

Story Cultures: Understanding how stories of different cultures can influence digital memories.

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ABSTRACT

Objects, people, spaces and memories are the building blocks of stories. Think of a story. Now try to find a memory that contains no people, objects or spaces. The stories we tell reference the objects that we have in our lives. They may be a key detail or a background prop, but nonetheless our memories are based on our objects. In this short paper, we would like to position objects and their role in elucidating memories – at times as triggers, acting as props or as access points.

Exploring different social and cultural context to consider artifacts in people's life. This paper proposes research methods to carry out case studies and methods to analyze and evaluate the study. Concluding with design methods and concept for digital memory technologies.

KEYWORDS

Memory palace, Culture, stories and memories, object and artifacts, cultural probes, case study analysis, Family archives, Methods.

1. INTRODUCTION

Design and technology methods that are used to gather insights for stories of people, objects and spaces – for example cultural probes, rarely probe cultures are more of a localized method tied to Western European and North American design cultures. We

are beginning to take this notion this further in relation to design research methods exploring stories and cultures of Indian domestic and family activity.

Memories are crucial to self-identity and everyday functioning; yet memory is known to be fragile [1]. A better understanding of what makes an object valuable, as well as how, when, and why the objects are chosen should help the design of technology for storing and accessing digital memory [2].

This paper talks about design methods that will facilitate to carry out a field study and a method to analyze and evaluate data. It also proposes method to design digital memory object.



Fig.1: Collection of objects and photographs from the participants.

2. CASE STUDY AND EVALUATION METHOD:

Few case studies were conducted in India to collect stories and memories of people, objects and places; Semi structured Interviews were carried out in the process. Cultural probe was used to collect data from the users. Cultural probe consist a kit of materials like cameras, post its, voice recorders, flip cameras etc, to record specific event of study, emotions, and interaction within the participants. The cultural probes will help us know the culture of the community better. In this case the probe was used to unveil the culture, values, emotions, connections and trust within the family network. The participants were selected within close family network. They were asked to bring objects and artifacts that they posses which triggered memories and stories of people and places. The case study encouraged reflection in the feelings and emotions that are evoked using the objects, which are directly meaningful to their memories. The case study was an attempt to understand how people perceive the objects to construct their physical environment such as “a physical map of memory, history and belief ”[14]. The cultural probe method was used to collect data from the participants; audio recorder, sticky notes, camera etc were used to collect data.



Fig2: Participant narrating his memories of the object.

The data collected were evaluated later, the method looked at the network of memory map created by the objects which the

participants related to places, people and events. The qualitative data analysis method was used to analyze the raw data generated from the interviews including transcripts, translations (given that some of the interviews were held in regional language Tamil), documents, photographs and materials. The grounded theory technique was appropriate in this research in order to analyze the data because the data itself directed the course of study, as in what is to be expected from the participants and what questions helped to trigger the emotions behind the objects.

Few questions were asked in the interview like, what do you like about the object? Why is it important to you? And what stories does the objects provoke?

It is important to value our experience that we shape from the stories we tell one another and the narratives we form. During the case study the participants were given the freedom to make their own interpretation of memories and stories behind the objects. However, the main objective of the case study was to share these stories to build the connection to others by providing object or material that provoked stories. The family home in particular contains personal and shared objects; the most valued often being related to memories [8].

3. THE FAMILY ARCHIVE (Memory box):

The objects the participants chose to narrate were not only displayed and shared, but also integrated into everyday activities. The stories behind the objects helped in unveiling the Family story, history and culture. The toolbox that is chosen to develop into an interactive digital memory box was inherited from participant's grandfather. Grandfather being a jeweler designer, the memory box was used as his jewelry toolbox. The aim of the design is to Build Grandfathers' toolbox as an interactive memory object to unveil family stories. The interactive memory box will be a technique to archive and articulate the sentimental family artifacts and memorabilia. The memory object can be termed as memory palace, which can hold events or experiences worthy of remembrance. This can help us to have a deeper understanding of home life and also critically analyze how our technology might fit into family life. The memory box will narrate how physical objects acquire sentimental values in homes, which together with photos and videos, from a class of objects we might call memory palace. To store, organize and interact with such sentimental

objects is a key human value, which is being considered in digital technology designs. [7]



Fig3: Tool box inherited from the participants family.

Why chose India? India is a country of bursting diversity-virtually every writer describes it as one of the most culturally and geographically diverse nations in existence [3]. In India the philosophy of life and the mental structure of its people comes not from the study of books but from tradition (Munshi, 1965, p148). The objects that participants talk about in the case study are a part of family history, work life, growing up, moving countries, education, and play. Taking into account of all the data collected from the participants, we decided the optimum design was to render from the invisible network formed by the participants. The artifact was chosen from the network and is been developed into an interactive memory box, which is a family archive of stories, memories and cultural value.

The paper explores the usage of 'Cultural probes' to articulate memories from the participants and the methodology that supported the design process to procure Grandfather's toolbox.

4. CONCLUSION:

Using the case studies the authors proposes a digital memory box, which will be an attempt to archive the family stories, memories of objects and artifacts and tested on the participants. The digital memory box will be a compact device that allows users to browse

through images, audio and videos of data. The paper is drawn out of case study methods explored using qualitative research to collect stories, which are analyzed and evaluated. More case studies are planned in the future; participants with different cultural backgrounds and cross generation will be involved to augment stories and memories in different cultural context.

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