



Walk-shop

Introduction

Initiated by the University of Utrecht, the walk-shop is explored as a situated and experiential co-design method to involve diverse participants in engaging with the smart city on the ground, in real urban contexts, and in teasing out controversies. Through this process, the aim is that citizens do not only become more aware of, or react to externally formulated controversies (e.g., surveillance, 5G health hazards), but also co-produce means for collectively forming questions and publics around shared matters of concern. The walk-shop method is being prototyped in different urban contexts (Amersfoort and Utrecht) with different audiences and in relation to various themes related to the smart city (e.g., urban datafication, sustainability, inclusion).

Goal of the session

This method combines data walking methods (Powell 2018; Van Zoonen et al. 2017) with co-design methods intended at involving non-expert users and enabling the design process. The walk-shop method complements the previous "[Controversy Workshop](#)" by prompting the participants to engage with datafication aspects of the existing smart city through first-hand experiences of space, knowledge sharing and reflexivity.

The intended outcome of this method is a list of potential smart city controversies based on the interpretations of participants involved in the session. Identifying controversies helps to acknowledge the impacts of technology at different levels, and is the first step for the development of tactics that address the tensions that might originate from the implementation of urban technology.



Description of the method

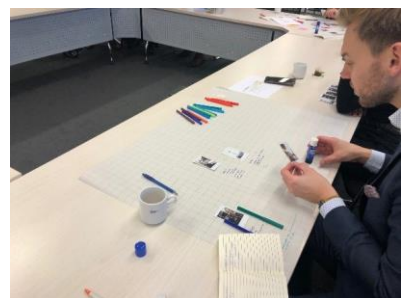
This method was initially prototyped during the NWO Consortium Partner meeting in November 2019 and it consisted of 3 different steps:

Step 0- Setting the scene

The session starts with a talk about how the material world around us changes due to datafication and other smart city processes, and what it means to make issues visible to encourage deeper engagement in thought and discussion about smart cities. The aim of the talks is to nudge participants to reflect and debate during the session with a specific mindset.

Step 1- Walk

Divided in small groups, the participants walk in the city for 30 minutes approximately. During the walk, they need to identify smart city technology, and debate within the group the values related to this technology in the city (i.e. autonomy, freedom, friendship etc.). To ensure that the participants kept track of their discussions and maps, each member of the group takes a different role: note taker, photographer, navigator. The note taker summarizes the discussion, the photographer takes pictures of the urban technology they encounter in the city, and the navigator drafts the route that they are following.





Step 2- Map the walk

After the walk, the co-design session begins. In this step, the participants map their walk. Based on their experiences, for each technology, they discuss potential tensions among values originating from the implementation of this technology in the city. These tensions can occur within a value or among multiple values (i.e. due to allocating multiple meanings to privacy or an existing tension between privacy and other values such as security or autonomy). The result of this step is an overview of various controversies associated to technology in the city, in the context of Amersfoort.

Step 3- Development of tactics

Having defined controversies in step 2, in step 3, the participants develop tactics to tackle this controversy. To this end, they first reflect in their groups on the levels of visibility of the identified controversies, in reference to how visible they were in the public sphere or to what extent people debated them. The three main levels of visibility are:

- Visible: controversies that are actively debated among multiple sectors of society.
- Less visible: controversies about which only specific sectors of society debate.
- Not visible: hidden controversies that are not at all debated.

Based on the levels of visibility of issues, the participants formulate various tactics or design interventions to make controversies more visible and debatable in the city among various stakeholders.





References

Powell, Alison. 2018. "The Data Walkshop and Radical Bottom-up Data Knowledge." In *Ethnography for a Data-Saturated World*, edited by Hannah Knox and Dawn Nafus. Manchester University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526127600.00018> .

Zoonen, Liesbet van, Fadi Hirzalla, Jiska Engelbert, Linda Zuijderwijk, and Luuk Schokker. 2017. "'Seeing More than You Think': A 'Data Walk' in the Smart City." *Bang the Table* (blog). 2017. <https://www.bangthetable.com/blog/data-walk-in-smart-city/>