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Creatieve Industrie

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Prologue

Dictionary of Digital is a design research project looking to expand our emotional awareness towards digital technologies by reflecting on, mapping, and creating new vocabularies to articulate our shared personal experiences.

Seeking to challenge the notion that technology is merely functional, cold or adversarial, it invites people to acknowledge, examine, and discuss their deeply personal and emotional relationships with digital technologies. The creation of words is employed as a design tool to open up honest dialogue, capture meaningful observations, and encourage the creative use of language.

This booklet contains a dictionary of the words that were created from the discussions, and a how-to guide on how to facilitate your own process of reflecting and neologizing.

The project is a collaboration between Ocean Conijn and Nadia Piet; both design researchers that bonded over a shared fascination with digital culture, technology, subjectivity, and the role of language in mediating experience.

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The importance of **language**

The Inuit have 20+ words for snow, and the British over 100 for rain. Vocabularies expand over time to capture the nuances of our everyday experiences and environment. While in recent years we've adopted terms like deepfakes, filter bubbles, and plandids to articulate emerging phenomena.

The availability of meaningful language around digital technologies seems to lag. Our current vocabulary around technology is limited and, like the technology itself, centered around objectivity, functionality, and efficiency, steering our understanding of it in the same direction. Few terms exist to acknowledge and articulate the deeply personal, emotional, and complex relationships we have with digital technology.

We love the word uncanny valley - which Wikipedia describes as "*a hypothesized relationship between the degree of an object's resemblance to a human being and the emotional response to such an object*".

Where most neologisms focus on observable behavior and objects, this term refers to the emotional response of the individual, rather than the thing itself.

We are better able to recognize, communicate, and examine both individually and collectively the ways technology is shaping our inner and outer worlds when we have words available.

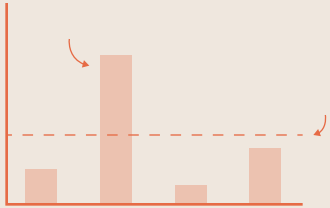
When do we need **new words**

Untranslatable words are words describing am experience or phenomenon that only exist in one language. For example the Japanese age-otori which means to look worse after a haircut, the Rukwangali word Hanyauku refering to the act of walking on tiptoes across warm sand, or the Spanish Sobremesa coining a term to describe the moment after eating a meal when the food is gone but the conversation is still flowing at the table.

To bring new words into being, the experience they refer to needs to occur frequently, be shared across different people, and be significant enough to mention.

Steph Smith captures this in the following figure concluding that *"this means that with untranslatables, we very likely experiencing a distinctive feature of a culture"*.

To extend our vocabulary in a meaningful way, we seek to surface those experiences that are indeed shared and frequent, but unspoken or unnamed.



Dictionary

first edition

Algoploy

~noun /ˈælgəplɔɪ/

Actions you take to intentionaly influence, train or steer an algorithm.

Ambisisive

~noun /ˈæmbisaɪsɪv/

Scroling trough an online platform and not being able to make up your mind on where to start because of all the infinite scroll.

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Anecdoche

~noun /ˈænɪkduːʃ/

A comment threat where everyone is posting a comment, but nobody is reading the convo.

Commontech

~noun /ˈkɒməntek/

A play on common wealth. The idea that tech is meaningless unless you use it to raise the living standards of others.

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Computational crutches

~noun /ˌkɒmpjʊˈteɪʃ(ə)nəl krʌtʃes/

Outsourcing cognitive functions and relying on your technology for certain tasks.

Copycorp

~noun /ˈkɒpikɔː(r)p/

Companies that blatently copy features, ideas, or designs from others.

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Data anticipation

~noun /ˈdeɪtə ænˌtɪsɪˈpeɪʃ(ə)n/

Prediction-induced (un)certainty about about what will happen based on personal data.

