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# PHILOSOPHY AND DESIGN FOR ALL

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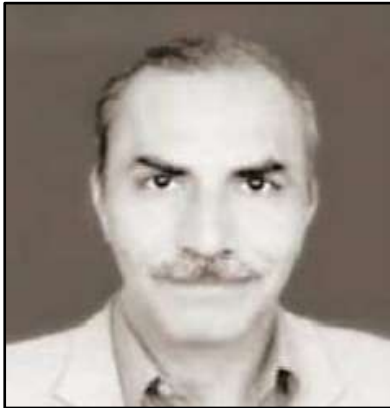
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# Letter from the Chairman's Desk

By Sunil Bhatia PhD



My aged father visited the doctor for routine check up and after the investigation he informed “nothing to worry, minor age related problem, I am advising you certain medicines these may not be that effective because your body will not absorb properly, but condition will not further deteriorate, it will be gradual.” I was standing by his side and shaking my head in affirmation as I am agreeing what doctor was instructing. While coming out of the hospital I realized no one could escape old age and its consequences are bound to surface. Our body is design for certain ‘design life’. It is not product life that is profit oriented, market driven that create unhealthy competition, certain known benefits associated that can pass on to the customer at no extra cost are suppressed and market with version 1.0 or 2.0 are launched for befooling customers by marketing gimmicks as better product and earlier version spare parts are start diminishing and customer left with no option but to upgrade every time with latest or discard the earlier version in absence of required supports rather it is ‘design life’ that is crucial for progress of society in ethical manner, helps in improvement of ‘product life’ through design and it is research oriented and confined to the level of manufacturer and consumer enjoy all good benefits will not feel being cheated. I

have never come across the rolling pin or comb or mirror that has any version rather it was designed ultimately by our ancestors in such a way there was no scope for any improvements by future generations. Why did our ancestors succeed in designing such products where modern generation fails miserably under the pressure of market forces? Was concept of 'design life' guided them to design such products? I remembered the incidence of my father's friend who was almost age of my father of 83 years was walking and he fell where there was no reason to fall. As I took him to doctor he informed "it is not because of tripping his bone is fractured. It is the bone that was weak because of depletion with age and could not bear the load of the body". Our bones are placed for specific design life. I start thinking about not the product life cycle that is designed under the influence of market driven forces but we have another world that is our natural world that works what for it is designed and fade out as its design life over. It never commits error and it happens as our design life over. 'Have we ever encountered a person where life committed error of not allowing him to die?' Death is bound to strike everyone as design life over.

Flower blooms for specific time and if it is lucky it turns to help in reproduction otherwise it dies without outcome. It has specific design and person with common sense understood the concept of 'design life' and keeping their vegetables or flowers or fruits fresh for long time used to sprinkle water over after some duration as feels moisture was missing and later designed by covering with wet clothes for avoiding frequent sprinkle. When a woman conceives infant stays in womb what for design life and as it over there is labor pain. Woman fertility is for specific age and afterward she cannot conceive in natural way but artificial possibility is there. When I looked at my nails I found it is natural to grow and our life styles restrict the length whether we cut or keep uncut. If it is uncut our nature of daily routine works bound to meet certain accidents with lengthy nails since these may crash. Some time accident is so harsh it takes out attached skin and bleeding starts, avoiding such pain our ancestors designed nail cutter and cutting nails became

safe practice. Similarly they might have experienced the disturbance because of long head hair that has nature to grow so for better management they started tying and cutting. Interesting part was hairs are designed for specific life either these would wear out or turn grey, people started coloring with natural product like henna and later design chemical dyes as hair color. As person experienced bald as hair design life was over they designed wigs and later on transplantation of hairs. Wisdom of ancestors reflected in every action of understanding of design life of products. How idea of making chapatti strike to their minds did is still a mystery. But they learnt the enhancement of design life of chapatti by using various techniques. When they learnt the art of cooking they prepared dough with water for cooking chapatti (bread) they realized it had design life of few hours and it did not remain fresh for eating and spoiled quickly. They invented idea of applying oil on one side of cooked chapatti for retaining the moisture for freshness but it was one step toward increasing life through design and real revolution came with idea of frying for extended its design life of freshness with few more hours compared to cooking with direct heat. They prepared dough with oil and cooked chapatti kept as fresh for few days. One thing preparation of chapatti is universal design and some areas it is with direct heat cooking, a few cooked on indirect ways on metal plate (tawa) or some baked or deep fry and many more preparation techniques. Europeans lived in harsh climate and they wished to increase the design life of hunted animal meat they realized by adding ingredient of black pepper it could achieve and that time India was the only country that was leader in black pepper. When black pepper was not available they stored raw meat as we prepared pickles.

