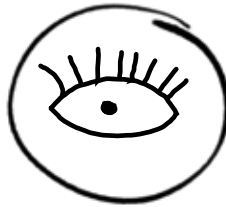


1 Short profile



2 Website
todomat.org



Content of the tool:

Automento Mori (Todomat)



Automento Mori (Todomat)

→ This unusual digital machine invites users to think constructively about what will happen when they die and suggests some actions they can take to be better prepared.

The topic

Automento Mori is a digital machine called ‘Todomat’ in German, which is made up of the words „Tod” (death), „to-do“ and „automat“. It asks users 20 questions about their own death in six categories (body, ceremony, memory, possessions, data and secrets). The answers they can choose include current options but also other possibilities that may exist in future. The machine offers additional information on the environmental and social consequences of the different options (e.g. in relation to funerals, burial and inheritance). Based on the individual responses, Automento Mori offers a list of preparations the user can make.

The Xtopian moment

Being asked to think about your own death can be both inspiring and unsettling, reflecting the ambivalence highlighted by Xtopian methods. Even the way the machine first greets users is designed to provoke. At the same time, it conveys how early preparations for their own passing can benefit the individual themselves and their loved ones – both during their life and beyond. The fictitious options trigger ambivalent feelings, challenging users to reflect in a way that gets under their proverbial skin.

The target groups

Automento Mori is suitable for anyone who wants a gentle, playful introduction to the serious topic of what happens when we die and what we can do to prepare. It is also a versatile tool that can be used for group work on this topic – for example in the context of personal development or intercultural understanding. Other target groups include various occupational groups involved in end-of-life care and funeral arrangements. At the time of writing, Automento Mori is sadly not yet suitable for visually impaired people and is only available in German; an English version will be published by spring 2024.



Time required	Group size	Format	Location	Materials
Approx. 10 to 30 mins	Any	Participants use the tool individually or in pairs	Anywhere participants can clearly read the screen	Smartphone, tablet or PC; website: todomat.org



The educational goals

The options users can choose and resulting to-dos prompt self-reflection. What is important to me in life? Who do I have a message for? What places are dear to me? What am I proud of? The background information touches on various aspects of sustainability and promotes systems thinking. The fictional options show that our society lacks debate and imagination when it comes to new ways of dealing with death and that there is scope to shape the future in this area too.

Application

Individual use: The tool can be accessed at todomat.org and is self-explanatory. Users choose whether they want to work on one or multiple categories. However, please note that the digital version does not allow them to save the information entered for later reuse. The machine produces a to-do list based on the user's responses. The to-dos are displayed on the screen and can be printed out or saved as a pdf. It is up to the user to select and prioritise tasks from the to-do list.

Integration into a group process: If you want to integrate Automento Mori (Todomat) into a guided group process, we recommend giving prior warning that you will be covering the topic of death (see below). Ensure a sufficient number of web-enabled devices and consider whether you will suggest limiting the exercise to certain categories for time reasons or leave it to the participants to decide which questions they want to cover. Prepare questions to reflect on afterwards and have the participants debate these individually, in pairs, in small groups or in a whole-group setting (depending on the size of the group and how well they know each other). Some possible examples: Which questions moved you (the most), and why? What questions or categories did you find unwelcome? What topics or aspects did you think were missing, and why are these important to you? Are there jobs on the to-do list that you will do, and if so, on what timescale? Do you feel privileged to be able to think about your own death in this way? What will you take from the exercise as a whole? Do you have ideas for other visions of the future? What issues would you like to give some more thought?

Potential and challenges

Automento Mori gives a new perspective on shaping the future, encourages us to think carefully about our own lives, stimulates fruitful conversations between friends and relatives, and can potentially prompt lasting change – for instance when users implement the recommended to-dos. By presenting such an unusual topic in the context of discourse on the future, it can provide a refreshing element of surprise in an extended group setting. However, everyone's personal circumstances are different, and not everyone will feel ready to think about their own death. Use of Automento Mori must therefore be voluntary. For the purposes of an Xtopian intervention, it would not be helpful to list every option available today when it comes to the subject of death. The traditions and practices of cultural and religious minorities may therefore be underrepresented.

Source: Jossin, J., Voigt, A., Godlewsky, T., Beecroft, R., Arnold, M., Bernstein, F., Messerschmidt, S., Rothfuss, D., Multhaup, S., Olshausen, I., Aweh, M., Lafratta, M. & Amrehn, U. (2023). *Toolbox for Xtopias: New tools for futurists*. kassel university press. doi:10.17170/kobra-202312089182

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More tools and materials: xtopien.org/toolbox



Automento Mori as an artefact from the future

The website todomat.org is the digital twin of the analogue original: a converted ticket machine serves as the shell of the Automento Mori ('Todomat' in German) and is located in the Museum for Sepulchral Culture in Kassel. There, it welcomes visitors to the freely accessible museum café as an artefact from a future in which people have overcome the taboos surrounding death and are organizing death both more self-determined and more sustainable. The machine provides its users with personalised to-dos and a personal access code to the digital twin.

