Designing a Multimedia Documentary Device for Research-Intervention through Co-design: The Case of the Innovation Labs Observatory

Cécile Payeur
Université Paris Nanterre, cecile.payeur@parisnanterre.fr

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1. Co-design of documents for research-intervention projects

Documentation plays a key role in research-intervention projects—an area that companies and universities are working on together. Contractual documents, intermediate research documents and deliverables are all classical forms of documents produced in research-intervention projects, as listed by Jeanneret and Rondot (Jeanneret & Rondot, 2013). More recently, innovative research methodologies based on a constructivist approach and on the implication of different actors generate the creation of new forms of co-designed documents and documentary devices—or documentary “dispositives,” within Foucault’s meaning of the term, considering the created network of an heterogenous ensemble of elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, and taking into consideration the nature of the links that are connecting these elements (Foucault, 1994, p. 299). We adopt an info-communicational point of view considering that the documentary dispositives are technical objects with a transformative effect (Peeters & Charlier, 1999) that give access to specific documents resulting from original situations of communication.

We explore some new forms of these documents and documentary “dispositives” used for research-intervention projects through the case of an innovative project named the “Innovation Labs Observatory.” This project, in which we are involved as researchers, is a research-intervention project that began in 2019 and will end in 2023 and that is led by Le CNAM1—Le Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers—and Codesign-it2—a group of independent experts in co-design. The goal of this collaborative project involving researchers, designers, and public and private companies is to explore the activities of intern innovation laboratories—what we call “labs”—using co-design methodologies. The project has two phases: the first phase, which has been completed, was about exploring assessment, performance and typologies of design developed in private labs: Valeo, Airbus, and La Française des Jeux (Zacklad et al., 2021). We are now finishing the second phase. The research extends to public innovation labs in the context of a partnership with the “Direction à l’Innovation et à la Transformation Publique” (DITP)3. In this phase, we are focusing on methodologies and theorization of the diffusion of the lab’s practices.

To support this research-intervention project, we developed a specific documentary dispositive based on multimedia documents using co-design methodologies. In this article, we propose to explore the modalities of the co-design of this type of documentary object in the context of projects on research-

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1 https://www.cnam.fr/ (consulted on October 23, 2023).
intervention. We will also take into consideration the perspectives and questions that arise, both for research work and in the field, in a wide sense. In the first part, we present the methodology used for the research, in the second part, we expose the construction of the documentary dispositive and finally, in the third part, we consider some hypotheses informed by the research still in progress.

2. Methodology of the research

The work carried out for this research is based on two main theories. The first theory is the RICO-D approach, recently proposed by Manuel Zacklad and Marie-Julie Catoir-Brisson (Zacklad & Catoir-Brisson, 2021). RICO-D means Research Intervention by Co-Design and is a method based on cooperation between researchers and designers, using design methodologies at every step of the research process (data production, analysis, and results diffusion). This approach favors a dynamic of collective action by creating new knowledge and relationships between the actors. It is based on designing different communication situations—using rational myths, engagement levers and elicitation probes—as a part of a transmediation dispositive, that will have a transformative effect in organizations and in which documentary dispositives are developed to accommodate conversations and offer a place for debate.

We also use the C-K theory devised by Armand Hatchuel and his colleagues from the Ecole des Mines de Paris in Management and Design Science (Hatchuel & Weil, 2002, 2003) to represent the research process. The C-K theory is a design theory that allows representation of the early creative phase of a project—or surprise—and modeling of the reasoning underlying innovative design. It is aimed at exploring the existing situation and generating new knowledge and theories by considering the design as a “process by which something unknown can emerge from what is known” (Hatchuel & Weil, 2003). The central notion of the C-K theory “is a formal distinction between ‘concept’ (C) and ‘knowledge’ (K)” (Hatchuel & Weil, 2003). K is considered here as a Knowledge space, where propositions have a logical status (it can be true or false, for example), whereas C is a group of propositions that have no logical status in K (and then it becomes impossible to prove that it is indeed a proposition in K). In this project we use this theory at two levels: the first level concerns the labs’ activities—what we call experimental dispositive level (1)—and the second level represents the research process—what we call research dispositive level (2). The C-K tree below represents the research dispositive level (2) that was implemented in the project (Figure 1).
Here, we see the main concepts that are the results of the first phase of the project: three types of design have been identified as deployed in the labs—solution design, environment design and relation design—and one modeling has been proposed—the Labvi Model—(Zacklad et al., 2021). In the second phase of the process, we first return to the K space, where a transmediation dispositive will be constructed. Here, we can see that some communication situations—round table discussions, on-site visits, live sessions, for examples—give rise to different media documents—including podcasts, video interviews, photo reportages—and that these documents will be integrated in a documentary multimedia dispositive, that will be used for the generation of new concepts in C. The co-design of this documentary dispositive will be carried out in two stages: the first stage is the co-design of multimedia documents and situations, and the second stage is the co-design of the documentary dispositive.

3. From situations of communication to documentary dispositive

Different situations of communication and the engagement of all actors in creative transactions support the co-design of multimedia documents (Zacklad, 2020). The situations created were, for example, round table discussions, on-site visits, or live innovation sessions in the labs. In these situations, the actors in the field co-produced qualitative research data with the researchers using rational myths in the sense of Armand Hatchuel (1997) cited in (David, Hatchuel & Laufer, 2012, p. 62) as a class of speech that is a generator for the collective action, thus advancing both knowledge and relations. The participants produced speeches about three case studies: 1) a challenge project for the CarLab of Valeo⁴, 2) a reorganizational project for the Lab Etat’LIN depending

of the Prefecture of Pays-de-la-Loire\textsuperscript{5}, and 3) a robotization process project for the Lab’O depending of the Prefecture of Occitanie\textsuperscript{6}. Specialists with artistic viewpoints were involved in the design of the documents, and included journalists, photographers, or podcast producers. The participants worked together in cooperation, using design methodologies at different stages of the process—such as preparation, production, feedback, or diffusion of the documents.