Modern world is completely working with one objective of generating profits at any cost. Human life, sensitivity and values are kept aside and proved insignificant when compared into commercial gains. To check this nonsense world growth I always advocate the theory of 'design life' of product rather life of the product. A bulb has 'design life' for nearly 1000 times on/off click where LED for 10 to fifteen

years irrespective of clicks. 'Design life' of helmets is to bear certain level of impact from protection of head injuries it exceeds helmet collapses. Design of helmets is for safeguard the head injuries at the time of impact of accident. They can design better helmets but their market driven interest of more profits restrict their actions. We have designed nuts, bolts and screws but failed to produce the uniform 'design life' because not maintaining the strict philosophy of 'design life' for quality policy which leaves huge room for human error and deliberate actions for earning more profits by manufacturing force for compromise for inferior policy. 'More the damage of produce items, more the sale lead to more profits'.

When a child is blowing soap bubbles with the toy and runs after to catch, realizes it has design for few moments and it vanishes. Toys are designed with short 'design life' and it generally breaks by little mishandling of the child. One of my classmates got a lucrative job and he took his wife to expensive shoe shop for purchase of most stylish pair of shoe with high heel. The moment she wore and step out of home where roads were improperly maintain and heel was broken. They rushed to shop for compliant and shop owners explained the design life of shoes 'if you are living in that locality where roads are bad, who has suggested you to buy such shoe. It is designed for few steps on better road or on carpet or use by persons who are mostly moving in luxury cars. I can't help you in this case.'

I purchased the refrigerator of international brand and was offered me warranty of compressor for ten years and rest parts were no information. I could not understand the gimmick of commercial world and I was trapped under their lucrative offer. I was glad to execute the deal. My happiness lasted for months and its parts were deliberately designed with such a way it could not match life of compressor and it troubled me so much that before expiry of ten years of compressor life I found it is no more useful for me and replaced with new one. I almost wept and thought why did in first place I purchase such a product. A student purchases the ball pen of certain make and deliberately refill is not

designed and other makes of refills available in the market may not fit in their designed pen, they market with 'use and throw' gimmick. I bought side lamp made of stainless steel and thought only part that is to replace was bulbs and rest has metal. After few months steel stands failed to stand as I found the bottom plate was made of cheap plastic and that developed cracks and very shortly it broke. I realized of being cheated by manufacturer by using one part was fragile and that did not match with rest life of the product. Every designer should pay focus on special areas where design part is weak or high human interaction or specific buttons for interface is frequently use and does not match with rest of the product. Mobile phone life line is keypad and frequent use makes the certain key no more properly functioning that irritates the users and bound to buy new one. Similarly readymade clothes manufacturers should use sturdy zips for opening/closing and automobile's manufacturers should focus on braking system of the vehicle and there should not any compromise. Our architects were aware about the 'design life' of the building and used natural stones or tiles for outer surfaces of the building with one idea of enhancing design life of the building by protecting from environmental effects. Later on it proved tools for aesthetic for buildings also. They even suggested inner paintings of walls or doors for controlling adverse effects of environment. Building design life is culmination of different materials used for construction and calculation of design life of the building is by using weighted to each component contribution. The period of time over which a building component or structures are required to perform safely, with an acceptable probability that it will not require replacement or significant repair during that time is the design life. Our ancestors were aware about this concept in designing for house and it proved dynamo for progress of the society and journey from hut made of bushes and wall with mud to baked bricks and latest reinforced concrete construction for earthquake resistance high rise buildings was possible because of 'design life'.

