Stefania Passera:
Legal Design Jams

The Legal Design Jam (www.legaldesignjam.com) is a participatory design workshop that brings together lawyers, designers, civil servants, researchers, entrepreneurs and everyone else interested in reimagining how legal documents could look and feel different.

Legal Design Jam was inspired by events like hackatons and service jams. It is one of the many participative, collaborative actions that came up in recent years in order to tackle the issues of the legal and bureaucratic world, like the Simple Actions organized by The Simplification Centre or the Legal Hackers movement.

Legal Design Jam is a format created by Aalto University's doctoral candidate Stefania Passera in 2013, and in just over one year over 10 Jams were organized, in Europe and Americas. The strength of the format, in addition to its multidisciplinarity, lies in its hands-on attitude. The participants have up to one day to come up with redesigns, but it is not enough to scribble ideas on post-its… they need to make them tangible, as a digital or paper prototype. When people are out of their comfort zone and are given strict time limits, they actually need to rely on each other's expertise and postpone judgment. The prototype becomes the focus of all efforts, and even if in the end it might not be a perfect solution, it allows making remarkable, practical steps towards the solution – as well as increasing the belief of the people involved in their creative and innovation skills (Gerber & Carrol, 2012). This way of working has been embraced long ago by Aalto University, especially by internationally renowned product and service development courses like PDP , ME310 and the upcoming I2P , where students might be given 'crazy' fast development challenges, like in PD6 – Product development in 6 hours.

After all, how can we plan innovations into existence? In our research, we believe that in organizations (and especially in public organizations) there is too much stress on planning and working in silos, rather than experimenting together: the LDJs create opportunities to challenge this convention. In her speech at the IDA Conference "Information Design Matters" in April 2014, Stefania summarizes some lessons learnt on why and how the Legal Design Jam format works well. You find the presentation here.

During the VISO project, we organized 2 Legal Design Jams tackling some legal documents related to public procurement. The goal of these Jams was to inspire civil servants and procurement experts to rethink critically. Additionally, we started researching and evaluating the Legal Design Jam as a format. Data gathering was done in collaboration with ICRI (Interdisciplinary Centre for Law and ICT) at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Stefania and ICRI colleagues organized three Jams in Belgium during October-November 2014, and collected quantitative and qualitative data (video recordings, focus group, individual questionnaires). Some of the questions we are trying to answer with the help of this data are:

- Can LDJ help non-designers in learning quickly the basics of visual communication? Do they feel more confident in their visual literacy skills after the event?
- How do visualizations, prototypes and sketches work as – objects between people with different background, allowing collaboration?
- How does the activity of visualizing together help generate involvement and insight?

VISO Legal Design Jam 1: rethinking the instructions of HILMA portal at Aalto Design factory

This Jam was organized as part of the the VISO Research Project, carried out by the SimLab unit at Aalto University School of Science. This Jam was tailored mostly for civil servants and procurement experts from public organizations, and took place in the inspiring spaces of Aalto Design Factory.

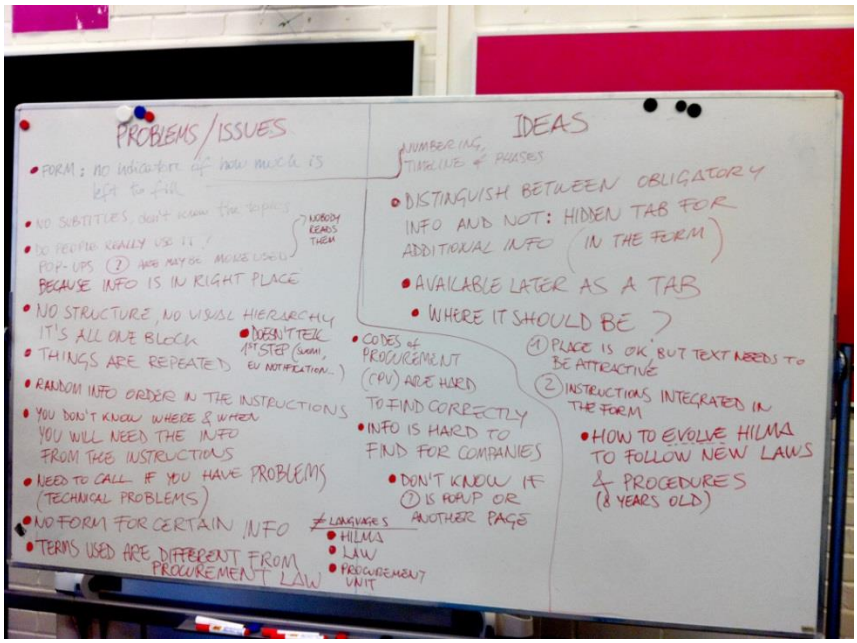
Participants

Our Jammers of the day were researchers Soile Pohjonen, Marika Noso and Nora Arlander; procurement experts Charlotta Tuovinen, Antti Tuukkanen, Jani Martikainen, Sari Aartolahti; designer Ruta Kirsnyte; design students Eeva-Maria Piiparinen and Nina Wester, and yours truly.

