MOTIVATION IN THE MUSEUM - MEDIATING BETWEEN EVERYDAY ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

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We explore the concepts of motivation and motives in relation to creating engaging museum exhibitions. Drawing on Cultural Historical Activity Theory, we present a theoretical conception of motivation and motives and their relation to museum engagement. We propose an approach for creating engagement in museums by mediating between the everyday engagement of visitors and the knowledge presented in exhibition spaces. We present the preliminary results from a case study of the interactive RuneTable at the Moesgaard cultural heritage museum to exemplify our approach and to unfold our theoretical conceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Museums are facing increasing challenges regarding the design of new exhibition spaces and their role in society. Recent years have seen a growing recognition that museums need to give greater priority to the visitor experience and the ways in which exhibition spaces invite visitors to engage with natural or cultural history. This has led many museums in the direction of digital and interactive technologies in an effort to renew styles of communication and create new ways for visitors to engage in the exhibition space. This movement has attracted the attention of researchers within various fields concerned with the design and understanding of interactive technologies. In particular, the fields of Interaction Design, HCI, and CSCW have begun to shed much needed light on the use and potential of technologies to engage visitors in exhibition spaces. These range from the studies of social interaction and participation in museums (e.g. Heath al. 2002) to studies on learning approaches (e.g. Pierreux et al. 2007) and visitor engagement (e.g. Edmonds et al. 2008). Engagement is a situational phenomenon that occurs in the interplay between visitors and the exhibition space, but it is also very much rooted in the visitors’ prior experiences, knowledge and preferences. Indeed, as argued by Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1995), a central issue for museums is to create strong links between the museum and the everyday life of the visitor. In this respect, a central aspect of understanding how exhibition spaces may engage visitors is to understand the structures of motivation and the relations between the everyday life of the visitors and the museum knowledge.

Based on a Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) account of motivation, we propose an approach for creating engagement in exhibition spaces by mediating between the everyday engagement and knowledge of visitors and the museum knowledge. As such, we continue a tradition of inquiry concerned with understanding the dynamics of visitor interest, curiosity, and engagement in exhibition spaces. We illustrate our theoretical conception in a design case and discuss aspects in which we successfully mediated everyday
engagement and museum knowledge and other aspects where our installation failed to produce this mediation. Before unfolding our theoretical perspective, we trace the key issues of motivation, engagement, and interest through some of the literature concerned with the museum experience.

MOTIVATION AND MUSEUM ENGAGEMENT

Traditionally, the role of the museum has been to preserve collections and make these available to the general public. Collections were put on display accompanied by information about the exhibited items. This is still very much the case today. There has, however, been a growing concern for making collections more accessible and renewing the means by which visitors are invited to experience the exhibition. It has been argued that even most modern museums are based on transmission models of communication, which conceptualize communication as a linear process of transfer from a value-free authority (Hooper-Greenhill 2001). Moreover, the visitor is conceptualized as a uniformed receiver outside any socio-cultural context. Recent decades have seen increasingly nuanced conceptualizations of the museum experience and how elements of exhibition spaces promote particular forms of visitor engagement. Falk & Dierking (1992) present an integrated framework, highlighting the interplay between the personal, social, and physical context in relation to the museum experience. Not only does this bring attention to the situation of the museum visit, it also instantiates the visitor as an actor with personal interests, knowledge, and preferences. This conceptualization raises the issue of motivation; what do people bring to the situation and how does this affect and become shaped during the museum visit.

Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1995) offer an insightful discussion on the issue of motivation and interest in museums. They argue that museum may use contextual stimuli or ‘Hooks’ to attract visitor attention (i.e. sounds, colours) that may in turn arouse the personal interest of the visitor. It is worth noting here, that Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1995) distinguish between the situational interest, that occurs when we encounter situations of challenge, uncertainty, and intrigue, and the personal interest which derives from more enduring preference. If visitors gain personal interest in a particular part of the exhibition, this opens the possibility for further involvement and development of the individual (Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson 1995). Edmonds (2006) suggests that this process of situational interest and sustained engagement is supported by various attributes of artefacts in the exhibition space: ‘attractors’ support immediate interest and ‘sustainers’ supports the sustained interest.

