

# **Dealing the dirt: Innovating ways of disrupting cleanliness practices in everyday lives**

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This and associated research has been conducted in collaboration with: Dr Will Medd (LEC), Dr Martin Pullinger (LEC), Dr Ben Anderson (Essex)

# An Idea of Distributed Demand

- From Browne et al (under review), 2012
- *Household water demand, in other words, is distributed across a complex system of industrial systems, actors and social practices including: individual bodies and what they do, how they are perceived and presented; within households and between households; between other public spaces like parks, gyms, schools and places of recreation; places of business; within water supply infrastructures; between water supply infrastructures and wastewater systems; between sewerage treatment works and the pipes that either dispel that water back into the environment or intentionally pump it back into drinking water supplies; in the designers and manufacturers of our desired bathrooms and laundry technologies and fittings; the beauty care and products industry; the designers and manufacturers, purchasers and buyers for DIY stores; garden designers and outdoor lifestyle promoters; the different business agendas of water companies in a regulated water industry; the policies, regulations and frameworks of government departments. The influences on this distributed demand are both material and conceptual – demand is distributed across physical infrastructure and physical stuff (the things we consume, as well as what we do with those things), as well as distributed in social and cultural images, services that water provides (family care, lifestyle, health, comfort), and policies and regulations.*

# Our Research So Far....

- 2011 Survey on water practices in the SE n=1802
- 2012 Interviews on water practice with 22 people in Essex and London
- 2012 'Dishing the Dirt' Focus Groups with:
  - < 24's Male n=8
  - < 24's Female n=8
  - > 24's Male n=9
  - > 24's Female n=8
  - Male community group n=6
  - Female community group n=7

# **Roll Up Roll Up ... All Will Be Revealed About Other Peoples' Dirty Laundry!**

- When do people change their clothes?
- How many times do people wear clothes before washing (from underthings to jackets)?
- What about towels, sheets, other household items?
- Why do people wash their clothes?
- How does this relate to household use of washing machines?

# **Types of “Lauderer’s”**

**(Were not Talking Money Here!)**

- Examples of our Analysis. Developing Clusters of Types of Practice. For Laundry we found there were:
  - The Convenience Outsourcers
  - The Convenience On-Demand Outsourcers
  - The Convenience Home Launderers
  - The Attentive, Cleanliness Focused Launderers
  - The Convenience On-Demand Home Launderers
  - The Hand Washers

# **Roll Up Roll Up ... All Will Be Revealed About What Really Goes on Behind That Bathroom Door!**

- How often do most people shower, have a bath, or use a flannel to wash?
- Why do people shower/bath/wash – is it always about getting clean?
- When does having a bath change in it's time and frequency?

# **Interviews and Dishing the Dirt Focus Groups: Bodies, Dirt and Cleanliness**

- One participant (who in her hot home country often showers 5 times a day) described in the focus groups the following types of showers:
  - i. Waking up shower (everyday)
  - ii. Going to bed shower (everyday) aka Relaxation shower (long shower to forget about everything)
  - iii. Gym Shower (quick to get the sweat off)
  - iv. Getting ready for work during the day (quick to be presentable and to get rid of sweat)
  - v. Getting ready to go out shower
  - vi. Pampering Shower (long exfoliating, shaving your legs)
  - vii. Sex Shower!

**What other types of showers or washing practices exist?!**

# Interviews : Bodies, Dirt and Cleanliness

- Themes on the Growing Concern with the Over Obsession with 'Cleanliness'
- Interview Example.

JANET: advertising in general I hate advertising but this, this um... *fetish*, this *obsession* with everything being *clean*, *everything* being so *clean* worries me! [laughs] It really worries me.

INTERVIEWER: And what is it that worries you?

JANET: I mean, you've got to have wipes to wipe every surface, it is just nonsense! It's nonsense!

INTERVIEWER: what is it that frustrates you so much about it?

