

REUSE IN CONTEXT: *SHIRT*

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ABSTRACT: Individuals' decisions regarding their possessions have wide implications in terms of resource efficiency and environmental impacts. With reference to a specific example – a used item of clothing – this workshop seeks, through structured discussion, to gain insight as to how and why individuals make decisions regarding when personal possessions reach the end of their useful life and the fate of such items thereafter.

Keywords: reuse consumer products decision-making

1. INTRODUCTION

The items and products that consumers routinely buy and use have viable lifetimes that depend on their continued fitness-for-purpose in terms of the consumers' needs, expectations, attitudes, beliefs and situation. In this context, apparently simple decisions regarding if and when an item ceases to provide sufficiently for continued use can involve a wide spectrum of factors (e.g. Schultz *et al.*, 1995). Even for individuals who have extensive knowledge of the options available for dealing with end-of-life personal possessions, understanding the relative benefits or impacts of their actions does not necessarily lead to best practice items of either resource efficiency or environmental contexts.

Fostering individuals' behaviour such that it aligns fully and suitably with the concepts of resource efficiency or minimisation of environmental impact can be a non-trivial task. In some cases, a decision that an item has reached its end-of-life is relatively straightforward. An inexpensive electronic product that ceases to function and is beyond economic repair, for example, would be readily viewed as "end-of-life" and a decision to recycle such an item would readily follow. By contrast, an item of clothing, for example, may bear signs of age and yet retain its utility in terms of its protective function, whilst losing value to its owner due to diminution of its appearance; there are many and various options reuse in such cases (Diop & Shaw, 2018).

There is clearly merit in exploring the processes to hand in such cases vis-à-vis what options are available to the individual, the choices made and the reasons why choices are made.

2. THE *SHIRT* WORKSHOP

2.1 Aims and focus of the workshop

This workshop will focus on the following issues:

- Decision-making regarding when and why personal possessions are considered to be no longer fit-

for-purpose, i.e. no longer retain attributes associated with or necessary for their continued use in the same manner;

- Decision-making regarding the fate of an “end-of-life” item once a decision has been that an item is no longer fit-for-purpose

The aim of the workshop is to explore these issues through participatory discussion. The workshop format for this session offers opportunities for participants to discuss these key areas on the basis of their own experience, insight and expertise, and to share and debate these with other participants.

2.2 Workshop content, structure and delivery

The workshop will explore key issues to hand by reference to an item of clothing (i.e. a shirt) that, through routine and long-term use, has minor but visible signs of wear. Participants will be asked to consider the condition of this shirt and discuss in small groups:

- What *could* become of this item and why?
- What *should* become of this item and why?

A short introductory presentation will be provided to set out the context and purpose of the workshop to participants. Participants will be divided into groups of *ca.* four individuals to discuss these key issues and given a set period of time to do so. In a subsequent plenary session, the discussion will draw together all the workshop participants as a means to compare and contrast the outcomes of the group discussion, seeking to identify areas of commonality and/or differentiation. Each group will be asked to elect a *rapporteur* to present a short summary of their discussion. Opportunities to discuss the collective view and outcomes will follow, terminating with a summary and round-up delivered by the workshop leader. The workshop will be approximately 60 minutes in duration, including the introductory overview, and be suitable for 12 to 24 participants.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

Through exploration of the key issues to hand (within small groups and in the plenary session), the participants will (1) have opportunity to reflect upon and present their own insight, experience and/or expertise, and (2) be able to compare and contrast their own perceptions to those of others. The expectation is that the contributions thus collected will permit evaluation of a wide range of possible outcomes, and, if identified, a consensus view.

REFERENCES

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