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mo: A New Mobility System

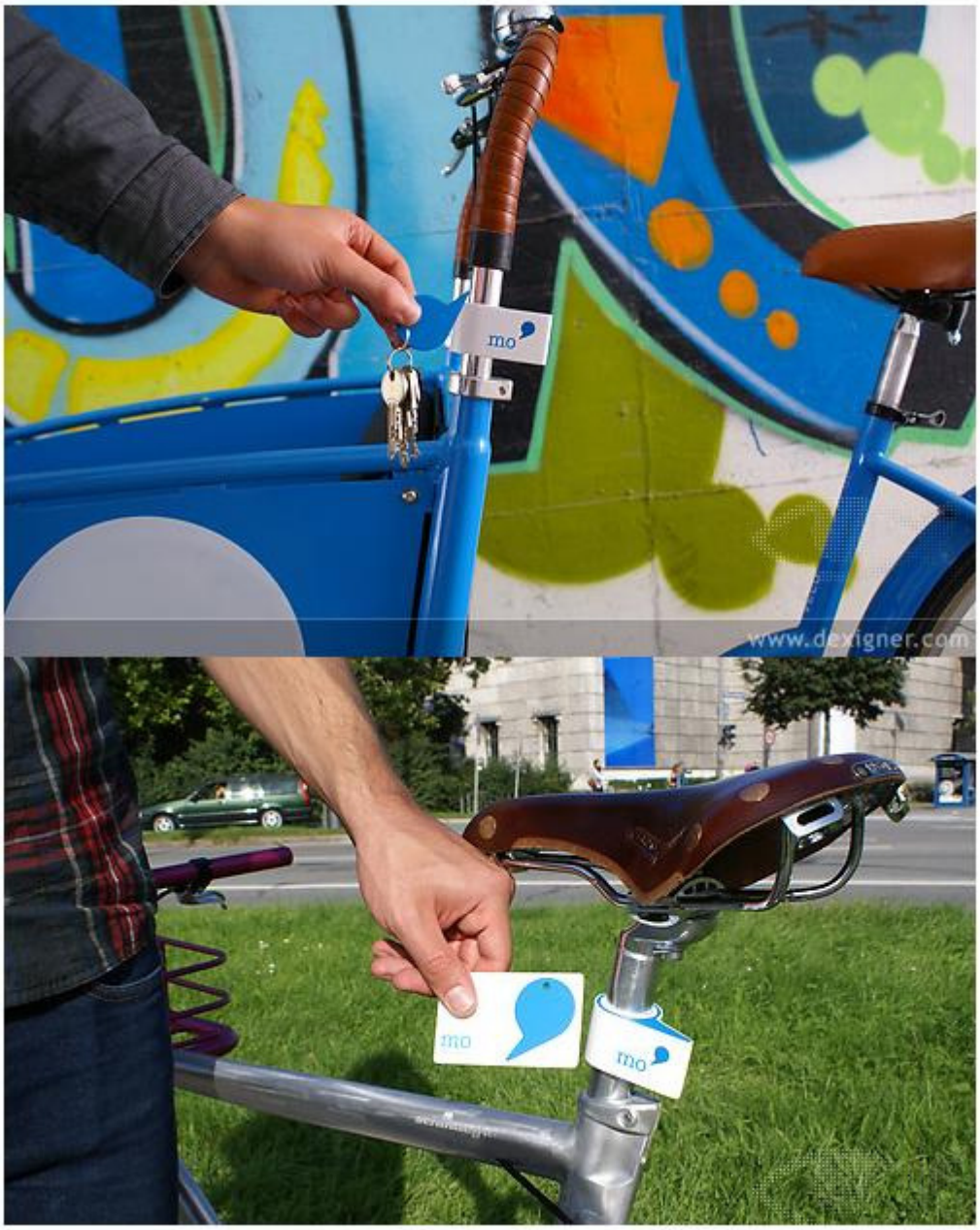
By autoadmin *October 19, 2011*

Under the direction of Munich design agency LUNAR Europe, a "human-centred" design process has been used to develop an innovative mobility system by the name of "mo." The concept study, developed in collaboration with environmental organisation Green City e.V. and the University of Wuppertal, is based on a flexible, affordable and sustainable combination of bike rental systems, local public transport and car sharing. The eco-compatible mobility offering is meant to make a noticeable difference to the number of cars on the city streets, thereby cutting noise levels and air pollution and turning paths and roads into part of our living environment again.

