

Using archetypes in the design process

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Abstract

Archetypes enable consumers to interpret products, to understand their meaning and usage better. By having a memory of the object people can utilize it. There are several products designed without having this idea of using archetypes in mind, but when it is applied in design it can have both advantages and disadvantages. This study deals with using archetypes in designing processes and also concentrates on these pros and cons.

In order to explore this diverse usage of archetype, I did a case study of released products where archetypes were applied in the designing process, categorizing the products in two groups. For the next step, I categorized the products we commonly use in four groups by usage and interaction with user. As a result I found that each category of product has its own characteristics. For the next step I designed four products using two approaches. I realized that the difficult part of designing could be solved by extra procedures. To fully deliver the intention of designer, it is important to have more usability test and questionnaires so that the feedbacks could intensify the archetype.

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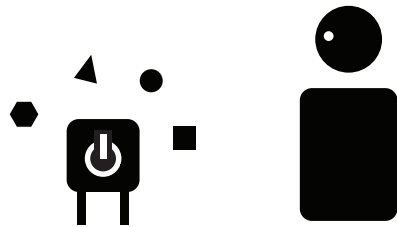
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Background

How does the product communicate with the consumer?



When a person looks at a product what does he see? If it is a product he never has seen before, the person becomes curious about it. He looks at the object, inspects and examines it, and whether it takes a few hours or a few days, learns to know and use it. Similarly to the objects he has encountered earlier in his life, the information or knowledge about the product is stored in the persons mind – the library of the brain. Once it is there, the meaning and usage of the product is quite clear and should he then happen to see the same or similar product again, there should be no confusion about its application.

From our first encounter with the product something is conveyed. A sense or an idea of the product is passed on to us whether it is by seeing hearing, smelling or tasting it. This can be called a sign.

“A sign... is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It...creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign.”

(Peirce 2.228)

Sign & Semiotics

Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and sign processes. It is the first step to understanding the sign system. We perceive everything through signs, and nothing can be interpreted without them. Though semiotics is mainly seen related to linguistics, it has a strong connection with other fields as well.

In ancient times, semiotics was considered a medical discipline. The earliest systematic representations of diagnoses based on signs. < Jørgen Dines and Svend Erik Larsen. Signs in use. Routledge. 2002. p 33>

In semiotics, there are three kinds of signs: iconic, indexical and symbolic signs.

Iconic sign: Icons are closely related to the things they represent and look like them. The photograph in a person's passport or driver's license is an iconic sign of that person, because it is like that person.

Indexical sign: Indices are related to the object it represents but not directly or in a concrete way. Since the wind affects the trees by bending them in the same direction, the slant of the trees can function as a sign of the dominant wind direction.

Symbolic sign: Symbols are signs that have no link at all with the thing it represents. The only reason we know what they mean is because we have learnt what they mean over time. Symbolic signs are constructed or agreed upon to be used as signs for given purposes in the internal or external world.<Peirce>

Signs signify their meaning in various ways and these three sign systems are the starting point for understanding objects. Sign systems often demand previous experience or knowledge from the person perceiving them. The people of Amazon, for example, who do not know about cars, cannot interpret the signs being used on the road. In some cases this knowledge about signs can be crucial and not knowing them can lead to problems or even unlawfulness, which is punishable (e.g. not following the traffic laws while driving).

Sign in product

It is interesting to see how much influence semiotics has in areas other than linguistics, including design. Susann Vihma did a research and wrote a book about products as representations. There she made the connection between semiotics and products.

The application of the semiotic sign is an interesting conceptional tool for interpreting representational qualities. Especially iconic and indexical signs seem to structure representation in a new way from the design point of view.
<Susann Vihma. Products as representations. UIAH. 1995. p 11>

Susann Vihma introduced a relationship between the product and signs (Icon, index and symbol), just as we categorize them in semiotics. Each segment has several clusters that can be found on products.

Product as an iconic sign

As iconic signs represent something with their appearance, a product can be an iconic sign. Products are not just used for their function, but they also signify signs from their producer. The six clusters are:

1.The tradition of form, 2.Similar color, 3.Similar material, 4.Metaphor, 5.Style, 6.Similar environment

Product as an index

Like an indexical sign, we can track the traces of a product. Normally, these traces are not intended by the producer. The nine clusters are:

1.The trace of a tool, 2.A pointing form, 3.Marks of use, 4.Other traces, 5.Light and sound signals, 6.Sound of use and noise of a product, 7.Smell of a product, 8.Touch of the material, 9.Graphic figures on the product form

Symbols of a product

Like icons, symbols also represent what they are standing for. In products though, these symbols are not only represented in appearance or visible materials. The five clusters are:

1.Graphic symbols, 2.Symbolic color, 3.Symbolic forms, 4.Symbolic positions and postures, 5.Symbolic material

Through the sign, you interpret the product. This 'sign' has been used by designers either intentionally or unintentionally and the way it is used can make a difference between the products. Just as babies learn how to communicate by being exposed to the sign system called language we can learn to understand products by being exposed to their sign system – the design of products.

How do designers communicate with consumers?

'Most Advanced Yet Acceptable' is Raymond Loewy's principle to design. He believed that, "The adult public's taste is not necessarily ready to accept the logical solutions to their requirements if the solution implies too vast a departure from what they have been conditioned into accepting as the norm."

The approach of designing "different but not too different" products is justified by the alibi of recognition. <Tim Parsons, 2009 p37>

Designer Robin Levien describes this balance as one of finding "the extra ordinary within the framework of the ordinary." <Levien, R. 2008 [Personal communication]>

If a product has a look which is "too different" it is hard for it to communicate with the consumer. Many companies try to avoid designs that are 'too conceptual' so the product could be understood by the consumer. As a consequence, what we see in stores nowadays can look like this:



Fig.1. Electron iron

Do you see something in common?

What we see in Fig.1 is "an archetypal shape" of an electric iron.

Archetype

What is an archetype?

An “archetype” - a standard or classic example conjured in the mind when an object type is mentioned - is rarely, if ever, based on one specific object but is formed through amalgamating experiences of seeing many of the same kind. <Tim Parsons, 2009 p37>

When a word is uttered it creates a picture or a sense of the meaning in the mind of the hearer. When it comes to products, there is a tendency to imagine a common shape for the object in question, even though it is not described to us in detail and we are not told to imagine the same thing. The image that is created in our minds comes from our daily life experiences.



Fig.2. Model 302 telephone by Henry Dreyfuss, 1937

Fig.2 is a picture of a telephone designed by Henry Dreyfuss in 1937. This distinctive design became an icon after it was designed and widely spread. This shape was not only used for this model, but it was also used for other models by other companies. Not everyone has seen this exact model, but when we hear the word ‘telephone’, this shape or a shape similar to this one is what we most likely imagine.

Archetype used in same product category



Fig.3. Design of telephones based on Henry Dreyfuss's design.

Since the archetypal shape is recognizable among many people, the manufacturer can take advantage of that. Figure shows the products which have the archetype of the model 302 telephone. The reason for applying this 'well-known' shape into the same product category is normally to remind about the positive aspects of the original product. These phones belong to the category which is called 'the Retro style'.

Archetype used in graphic design



No telephone sign

Public telephone sign

icon in iOS

Fig.4. Different usage of telephone shape

Icons are closely related to the things they represent, and look like them. They are widely used for traffic signs and public signs but, nowadays, becoming even common in GUI (Graphic user interface) for computer operating systems and mobile gadgets. The most important thing for the icon is that it is meant to be easily recognized, thus it uses a symbolic shape to signify things. Especially when it comes to indicating a certain product, using an archetype, helps more people to recognize it. Using a form of a certain object means that the object is well known to people – they can tell what it is just by looking at the icon.

Archetype used in industrial design

Category #1. Applying an archetype of whole product



Fig.5.

DVD projector by Industrial facility for Epson

IF's DVD projector applies the archetype of a cine-projector. The spinning DVD looks like the cine film.

By using the icon of an old reel-to-reel cine-projector rather than contemporary projector layouts, IF were able to communicate the product's purpose instantly while still styling the product to feel contemporary.

Instead of its form following function, it follows understanding through the collective memory of the archetype. <Thinking: Objects, p38>



Fig.6.

Ele funnel by Quality design

The archetype of an elephant is applied to the funnel. Elephants use their trunks to spray water and the function of the funnel is quite similar, thus the design is closely related to the usage of the product.



Fig.7.

Cloud keyholder
by Duncan Shotton

The Magnetic-cloud holds the keys underneath it, reminding us that the thunder and clouds go together.



Fig.8.

Dinosaladserver by All lovely stuff

Though it has five legs, it still looks like a dinosaur, which has a smiley face. All the features – legs, a long neck and the face – are parts of the salad server and represent it in a humorous way.

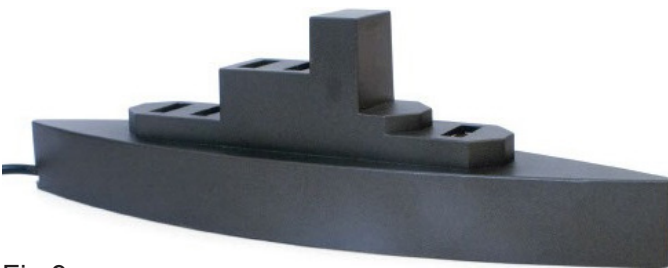


Fig.9.

Battleship USB Hub

The archetype of battle ship, gives a monotonous product, a USB hub, a little more character, though it looks nicer without any USB cables.