Our ancestors were wiser and design life of the book was enhanced by first arranging the loose pages in systematic order by binding, then introduction of

hard cover bound design. Application of the technique of lamination for each page helps in enhancing design life of the book. Photo frames are designed for increasing the design life of photo that comes under adverse effects of environment. Medicine has specific design life and there is clause to print expiry date. Milk or bread has certain design life and it is no more useful if expiry data is over. New technology of tetra packing is allowing increasing the design life of milk to store for almost year and once it is open it should be consumed in a day. Our ancestors realized the hanging roots could bear certain human weight and more then it breaks. Similarly branches of tree has different design life accordingly shapes and sizes and animals or humans learnt the art of selection of branch that could bear weight was inbuilt trait. It means they understood the concept of design life and they designed thread and rope with natural fiber of jute or coconut hairs that could bear specific loads, moved to steel wire to steel wire rope to chain pulley for bearing heavy loads. Each product is designed with specific objective and has design life.

It is shelf life of the fruits that is designed to keep fresh forced the human to think for storage in container, later designed with lid for better management, airtight for minimal environmental damaging affects , refrigeration, cryogenic, pasteurizing of milk , boiling, frying, use of preservatives and lamination with wax to increase the freshness design life. Pickles design is ancient practice and with the help of natural ingredients and dip in oil wished to increase the shelf life with the design. Storing of the potable water not to get stale various shaped containers were designed and each container has specific design life where earthen pots has limited but metal has better but thermos best.

My friend informed that going to market for tailor for repair of collar of the shirt that is damaged and rest of the shirt is still in good condition. "Why did color fail to match with rest of the shirt? Is it not design fault that has lower the design life of the shirt. I thought design of the shirt increases the life of the shirt. Collarless shirt



has certainly longer life where shirt with collar and full sleeve with cuff damaged fast compared to half shirt. Similarly white shirt has limited life and certain wash it gets pale and to counter this they started dyeing the shirts for longer design life. It is the design life of polythene bags that is difficult to destroy compared to biodegradable paper bags. Paper bags has short life and not design for carrying heavy weight where clothes carry bags are designed to meet this challenge. Designing bacteria for destruction of polythene bags is latest focus area to save the environment.

I remember an incident when I was pursuing my master program and I designed muffler made with stainless steel instead of mild steel. I approached many automobiles companies for order for mass production by showing sample made with steel and proudly narrating to perspective buyers it has life of 15 years, light in weight and has little higher cost compared to MS. One day a senior executive understood my frustration and informed me why people would not interest in your product. One it is costly and we do not want to increase the cost. We are working on cost cutting for generating more profits. Second our vehicle's design life is 10 years and you are offering me product of life of 15 years. Third we are in spare parts business where parts should be replaced before the life of vehicle. I well understood the philosophy of market and went to sea and submerged my dream muffler.

Design of pencil is such where graphite is placed under wood and as user use its life shortens. Pencil design life depends on how much it is in use for writing. Quilt made with cotton fiber or petroleum fiber is recyclable and cover is made of cotton clothes supports its extended design life. Manual sewing machine has life and it affects their sales because a family will buy it once in decades and one family needs one sewing machines. Best use of design life is by medical profession where they are aware about design life of each organ after the death of the person and transplantation of the organs is possible for saving the ailing person.

When automobile manufacturer indicates 'under ideal condition vehicle would perform specific mileage per liter', it means design life of the products. Nowadays government calculates the design life of the vehicle and formed the law that personal vehicle can be used for fifteen years where commercial vehicle for ten years no matter how these are maintain. What they advocate by warranty and guaranty of the products is nothing but countering possible human errors at the time of manufacturing and gives buyer a psychological assurance that this will at least function till the time of back up services at no extra cost. One part has ten year of guaranty and rest are designed in such a fashion that synergic effects of entire assembled parts never live for what for one part guaranty was announced. It is unethical practice.

It is great honoring for us that lecturer Manja Unger-Büttner is an industrial designer & philosopher of technology, literary and cultural scientist associate at the professorship for Philosophy of Technology at Technical University Dresden, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, beside this she is a lecturer for ethics and philosophy of design and technology for designers, engineers, as well as students of design and philosophy and accepted our invitation. This issue is unique in many ways. First, it is special concluding issue of year 2017 and end of our 12<sup>th</sup> year of publication without missing any monthly issue. Second, we have never covered such topic in past and she has done complete justice with job of Guest Editor.

