On the 23rd and 24th of June the WINK The Nudge Conference took place at the University Utrecht, Academy Hall. Keynote speakers were David Halpern, managing director of the BIT UK ‘Nudge Unit’, Luc Bovens, Professor of Philosophy at the London School of Economics and Dan Ariely, Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics at Duke University and writer of bestsellers like Predictably Irrational and The Honest Truth about Dishonesty. The conference was hosted by the WINK research team, consisting of scholars of both Utrecht University (a.o. Prof. Dr. Denise de Ridder) and Wageningen University (a.o. Prof. Dr. Emely de Vet)

The programme was densely filled with workshops. See the programme of the days (day 1, day 2). This summary below reflects my pathway and interests during the conference.
Day 1 – 23rd of June 2017

Opening

Prof. Dr. Denise de Ridder – Professor Health Psychology, Utrecht University, Self-Regulation Lab

- **WINK project**: Welfare Improvement through Nudging Knowledge
  - Research into Effectiveness, Feasibility, Acceptability of Nudging.
  - Supported by a.o.
    - Netherlands School for Public Policy (Nederlandse School voor Openbaar Bestuur)
    - Council for Public Health and Health Care (Raad voor de Volksgezondheid en Samenleving)
    - National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (Rijks Instituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieuhygiène)
    - Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid)
    - Department of Public Health, City council Utrecht (Volksgezondheid Gemeente Utrecht)

Victor Everhardt – Alderman Public Health, City Council of Utrecht

- Citizens of Utrecht are in general very healthy, but there are big differences. That’s what we want to change. Making healthy choices easy. In various departments, mobility, spatial planning, health, etc.
- Nudging Network of Utrecht: examples are shared:
  - Living Lab of Nieuwe Welgelegen - Nudging in the Wild. Council of Utrecht is part of this, municipality has a connecting role.
  - In primary school still problems with obesity, big treats. Development of a treat plate that nudge children to give small treats.
  - Flo, for a better cycle flow. Read also this article.

Thomas Schillemans – Assistant Professor Utrecht University School of Governance

- Read book *Inside The Nudge Unit* written by David Halpern
Keynote 1

David Halpern – Board Director BIT UK

Behavioural Science and Policy

- 400 RCTs done in last 7 years. It’s also policy work, policy decisions
- Examples:
  - White lines on the road
- What would government look like based on humans, not econs?
- Reading suggestions: Nudge, Mindspace, EAST, Inside the Nudge Unit

EAST: framework of working for the BIT UK team. See the complete book here

- Easy
  - Defaults, simplification, remove friction
  - Example:
    - Make it more difficult to get unhealthy drinks, f.e repositioning. Sales of unhealthy drinks lowered, other options increased so fear of selling less is not necessary
    - Make it less easy to commit suicide (insert friction)

- Attractive
  - A written note on a letter helps for people to read it or act on it
  - Speeding fines are not explained. If you explain why they get a fine, people are much more willing to pay the fine or to prevent people to speed.

- Social
  - Increasing tax pay rates by adding one line in the letter with a local and debt norm (people in your area are paying their taxes)
  - Can you influence professionals? Yes, you can. See this example of reducing antibiotic prescription: article in The Lancet

- Timely
  - Priming, framing, key moments
  - Examples:
    - Encouraging people to charge electric vehicle at night: first three months people are open for it/ issue is salient.
‘I’ve booked you a place for a job interview’: worked best when offering a letter with name of applicant on it and name of the advisor at the bottom, wishing the applicant good luck (reciprocity)

Make energy markets work:
- Scan your bill, QR code and then you get the options for switching. Instead of asking energy companies to add a line about switching.

Sugar Tax in UK: in UK there is extra tax for products that exceed 5 spoons of sugar and again extra tax for products that exceed 8 spoons of sugar. This induces manufacturers to reformulate their products to get their drink below the tax lines.

Other interesting quotes:
- “Social trust is a very important indicator of economic growth”
- “Doing policy is also about saying you don’t know and that you will test it. Fundamental and radical change of paradigm”

Parallel sessions
Reint Jan Renes – Professor Applied Sciences, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences

Nudges don’t design themselves: How to design for effective behaviour change?

