

Will Service Design save the world?

In short: No. But it can make the life of some people nicer, more meaningful.



For a long time I've seen Service Design practitioners talk in a way that feels as if they believed the practise will save the world.

I don't think so. It's a practice that is born from marketing (if you look at it's history) and it has some dark sides too.

But Service Design can and is making the lives of thousands if not millions of people better. The fact that it's used in public services to make them more human and not soulless administrative is a big win! But honestly I don't think that the climate crisis will be solved by a bunch of people with a human centered perspective. I think that will be done by other people with other mindsets.

That doesn't mean we don't need the practise either. Someone taking care of kids, or their garden with intention is a great thing. It won't change the world, but it's an important thing to do at that scale. Service Design feels to me a bit like that. It's a practice which does a lot of good but not at a planet scale. And yes we can make sure that it doesn't fuck the world by trying to make the lives of humans easier and better.

Backstage of this article

This article was illustrated and written by hand on a refurbished Remarkable II tablet. The text was then converted into typed text through the connect service of Remarkable. You can download a PDF version of the original note below if you are curious.