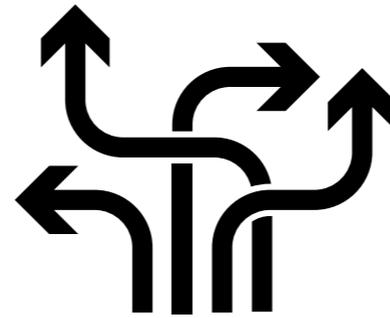# Proximity

Principles to draw us closer emotionally
to our physical environment using tech

Determine directionality

Determine directionality. Associated with the concept of proximity is that of motion. The team noticed that certain specific and different outcomes were required in the approach compared with the retreat from an object or a destination.

Anticipate interaction at stages of approach

Anticipate interaction at stages of approach. The team considered a journey to a specific destination. The field trip, which included a visit to the statue of Sir Isaac Newton outside the British Library, gave inspiration to the possibility of enhancing the journey during its planning and approach by providing additional content or opportunities to engage with the destination. The team also considered minimising negatives: for example, in the context of London Underground commuting, getting stopped at the barrier for lack of funds could be anticipated on entering the station.
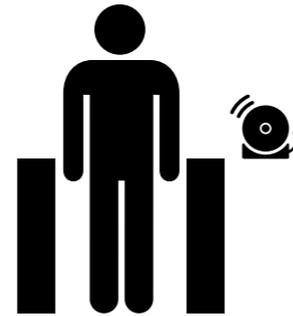
Enable natural gestures to correspond with physical context

Enable natural gestures to correspond with physical context. Next to the statue of Sir Isaac Newton is a small purple circle with various means for triggering some information about Newton. The circle is hard to reach even for a 6 foot tall man. For the majority of people, climbing onto the lower tier of the plinth is the only way to reach it. A sign on the plinth says 'do not climb'! The team extrapolated from this the need to maintain a relationship at the closest proximity between visitor and destination that is unencumbered: instead it should be intuitive and anticipate instinctive behaviours.
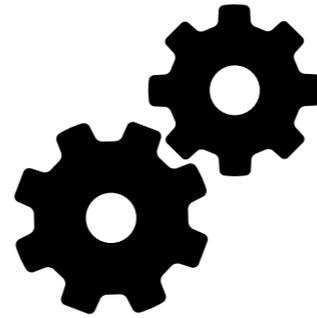
Let experience guide choice of linking technology

Let experience guide the choice of linking technology. The team explored a variety of situations with different means of linking user and object. 'Experience' here refers to user experience. The example of unlocking a car using an app has been used as an example of adding unnecessary steps and complexity into a simple task that should reside in the 'quick thinking' part of the brain.

Provide reassuring feedback to actions

Provide reassuring feedback to actions. Automatic outputs resulting from a proximity input requires providing some clue to the person that the output has been effected. A bike lock (the team considered the Skylock) that automatically locks when the owner walks away does not provide any reassurance that the bike is, in fact, locked. Visual, audible or haptic feedback can be deployed to provide confirmation and reassurance.

Deal with negative emotions and outcomes elegantly

Deal with negative emotions and outcomes elegantly. Considering again the example of failing to pass a barrier in the London Underground, the team found that insufficient information is provided to the passenger to resolve the situation, leading to irritation both for the passenger and others in the queue.