Agenda
- Explore the wide variety of nudge like interventions (policy, design, etc.)
- Discuss the dilemma’s faced when designing nudges for behaviour change
- Use the behavioral lenses and Persuasive by Design Model

Case: use of smartphone
- Showing you what you’re doing on your Phone. This is seeing and realising (transfer from knowing & believing)
  - Checky - app
  - Me - app
- Why doing something about usage of smartphone?
- Issue is that 10 million people have smartphone, 5 million use them behind the wheel
- Why do people do it? --> habits and impulses
  - Fear of missing out
There’s often discussion whether an intervention is a nudge. Some say if it includes behavioural science then it’s a nudge.

It’s all about:

- **Cue ––/–Behaviour** - How to disrupt the cue to the behaviour. "Making things easy by making things difficult".
- **Examples (all feedback nudges):**
  - Malfunction telephone network Abu Dhabi - 40% less traffic accidents
  - Toilet that doesn’t flush if the lid is not down
  - Smombies (Smartphone Zombies): Not optimal design because habit of using smartphone and not watching is not affected
  - What is smart optimal design of toilet water saving method?
  - Landscaping solution in Amsterdam - shared space (pedestrians and cyclists make use of the same public space). But people in Amsterdam are biased, used to crowded streets. What is the social principle behind it?
  - Automatic behaviour - use of arrows
    - People feel better informed
    - The up arrow relates to the navigation systems in cars
    - Less traffic jams
  - Classic nudge: The fly in the toilet - stimulant nudge
  - Change the default around getting mail
**Behaviour change design projects**

- In one group a nudge will work, in another group it might not work.
- How to make an effective design solution?

Example:

- NS campaign 'fluiten = niet meer instappen'. Is not clear. What does the bike stand for? No train, a bike?
- If you use a fear campaign, Always use a perspective of action (handelingsperspectief) – see photo
- Be consistent in a campaign, perceptions are able to change (f.e. with smoking)

**Challenge in co-operation between social scientists and designers**

- Designers don't read a lot, peer-reviewed articles are often not available to them
- Designers use design thinking, co-design processes, testing, prototyping

**Why theory-driven design?**

2. Increase decisional accountability
3. Avoids cherry picking
4. Increases the possibilities to evaluate efficiently what works
5. Often a precondition together with evidence-based for access to the health market

**Which theory is used?**

- Most often transtheoretical model - not the best model --> there's a difference between social scientists and designers, looks like a disconnection
• Science and Design is like water and oil
• **Touchpoints** - it's not the ultimate solution, it's a trial as well
  o Persuasive by Design model
  o Made a toolkit, behavioural lenses (designing for behavioural change)
  o Simple model

How can we support designers to create theory-driven designs for behaviour change? Read:
• [How can we support designers to create theory-driven Designs for Behaviour Change? The Persuasive by Design–Model and how it came to be.](#)
• [Developing a theory-driven method to design for behaviour change: two case studies](#)

Key Question: How to find the right balance between systematically theory-driven design and designerly drifting?

**Parallel sessions**

Elke Huyghe - PhD, Ghent University

*To Squeeze or Not to Squeeze: How Squeeze Tubes Affect Consumers’ Serving Sizes*

• Motor fluency: physical actions can impact judgments
• Results indicate people use less from a squeeze tube than from another package

Lydian Veldhuis – PhD, Nutrition Centre (Voedingscentrum)/ VU

*How to Nudge in Canteens; Making the Healthier Choice the Norm*
• Guidelines for Healthier Canteens: Guidelines and Canteen Scan are widely used. Current studies to improve guidelines and scan and to test validity and reliability of the scan (at VU). Guidelines: voedingcentrum.nl/factsheets

• Literature: indication that nudging helps people to make healthy choices.

• Effects: long-term effects on food choice and health are unclear

Victor Immink – PhD, Wageningen Economic Research

Healthy snacking at the office: field studies show how workplace meetings contribute to vegetable intake

• Aim: examine optimal conditions to encourage vegetable consumption in a work meeting setting

• Choice architecture: social norm (social acceptable share, rabbit feed), other attractive snacks (cookies/cake culture), product contagion

• Work meetings are potential relevant consumption moments to contribute to increased vegetable intake by simply making them available

• Higher consumption of individual portion compared to multiple portion bowl

Sanne Raghoebar and Sofie van Rongen – PhD, Wageningen UR

Identifying normative cues in food environments: a mixed method photo study

• Social norms embedded in diverse eating situations

• Food environments are dynamic not static

• Food environments are complex
  
  o Interpretation is highly relevant
  
  o Experimental research
  
  o Other processes
Niek Verlaan – Policy Advisor, Public Health Department, City Council of Utrecht

How to connect the living with the lab?

