Human-Computer Interaction Design
Project 2.A Comfortable Spaces & Comfort Control Systems
Tuesday September 14th 2010

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Project
Find or create your own images or illustrations of existing or currently imagined spaces which afford comfort. This is the research part of the project—we are looking for your design research rather than your own creative concepts.

Choose three contrasting images or illustrations. At least one of your choices must be connected to digital technologies in some way.

Format:
Your project must be presented on three and only three landscape mode pages in pdf format. The first page should be a sketch, the second page should be your final research or concept, and the third page should be your primary and secondary attributions lists, as in the example/model solution that follows.
Upload your work to oncourse, as instructed in class. Be certain to reference all of your sources accurately and completely.

DUE Wednesday September 22nd no later than 11:59 PM
An initial first iteration of your project to be presented in your practice session as described in the syllabus.

DUE Tuesday September 28th no later than 4:00 PM
A FINAL form completed project.

Explain why your choices contrast and what’s interesting about them in any terms relating to HCID. The following notions may be particularly helpful: cognitive mapping between human conceptual models and operational models; ubiquitous computing; individual and distributed cognition; sustainability.

The example on the page that follows gives an idea of what a design research project could look like for the purposes of this class assignment. The example is by no means the most ideal project—yours should not be longer, but it can be more compelling and interesting than the example.
Analog

Digital
A modern, green space: This home’s features include the following “grey water recycling, storm water capture, recycled coal fly ash concrete, solar energy, recycled lumber, passive cooling, thermal rock wall, and mobile shade panels.”

This design is interesting as an act of elimination—a term which owes to Tony Fry: see Fry, T. (2009). Design Futuring: Sustainability, Ethics, New Practice. Oxford, UK: Berg. Rather than add digital climate controls and other energy consuming climate control systems, one strategy is to find ways to avoid such consumption as in the example.

An old, comfortable space: Also absent of digital technology, this dining car has more appeal as a comfortable space than nearly any commuter car. Is a revival of passenger rail service possible in the USA? The environmental advantages are manifest. The potential for comfort is much greater, but there are possible down-sides in terms of convenience over private transportation.

Digital controls for helping to make spaces comfortable: Why do thermostatic controls vary by location? What does this say about mental models of comfort and climate control, if anything? The vehicle control above is needlessly decorative, but very “cute.” The home control is ugly and the need for the detailed instructions indicates less than thoughtful usability design.
Primary Attributions
images: Analog and Digital Sketch Images (E. Blevis)
images: Climate Control Vehicle & Home Digital Thermostats (E. Blevis)

Secondary Attributions
image: Jeremy Levine Design – Room Built Around a Tree (http://www.flickr.com/photos/jeremylevinedesign/3590460562/ @ 9.14.09 under creative commons license)
image: Pullman Orient Express Dining Car (http://www.flickr.com/photos/14589121@N00/2070419285/ @ 8.31.09 under creative commons license)