Digital voyeurism

~noun /ˈdɪdʒɪt(ə)l vwɑɪˈɜː(r)ɪz(ə)m/

That weird 'invasive' feeling when you're reading or seeing something on someone else's device and are aware of how personal its contents are.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Discussion dashing

~verb /dɪˈskʌʃ(ə) dæʃɪŋ/

Resolving quickly a discussion, conversation, or disagreement by immediately grabbing your phone for Google or chat history.

Ellipsepation

~noun /ɪˈlɪpsɪˈpeɪʃ(ə)n/

Waiting for someone to hit enter when you see them 'typing...'

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Expos-ad

~noun /ɪkˈspəʊz-æd/

Feeling ‘busted’ when a friend sees a you get an ad that indicates a private or embarrassing interest.

Hood-collar worker

~noun /hʊd-kɒlə(r) wɜː(r)kə(r)/

A play on white/blue/new-collar categorization of professionals - Refering to the new tech elite with (programming) skills so scarce they can afford to show up to work any way they want - mostly hoodies.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Inverse uncanny valley

/ˌɪnˈvɜː(r)s ʌnˈkæni ˈvæli/

Seeing yourself reflected through the eyes of an algorithm or data.

Luck of the pull

/lʌk əv ðiː pʊl/

A play on the "luck of the draw" effect in gambling, when you refresh your feed by pulling down to see new results.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Memeality

~noun /ˈmiːmæləti/

Getting a better understanding of an experience after seeing a funny meme that gives you some much needed perspective.

No-tificurge

~noun /ˈnəʊtɪfɪcɜː(r)dʒ/

Zero notification urge the fight the existence of the red dots.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Omnicognito

~noun /ɒmnɪkɒgˈniːtəʊ/

Opposite of incognito. A compulsive urge to share and be seen in everything you're doing and everything you are.

Outbored

~verb /aʊtbɔː(r)d/

The feeling that you can no longer be bored because you have access to infinite content.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Phantom reply

~noun /ˈfæntəm rɪˈplaɪ/

When you thought you replied but you only replied in your head.

Phone flip

~noun /fəʊn flɪp/

That satisfaction or self-liberating feeling you get from flipping your phone with it's screen down after receiving a call or notifications.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

How to: *make new words*

1. Reflect to neologize
2. Exploring the experiences
3. Neologize

Step 1: Prompted reflection

Phygital dissonance

~noun /ˈfɪʒɪt(ə)l ˈdɪsənəns/

Our cognitive functions glitching between dynamics of digital and physical interfaces.

Poasting

~verb /ˈpəʊstɪŋ/

Posts of people sharing achievements and 'wins' on social media, leaving us with a distorted view of other people's life.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Samephobia

~noun /seɪmfəʊbiə/

The fear of being an instagram cliché.

Schadenscrolling

~verb /ˈʃɑːd(ə)nskrəʊlŋ/

Feed-mediated schadenfreude where you keep scrolling down on someone's feed in the hope of seeing a previous and less perfect version of said person.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Screenshaming

~verb /skriːnʃeɪmlŋ/

Shaming yourself or others for the amount of time spent online.

Shallow learning

~noun /ˈʃæləʊ ˈlɜː(r)nɪŋ/

When a product that promises powerful AI features fails miserably.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

SIMsurance

~noun /ˈsɪmʃʊərəns/

The feeling of safety and comfort you get from having a SIM with data (e.g. when abroad).

Spatial ignorance

~noun /ˈspeɪʃ(ə)l ɪgnərəns/

Never learning the route because you keep putting directions on Google Maps.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Tab hoarding

~noun /tæbhɔː(r)dɪŋ/

Working through those infinite tabs you openened for 'later reading'.

Twilight cart

~noun /twaɪˌlaɪt kaː(r)t/

When you're on your phone right before you fall asleep and order things or send messages not fully conscious.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Voiceletter

~noun /vɔɪsletə(r)/

A very lengthy voicenote.