This conceptualization offered by Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1995), highlights the essential link between the everyday interests, motives, and practices of the visitor and the knowledge and context of the museum artefacts. Engagement in the museum space may thus be conceptualized in the intersections between people and the attributes of the exhibition space as argued by Edmonds (2006). It is realised in the transactions between what people bring to the exhibition and how this is transformed during the visit. Creating the links between visitor interest and the knowledge presented in museum thus becomes a central challenge. Pierroux et al. (2007) describe the museum experience as the meeting between two activity systems: the activity system of the visitor based on her everyday dealings and the activity systems that are crystallised in the museum artefacts. Pierroux et al. (2007) argue that it is vital to re-contextualize museum artefacts so as to make visible the latent activity systems associated with these artifacts and to bridge these systems with the activity systems of the visitor.

The accounts provided by Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1995) and Pierroux et al. (2007) pinpoint the central concern of bridging between visitor interest, motivation, and activity systems on the one hand and on the other hand what is provided in exhibition spaces. As Pierroux et al. (2007), we suggest that a CHAT account on the museum visit is capable of more fully capturing the dynamics of visitors engaging in a cultural institution. We will however dedicate particular attention to the issue discussed above, namely that of motivation. Based on the work of Hedegaard (1995) and El’Konin (1971), we propose a CHAT based perspective on engagement through an account of the formation of motives as a point of departure for conceptualizing visitor engagement and in particular how designers may create mediations between visitor everyday engagement and museum knowledge. We use the term museum knowledge with inspiration form Vygotsky’s (1982) concept of ‘scientific knowledge’ denoting the forms of knowledge associated not with everyday life but with schematic relationships. As such,
we use the term museum knowledge in the sense of scientific knowledge regarding the subject matters of the museum.

ENGAGEMENT AS MOTIVATION AND THE HIERARCHY OF MOTIVES

In Interaction Design, there is a continuous need to consider in what ways theoretical concepts support the nature of design (Stolterman 2008). As an understanding of engagement is a prevalent factor in Interaction Design, and especially in designing interactive systems for museums, we want to argue that a theoretical understanding of engagement based on motives and motivation can be a valuable resource for interaction designers. Studies within CHAT underpin how motive-development can be addressed explicitly as motives are mutual constructions between people and practices (Leontjev 1981, El’Konin, 1971, Hedegaard (1995, 2002)). Hedegaard and Chaklin (2005) illustrate how a thorough understanding of children’s hierarchy of motives can support the development of teaching tools and methods to combine scientific knowledge in schools with the everyday practice of children. In the sense of communicating scientific knowledge, the educational institution of the school and the museum are similar.

In her theoretical account of engagement, Hedegaard (1995) distinguishes between motivation and motives. According to Hedegaard, motivation is the dynamics that characterizes a person’s actions and relationship to the surroundings in a particular situation. For the person, motivation characterizes the dynamic of her situated activities. When returning home from a visit at a World War II memorial, we can be motivated to actively retrieve background information to know more about the events. However, the motivation as such is prompted by our recent experiences at the memorial and will almost inevitable decline unless we are re-engaged in other motivating situations. Hedegaard’s notion of motivation is comparable to the situational interest described by Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1995). However, visiting the World War II memorial as a descendant of veterans, with a master degree in history, or in some other way with underlying motives for engaging in the experience of the memorial, we would be able to get a more profound take-away from the experience. Motives are, in CHAT terms, the goals, which characterize the actions of a person in different activities over an extended period of time (Hedegaard 2002). Hedegaard’s description of motives corresponds well to the individual interest as a relatively enduring preference for certain topics, subject areas, or activities as described in Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1995). However, they diverge significantly as to the locus of motives. According to Fleer et al. (2009), human motives are developed through the person’s engagement in social institutions and thereby motives become strongly related to cultural values:

“As cultural values of what constitutes a good life and appropriate development are reflected in institutional practices and as personal development takes place through the participation in these social institution, the cultural values becomes condition for the individual development of motives.” (Fleer et al. p. 113).

