

Transcript

[first scenario - HotMit]

D: So, what are your first thoughts?

J: I think that it's a really nice idea... mainly because it's quite personal for a start, everyone's got quite individual handprints so its always going to be something that's unique to your partner... I think it's a good idea, I would be interested to see if it actually mimics hand holding...

D: Do you think that would be important then? Like how close to it is, it is?

J: Yes and no I suppose... I think yes because a lot of people find hand holding very important... personally, although its something I do, I think its mainly because everyone does it, you feel obliged... there's other things that I find more meaningful... so yeah, I think it's quite an important thing... but as a hand holding device, its probably one of the better ones that I've seen

D: So... what aspects of the idea did you like?

J: I think... the personal aspect but also the way that you can combine the device with other communication devices is quite a nice idea... so the fact that you could be on skype or a phone, you don't have to be using a technical device; as long as the actual device is in the room with you, you could be using pretty much any method of communication even I suppose you could argue, you could have both of you in the room together and you could still both have a device and do it... so I think that's quite a cool thing to have... the portability too I suppose, its not something that's... it doesn't seem too sort of cumbersome, something that you have to wear; you could potentially just carry it with you... so if you travel a lot, you could take this with you, it's nothing which is too restrictive in that sense... so I think its very convenient; it can be used with multiple communication tools

D: Are you thinking there about how you travel a lot on placement and when you start work you'll be in New York...?

J: Yeah, it's not something that's limited to being in your physical home where you spend most of your time, you could take it wherever and I think for a couple that enjoy using it, I think it's a really big benefit if you can use it with more than one medium of communication which you clearly can

D: Was there anything about it which you didn't like?

J: I might have misunderstood but if I didn't then the one thing that stood out was, it is essentially, nothing stopping another person putting their hand in the device... if you're not currently having a conversation with your partner, at the time, through any other medium of communication, then they could potentially be, you partner could be under the false assumption that you're trying to communicate with them when actually it's not... that was the main thing and the other thing is kind of around hand holding in general, which is something that im trying to get my head around... I think

a lot is, heat is normally involved to generate some sense and I think there definitely is, once hands make contact, there's an element of heat there but I suppose that remains pretty constant once initial contact is made so it's how you could translate the difference between physical hand holding and virtual hand holding if you like... how well that translates across from physicality to digital...

[prototype]

D: So having now used the device, has your opinion now change at all?

J: its kind of confirmed how I perceived how I thought id think about it which was like I was saying about hand holding in general, its not something that personally I sort of hold in the highest regard... and I think the main reason that is, is that I imagined that the heat would be transferred to the palm area which was how it actually is but I find that more with hand holding I tend with my partner to hold hands with interlocked fingers rather than palm to palm so that's probably why I had that idea and I think that it's more the in my mind, the sensation and the value in it is in the interlocking exchange rather than the heat across the palm, so to me it doesn't necessarily feel how it actually feels when I hold hands with my partner... because I don't, in reality I don't actually feel the sensation at the bottom of my palm, it tends to be the interlocking exchange...

D: So is that, something you'd change, youd make it less of a static thing and go for an interlocking idea... maybe cast it deeper so you can grip your fingers in?

J: Yeah, maybe...

D: So we talked a bit about it being you and you're partners hand... what if we told you that instead of doing that, it would just be almost a standardised hand print that you got off amazon? Do you think that would change some of your opinions about the device?

J:I think if I were to have this standardised, that wouldn't be as valuable as this device... I think yeah, for, its hard now because this is... firstly its not my hand print so its, the device is not necessarily personal to me and second, I subconsciously know that the other part is not my girlfriends hand print. So I think I would see big value in using it if my partner was to use it and enjoy using it and I think that would be more important to me that we could make that contact through this... I think this idea is definitely more beneficial than a generic... cause I think the personalisation is massive because... one of the first things I felt when I put my hand in is that it isn't my hand print, it doesn't fit... I think so instantly I would've made the bond with my own hand and then the fact that my partner would've been on the other end is definitely... made it more valuable...

[second scenario - HotHands]

D: So same question as last time... first thoughts?

J: So just a comment; this is very similar, just a physical hand this time rather than a...

D: Do you think that changes your thoughts at all? Or do you think it's so similar, there's really nothing to distinguish it?

J: yeah, it changes my thoughts in that... I think potentially, without seeing it, aesthetically it could be more sort of displeasing than a hand print... just because sort of, the unfamiliarity people have with just seeing a limb lying around... and I think it's very familiar to see a hand print, and I suppose it's more common and less innovative for people to either dip their hands in paint and put it on the wall or whatever... so I think this design is certainly my innovative and I think because of that, potentially more effective because I imagine there's a more similar physical resemblance... yet it would be interesting to see the balance between whether the sort of unfamiliarity will outweigh the actual benefits...

D: So the fact that it's... the strangeness... the fact that it's a cast of a hand is both a positive and a negative because it's unfamiliar and a bit creepy but also it's a stronger metaphor...

J: Yeah, I think it's more physically accurate than a hand print is... and I think potentially, once you've mentally passed the obstacle of unfamiliarity, there would therefore be a lot more meaningful...

D: Does the same hold for what you said before; that it's more important what your partner thought because hand holding is more important to them?

[prototype]

J: I think the way I would naturally hold it would be more [fingers up] with my fingers through there so the heat potentially should be inside the palm...

[post-prototype]

D: How do you think this compares to the other one then?

J: I think it's a more accurate representation of hand holding... yet I suppose ergonomically it feels a bit strange, just because it's unfamiliar, I suppose the actual physical material is never going to accurately portray skin

D: Do you think that would be something to push for? This is obviously just a plaster cast but we could easily cover it in something, if not skin-like, then softer

J: maybe even something just as smooth finish... just to... give it that feel that it's not...