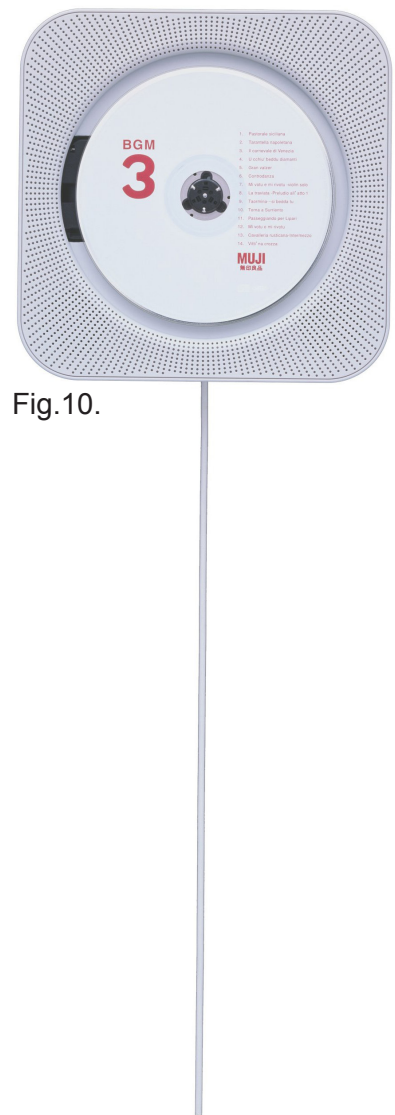


Fig.10.

Wall mounted CD player by Muji

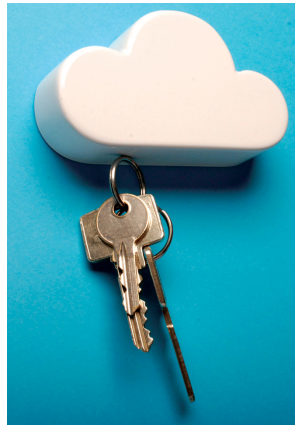
This famous CD-player by Muji applies the archetype of a ventilation fan, the spinning propeller turned into a compact disc. The switch string has the same function – to turn the device on.

Analyzing:

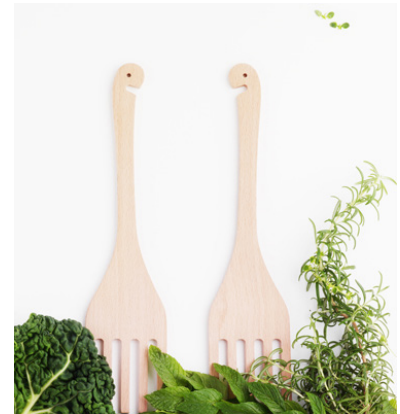
Products belonging to this category resemble other objects or things. The archetypes of these objects are used to give the product a distinct appearance. We can sort these products by how closely the archetype is related to function of the product. A DVD projector and a CD player have a strong connection with the original object, a spinning fan and a film. As to the cloud key holder and the Ele funnel we can find the connection from the statement it makes and of its use – a cloud carrying thunder and an elephant spraying water from its trunk. The Dinosalad servers and the Battleship USB hub, on the other hand, have less connection to the original product. These two products are borrowing the form rather of the archetype rather than its functionality.



Ventilation fan



Cloud



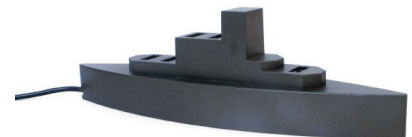
Dinosaur



Cine-projector



Elephant



Battleship



connection between two objects

Category #2. Applying an archetype on a part of the product



Sole bag by Naoto fukasawa

The design of this product takes away the hesitation one has of putting their bag on the floor or onto the ground. By applying the sole of a shoe on the bottom of the product, we are made less concerned about dirt or any other substances that might damage the bag or its appearance.

Fig.11.



Bell Alarm Clock by Sam Hecht for IDEA

The big bell attached to the back of the clock does not only increase the volume of the alarm but is also a good addition to the overall look.

Fig.12.



Clown nose by Tomas Kral

A trash bin that has the nose of a clown. Any negative feelings that a trash bin can create are reduced by this funny nose. The functional advantage to this is that you can close the mouth of the bin with the nose.

Fig.13.



Data clip by Nendo for elecom

Small objects, like USB memory sticks, are easy to lose. By applying the functionality of a paperclip to the memory chip, enables us to clip it on a piece of paper.

Fig.14.



Card key by Design Studio S

Sometimes it doesn't make sense that a card is called a key. Since the shape of key is in the card, it is not confusing anymore. It helps you to understand its function better.

Fig.15.



Door mouse by All lovely stuff

By putting two dots and a strap on an ordinary doorstopper it becomes a mouse. Making an inanimate object resemble an animal adds character to the product.

Fig.16.

Analyzing:

The products in this category use an archetype of another object in one or some parts of their composition. Each product in this group does not look like something else, but has some part transplanted. Sole bag and Data clip are examples of physical application. The sole and clip work as original soles and clips do. Card key and Door mouse are examples of visual application and thus made to resemble an image. By looking at the key shape on the card key, consumers can imagine what it is used for. Door mouse uses the image of a mouse for the purpose of entertainment and to display wit. The archetypes in Clown nose and Bell alarm clock are examples of both physical and visual application. Their attributes have both functional and aesthetic advantages.



Physical

Visual

Categorizing products

I started by creating graphical archetypes of objects we are familiar with. In this step, I simplified the products and made icons so that we can see which products have clear archetypes and how they communicate. After making icons, I colored them after their functions and categorized them into four groups.

1. Tools/cutleries.

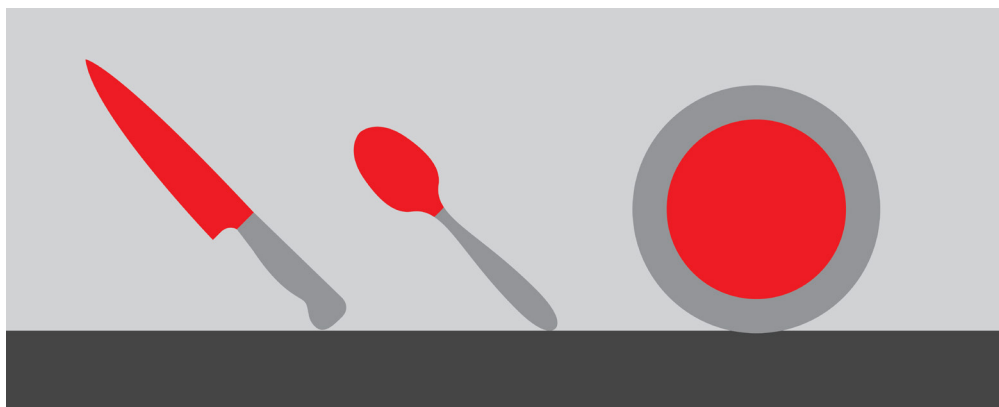
The products here do not need any electricity. They work by manpower and their structure is not complex. It is easy to understand what the product is and how it is used.

These products can be divided into three parts by function: The working part, the grip/control part and the body.

- The working part is the part that actually does the work. This part carries the purpose of the product.

- The grip/control part is the part we hold when we use it. As the products are powered by manpower, this part is important to deliver the power to the product.

- The body is the rest of the product. It does not have a special function other than connecting the working part and the grip/control part.



2. Electric home appliances

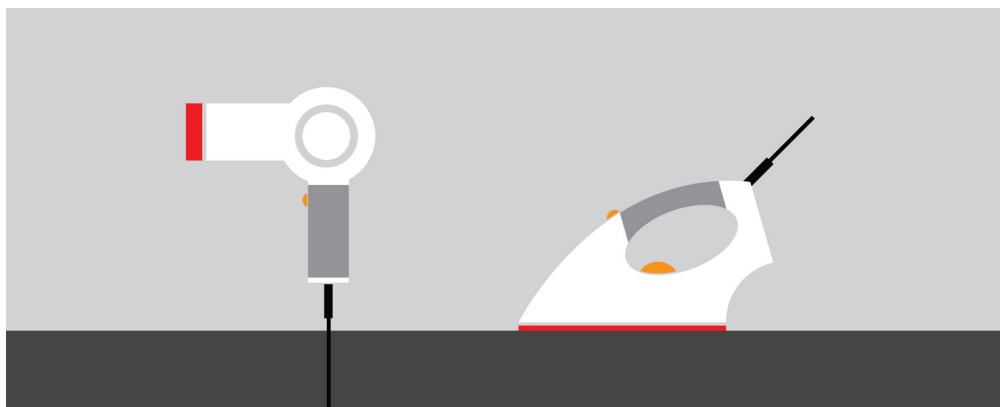
These products can be easily found in our homes. These products need electricity and help us with simple chores. As these products use electricity they all have a switch and a power cord.

-Switch/input part is used to turn the power on and control the functions.

This part is connected to the electric circuit.

-Power part is the power cord that is connected to the power outlet.

The difference between this category and the first one is that these products have a bigger body. The body covers all the electrical devices inside and we cannot actually see how it works. Although the structure is hidden and covered, it is still distinguishable by the shape of the body.