*Merry Christmas and wishing prosperous New Year 2018*

*With regards*

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# Guest Editorial

Manja Unger-Büttner

With every design decision, designers touch the spheres of philosophy and ethics. After all, things could always be designed in a different way, too.<sup>1</sup> Being aware of this already opens up a productive-pragmatic approach to a sort of philosophical scepticism.<sup>2</sup> Every design solution is a commitment within a wide variety of scope (German: Spielraum). To consciously accept and bear responsibility for each of these decisions is already an essential part of the professionalism of a designer, an engineer, a computer scientist and so on. In both German and English, the term responsibility includes the term response. Designers should be able to answer why they made a solution, an artefact, or a surface *that way, and no different*.

Doing this, in combination with a view on general relations between terms and words and thinking, a discourse can emerge or be expanded. This is exactly what the publication series of the Design for All Institute India is making possible. The element that unites all the contributions of this December 2017 publication is philosophy. This includes various approaches to design for all, and all of them can be considered philosophical. At the same time, they also address the question of what philosophy (in general) and philosophy of technology and ethics (in particular) can contribute to the topic of design for all. Every single contribution seeks to clarify terminology, question concepts and prejudices, as well as their origins, and introduce new concepts, topics and suggestions into the debate.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Hartmann, Karl-Eduard von: Philosophie des Schönen. Ausgewählte Werke, 2. Ausgabe, Bd. IV, Leipzig, p. 140; Verbeek, Peter-Paul: What Things do. Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency, and Design. Pennsylvania State Univ. Press 2005, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> A recommendable explanation online: „Skepticism, also spelled scepticism, in Western philosophy, the attitude of doubting knowledge claims set forth in various areas. Sceptics have challenged the adequacy or reliability of these claims by asking what principles they are based upon or what they actually establish. They have questioned whether some such claims really are, as alleged, indubitable, or necessarily true, and they have challenged the purported rational grounds of accepted assumptions. In everyday life, practically everyone is skeptical about some knowledge claims; but philosophical skeptics have doubted the possibility of any knowledge beyond that of the contents of directly felt experience. The original Greek meaning of *skeptikos* was “an inquirer,” someone who was unsatisfied and still looking for truth.” (Papkin, Richard H.: Skepticism. In: Encyclopaedia Britannica. Online: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/skepticism> - last seen 2017-11-27)

For me as a philosopher and designer the use of different terms in different regions and contexts (e.g. 'universal design' vs. 'design for all') within the discourse seems to be quite productive. Anyone starting to participate in this discourse, of course, will become aware of these differences quite quickly. But as soon as one begins to think about possible *contentual* differences, one already deals with the 'how' of this type of design, and not only with the 'what' in relation to this design.<sup>3</sup>

"UNIVERSAL DESIGN MEANS DESIGNING FOR ALL" – this cross heading in a German standard work on Universal Design from 2008 perfectly combines both approaches, despite all the subtle differences between universal design and design for all.<sup>4</sup> And so I am very pleased to convene designers and thinkers (all authors in this booklet are both in their respective person) who attempt exactly this notion of a *universal design for all* – and thereby don't dilute it. Likewise, the publication of the Design for All Institute India – whose friendly invitation I accepted with pleasure – also seems to strive for a narrower concept of *design for all*. The international and interdisciplinary nature of this cooperation is also particularly appealing to me.

Our contribution should thus situate the critical-creative thinking as well as the philosophizing in a discourse that already has been practiced here for 12 years. This positioning of philosophical and inquiry-based reflection (not only in the sense of design research) can never, in my opinion, happen too often and should be tried again and again. At the same time, ethics as a branch of philosophy understands itself parallel to the active acceptance of moral and professionally-creative responsibility in every days' designing and researching as well as in social relationships.

I am currently teaching at the Department of Design at the FH Dresden/University of Applied Sciences. Through my research colloquium at the Chair of Philosophy of Technology of TU Dresden and various interdisciplinary research consortia, I am closely associated with the TU Dresden/University of Technology and the HTW Dresden/University of Applied Sciences. Since 2007, I have been working on

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<sup>3</sup> Sie, f. e.: Peter-Paul Verbeek: "When only the functionality of products takes center stage, we are merely involved with what products *do* and not with *how* they do it". (What Things do. Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency, and Design. Pennsylvania State Univ. Press 2005, p. 232.)

