

EXPERIENCES FROM 4D LIVING EXHIBITION

PRODUCT DESIGN SPECIAL PROJECT

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Experiences from 4D Living Exhibition

-A guideline for conducting public exhibitions.

Design Research Seminar

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this written submission represents my idea in my own words and where others ideas have been included, it has been adequately cited and referenced the original source. I declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misinterpreted or fabricated or falsified any data/idea/facts/sources in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above entitles the institute to take disciplinary action against me to which I shall be answerable to.

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Acknowledgement

I am really thankful to Prof. U A Athavankar for his guidance and support and for making me a part of this design research seminar project, The knowledge he passed on to me cannot be replaced. The experience of working on conducting the exhibition in itself was great. I would also like to thank Prof. BK Chakravarthy as well as Ameya and Prasad from affordable housing team- IDC for their valuable insights they passed on to me. We are also thankful to all the faculty for their support and valuable feedbacks, which helped me in various difficult situations.

I would also like to thank all the studio staffs in IDC for the help they had granted in various situations. I would also like to thank my team-mates, friends and family for their support and guidance.



Abstract

This report gives a concise information regarding conducting, co-ordinating and handling an exhibition. The information in this report is conceived from the team's experience during the '4D-Living' exhibition which was conducted from 16th to 19th of January 2015. This particular report can become a guideline, for the coming batches in the institute, to avoid common mistakes and conduct a successful exhibition.

The report briefly explains each stage involved in an exhibition right from naming the exhibition to handling the crowd. Although the report could become a guideline, this may not be an exhaustive list of recommendations for conducting the exhibition.



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Introduction

An exhibition on the aspects of new ways of living was conducted from 16th to 19th of January 2015. This exhibition showcased two aspects, '4D' and '3D' living, which basically deals with new ways of living in the urban slums.

A team of three, under the guidance of Prof. UA Athavankar, conducted the exhibition at IDC, IIT Bombay.

There are different stages involved in conducting a successful public exhibition. Each stage has to be carefully planned and executed without any compromise on the time constraints and quality.

Fabricating a guideline based on the experience of conducting a public exhibition could be useful for the coming batches in the institute in avoiding common mistakes and glitches that may happen otherwise.



Fig 1. *The title (logo) for the exhibition*

+ Choosing The Title

Curiosity attracts people. The title of such an exhibition should immediately grab the attention of the general public. Analysing what all are going to be shown in the exhibition and the kind of projects that were done, a title and a sub-title was chosen, i.e, '4D-Living' and '3D-Living' respectively.

'4D-Living' has an ambiguity associated with it. The general public would have heard only till the third dimension and on hearing '4D', there will be a question that arises in mind which in turn changes to a curiosity. A logo was also made depicting the '4D' which people can easily associate with.

Everyone has heard about the three dimensions or '3D' but '3D-Living' is something which many people haven't heard of. '3D-Living' was also associated with the physical prototype which was set-up in the exhibition, as interesting concept where people would get involved and experience the volumetric living space inside.

+ Designing the panels



Fig 2. *Exhibition panel mock-up made with paper to decide the size of the panels*

Panels form an important part of the exhibition given the fact that they can be used to communicate the information as well as guide the user through the exhibition. Utmost care was taken in designing the panels which involved creating a right balance between readability and visual experience it delivers. Panel design went through the following process:

1. **Determining the size of the panel**

Size was chosen after analyzing the distance and height at which it will be viewed. Various factor like availability of frame on which it could be placed were also taken into account. The final size chosen was based on the golden ratio with height being 4 ft and width at 2ft 6 inches. This provided ample opportunity to bring out a better composition to the panel as a whole, at the same time making it right enough to accommodate the contents.

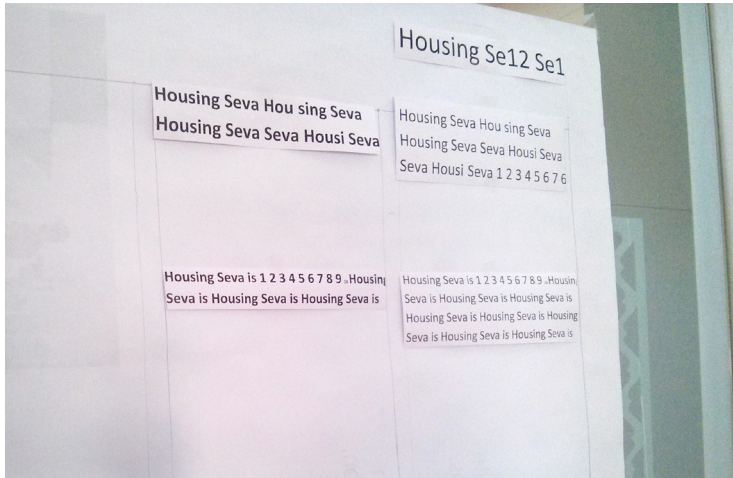


Fig 3. *Trying out different fonts and font size on the mock-up panel*

Font Used :