watchmo

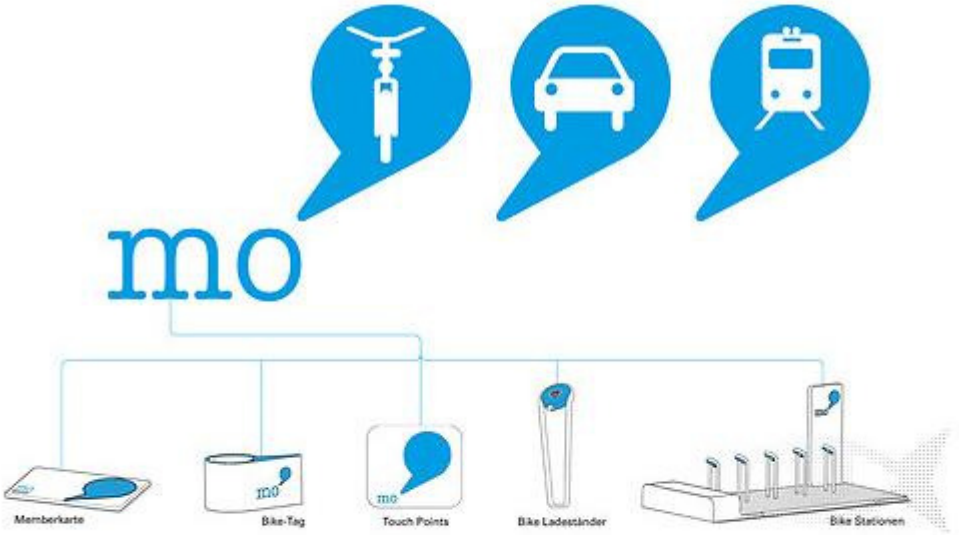
"mo" combines urban mobility with the desire for more sustainability and quality of life. The mobility system takes users' needs as its starting point. "First and foremost, the success of a new mobility concept depends on its acceptance, i.e. on whether the concept caters to people's needs and offers them an appropriate solution," explained Matthis Hamann, one of LUNAR Europe's two managing partners.

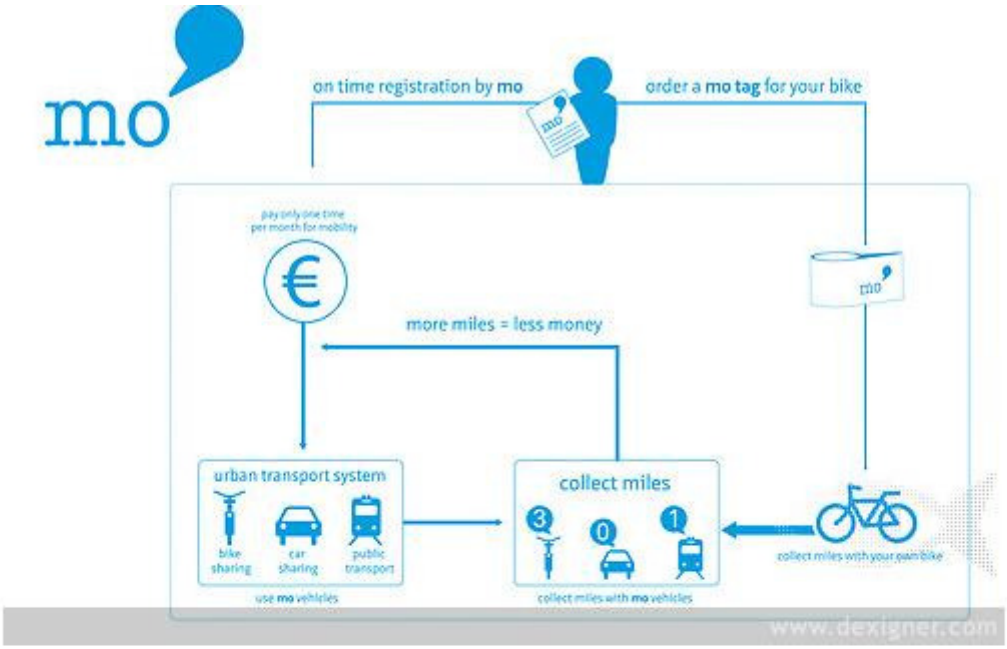
"That's why, right from the start, we opted for what's known as a 'human-centred' design process. The first step was to look at the mobility of the Germans in general and the people of Munich in particular. So we started off by analysing existing mobility concepts and emerging mobility trends and then set about looking into the motivations, needs and wants of people who are on the move day in, day out."



