

Lunch & Learn:

The trap of gendered design and how to overcome it

Anna Hanchar & Jlona Troll

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Picture credit: <https://design-milk.com/crossed-legged-chair-by-vladimir-tsesler/>

Agenda

- *About us...*
- *Where does gendered design come from?*
- *Common traps and how to overcome them*



- *Let's sum it up!*
- *Let's discuss!*

About us... Anna

- Went from clinical & developmental psychology (first M.Sc.) to psychology of Human-Computer-Interaction (second M.Sc.)
- Joined Zühlke in 2016
- Love "boring" things like making complex (internal) applications work neatly for users, user research, RE, and getting **it** done

*Used to be a traveler, hiker, windsurfer, reader, snowboarder
Currently trying to squeeze something for me while being a working mom ;)*



About us... Jlona

- Started as an industrial designer in medical design and fell in love with UX – 10 years ago
- Supporting Zühlke UX since 2017
- Finished my MAS in Product Management in 2019
- Main interests early design phases, health care & medical, connecting the hardware & software world



How do we define "female"?



14/04/2021

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<https://cached.imagescaler.hbpl.co.uk/resize/scaleHeight/817/cached.offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/news/OMC/Dove2-20181116033930796.jpg>

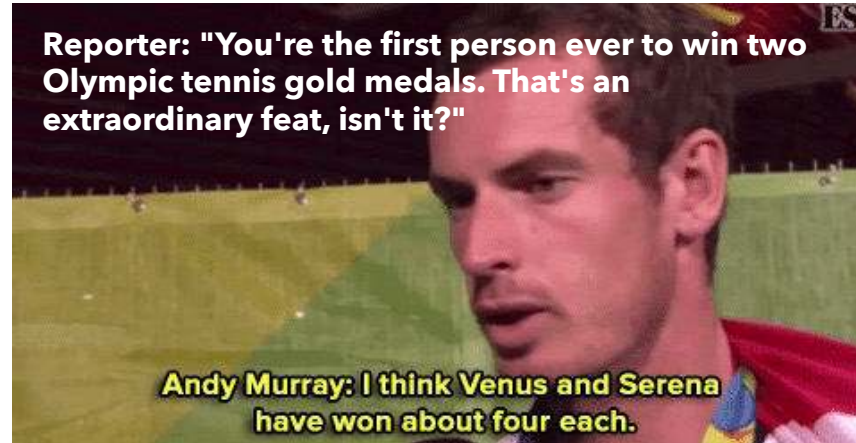
Where does the gender gap come from?

Ancient female warriors



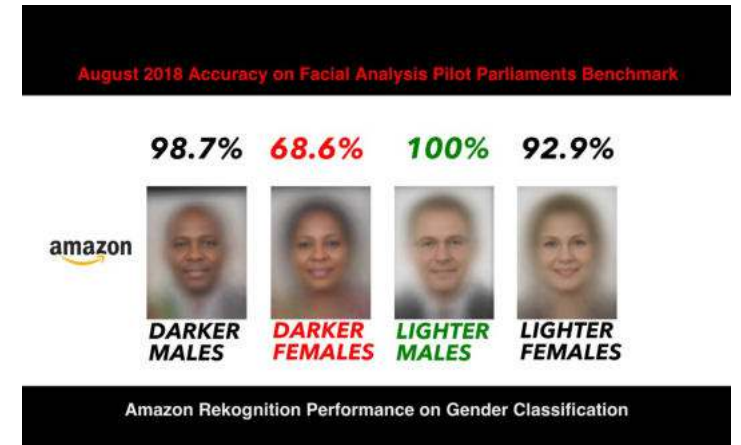
<https://www.ancient-origins.net/sites/default/files/field/image/scythians3.jpg>

Sports



<https://www.lipstickalley.com/threads/yes-olympic-gold-medalist-tells-broadcaster-to-put-some-respect-on-the-williams-sisters-names.1068824/>

Artificial Intelligence



https://hackernoon.com/hn-images/1*xOJ3mjjslfud7GPS7XNJIQ.png

...and clinical data, gendered languages, etc.

Tell me more about the spa breeze when I try to balance a toddler and shave the legs at the same time...



versus



Smart phones

The size and consequent comfort factor of smartphones is based on the average size of a man's hand.



