

**“We don’t want woollen trousers” –
Studying how researchers and developers interact
with police officers during an innovation project**

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Abstract: The author describes one research and development project from the perspective of participant observer. The project team members – researchers and developers – seek interactions with (future, putative, potential) end-users – in this case: police officers – to inspire and inform their innovation project. The study focuses on how project team members interact with police officers, and how they make decisions about the application that they are developing for them.

It is shown that each interaction affected their decision making which resulted in a gradual shift of the project’s goal and focus. It is also shown how the project team members – because of their focus on developing and evaluating an innovative telecom service – unintentionally missed several chances to learn about what it for police officers to work within a police organisation. E.g. they could have listened better to police officers telling about not wanting to wear woollen trousers. Such stories can tell something about police officers’ professional identities and how management and innovation work within a police organisation.

This paper is *not* about good guys versus bad guys. Both the researchers and developers, and the police officers did what they could do, given their respective tasks and roles. Two topics are identified for further study: How researchers’ or developers’ professional roles, e.g. their practice of creating fictional *personas* and *storylines*, allow movements towards openness/otherness (towards end-users’ experiences) or towards closure/self (towards their professional role and agenda); And what we can say about ethical qualities of design choices, e.g. when a researcher or developer chooses to privilege or marginalize a specific target group, problem or solution.

Requests to receive a copy of the full paper can be directed at: marc.steen at tno.nl