Emphasizing this cultural aspect of motives as a process of appropriation, El’konin (1971) describes how development of motives in childhood progresses through three relational stages. The first, being the direct emotional contact to another person, the second being the development of roles in relation to human beings, and the third stage is the development of close personal and work relations. However, most important in our effort to theoretically illuminate engagement as a relational entity is, that El’konin’s stages all reflect the most predominant institutions in which the child participates. In the western world these institutions are family (direct emotional contact), school (role development) and eventually the work place (close personal and work relations) (El’konin, 1999).

Motives are, according to Hedegaard (1995), structured in a hierarchy of dominant, meaningful and stimulating motives. The dominant motives of a child originate from the child’s central and important activities (Leontjev 1981). Fleer et al. (2009) identify several successive dominating motives in western societies: the motive of the infant is contact with caregivers. The toddler’s dominating motive is exploration of the surroundings. The preschool child’s main motive is play and during the first years of school, this motive is gradually replaced by the motive of learning. When the child reaches their teens, the dominant motive is the acceptance from friends (Fleer et al. 2009) and “to become someone of consequence” (Hedegaard 2002). Dominant motives are always meaningful, but a range of other meaningful motives can be present without
being dominant. As an example, teenagers will still have ‘learning’ and ‘play’ as meaningful motives, regardless that their dominant motive is social acceptance. The ‘learning’ and ‘play’ motives are, however subordinated to the dominant motive of social acceptance (Hedegaard & Chaklin, 2005). Finally, Hedegaard (1995) identifies stimulating motives as a third category of motives. Stimulating motives are a particular category of motives that in certain activities are meaningful motives. However, these motives loose their meaningfulness as they are introduced in another activity as an attempt to motivate this particular activity (Hedegaard 1995).

When the museum offers distributed information on the teenagers cell phones (which is an artifact with strong relations to the social relations and thereby to the dominating motive of teens) this in itself is an example of a stimulating motive.

Fleer et al. (2009) argue that human activity is always multiple motivated. A museum visitor might go to the museum with the dominant motive of exploring his cultural interest. However, when facing an intriguing exhibition, new motives can be appropriated through the involvement in the new aspect of the activity. With this theoretical conception of motives, Hedegaard & Chaklin (2005) argue that providers of scientific knowledge, such as museums, can mediate between everyday engagement (in the sense of motivation and motives) and scientific knowledge by consciously addressing the hierarchy of motives and especially the dominating motives.

To sum up, we follow Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1995) and Pierroux et al. (2007) in stating that it is vital for museums to create links between everyday engagement and the museum knowledge. By looking at engagement from the perspective of motivation, we have developed a more detailed account of motivation and motives. We have done this with the aim of producing a basis for conducting design inquiries into these issues. In the next paragraph we exemplify our theoretical conceptualization by looking at a particular museum installation. We will focus on how we can understand the installation in relation to engagement, motivation, and the hierarchy of motives. Moreover, we discuss how the installation mediates between everyday engagement and museum knowledge.

CASE: THE RUNETABLE

Our case derives from an exhibition at the Moesgaard museum. Among Moesgaard’s collections is a range of rune stones from various parts of Denmark that have been on display for several years. Recently, the museum received at grant to create a new exhibition about the rune stones and about the rune language in general. As part of this exhibition, we were invited to create a research installation that would experiment with the linking of museum knowledge about runes with the everyday life of visitors. A number of conditions and considerations guided the design of this installation. Apart from being a prototype that would allow us to study particular aspects of the intersections between the museum knowledge about the runes and everyday life of the visitors, the installation should promote tangible forms of interaction, as this is a much employed interaction style throughout the exhibition space. Furthermore, the installation should be an integrated part of the rune stone exhibition. Here, we will focus on the design choices that are embedded in the installation as we discuss the installation in relation to our arguments concerning engagement, motivation, and motives.