Presented below is the round table discussion of a situation of communication involving a journalist, Valeo innovation professionals, a researcher, a co-design expert, and a podcast producer that resulted into a tangible podcast document (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Round table discussion and podcast for the CarLab.](image)

A second example is a video interview produced during an on-site visit of the lab Etat’LIN involving a journalist and innovation professionals from the Prefecture of Pays-de-la-Loire. All the partners involved in the project participated in the preparation and production of this interview, including co-design experts and researchers (Figure 3).

\textsuperscript{5} \url{https://www.prefectures-regions.gouv.fr/pays-de-la-loire} (consulted on October 23, 2023).

\textsuperscript{6} \url{https://www.prefectures-regions.gouv.fr/occitanie} (consulted on October 23, 2023).
A third example of a situation of communication presented here is a photo taken during a live innovation session in the lab Etat’LIN (Figure 4).

All the documents produced during the project reflect the different situations of communication that involved collaborative work of both the researchers and the participating organizations. Although these documents exploit different modalities (audio, video, picture), they need to be connected and integrated into a wider dispositive that makes them accessible to all the actors of the project. They were linked, structured, and placed into a network of additional content to become usable. We created a documentary dispositive in the form of a website\(^7\) exploiting the collaborative properties of the web to organize and give access to this tangible documentation. We are next presenting the process and the different steps that will lead to the design of an accessible multimedia documentary dispositive to both researchers and actors.

First of all, we harmonized and connected the documents format, frame, or length, and structured them in a tree diagram, categorized as a menu and annotated using tags. Then we produced additional documents like images (a

\(^7\) [https://observatoiredeslabs.ricod.net/](https://observatoiredeslabs.ricod.net/) (consulted on October 23, 2023).
new logo for example), videos (interviews of the stakeholders, for example),
texts (presentation of the project and the labs, publications, captions, subtitles,
etc.). At this step, we involved a graphic designer to add an artistic viewpoint
and used Agile methodology and user-friendly technical tools (like Content
Managements Systems—CMS). The documents were distributed via various
platforms including Apple Podcasts\(^8\) or YouTube Channel\(^9\), or on social media
(LinkedIn, for example), and linked to websites from companies and labs.

Next, we show the homepage of the constructed website (Figure 5).

![Homepage of multimedia documentary dispositive.](image)

To navigate one can browse the case studies by lab starting from this homepage.
For each case the lab, podcast, interviews, and the photo reportage are all
available. Figure 6 presents the specific example of the Lab’O in the Prefecture
of Occitanie and identifies the three media documents (podcast, interview, and
photo reportage).

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\(^9\) [https://www.youtube.com/@observatoirelabs1588](https://www.youtube.com/@observatoirelabs1588) (consulted on October 23, 2023).
If we focus on the photo reportage, we can see that there is a classification of the produced documents, each categorizing the different phases of the co-design process (Figure 7).

Another way to explore the documentary website is to navigate by media documents and find either all the podcasts, all the video interviews, or all the photo reportages through the different labs. All the videos and podcasts are also distributed via other media access including social media and streaming platforms.
4. Conclusion and perspectives

In this article, we started to explore the main steps of the design of an intermediate documentary object both for researchers and actors in the field. This is a form of sharing knowledge between different actors that gives a new representation of the data observed. We presented a multi-faceted documentary object that is the visible part of the iceberg and reflects the transmediation dispositive that produces the speeches and the data, based on communicational situations. It involves diverse actors in the design process based on co-design, adds original mediation with artistic viewpoints, and gives a transversal documents approach by exploring different case studies with a navigation by lab or by media. This shared documentary object between researchers and people in the field is an informational object, giving access to connected multimedia documents and publications, and where we can find the latest update, and project and lab’s presentations. But it must also be considered as a communicational object offering multi-channel diffusion, links with other websites (especially social media), or spreading contact information to new actors interested in getting involved in the project. At the same time, it provides a new original intermediate research-material, where all actors can access and analyze the data of the project, including potential new external members joining the project.

Here, we presented a currently ongoing process that is being continued. Now in order to produce results we will move on to the next stages in the research process and will analyze the documents on the website, collect the feedback of the project participants about the effects of this new documentation, and then propose new concepts in C. This work raises the question of literacy in the perspective of digital humanities 2.0 that “are dynamically linked to communities vastly larger and more diverse than those to which the academy has been accustomed” (Burdick & Drucker, et al., 2012, p. 75). It seems that the research and innovative and creative processes converge in a co-design process that must redefine its methods and models while moving forward. In this constantly changing process, the documentation plays a double role, for the research and for the fields, by connecting the actors and giving stability, historicity, and at the same time by constantly evolving as an intermediate research material. We hypothesize that the capacity of co-designing such documentary dispositive could become a key-competence for the researcher involved in research-intervention in the years to come. In addition, we question the genericity of the dispositive (Payeur & Chupin, 2020), that could be reused or reinvested in similar research projects. We are currently exploring this question by developing similar websites in other research-intervention projects.
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6. References