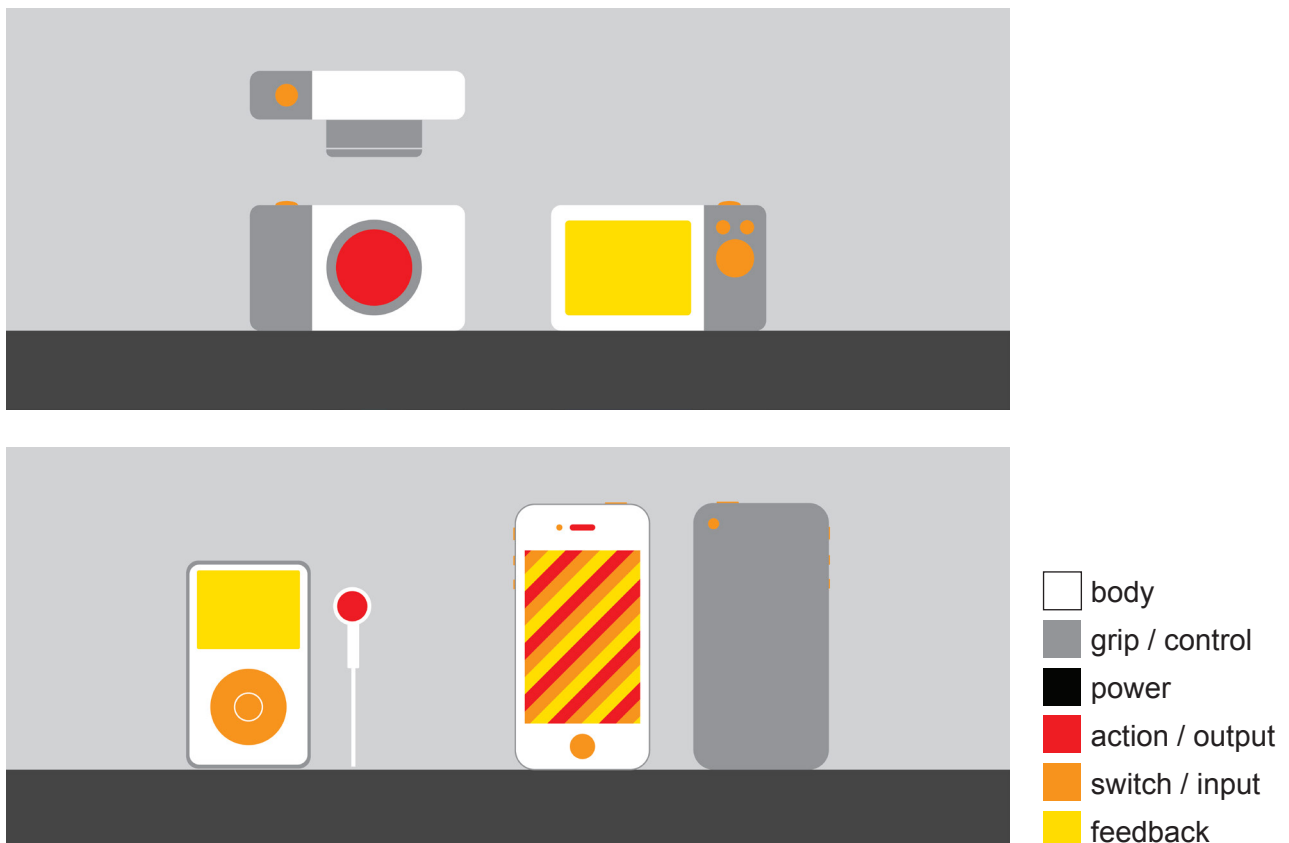


3. Electronic gadgets

These are mobile electronic devices that have particular functions. The development of semi-conductor industry made it possible to make products smaller so that we can carry them in our pockets.

-Feedback part is normally a screen where you can check how the product is working at the moment. As the functions are not simple, the need for feedback is eminent.

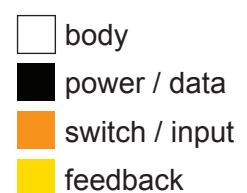
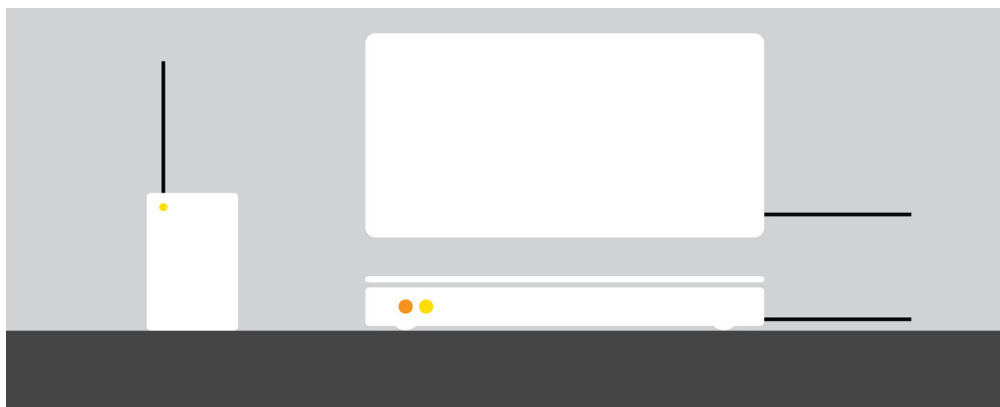
When it comes to the shape, most of them are boxy and slim as they are portable products, but the composition of compartments –LCDs, lenses, speakers, buttons – help us recognize the product.



4. Computer devices

Computer devices are the product connected to computer, performs input/output functions.

As they are connected and controlled by computer, they do not have characteristic shape. It is normal to have boxy shape following the size of PCB inside. Screen for feedback is not necessarily needed; output or action part is hidden. Some LED lamps show it is working or not. Just by looking at the shape, it is hard to tell what it does if you are not so interested in computer. A box with a cable does not give you enough hint.



Design process

Approach

How can we use archetype in design process?

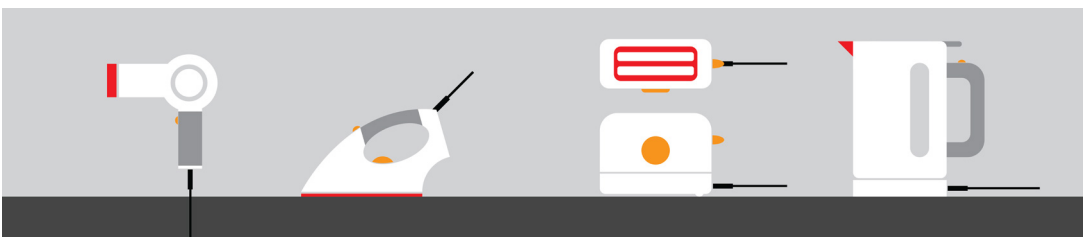
Through categorizing products in previous chapter, I could see the characteristics of each category. For applying archetype in design process, I chose two categories from previous chapter.

First category is 'Computer devices.' They are hard to recognize compare to the other categories, as they do not have strong archetypal shape. I will design them easier to recognize its function, by applying archetypal shape.



Second category is 'Home appliances.'

It is not so hard to tell what the product does, as they have quite strong archetypal shape. They generally work fine with simple functions. But the possibility of having minor problems always exists. I will focus on solving the problems that we are not focusing on.



Case #1 – Wi-Fi router

Background

Wi-Fi router is a device that makes wireless network accessible and enables exchanging data over the computer network. It receives signals from a broadband network and sends them wirelessly. This device is popular, because with it, it is possible to connect more than one device to the internet. The wide use of laptops and other mobile devices, such as smart phones, accelerated the use.



Fig.17. Disassembling Thomson SpeedTouch 780 WL

Wi-Fi router basically consists of a PCB(Printed circuit board) with several lan sockets and antennas. The size of the PCB can vary, depending on how big or small the design is. The boxy shape of the case can also be changed conceidering the shape of the PCB, so it can even be a circle or a triangle. (Apple Inc released round wireless router in 1999)



Fig.18. Airport extreme base station, 1999



Fig.19. Disassembling Airport extreme

Research



Fig.20. External antenna Wi-Fi router



Fig.21. Internal antenna Wi-Fi router

Through the research, I found two kinds of Wi-Fi routers. The Wi-Fi router with an external antenna has been known to people for quite a long time. It is possible to recognize that a box with antenna might be a Wi-Fi router. The 'antenna' makes it easier, as it has the image of receiving and sending signals. However there are also internal antenna Wi-Fi routers, which have the antenna inside, so that it is not visible from the outside. Apple airport has always had an internal antenna, but nowadays it is also common for other brands. The routers with an internal antenna work as well as the ones with an external antenna, but are harder to recognize from their shape.

Inspiration

Every family that uses wireless Internet at home has a Wi-Fi router, as they get the device from an Internet provider once the contract is made. As the internal antenna Wi-Fi router is getting more popular, it is quite hard to guess from its appearance what its function is unless the person is interested in computer devices. Using an archetype can help to understand the use better?

Design

Like many other computer devices, the function is invisible. Furthermore, a Wi-Fi router sends signals through the air, so we cannot even imagine how it works. It is hard to visualize this invisible process. I was looking for a sign that is familiar to us. I noticed that we use the Wi-Fi network icon in many devices. This icon is recognizable to those who have used Wi-Fi from their computers or smart phones. Since a Wi-Fi router has just a PCB in it, it has more freedom to change shape compared to the other portable devices that are full of other components. I chose this icon as a new shape for the Wi-Fi router.