The RuneTable installation allows visitors to create and decorate their own rune stone and place this in a landscape alongside rune stones that other visitors have created. The installations consist of a large (165x135 cm.) interactive table with two input stations (touch screens) at the end (picture 1). The table shows a map, where particular features are highlighted: cities, large roads, forests etc. (picture 2A) Visitors create their own rune stone by picking up one of the small wooden model rune stones (picture 2B) found around the table and placing it in the backlit holder besides the input station (picture 1). When a model stone is placed in the holder, the input station guides the visitor through the

![Picture 1](image-url)
process of choosing what to write on the stone and how to decorate it. When the stone is done, the visitor can pick up the stone from the holder and place it anywhere on the map. When the model stone is placed on the map, a counter indicates that the stone is about to be placed at this particular spot (picture 2C). After a few second (if the stone is not moved to another location on the map) a digital representation of the stone is shown on the map. Visitors can use a model magnifying glass to explore the content and placement of the stones created by other visitors.

The stones are identified on the table surface and in the holders besides the input stations using the reacTIVision software (Kaltenbrunner & Bencina 2007). A camera monitors the table surface from below and tracks unique tags printed on the bottom of the model stones and on the magnifying glass.

The installation reflects several relatively recent trends in museums installations. The use of various forms and combinations of tangible interaction and augmented reality, have been explored throughout the literature. Woods et al. (2004) point to the potential educational benefits of using augmented reality in exhibitions. Moreover, various forms of context (usually ‘location’) sensitive guides have been studied at length as a way of augmenting the exhibition space (see Raptis et al. (2005) for overview). The RuneTable also reflects a trend of allowing visitors to be active participants and even contributors to the exhibition space. As proposed by Simon (2007), this development has analogies to the idea of web 2.0. Within the literature, several studies have dealt with how visitors may be framed as active participants. Hall et al. (2002) provide an excellent example by inviting the visitor to be a ‘virtual archaeologist’. Inviting visitor-generated content is also an area that is beginning to be explored (e.g. Ferris et al. 2004, Pierroux et al. 2007).

Here, we will not dwell on the general issues of user generated content or augmented reality in exhibition spaces, but rather focus on the RuneTable as an attempt to bridge everyday engagement with museum knowledge. Moreover, the installation will act as a springboard for a further discussion on motivation. In particular, we will focus on two aspects of the interaction with the RuneTable; one that seems relatively successful in mediating everyday engagement with museum knowledge and another aspect in which the installation very much fails to do so. Through our analysis, we will go into some detail about the actual design of the installation.

RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA

Our analysis of the interactions on the RuneTable primarily derives from the RuneTable database in which each of the entries on the RuneTable is registered. The Rune exhibition was launched February 5th 2009 at Moesgaard museum. In the first 14 days of the exhibition, a total of 482 rune stones were generated and thereby accumulated in the RuneTable database. In the analysis of the data, a limited number of rune stones were categorized as test entries provided by museum personnel, programmers, or designers. Another 21% of the entries did not contain a cause, but only a sender and a receiver. Consequently, one out of five did not complete the three-step sequence of providing a sender, a receiver and a cause to finalize their rune stone. This relatively high amount of incomplete interactions was partly due to technical problem in the research prototype. We have chosen to disregard these in the analysis. That left us with 331 completed entries, which compared to the purpose of our study is sufficient. Five short observation sessions have been done at the RuneTable during the same period of time.
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There are basically two ways of approaching the RuneTable installation: visitors can start off by using the input station to create a rune stone or visitors can start by exploring the map where the rune stones are placed. Visitors can explore the table with a tangible magnifying glass that allows them to see in detail the stones that other visitors have created. If visitors pick up a stone and place it on the table before any content has been associated with the stone, a graphic is shown suggesting that the visitor can go to the input station to create a new stone.

