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THE A-Z OF CO-DESIGN

A brief introduction to participatory design



Introducing the A-Z of Co-Design

Co-design, or participatory design, is about the meaningful involvement of end users in the design process. By taking account of a wider range of perspectives and experiences, we can design more inclusive - more innovative - solutions, products and services that are better suited to users' needs.

Presented in bite-sized form, this A-Z explores the origins and background of participatory design. It looks at the practical methods and techniques you can use in a participatory design project, and at the key roles, principles and issues these projects entail. It explores topics you might be familiar with and others which might be completely new.

Many of the hints and tips are based on our own experiences of delivering a rich, varied programme of co-design activities as part of the three-year research project, Mobility, Mood and Place. Bringing together architecture and landscape architecture students and older adults, we investigated how we can design environments that are enjoyable to be in, and easy to move around, as we age.

We've combined insights from this work with those of experts from a range of fields - from planning to design, geography to health, sociology to gerontology. Extensively referenced, we hope you will find this handy, practical guide both supportive and inspirational in your future participatory design endeavours.

The Mobility, Mood and Place research team

www.mobilitymoodplace.ac.uk

Foreword

"The participation of end users, and the invaluable contribution this makes to design outputs, can often be significantly underestimated. To capture the wealth of expertise, resources and additional sources of information for successful participation in this simple and highly attractive format is nothing short of inspirational. We feel sure this engaging chart will encourage many to dip in and discover methods and techniques they had never considered.

Participation with all stakeholders, including the important end users, is essential if we are to evolve to a truly inclusive and just society. The A-Z allows readers to easily digest a spectrum of ways in which any designer can do this, from familiar methodologies such as walkalongs, to new techniques such as PhotoVoice.

It will no doubt provoke interest and discussion and draw readers back to it time and time again. Once the CAE team started dipping into the content, we had to go back for more! A tool like this is a catalyst to fresh thinking, encouraging us all to be innovative in how we develop designs with invaluable user input along the way - involving, sharing and feeding back and forth thoughts and ideas - it really places the right people at the heart of the process.

The Centre for Accessible Environments truly welcomes this engaging tool which will help us all to use participatory design as the norm. We hope to see it adorning walls everywhere!"

Jean Hewitt, Director
Centre for Accessible Environments



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