



## “HOW CAN WE MAKE EVERYDAY LIFE BETTER?”

**H**uman-centred design is about looking at daily life with the user in mind. Insights into behaviour patterns help realise and create value in products and services; tedious things made easier, enjoyable things made unexpectedly satisfying.

To Dylan Martyn it seems he has lived all his life with this perspective... always looking to our complex society for new opportunities to innovate.

Dylan (Ngati Porou) is studying towards a Masters of Applied Science in Design for Technology. He's the first Masters student for the Applied Sciences programme that began in 2001. The aim for his Masters research is to “explore the opportunities for innovation in the audio product and music service market”, however Dylan's approach to design is not a common one. He describes his investigation as ethnographic: looking intimately at how people experience audio products; where they listen, how they listen, what they listen to and why. “A fundamental emotional and social relationship exists between people and sound. The potential benefits of this extend further than portability, cultures of possession and status symbols.”

“I'm a musician, so music is very important to me. I have played volleyball and basketball at a national level, and still play volleyball competitively now, so I have spent a lot of time in buses and trains and in airport terminals. I find music is very useful in personal preparation before a game, so I recognise the prospective importance of audio products for so many lifestyles.”

Dylan's research applies design thinking towards discovering unrecognised needs, rather than a traditional competitive strategies focusing on price, market share or the sometimes-redundant advances in technology. “Businesses are only starting to recognise the potential for strategic and user-centred design at all levels of business.” Dylan's user-centred approach to design research seems in tune with his Māori background, giving more importance to a real understanding of the people who use products, not just using design as a service

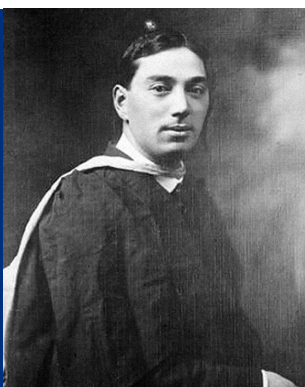
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or stereotypical style guide. He spent many hours interviewing people about their experience with music and audio products, many more hours filming users interacting with audio products, wired for sound and oblivious. As well, Dylan gave some participants disposable cameras, and built collages of where and how each person experienced their music, putting together a mini exhibition to further his design process.

“My supervisor Charles Bezerra suggested I put the many variables identified from the human-sound relationship into a map so I could view it from a fresh, broader perspective. It was a challenge, but it really helped me to see the relationships between users and how products are designed, and where opportunities could lie.

It shows how people – broken down into different generations of distinct needs and tastes – have differing relationships with sound. That relationship has different aspects: physical (how our bodies process sound) and cognitive (how our minds receive and interpret it). That relationship is explored through various audio products – MP3 players, home entertainment systems, car radio and so on. Approaches to design can also vary in purpose and focus. Designers are sometimes market driven, sometimes focussed on the design aspects, sometimes technically focussed, and sometimes user-centred.

The concept map, ethnographic methods and tools helped Dylan to work through a user-centred design process, gathering research information, then analysing it. Then, the challenge is to synthesise that into innovative opportunities for business. Dylan recognises that his work is based on a very unique design process, as it won't necessarily lead to materialising new audio products at the end of the day. What he has done is design a new dynamic, reflexive approach for design in a complex context. It is a process that takes the real needs and aspirations of the people on the street as it's starting point.



**SIR PETER BUCK (TE RANGI HĪROA)** Studied at Otago 1900 – 1904 MB ChB 1904 MD 1910 Hon DSc 1937

Peter Henry Buck's graduation in 1904 marked the start of a brilliant career and also the beginning of an era at the University of Otago. Buck, later Sir Peter, and also known as Te Rangi Hīroa, was the first Māori to complete a medical degree in New Zealand and the first Māori to complete a degree at the University of Otago.

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