

FOUNDATIONS OF

INTERACTION DESIGN

ENTERTAINMENT IN THE SITTING ROOM

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A sitting room (also called a living room or lounge), is one of the main rooms in the house. It is known for being the primary hub for socializing and entertainment, with the majority of social interaction taking place in this room.

A typical sitting room has furnishings such as a sofa, an armchair, a coffee table and an entertainment system such as a TV or stereo. Traditionally, a sitting room also has a fireplace. This ensures a comfortable and relaxing space, as it is warm, and there is a lot to do.

From our research, this was the case for most of us, however, for one of our group members, Carolyn, this was not the case. She has recently moved into student accommodation and found that her sitting room was very rarely used.

"My sitting room doesn't have much. A couch, an old antique lamp, two chairs, a coffee table and a very old TV, huge in comparison to modern ones. which only has basic UPC channels"

The space was not used as it was not comfortable to be in. The users felt there was nothing to do, and were often bored, and therefore decided not to use the space. My group members and I thought this to be an interesting discovery and therefore decided to focus on this room for the purpose of our report.

The theme that was coupled with our space was entertainment. Entertainment involves anything that evokes a sense of happiness, amusement or enjoyment in the user. Fun is a synonym for entertainment and simply involves doing something that makes you happy, gives you enjoyment and helps you relax during your free time.

Entertainment and fun are very important in our lives. One needs to relax and enjoy their free time in order to live a happy life. We believe it is very important to provide this necessity in the home so you have access to the joy that it provides daily. We strive to incorporate an element of entertainment and fun into the sitting room with our design in order to provide people a method of relaxation and enjoyment and simply involves doing something that makes you happy, gives you enjoyment and helps you relax during your free time.

For the purpose of this report, we utilized a number of different IDEO cards under 3 categories, Learn, Look and Ask. From this we were able to obtain a better understanding of our space and its users, which further aided our research.

LEARN



Activity Analysis

Each member of our group undertook an activity analysis in their sitting room, documenting the users, the activities, the objects and the interactions of the room. This enabled us to identify our target audience, as well as our main priorities when it comes to the design of our product.

It was discovered that people's main priority in the sitting room is relaxation. All of the individual findings from this analysis can be seen later in this report where we reflect on the space, its users and the activities that take place there.

Affinity Diagrams

Through mind mapping, we were able to create an affinity diagram of the objects and activities of the room. We arranged them into categories, and sub-categories based on their relevance to each other and to our room and theme. This allowed us to easily determine what works together, and make connections that may have previously gone unnoticed.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

Cross- cultural comparison

As part of our exploration of our room and theme, we researched how sitting rooms differ across different cultures. We decided to do this in order to broaden our idea spectrum and also to get a better insight into other possible markets for our products. This proved to be very beneficial as it helped us to step outside of the box and to think of other target audiences besides the average middle-class people of the western world.



Figure 3.1 Typical Western Sitting room



Figure 3.2 African Hut



Figure 3.3 American Bachelor Pad



Figure 3.4 Arabian Palace



Figure 3.5 Beach-side Villa

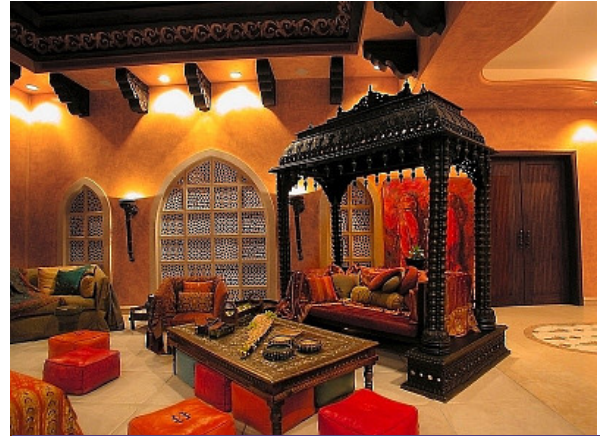


Figure 3.6 Moroccan Home



Figure 3.7 American Tech-Savvy Sitting Room

LOOK



A day in the life

For this element of our research, we requested users of our space to document their daily routines while occupying the space. This meant asking them to keep a diary of sorts to document every time they may have used the sitting room within the space of 4 day college days. Our findings showed with the five people occupying the space that it was common for them to use the space more so in the evenings rather than the mornings. In the space they we also inclined to be on a smart device instead of watching the television as it was old and “dodgy” at times