Fig. 22. Wi-Fi icon from Mac OS X



Fig.23. Wi-Fi icon from iPhone

Fig.24. Wi-Fi icon from Mac OS X

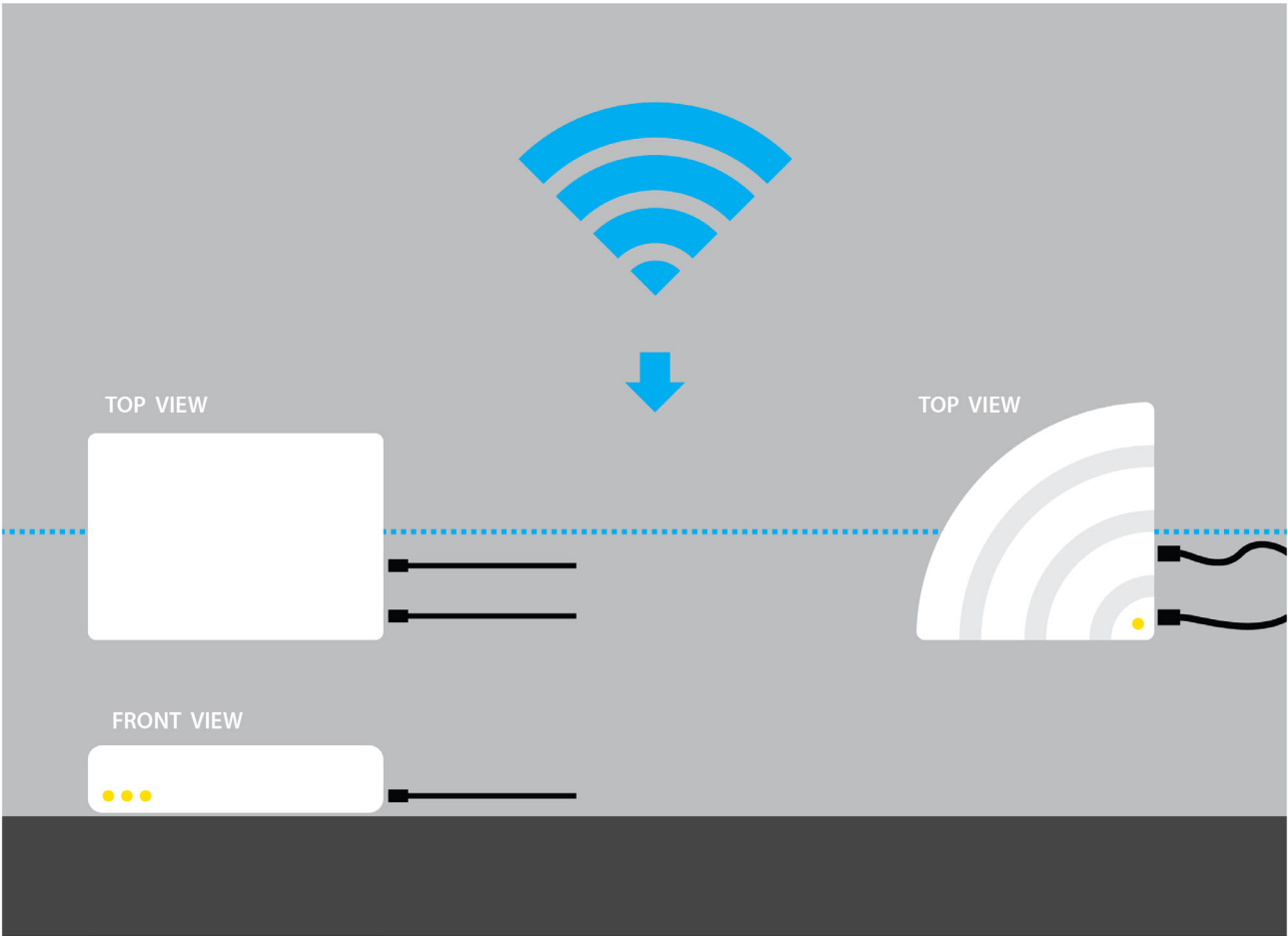


Fig.25. Wi-Fi icon from public transportation

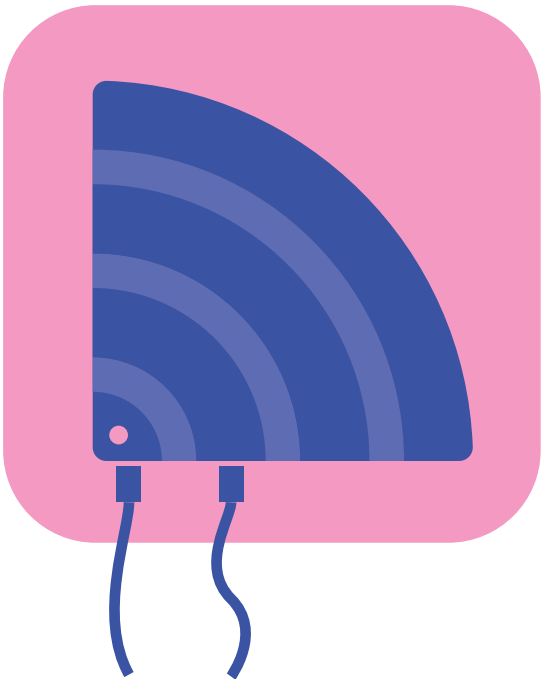


Fig.26. Wi-Fi icon from T-mobile

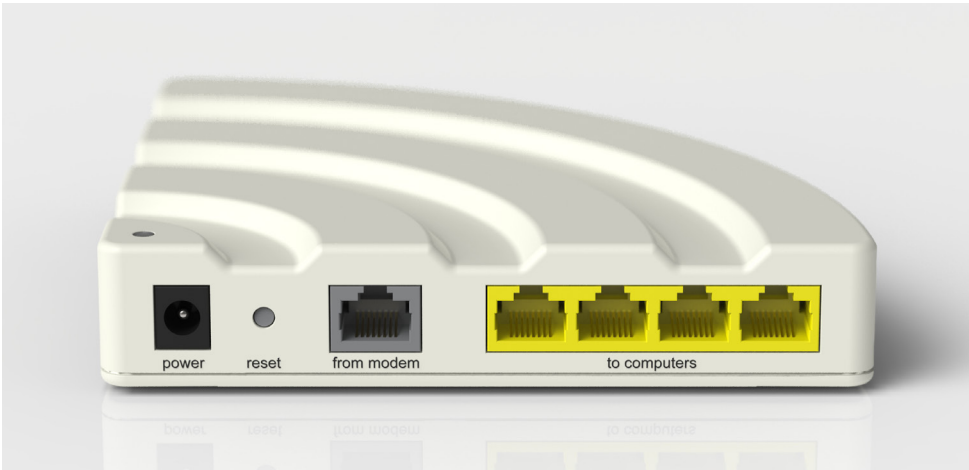
Iconize design process



Iconize product



Design



Case #2 – External hard disk

Background

An external hard disk is a mobile data storage device that you can carry around without needing a computer and connect it to other devices. It is commonly used for backing up or storing data as the volume of data files is getting bigger. It has hard disk inside (2.5 or 3.5 inch is commonly used) and the shape is boxy, as it holds a hard disk (which also has a boxy shape). It is connected to a computer using USB or other kind of cables. Also a small led lamp shows whether it is on.



Fig.27. Disassembling a Next mobile storage

Inspiration

The products vary in their appearance showing that the external hard disc does not have an archetype yet. The shape of it is quite free except for the box inside. Figure28 shows the various shapes of the external hard disks. If there is no interest in computer devices, it can be quite tricky to recognize the device.



Fig.28.

Approach #1

To be able to remind people that there is a hard disk inside, I used the structure of hard disk first. It consists of several layers of disks with an access needle. Every hard disk has the same structure, differing only in the size of disc. I made an illustration of a hard disk which symbolizes the disk and the needle. Figure30 is the icon that I first made for the cover of the case.



Fig.29.

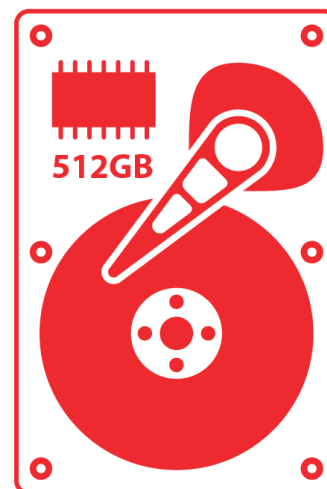


Fig.30.

But when I did an experiment, many people did not recognize the graphic as a hard disk, but thought it was a LP player. I modified the graphic so it would be easy to understand, but it was still hard for people to guess what it was, since many of us do not know how the inside of a hard disk looks like.

Approach #2

I changed my approach to the design and concentrated on the memory and the experience that people have with the product. Hard disks store files. We imagine Figure31 when we are reminded of 'files' in the physical sense. For computer a file, on the other hand, we have a different mental image. Since it is not tangible, what we can see is the medium for storing the files. On Figure 32 is the medium that was used in the past, and Figure33 shows how it looks like now.

