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Care Practice and Product-service system: Design Thinking Towards User Detachment from Hibernating or Accumulated Clothing at End of Use

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The value of unused clothing in wardrobes has been estimated at around £30 billion (WRAP, 2017). In the UK, around £1,200 worth of clothing in the average wardrobe has not been worn at least a year (WRAP, 2012). People throw away around 680 million garments in one spring season as they clear out their wardrobes, with 235 million pieces of clothing reaching UK landfill (Sainsbury, 2017).

Changing behaviour to a more sustainable approach has recently received increasing acknowledgement and attention (Daae, 2014), in particular from the design sector. One innovative approach in the field of design for sustainable behaviour (Lockton et al 2008; Wever et al 2008) involves designing for user detachment from hibernating or accumulated objects at end of use through care practice which offers the potential for extending an object's lifespan and reducing environmental impact to influence people's behaviour (Choi, 2020). In contrast to the approach of emotional attachment and caring for the object, there is a pragmatic approach within care practice with less emotional responses around responsibility or a commitment to objects' end of use. In the light of this, Carative Factors Inspirational Toolkit is designed to provide a better understanding of the user's relationship with hibernating or accumulated objects at end of use, and their responsible and decisive disposal, for designers, in order to create products, services and an environment that will influence users' possession and sustainable disposal behaviour (Choi, 2018).

This paper explores the potential feasibility of adapting and applying the Carative Factors Inspirational Toolkit to the clothing sector and its implication for a product-service system (PSS). How could the pragmatic approach within care practice be applied in clothing design process and enabling the recirculation of material for a zero-waste circular system (Stahel, 2010). PSS has been considered as potentially a more sustainable approach as the relationship is based on the premise of services creating value by addressing function, which may consume less resources than products (Clark et al, 2009; Manzini et al. 2001); as a result the system creates a beneficial effect for the environment (Tukker, 2004; Baines et al, 2007).

In the following phase of this research online workshop participants from different discipline (e.g. fashion and service design) took part in an interdisciplinary design thinking approach. Through exploratory workshops and design projects in which participants used the Toolkit to generate concepts, and in the subsequent PSS design process, several concepts were developed to inform different user's decision-making process towards hibernating or accumulated objects at end of use.

The aim of this workshop was to apply the Carative Factors Inspirational Toolkit to the clothing design process to influence designers' system level design thinking toward user's detachment from hibernating or accumulated objects at end of use and to develop ideas.

This paper will include design concepts under development applying the Toolkit, insight from the workshop and feedback from the participants. It reflects upon the ideas that use of the Toolkit evokes, and the implication for PSS with the circular economy.