Behavioural Mapping

We also closely observed how users behaved in our space, and whether this was directly linked with our theme or not. This was done by being in the space with the users. It was important to observe how they interacted and what behaviours they had towards each other as well as the space itself. In our mapping, we discovered that the users in the space were particularly inactive due to the lack of technology in the room, mostly sitting on the couch, whilst on their smartphones, but not watching the television. Our mapping became interesting when more than two people were in the space, as most of the users were much more interactive with each other. The lack of entertainment within devices in the room was made up by entertainment of each other's company.

Still-Photo Survey

Our team all went out and investigated different types of people in our space. Where there were family members, children, or pets. We documented our findings by taking pictures of users and also included actual quick captions of what the users did in the space. What we discovered was by accessing the pictures taken by the team, we easily could understand the activity of a huge diversity of users in the space, in different locations



Figure 4.1 Emma's photo survey



Figure 4.2 Carolyn's photo survey



Figure 4.3 Carolyn's photo survey (2)

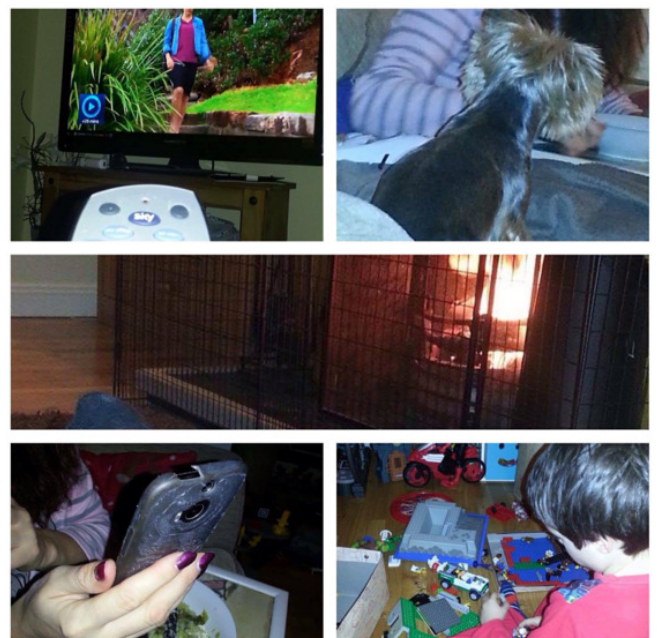


Figure 4.4 Chloe's photo survey



Five Whys

We gave our users a survey of “Five Why” questions to help us understand how they use, interact, and feel about the space. These questions were primarily picked in order to encourage users to express their feelings and behaviour about the space and if they believed our theme was also a contribution to the atmosphere in our space. Most users in our space agreed that with such little entertainment on hand in the sitting room, they found it difficult to socialise and also communicate to others, one user described the space as “cold and boring”

Narration

We asked our participants to talk aloud about what they’re thinking as they complete tasks in the sitting room. This allowed us to observe a user’s concerns and motives when it comes to entertainment in the sitting room. We found a lot of the users reasonings for their activities was to relax, to have some down time or to take some time out of a busy schedule.

