

## P1 Thoughtless Acts – DUE in class Thursday January 7

*What happens when people improvise design for their own needs?*

**As Yogi Berra said**, “You can observe a lot by watching.” In this project you will practice observing people and their interaction with objects or places, with an eye to the act of improvising – of making their world fit their needs in ways that weren’t anticipated by a designer. The project is based on the concept of “thoughtless acts” as explored by Jane Fulton Suri (IDEO) in her book of that name (see <http://thoughtlessacts.com> )

“... notice the subtle and amusing ways that people react to the world around them. These ‘thoughtless acts’ reveal how people behave in a world not always perfectly tailored to their needs and demonstrate the kind of real-world observational approach that can inspire designers...”

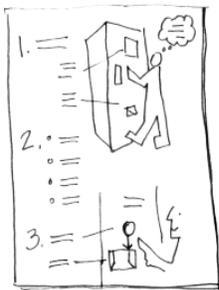
**The goals** of this project are to

- Become more sensitive to how people interact with the designed environment
- Recognize underlying needs that lead to improvisational behaviors
- Discovering design opportunities
- Using sketching to highlight an observation
- Making a strong start in your Idea Log.

**Read:** The thoughtlessacts.com web site and the attached excerpts from Suri’s book.

**Visuals:** Look around you for potential situations of design improvisation. They don’t need to be fancy – in fact everyday life is often the best source of interesting observations. Choose one that you find most interesting in revealing people’s unmet needs. Take a photo that captures your example (like the ones on the web site - Note, this means actually going out and taking a photo, not finding one on the web). Then, draw a sketch that captures the essential elements.

**Posters:** Prepare an 11" × 17" poster for posting and discussion in class. The poster should include:



- 1 A **photo** of the situation indicating the person and the interaction.
- 2 Your **sketch** (with annotations as useful) of the observation.
- 3 A short **description**, explaining the setting, the activities, tasks and motivations, and the underlying needs of the users.
- 4 Design **opportunities**. This isn’t to “solve the problem” but to see what directions for design it suggests (see Suri’s examples)

Come to class prepared to display and discuss your poster. Use **simple sketches** and **bold lettering** on your poster so it can be easily read from 4 to 6 feet away.

### More on the Idea Log

As you collect your observations and prepare your poster presentation for this project, begin making your Idea Log the center of your conceptual workspace for the course. Use your log as a place to:

- Compile a list of design improvisations you have personally experienced
- Brainstorm a list of places you might go to look for examples
- Record your observations, in sketch and annotation, paying attention to the details of setting, actors, task goals and motivation, actions, and outcomes
- Draw sketches of your poster presentation to plan its layout before preparing the full-sized (11x17) version you bring to class.

### Grading (This is an individual assignment)

- 40% Insight in the example
- 20% Creative potential for design as expressed in the opportunities
- 20% Clarity of exposition (writing)
- 20% Craft and use of different media (sketches, photographs,...) in poster design

*Credit: This exercise was inspired by a similar exercise in a course on Tangible User Interfaces taught by Kimiko Ryokai, Ryan Aipperspach, and David Nguyen at UC Berkeley.*