If we look at the situation where visitors are located at the input station (picture 3), there are a number of points to be made about the mediation of museum knowledge and everyday engagement, which is crystallised in the physical and digital design of the table. The creation of a rune stone is done, by placing one of the wooden stone models in the holder besides the input station. When the model stone has been placed, the visitor is guided through the process of creating and decorating the stone. This is a four step process where the visitor must decide (1) who is creating the stone, (2) for whom is the stone created, (3) why is the stone created, and (4) the graphical design of the stone. Apart from being a relatively linear guide for visitors to create a rune stone, this sequence embeds central knowledge about how and why rune stones where originally created. Rune stones always contained a statement about who set the stone – e.g. “Toke the blacksmith set this stone for Troels, son of Gudmund...”. And finally, the rune stones were set for a reason; an event or quality relating to the person in question – e.g. “Toke the blacksmith set this stone for Troels, son of Gudmund, who gave him gold and salvation.”

The steps provided at the input station are very direct reflections of the structure and style of the rune stones. The installation invites visitors to consider what events or people in their own life they would credit when creating a stone. In this sense, the installation aims at a very direct mediation between the museum knowledge embedded in the input station and everyday engagement of the visitor. However, the steps at the input station allow for the visitor to use the Latin alphabet and not runes to write the inscription on the stone, and in this sense the input becomes less connected to the original effort in creating a rune stone. Moreover, the process of writing a few lines of text on a touch screen is obviously very distant from the effort put into making inscriptions and decorations on a real stone. In this respect, the installation does not mediate the efforts put into the original stones with the efforts by the visitors. A range of factors do, however work to maintain the link between the everyday engagement of the visitor and the universe of the original stones.

We will discuss two issues relating to the use of the table with the aim of illustrating our theoretical conception about the link between everyday engagement and museum knowledge. More precisely, we will draw on two observations based on our preliminary studies that relate to the use of the input station and the use of the map projected onto the table. Based on the stones created, our preliminary results indicate that visitor do in fact create connections between the knowledge about the rune stones and their everyday engagement. Several stones are raised in the memory of family or friends; a usage of the medium very similar to that of the original stones in that these typically portrayed very significant events – an example

1 This particular inscription is from the Hørning Stone, now located at Moesgaard Museum.
from the database: “Jonathan set this stone for his cousin who sadly died at the age of ten”. Another category of stones most likely made by teens, has a more social content – another example from the data: “Jeppe set this stone for Anne who is a nice chick”. In a sense this does not reflect the seminal messages that where originally portrayed on the rune stones. However, as described by Hedegaard (1995), we see dominant motives among teens as relating to social positioning among friends and peers. In this sense, there is a clear link between the dominant motives of the visitor (the teens) and the museum knowledge in the form of the rune stones and their form and function. From the data collected from the database, the predominant categories of stones are those that commemorate a loved one and those that are more direct social statements.