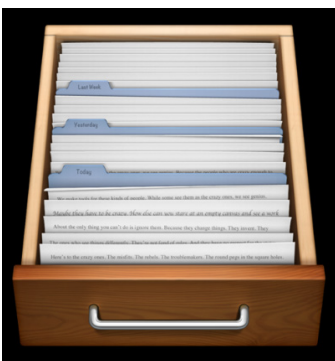


Fig.31. Files in a drawer



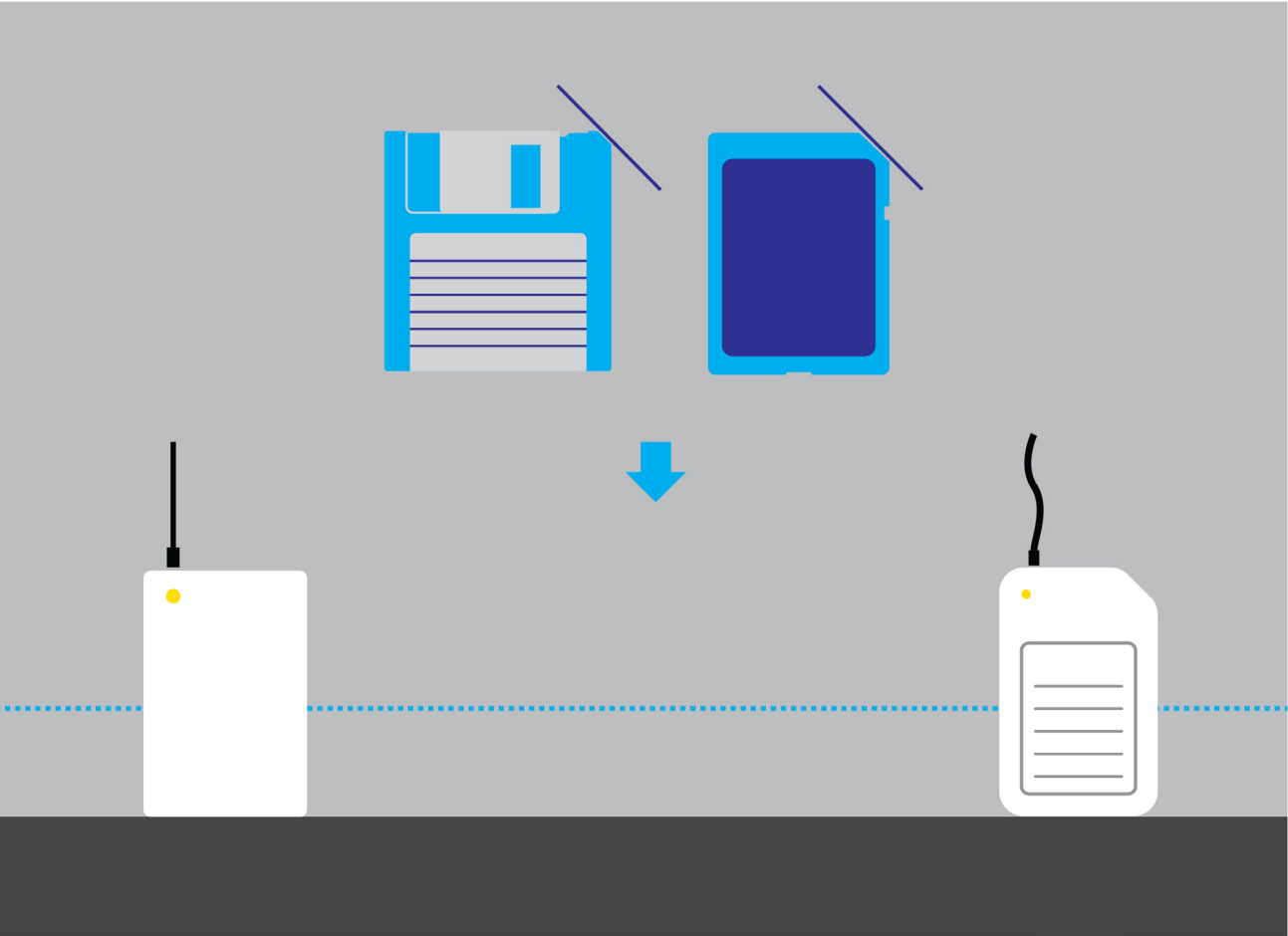
Fig.32. 3.5 inch Floppy diskette



Fig.33. SD memory card

I chose those two images to represent computer files. To extract what these two have in common, I analyzed the shapes of floppy disks and memory cards. A trimmed corner and a space for writing about the data were chosen to be applied in the designing.

Iconize design process



Iconize product





Case #3 – Hair dryer

Background

Hair dryers are one of the most common household appliances. Since the 1920s, the development of the hair dryer has been mainly focusing on improving the wattage, exterior and changing the material. In fact, the mechanism of the hairdryer has not had any significant changes since its inception. Thus, the hair dryer has a fixed archetype.



Fig.34. Disassembling Unix Hair-dryer

As for the shape, it consists of a cylinder and a handle. A cylinder is the part that covers the motor and the electric coil. It lets air travel through the hot coil, pass by the motor, blowing hot air. Since the cylinder (upper) part has the most function, the handle part does not have any special function inside it. It has a power and a control switch so that users can control it with one hand. The power cord is connected from the power outlet to the handle.

Inspiration

Most hair dryers are well designed, focusing on the basic function. There are no obvious faults in the usability. When it is not being used, though, it has to be kept somewhere and it is usual to hang it up. We can use the ring under the handle for that like Figure35, but the ring often proves to be too small for the hook. In this picture that I found while doing research, the owner of the hair dryer connected a ribbon to the original hook to be able to hang it on the wall.



Fig.35. A hair dryer with ribbon

Research

I went to an electronics store to check those rings on hair dryers. Most of the rings look like the one in Figure ???. The shapes of the rings vary, but they are still too small for hanging the dryer on a bigger hook. I chose the ring as the target of my design.



Fig.36. Rings of the hair dryers

Archetype - What to apply?

What can be applied to a hair dryer is something that can work as a hanger. After looking into what kind of hand positions are common when holding a hair dryer, I found that these are similar to using an umbrella.



Fig.37.

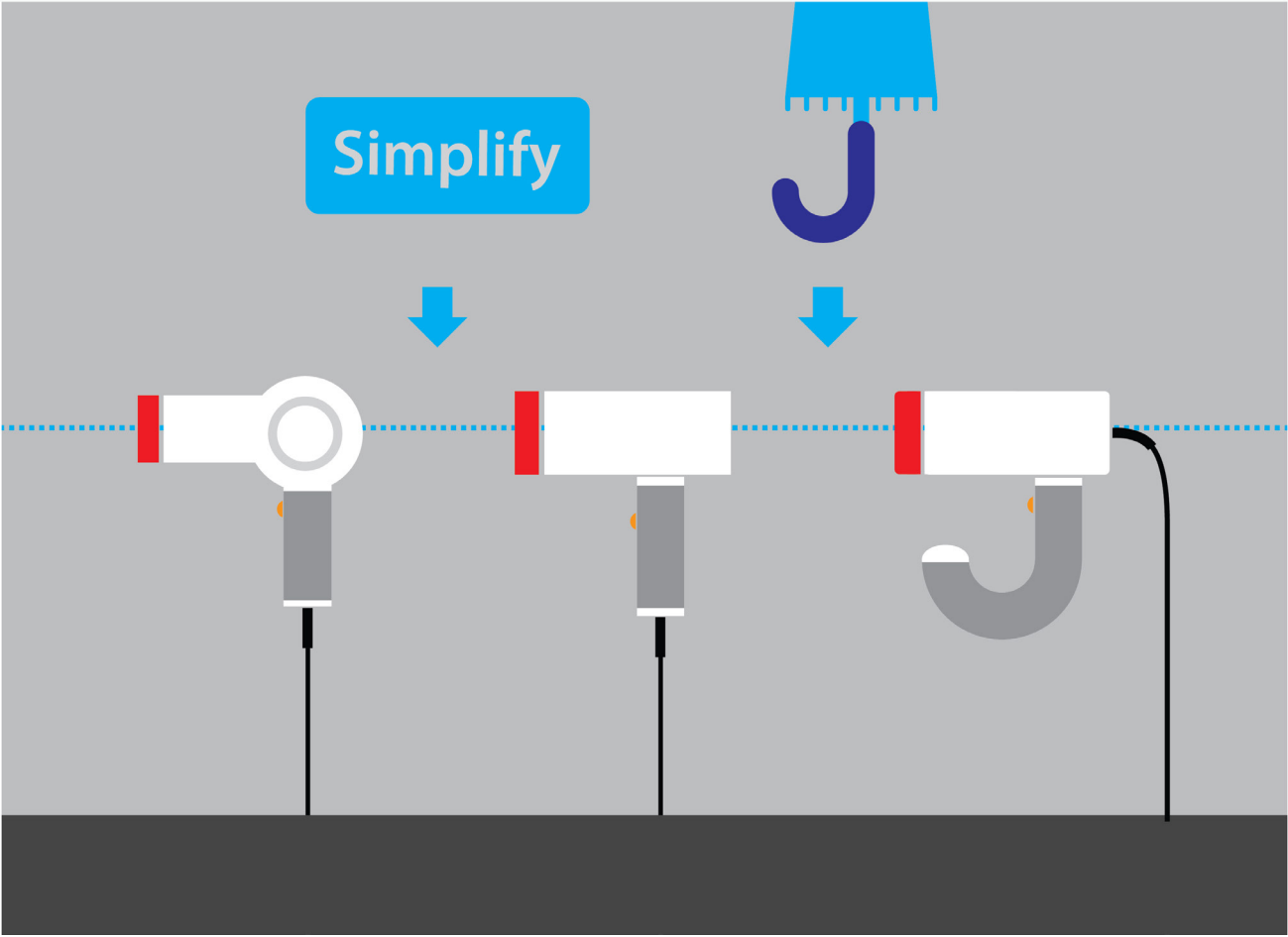


Fig.38.

