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Editor's Introduction

The rhetoric and professional communication community holds a genuine love for the practice of everyday life. Take the two major works of user experience design as example: The appreciation to mundane artifacts like *The Maple Sugar Book* led to a reclamation of the value of user knowledge — "the lost, colonized voices of know-how"—in our technological order (see Johnson's *User-Centered Technology*, 1998), and the curiosity to everyday genres like post-it notes sparked a groundbreaking sociocultural design approach of genre tracing (see Spinuzzi's *Tracing Genres through Organizations*, 2003).

A sustained interest in "everyday life" also represents the development of user experience research in a broader arena. As Rogers and Marshall (2017) observed, the recent popularity of the phrase "in the wild"[1] in the literature signaled a research shift that "researchers are going into people's homes, the outdoors, and public places, to study their reactions to, uses, and appropriation of a diversity of technologies" in everyday life (p.1).

This special issue is a situated response in this discourse context, to investigate research issues surrounding the mundaneness and messiness of "Designing for Everyday Life in Global Contexts." For the past two decades, a steadily growing body of work on the intersections of intercultural communication and information design has been developing within the field of Technical and Professional Communication (e.g., Kostelnick,1995; Chu, 1999; Fukuoka, 1999; Honold, 1999; Thatcher, 1999; Zahed, Van Pelt, & Song, 2001; St. Amant, 2002, 2005; Sun, 2006, 2012; Agboka, 2013; Breuch, 2015; Gustav, 2015; St. Amant & Rice, 2015; Maher & Getto, 2016; Sun & Getto, 2017; Zhou & Getto, 2017). This work variously seeks to articulate culturally situated and rhetorically sound practices for designing in intercultural, cross-cultural,

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[1] A term refers to research conducted in naturalistic settings rather than in controlled labs.

and global contexts, contexts in which a variety of cultures, identities, and technologies are required.

Yet there is still much work to be done. We need more work at the intersections of professional communication, intercultural inquiry, and design that take into account the everyday practices users engage in in global contexts. We need a better understanding of how to design for the everyday lives of users around the world, in other words. The challenge is that these lives are as complex as the technologies being used. If we know one thing, it is that users are very good at taking technologies built in one context and using them for a completely different purpose, and in a completely different context, that the designers of those technologies could never have guessed at. And we also know that designers and users bring with them cultural biases, goals, and preferences that must be accounted for at the deepest levels of design and communication.

Messy? Yes, messiness, or "mess" illuminates that "technological realities are always contested" (Bell & Dourish, 2011, Loc 108). As noted in the works of Johnson and Spinuzzi, the mundaneness and messiness of everyday life often imply the invisibility of user's life worlds and user's powerlessness in the whole structure. In probing into the mundaneness and messiness of global design for everyday life, our goal is similar to what Michele de Certeau envisions: We should no longer regard everyday practices as "merely the obscure background of social activity," and we need to have "a body of theoretical questions, methods, categories, and perspectives" to articulate everyday practices and "penetrat[e] this obscurity" (1984, p. xi).

This special issue on "Designing for Everyday Life in Global Contexts" collects such endeavors on the theoretical questions, methods, categories, and perspectives to penetrate the obscurity, amplify once lost, muffled voices, and articulate the meaningfulness of everyday life. The work here seeks to understand, exemplify, and interrogate the impacts of design on global contexts and vice versa. Some of the questions it both asks and answers include:

- How should information be designed based on the cultural location of designers and users?
- How are tried-and-true design methodologies such as usability testing impacted by the presence of users from a different culture than the researchers?
- How does translation change the dynamics common to design, such as the creation of instructions, interfaces, and mental models?
- What are the limitations of genre when considering the ways in which users from a variety of cultures will approach a single communication artifact?

We hope that this work will provoke as many questions as it answers, however.

In "Testing in translation: Conducting usability studies with transnational users," Emma Rose and Robert Racadio ask "What do we mean by usability in everyday life?" (pg. 6). Their answer to this question is to approach usability as a form of social justice work by supporting transnational users attempting to use documentation in order to access services available under the Affordable Care Act. They found that usability testing as a method must be adapted to the context of use, linguistic requirements, and conversational style of transnational users in order

for it to be effective. They further argued that doing so in order to help such users gain access to potentially life-saving healthcare information can be an act of communicative justice.

In "What can Asian eyelids teach us about user experience? A culturally reflexive framework for UX/I design," Jennifer Sano-Franchini answers her own question with a provocative argument, that "race matters to user experience (UX) design" (pg. 28). She predicates this argument on several interconnected assumptions: that designers and users are always already culturally situated, that user experiences are shaped by culturally contingent and ideologically laden forms of representation, and that because design contributes to the creation and communication of culture, designers need to consider the potential for social impact and harm to their users. Using user engagement on YouTube videos about eyelid surgery as a cultural lens, she examines the implications of design for everyday users.

In "Making culture relevant in technical translation with dynamic equivalence: The case of bilingual instructions," Massimo Verzella asks if there is a best practice for translating how-to instructions from one language to another in a way that foregrounds usability. Specifically, he looks at translation techniques and their impact on the creation of usability documentation across language barriers: explicitation, implicitation, generalization, and particularlization. Ultimately, he finds that to ensure that translation results in usable documentation across languages, "more intense collaborative work between writers and translators" is called for (pg. 55).

Finally, in "Designing life: A socio-cultural analysis of IKEA *Kitchen Planner* and UX," Yunye Yu examines the appropriateness of a computer-aided design program for users from a wide variety of contexts. She asks: how does such software connect action and cultural meaning in local contexts? Comparing the Swedish, Chinese, and U.S. versions of the software, Yu performs a usability review of the software and finds that the various versions of the software represent "meaningful variations responding to local cultural traditions" (pg. 79). Her auto-ethnography of a relatively simple planning tool begs further questions about the degree to which single applications can be built with transformative affordances that respond to various cultural contexts.

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