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students

Product Metaphors

Implimenting Salient Properties Effectivley

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Time is money. Heart of gold. Fish out of water. These metaphors and similes are literary devices that help a reader or viewer understand plot, characters, themes or concepts in books and movies. Designers implement a similar technique known as product metaphors to create better and more interesting products. To understand how to create effective product metaphors we must break the concept down into basic components. According to Hekkert (2015), the first aspect of a product metaphor is the source; this is where the designer draws inspiration from. Product metaphors most commonly pull inspiration from the physical properties of nature and animals, such as colour, shape, and sound. The second component in a product metaphor is the target; this is the proposed concept of the designer (Hekkert, 2015, p.199). The final and most important part of the product metaphor is the link between the source, and target. As noted by Hekkert (2015), this link is called the salient property, it is the most obvious and key characteristic of the source. To find the salient property you must ask: what characteristic or characteristics makes the source the source? You could also try removing the salient property from the source and seeing if the

source still makes sense. If it doesn't make sense, then this is truly the correct property and is critical to the source. In order to redesign and improve this monarch butterfly chair, I analyzed the salient properties of a monarch butterfly. The properties that stood out to me were the unique symmetrical form and the bright orange colour. While the existing design is clearly inspired by a monarch butterfly, its quirky design does not implement the salient properties effectively. The asymmetrical seat and backrest looks stiff and uncomfortable. It also feels tacky and a bit too literal. My approach uses an abstracted implementation of the source's salient properties, but the user can still understand the inspiration. The proposed design uses vertical symmetry and almost looks as if it is wrapping its wings around the user, or if the chair is flying away. Furthermore, the plush fabric upholstering mimics the butterfly's bright orange colour. The addition of a slight recline also increases comfort, while changing the context of the product; from the dining room to a friendly living room setting. Implementing the source's salient property into the target requires a poetic balance between literalness, abstraction, interestingness and understandability.

Hekkert, P., & Cila, N. (2015). Handle with care! why and how designers make use of product metaphors. Design Studies, 40, 196–217. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2015.06.007

https://webneel.com/daily/sites/default/files/images/daily/09-2019/design-butterfly-chair-haris-jusovic.preview.jpg

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