In the initial stages of the process, the designers used various methods such as online surveys and qualitative in-depth interviews with potential users to select the right approaches for the concept, later refining it by means of various 'experience prototyping' methods such as 'personas' and 'scenario creation'. In order to ensure that the concept remained within feasible limits, interviews and workshops were conducted with mobility experts and representatives of the city of Munich so as to gain an in-depth understanding of the relevant parameters for implementing the concept in Munich.

It emerged that many people would be quite happy to do without a car of their own if more attractive alternatives were available. "mo" provides these alternatives: the appropriate means of transport is available for any occasion and in any situation, even spontaneously. "mo" could be implemented inexpensively and rapidly and would require only a moderate amount of technical infrastructure/outlay. In the form of a smartphone app, "mo" becomes a practical 'location-based service' that encourages spontaneous usage of the mobility system even on the go.





watchIntroducing mo

The heart of the "mo" system is the strategy of offering local public transport in connection with various individual rental vehicles: from bikes and cargo bikes all the way to electric bikes and cars, the "mo" member is meant to be able to choose from a comprehensive, single-source range of vehicles as spontaneously as possible – whatever his situation. Bulky goods can be transported with the cargo bike, longer distances travelled with an electric bike – vehicles that represent a more eco-friendly alternative to the car are available for all kinds of usage scenarios.

The system uses positive incentives to encourage "mo" members to make more sustainable decisions: depending on the means of transport he opts for, the "mo" member collects miles for the distances travelled that he can then redeem within the system. Even when he uses his own bicycle, he earns points in the "mo" miles system – and is thus rewarded. His accumulated "mo" miles can for instance be used for a trip to the furniture store with the "mo" car. The better a member's "mo" miles balance, the less he pays. This encourages environmentally aware behaviour and, ideally, gives the user an incentive to change his habits long-term.

"Rather than just sketching a concept, we wanted to make the system tangible. That's why we decided to visualise the service the 'mo' system provides," said Matthis Hamann. The LUNAR designers therefore set about developing all the products "mo" entails, such as the stations where the "mo" vehicles await their users or the "mo" bike tag that can be fitted onto the user's own bicycle so as to credit the miles he rides to his "mo" miles account. In the final 'experience prototyping' step, which involved shooting a film that demonstrates how the system is used and all its many implications, the abstract 'mo' system was made truly and universally tangible.

Dirk Hessenbruch, the driving force in the "mo" design team, is optimistic about the future. "Things have to change – and they will," he commented. "Whether people are going to work, going shopping or exercising: eighty percent of all the distances travelled in Germany are shorter than 20 kilometres. At the same time, more than fifty percent of people use their car – with all the consequences that entails for our roads and the air. 'mo' points out concrete, feasible alternatives that are based on people's needs. 'mo' means mobility for the city of tomorrow."

"If our political and economic decision-makers could break away from the dogma of a car-friendly city, Munich would be able to create a networked solution for its citizens," added Andreas Schuster of Green City. "It's not a question of feasibility, it's a question of will."

Article source

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