Scope of the Jam

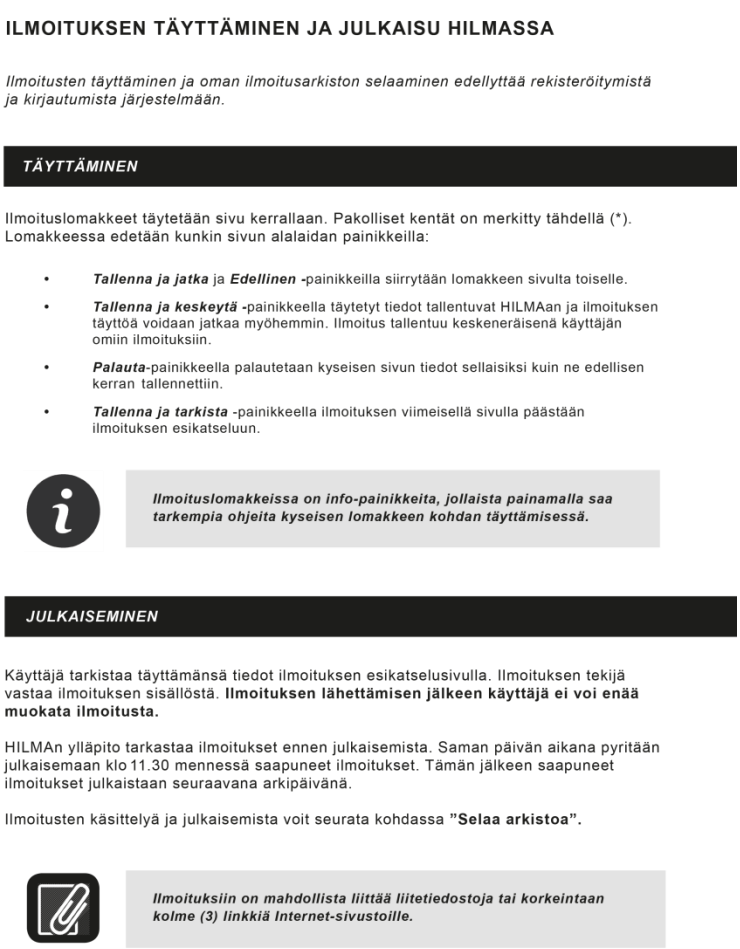
This was a short afternoon Jam, so we concentrated on a document that would not be too long or complex. The candidate for redesign were the instructions for using the procurement portal Hilma, which is the site where all Finnish public procurement announcements and requests for tender have to be made public.

These instructions have several problems. Firstly, they are placed under the “fill in an announcement” link, and not under a “read instructions” link: clearly, they are going to be ignored by those who already made their mind about filling the procurement announcement form, and they are not going to be found by those searching explicitly for instructions.
Secondly, the text is just a wall of text: very little paragraphing, no clear headings, no visible structure… it is very easy to ignore this text even if it appears on your screen!
Thirdly, the instructions are provided *before* filling in the form, and they are not easily at hand while performing that task. However, many doubts and questions could arise *while* filling in the form. So why not providing guidance in a more contextualized, need-to basis?



Results & prototypes

One of our teams worked on making the instructions more visual, simpler and appealing. The style is still official and professional, but different visual elements create better a structure and a more overall pleasant look (see picture below).



ILMOITUKSEN TÄYTTÄMINEN JA JULKAISU HILMASSA

Ilmoitusten täyttäminen ja oman ilmoitusarkiston selaaminen edellyttää rekisteröitymistä ja kirjautumista järjestelmään.