<sup>4</sup> Oliver Herwig: Universal Design. Lösungen für einen barrierefreien Alltag. Berlin 2008, p. 9.

ethics in design, since 2011 explicitly on universal design/design for all. This orientation initially arose from a need for a philosophical reflection on creative approaches to the problem of demographic change in Saxony/Germany.<sup>5</sup>

The responsibility of the designers for the inclusion or exclusion of groups of people *by design*, to me, was of course already conscious in my design studies – at the very latest from my seminars on ergonomics. Quite matching, for example, the European Institute for Design and Disability (EIDD – today: EIDD Design for All Europe) states that the principles of design for all have their roots in Scandinavian functionalism of the 1950s and ergonomic design of the 1960s.<sup>6</sup> Such relatively far-reaching origins make the topic of design for all/universal design even more interesting.

A pioneer of design for all in Germany, Oliver Herwig, emphasized that he had written his reflections on this topic from a Central European perspective. Initially he just wanted to write about things and spaces for old people, but then he learned: "It's not about special solutions, it's about us all, about Universal Design. It would have been different in Japan, even in the US or Russia."<sup>7</sup>

So there seem to be differences in claims for a universal design respectively design for all. Differences create tensions that can be used to create something new. Therefore, I am very pleased to be able to announce a nationwide to international cooperation with the present issue.

We will start right in the capital of Germany, Berlin – which is not so far from Dresden. Coming from Design Research, the contribution of Gesche Joost and Tom Bieling sheds light on the role of 'the normal' and the "design-playgrounds" on which designers could really let off steam – instead of following any standard roles that leave a too narrow perspective for creative work. I like their emphasizing the randomness that arises when you leave the beaten path. This is where unexpected new solutions can emerge.

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<sup>5</sup> At this point I would like to thank the European Social Fond (ESF) for the generous support of my dissertation project, which enabled me to work on this topic and to develop my own philosophical approaches to philosophy, ethics and design.

<sup>6</sup> The EIDD Stockholm Declaration 2004 – online: <http://dfaeurope.eu/what-is-dfa/dfa-documents/the-eidd-stockholm-declaration-2004/> last seen: 2017\_11\_27

<sup>7</sup> Oliver Herwig: Universal Design. Lösungen für einen barrierefreien Alltag. Berlin 2008, p. 9. – transl. by M. Unger-B.

Then, Hidekazu Kanemitsu from Japan allows a practice-oriented look at the connections between Design for All and philosophy using the example of the human-technology relation. As a philosopher of technology, he applies European-American philosophical patterns of interpretation to Japanese perspectives – for the benefit of the discourse on design for all. Particularly valuable, even for the interests of philosophy of technology itself, seems to me his introduction of the *tojisha kenkyu* (the interested, involved person) in his connection of user participation and design for all.

As will be seen in my own contribution, in some debates the term universal design seems to become a synonym for design in general. Explanations of terms and be an essential prerequisite for well-founded considerations, including ethics in design. With Hannah Arendt<sup>8</sup> I already here like to point out the role of conscience of each individual designer: Being aware that one should be able to finally look oneself in the eye on the evening of each day seems to be a practical test for one's moral decisions (not only) in designer's everyday life.

The look in the eyes – now in these of another person –, for me, is a central point in the draft of an artifact which should facilitate mobility for people with problems in mobility: Beside this it would be perfect to afford them as well as non-disabled people *conversations at eye level*. SIMINIS is a design that repeatedly serves me as an example for a more conscious and reflective design for a more dynamic participation in social life and interaction. With their explanations, Helge Oder and Ralf Pohl conclude this month's contribution as a quasi-interdisciplinary team of design theorists and practitioners.

Finally, the topic may also be understood in a combination of a *basic idea* of design for all as well as philosophy: Without all the people around us, leading their own lives and ways of life, without the people who were before us and those who will come after us, philosophy would be meaningless. Design as well. Both can only be conceived and made for and with people – and with the aim to regard each individual as an end in itself and as infinitely valuable as any other human being (probably I have to write it so emphatically because this issue has been compiled in Dresden). In this sense, the title of this issue can also be read as a kind of exclamation: *Philosophy and design for all!*

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<sup>8</sup> See: Arendt, Hannah: *Über das Böse. Eine Vorlesung zur Ethik.* (Engl.: *Some Questions of Moral Philosophy*) München: Piper 2006, p. 69.

