"We don't want woollen trousers"

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Presentation at SCOS 2006, July 13-15 2006

TNO | Knowledge for business

Marc Steen

Context

Work at TNO Information & Communication Technology (Delft)

PhD/DBA-program at University for Humanistics (Hugo Letiche)

Other supervisor at Delft University of Technology (Jan Buijs)

Topic and approach

Researchers and developers/designers who interact with end-users – in this case: police officers – in order to inspire or inform their innovation project.

How do these interactions relate to their decision making about what they are developing for the police?

Study one R&D project (2004-2007, 40 people, multi-disciplinary, organisations)
Focus on one part (in which I work, coordinate): develop and evaluate "we-centric" telecommunication

Good or bad or ugly?

Questioning "empathic design", "participatory design", "human centred design" – it is **good** to have empathy with end-users, to invite them to participate

"Piss off!" […] "We don't need your patronising help, you designers. If you've come here to help us, you're wasting your time; we don't want to be helped, thanks just the same. […] If you could kindly change your attitude and help us explore how we will live, then perhaps we can do something together."

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Work-in-progress

1. Participant observation -> Two conference papers ("police officers" and "informal carers")

2. Group discussion with project team members -> Sessions done (interesting!), write about in 2006

3. Interviews (storytelling) with individual project team members -> To do in 2006, write about in 2006

Observation

Each interaction with end-users did significantly affect their design decisions:

- a growing understanding of what police officers do
- gradual shift of the project's goal and focus – which is **good** in user-centred design

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Prototype *WijkWijzer*

To stimulate community police officers and emergency police officers to share knowledge with each other

- Incident ("Vandalisme") plus location ("Piekstraat 34") and time
- Relevant police officers, with "utility" (bar graph) – you can select one
- Name of (selected) police officer ("Wouter de Korte"), plus reason why this police officer is relevant ("Wijk")
- Instant communication with "Erik Reitsma"

Timeline	Interactions with end-users	Design decisions: What the service under-development (WijkWijzer) must do
End of 2003	Before the project	**We-centric**: to facilitate people to communicate and cooperate in heterogeneous, spontaneous or dynamic groups, and to combine possibly conflicting tasks or roles
Apr 2004	Start, briefing	To support **area-bound** police work: support police officers to communicate and cooperate – both inside and outside the police
July 2004	Workshop 1 (South)	To support community police officers to communicate and cooperate **with network partners**: others outside the police
Aug – Oct 2004	Observations and workshop 2 (Centre)	To support community police officers to **share their knowledge** with emergency police officers
Aug 2005	Workshop 3 (East)	To stimulate emergency police officers to **access and use the knowledge** of community police officers
Nov 2005	Workshop 4 (East)	To stimulate community police officers and emergency police officers to **share knowledge with each other**
June – July 2006	Workshop 5 and small-scale test (North)	To enable police officers to **look-up information** themselves (and maybe communicate with other officers)

New!
This week!

Observation

Project team members focused on communication (the project's topic) and neglected information – as if: communication is good (=cooperation), and information is bad (=bureaucracy).

Project team members missed opportunities to learn about what it means to work as a police officer (identity, culture) – they focused on communication, and on small groups of police officers

Met police officers from South, Centre, East and North – all different (organisation, processes, culture…)

"We don't want woollen trousers"

They/We could have listened better to police officers telling: "We don't want woollen trousers" *(are difficult to clean, must have a crease, have a wrong belt…)*

They/We could have learned more about police officers' professional identities and how management and innovation work (or not) in a police organisation

Not about *good guys versus bad guys*. Both the researchers and developers, and the police officers did what they could do, given their tasks and roles

Further study

- **<u>Not</u>** a one-way or straightforward relation

| interacting with end-users | ↔ | openness / closure | ↔ | making design decisions |
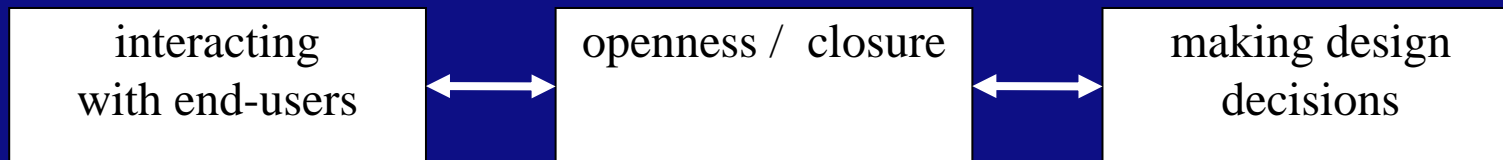
- *Openness/otherness*: Interacting with police officers, trying to learn about police officers' experiences

- *Closure/the self*: Sticking to their task and role (*we-centric)*, re-using ideas from previous projects

Further study

- Ethics of such interactions and decision making: when rationality or morality cannot help you ("aporia", Derrida), but you must make a decision nevertheless

- Such interactions and decisions happen within (ethical) relations: with end-users, with fellow project team members

- Science and Technology Studies (Latour, Woolgar, Pinch, Oudshoorn etc.) is all about relations – but ignores ethics (Winner, Poel & Verbeek)

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Thank you for listening!

- Questions?
- Discussion?

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