

# Individual Reflection

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As someone with a passion for smart homes or Internet of Things (IoT) and a growing interest in rich/aesthetic interaction, this course was very much in line with my interests and passion. It is not common for a course to be so closely aligned with the things I enjoy and care about in industrial design. This makes it very easy to be motivated in class, and in extension to learn from the course.

I was already familiar with the concept of affordances and aesthetic interaction, but not in the context of IoT and growing systems. Rich interaction is an effective way of making devices easier to understand, the action possibility alone explains its own functionality through feedforward without the need for labels or further explanation. For instance, both locks shown below are similar in the sense that they require rotating a key counterclockwise to unlock the gate, but the mechanism being more exposed in lock 2 makes it easier to determine which way to turn the key by just looking at it; logically the bar will move to the right when rotating the key clockwise.



*Lock 1: A hidden mechanism inside [1]*



*Lock 2: The mechanism is exposed [2]*

So if rich interaction can make individual products and devices easier to understand and use, it can make IoT systems easier as well, right? What if those systems are open and actively growing, how does rich interaction help with this? Based on my experiences in this course, I would argue that it is possible to design for rich interaction when the application is specific enough. Our very first idea was to design a handheld device which can connect any two devices to form simple automations with a trigger and an action. This idea is very open and broad, and almost certainly would have to rely on a set of (touch)screens to be able to handle all possible devices and all of their possible triggers or actions. While it would still be a more intuitive way of making automations, there are only limited opportunities for rich interaction and it would still mostly rely on the user's cognitive skills. When we narrowed down our scope to connecting speakers to devices playing audio, it became easier to design rich interactions that would be meaningful. To me, this raises the important learning point that the methods and approaches taught by the course become easier to implement when the goal is scoped down enough.

In my future endeavours as an industrial designer, the concept of rich interaction in growing systems will always have a special place in my mind. I strongly believe that they are an important tool to design better and more intuitive products and systems by aesthetically and intuitively bridging the gaps between the physical and digital worlds. Whenever I see the opportunity, I will do my best to design rich interactions, or at the very least include elements of them as it makes things just a little more pleasurable and satisfying.

[1] WhoseHouse... 2021. Any way to automate this outdoor gate lock? r/homeautomation. Retrieved April 10, 2024 from [www.reddit.com/r/homeautomation/comments/pptzht/any\\_way\\_to\\_automate\\_this\\_outdoor\\_gate\\_lock/](https://www.reddit.com/r/homeautomation/comments/pptzht/any_way_to_automate_this_outdoor_gate_lock/)

[2] Samantha4Hardware. Garage Gate Lock Garden Security D/Long Throw Bolt 50mm & 70mm Lock Both Sides. eBay. Retrieved April 10, 2024 from <https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/372896510763>