## Acknowledgment:

At this point I would like to thank all contributors for sharing their ideas and reflections upon my call in this edition of the Newsletter by the Design for all Institute India. It is an extraordinary pleasure to be able to bring together such a versatile network on the topic of design for all/universal design. All this was possible only through the request of Prof. Sunil Bhaita about taking over the guest editorial for this issue. I would like to thank him and the Design for All Institute India for this contact and his indulgence in the process of compiling this essay collection. All the best and success, further on, for this versatile and uncomplicated publication series!

Manja Unger-Büttner, Dresden, 28th November 2017.



**Manja Unger-Büttner** is an industrial designer & philosopher of technology, literary and cultural scientist. She is associate at the professorship for Philosophy of Technology at Technical University Dresden, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science. Beside this she is a lecturer for ethics and philosophy of design and technology for designers, engineers, as well as students of design and philosophy.

Since 2017 she is teaching design- and media-theory and scientific thinking and writing at the FH Dresden, University of Applied Sciences. In 2016/17 she taught

design & ethics at the HTW Berlin, between 2011 and 2013 ethics, aesthetics & philosophy of technology in Dessau and Dresden. Since 2002 she is a freelance designer.

Her scientific work is about ethics *for* and *with* design: ethics & aesthetics, moral scepticism, exploratory ethics. For this she did diverse studies about philosophies of aging and disabilities as well as universal design and design for all. Areas of application and examples are robotics (anthropomorphism, social choreographies, artificial intelligence, surveillance), the so-called 'active and assisted living'/'smart home', industrial, communication & interface design. Beside this she is working on the linkages of ethics and philosophy of technology with philosophies of design.

She holds a diploma in integrated design from the Anhalt University of Applied Sciences in Dessau; her studies in philosophy, literary and cultural sciences she did in Heidelberg and Dresden. She holds a Magistra Artium (with honours) from TU Dresden. From 2012-2014 she was awarded with a funding by the European Social Fund, in 2016 by the Graduate Academy of the TU Dresden.

She is member of the Association of German Industrial Designers (VDID), the German Society for Aesthetics (DGAE), the international Society for Philosophy and Technology (SPT), the Study Group of Philosophizing Engineers and Scientists (APHIN e.V.) and founding member of Networking Philosophy of Technologies e.V. ([www.NetPhilTech.org](http://www.NetPhilTech.org)).

[www.ethics.design](http://www.ethics.design)



**Tom Bieling / Gesche Joost**  
Designers & Design Researchers,  
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# **HACKING NORMALCY - DISABILITY FROM A DESIGN RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE**



**Tom Bieling** is a Design Researcher and PhD candidate at Design Research Lab/ Berlin University of the Arts, where he heads the Social Innovation cluster.

Since 2011 he is a visiting professor in Applied Sciences and Art at the German University in Cairo. Tom is author and editor of several books, including 'Design (and) Activism' (2018), 'Gender (und) Design' (2018), 'Inklusion als Entwurf' (t.b.a.), 'Gender Puppets' (Lit, 2008). Furthermore he is Chief-Editor at [www.designabilities.org](http://www.designabilities.org), co-founder of the Design Research Network and founder of the Institute for Applied Fantasies (Institut für angewandte Fantasie).

Numerous guest lectures and workshops at international universities (e.g. Mumbai, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Basel, Bern, Luzern, Milan, Portland, Spokane, Edinburgh, Brussels, Nottingham, Tallinn, Bremen, Budapest, Dresden, Potsdam, Hildesheim, Eindhoven or Rotterdam).

Exhibitions in New York, London, Berlin, Vienna, Manchester, Sheffield, Milano, Munich, Dresden, St. Etienne, Karlsruhe, St. Gallen, Eindhoven, St. Quirin, Darmstadt, Paderborn and Cologne. In his previous work as communication- and interaction- and user experience designer and design researcher he worked with clients including Daimler-Chrysler, T-Mobile USA, Museum Ludwig, Smart or Dokumentationszentrum für Popkultur.