Surveys and Questionnaires

We conducted a questionnaire with approximately 25 people in our participant group. Our main goal of this questionnaire was to find out what people’s main goals in the sitting room are and also what the sitting room means to them as a part of their home

Survey Questions	Yes	No
1. Do you typically use the sitting room in the evening time?	✓	
2. Do you find being in there relaxing?	✓	
3. Do you hang out with peers/friends/family in the sitting room?		✓
4. Would you consider the sitting room entertaining?		✓
5. Typically most people are on their smartphone as well as watching TV in the sitting room do you agree with this statement?	✓	
6. Do you find it easy to hold conversation in the sitting room?	✓	
7. Does your family eat in the sitting room?		✓
8. Are your pets allowed in the sitting room too?	✓	
9. Do you find it a calming environment to be in?	✓	
10. Do you feel that Smart Tech Objects add to a persons comfort and entertainment in the sitting room?	✓	

Figure 5. Survey

Our group primarily based our secondary research on the aspects of our room(sitting room) and theme(entertainment). Together we each came up with 5 relevant products that are on the market today that relate to both our theme and our room.

For purposes of future developments of our assignment we decided to chose 5 between us to focus on. These 5 products were Amazon Echo, Phillip's Hue Lighting, Wireless Control 4, the Harmony Remote and the Insight Switch, all of which can be seen below.



Figure 6.1 Amazon Echo

Amazon echo is a modern, stylish, non-invasive device that plays music throughout your home. Although it is not specifically tailored to the sitting room it was found that this was the room its most used in. This device can play music from your mobile, your iPad etc. It can also play you the latest sports scores, international news and audio books.

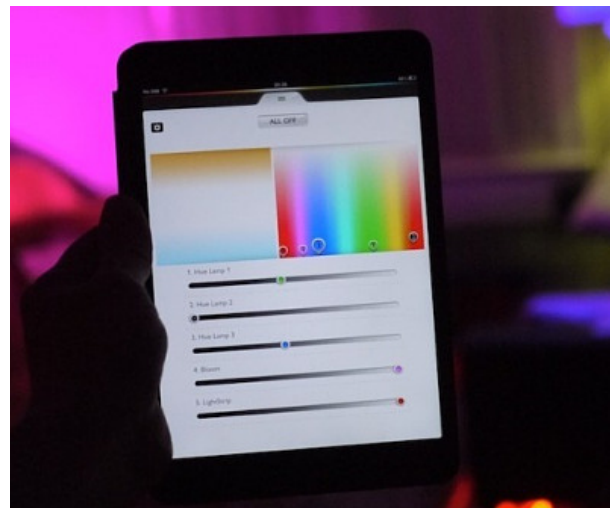


Figure 6.2 Phillip's Hue Lighting System

Phillip's Hue Lighting System is a innovative design created to tailor the atmosphere of your room to your own needs. They have created bulbs, which conveniently screw into normal light bulb sockets, that are connected to an app which you can download on your mobile device. From this app you can control the colour that these lights produce and you can also program it to change lighting to suit the activity at hand. For example, you may have a more colourful, bright light display for when you're entertaining your friends in comparison to the low, dim light you may use when you're sitting in front of the tv with a takeaway just relaxing with your significant other.



Figure 6.3 Wireless Control 4

Wireless Control 4 works basically the same way the Amazon echo does. With a slightly different yet still modern design this device plays music, news and other audios from your mobile devices. This device connect with both Android and iOS.



Figure 6.4 LogiTech Harmony Remote

This remote is one of the first kinds of 'Universal Remotes' created. This smart technology can control not only your television, but also your lighting, heating and air conditioning. Not only is it an innovative design but it's also amazingly convenient.



Figure 6.5 Belkin Insight Switch

This device plugs into your electricity sockets at home. They can then control anything you plug into them , for example, lighting and even what channels are available on your television. This is especially beneficial for parents as they can control what's available for children to watch without even being in the room.

We also made a 2x2 matrix and slotted these products into it. Our first axis went from least expensive to most expensive and the other went from understated to ostentatious