D: Again, this is meant to be a personal cast, what if it was standard; like a manikin's hand... would that change your thoughts?

J: Yeah, it wouldn't... one of the reasons I think this could potentially be more effective than the first device [hotmits] is because it's physically more accurate and what I mean by that is that it's a more accurate representation of your partner's hand so that's one of the biggest value added thing that I

was seeing so having a standardised manikin hand would definitely tip the scales in the more unfamiliarity and sort of weirdness... and I think the benefit would certainly decrease...

D: How do you think the process of actually making them fits into that? Do you think that's a valuable part of the process?

J: Yeah, I think on both accounts, the process of making is important because I imagine they'd be quite fun to make, because the activity is done together, it's a shared memory, so I think each time that you would go to use the system there would be a triggering of the memory of making the cast which I imagine would be a positive memory so that would then influence your mood in a positive way I think... again I think its still pretty portable, I suppose you could argue, I imagine its more fragile so maybe travelling, you have to be a bit more careful about how you moved it...

[third scenario - YourGlove]

D: So what do you think about this one?

J: I think this one, takes it a step further, I think it's definitely closer to reality... I think, same as the previous one, there's that element of unfamiliarity and weirdness even like from the first system up to the third, there's a correlation between the closer you get to reality, the more unfamiliar they get, probably because nothing has been done like this before... but I think potentially it's the most powerful and accurate of the three

D: You think that striving for the realism is the goal then?

J: Yeah, I think that as a user that would be the main benefit that I would wish to achieve... the reality of it... because I think if you can achieve reality, then it's easier to overcome the barrier of unfamiliarity... and if the product is worthwhile in delivering what it aims to deliver which is to be as close to possible to the sensation of handholding then its definitely worth it... and I like the idea that you can personalise the manikin more... with the previous products, I know you can paint them but a lot of peoples' favourite colour is blue, a lot of peoples' favourite colour is yellow... I know a lot of people that have different sized hands but there is some kind of generality and that people of certain height and sizes will have similar sized hands... with this, I like the whole bracelet idea especially cause like I have this bracelet and my partner has the same one and we've had them for like four years so although it's like a pound and worthless to anyone else, there's some sentimental value that means we just don't take them off... so I think that's quite a powerful thing actually... and with the glove idea, in my scenario, neither me or my partner wear gloves but that led me to think that maybe you could buy a pair of gloves together and personalise them together and make that a collaborative act and dress each others... or you could even potentially take it further and dress each others manikins and swap them

D: And you've still retained that shared process

J: Yeah...

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D: Is there anything about this one which you dislike?

J: in the photo; in reality how far is it elbow down?

D: At the moment it's kind of elbow down but that's... that is just through how its made... it needs a little bit of arm, a couple of inches but nothing more than that...

J: I can imagine the other two, they can sit freestanding on a desk, is there any intention of how this sits on a desk? Would you lie the arm down or...?

[prototype]

[interlocking – not strong grip, needs to be more]

[palm to palm a better grip]

J: Because the interlocking doesn't work, I think its easier to recognise that it's not your partner's hand... if it interlocked and you were communicating with your partner on the other end, there would definitely have more emotional benefit and feel more connected than it does at the moment...

J: Is there any way that you could have some kind of modelled hand in this one?

D: Potentially... [explains how the hand is made] There is potential for doing different finger size, different lengths, different widths, different spacing but it would be a harder... well, I think it would be a harder thing to sell as a process than casting your hand which is straightforward...

J: Definitely the process of creating would be more difficult... but the end benefit I think would be higher... because id say the main, the two main advantages of the others, which is they are more familiar, more real and they are an accurate representation of your partners hand... and I think the accurate representation is really important because like your partner could be... like im 6"3, my partners 5"2, my hands are significantly bigger and I imagine for her part it feels that my hand is quite a lot bigger and from my part, it definitely feels like my hands are a lot bigger and I think then when you introduce a general manikin, there will be people who fall quite outside that generality and then maybe instantly detach themselves from that... and it's the know that the hand you are actually holding is the casted had of your partner and like I said, the memory of casting that together would instantly improve your mood I would imagine... so if there was some way to encompass both I think that would be good

[wrap up]

D: so which of the three is your favourite?

J: I'd say the arm because of it's potential... I think the idea that you can dress it the way you like is very very personal and I think I would recommend to my partner that we dress each others arms and swapped and that would make it even more personal... its almost like a gift then I suppose

D: So its that hyperpersonalness or do you also prefer the movement over the heat

J: yeah it's a more accurate... personally, when I hold hands with my partner, its not the heat I appreciate, its more the interlocking sensation which is achieved more by the arm rather than the other two... I think with the other two as well, it's all initiated by you, you put your hand in and it's coming back to you... with the arm, you put your hand in and the interlocking happens, you feel like someone the other end is actually physically making that connection

D: You said at the start that there were things you valued more than hand holding... what are those things?

J: Id say things like... just in general... I think memories is more... id say kissing is probably more kind of emotional... in a sense that I don't think men do it but girls will often hold hands with their friends even up to adult age you frequently see girls do hold hands with their friends, and there's kind of an emotional boundary there and kissing is probably more intimate beyond that... but I imagine it would be almost impossible to replicate!

D: Do you have similar thoughts about hugging then?

J: Hugging I think is less so even then hand holding... I think people in general, friends even who see each other on a regular basis are inclined to hug their friends... maybe in not so sensual way but there's still the physical act of hugging.