



# Beyond Human-Centered Design

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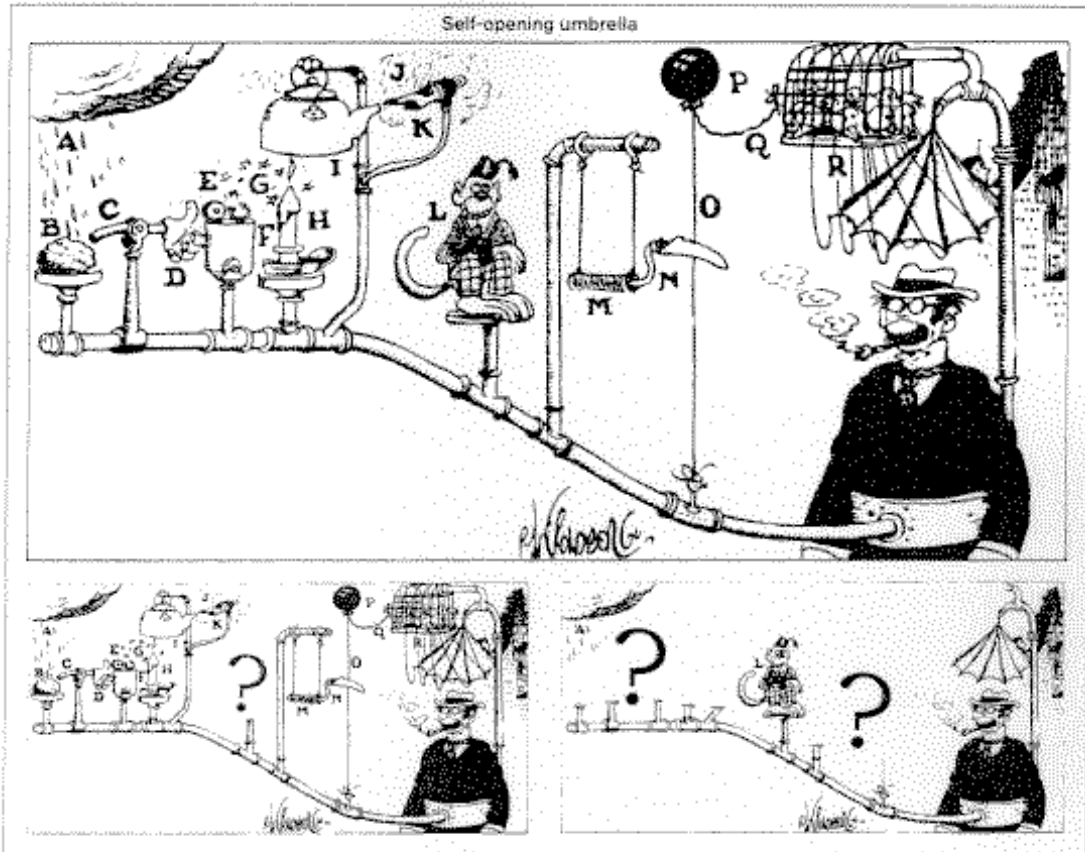
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# Are HCD methods really stifling innovation?



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First we must ask: what **IS** innovation, anyway?

Webster's dictionary describes innovation as:

**A new or novel idea, method, or device.**

But I like to think there's a little more to it...

# Practical innovation exhibits **ingenuity**



For most people to consider something innovative, it needs to be not only new or novel, but **ingenious** as well.



New or novel things, ideas, or methods that don't seem ingenious usually don't seem innovative, but rather simply different — or even genuinely **odd**.

# What makes something ingenious?

Ingenious ideas, methods, or things are **clever solutions to problems**.

- They allow people to do more with less (or seemingly less).
- They let people to do desirable things that they couldn't do before — or do them better/easier.
- They save time, effort, money, or all of the above.
- They can generally be implemented without undue cost and difficulty.

Rube Goldberg contraptions are funny because they break these rules!

# Design vs. business perspectives on innovation



**Designers** tend to focus on these two aspects of innovation:

- Allowing people to do more with less (or seemingly less).
- Empowering people to do desirable things that they couldn't do before — or do them better/easier.



**Businesspeople** tend to focus on these two aspects:

- Saving time, effort, **money**, or all of these.
- Implementing without undue cost and difficulty.

This can cause a mismatch in expectations!

# Innovation doesn't guarantee business success



This product was considered to be extremely innovative for its time, and was also extremely successful financially.



This product had most of the same features... **sixty years earlier!** It was a complete flop.

Many factors beyond the designer's control influence the success of a product or service.

# Three types of design innovation



1. Envisioning useful, usable, and desirable applications for new technologies.



2. Using available technologies in new ways to create novel human-centered applications.



3. Creating better, simpler, more elegant, and more compelling experiences for existing applications and technologies.

# HCD methods are important to design innovation

**Generative** HCD methods are **critical** for establishing a context for design innovation. They answer these questions:

- What are people currently doing?
- How are they currently doing it?
- What problems does this cause for them?
- What things **can't** they do that would really help them if they could?
- What might they want or need to do in the future?



# Don't blame the tools!



Blaming HCD methodological tools for lack of product innovation is like blaming **Black and Decker** tools for lack of architectural innovation.

It's **how** they are used that matters.

What **IS** the issue, then?

- Design educators and organizations need to better integrate generative research into their **design** practices
- Businesses aren't yet willing to invest in design innovation because it's still viewed as risky, or beside the point — and designers aren't able to fully communicate its value

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Thank You!