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# Service Design for a Wilderness Experience Restaurant

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NatureCHI 2016, workshop at CHI'16 May 8 2016. San Jose, CA, USA.  
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**Abstract**

Experience design is one of the rising trends. In this paper, we describe a service design case, where experience design was applied to a wilderness restaurant in the arctic nature. In the design case, the perception of simplicity and technology-free environment is essential, and technical solutions need to fit to the holistic concept design. We present the design process and a concept design where the solution seeks to enhance the experience of the wilderness.

**Author Keywords**

Arctic design; experience design; nature; service design.

**ACM Classification Keywords**

H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous.

**Introduction**

Today, so called experience industry has grown into a large business done. Especially this is true in the areas where tourism forms a significant part of the service base, and where tourism services are actively developed. One of these type of areas is Lapland, which extends roughly from Arctic Circle towards north in Finland (as well as Sweden and Norway). Sparsely populated Lapland is known for its wildernesses,

remoteness, cold and snowy winters, and outdoor lifestyle. These are also the key points for the local tourism business to attract visitors around the world. In this paper, we present a service design case, where an experience driven design process was conducted to enhance the visit to a wilderness restaurant. The central idea behind the concept design was to maintain the remote and somewhat mythic experience of the place, while intensifying the atmosphere and providing visitor a high quality service experience. The context for the design case is a remote wilderness location, away from the urban everyday life, people and technology.

In prior art, enhancing the experiences in the nature has been addressed in Ambient Woods project, which added contextual multimedia elements in the woods for educational purposes [5]. Earlier works include examples, which combines QR codes and mobile device in order to achieve located presentations in a cultural heritage setting [7]. Posti et al. [4] have presented a demo and user study on a hiking application, which warns the user of approaching people in order to guide them towards more quiet tracks. However, contrary to the earlier examples, in our design case, we wanted to get away from the visible or obviously technical solutions. This approach has been promoted also in [1], where technology is faded to the background but simultaneously used to help people to experience the natural places differently. Designing for solitude and emphasizing the magical feeling of the wintery nature were the keys.

### **Design Case Wilderness Restaurant**

#### *Context and Background*

Our design case addresses an exclusive high quality restaurant located in the forestry wilderness of Finnish

Lapland, figure 1. It has a impressive history of being the hide away place of a former Finnish president Kekkonen, who used it to dining and have sauna with the heads of other countries, running important negotiations during the cold war times. Now the place belongs to an experience safaris company, and it still obtains the amazing atmosphere that made it so favorite for the president.



**Figure 1:** The wilderness restaurant.

Core of the project was to enhance the story and atmosphere of the place by service design. Story based service design gives a holistic view to customers experienced servicepath trough a story or narrative. In the project there were a vast amount of stories which could be utilized, and on the other hand the coziness by bringing furry and soft textures that can be related to bears. With stories one can created content and more value to the service. [2]

### *Design Process*

The design process included the following steps:

- mystery shopping, where the place is visited and observed as a customer
- co-creation workshops
- interviews with employers and management
- co-creation workshops with the service provider

In the co-creation workshops the story and style of the place was outlined, and the story behind the place was compared to customers' experience the place. As the outcome, the story was written and enhanced in the servicepath presentation with interior design, decoration, graphics, working clothes and actions of employees in a way that the all parts enhanced the story and the atmosphere. Story should be sensed multimodally. [1]

### *Restaurant Concept and the Role of Technology*

In a hideaway place in a wilderness, the nature has to be relevantly close to the user. In an exclusive place like this everything has to function well and smoothly, which means that also technological solutions are needed. Hiding the technology is essential to create right kind of atmosphere. [3]

Speakers have been hidden in wooden elements that disappear to the wooden roof and walls. In the dining room there is fire place with an open fire and candles, but the rest of the place is illuminated with artificial lights that emphasize the coziness of interior design. Lighting has to support the scene and give enough space for natural light.

Bear's lodge is used for exclusive dinners and sauna evenings. As in Finnish sauna tradition there is a hole in the ice for swimming. The hole is kept open by flowing water. At Finnish winter time it starts to get dark after

2 pm, so it can be already dark when the customers arrive. At the dark the nature can't be seen more than 20 meters from the windows. In the wilderness restaurant area, the nature has to be illuminated with technology. There are bright lights and real fire used to get mystical lighting as well as the nature visible for the customers.

The view from the Bear's lodge comes to a natural pond. The trees before and after the pond has been illuminated so the customers get the feeling of nature, see figure 2. Beyond the lights everything else is pure in darkness. In this nature the coziness and exclusiveness of the place becomes stronger.



Figure 2: Illumination concept for the place.

### **Arctic Design Approach**

This work is an example of Arctic Design design approach. The arctic environment and conditions force specific challenges and needs for services and products. Arctic design approach is looking for answers to the extreme conditions that living in the arctic enforces to us. Distances between towns are long, land area is sparsely populated, natural living conditions are harsh and, in some places, population is rapidly ageing. Design methods and approaches can help overcoming these geographical and environmental challenges.

Arctic design helps us to integrate and understand local communities with their histories and cultural context and develop new service solutions that utilize storytelling, as demonstrated in this case.

Arctic Design is about producing extreme wellbeing and competitive edge for circumpolar areas considering both natural environment and technological solutions that help in enduring and solving challenges as well as coping in the extreme conditions. Further, Arctic Design is a multi-disciplinary approach that connects areas of, interaction design, industrial design, service design and social design to increase wellbeing of the periphery and the marginal. Many new solutions include the use and interaction with new technologies. Arctic design is about design for extreme affordability, which focuses on need finding of the users, user empathy, user centered design, rapid prototyping, and collaborative dynamics as well as issues of social design [3].

Arctic design approach works as a living lab where we are able to design new technological solutions in collaboration with communities and companies located in the north that live with the extreme natural conditions. Companies can benefit from the use of arctic design approach when developing technological solutions in collaboration with various stakeholders. For example local tourism business can develop new solutions that both benefit from the local natural phenomena and maintain sustainability.

### Acknowledgements

We thank Lapin Safarit Oy and Bears Lodge for the opportunity to work with them.

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