1

Uniforms are not that universal



Migros Zeitung



<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DIm3VY6XYAAC8-w.jpg>



Ignore one gender during definition of user groups or personas

Focus & design only for gender:

- Physical dimensions: use male body type even if a user group with a female body type can or will use the product
- Psychological factors : E.g. no easily accessible security settings or no way to connect to a help in case of danger for a female

1

Ignore one gender during definition of user groups or personas

- Do due diligence, consult your marketing or sales team, get any data of the demographics
- If this is not a clearly one-gender-specific-product like a tampon: make sure to include the most important potential users and derive their biggest needs
- Use a broader, specifically graded range when it comes to anatomic & ergonomic requirements – NOT one size fits all

*How to
escape the
trap?*

2 *Shrink it & pink it. Because it is the favourite colour of every female human being...*



Cool Tools for Women

A "must have" list for all your simple home improvements



2

Describe your target group using the stereotypical view

- Make assumptions about the user needs based on stereotypes:
 - women = simple
 - men = experts and explorer
- Using your own "common sense" instead of user research & science

2

Describe your target group using the stereotypical view

- Use any project data source to understand who are the users and what are their needs: Desk research, interviews, contextual inquiry, analytics are here to help
- Derive characteristics for your user group that include more than gender stereotypes: *"What other products does this group use? How does their environment look? What do they enjoy most? How do they like to work – precise, fast, neat? And so on..."*

*How to
escape the
trap?*



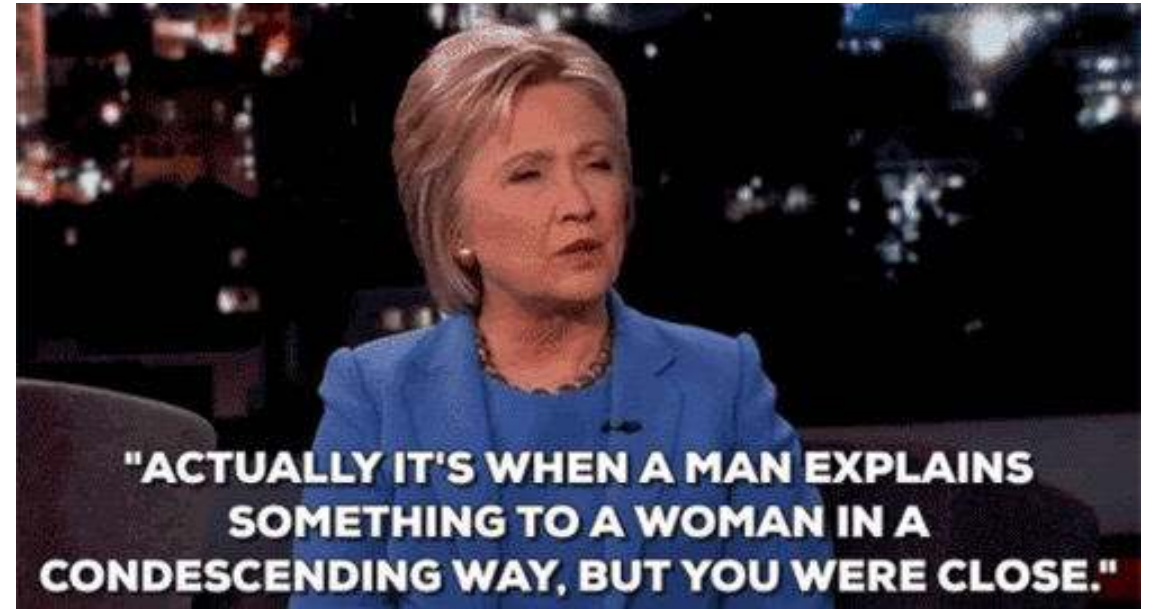
3



3

Designing in a non-diverse team which knows only one side of the medal

- All feedbacks and often decisions come from one (male) perspective
- Team sympathizes and relates to specific user group and works for it



3

Designing in a non-diverse team which knows only one side of the medal

- If there is a chance, try to create diverse environment
- Involve users from different backgrounds and make the team observe and participate
- Make the person who decides about the product hear different voices and see different perspectives
- Make the user group tangible to the team: use mood boards, have your personas omni present, take the team to user tests or show them the testing-videos

*How to
escape the
trap?*

4

Are those cuties really safe for women?