Before he moved to Berlin, for joining the technical University of Berlin in cooperation with Telekom Innovation Laboratories in Berlin/Germany in 2007, he studied Design at Köln International School of Design (KISD) at the University of Applied Sciences, Cologne (Germany) and Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR), Curitiba (Brasil).

In his research projects he mainly focuses on social and political dimensions of design, and aspects of design for social innovation, interaction and inclusion, with a current major research interest on the coherence between design and dis/ability. In 2014 he was announced "Young Innovator of the Year" by the Falling Walls Consortium.

[www.tombieling.com](http://www.tombieling.com)



**Gesche Joost** is Professor for Design Research at the Berlin University of the Arts and since 2005 heading the Design Research Lab.

With international partners, she conducts research and development projects in the areas of human-computer-interaction, wearable computing, as well as user-centered design and participation. Until 2010, she was junior professor for Interaction Design & Media at the Technical University of Berlin in cooperation with Telekom Innovation Laboratories. As a visiting professor, she taught Gender and Design at the HAWK Hildesheim.

In 2009, she received the young talent award for science from the mayor of Berlin. She is the chairwoman of DGTF e.V. (German Society for Design Theory and Research) and board member of Technologiestiftung Berlin. She is member of the board of the German National Academic Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes), appointed member of the Synod of the evangelical church in Germany (EKD) as well as full member of the Goethe Institute.

She is co-founder of the non-for-profit company Calliope engaging in digital education for school children in Germany. In 2014, she was appointed as a Digital Champion for the EU commission. Since 2015, she is member of the Advisory Board of SAP SE. Since 2016, she is also board member of the Einsteincenter for Digital Future in Berlin.

# Hacking Normalcy – Disability from a Design Research Perspective

Tom Bieling, Gesche Joost

## Introduction

In the conceptualisation and development of information–communication–technologies as well as in policy making, the needs, experiences and knowledge of socially marginalised people – especially those with disabilities – are still often not considered and incorporated. Targeting non-disabled majorities even reinforces the processes of social exclusion. The more marginalised certain communities are, the stronger they are excluded from several forms of information, communication and participation. This article draws from critical theories of design and technology to describe and situate some of the challenges and opportunities for design in terms of social inclusion.

## Design Matters: Engagement, Representation and Politics-in-Action

Ine Gevers claims the margins of society as the ‘best laboratories for democratic renewal.’ By describing how democracy develops in these margins, she argues that its ‘current decline can perhaps partially be attributed to the ever-decreasing visibility of the “others” in our society’ (Gevers et al. 2010). Referring to Giorgio Agamben who speaks of a ‘post-democratic spectacle society’, she raises fundamental questions: *‘Which democratic practices still have a right to speak in today’s post-political climate? To whom and to what should we listen if we want to restructure [...] society in such a way that increasing numbers of new minorities, [...] and as yet unfamiliar voices get heard? How do these ideas relate to a society that with its aim of achieving order and perfection seems increasingly to distinguish between citizens and ‘other’ citizens, with the latter apparently not automatically in a position to claim the rights that the status of citizenship should*

*lend them? How can we bring about a society that doesn't turn its back on its own most fundamental values – diversity, interdependence and asymmetry?' (Ibid.)*

Not least, these questions are also design questions, as design is often directly or indirectly involved in steering, enabling, accompanying, interpreting and evaluating such processes.

In recent years, the social<sup>1</sup> and political dimensions of design have gained increasing importance (Bieling, Sametinger, & Joost, 2014). Critical and cross-cultural as well as inclusive and socially-informed design approaches have helped form an understanding of design as a practice with a high potential for societal transformation. A strong characteristic of these approaches becomes obvious in their intention to satisfy the needs of underserved or marginalised populations (Margolin & Margolin 2002), as well as to improve and contribute to human wellbeing, participation, self-organisation or alternative forms of political action.

In previous publications we have discussed the different effects that occur when these marginalised communities are regarded as 'target groups' in terms of potential consumers instead of as an active source of innovative, social sustainable development which contains added value to a broad range of non-intended use and initially non-addressed users (Bieling, Goellner, & Joost 2013; Bieling, Gollner, Joost 2012; Joost & Bieling, 2012).