Whitney Black

Font size :

Heading : 72 pt

Subheading : 48 pt

Content : 28 pt

2. Determining the size of text

Once the contents were finalized, scaled down grids were done on an A4 sheet to roughly figure out the layout of the contents. Different layers of contents were identified, which demanded a hierarchy in the information flow. Once the grid layouts were fixed (3 column grid was used to provide adequate flexibility), a life size mockup of the panel was made and pasted with strips of alphabets and numerals. This mockup was then attached on a vertical surface at height of 2 ft from the floor and observed at viewing distance with ample lighting. This gave an understanding of how the viewer would experience the content - whether it was readable and if the hierarchy of information was maintained.

3. Choosing the font

Some of the factors which were looked upon to make decisions regarding the fonts were, readability at different scales as well as going with the reading pace of the viewer. Whitney was used after discussion with Prof: Girish Dalvi regarding the layout and the size of the panel. The font was a multipurpose font which was initial designed to be used in Whitney museum signages. It was designed to be used at different scale from texts in paragraphs to signages.

4. Taking rough print outs

Once the font was fixed, contents were applied to the grid and a rough print out was taken with both text and images (images occupying the first 2 columns and the text in



Fig 4. Image file of one of the panel used in exhibition

the last). This was again used to understand the readability of the content at viewing distance.

5. Showing just enough data:

One major problem faced during the content generation was to crunch the data into the limited space available. Care was taken not to elaborately explain the projects and rather provide just enough information and compliment it with images or graphics. This could enhance readability as well as understandability of the designs.

6. Graphic elements in the panel:

Graphic elements not only add to colorfulness of the panels, but also helps in establishing a border. While designing the graphic elements, various patterns were iterated which could go with the context. The patterns were chosen taking into account the fact that it should be subtle in nature such that the pattern should not overpower the content of the panel.

7. Common elements among the panels:

Certain elements (color, pattern of placement of images, heading bar etc) were made common to panels that were in the same family of projects. This gave the feeling of panels being common to a particular project or set of projects.

8. Panels paired with models:

Apart from the panel, one factor that kept the viewer glued to the space was the availability of physical model. The position of the model with respect to the panel had to be taken care of - considering the fact that, the models actually complimented the information displayed - aiding better understanding of the project.

+ Designing the brochure

Brochures were designed to give the viewers a detailed understanding of the process, at the same time it was also a space to communicate the contact information and details of the participants. The hand out design went through the following process:

1. Preparing the content

The process section went through nearly 20 - 30 pages in the project report. Idea was to see how that can be crunched to an A4 size paper with minimal effect in readability. For this, important sections were identified that could become the heading points, which included Context, Research, Making process and Final solution. Apart from this, contact information, cover details, images, stakeholder details were also collected. Sub headings were also marked out in addition to the problem statement and the key statement that went guided the ideation. The size of the content also gave an idea of designing the grid.



Fig 5. Trying out different fonts and font size on the mock-up panel

2. Designing the grid.

Once the contents were ready, an order of precedence was decided as to which has to be given the maximum visual weight. Based on this, thumbnails were drawn on a 3 column grid to come up with various compositions. The texts were replaced by strips and images with boxes to get an approximate visualization. Thumbnails were helpful in the sense that they gave maximum ideas in minimum time. From the thumbnails, the one which was better in terms of composition as well as sticking to the order of precedence was selected for detailing and placement of contents.

3. Placement of the contents

When the contents have to be placed according to the thumbnails, various problems arose regarding the spacing between different sections and within sections. At times contents has to be again reduced or restructured to fit in the space. Images were also cropped and care was taken to maintain the identifying features of the images intact. Apart from this placement of texts above the images also had its own issues as to problem of readability at certain points. These were solved by either with play of colors or slight manipulation of the images.