4

Speaking about health

- Historically, females have been excluded from human and animal clinical research trials
- Health apps at first failed to account for the menstrual cycle



Image credit: <https://time.com/collection/davos-2020/5764698/gender-data-gap/>



Tested with users, that didn't correspond to the actual user group

Women are defined as one of the target groups,
BUT they do not participate in the actual user tests



Tested with users, that didn't correspond to the actual user group

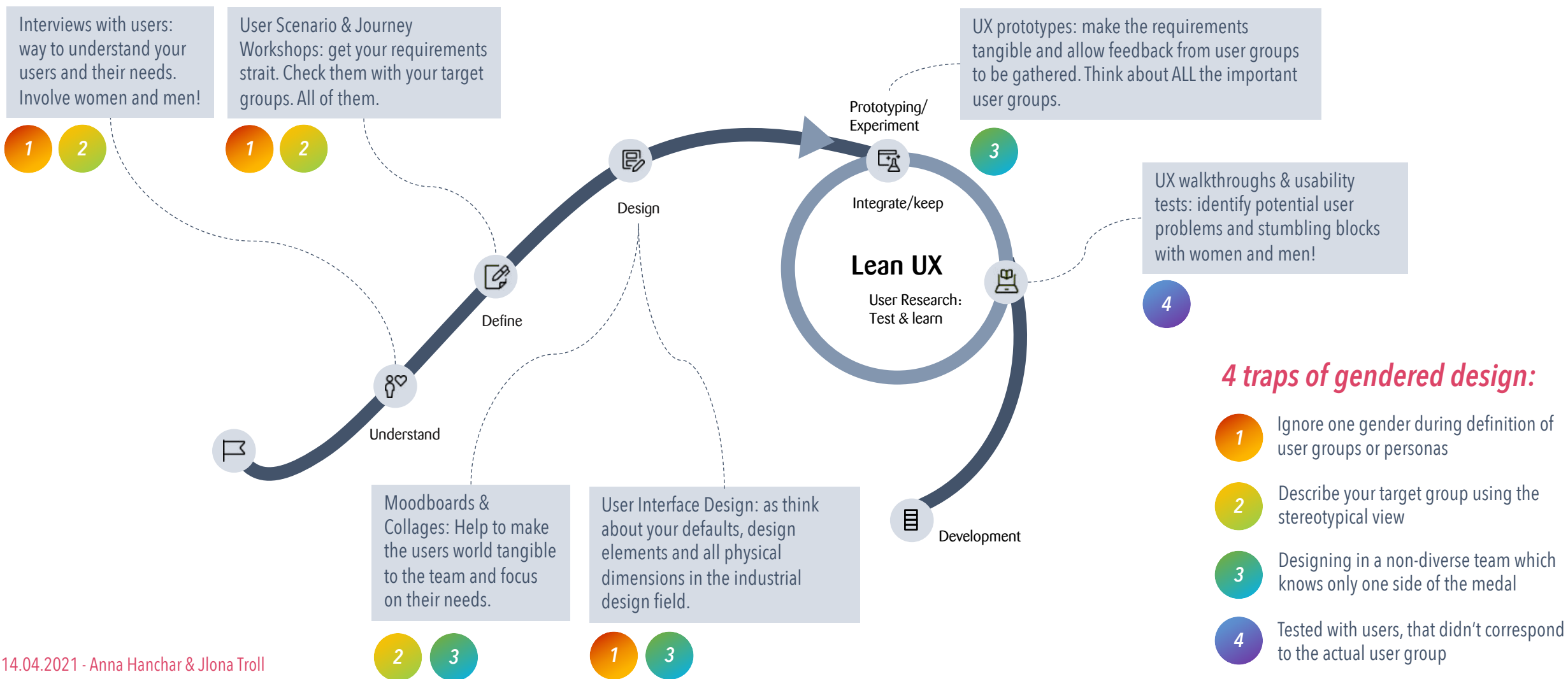
- Recruit the right participants for your tests and this means not only male/female, but also other demographics (age, race, income, education, etc.)

