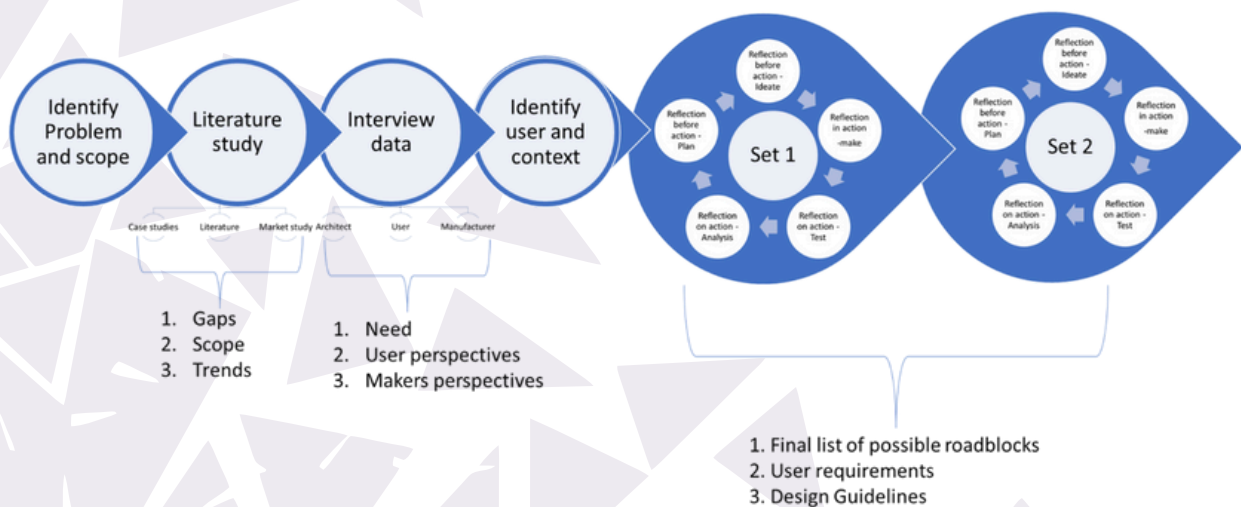

Figure 2: Diagram of synthesised methodology

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