Knowing things: Objects, knowledge and interaction

Workshop, 6-7 October 2014
University of Southern Denmark, Kolding

Organised for the project
SOCIAL OBJECTS FOR INNOVATION AND LEARNING
http://www.social-objects.net

Objects are essential for how people create and experience social life, and relate to the physical environment around them. In this workshop we consider objects and interaction, focusing on people’s knowledge of objects’ nature, role, and potential, to make sense, conduct activities, and accomplish social actions.

We seek research contributions which address the workshop theme of ‘knowing things’.

Background

Participants can ‘know things’, for example, by perceiving objects, handling them, referring to and describing them, or exchanging, assembling, interpreting, imagining, appreciating, controlling, or responding to them. ‘Knowing things’ might be considered in two main senses: first, how participants know objects, what they are, and can do; second, how participants treat objects as knowing, in that understanding might be offloaded onto (be available from) them, and the dynamic nature and status of objects may reflect previous knowing and activity. In different ways, people treat objects as known, unknown, knowable, or becoming known. Such knowing may also become problematic, at moments of uncertainty, dispute, or asymmetry, which need repair and resolution.

This workshop explores: how, in or through interaction, people orient to and manifest their knowledge of objects, locally and in the moment; how the features, affordances, or design of objects can impact knowing for activity, experience, and interaction.

For interaction studies, especially relevant are three scholarly influences and concerns:

1) epistemics: participants deal with such matters as access to knowledge, rights, and entitlements and obligations to know, where such knowing is dynamic, contingent, and continuously monitored and negotiated to organise participation and progress social actions;

2) cognition: cognition can be appreciated as situated, embodied, and socially shared, as contextualized in meaningful practices as participants interact with one another and with features of the material world - cognition can be distributed into/ across objects and systems in the environment;

3) workplaces and institutions: knowing (understanding) has long been a concern for studies of interaction in work and institutional settings, as participants coordinate and collaborate to achieve setting-specific goals. Objects (e.g. tools in-the-hand, displays, even the body itself) inform how participants organize attention, conduct and progress activities, monitor events, and hold one another accountable for awareness and responsibility.

Call for participation

We seek proposals which address the workshop theme. Proposals can be for presented papers, or other forms of contribution such as posters, demonstrations, or data sessions. The workshop welcomes local, national, and international researchers.

There is a limit of 30 participants, and proposals will be reviewed for inclusion. There is no registration fee.
Possible publication

Selected workshop contributions will be considered for publication in a peer-reviewed collection. If you are not able to attend the workshop but are interested in publishing in this collection, please contact Maurice Nevile (nevile[at]sdu.dk).

Project on Social Objects for Innovation and Learning

The workshop is a key activity for Year One of the project Social Objects for Innovation and Learning, conducted with funding from a Velux Foundation grant and the University of Southern Denmark, and in connection with SDU Design (http://sdudesign.sdu.dk).

Important dates

Submit your proposal of 300 words (maximum) to Maurice Nevile (nevile[at]sdu.dk). Proposals will be peer reviewed.
1 July 2014: last day to submit proposal
15 July 2014: notification of review decision

Some possible questions to guide contributions

- how do participants in interaction demonstrate and act on their knowledge of objects, such as availability, properties, affordances etc.?
- how do participants manage and negotiate varying or asymmetrical knowledge of objects?
- how does participants’ knowledge of objects impact action and participation?
- how might objects’ design and nature impact how they are known and experienced?
- how do participants identify, categorise, refer to objects, as known, unknown, knowable etc.?
- how are objects treated or designed as somehow ‘knowing’, for impacting understanding and action in or for interaction?
- how do participants orient to accountability for knowledge about objects?