Utopian Design Fictions: The Activity Book!

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Welcome!

Utopian Design Fictions are fact-based fictions that help designers and teams envision better tomorrows so we can shape our decisions around clear-eyed visions for preferred futures. As a practice, Utopian Design Fictions expands our hopes and our imaginations beyond our current ideas about how the world works and our limited reference points for what the future may look like.

By embracing a practice like Utopian Design Fictions, the products we make help create the conditions in which people - and the world we live in - get a chance to thrive.

Getting started... Identify preferred futures!

To construct a Utopian Design Fiction, you must identify and describe the preferred futures you want to aim for. What kind of world are you excited to help create? What macro conditions relating to society, technology, economics, ecology, and politics characterize your preferred futures? What micro influences of our industry support strong and healthy social and natural systems?

In the initial set of activities that follow, nudge your thinking towards a preferred future you'd be proud to be a part of making...

Human Sensitivities Word Search: Attention

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T  C  C  D  E  Z  I  G  R  E  N  E  T  W  I  R  E  D  M  P  U  E  H
D  Q  G  D  E  F  U  V  A  B  O  E  T  G  A  V  O  U  K  G  C  G  J
H  G  N  C  J  L  V  E  E  D  V  C  U  Q  C  Z  P  K  V  Y  J  V  Y
G  G  I  R  Q  I  Z  N  D  U  X  G  F  X  R  F  A  W  A  R  E  K  F
R  Z  K  F  T  Q  W  A  T  T  F  G  Z  D  E  T  C  A  R  T  S  I  D
E  E  N  C  G  P  Z  M  D  E  S  U  C  O  F  T  U  N  E  D  I  N  H
M  N  I  P  U  R  E  C  O  N  C  E  N  T  R  A  T  I  O  N  K  K  K
O  G  H  J  O  V  E  R  W  H  E  L  M  E  D  V  A  A  Z  W  B  H  H
V  A  T  C  O  N  C  E  N  T  R  A  T  E  D  H  U  M  H  D  N  K  R
E  G  R  D  I  I  R  V  L  U  F  D  N  I  M  O  Y  R  J  X  H  G  V
D  E  A  B  I  H  O  G  U  F  D  K  W  C  J  D  L  U  Z  W  P  I  H
W  D  E  I  F  R  A  G  M  E  N  T  E  D  S  J  W  A  X  F  Y  K  E
U  V  L  Q  L  N  Y  D  F  R  E  N  Z  I  E  D  M  D  M  Z  A  J  V
H  Y  C  X  G  A  B  S  O  L  U  T  E  F  L  O  W  V  E  H  E  Q  Y
V  Z  W  X  C  F  K  C  C  Z  I  U  D  P  R  E  S  E  N  T  A  P  V
V  I  D  E  T  P  U  R  R  E  T  N  I  O  P  M  Y  U  E  T  I  S  S
```

Find the following words describing how and where our work can affect users' mental energies:

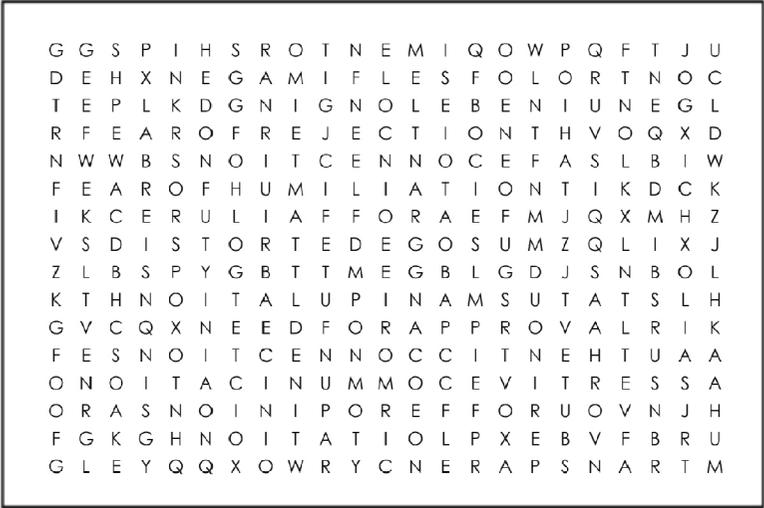|		
Absolute flow	Engaged	Overwhelmed
Aware	Focused	Present
Clear-thinking	Fragmented	Pure concentration
Concentrated	Frenzied	Removed
Distracted	Interrupted	Tuned-in
Energized	Mindful	Wired

Circle words describing the preferred futures you want to be a part of making.

Strikeout words describing what you'll guard against in your designs.

Human Sensitivities Word Search: Social Reasoning

