

Proverb randomizer

The *Proverb Randomizer* is a storiencing resource that supports the creative composition of design scenarios. While proverbs instill a little ‘wisdom of the street’[1], randomness can lead to new ideas.

The *Proverb Randomizer* has been used successfully in design storytelling as a provocative agent in composition. It can be used as a starting point for a story plot line or as a way to flesh-out a story in combination with other storiencing resources or standard scenario-based design approaches.

Proverbs

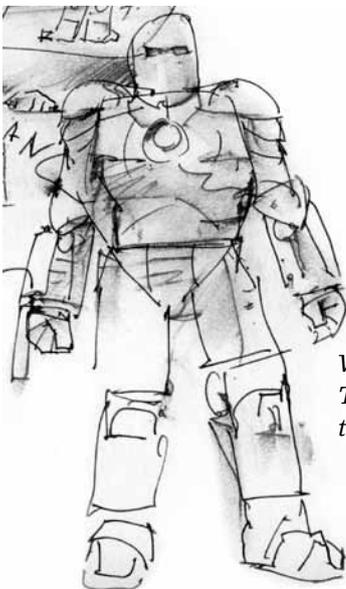
Proverbs are used in everyday life to sum up a situation, pass judgment or recommend a course of action[2]. They can be heard expressed in sentences, but may also be embodied in stories. Many of Aesop’s fables are elaborated proverbs.

Though a scenario may express the right design propositions it may yet be a bland and unengaging read. When a proverb is woven into the fabric of a scenario it has the effect of exposing human characteristics, motivations and beliefs.

+ Randomness

Randomness, along with chance, chaos and unpredictability, all come into play in the creative process.

‘Random phenomena such as serendipity, coincidence, and unconstrained conceptual association [...] are useful, because they provide unexpected ideas that can be fed into a structured creative process.’
(Boden 2004:233*)



What motivates Tony Stark to build the armored suite?

In the movie, Iron Man (Paramount Pictures, 2008), what events motivate the creation of the armored suite? At some point in the development of the story and script, this question was posed. The writers constructed a plausible course of events around Stark’s basic human instinct for survival that are universally recognized in the proverb “Necessity is the mother of invention”.

(1) Oxford English Dictionary. (2) Arewa, E. O. & Dundas, A. (1964) Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore, *American Anthropologist*, 66 (6) December, pp. 70-85. * Boden, M. A. (2004) *The Creative Mind: Myths and mechanisms*. Routledge.