Window effect

~noun /wɪndəʊ ɪ'fekt/

When you open an app or tab and forget what you came there to do. Digital equivalant of the doorway effect.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

How to: *make new words*

1. Reflect to neologize
2. Exploring the experiences
3. Neologize

Step 1. Reflect to **neologize**

Within the project, the act of reflection, dialogue, and neologization feed into one another. The making up of words is used as a design tool to instigate critical reflection and open discussions. It invites you to reflect on your experiences on a deeper level, and share with others what might feel as confessions about your otherwise private experiences with and of technology. Providing prompts and a goal offers a structure for these insights and conversations to unfold, where process matters as much, if not more, than the outcome.

We highly encourage you to give it a go yourself. You'll be flexing your self-reflective muscles, opening up about awkward digital habits, and hopefully walk away with novel perspectives, a few giggles, and new words you generated.

Over the next few pages we'll share a how-to so you can go through this process yourself. While they are written as instructions for doing this in a duo or group setting, you can also interpret them as an individual exercise.

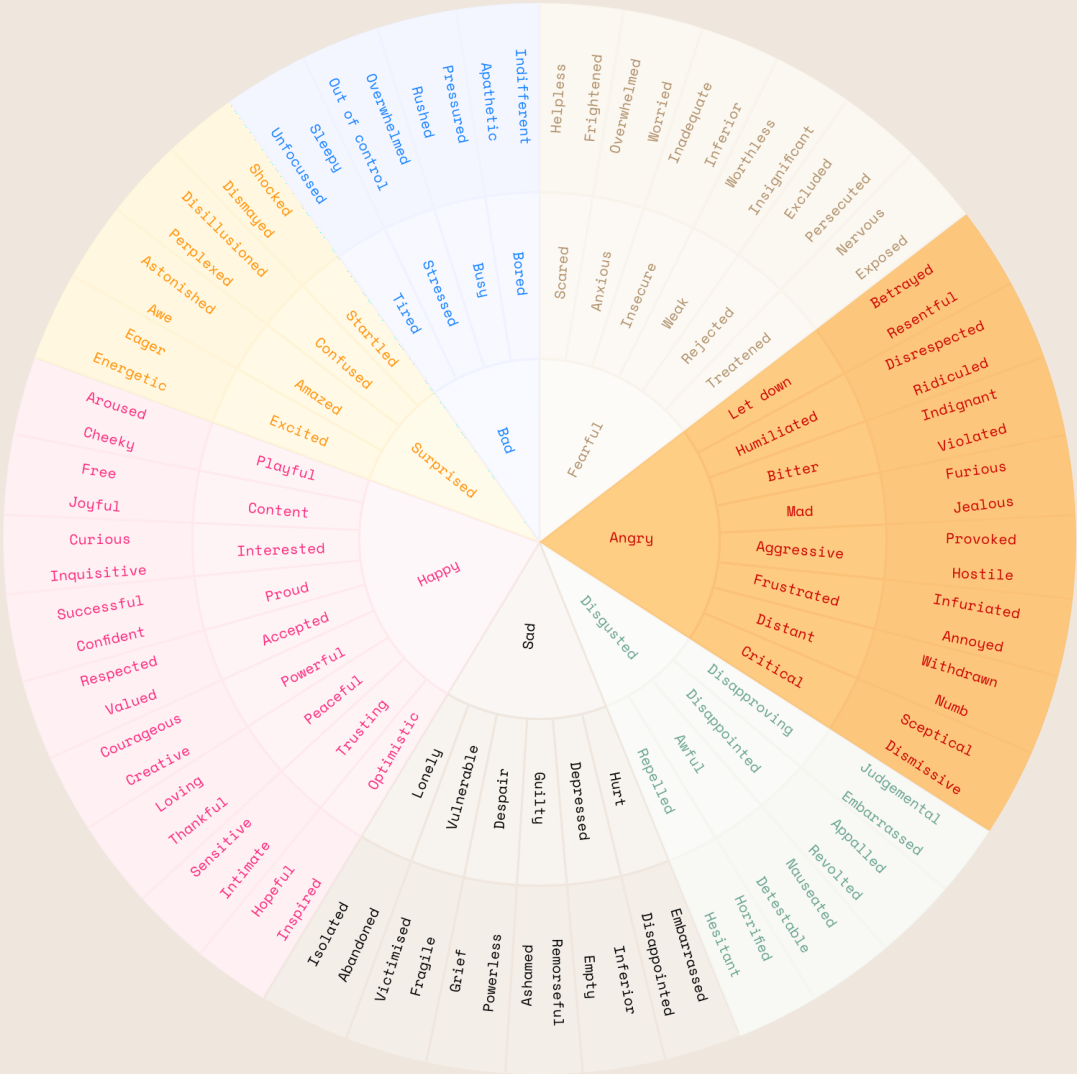
The goal of step 1 is to collect experiences. We use four lenses for starting this reflection, which can be used separately or in combination. When answering the prompts, please describe in a few sentences a specific event (rather than general statements) from a first-person perspective, focussing on the way you experienced it rather than the happening itself.