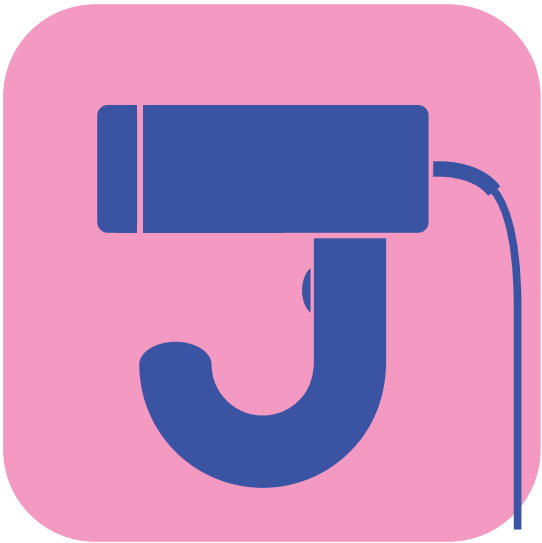
When used, the hair dryer is held vertically like an umbrella (the angle of a hair dryer can change during hair drying, but the umbrella keeps the vertical angle). When it is not being used, the umbrella can be hung up, if it has a bent handle. The archetypal shape of the umbrella make people think of both the holding and the hanging position. I chose this archetype of an umbrella handle to apply it in the design.



Fig.39.



Iconize product



Design



Case #4 – Toaster

Background

A toaster is a kitchen appliance for toasting bread. The first toaster was invented in 1905 and people used fire before that. After the first 'pre-sliced' bread was sold in 1928, pop-up the toaster got more popular and became an essential kitchen appliance.

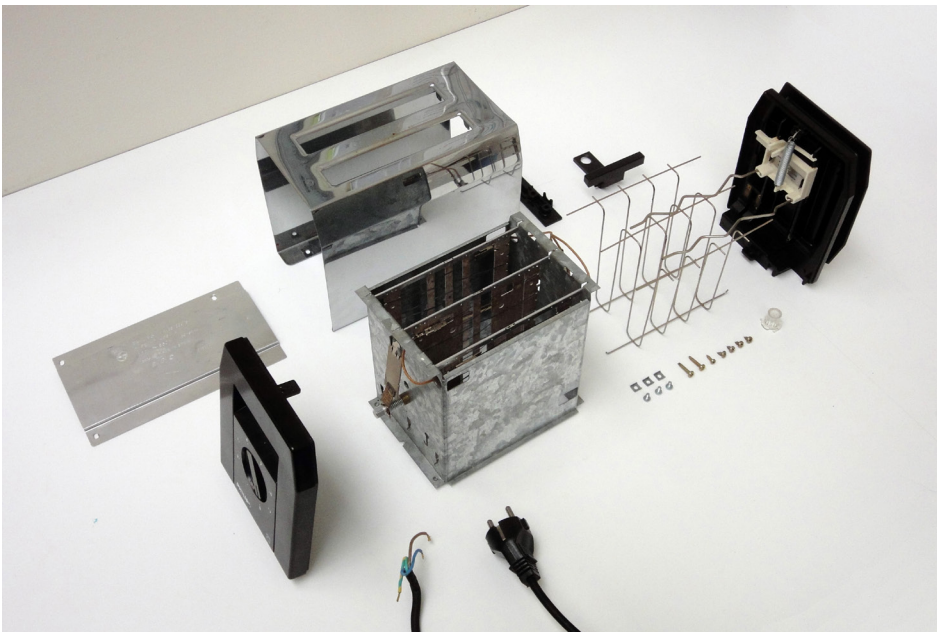


Fig.39. Disassembling a Philips toaster

A toaster has an electric coil inside which heats the bread, and is covered with a plastic or a metal body. It has a lever for lowering the bread into the machine, a knob that can change the time of heating and a button to cancel the toasting.



Fig.40. Position of checking and smelling the bread

Inspiration

Every pop-up toaster has a timer in it so that it can eject the toast depending on the set time. Because the temperature inside the toaster rises as time passes the toast might get burnt, regardless which program is used. Therefore, many people use the 'cancel' button to prevent burning and use their noses to decide on the time necessary for toasting. Unfortunately, the cancel button is not emphasized enough, considering how frequently it is being used. Also, most of the cancel buttons are located on the front of the toaster, which makes it harder to eject the toast since the toast is both observed and smelled from above.

Research



Fig.41. Cancel buttons of toasters

The toasters on the market have cancel buttons either in the front or on the side. The shape of the buttons is also similar to the other buttons on the toaster (defrost and reheat). The target of my design was this cancel button.



Fig.42.

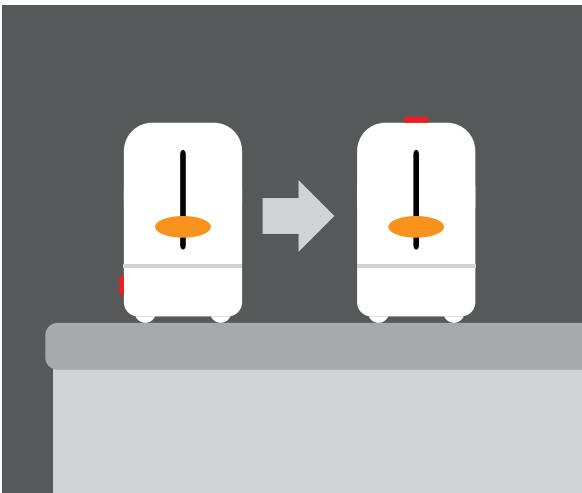
From distance:
Hard to check the bread.
Easy to see the buttons.



Fig.43.

Checking the toaster:
Easy to check the bread.
Hard to see the buttons.

Design point



After doing research I discovered that an easier way to push the cancel button would be to change the position of the button from the side to the top. The design process will concentrate on putting the buttons on top of the toaster.

Applying archetype

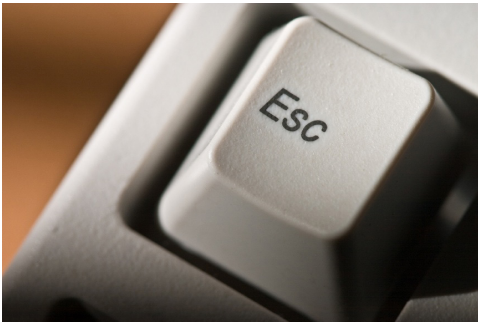


Fig.44. ESC key

For representing cancellation, I chose the 'Esc' key. To match the esc key, I chose the 'enter' key for dropping the lever. The enter and the esc key will work as the dropping lever and cancel key.



