



Taking [A]part: The Politics and Aesthetics of Participation in Experience-Centered Design (Design Thinking, Design Theory)

John McCarthy, Peter Wright

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In *Taking [A]part*, John McCarthy and Peter Wright consider a series of boundary-pushing research projects in human-computer interaction (HCI) in which the design of digital technology is used to inquire into participative experience. McCarthy and Wright view all of these projects -- which range from the public and performative to the private and interpersonal -- through the critical lens of *participation*. Taking participation, in all its variety, as the generative and critical concept allows them to examine the projects as a part of a coherent, responsive movement, allied with other emerging movements in DIY culture and participatory art. Their investigation leads them to rethink such traditional HCI categories as designer and user, maker and developer, researcher and participant, characterizing these relationships instead as mutually responsive and dialogical.

McCarthy and Wright explore four genres of participation -- understanding the other, building relationships, belonging in community, and participating in publics -- and they examine participatory projects that exemplify each genre. These include the Humanaquarium, a participatory musical performance; the Personhood project, in which a researcher and a couple explored the experience of living with dementia; the Prayer Companion project, which developed a technology to inform the prayer life of cloistered nuns; and the development of social media to support participatory publics in settings that range from reality game show fans to on-line deliberative democracies.

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