*How to
escape the
trap?*

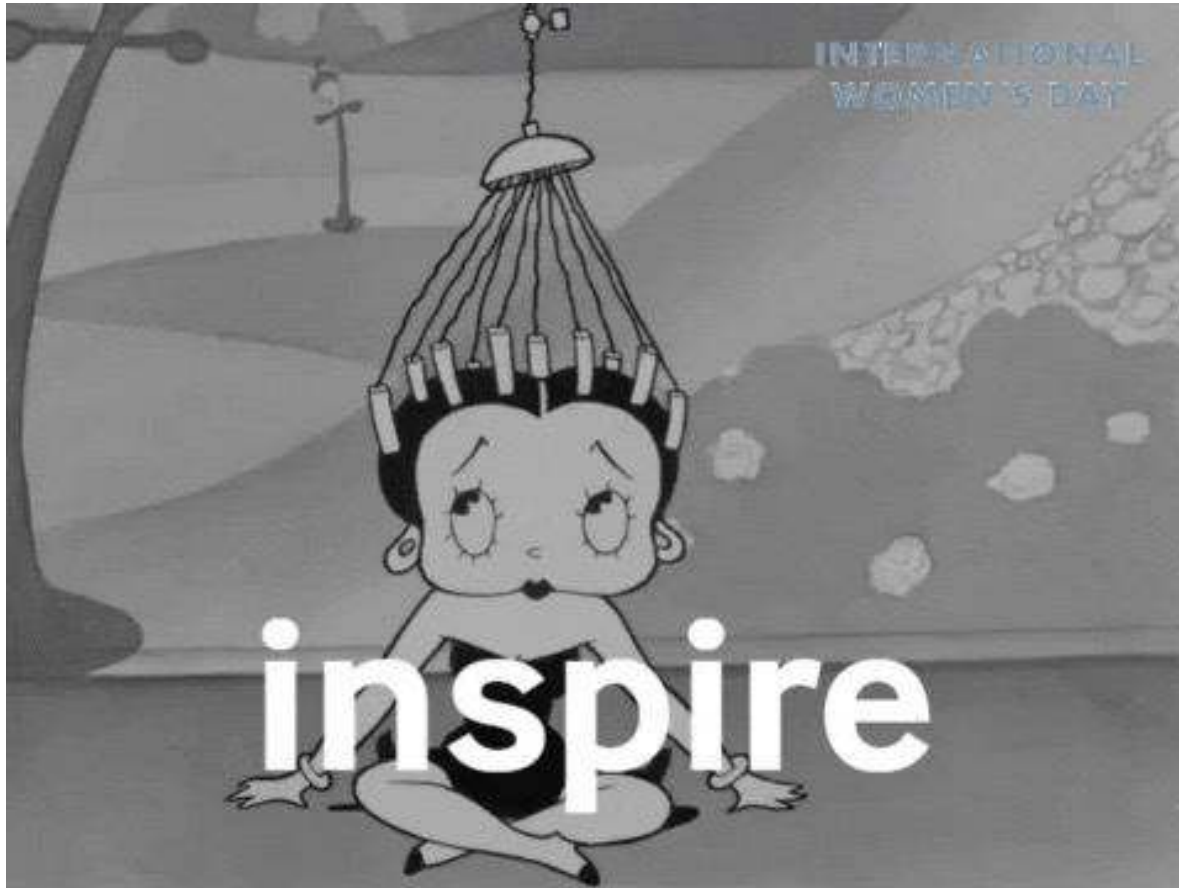


Be INCLUSIVE alongside your UCD journey

Take gender into account especially during the following steps of your User-Centered-Design journey:



Let's discuss!



https://www.mercurynews.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AFP_1LG3GH.jpg?w=1024&h=760

Good reads & inspiration

- <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/first-all-women-spacewalk-suit-design>
- <https://medium.com/menstrual-health-hub/women-centered-design-the-future-of-innovation-investment-bed1a021e542>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/feb/28/invisible-women-by-caroline-criado-perez-review>
- <https://www.cars.com/articles/most-popular-cars-for-women-vs-men-412828/>
- <https://www.design-people.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/design-people-Diversity-Potentials-Study-Wearables-1.pdf>