Fig.45. Apple keyboard

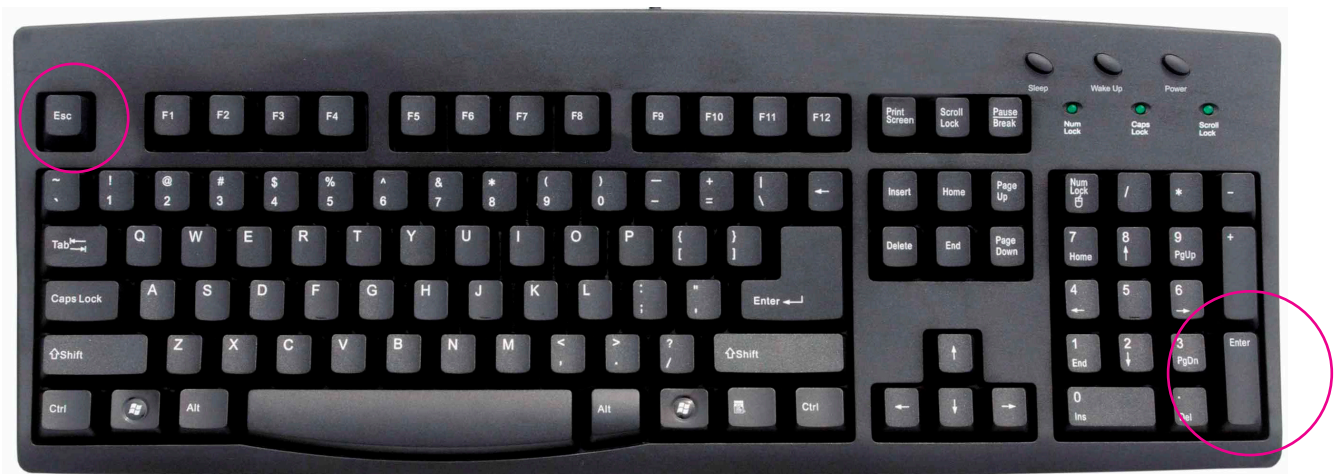
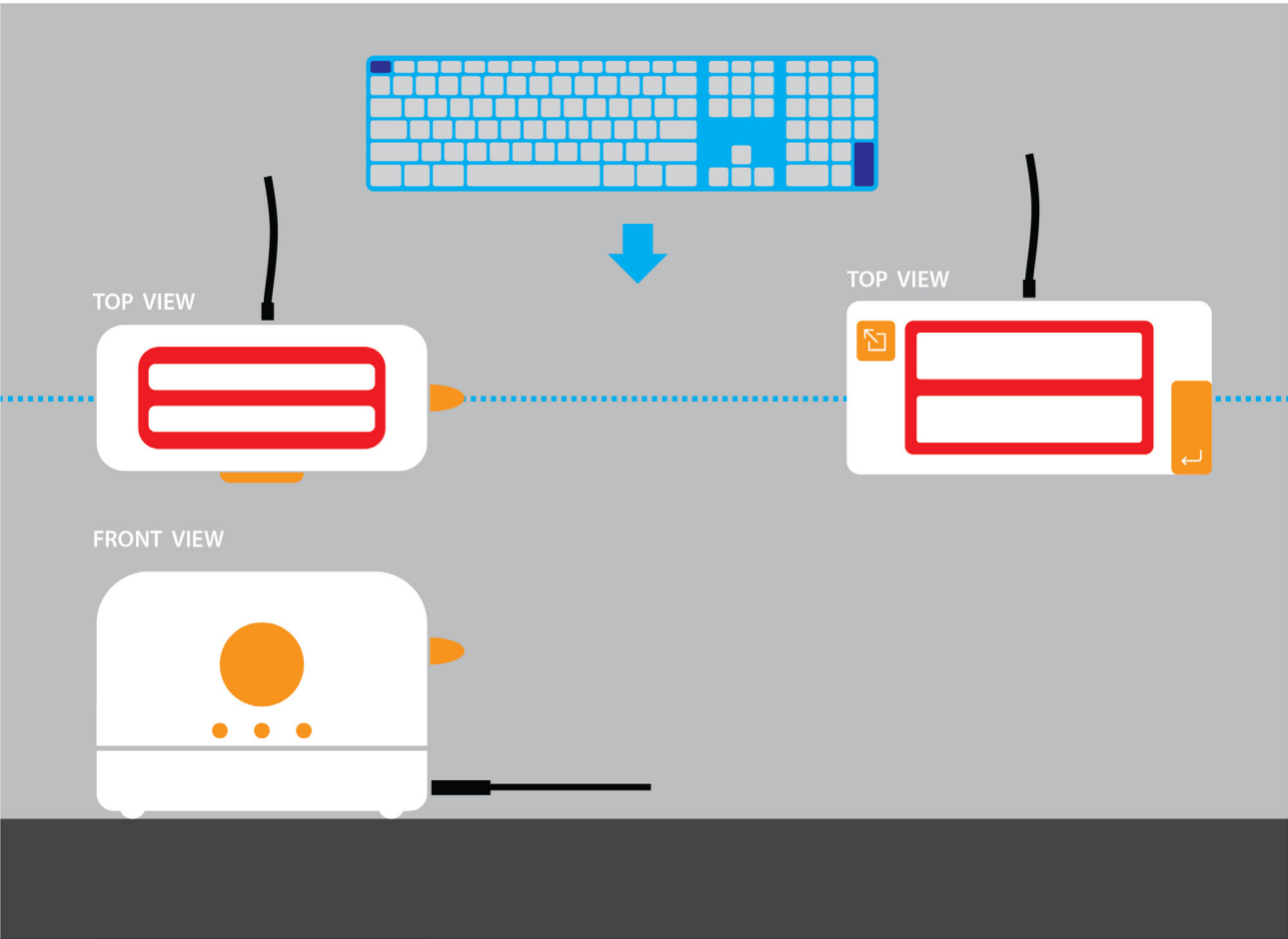
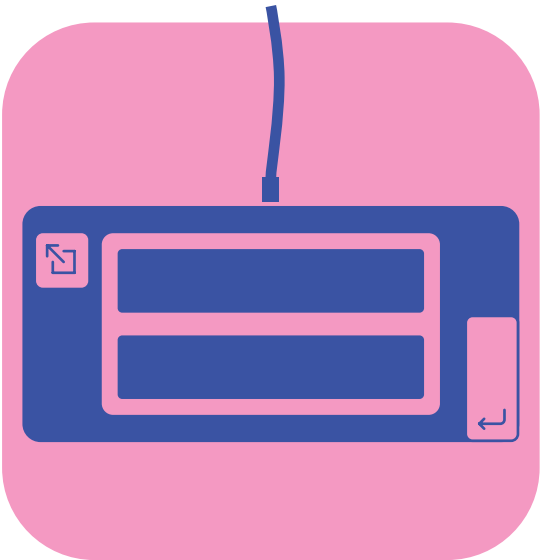


Fig.46. Keyboard

Iconize design process



Iconize product

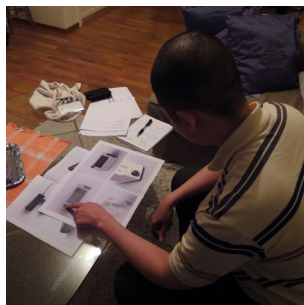
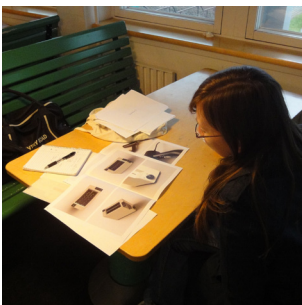
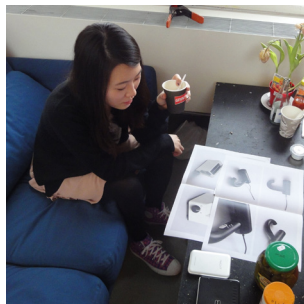
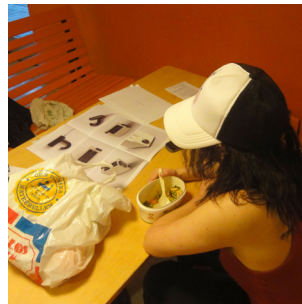
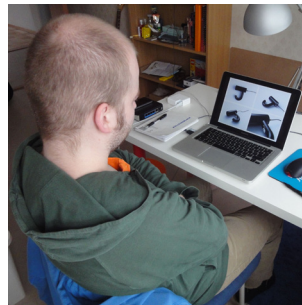


Design



Survey

In order to see what and how they recognize those products, I conducted a survey. I took pictures of the products in different angle and sorted them in order of difficulty. 60 people in different places were asked to guess what the products are and how to use them.



People from various field, in Stockholm



Top view



Perspective view

Those are Wi-Fi routers without visible lan port. 42% people guessed right only with the shape of it. The icon of Wi-Fi is quite good signifier.



Perspective view
+Lan port

This picture of Wi-Fi router with visible lan port was given to those 58% people who didn't guess right and 50% of people made a good guess. It shows that Lan port is stronger signifier than Wi-Fi icon for this product.



Top view



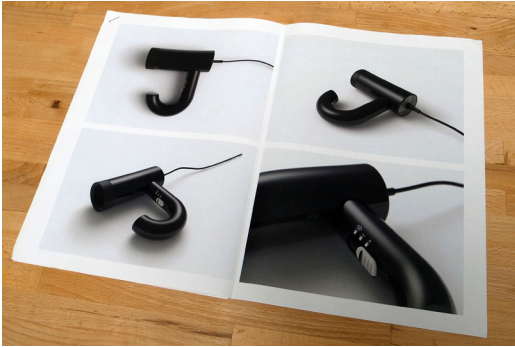
Perspective view

Those are External hard disks without visible usb-port. 33% people guessed only with the shape of it. The archetypal shape is not applied well in this product.



Perspective view
+USB port

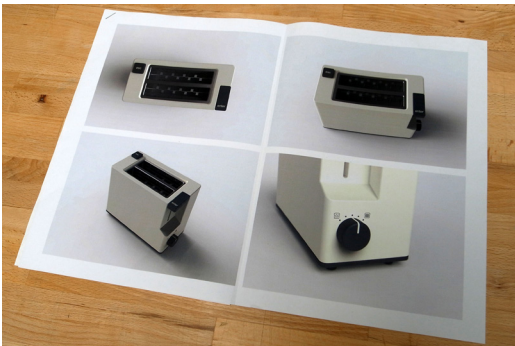
This picture of External hard disk with visible usb-port was given to those 67% people who didn't guess right and 17% people made a good guess. This shows that Usb-port is not a strong signifier either, as it is used in many other devices.



This picture was shown to interviewee without any explanation. 75% people made a good guess and 25% people were not able to guess the usage of the handle.

75% guessed right

25% guessed wrong



This picture was shown to interviewee without any explanation. 92% people made a good guess and 8% people were not able to guess the usage of the buttons.