1.1 Emotion *wheel*

To shift our focus from objects and interfaces to experiences, we can draw on emotion theory. The psychologist Robert Plutchik created an Emotion Wheel with eight basic emotions (anger, anticipation, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise) which we can use this to provide a foundation for our collective emotional vocabulary. Over time, many versions of this wheel evolved.

On the next page you'll find an illustrated Emotion Wheel of the version we used by Geoffrey Roberts. The basic emotions seated on the inner ring and as you moved outward the sentiments become increasingly subtle and specific.

Instructions:
Starting from the inner ring, pick a random emotion and ask where this shows up in your digital life. Reflect and write your answers. Repeat the process for the middle ring, and ultimately the outer ring. Feel free to swap out the Emotion Wheel for any other emotion theory that resonates.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Fearful
Angry
Disgusted
Sad
Happy
Surprised
Bored
Busy
Stressed
Tired
Scared
Anxious
Insecure
Weak
Rejected
Treatened
Let down
Humiliated
Bitter
Mad
Aggressive
Frustrated
Distant
Critical
Disapproving
Disappointed
Awful
Repelled
Judgemental
Embarrassed
Appalled
Revolted
Nauseated
Detestable
Horrified
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Optimistic
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Peaceful
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Indifferent
Apathetic
Pressured
Rushed
Overwhelmed
Out of control
Sleepy
Unfocussed
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Overwhelmed
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Remorseful
Empty
Inferior
Disappointed
Embarrassed
Shocked
Dismayed
Disillusioned
Perplexed
Astonished
Awe
Eager
Energetic

1.2 Working with **themes**

Another way to open up the scope of your reflections is by looking at different life themes.

We used the following list of themes:

1. Body, the Senses & Materiality 👁️
2. Safety, Security & Stability 🛟
3. Creativity, Play & Expression 🎨
4. Work, Learning & Mastery 🎓
5. Mental Health, Emotions & the Self 🤳
6. Relationships, Love & Communication 💓
7. Culture, Identity & Community 🏯
8. Spirituality, Intuition & Nature 🌿

Instructions:
Using these themes as prompts, ask:
How do digital technologies influence my experiences in this space?
What role does technology play in my relation to it?

You can either work through the list sequentially as the themes get increasingly more personal and abstract. You can also pick one randomly or that speaks to you, and start there. Reflect and write your answers.

You could use the list above, the Maslov pyramid, chakras, or any other framework you find meaningful that touches on the different areas of life.

1.3 Starting with **channels**

Another way to invite reflection is by zooming in on the different channels, interfaces, services, and platforms where these experiences play out.

We used the following list of channels:
Devices - Smartphone, laptop, smartwatch, Internet of Things, smart speaker, wearables, tablet, analog, mechanic + electrical devices

Application - Dating, finance, health, games, productivity, notes, food, maps, news, entertainment, photo/video, email, work, creative

Communication - Whatsapp, videocall, Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, Linkedin, TikTok, Snapchat

Intructions:
Using your list of channels, ask:
What experiences do I have with this channel that are unique or typical to it?
How does this channel mediate my experience differently than others?

