Toys and product longevity

Tore Gulden
Oslo and Akershus University College, Norway

The global toy industry can lock children into an unsustainable behavior through the market strategy of transmedia storytelling, a strategy where children learn to know a toy by pertaining play themes presented on multiple media platforms such as cartoons, games and tangibles. Each type of media reveal information and experiences which in total makes a toy. As the story within the toy develops, new figures, and objects emerge. Accordingly, constant offerings of novel objects are presented through the toy which the children feel they must have.

A play experiment was set up to explore how one can design toys that children become attached to by strengthening its emotional value. Research within product attachment and do it yourself activities made the parameters for a play experiment with children. The product attachment strategy of personalization was explored within the context of personalization of play themes and not the tangible toy itself. Throughout the play experiment, there was a tendency for the children not create personal play themes when playing with a new TS-toy that presented one.

The framework of pragmatic aesthetics was explored in order to analyze the possible consequences of this observed play behavior. This brought forth the following key factors for classification: intellectual classification, recognition, resistance, and creation of personal experience. The succeeding analysis implies that the personalization of play themes firstly, is connected to play experience and subsequently feelings towards toys and secondly, that it enables children to create personal experiences. In light of pragmatist aesthetics, personalization of play themes and following the creation of personal experiences can be considered to contribute to a higher degree of pleasure, and therefore feelings of attachment towards a toy which in turn relates to the longevity of a toy.

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*Presenting author