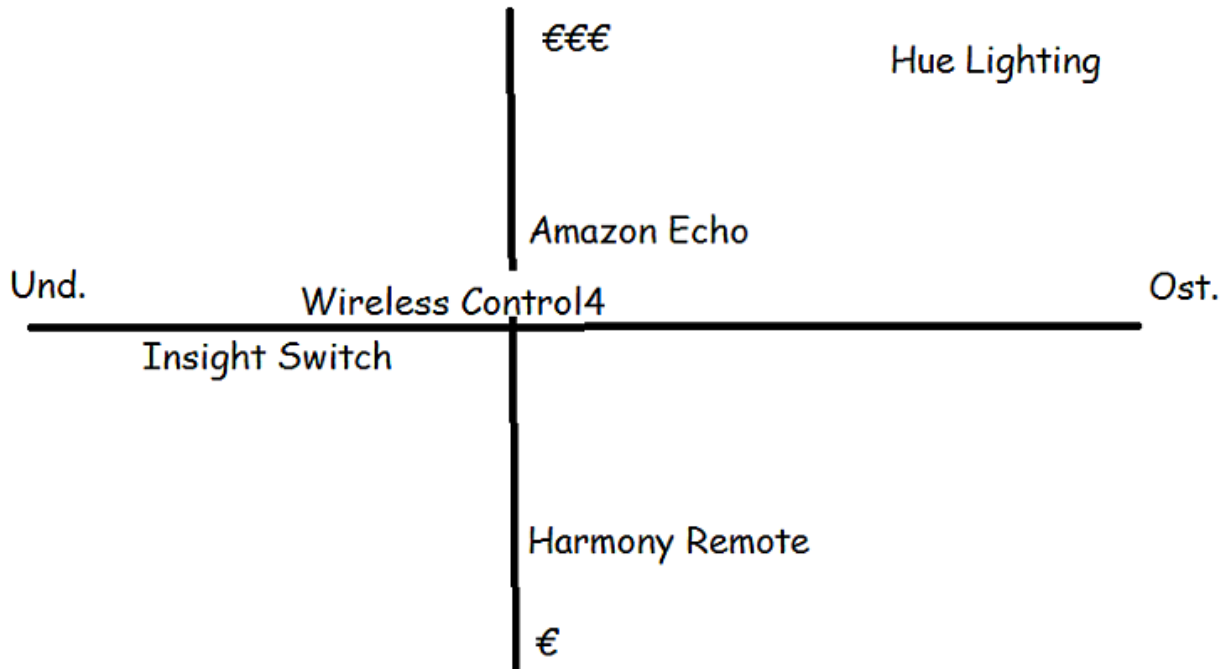


Figure 7 2x2 matrix

We based the products positions on our matrix on their appearance, functionalities and the brand's reputation. This was our rough idea of how these objects may look on this matrix..

Main findings

From our research, we discovered that most users tend to go into the sitting room to be part of an atmosphere of relaxation. The most common form of relaxation was sitting on a couch whilst using their smartphone or watching television. This made the user feel calm and content, and happy to be in the space. It was also discovered that the sitting room is a place of interaction. Over half the people we interviewed agreed that most of their physical conversation began and ended in the sitting room, which is also where most of our users (college students) interacted with their roommates. The other percent, adults (parents) interacted with their kids, their own parents, their friends and even their pets in the sitting room. We also decided on a student accommodation sitting room off campus, which is situated in a quiet estate. The house itself is quite old and the sitting room is very old and unused, because of its lack of entertainment devices. This made it the perfect space to design for.

Our assigned space

Through our assessment of the sitting rooms we've noticed that in homes such as student accommodation, the sitting room is used far less than a family home. With limited channels, an old fashioned, bulky television and outdated furniture the sitting room is only used for socialising between students before a night out.

On the other hand, we found that in family homes the sitting room is used as a place of relaxation. From our analysis we realised that it's in fact the parents, especially mothers, which use the space for some down time, as a break away from their busy lives. Those of us that are students that live at home don't use the sitting room as much. But when we do we're mostly social networking on our phones or laptops, which could be easily done in another room such as the bedroom but the sitting room is seen as a more cosy, comfortable and warm place to do these activities.

We've also discovered through our study of the room that young males use the sitting room less. As boys tend to be more interested in gaming, with most of their free time being spent in their rooms on games consoles.

