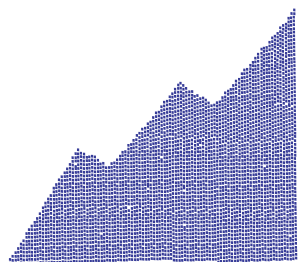

guest author
**Suzanne
Gibbs Howard**



MACRO MATTERS

Individuals want to understand how changing their light bulbs impacts the world

With technology tracking our behaviors and the Internet connecting more and more people together, it's easier than ever to comprehend one person's ability to affect the experiences of many: sharing information about a favorite city. Loaning money to a small business in Vietnam. Protecting the community by reporting suspicious activity. Micro Matters explore the ways people seek to measure, visualize, and learn from the mini actions they take every day.

TAKE ACTION – *designing for Life's Changes*

1.

Provide meaningful feedback

How might design give context to abstract bits of information?

2.

Connect the individual to the larger whole

How might we link an individual's action over time and across communities in order to magnify the impact?

3.

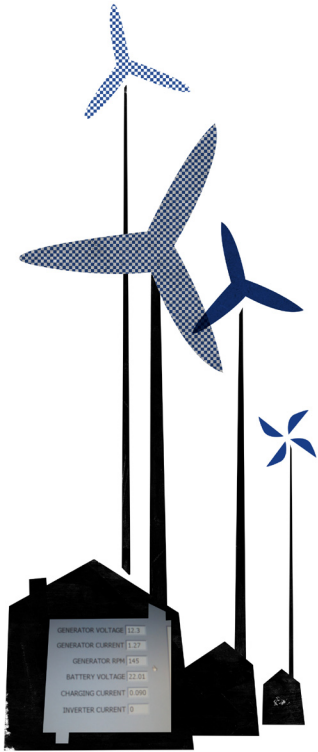
Create opportunities to contribute

How might design inspire individuals to take action?

4.

Make visual connections

How might visual cues help individuals connect and respond on a more emotional level?



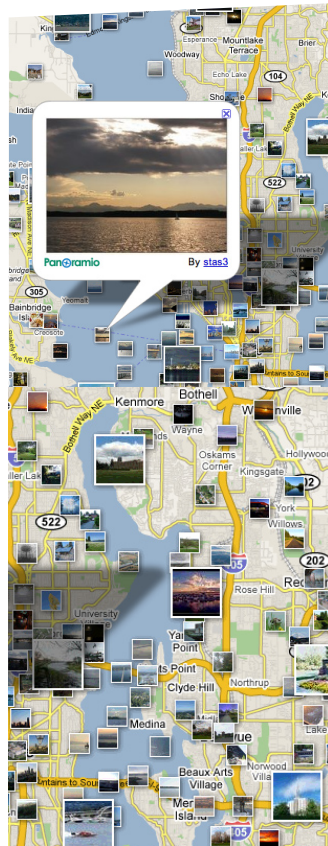
Wind-powered innovation

Jonas, an engineer, became fascinated with alternative energy and decided to experiment with something distinct from solar. After researching his options, he decided to install an energy-producing wind turbine on his roof. He especially enjoyed seeing the wind turbine turn and produce energy.

The only downside? The wind turbine isn't even strong enough to power a single television. While this limited return on investment might have deflated Jonas's enthusiasm, it actually encouraged him to start his own business. Now he creates software to help people see and manage their own wind-power usage.

Global connection from a local perspective

Elizabeth loves to share information about her native city of Seattle filled with its picturesque lakes, beaches, and hiking trails. Google maps makes it easy for her to post pictures of specific locations and share them publicly. "The other day I was on the ferry and it was so beautiful. I took a photo and posted it just so others could see it too."



Citizens on patrol

Sarah's husband died on one of the airplanes flown into the World Trade Center on 9/11. As the city began its difficult recovery, she felt the MTA campaign, "If you see something, say something," had a powerful impact on helping New Yorkers feel connected and more compassionate about their larger community.

Recently, when Sarah visited a neighborhood deli, a fellow patron reported suspicious activity to a nearby policeman. The deli was evacuated and even though it turned out to be nothing, she was impressed that individual New Yorkers felt motivated to speak out.

MoveOn.org

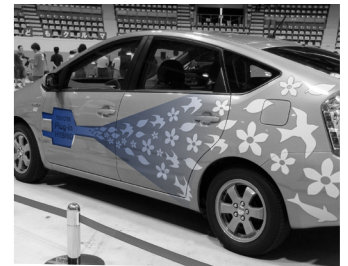
With a simple email list of over 3.2 million members, MoveOn strives to inspire mainstream US citizens to participate in the democratic process. Short messages and easy links mean individuals can take immediate action from the comfort of their computers.

Kiva.com

Following the progress of a Ghanaian basket weaver as she launches her business provides a much deeper connection for people looking to do good. By taking the world of microfinance and making it accessible to everyday citizens, Kiva has made the traditional donation process more personal. Now donors can choose to lend amounts as small as \$25 to specific individuals. Then they can track the progress as others invest alongside them.

Yahoo! Green

Building on the power of Yahoo! Communities, Yahoo! Green encourages more sustainable behaviors. Their successful 18 Seconds campaign recorded over 160 million people taking the 18 seconds necessary to swap out their old light bulbs with more energy efficient ones. By helping people visualize their actions together, Yahoo! increases the understanding of the impact.



The plug-in Prius

The concept has been around since the '60s, but the idea of plugging a car into the larger power grid is regaining popularity. In April 2007, PG&E showcased how a plug-in hybrid Prius could create financial incentives for drivers, by tapping into their vehicles' battery power. The process is fairly simple. The power company draws small amounts of energy while the car is plugged in during the day, taking advantage of high-demand periods. In exchange, the car owner benefits from a decreased electric bill.

PATTERNS are a collection of shared thoughts, insights, and observations gathered through our work and the world around us. We invite you to join the conversation, so we can raise the bar and develop richer design thinking experiences collectively.

Be a pattern spotter: Now that you've been exposed to a few different examples, don't be surprised if you start seeing *Life's Changes* patterns all around. Keep your eyes open and let us know what you find, especially if it's the next new pattern.

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Image Credits: Google Maps, Mujitra.

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