```
G G S P I H S R O T N E M I Q O W P Q F T J U
D E H X N E G A M I F L E S F O L O R T N O C
T E P L K D G N I G N O L E B E N I U N E G L
R F E A R O F R E J E C T I O N T H V O Q X D
N W W B S N O I T C E N N O C E F A S L B I W
F E A R O F H U M I L I A T I O N T I K D C K
I K C E R U L I A F F O R A E F M J Q X M H Z
V S D I S T O R T E D E G O S U M Z Q L I X J
Z L B S P Y G B T T M E G B L G D J S N B O L
K T H N O I T A L U P I N A M S U T A T S L H
G V C Q X N E E D F O R A P P R O V A L R I K
F E S N O I T C E N N O C C I T N E H T U A A
O N O I T A C I N U M M O C E V I T R E S S A
O R A S N O I N I P O R E F F O R U O V N J H
F G K G H N O I T A T I O L P X E B V F B R U
G L E Y Q Q X O W R Y C N E R A P S N A R T M
```

Find the following words describing how and where our work supports people in understanding and navigating personal relationships and networks:

Assertive communication
Authentic connections
Control of self image
Distorted egos
Exploitation
Fear of failure
Fear of humiliation
Fear of rejection

Genuine belonging
Mentorship
Need for approval
Offer opinions
Restricted relationships
Safe connections
Status manipulation
Transparency

Circle words describing the preferred futures you want to be a part of making.

Strikeout words describing what you'll guard against in your designs.

Envision the human impact!

Well considered Utopian Design Fictions envision our work as supporting mental health on levels of the individual, household, community, and society. Imagined within the familiar places in which emotional impact is expressed today (e.g. customer service logs and the comment sections in apps stores), what future feedback will assure you that your decisions have positively impacted users' mental health? Supported their happiness and life satisfaction? Nurtured their psychological and overall social well being?

In the next activity, create a Utopian Design Fiction envisioning your product as having a positive mental health impact.

Your Preferred Future's Comment Section