TÄYTTÄMINEN

Ilmoituslomakkeet täytetään sivu kerrallaan. Pakolliset kentät on merkitty tähdellä (*). Lomakkeessa edetään kunkin sivun alalaidan painikkeilla:

- ***Tallenna ja jatka*** ja ***Edellinen*** -painikkeilla siirrytään lomakkeen sivulta toiselle.
- ***Tallenna ja keskeytä*** -painikkeella täytetyt tiedot tallentuvat HILMAan ja ilmoituksen täyttöä voidaan jatkaa myöhemmin. Ilmoitus tallentuu keskeneräisenä käyttäjän omiin ilmoituksiin.
- ***Palauta***-painikkeella palautetaan kyseisen sivun tiedot sellaisiksi kuin ne edellisen kerran tallennettiin.
- ***Tallenna ja tarkista*** -painikkeella ilmoituksen viimeisellä sivulla päästään ilmoituksen esikatseluun.

Ilmoituslomakkeissa on info-painikkeita, jollaista painamalla saa tarkempia ohjeita kyseisen lomakkeen kohdan täyttämisessä.

JULKAISEMINEN

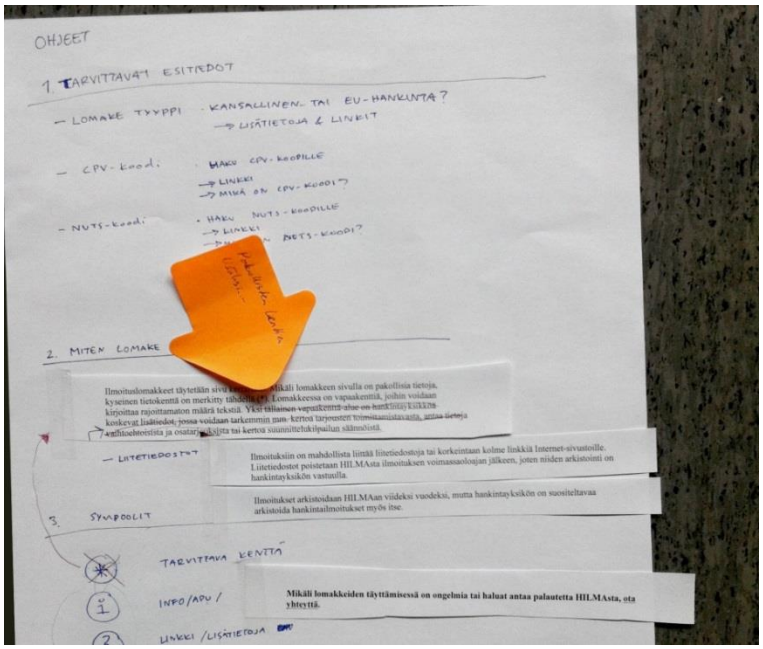
Käyttäjä tarkistaa täyttämänsä tiedot ilmoituksen esikatselusivulla. Ilmoituksen tekijä vastaa ilmoituksen sisällöstä. **Ilmoituksen lähettämisen jälkeen käyttäjä ei voi enää muokata ilmoitusta.**

HILMAn ylläpito tarkastaa ilmoitukset ennen julkaisemista. Saman päivän aikana pyritään julkaisemaan klo 11.30 mennessä saapuneet ilmoitukset. Tämän jälkeen saapuneet ilmoitukset julkaistaan seuraavana arkipäivänä.

Ilmoitusten käsittelyä ja julkaisemista voit seurata kohdassa **”Selaa arkistoa”.**

Ilmoituksiin on mahdollista liittää liitetiedostoja tai korkeintaan kolme (3) linkkiä Internet-sivustoille.

Our second team instead worked on how to better integrate the instructions in the process of filling the procurement announcement form. Since the Jam was quite short and the idea quite ambitious, the team created a paper prototype in order to give shape to their idea as effectively as possible and figure out the overall information structure that would be needed for a redesign. Then, they complemented it with a mock-up layout for the procurement form, which uses color, icons and typefaces to make the form more user-friendly and pleasant (see the following pictures).



Hankintailmoitus

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi.

Hankintayksikkö ja yhteystiedot −

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

Suismod magna aliquam erat *

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing *

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing *

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing *

Hankintalaji −

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

Suismod magna aliquam erat *

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing *

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing *

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing *

Hankinnan kohde +

Hankintamenettely +

VISO Legal Design Jam 2: creating a mini-guide for small public procurement in Vantaa

This Jam was organized as part of the the VISO Research Project, carried out by the SimLab unit at Aalto University School of Science. This Jam was tailored for a small group of civil servants from the City of Vantaa.

Participants

Our Jammers of the day were Katja Koskelainen, Kai Weckström, Pertti Sopanen, Mikko Ilmonen, Johanna Friman, Leena Palander, Irma Tähkäluoto, joined by designer Eemeli Nieminen, research assistant Tiina Toskovic, and yours truly.

