A NEW WAY OF IDENTIFYING NEEDS FROM MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a new way of identifying needs from multiple stakeholders with a concept we call "Future Language" by mining their desirable communities and problems and mapping so-called "Future Words". Future Language is a methodology to describe the vision for the future. In this paper, we introduce the case of designing "Output café," which is planed to be opened at Ebina City, in Japan in summer 2015. We anticipate that applying the method of Future Language for identifying needs from multiple stakeholders will unfold the overlap of needs and the differences in their desirable common place, by mapping Future Words.

INTRODUCTION

In the case of designing Third Place (Ray, 1999), which has multiple customers, it is ever more necessary to form a place that fulfills various needs and desires. When designers create a place, they examine multiple stakeholders' current desires and problems, thinking about a place that satisfies their needs. In such situation, designers are required to consider an output with a single-sided perspective. However, there are restrictions in creating a place that fulfills various needs and desires with only the designer's idea. Therefore, designers need to extract concrete ideas of the ideal place from multiple stakeholders as well as examining their current desires and problems.

In this paper, we make a proposal to apply Future Language method (Iba, 2015) to identifying the needs of multiple stakeholders, as we show the case of designing "Output café" in Ebina City, Japan.

DESIGNNING A PLACE WITH FUTURE LANGUAGE

Different from houses and offices, Third Place gathers multiple people. When designing such place, Future Language is useful as a new method that describes the vision for a desirable place and identifies the needs of multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, it is effective in understanding the contents and service that satisfies the requests withdrawn from various stakeholders. Future Language is a new type of language that is composed of Future Words that have three aspects: what is desirable in the future, why it is desirable, and how to achieve such a future (Iba, 2015).

When creating Future Words in each stakeholder, they mine what they desire, the problems that they currently hold, and how to bridge such a gap. After this process, designers can find the overlap of needs from examining Future Words as a mapping of the solutions and find out new services or favorable contents, which satisfy multiple stakeholders' needs.

CASE: IDENTIFYING NEEDS FOR DESIGNING OUTPUT CAFÉ WITH FUTURE LANGUAGE

We show the case of "Future Language workshop" for designing "Output café," which is expected to situate in a new type of Future Center, opening at Ebina City, Kanagawa, Japan in summer 2015. This building is designed by UDS Ltd., a Japanese company that supports community development by designing houses, offices, and hotels.

Figure 1: Future Language workshop for workers (upper left), housewives (upper right), students (lower left), and designers (lower right)
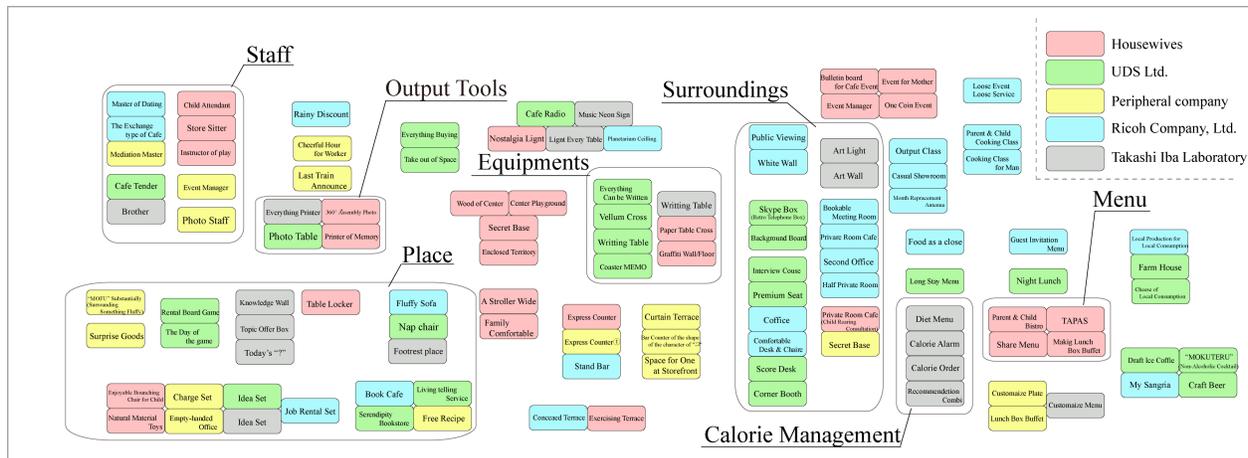
Figure 2: The overall figure of Future Words for Output café

We targeted five stakeholders: Housewives, members of Ricoh Company, Ltd., members of a peripheral company in Ebina City, members of UDS Ltd., and some students from Takashi Iba Laboratory at Keio University. In this workshop (Figure 1), the participants described their desirable vision for the future and current problems they have. The reason for including the designer as a stakeholder is because designers can also be considered as potential customers. As a result of this workshop, 211 Future Words were created by five stakeholders.

After creating Future Words for each stakeholder, we mapped these Future Words. In this mapping process, Future Words with a similar meaning were brought together, in the perspective whether such are symbolic, concrete, and feasible or not (Figure 2). Although their desirable future and the reasons behind the needs were different, there was an overlap among some solutions. Here are some examples of three Future Words: (1) "Fluffy sofa" is place to have a long stay. (2) "Nap chair" is a required space for taking a nap. (3) "Footrest place" implies the necessity for a place to sit down and stretch legs. Such Future Words are different in respect of the needs themselves, but there is a common point in that each one is a chair and a sofa to relax. Additionally, we found the differences among the participants' desirable place. Housewives in Ebina City, expressed the need for "Parent and child bistro," a meal that satisfies both the mother and her child. The underlying desire of this Future Word is that housewives want to come to Output café with her children, simultaneously being satisfied. On the other hand, one of the members at the peripheral company addressed the need for "Craft Beer," a high-quality and craftsman-made beer made to enjoy. The potential hope in this Future Word is that they need more choices for drinks than only coffee and tea. From these two Future Words, we discovered that the possible usage of the place is the same, but the purpose of it differs depending on each stakeholder.

So, this new way of identifying needs from diverse stakeholders enables us to not only find the overlap of needs but also to understand the differences from their desires for a place in common.

CONCLUSION

This paper proposed a new way of identifying needs with Future Language. The case in this paper demonstrates that using Future Language to identify the needs of multiple stakeholders is effective in understanding the overlap and difference of needs by mapping Future Words and their desirable place.

As the next step of this method, we plan to host the dialogue workshop using the blueprint or mock-up of Output café that the designer made with Future Words. In this workshop, the stakeholders can find out which Future Word took form in certain spatial design. As a result, they can share their needs with the designers and the designers can explain their design objectives to the stakeholders.

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