



EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

Design
Ethnography

Using immersion methods of traditional ethnography, it helps to deeply experience and understand the user's world for design empathy and insight.

I immersed myself into the environment of the support workers and volunteers working in Sense Scoltand by attending the Cane Making Workshop for several weeks.



EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

Interviews

Interviews are fundamental research method for direct contact with participants to collect firsthand personal opinions.

Interviews were conducted with almost all the participants of the research. Insights gathered this way were especially crucial in case of experts and teachers. In other situations interviews were combined or followed observation, exercise or a workshop and formed part of the feedback process.



EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

Participant Observation

Immersive, ethnographic method for understanding situation and behaviours through experience of membership participation.

In most cases I observed the participants during their activities from a more marginal level when I passively observed the participants and then conducted the interviews. However, in case of Sense Scotland the participation took more full dimension over extended period of time.



SECONDARY RESEARCH

Literature Reviews
/
Case Studies

Secondary research consists of information collected and synthesized from existing data rather than original material sourced through primary research with participants.

Taken the user-centered approach that I took from the beginning of the project, secondary research served mainly as a supporting evidence for the insights gathered in field research and helped to make sense from the gathered data.



IMMERSE

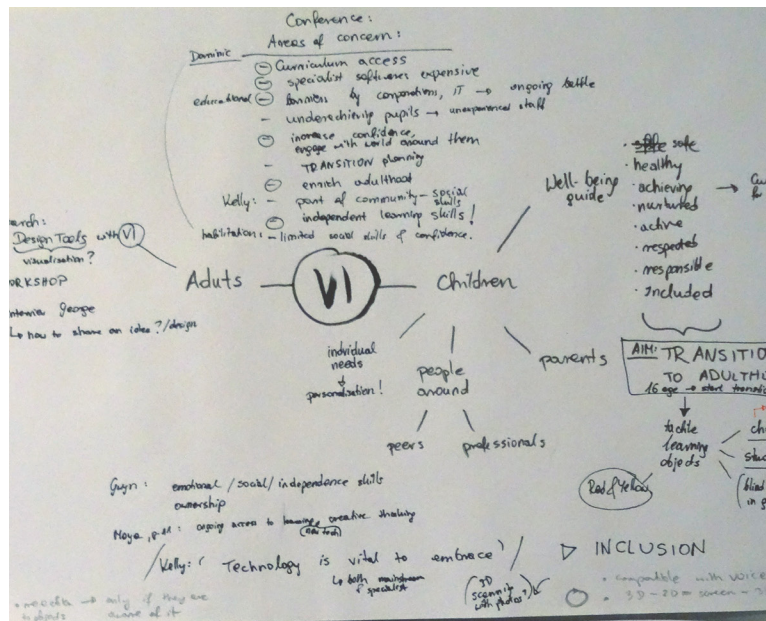
Empathic Modelling

With empathic modelling the designer tries to put themselves in the position of the disabled user.

The method is easiest to apply when one is designing for people with motor or sensory disabilities, like the visually impaired. The aim is to increase awareness of the implication of design for specific disabilities. In this case I experienced the space and the objects in that space blindfolded and with covered ears.