92% guessed right

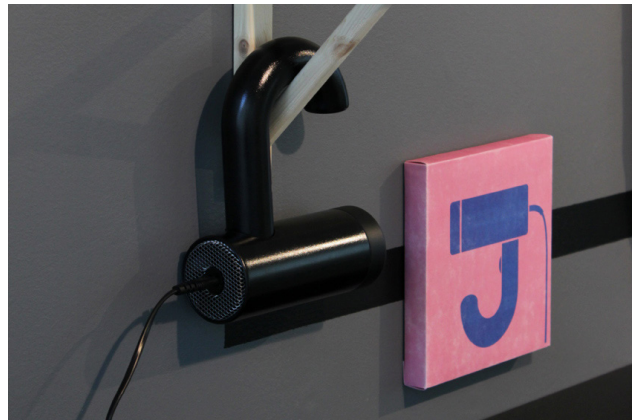
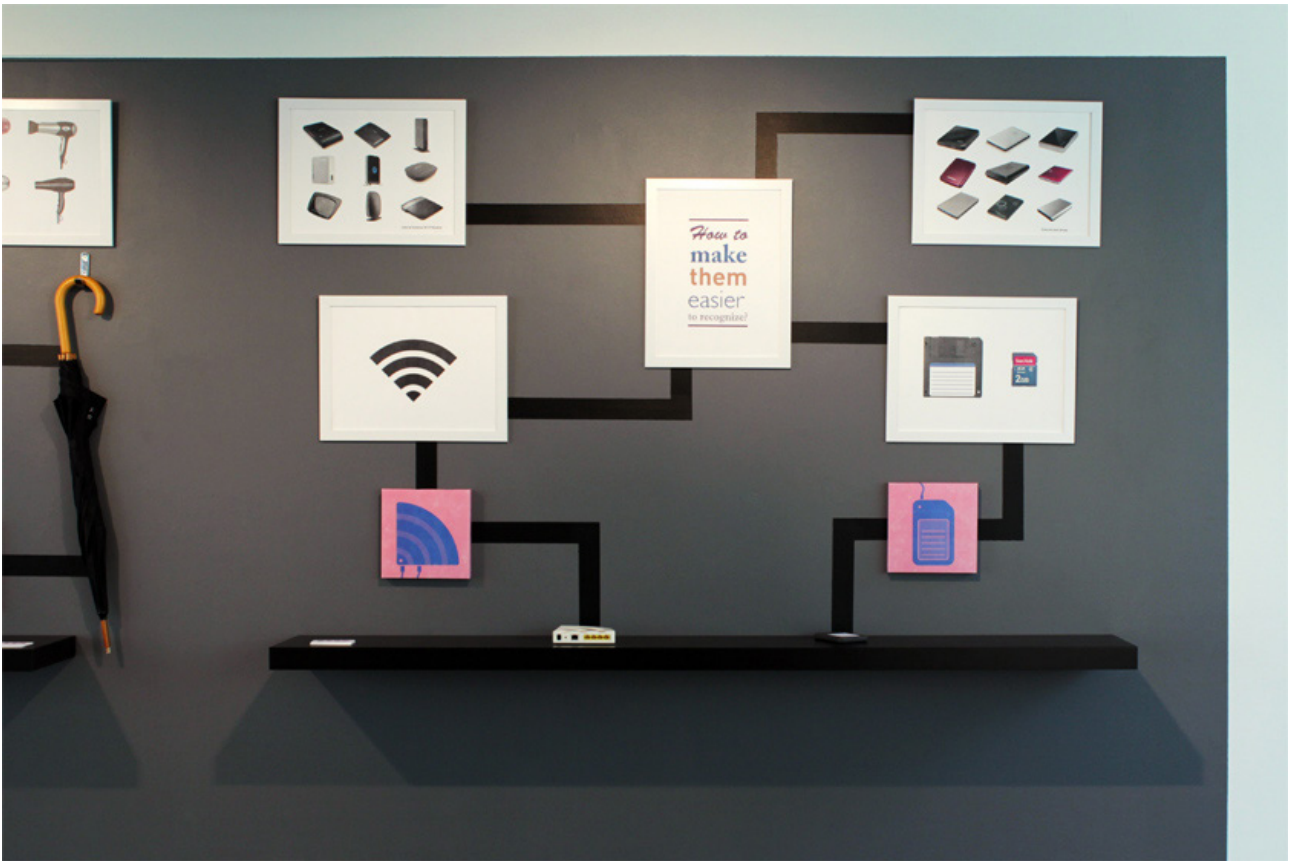
8% guessed wrong

Exhibition

Konstfack Degree Exhibition 2012

May 16 - May 27 / LM Ericssons väg 14, Stockholm





Conclusion

From the examples given it is apparent that there are several products which have been designed by using archetypes. Some are used so that the product would be distinguishable from other similar products and some to communicate better with the user. This has advantages, but in certain conditions downsides can also be found.

Advantages of applying archetype

1. Easier to deliver signifier (=Easier to understand the usage)

Through what we experience in our daily lives, by using and seeing a lot of products, we learn the function of objects. This memory or knowledge of how something is used can be recalled when these memories are triggered. These signifiers or triggers help the product convey its usage to the user.

2. More personality

These days, as a result of the flood of products, the market demands differentiation. Many products are designed to stand out, to be different, but not all of them are remembered by customers. Applying archetypes, especially when they are personified, make the product more distinguishable from other products and thus easier to remember.

3. Giving wit and humor

Something that is unpredictable makes people laugh. Applying something unexpected can be seen as parody. It adds wit and humor to the product and therefore entertains the users, even if it might seem like nonsense at first sight. When the archetype is understood and the connection between that and the object is made, the wit and humor in it becomes apparent.

Disadvantages of applying archetype

1. Unconditional applying of archetypes creates undesirable products.

It is so easy to design using archetypes. You just decide which product to design and make it look like something else. The problem is that this normally ends up in kitsch design. If an archetype is applied without discovering a good connection with the product it can lead to an undeveloped product.

2. Far from ergonomics

As the shape is supposed to represent the signifier, more focus is put on the appearance of the product than its functionality and usability. If in the designing process more concentration is put on the shape of the archetype rather than on the functionality of the product, it might not be the best solution ergonomically.

Findings from design process

The design process was where I could find out a practical method for applying archetype.

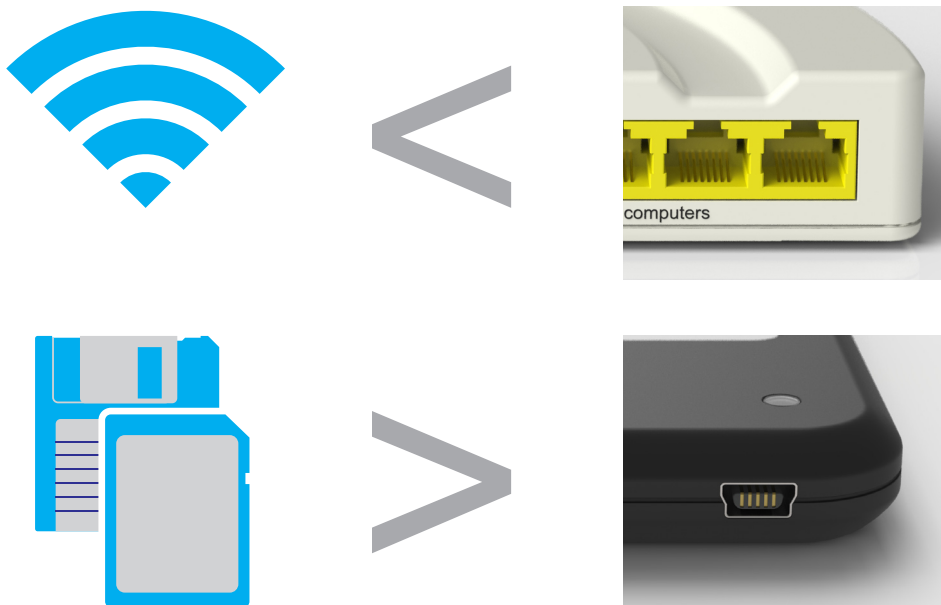
Creating a new archetype for the first category of products(Wi-Fi router, External hard drive) was interesting since there are no archetypal shapes, meaning that shapes are not fixed but are quite open to new forms. In the design process, finding the common archetypal shape for a product was the most important and difficult part. We have similar images about certain objects, but it can also vary depending on the age, gender and experiences of a person. 'Distilling the most common image of an object' is where we should spend more time and effort on in the design process.

For the second category(Hair dryer, Toaster), applying archetype of other objects was harder than in the previous process, because the products in this category already have a strong archetype. Even small changes in design will make the product look odd. Matching the new object and the existing object can be limited due to the usage, size and other reasons. Thus the best archetypal shape cannot always be suitable for applying. If the form or the overall shape is changed so that it no longer has an archetypal shape because the archetype of another object has been used, it causes a problem. This can cause losing fast recognition, but not necessarily, depending on how it was styled.

From the survey, category 1

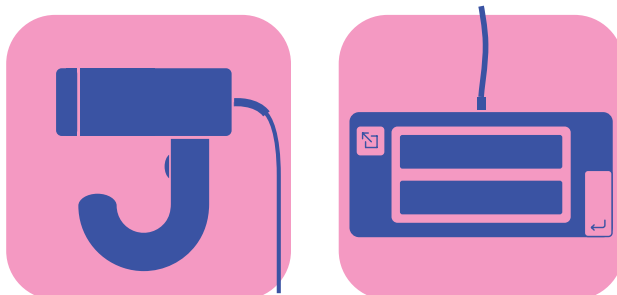
When applying archetype, it is important to be sure that it's recognizable for general. People's experience and signifier for an object is varying, more interview and survey will help designing.

And the compartment tells a lot. See the socket or port for router. More people recognized it with it than my icon. But not external hard disk, as the port is also used for other devices.



From the survey, Category #2

As for the second category, it was difficult applying another archetypal shape into a product, as products already have fixed archetypal shape. But once applied, more people recognized the function. Designer's intention is more than just recognizing, it should work and improve the function.



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Figure.2. http://www.yalealumnimagazine.com/issues/2012_01/popups/bell_telephone.html

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Figure.4. <http://www.sxc.hu/photo/1231361>

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Figure.6. <http://www.newarriva.com/qualy/main.html>

Figure.7. <http://www.dshott.co.uk/cloud.html>

Figure.8. <http://www.alllovelystuff.com>

Figure.9. http://www.alllovelystuff.com/product_info.php?products_id=51

Figure.10. <http://www.muji.com/jp/>

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Figure.18. <http://www.deskpicture.com/DPs/Technology/Apple/AirPort.jpg>

Figure.19. <http://www.vonwentzel.net/ABS/Snow/index.html>

Figure.20. Google image search

Figure.21. Google image search

Figure.25. http://online.wsj.com/media/WiFiLogo_DV_20081215110657.jpg

Figure.26. http://androidandme.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/tmobile_wifi_calling.jpg

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