Scope of the Jam

The goal of this Jam was to create a short, practical and visual guide on how to do small procurements (below 30 000 €). The City of Vantaa has an intranet page where information on how to do small procurements is available, but this seems not enough to orientate people on how to do the purchase. This is because small procurements follow different rules and processes from "usual" larger procurements. For instance, people can make direct purchases without tendering, in case the expense is very small, but there are still rules to follow and in some cases there are pre-selected suppliers that need to be employed (and they are listed in a humongously long list that needs to be searched for).

Results & prototypes

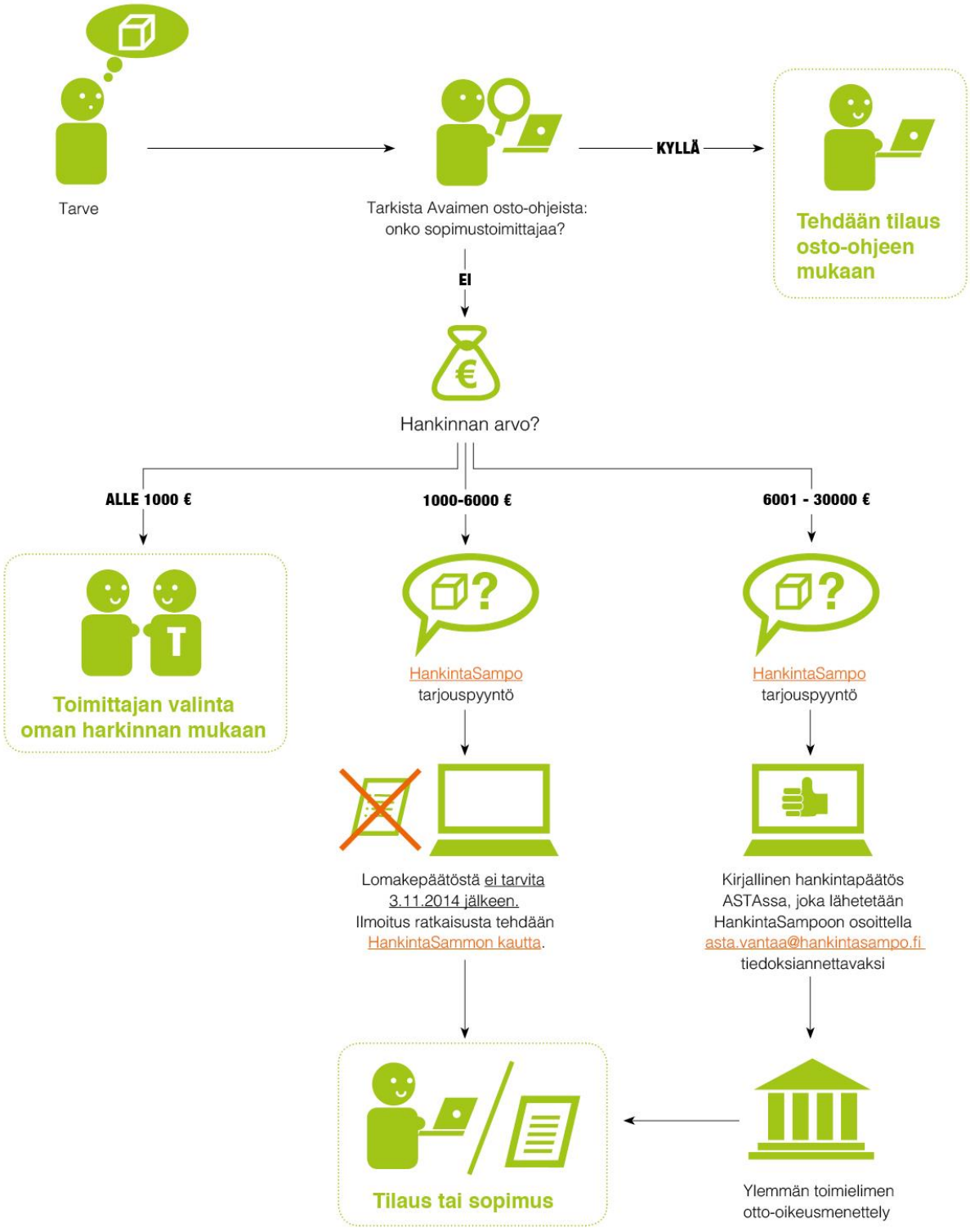
The teams converged towards creating a one-pager summary of the process, that would be visual on one side and textual on the other: the idea was to explain in the simplest possible terms what the small procurement process looks like at the moment, what steps to do and which electronic procurement tools to use and when.

