Erik Kristiansen
Performance design
Roskilde University
erikk@ruc.dk

PLAYING THE LOBBY
THE THRESHOLD DESIGN GAME
Erik Kristiansen, Roskilde University 2014

Object:
　　　　To understand the workings of the entrance area and improve it by redesigning the game.

Prerequisites:
　　　　The better you know your visitors and staff, the better you can design the threshold. If you know little about either the game may tell you what to look for to improve the threshold.

Game elements:
　　　　Cardboard figures (scale 1:50) representing staff and visitors. Cut out and fold the stand.
　　　　Cardboard for walls, information kiosks, desks etc.
　　　　Cards representing the properties of each person.

Preparation:
　　　　BOARD
　　　　Make a board representing the entrance hall or area you wish to work with. To fit the size of the figures 1 meter should be approx. 2 cm on the board (scale 1:50). Don't draw the exhibition halls. Instead of a board you may make simple walls, and arrange them like the

entrance area.

Draw counters, toilets, shop, wardrobe, steps, stairs, queueing facilities, signs, information kiosks etc. Some of them may be made of cardboard, as cubes or even simpler.

It need not be precise, just a rough - but realistic - sketch.

PERSONS
Each person is represented by a game piece (cut from the cardboard) and a card with personal details. Fill in the cards and remember to draw the number on the game piece (on the back), so that you easily may identify the person.

Sample persons:
> *Visitor*: Alfred, 66 years, M
> *Goals*: Coffee
> *Likes*: Exhibitions, talking to other visitors
> *Dislikes*: Shops
> *Strengths*: Patience
> *Weaknesses*: Bad at orientation, don't read signs

> *Visitor*: Alice, 35 years, F
> *Goals*: Come to view three specific objects in the exhibition
> *Likes*: Good shops
> *Dislikes*: Other visitors blocking the way
> *Strengths*: Loves museums
> *Weaknesses*: Needs precise directions, takes many pictures

Make it as realistic as you dare... plus a little bit more. A set of visitors is ready for you to use. Please add your own – fill out the empty cards.

PLAYING THE LOBBY
> The game is a kind of *Role Playing Game* (RPG) and is played in *near realtime*. It is a collaboration game focusing on the sequence of events and the resolving of conflicts.

> Two players: one plays the staff, the other plays the visitors.
> Three or more players: divide the persons between you.
> The game is played in turns.
> The object of the player(s) who control the visitors is to engaged with the staff and threshold in a realistic way.

> Place the staff at the appropriate positions for any time of the day you agree as the beginning of the game. Place the visitors accordingly.

> Remember: Some visitors may be on their *way in*, some on their *way out*. Some may just linger in the lobby. You decide!

> *Game begins:*
> Any number of visitors may be moved. The visitors should move according to their properties and goals. Remember it is supposed to be realtime movements.

> The staff is moved accordingly.

When the visitor meets one of the staff a conflict arrises, and this should be resolved immediately. Conflict also arrises if a visitor can not move because of congestion.

Any visitor that fulfils his/her goal leaves the game. New visitors may be introduced at any time – or former visitors may return.

Conflict resolution:
The goal is to resolve a conflict to the satisfaction of both parties. This is done by playing out a realistic discussion according to the properties of the persons. You may have to exaggerate a little to get good results within a short timespan. If the conflict can not be resolved or may be resolved in a better way, discuss how the entrance area may be changed and change it immediately. Changes could be moving a desk, adding signs, benches, make access easier etc.

Completing the game:
You can't win – but then, you can't lose either. Your entrance hall is the winner or the looser. And hopefully you have got a deeper understanding of the threshold problem.