As the visitor has created the message in the sequence of questions, the system prompts her to place the wooden rune stone on the map. The visitor removes the wooden rune stone from the backlit holder and places it on the map. Originally, the rune stones were deliberately placed along arterial roads (to secure a certain amount of attention) or at particular interesting sites (according to the message presented on the rune stone). The connection between the placement and the content of the message was a significant part of the message provided on the rune stone. As many rune stones were originally set in memory of late relatives, the church was one of the preferred locations to place them. In an attempt to create links between the rune stone produced and the visitors everyday engagement, a quite simple map was used on the RuneTable, where cities, major roads, lakes, railroads etc. were highlighted (picture 2A). From our preliminary studies, there is however a tendency for the placement of the stones by visitors to be relatively arbitrary; visitors place their stone in a somewhere easily reached from the input station or a place where relatively few other stones are placed. This results in a somewhat distinct pattern of placements on the map, where the majority of the stones are placed close to the input station. Moreover, very few of the stones contain clear spatial references that link the content to the map. We very rarely find stones with content such as “Jonathan set this stone for Hellen, who gave her life on this field”. The intention with using the map was, that visitors would associate their message with particular archetypical places on the map. It seems reasonable to point to a range of factors as contributing to this apparent failure. First of all, although the map has been made simple, it contains very little reference to the central institutions and places in visitors’ everyday life. The map does not clearly show e.g. schools, workplaces, sports-fields, etc. In the terms outlined in previous sections, the map is lacking clear links between the institutions and places in which dominating motives of everyday engagement are realised. Although e.g. roads are depicted, these are merely depicted as lines on the map. Secondly, the interaction that the RuneTable entails, does not significantly support the linking of spatial features and content features; if visitors start off by going to the input station and creating a stone, the issue of placing the stones in an environment is not introduced until the content has been created. If the visitors on the other hand start of by exploring the map, they will not likely find any spatial features that inspire them to create specific localised content. As described here, the failure of the map, relates both the overall issue of mediating everyday engagement with the museum knowledge and to the issue of motivation. As the map does not provide any representations, that create clear links to the everyday engagement of visitors, it does not relate to most of the dominating and meaningful motives of the visitor. This in turn means a lessened motivation in the aspects of the spatial placement and that the crucial mediation between everyday engagement and museum knowledge, to some extent, remains unsuccessful. The very idea of placing the rune stones in the landscape is directly linked to the museum knowledge about the stones as they where placed very consciously in respects to the event they concerned and in terms of who should see the stone. The intention of the map was, in a sense, to extrapolate this practice concerning the original stone to present day, by asking visitors to relate to where in a contemporary landscape they would place their stone – close to major roads, shopping malls, schools?

So far, our analysis has predominantly dealt with the issue of mediating between everyday engagement and museum knowledge. We have yet to consider motivation and exemplify how the installation relates to the hierarchy of motives as discussed in previous sections. To do so, we will continue to look at the particular features of the table and discuss these features as design-choices that appeal to various motives and thus to various forms of engagement. As explored earlier in the analysis, two categories dominate the constructed rune stones: the social statements and the ‘memorial’ stones. These correspond
to different parts of everyday engagement and may reflect different places in the visitors’ hierarchy of motives. As stated be Hedegaard (1995), the dominating motives among teens are the social navigation. This is not to say that social positioning and navigation is not a motivating factor for the engagement of adults. Rather, it exemplifies that the hierarchy of motives is dynamic as certain motives shift from being dominant to being meaningful. Allowing visitor to set their own rune stone and linking this to the seminal character of the original stones is very much an invitation for visitors to draw on dominant or meaningful motives; what would be worth setting a stone for? Yet, there are many other qualities of the rune stone table that invite various levels of engagement. As we are looking at engagement through the lens of motivation, we talk about these as concerning the levels of motives. At the level of stimulating motives, we find such things as using the touch screen, exploring the large projected table surface and it’s interactive qualities, manipulating the tangible model stones etc. As argued by Hedegaard (1995), stimulating motives are often motives that are meaningful in others settings and are brought into the new setting to start the activity. Physical model stones and touch screens invite this immediate motivation. These are valuable parts of the overall interaction but also work to attract the immediate attention. Edmonds (2006) uses the term ‘attractors’ to describe these qualities of artefacts that invite this immediate engagement.

Through our analysis we have strived to look at engagement through the lens of motivation and motives. In particular we have focused on exemplifying the link between everyday engagement and museum knowledge and the levels of motives. In the following section we discuss our theoretical conceptualizations and, in particular, in what sense these are a valid contribution to the interaction design community.

