

Feminist and Uncomfortable Design

CS181 DT | Shuyan & Keya





Iterating Feminist Utopias

Hackathons

Critiques

Rigid Structures

Exclude potential hackathon participants, such as people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ population, and people with childcare responsibilities, work constraints, limited access to transportation.

Technological Solutionism

- Favors the making of the new over the maintenance of the existing.
- Curtails systems thinking
- Privilege certain computer technical expertise, limit debate, discussion, and difference among participants


Make hackathons more inclusive and accessible






Intersectionality, Feminism, HCI

Feminist HCI



- Intersectional lens that focuses on the coalesce of various dimensions of identity and its relation to one's own surroundings
 - Marginalization is inflicted not only by the societies in which we live, but by our own design processes and artifacts.
 - Intersectional social justice-oriented design movements have worked to extend design as a tool for challenging injustices and systematic inequalities.
 - **Examples:** equityXdesign, Anti-Oppressive design, Design Justice movement
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Feminist utopian participatory design

- feminist theory + the democratic values + proven methods of participatory design => utopias in which publics can address complex social issues at scale.
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hackathon iterations

**MAKE THE
BREAST PUMP
NOT SUCK
HACKATHON**

Make the breast pump
not suck Hackathon

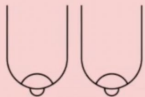
2014

V.1

V.2

2018

Make the breast pump not
suck Hackathon & Make
family leave not suck
policy summit



Version 2 Improvements

Equity by Design

- Priority diversity groups in recruitment
- Equity Workshop
- Core values & community agreement

The role of storytelling

Reproductive journeys from **33 parents** and interviews with **15 care providers**

Community Innovation Program

9 month program which provided money and time for **4 teams** to research problem space

Space & Experience Design

Temporary Living Rooms, Art Exhibition, Zine Library, "Baby Village", & Spaces for creation

Version 2 Improvements

Science Fair & Prizes

- 12 Themed prizes
- Experimental prizes

Policy Summit

- legal support firm ChangeLabs Solutions to shape the agenda
- the design firm Continuum to create interactive activities

Innovator's Gallery

product expo that included **26** breastfeeding and baby product companies.

Impact Stories

Press & media, Collaboration, Community, Policy, Personal

Design Principles

Intentionally
Structure Equity



Leverage Privilege
Institutional power



Push for narrative
change



Cultivate Joy and
Play



Uplift low-tech and
no tech innovations



A photograph of a roller coaster car filled with people, positioned on a blue track. The car is blue and yellow, with the text 'CEDAR POINT' and 'THE FURY' visible on its side. The track is supported by white pillars. The background is a clear blue sky. The text 'Uncomfortable Interactions' is overlaid in a large, bold, black font on a white rectangular background.

Uncomfortable Interactions

BACKGROUND:



- 4 main types of discomfort (we will examine them in a second)
- Main concerns of the reading were:
 1. How to frame discomfort for a user to experience it ethically
 2. What forms can uncomfortable interactions take on and look like?
 3. How can uncomfortable interactions shape and influence cultural experiences?
- Examining through the these lenses: Entertainment / Enlightenment / Sociality

ENTERTAINMENT

Physical:
rollercoaster for
the thrill
Emotional:
narrators create
suspense

ENLIGHTENMENT

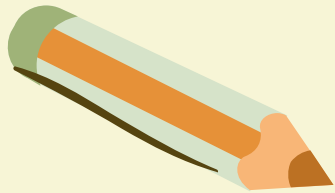
Discomfort inspires
self-reflection and
creates an intimate
relationship
between the user
and the content

SOCIALITY

Rollercoasters
and horror movies
seen as rites of
passage. Bonding
in the discomfort



4 types of discomfort



01

VISCERAL

Embodied in the physical nature of interaction

02

CULTURAL

Interactions with challenging themes, and culturally resonant devices

03

CONTROL

Most commonly in surrendering control or in taking on greater control

04

INTIMATE

Isolating people, making people connect with strangers, or themes of surveillance or voyeurism



Discussion Questions:

Finding discomfort in your Project 1:

1

Get into your project 1 (Protest Design) groups. Reflect back to project 1 - could you identify any type of discomfort in your project, and how did that influence the user?

2

Joy meets discomfort:

As designers, how do these two coexist in a design space? Which of these feel more impactful or powerful when it comes to shaping the user experience?