Imagine your product's Google Play Store review page after your preferred future-informed designs have launched. What would people say to signal that positive mental health? What difference does your product make in people's lives? How have their feelings shifted? What new things do they now do? What old ways have they left behind?
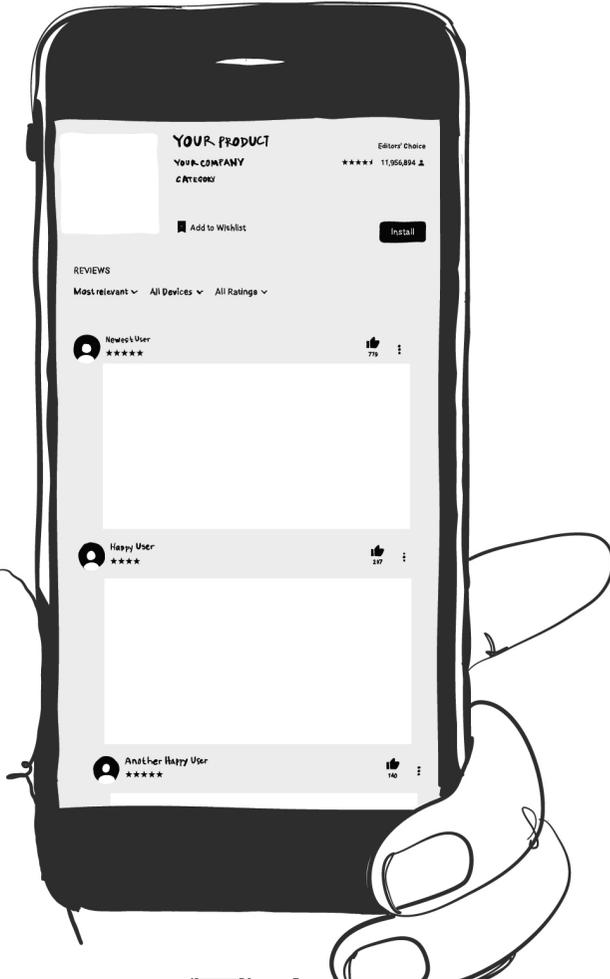
Outline required change!

Impactful Utopian Design Fictions take the time to outline key changes required for preferred futures to take place. If we were to meet after your preferred future had safely become the new normal, what types of new ideas, behaviors, and events would have manifested as steps towards your desired conditions?

In the next activity, create a Utopian Design Fiction referencing a change that needs to take place before your preferred future can be firmly established.

Author a best-selling book about required change!

Imagine a near-term future in which you've authored a best-selling book that's galvanized the design community to follow your call for change. Draw the book cover and give it a catchy, change-inducing title. What similarly-themed books would algorithms know as irresistible to like-minded readers eager to be a part of the change?
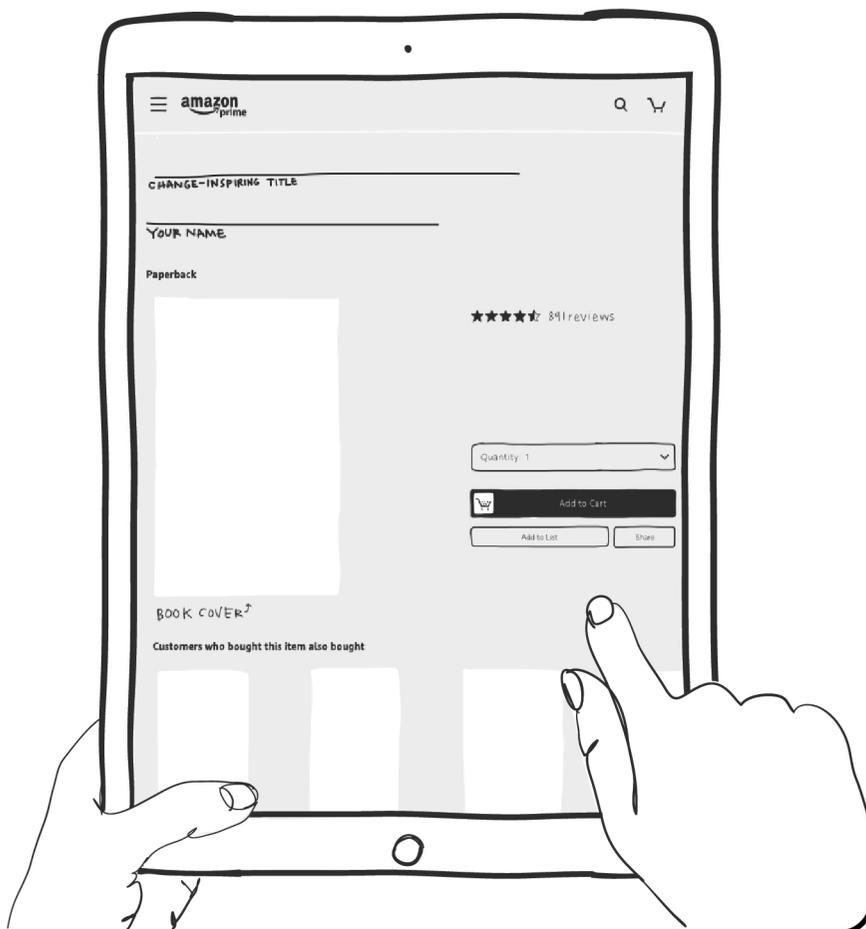
Envision your product future!

Utopian Design Fictions should also envision your future product. At the design fiction phase, you don't have to work out all the details or persuade leadership with a fancy prototype (you'll get to all that later on in the design processes you already use), but you do want to capture the gist of what success feels like so that your team (and your clients, your bosses) have a common vision of the direction you should be heading in.

In the following activity, create a Utopian Design Fiction that envisions your product in the context of your preferred future.