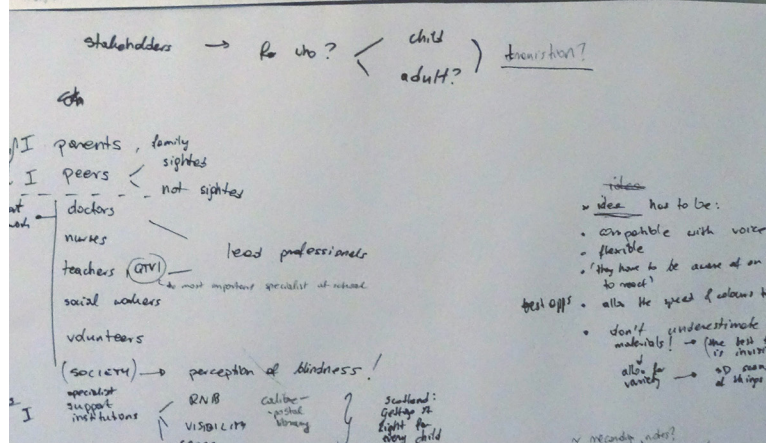
ENGAGE & TEST

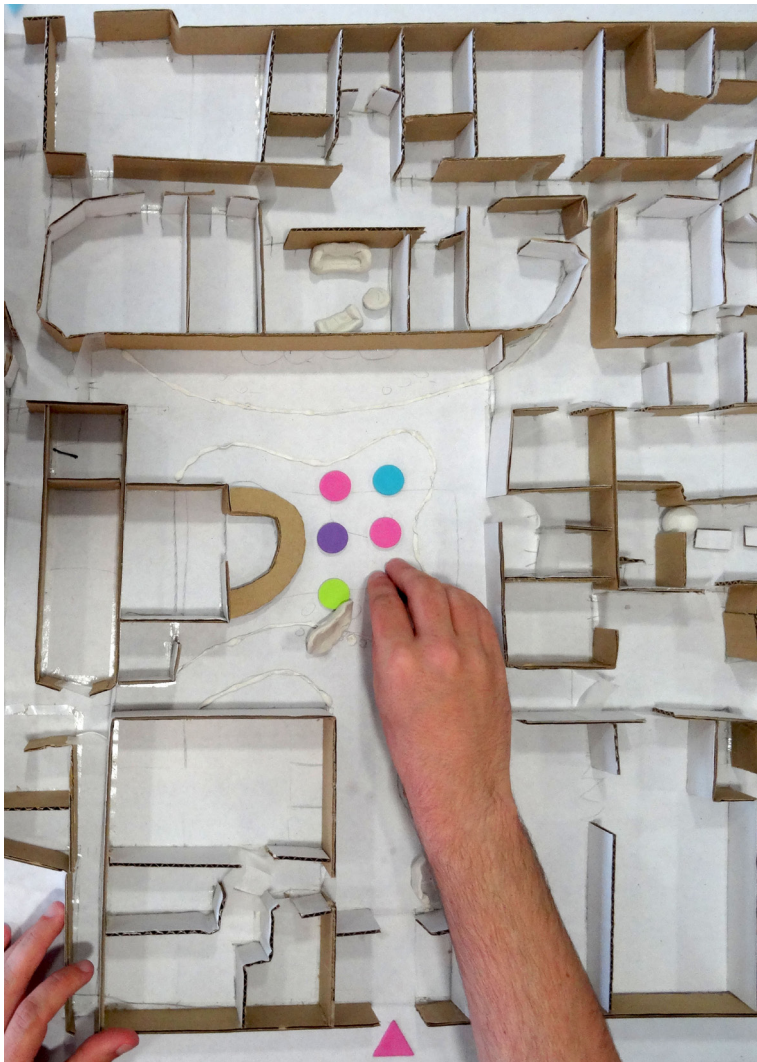
Concept Mapping



It is a visual framework that allows designers to absorb new concepts into an existing understanding of a domain, so that new meaning can be made. A mechanism similar to the way children learn new concepts and information.

Concept mapping helped to make sense out of large amount of information and ideas and helped to define the direction for further research, especially in the initial stages.





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Creative Toolkit:

- stakeholder map
- maquette

Collection of physical elements organized for participatory modelling, visualization or creative play by users to inform the design.

Tactile stakeholder map and maquette workshop became equivalent to creative toolkit in this project when users interacted with physical elements. These exercises had two aims though, since the shapes and the way the elements were manipulated had equal importance as the purely expressive/creative side of such activity.

