

Workshop Title:

Innovation through ‘problem-space’ visualizations: a design-driven process to support cultural experiences

Facilitators:

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With innovation increasingly a calling card for successful products, it has become imperative for industry and design pedagogy today to understand if there is a systematic way to decipher innovation’s essential connect with everyday life. Especially in those worlds far removed from the predictable, organized behavior governed/facilitated by the machine, viz., in the emerging markets, where culture mediates spaces and people’s behaviors, and technology defies the lay of the land to follow pathways of unanticipated consequences.

In such culturally mediated environments, it is easy to conclude that innovation as a game changer remains a victim to acts of creativity that are necessarily conditioned by the occasional and accidental bursts of intuition as an inner calling, thereby making innovation a force of serendipity alone. And begs the question: *how are we to reliably bank on innovation as a solution to problems especially in complex people-driven environments?*

The workshop seeks to demonstrate that far from the shadowy and intractable notions that surround stories of innovation, and contrary to a widespread sense of chance and mystic that seem to characterize acts of creativity behind innovations. There lies a land of great opportunity in design waiting to leverage interactions of various kinds without sacrificing design’s idiosyncratic ways

It is where innovation could verily follow a systematic process, with distinctly identifiable forward and backward integrations to reality, that take their cues not from the mysterious but from the rather prosaic dynamics of everyday life. This would obviously make it incumbent upon us to then understand how we might meaningfully ‘visualize’ these dynamics in order to locate prospective innovation ‘spots’ within the axis of creativity - turning innovation from an accidental tool of opportunity into an outcome of a purposive search for opportunities for life’s betterment itself.

The workshop premises itself on a PROCESS that aids a search (for innovation) not only as a facilitator for industry but also as a tool for design pedagogy, and navigates participants through a step-by-step journey of the said process, articulating its different steps in a way that is transparent enough to ease both design and industry’s path into innovation.

Central to the proposed approach to innovation are scenarios drawn from real life in a manner of storytelling, that connect the worldviews of users to a set of imaginative ‘mapping’ and ‘structuring’ of information based on a set of self-organizing and open-ended principles. To gradually reveal an underlying method in chaos through ‘*problem space visualization*’, aided by a summary understanding of worldviews.

And which clearly suggest innovation’s innate ability to be addressed in a systematic manner, as a set of exercises, that are meant to make a search for solutions not only creative but also the solutions themselves replicable, scalable and reverse-engineered for repeated use, thus rendering the process a viable and actionable tool for *problem-solving*. The promise of design lies in allowing technology to intersect with cultural experiences to create designs that are systematic-processual and at the same time unique-personal.