Reflect and write your answers.

The list should be personalized because it depends on the channels you interact with so we recommend creating your own or adding to the one above.

1.4 **Promptless**
or free flow

Once you get into it, you won't always need prompts. You might remember experiences from memory. By bringing more awareness to your experience as you're interacting with digital technologies, you'll start noticing more and pick up on interesting phenomena as you go.

If you find someone else that's open to continue exploring, share these observations with eachother as you go. This is what we do :)

Step 2. **Exploring** *the experiences*

If you've made it through step 1, you will have a lot of material and insights to work with here. In step 2, we will share, discuss, and poke at our stories together. To do this, we use a method called Socratic questioning. If you're familiar, get right to it. If not, we'll elaborate below.

Socratic questioning is a form of disciplined questioning that can be used to pursue thought in many directions and for example to explore complex ideas, to get to the truth of things, and to open up issues and problems.

It's best practiced in duos, where one asks and the other answers, but can also be done individually or in a small group.

Here are some questions you can ask:
How does that feel?
Can you give me an example?
Can you elaborate a bit?
What effect does that have?
Is this different offline?
Is that always the case?
Is it like that for everyone?
What consequences does this have?
How does this relate to ___?
Is there an alternative?
Does this or a similar experience show up elsewhere?
Why do you think this happens?

After unpacking and gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences, you probably have a sense of which experiences are interesting, shared, and significant enough to create words for.

Step 3. **Neologize**

Now it's time for step 3, making the words for your experiences. Here some practical tips and strategies to start with neologizing.

Approach it like a brainstorm so quantity first, quality later. You can create a mind map, take out your sticky notes, be creative.

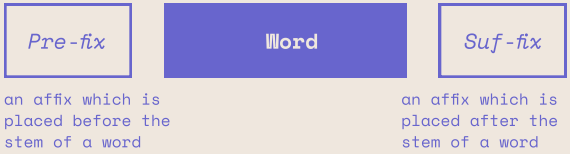
Associations of words will help you out here. Different words have different nuances so having a bunch of words in the area of exploration is a nice start. Use thesaurus to find words that are not directly in your personal lexicon.

Last general tip, keep talking and discussing the meaning of the word and if it's the nuance you're looking for.

3.1 **Nine strategies** *for neologizing*

1. Derivation

Adding prefixes or suffixes to the word. Like our word **Omnicognito** a play on incognito. We took te prefix in and replaced it with omni.



Tip: Google common prefixes and suffices.

2. Conversion of word class

Adding prefixes or suffixes to the word. For example making from Google an adjective a verb; googling.

Tip: Try switching between adjective, noun & verb.

3. Compounding

Here you merge 2 words or parts of these words to create new meaning. For example **Voiceletter** or voicenote.

4. Repurposing

Making a new word with a refrence to the context or symbolic meaning. A good eample of this is the word **Computer mouse**. We take something we know a mouse and add it to a device that has a similair “look” with the shape and cable.

Tip: Look at nature or try to add words to your mindmap that look or feel similair.

5. Emponyms

Words named after a person or place.

6. Abbreviations

Here we have two variations: acronyms and clipping. Ancronyms take the first letters of words to form a new word. **PC** is one of these words, personal computer. Clippings are shortend words so **Phone** instead of telephone.

P ersonal

C omputer

7. Loan words
Borrowing words or parts of words from other languages.

Tip: If you're bi-(or tri-)lingual, use that to your adventage. If you're not, there's always Google translate.

8. Onomatopeia
These words are based on the sound that they make or the sound it describes.

Tip: Does it make a recognisable sound?

9. Nonce words
Words pulled out of thin air that have no apparent meaning.

Tip: Ask help from a 7-year old.

Closing notes

We'd love to hear from you! If you gave the process a try or found any new strategies. If you read a word in the dictionary that gave new meaning to your experience. If you made up a cool word that you'd like to share.

Share with us on Instagram
@dictionaryofdigital

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