LANGUAGE OF CONFLICTS:
AN INTRODUCTION TO USING CONCERN CONFLICTS AS A DESIGN OPPORTUNITY

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ABSTRACT
This workshop is based on the proposition that concern conflicts can be powerful starting points for user-centered design processes. Concern conflicts arise when the user wants to simultaneously fulfill two concerns that require mutually exclusive choice alternatives. Imagine your alarm clock ringing in the morning. You need to attend an early morning meeting that is important for your work (concern for competence), but you also want to stay in bed to relax for as long as you can since you could not get enough sleep (concern for relaxation). What do you do? This is a typical example of an experience that involves a concern conflict, i.e. a dilemma. Dilemmas are pervasive in everyday life, and thus, they are a crucial part of every design context. The way designers formulate and address users’ dilemmas can lead to creation of different product identities ranging from user-friendly products to products that promote social responsibility. In this workshop, participants will have the opportunity to explore different types of dilemmas and to create design concepts using new design tools and techniques.

INTRODUCTION
Designers are skillful in identifying and designing for unfulfilled wants and needs of their users: this is the premise of user-centered design. However, people pursue multiple and often conflicting goals during their everyday activities: we may decide to skip our gym-night to go to the movies (concern for entertainment), and yet, we wish we would have a fine-looking body like the movie stars we admire (concern for beauty). Or we may want to show our best selves to increase our chance for a promotion (concern for competence), yet we also want to remain modest because we do not like to be perceived as being arrogant (concern for social approval). Designers can take any of these concerns as the starting point for designing something that appeals to the user. However, addressing unfulfilled concerns separately might result in designs that fulfill only one concern while ignoring the other. As a result, these designs might evoke both pleasant and unpleasant user experiences. Therefore, we propose that focusing on the tension between the concerns, rather than on specific concerns in isolation, lead to solutions that tackle this emotional duality.

Users experience different types of dilemmas ranging from concrete and context-specific dilemmas (e.g., I want to cook my own dinner versus I want to keep my kitchen clean) to abstract and ideological dilemmas (e.g., I want to be socially responsible versus I want to lead a comfortable life). As a result, it is important for designers to be equipped with the knowledge and tools that support identifying and designing with users’ dilemmas. In this workshop, the participants will be introduced to three main stages of a conflict-driven design approach that can support designers in designing with dilemmas (see Figure 1). The main challenges and opportunities of adopting a conflict-driven design approach will be discussed and future research directions will be identified.

Figure 1. Conflict-driven design approach
Stage 1 - Capturing Users’ Dilemmas

An important challenge in the proposed approach is that it requires identifying users’ dilemmas that are relevant to the user and inspiring to the designer. To address this challenge, the participants will be introduced to several research methods and gain hands-on experience with a work-in-progress research tool (i.e. co-exploration) developed by the authors.

Stage 2 - Formulating Relevant and Inspiring Concern Conflicts

Dilemmas are composed of two concerns that conflict each other in a specific design context. These concern conflicts can be taken as a starting point for design activities. As a result, the second challenge in the proposed approach is to distill concern conflicts from users’ dilemmas and to formulate these concern conflicts in a relevant and inspiring way. For this, the participants will be introduced to various ways concern conflicts can be formulated based on the work of Desmet (2008), and Desmet and Ozkaramanli (2012).

Stage 3 - Developing a Design Vision for Addressing the Selected Concern Conflict

Identifying dilemmas and formulating concern conflicts take designers only half way through the design process. Therefore, the third challenge in the conflict-driven design approach is to generate design ideas that can address the concern conflict at hand. For this, the participants will be introduced to three main design directions (taking a firm stance, taking a flexible stance, or taking no stance) and supporting design strategies to deal with the concern conflicts they selected.

WORKSHOP

The goal of this workshop is to introduce a preliminary approach to conflict-driven design. The research questions we aim to address can be formulated as (1) what are possible criteria to select an inspiring dilemma? (2) What are possible criteria when formulating an inspiring and informative concern conflict? (3) What are possible criteria that designers use when forming a design vision to address a selected concern conflict? We welcome critical discussion on the usefulness of adopting a conflict-driven design approach and seek out inspiring tools to support its implementation.

Approach

Participants will be introduced to various tools and techniques that can support the implementation of the proposed design approach. The workshop will be composed of three 30-minute lectures followed by interactive exercises and reflective discussions. At the end of the workshop, designers will gain a comprehensive overview of tools and techniques they can use to implement the three main stages of the conflict-driven design approach.
**Workshop details** - This workshop is intended to be a full day (6 hours) workshop. The number of attendees is between 12 and 15 people maximum. The organizers have no preference over the location of the workshop.

**Requested materials** - Wireless internet access, LCD projector and screen, name badges, flip chart, post-it sticky notes, A3 paper, writing pads, pencils, colour markers, colour papers.

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**REFERENCES**