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Personas

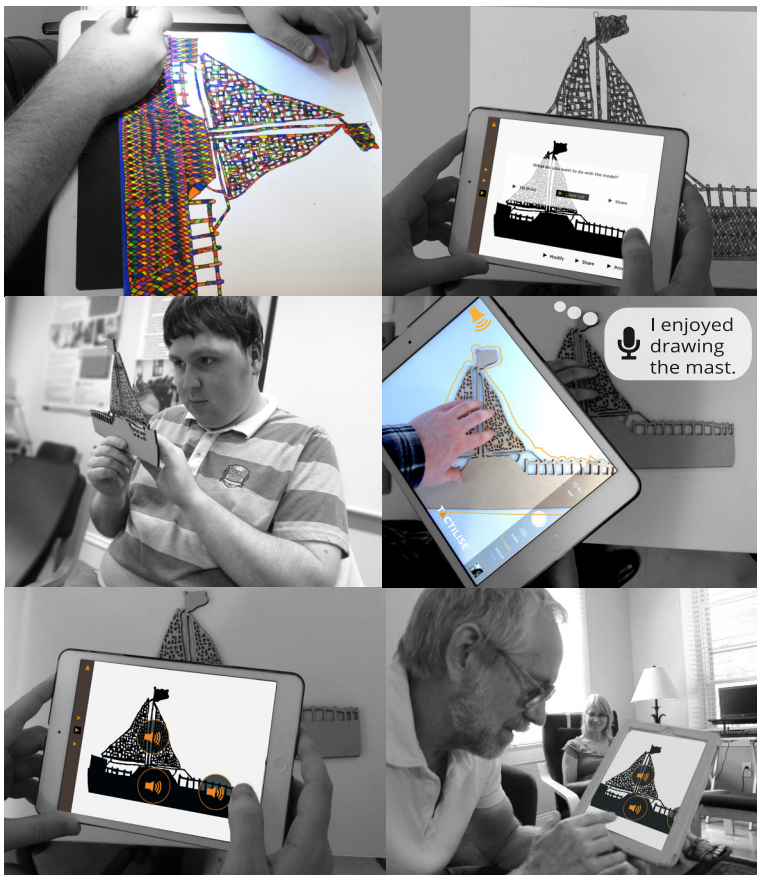


Personas consolidate descriptions of users behavior patterns into representative profiles to humanize design focus and test scenarios.

Through personas I tried to represent the typical users I encountered throughout my research which helped to communicate the concept and put in a particular, human-centered context.

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Scenarios



A narrative that explores the future use of a product from a user's point of view.

Scenarios are based on real needs or situations observed during the research and show how those could be made possible using Tactilise. Scenarios also serve to present in an accessible way all the main functions of the platform.



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Prototyping

Tangible creation of artifacts at various levels of resolution for developing and testing ideas.

The physical realization of a tactile graphics that were brought to a visually impaired users made the project real and aimed to test the reaction of the potential users. Cut out of a ship and the 3D printed particle model were the most defined prototypes in the process so far. However, the stakeholder map and maquette exercises also served to research and test tactile communication in an earlier phase of the project.



SENSE-MAKING

Affinity Diagramming

Process used to externalize and meaningfully cluster observations and insights from research.

Affinity diagramming keeps designer grounded in data throughout the process. It has been useful to have the big affinity diagram created on the wall – a space where the research is being constantly materialized and new connections and ideas can be added. From the affinity diagram the four pillars of the project emerged: Inclusion, Independence, Personalisation and Technology.



SENSE-MAKING

Synthesis

During synthesis, designers visually explore large quantities of data in an effort to find and understand hidden relationships. These visualizations can then be used to communicate, or can be used as platforms for the creation of generative sketching or model making. The action of diagramming is a way to actively produce knowledge and meaning (Kolko, 2010).

Thanks to the difficult art of synthesis that we practiced throughout the degree, this time arriving to the main insights was a relatively painless and enjoyable process. Brainstorming and diagramming helped to keep the balance between creativity and more focused approach to the topic.