Academic Writing

Part 2
Your Assignment Headings

• Abstract
• Introduction
• Literature Review
• Conclusions
• References
An effective introduction discusses the meaningfulness of the chosen topic. It also gives a clear insight into your intentions. Thus the introduction presents a background and statement of context for your investigation.

Your introduction should include these items in some form:

• Clear Statement...Purpose...Definitions (if necessary)

Your introduction should:

• Set the context and capture the reader's interest.
• Explain the background of your research topic.
• Cite relevant references (if required).
Structure: Literature Review

The literature review develops broad ideas of what is already known in a field, and what questions are still unanswered.

You must show that you have looked through the literature and have found the latest updates in your field of study.

A discussion of the present understanding and/or state of knowledge concerning the problem or issue should be included in your essay.
Finally conclude and discuss possible future research.
Discuss how your research plan provided a method for exploring research.

Remember to include References.

Only after you are finished, should you write the Abstract.
Using Google Scholar

Sustainability? ...we get 3,090,000 results

Sustainable Interaction Design? ...we get 2,850,000 results
Also, the author E. Blevis is coming up a lot.
Choreographing Obsolescence – Ecodesign: the Pleasure/Dissatisfaction Cycle


**ASSESSMENT:** A comprehensive explanation of built-in obsolescence & choreographed obsolescence, and how certain types of goods, such as musical instruments, are often exempt from these patterns.

**QUOTES:**

- “The control of pleasure was directly linked to the control of dissatisfaction and it became increasingly difficult to separate out the ‘natural’ physical decline of products over time, from the ‘contrived’ dissatisfaction deliberately and often collectively engendered by manufacturers.”

- “In tandem with physical decline, two other factors: technological and fashion cycles, play an equally important part in the perception of decline.”

- “Built-in obsolescence was usually a default strategy in which reduced material and production costs resulted in less durable individual products. In contrast, choreographed obsolescence ensures that the life of products is governed by their position within a company/sector innovation cycle, rather than resulting from the vagaries of product durability.”

- “It is equally possible that the group of products deemed ‘close to body’ such as furniture and clothing, or those that require an investment of skill and time, such as cars, musical instruments and computers, share a common characteristic - that long-term pleasure may override the negative effects of declining ‘newness’.”

- “The ‘old armchair’, ‘faithful’ walking stick and ‘trusty’ waterproof jacket, enjoy a degree of perceived maturity which is not just tolerated but actively celebrated.”

What follows is a 710 word excerpt, with a total of 17 references...
Sustainable Interaction Design

David Suzuki said that “sustainability means doing things better – not doing without” (Boyd 2004). As every major assessment regarding the Earth’s resources has concluded that we are “eating into natural capital, rather than living off its interest” (Jucker 2002), then without doing better, we may soon have to do without.

For years, researchers and practitioners in Sustainable Interaction Design have attempted to reverse resource consumption trends by focusing on the individual (Petkov et al. 2012, Pierce and Paulos 2012) and attempting to change their behaviour. While millions of individuals making small, positive changes would be obviously significant, achieving this has proved problematic as, “people don’t use energy, they use products, which use energy” (Holmes 2007). The lack of a sustainable solution is partially because of the researcher’s mind set, seduced by Modernism, as they strive to find simple technical solutions to complex social problems (Brynjarsdottir et al. 2012, Heslop et al. 1981). The arresting finding that “raised awareness and increased knowledge do not automatically lead to more sustainable behaviour” (Jucker 2002) reiterates the problem, but without suggesting a straightforward solution.
Sustainable Interaction Design

Other pertinent issues compound the struggle for Sustainable Interaction Designers. This is despite having the moral high ground, fighting against ingrained economic policies such as Neoliberalism, which prioritises economic prosperity over ideals such as equality or social justice and then defends this position by arguing that market forces will ensure “the greatest good for the greatest number of people” (Dourish 2010, Harvey 2005). An example of how this political outlook exerts an influence is the throwaway culture we live in, where people buy smartphones and portable media players “with the expectation that they will be replaced within a period of a few years” (Huang and Truong 2008). This is despite quantifiable evidence that people have predictable attitudes toward their varied possessions and that these very same attitudes could potentially form the foundation for profound changes in sustainable behaviour (Barba 2008, Huang and Truong 2008, Odom et al. 2009). Commercial entities wilfully ignore this evidence and continue with “choreographed obsolescence”, an intentional strategy that ensures product life-span is “governed by their position within a company/sector innovation cycle, rather than resulting from the vagaries of product durability” (Woolley 2003). This ensures that their bottom line always trumps any other considerations (Hanks et al. 2008).

That sustainability can be “more than just recycling” and become “a cultural paradigm shift away from technology novelty and induced consumption, toward an aesthetic of well-cared-for systems” (Blevis 2007) remains an aspiration for now, and will remain so while designers are “complicit in the unsustainability of current interactive products” (DiSalvo et al. 2010).
Sustainable Interaction Design

Collapse Informatics

A new trend was set by Collapse Informatics researchers who articulated that we cannot take continuous economic growth and improvement in living conditions in the developed world for granted anymore, but need to develop “sociotechnical systems in the abundant present for use in a future of scarcity” (Tomlinson et al. 2012). It is self-evident that infinite consumption of finite global resources is impossible. Therefore, a fundamental change in how we consume these finite resources is approaching, desired or not.

While acknowledging that Human Computer Interaction as a discipline has not succeeded in finding a solution as of yet, they suggest that “novel research” may reduce the impact of societal collapse, even as they hope that preparing for this outcome may make the collapse less likely. This is why Sustainable Interaction Design is not simply an academic discipline, where people write papers, point out problems and discuss philosophical issues. There may/will come a point in the near future when change is inevitable. Then “prevention is no longer possible and adaptation is required” (Tomlinson et al. 2012). Waiting until it is too late to manage this change smoothly cannot be an acceptable option, but so far, practical solutions to these complex issues have proved elusive. To reinforce the immediacy of the problem, we simply need a reminder that for much of the world’s population, “crises of scarce resources, inadequate housing, deplorable conditions of health, and starvation are already at hand” (Tomlinson et al. 2012).

Ironically, it may be the current applications of digital fabrication technology by these same developing countries, and in other extreme settings, that may hold a key to achievable sustainability.
References


References


Working Together

Much software exists to help people collaborate with each other. For example, **Google Drive** allows for the creation of shared documents (mimicking Word, Excel, etc.), restricted to relevant parties by invitation only.

Only 1 copy exists. All group members can edit it, even all at once. When you are finished collaborating, a copy can be downloaded as a Word document to finalise the format, according to your needs.

If you want to set up “2-step verification” for your Google account, the following links will help you.

- [https://www.google.com/landing/2step/](https://www.google.com/landing/2step/)
- [https://support.google.com/a/answer/175197?hl=en](https://support.google.com/a/answer/175197?hl=en)