

A Day in the Life

HOW: Catalog the activities and contexts that users experience throughout an entire day.

WHY: This is a useful way to reveal unanticipated issues inherent in the routines and circumstances people experience daily.

IDEO asked potential wearers of a drug-delivery patch to document their daily behaviors including those that might affect the function of the patch - getting wet, snagging on clothing, etc.



Behavioral Archaeology

HOW: Look for the evidence of people's activities inherent in the placement, wear patterns, and organization of places and things.

WHY: This reveals how artifacts and environments figure in people's lives, highlighting aspects of their lifestyle, habits, priorities and values.

Noting that people efficiently organized multiple work tasks by stacking paper all over their desk surfaces, IDEO invented a brand-new system furniture element to support this.

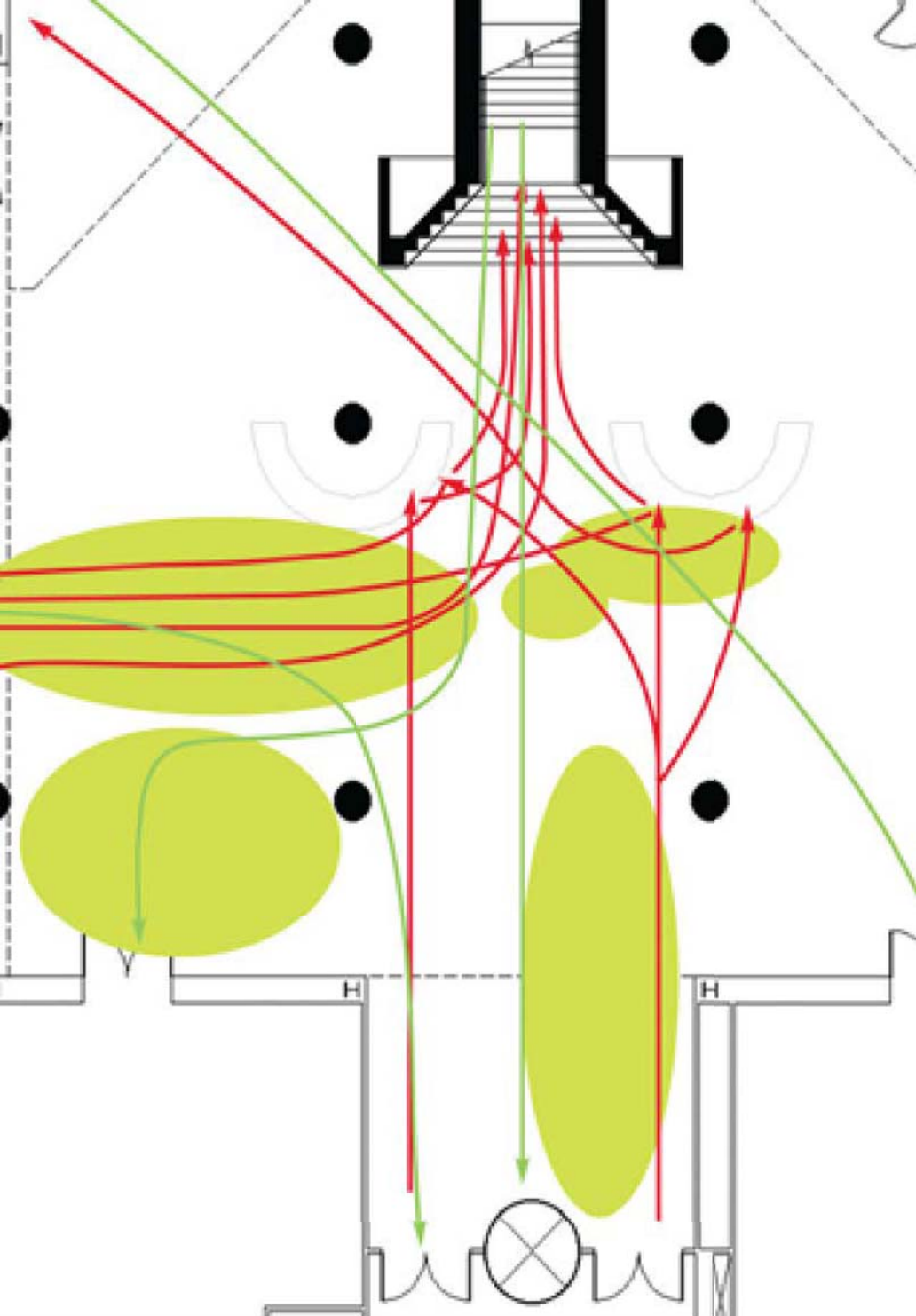


Behavioral Mapping

HOW: Track the positions and movements of people within a space over time.

WHY: Recording the pathways and traffic patterns of occupants of a space helps to define zones of different spatial behaviors.

Tracking the paths of visitors helped designers to identify the traffic spots and the vacant, underused areas of a museum lobby.





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Fly on the Wall

HOW: Observe and record behavior within its context, without interfering with people's activities.

WHY: It is useful to see what people actually do within real contexts and time frames, rather than accept what they say they did after the fact.

By spending time in an operating room, IDEO designers witnessed the regard with which the surgeons treated a transplant organ and incorporated these ideas into the transport box they were designing.

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Guided Tours

HOW: Accompany participants on a guided tour of the project-relevant spaces and activities they experience.

WHY: Making an exploration of objects and actions in situ helps people recall their intentions and values.

By following users through their homes, the IDEO team understood the various motivations behind ways photographs are used and stored.





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Personal Inventory

HOW: Document the things that people identify as important to them as a way of cataloging evidence of their lifestyles.

WHY: This method is useful for revealing people's activities, perceptions, and values as well as patterns among them.

For a project to design a handheld electronic device, the IDEO team asked people to show and describe the personal objects they handle and encounter every day.

Rapid Ethnography

HOW: Spend as much time as you can with people relevant to the design topic. Establish their trust in order to visit and/or participate in their natural habitat and witness specific activities.

WHY: This is a good way to achieve a deep firsthand understanding of habits, rituals, natural language, and meanings around relevant activities and artifacts.

In exploring opportunities for internet-enabled devices, an IDEO team spent time with families from different ethnic, economic, and educational backgrounds to learn about their daily patterns.





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Shadowing

HOW: Tag along with people to observe and understand their day-to-day routines, interactions, and contexts.

WHY: This is a valuable way to reveal design opportunities and show how a product might affect or complement users' behavior.

The IDEO team accompanied truckers on their routes in order to understand how they might be affected by a device capable of detecting their drowsiness.



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Social Network Mapping

HOW: Notice different kinds of social relationships within a user group and map the network of their interactions.

WHY: This is a useful way to understand interpersonal and professional relationship structures within workgroups.

Understanding the social relationships within a workplace helped IDEO to articulate how environment design could support these important connections.



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Still-Photo Survey

HOW: Follow a planned shooting script and capture pictures of specific objects, activities, etc.

WHY: The team can use this visual evidence to uncover patterns of behavior and perceptions related to a particular product or context, as well as structure and inspire design ideas.

For a faucet design the team documented all the situations in which people accessed water.



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Time-Lapse Video

HOW: Set up a time-lapse camera to record movements in a space over an extended period of time.

WHY: Useful for providing an objective, longitudinal view of activity within a context.

The IDEO team recorded the activity of museum visitors over several days to learn how to improve space layout.