**DISCUSSION**

We are not the first authors to consider motivation as an important aspect of engagement in general and museum engagement in particular. Our conceptualization of motives and motivation is based on CHAT, as we believe that this perspective more fully captures the dynamics of motivation as it develops in context. Moreover, we suggest that this inherent dynamics of the framework and its relational character makes it a valuable perspective for interaction design. As argued by Stolterman (2008), there is a continuous need to consider in what ways tools, theoretical concepts etc. actually support the nature of design. Stolterman (2008) argues that a fundamental premise for designers, is that they face situations of complexity and that acting designerly is not necessarily a matter of reducing complexity but about a rigorous and disciplined activity in the face of complexity. We believe that the dynamic conceptualization of motives has designerly qualities in a number of ways. The conceptualization is not a prescriptive in the sense that it dictates what levels of motives are to be considered at any given time. As argued by El’konin (1971), activities are most often multiple motivated and represent a complex structure of dominating, meaningful, and stimulating motives. El’konin’s (1971) work does suggest that there exist dominating motives related to specific stages of development in humans. However, the challenge for any designer working with e.g. museums is to explore the actual and potential structure of motives that characterise the particular situation. The relational perspective is an important link to the practice of interaction design. This perspective insists that motives are developed through engagement in particular situations and institutions in society. Our conceptualization does not prescribe action or reduce the richness of the situation. Rather, it provides a general epistemology and concrete concepts for reflection and for rigorous design inquiries. This conceptualization highlights not only the situational character of motives, but also the fundamental relation to everyday practice and the institutions that mediate our dealings.

In relation to the context of museums, we have dealt with the challenge of bridging everyday engagement with the museological knowledge of the institution. Our analysis exemplifies how we have worked with a concrete museum installation in trying to achieve this mediation. And indeed, our preliminary data suggest that the mediation was successful to some extent. However, as stated by Hedegaard (1995), people adopt the motives that are embedded in particular forms of institutions as we engage in these institutions. This is very much the case for museums. Particular archetypical types of engagement are found in museums; looking at artefacts, reading labels, conducting oneself in a manner appropriate of museum. For better or worse, these are some of the classical forms of engagement and motives
that people adopt from the institution. As shown in the literature on user-generated content (e.g. Ferris et al. 2004), there is however a potential in changing these forms of engagement by allowing user to be active contributors at the museum. This change does however require that designers carefully consider the complex interplay between the means provided relating to stimulating motives, e.g. particular interaction styles etc. and the practices and motives that are embedded in the institution. As argued by Hooper-Greenhill (2001) many museums are still perceived as bearers of truth that is beyond question, derived from a value-free authority. This very much influences how people engage in the exhibition space and the link between everyday engagement and the museum. It is a particular strength of the CHAT perspective, that is integrates the understating of motives and engagement as being a very situated and contingent phenomenon and being inextricably linked to the institutional structures. The fact that our conceptualization employs a hierarchical structure of motives, suggest that there is a need for designers to conduct inquiries into all the levels. As design is less about understanding what already exist than it is about exploring what does not yet exist (Nelson & Stolterman 2003), we may term this as an exploration of the motivational potential for engagement. This means exploring the very concrete stimulating motives as well as exploring the levels of motivation that relate to dominating and meaningful motives; how are particular interaction styles and representations used not only as “hooks” but also to promote more enduring forms of engagement. These are the design inquiries needed in the individual design process. In relation to interaction design as a field of research, it would be beneficial with more contributions that deal with particular concept genres (e.g. user-generated content) interaction styles, representations etc. and how these promote particular forms of motivation and engagement. As presented earlier, several contributions already deal with these issues – it does however seem that we could benefit from an even more comprehensive repertoire.

CONCLUSION

This paper contributes to current developments in the theoretical foundations of engagement in museum environments. We have proposed that interaction design can benefit from addressing engagement through the lens of a hierarchy of motives and motivation. Moreover, we have argued and exemplified that it is crucial for museum to provide links between the everyday engagement of visitors and the museum knowledge.

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