JANET: the fact that they're encouraging people to, with kids particularly, you know they emphasise babies sitting in high chairs, that you have to wipe the highchairs, and a disinfectant wipes; to make sure it's quite clean before they sit and eat there ...., kids have grown up for *generations* without that sort of nonsense going on and it reduces their resistance to infection! It think it's just so crazy. And along with that there is this thing about constantly washing and constantly washing clothes and washing floors with disinfectant every day! Ah [throws hands up in exasperation]. I can't be doing with that I'm afraid, I'm a great sceptic!

INTERVIEWER: Are you just sceptical about that whole industry?

JANET: The whole thing.... yes and of course it is the manufacturers that advertise so yes clearly it goes back further than the advertisers, but no I don't like it at all. Umm... You have to maintain a certain level of cleanliness, of course you do, I won't deny that, but this *obsession* with antibacterial stuff all over the place, washing kitchen floors every day with disinfectant...no...afraid not. [laughs]

INTERVIEWER: Sounds sensible!

JANET: I mean I've eaten, my kids have eaten and probably you've eaten dirt out of a garden before now. Never did any harm did it! I think this obsession with cleanliness goes too far

**We Need to Think About Water  
Sustainability ‘Interventions’  
through a Different Lens!**

# International Examples of Practice Based Experimentation e.g., Nobody Was Dirty

<http://youtu.be/PhyevSNVFeg>

Tullia Jack's Masters research 'Nobody was Dirty' got people to wear jeans five days a week, for three months, without washing them! © The University of Melbourne, 2011. All rights reserved.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2011/01/20/consumer-jeans-study.html>

Josh Le wore his jeans for 15 months before washing and Dr Rachel McQueen swabbed his jeans to test for bacteria and other nasties – no difference to a pair of jeans worn for a few months!

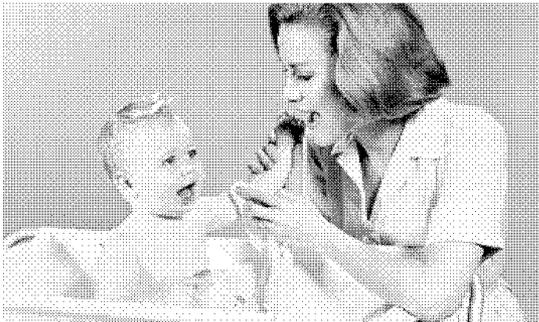
# Everyday Examples of Innovating Disrupted Practice(s)?

## Lucy Mangan: save our flannels

All that is wrong with modern humanity is there in the abandonment of that small square of tufted cotton that costs so little and does so much



Lucy Mangan  
guardian.co.uk, Friday 27 April 2012 23.00 BST



Ah, the good old flannel days. Photograph: H Armstrong Roberts/Corbis



**SHOWER RESPONSIBLY**

*(That's right. Shower.)*



This is long.  
But if you read all the way to the end,  
you can win things.



## Save The World-Grow A Beard! Budweiser Promotes Water Conservation

Published on May 26, 2012 at 8:59 AM

Shave or save? That's the question Budweiser is asking men across the country to consider each morning as they pick up their razors, for with every shave a man skips, he will save roughly five gallons of water. The initiative is part of Budweiser's *Grow One. Save a Million.* water conservation campaign leading up to World Environment Day on Tuesday, June 5.

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**WASTE WATER NOT. WANT WATER NOT. DO THE 2-MINUTE RINSE™**

# **My Ideal Future Research Projects**

## **(Looking for Willing Participants and Collaborators!)**

- Exploring cross-cultural approaches to everyday water related practices, dirt, cleanliness, clothes and bodies (e.g., UK, Australia, India, Brazil)
- Innovating change: How to disrupt and encourage sustainable practices without simply focusing on the 'environment'?

# Examples of Research Results ‘In Press’ (and Under Review!)

- Browne, A.L., Anderson, B., and Medd, W (submitted December 2011, under review). Developing novel approaches to tracking domestic water demand under uncertainty – A reflection on the “up scaling” of social science approaches in the United Kingdom. *Water Resources Management*. Special edition on Climate Change, Water, Uncertainty
- Browne, A.L. (submission March 2012). Sex and the Shitty: Bodies, dirt and the materiality of water using practices. *Environment and Planning D*

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