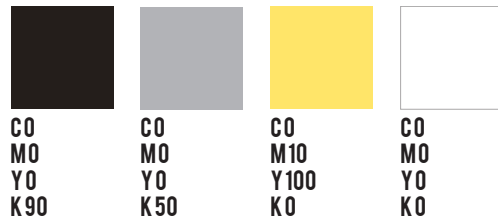


Fig 6. *The colour scheme used in the brochure.*

4. Identifying a color scheme

Colors were chosen in such a way that they could provide ample contrast which could attract the attention of the viewer at the same time were used to give precedence to the information. Apart from this different saturations were tried to identify the ones that could go easy with the eye at the same time good enough to be attractive. The following were the colors used for various elements as can be seen in the design (Fig:6).

5. Designing for print

Even though the designs went well in the context of digital media, care had to be taken to make sure it portrayed the same quality in print media. Various things that had to be taken into consideration were use of CMYK color scheme, better quality paper (based on the amount to be printed) and most importantly the space for margins. A min space of 5mm was left in order to make it suitable for machine cutting.



Presentations and Presentation Techniques

A presentation is an activity of presenting a topic to an audience. The presentation could be in any form right from a paper poster to holograms. Since these are ways to pass on the ideas from an individual to a group, it is important to take notice of what kind of audience it is being presented to. It is for the speaker to understand the audience's capability to receive whatever is being told and it also the speaker's responsibility to know what should not be told.

This can be further described with the various scenarios as said below.

Presentation for Jury

A jury, typically, would be a body or a panel of people who are experts in the field. Giving a presentation to them is completely different from what would be given for general public. The presentation for the jury has to be crisp and precise. At the same time, it should dive deep in to the subject only wherever it is needed. It is better not to have a lengthy presentation which could take the jury's mind off from the topic.

The speaker should have the complete idea about what he/she is describing as the juries can be judgemental. The presentation should contain only the keywords and it is recommended to eliminate long text like a sentence or a paragraph.

Sans serif fonts are mostly recommended for presentations. The speaker should see to it that the text is not merging with the background color and is visible from a certain distance.

Keywords: Crisp, precise, short, to-the-point, good understanding of the subject

Presentation for Exhibition (General Public and Experts)

A presentation for an exhibition which is open to public need not be as detailed or in-depth as it is for a juror, though it has to briefly cover up the entire subject. In this particular scenario, the audience is the general public which includes a few experts as well. Therefore, it is important to keep the presentation interesting. A few ways to keep it interesting would be by asking questions, making people do some kind of small activities and debating etc. All the other guidelines such as making the text short and being crisp is applicable in this scenario as well.

Another important aspect to be considered is that, when you are presenting to the public, it would be usually a crowd in a large hall or auditorium. In such cases, the text should be large enough so that the last person in the hall could read it. It



Fig 7. *Presentation of 3D Living during the Affordable housing workshop.*

is a different case, if the hall has the provision for projectors.

Keywords: Not detailed, short, optimum text size, raise questions

Presentation for evoking curiosity

A presentation which needs to evoke curiosity should, obviously, not disclose the entire content rather it should be in such a way that whatever the presenter presents should raise questions in the audience's mind.

The presentation could be one liners, questions or pictures that are curious. All the guidelines mentioned earlier are applicable here.

Creating The Invitation



Fig 8. *The Invitation image which was sent through emails*

Invitations are a crucial part of such exhibitions. Dignitaries, media and even the general public have to be informed and invited for the exhibition. An invitation was made with the help of a visual designer

In the present day, invitations are hardly sent by posts. Mostly the medium of emails and social networks are used for passing on a message. So there was no actual size constraint for the invitation. The size was governed by the content that was present.

The logo made for the exhibition was given prime importance right in the beginning of the invitation itself. The visual designer was given all the freedom to make choice of fonts, colors and texture. The exhibition team provided only the content and a basic guideline as to what needs to come out as important.

The font used for the invitation was Proxima Nova and the color scheme was taken from the identity of the logo. The content or text which needed to be highlighted was either made bold or was in a different color or both.

The invitation was sent to dignitaries, media and others by pasting it in the text space of e-mail so that it would be visible right when they open the mail. The invitation was also

put up in the official website and social media networks to gain maximum coverage. A few hard copies were also made to invite people who were physically present.