One team worked on the process diagram and one team focused on writing the step-by-step checklist. Links to key webpages and online procurement tools were added to the PDF miniguide, so users just need to click in order to be on their way.

The results are depicted in the following pictures.

Tavara- ja palveluhankinnat alle 30 000€

A. Prosessikuvaus



B. Muistilista

Tarkista aina ensin onko tuotteelle tai palvelulle sopimustoimittaja Avaimesta

JOS TUOTTEELLE TAI PALVELULLE EI OLE SOPIMUSTOIMITTAJAA:

Mikäli hankinnan arvo on alle 1 000 €

1. Hanki parhaaksi katsomaltasi toimittajalta
2. Hankinnasta ei tarvitse tehdä kirjallista hankintapäätöstä

Mikäli hankinnan arvo on 1 000 € – 6 000 €

1. Siirry HankintaSampo-portaaliin

2. Pyydä tarjous vähintään 2–5 mahdolliselta toimittajalta.
   Tarjoukset ja niiden vertailu käsitellään HankintaSammossa

3. Kirjoita hankintapäätös perusteluineen HankintaSammossa

   - Päätökseen tulee merkitä vähintään:
     1) tarjouksen jättäneiden yritysten nimet
     2) tarjousten hintatiedot
     3) päätös perusteluineen
   - Päätöksen annat tiedoksi HankintaSammon kautta
   - Päätös jää Hankintasampoon, joten sitä ei tarvitse arkistoida erikseen

4. Tilauksen tekee tilausoikeuden omaava henkilö

5. Tavaran tai palvelun vastaanotto:
   Huom. tarkista vastaanottamasi tavara

6. Tilaaja vastaa laskun oikeellisuudesta

Mikäli hankinnan arvo on 6 001 € – 30 000 €

1. Siirry HankintaSampo-portaaliin

2. Pyydä tarjous vähintään 2–5 mahdolliselta toimittajalta.
   Tarjoukset ja niiden vertailu käsitellään HankintaSammossa

3. Toimivaltainen viranhaltija tekee hankinnasta VIPS:n ASTA:ssa
   (tarkemmat ohjeet löytyvät ASTA:sta)

   - Päätökseen tulee merkitä vähintään:
     1) tarjouksen jättäneiden yritysten nimet
     2) tarjousten hintatiedot
     3) päätös perusteluineen
   - Päätöksen annat tiedoksi HankintaSammon kautta

4. Tilauksen tekee tilausoikeuden omaava henkilö

5. Tavaran tai palvelun vastaanotto:
   Huom. tarkista vastaanottamasi tavara

6. Tilaaja vastaa laskun oikeellisuudesta

Our conclusions in a nutshell

- Participatory design is a powerful tool for envisioning alternative futures and empowering civil servants to rethink their role, their tools of the trade and their processes.
- Silos should be broken down: not only within public organizations, but also between professional communities. Content experts should not simply brief designers, and designers should not simply execute: working collaboratively allows to embark on a discovery process, where non-trivial questions can be asked, and non-obvious solutions can be envisioned.
- Visual communication is powerful: not only it allows to concretize ideas quickly and communicate more easily our "mental models" to each other, but it can also serve as an auditing tool for our thinking. In order to create visual representations of legal and institutional documents we are forced to make explicit our assumptions and spell out the facts: this helps in checking whether 1) our understanding is sufficient 2) the content of the document itself is complete or lacking 3) the rules and processes we seek to describe are meaningful and suitable or convoluted and inefficient.
- Visual communication is engaging: organizational scientists like to imagine managers, employees and everyone, really, as perfectly rational, logical actors. Too often we forget that civil servants, managers, lawyers are real people, with cognitive and emotional needs. In order to make our organizations thrive, we need to support every person in it, creating tools and documents that are useful, usable and – why not? – delightful. After all, it is people who achieve things, not documents!
- Visualizations and the activity of visualizing together can function as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989): they help people share meanings, construct new understanding together, integrate their multidisciplinary knowledge, support collaboration and focus on the task at hand.

Read more

http://legaldesignjam.com

References

Gerber, E., Carroll, M. (2012) 'The psychological experience of prototyping', Design Studies, vol. 33, no.1, pp. 64-84.

Star, S.L. & Griesemer, J.R., 1989. Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley ' s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39. Social Studies of Science, 19(3), pp. 387–420.