

# Location-based tools for neighbourhood transformation

Module reflection by  
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*This module was about creating tools that help to get insight in what is important to people in some community. This is important information to be able to evoke discussion, cooperation and change of behaviour within this community. In this module the community context was the neighbourhood Eckhart-Vaartbroek in Eindhoven.*

Since this neighbourhood has some issues on a social and economical level, the municipality and some affiliated parties want this neighbourhood to transform to more pleasant place to live for all inhabitant. They don't want perform this as some operation that is imposed from above. Nowadays most municipalities in the Netherlands tend more to facilitate governance rather than just being the government. This means people need to be more involved in both decision making and taking action by for instance forming committees, action groups or community centres.

To develop a suitable tool for his particular community context at first we needed to get to know this neighbourhood and its inhabitants. This is done by trying to find out what the people find important within the imposed very broad subject of sustainability.

For me personally this meant getting out of my comfort zone to approach people and

moreover, to approach people from different alloy that I may not approach normally. By doing this I learned that once people allow you to explain what you are doing they are willingly to help. This was even stronger emphasized by the fact that people where more willingly to participate when I stopped them by saying 'can I ask you something' – let them help me with my problem – opposed to 'Would you like to take some time to participate..' – this makes them feel they have to commit, making it their problem.



**Getting out of my comfort zone Approaching people at the shopping mall.**

The process of getting to know the neighbourhood started with some simple wandering around and interviewing the people we walked into.

Using the information we gathered a first probe was developed. Since most of my fellow team members had a fairly expectant attitude I had to take the lead in the ideation process that followed. This is a role that I don't take naturally, especially if more exuberant persons are part of the group. By taking the lead in the ideation process I found myself to become more creative in the ideation process. I came up with lot of ideas, also to trigger my fellow team members to come up with ideas as well. The focus I chose within this module was 'physical to digital'. This meant we had to find some way to attract people to be able to get to know them and to engage them by presenting something physical/concrete. The translation to digital could provide a platform to further facilitate governance and discussion. Several iterations for a tool that supports this where developed, tested and further elaborated.



Developing the first probe



The second probe in action at the BIEB



Setting up the third iteration



Testing the fourth iteration at the entrance of the Eckhart shopping mall



Testing the fifth iteration

It was very pleasant to keep the creating, testing and elaborating design iteration cycles close to each other.



**Evaluating the second and third design iterations**

During all processes I made photos and filmed. Something that I usually do in a pre-arranged setting opposed to a dynamic setting in which you can't redo scenes. From this I learned to focus more on just capturing things rather than to always put all the effort in finding the best composition, depth of field and light settings. When we started creating more elaborate probes/tools I focused on creating physical elements. One of the goals I set in my PDP is rapidly creating prototypes that are still aesthetically appealing. For this I worked a lot with thin cardboard to create boxes. By creating many boxes – seventeen and some failures – I found that every box was creating in a shorter amount of time but also looked more tight.



**Making cardboard boxes**

I deliberately chose to let others work on the design of the digital domain interface because

I wanted to focus on physical prototyping but also because interface design is something I already worked on very much.

During a lunch break I designed the logo for a name I came up with – 'Participile' - and after making some sketches and decisions, two of my fellow teammates started working on the interface design. They took more than a whole day to finish this. Since it took quite some time I was surprised to see that they only created a non-working visual mock-up in the end. I am pretty sure I could have done this in 2 to 3 hours. This is something to remember.

Apparently I am way more experienced and skilled in interface design than some fellow ID master students. Whilst they might be way better than me in some or many other things, I should keep this in mind, as it might be something that I stand out in. This is based though on one experience with two fellow students, so I should find out how experienced other students are with designing interfaces before actually drawing this conclusion.



**Final 'Participile' logo**

If I would do this module again I would be more prepared for rapid prototyping. Since this was my first module and my second week at the University of Eindhoven I did not exactly know which facilities we could use on such short notice.

Another insight that this module provided me was the fact that going out on the streets with some big and noticeable installation is a very powerful tool to attract people by triggering their curiosity. This is something that I will keep in mind for future designs definitely.

By receiving feedback on my work and this reflection I hope to learn more about things I could have done better but mostly on how to reflect on modules. This is my first actual reflection and as I defined in my PDP; I still really need to find my way within the unique educational model at the University of Eindhoven.

*The final video of our project – Participile – can be found at: <https://vimeo.com/120791328>*