+ Exhibition Layouts

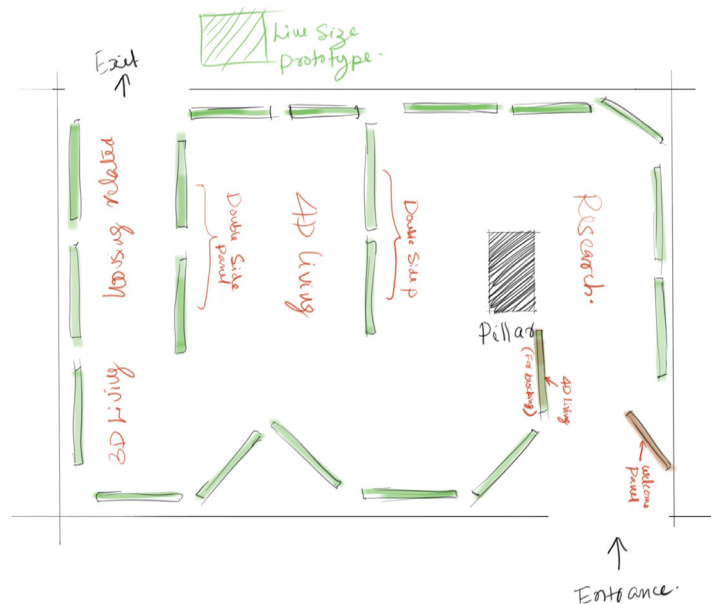


Fig 9. Rough plan of layout being made on paper.

The exhibition displays three sections on affordable housing i.e. 3D living, 4D living and housing related projects done in IDC. The order of the panels were decided such that the research part and the 4D living comes in the beginning followed by 3D living and other projects. One of the other reason to keep 3D living little behind was that the working prototype for the 3D living project was kept outside the exhibition hall in rear side. So the visitors can visit the prototype directly after going through the 3D living panels. This layout also helped to convey the research process behind the affordable housing projects effectively to the visitors.

The layout for the exhibition was designed in such a way that the panels itself shows the visitors were to go next. The panels were arranged in the manner that it blocked unnecessary paths preventing the visitors from crowding inside the hall. Also care was taken to differentiate between various sections of projects by adding other panels in between. As the space inside the hall was not big, special care was taken to make sure the exhibition hall doesn't look congested with too many panels. The efficient utilisation of the space inside the hall was the prime focus when we chose the panel size and maximum number of panels to be displayed for the exhibition.

+ Handling The Crowd



Fig 10. *Explaining the project to the visitors*

Handling the crowd is a big task in such exhibitions. The layouts, in the first place have to be arranged keeping in mind the flow of people. Once a person arrived at the exhibition entrance, he/ she is invited inside and introduced to the subject. He is given all the freedom to move around, with or without guidance, and read through the panels and observe the models. The physical models which are not to be touched are written so. A separate piece was kept for the people to handle and learn carefully. Once they pass the '4D-Living' section, he/ she is introduced to the '3D-Living' aspect. If the person wishes to see the panels he is allowed, otherwise he was taken to the physical (life-size) prototype so that it will be easier for explanation as well as the person to understand the aspects better.

While climbing the ladders inside the affordable housing prototype, extra precaution was taken from both the team's side as well as the person's side. Only limited people were allowed to go to the first floor because of safety issues. Once they are done seeing the exhibit, they are guided back to the hall where the panels are kept so that incase if they have any doubt it can be cleared.

Visiting cards were exchanged to keep an account or reference of the people visited the exhibition.

Handling Press

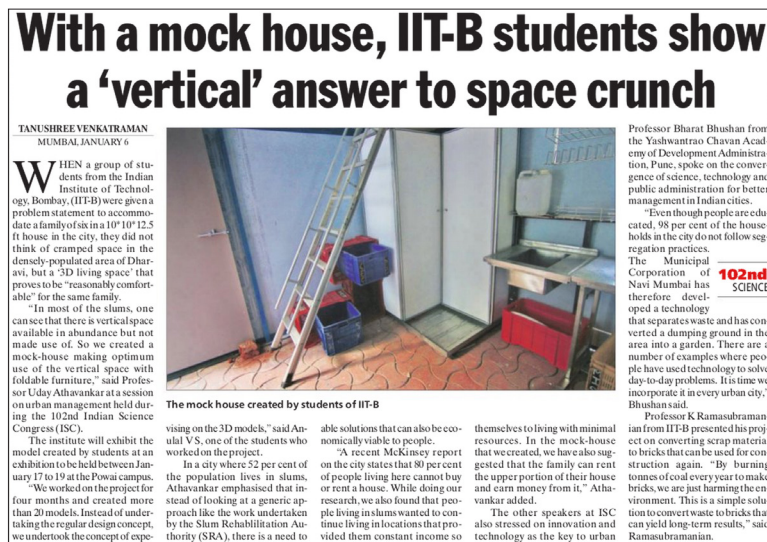


Fig 11. The News article came in Indian express

The objective of conducting the exhibition is to take the idea to the mass and there is no other medium, other than may be the social networks, that reaches out to the public than the newspapers. The correspondents of the newspapers were informed and invited about the 4D-Living exhibition by e-mails and phone. Some of the reporters called back on phone to get the details of the project and the exhibition so that they could publish it in the newspapers. A set of appointments were fixed with the newspaper correspondents so that they could get a detailed report. This was done over the phone. A first draft of the newspaper content was sent by them, so that if incase there is any correction, it could be done and send it back. One of these reports was tagged as a curtain raiser, since the details such as date and venue of the exhibition was mentioned in the content.