Do your best to incorporate thinking from the previous activities… aim purposefully for a preferred future you're proud to be a part of making… express your product's positive mental health impacts… reference key changes required in order for your preferred future to take place.

Hey! You're App of the Day!

Congratulations! Your product took on a bold vision to embrace desirable change and both fans and editors are loving it! You've made it as App of the Day and people are downloading it like mad. Draw an app store hero image referencing the positive future your product supports. Write a compelling product description and sketch out teasers so prospective users know how their lives will be improved once they download your app.

APP
OF THE
DAY

GET
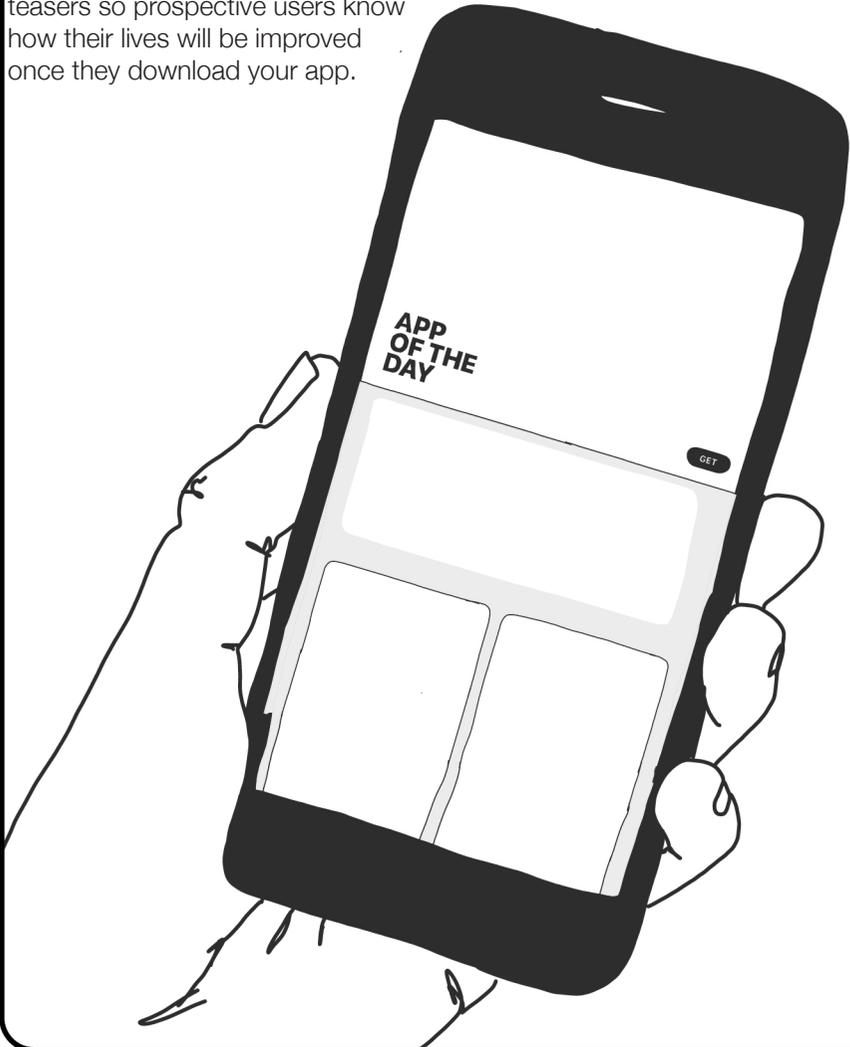
Thank you!

Thanks for giving "Utopian Design Fictions: The Activity Book" a try!

Feedback on the presentation and handbook are welcomed here:
https://bit.ly/36jebYa

Your work and play matters! Thanks for making product decisions that give humans - and the glorious world we get to live in - a chance to thrive!

References & Influences

Center For Humane Technology
Public Health Agency of Canada
"Speculative Everything," Anthony Dunne & Fiona Raby
"The Trend Forecaster's Handbook," Martin Raymond
"The World We Made: Alex McKay's Story from 2050," Jonathon Porritt

*"Any movement toward a more just and civil society can now be considered a meaningful climate action. Securing fair elections is a climate action. Combatting extreme wealth inequality is a climate action. Shutting down the hate machines on social media is a climate action. Instituting humane immigration policy, advocating for racial and gender equality, promoting respect for laws and their enforcement, supporting a free and independent press, ridding the country of assault weapons—these are all meaningful climate actions. To survive rising temperatures, **every system, whether of the natural world or of the human world, will need to be as strong and healthy as we can make it.**"*

- Jonathan Franzen, "What If We Stopped Pretending," The New Yorker