- See tweets about this session
Day 2 – 24th of June 2017

Keynote 2
Luc Bovens – Professor of Philosophy, London School of Economics

Nudges, fundraising and charitable giving

5 principles of fundraising
1. True to purpose
2. Avoid undue pressure
3. Enable informed decision making
4. Avoid vulnerability
5. ?

- Principles: reciprocity, lack of attention, procrastination, inertia, Goldilocks principle (three options Oxfam campaign)
- Leon Festinger: cognitive dissonance - rationalising what you did earlier
- Is this what they really really really want?
- Overview: nudge style charitable giving campaigns

Parallel sessions
Gareth Hollands – PhD, Behaviour and Health, University of Cambridge

Development of TIPMME: a typology of ‘nudging’ (or choice architecture) interventions in proximal physical micro-environments

- Development of TIPMME: typology of nudging
- Historical emphasis of public health interventions to change behaviour = information provision
- For changing population health behaviour such approaches are limited in effectiveness and by scale
- Examining potential of these interventions
- Focus: Interventions or ways to alter the properties or the placement of objects or stimuli within proximal (sensorily perceptible) physical micro-environments, to elicit particular behaviours among people within
those environments
- Implemented within the same environment as that in which the target behaviour is performed
- Not designed to be interactive or tailored to specific target group

David Marchiori – PhD, Department of Social, Health and Organisational Psychology, Utrecht University

Promoting healthy food choices among customers
- Is the effectiveness of nudging dependent on the individuals’ level of awareness of the intervention?
- Possible solutions:
  - Disclosing the intervention (telling what you’re doing)
  - Raising the salience of the intervention
  - Public perception of the intervention
- Usually people approve of nudging because it aligns with their goals. Disclosed nudges seem to work. What are those goals? Do people want to eat healthy or is it that they want to have the benefits of eating healthy?

Laurens van Gestel – PhD, Utrecht University

Investigating the effectiveness and acceptability of nudging healthy choices at the checkout counter
- Most decisions around food are habitually, mindless, impulsive
- Study aims
  - Investigate robustness of effect of food repositioning nudge - (replication previous results (Kroese, Marchiori, De Ridder, 2015) on a long term): Examine effectiveness on an individual level
- Results: food sales
  - Decrease in total amount of food products sold per day
  - Increase in proportion of nudged healthy food products
- Food purchases
  - More customers bought an nudged healthy food product
  - Purchasing this was hardly planned
- Awareness
  - Large majority noticed no difference in the store
- Acceptability
Large majority think the nudge could be helpful in making healthier choices (75% yes). Do you think it affected your choice (88% no)
Keynote 3
Dan Ariely – Professor Psychology and Behavioural Economics, Duke University
The Honest Truth about Dishonesty

Project nr 1: lose weight
- One of principles is to get something in peoples daily routine
- People expect that they go to run and eat salad and that they will see effect tomorrow. Body is slow machine, it reacts very slowly. People get confused between relationship input and outcome. What should we do?
- Option: Scale with no display. It’s already good you’re on the scale. Display on an app, information on a 5 point scale. This is kind of granularity that is helpful for decision making (not 158,2 pounds). Giving people less information, but with right granularity people can understand the relationship between the information and the needed behaviour
- Other option: turtle app, when you eat well, rest good and exercise the turtle is happy. As turtle gets unhappy, it deletes those apps you like the most from your phone. Just lost for the day.

Dishonesty:
- New experiments: one method is using dice and we pay what comes up. But you will be paid top or bottom, but don’t tell us. Lots cheat a little bit, very few big cheaters.
- People misremember what they chose (top or bottom), but are not stealing (honest about amount of money they take out of an envelope)
- Dye task, one time by themselves and one time with a significant lucky person (can be seen on the list)
- It’s ok to lie for peace at home. We have many human values. Not all human values are compatible all the time. What to do when the values contradict each other? How do we trade off different human values?
Two thoughts:

1. In many ways the Behavioural Economics perspective on life is a very sad perspective. Quite nice to think everybody is rational, but seeing that it’s not the case is sad.

2. It’s all about designing the world. How can we take similar steps. We’re all cognitive designers. How can we design our cognitive world so that we're helped and not trapped

One important question:

- What granularity is useful for proceeding and taking decisions? People that try to lose weight experience a high variance. Body is fighting back. Should we give people more data over time? Yes, if it’s helpful.

Summary of the three keynote speeches