Users

One of our group members has a younger child in the house. This was a great advantage to us because we were able to obtain a further insight into our room by seeing how a younger person uses it. We observed that he mainly used it for entertainment rather than relaxation like the other participants of our research. His activities involved playing with toys, playing games on consoles such as the Wii and an android tablet, and also watching cartoons on the television between games of Lego or superheroes. Obviously, with playing in the sitting room comes cleaning up the toys in the sitting room, which we noticed was a major task for the young four-year-old. This definitely doesn't involve entertainment or fun but there is a possibility that it could.

Another generation's experience with the sitting room that we explored was our elders. Through visiting grandparents in their homes we noticed the majority of their time spent in the sitting room. This is the place they watch television or read their books in order to relax, entertain their visitors and catch up on the news or do some crosswords to keep their mind active. We also noticed that the radio is a big part of the older generation's entertainment in the sitting room. Although it sounds a bit morbid, listening to the obituaries is a big part of our elder's day and keeps them updated on the world around them as our phones do for the younger generation. Comfort is also a big part of the elder's sitting room. More often than not a rocking chair or armchair is found in an older person's sitting room which helps them relax, in turn helping them be entertained.

Summary

It's clear from our research that the sitting room is a place full of entertainment. Between the television, projectors, mobile phones, laptops, radios there's a copious amount of technological entertainment systems present in the sitting room. Keep in mind that these findings are a result of only three group's experiences with sitting rooms. Therefore, there could be even more entertainment systems that other's use in a sitting room that we've not thought about. We hope to explore these in further research of our room and it's link to entertainment and fun.

Roles of each person

In order to get our creativity flowing, the first task that our group undertook was to create a brainstorm with associations to our room and theme. We could later then group together overlapping ideas. This allowed us to see which items, feelings or activities overlapped with both our theme and room. To gather more inspiration we then accumulated some pictures of some designs and technologies that incorporated our theme and room from the Internet. We looked at their visual design, their abilities, their pros and cons, what we could improve and most importantly who would use them. In doing this we got a better grasp on what type of people use what type of products. We then tried to tweak the designs in order to suit other specific types of people or just a broader group of people in general. This allowed us to make changes to something that already exists on the market to make it more accessible, user friendly, cost-efficient etc. in order to make a better product, which is very important when we are designing.

Our next task was an individual one. Each of us were required to analyse our room, its users and the activities that happen in the room. We then created a user journal with this information and also took photos of these activities in order to provide visual aid to our research. Each of the members in our group did this so we could get a wide span on every one of our sitting rooms and all the different types of people that use it. We also gave our participants a short survey to complete regarding entertainment and fun in the sitting room so we could get a better insight on their opinions on the topic.

Ethical treatment of participants

When ensuring the ethical treatment of our participants, it was important that we first informed them of the research we would be carrying out, its purpose, duration and what their role would be. As part of our research, we were required to take pictures of our assigned space. We first requested their permission, and if they agreed, informed them of when we would be taking pictures. It was also vital to inform each participant that they could withdraw their pictures if they were not happy with them. As our research also included an interview of our participants, it was crucial that we explained to them that they were under no obligation to answer, but it would greatly help our research if they did.

From the first part of this project we've learned that the main functionality of a sitting room for most people is based on relaxation and serenity. This is going to help us further our research and focus on bettering any ideas we have with this fact in the back of our minds.

We also learned how to treat our participants ethically and how to appropriately approach research in people's personal homes.

An area of interest at the moment is the student accommodation sitting room that we have in our group. This area lacks a lot of entertainment facilities therefore, we have a lot of scope for ideas and improvement in this space.

The information that we gathered in the first phase has been extremely beneficial towards our team in regards to progressing to phase two. Our findings brought us to conclusion that Carolyn's User Journal for her student accommodation sitting room is the key user space for our project. Through the IDEO methods used to observe the space as well as the users, we were able to successively understand the user's needs and to also able to understand what is lacking in their space. Within this space, the user's have a lack of engrossment and overall have a lack of entertainment to facilitate their needs, entertainment being our theme. We believe this space would be the perfect candidate for our upcoming research. Considering how little the space offers in regards to entertainment, we hope to design an interactive object to facilitate the needs of the users occupying the space as well as give them a great diversity of entertainment through our overall design.