The media came for the inauguration of the exhibition and the reporters sat through the entire event. There were newspaper reporters as well as television news reporters. The reporters belonging to the news channel came with their own crew of camera men. For the news channel report, it is necessary to ensure that there wouldn't be any disturbance or noise while the camera is recording. It will be better if the entire reporting is taken in one shot. So the reporter as well as the interviewee should be well prepared.



A Defence and an Exhibition

When the process and approach of a defence jury and an exhibition is looked at as a whole it is possible to find obvious differences as well as some strange similarities. This was an opportunity to find out such interesting aspects of both.

1. Differences

- A defence is presented in front of a jury who are experts in the field.
- Have to go much deep in to the subject while presenting for a defence.
- In the case of an exhibition, the things that catch the visitors' attention have to be told first.
- The narration or explanation should not be too long or detailed.
- The presentation for defence is pinpointed on the topic whereas the presentation for exhibition would be to create curiosity about the topic among the crowd.

2. Similarities

- There is always a last minute rush and preparations in both the cases.
- Mistakes, which become 'visible' only after printing a hardcopy, are noted and re-printed.
- Last minute presentation checks.
- Technical glitches such as the mic not working, projection is not bright etc

Behind The Scenes



Fig 12. Exhibition room with Panels arranged

The exhibition was initially planned to be conducted in the exhibition hall of IDC. But due to certain reasons a second space had to be sorted out. The matter was discussed with the guide and HOD, the proposal came out was to use space inside VMCC. When enquired it was known that VMCC space is not available for all the dates of exhibition. This led to further discussions with HOD and guide, which gave the idea of using the basement of IDC as the exhibition room. The room came to be a promising option because it also had a door at the rear side which opens directly to the Working House prototype, which makes it easy for the guests to visit the prototype directly after seeing the panels.

The basement room had been used as a storage room throughout the time, it was flooded with previous years dds panels, project prototypes and many old furnitures which were not in use. With the help of IDC studio staffs, the entire room was emptied and cleaned. The ventilation and natural lighting was lacking as the room had no windows and the height was less. Since the space was not in a condition to be exposed to public, certain touch ups were done to make the room look nice and tidy. For lighting, initial idea was to use the normal tube lights, which already had the connection points in the wall. But even after all the lights were ON, it was not giving the proper ambience of an exhibition. For this purpose, an outside



Fig 14. *Setting up the panel frames.*



Fig 13. *Prof UA Athavankar explaining the projects to the guests*



contract was made with a lighting company. They brought 10 of their halogen standing baby lights, of which 8 were used in different positions inside the room.

The room had been a dump-yard for so many years and hence the floor was not properly finished. This again led to an extra expense of hiring a decoration team to decorate the room with proper floor mats. Several options were thought for the colour and feel of the floor mat, but as many of them were not available at that moment, we had to go along with the Red coloured normal floor mat, which the contractor had.

The panels for the exhibition were designed in the golden ratio measurement 4'x2.5', which had to be installed on the 4'x3' frame which idc had. The night before the exhibition, all the panel frames were brought inside the exhibition hall. The printed panels came from the print shops in two sections, the first set panels were installed and kept ready prior to the exhibition day. The second set of panels which came on the exhibition day early morning were also made ready for the exhibition. Certain Panels were designed for showing the direction to the exhibition hall, these panels were installed in the pre decided positions around IIT.

The panel with writing '4D living ' and sponsor names was kept in the entrance to attract people from outside. Another panel of 4D living was kept at the side to block the users from directly entering into the centre of the hall and thereby forcing them to follow the walking path designed by us. There was a rectangular pillar on side of the hall near to the entrance. Instead of leaving the pillar empty, the space on the pillar were also utilised effectively by creating panels which covers the pillar from all sides. This panels were designed to give an ambience to the context of the exhibition, hence pictures representing various problems faced by people in slums were displayed in the panel on the pillar. The pillar side facing the entrance were again utilised to give the branding of the exhibition.

 **End**