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Fingers First, Analysis After: Using the Scenario Canvas to Scaffold Innovation

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ABSTRACT
While there is a strong tradition for participatory design and more recently participatory innovation, there is still a need to explore the tricky transition between the two. This paper introduces the Scenario Canvas that takes elements from both cooperative design and business modeling in an attempt to link concept generation with its impact in a collaborative process. We describe the method and discuss how it was used within a participatory workshop centered around innovative concepts and their impact on public sector work.

Author Keywords
Innovation, scenario canvas, participatory methods.

ACM Classification Keywords
H.1.2

INTRODUCTION
Participation requires a common language for discussion and so participatory design has advocated prototyping as a way of achieving a shared understanding (Ehn 1993). As more partners and participants are brought into user driven innovation projects, we move from design towards business requirements. How can we develop a shared language and tools for collaboration, especially as not everyone comes from a business background? Constraints include a short timeframe, a desire for active participation and innovative thinking on demand. This position paper builds upon work in business modeling (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2009) by conducting a mash-up with tinkering (using found materials) to explore the scale of impact of a design concept from a local context to societal implication, drawing upon participants’ values, skills and embodied knowledge.

THE SCENARIO CANVAS
Instead of starting from scratch and generating a new method for innovation, we explore a tool that takes elements from business modeling and participatory design and “remix” them in anticipation that the amalgam would both scaffold the participant’s creative and analytic modes. We call it the Scenario Canvas and suggest the method has a place within participatory processes that need both new product development and a business case.

The Four elements
The canvas serves as a blank slate for moving from a loose assembly of ideas (concept bundling) to mapping out changing roles of stakeholders (touchpoint reconfiguration) to describing potential pressures (future environment) and finally mapping the opportunities (value flow) (fig 1). The first half of the canvas requires participants to articulate the concept value through making and mapping to a particular context, using easily accessible materials in a hands-on format. The second half, using the concept as the focus, pushes the participants to describe the network impact as if this concept were to exist, including the conflicting forces in play and the opportunities it opens. A key feature of the Scenario Canvas also includes a section for a timeline that indicates how far into the future this scenario takes place.

Placement within a workshop process
The Scenario Canvas can be used for workshops that require “new thinking” for innovation where either a concept has already been developed or needs to be generated. We have used it after a brainstorming process that generated hundreds of ideas and then followed the canvas in refining and articulating the business case for particular ideas. We suggest the following four-part structure: 1) Brainstorming of ideas. This can be through any of the familiar techniques. 2) Concept bundling which takes a series of ideas and makes them tangible. 3) Value and impact articulation by completing a blank canvas on large sheets of paper. 4) Peer evaluation through a demonstration of the concept. A critique session such as this allows for comparison among workshop groups and suggests an additional meta-analysis.

OUR EXPERIENCE
We have experimented with the Scenario Canvas as part of the Stericentral Project (Kilbourn & Bay 2010) in which 15 organizations are exploring the role of automation technology in hospital sterile supply wards. In November 2011, we held a half-day workshop to create the “ultimate sterile supply ward” as part of the project with 25 participants. The first half was a structured brainstorming session with different techniques to elicit new thinking around sterilization of medical devices. The second half we used the Scenario Canvas, as described (fig. 2). One of the resulting concepts was the “3D Printstrument” in which on-demand 3D printing of new medical devices was envisioned as a solution. In many ways this was considered one of the most valuable results of the workshop as elicited through the evaluation as it was both novel and ambitious. Including the timeline...
element where the groups needed to check off how far into the future the idea could be implemented was another resource for negotiation. Even in a project with a long-term output, picking the correct time frame requires agreement. However, some participants questioned the inherent risks in the scenario, such as resource consumption and quality of instruments. One comment directed at the Scenario Canvas is that it allowed for “thinking about the role Sterile Supply employees have” in that it linked the idea with the context while also straddling the business and societal impact.

**DISCUSSION**

If we are to scaffold participation in business design, tools need to allow for a shared language or at least create a boundary object. By using a “fingers first” strategy where making physical as a warm-up allows for everyone a place at the discussion when transitioning to business language. “Analysis after” brings the details of design to scale up beyond a particular context to larger impact. The canvas acts as a kind of dashboard to get an overview of the entire scope of new products, with a collaborative focus. Participatory design will need to play a role in business modeling in an era where all organizations are considered in terms of input of resources and output of deliverables. We are the ones to acknowledge the intangible values that are left behind in current accounting schemes, and use it as a resource to envision more inclusive futures.

**REFERENCES**