The research cluster 'social innovation' at the Design Research Lab at the Berlin University of the Arts unravels the social and political dimensions of design, prioritising interrogating design as an enabler and negotiator within social, cultural, economic, political, ecological and ethical parameters. Following an inclusive and diversity-based<sup>2</sup> approach for transformational change and activism in underrepresented and disadvantaged communities, this research cluster

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<sup>1</sup> The concept 'social' is understood here in a general sense as related to aspects of cohabitation or collective co-existence of humans, their intentional or non-intentional interaction with each other, as well as corresponding organisational patterns.

<sup>2</sup> We are following a concept of diversity that includes a variety of demographic characteristics, including gender, class, ethnicity or ability amongst others. Different models of diversity have recently been discussed in the field of diversity studies, often aligned with a critical thinking about these social and cultural categories that constitute society. One of their central characteristics is embodied in a commitment or aim to social justice and change, emphasising to identify and critique the processes and effects of institutionalised oppression, social inequality or dominant group privileges. As Bessing and Lukoshat (2013) indicate, diversity has increasingly been discussed and shown to contribute to the field of 'innovation'.

addresses issues such as dis/ability, poverty, ageing, health, gender, social movements, protest or intercultural dialogue. Within the framework of the social innovation cluster, one central approach is to focus on the assumption that developments in the fields of the “underrepresented” also bring an added value to a variety of other users (Bieling, Sametinger, Joost, 2014).

## **Disability: a matter of perspective**

This obviously also tackles the issue around the processes of social exclusion and inclusion raised by technology, opening up important questions in regard to the politics of design, research and technology development. One of these is to clarify the positions design and design research can have in the social sphere and its construction, and thus in the structuring of society. One approach is to more fully integrate disadvantaged, disregarded or marginalised groups through the design process – and in this sense, design also means the determination of decisions, situations and processes or participation.

Design and technology have long become indispensable in broad fields of human ecology. Both are omnipresent in everyday life, and often we do not realise once we become accustomed to and reliant upon them (Goggin & Newell 2003, p. 3). Both play a fundamental role in developing, understanding and sustaining our identities. Both can (even simultaneously) allow or deny access, and so they are often (if not generally) responsible for social and cultural inclusion or exclusion.

Thus design and technology are never socially neutral. And the design processes around understanding and addressing specific user needs as well as developing innovative technologies, can be described as *‘an activity that influences and is influenced by the balancing of interests among different social groups that participate in its process and deal with objects or systems’* (Couto & Ribeiro, 2002). Furthermore, technology is never neutral, since *‘technological artefacts [...] can be used for certain goals but not, or far more difficulty or less effectively, for other goals’* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2013).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This conceptual connection between technological artifacts, functions and goals makes it hard to maintain that technology is value-neutral (ibid.)

Technology thus appears to be an exertion of human power<sup>4</sup>, which Hans Jonas describes as a form of action constantly exposed to moral verification (Jonas 1993).

Assuming that human-made constructions and technologies have influence upon the individual, it becomes comprehensible that technologies 'enforce normalcy'<sup>5</sup> (Davis 2002). Therefore, they have an effect of 'reproducing an ableist framework, rather than building in, creating and contributing to new modes of living which embrace difference and diversity' (Goggin 2008, p.11). In this respect, the 'design perspective' can play a significant role in altering these frameworks and allowing for diversity. Design is especially able to engage with such tasks, since it automatically influences learning as a human activity that is socially situated and mediated through artefacts.

Goggin and Newell (2003, p. 147) have shown how society 'consciously and unconsciously, has built in disability into digital technologies' and how disability is 'constructed in and through technology' (p. 12). In regard to the enabling and disabling practices triggered and represented by technology, the knowledge and perspectives of people with disabilities appear to have a high value of (social, emotional and not least economical) benefit. Both society and industry can benefit, if a broad and diverse range of citizens and communities are involved in the process of critical and sustained reflection and development. And in regard to alternative modes of policy exchanges, Goggin and Newell state, that 'such subaltern knowledge can make an important contribution [...], and help to shape the emerging social and technological systems that are becoming today's and tomorrow's norms' (p. 80).

## **Design: Interpreter between object and user**

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<sup>4</sup> German: *Macht*

<sup>5</sup> Lennard Davis indicates how the term 'normal' coincides with the birth of statistics and eugenics in the mid nineteenth century, while replacing the former concept of 'ideal' as the regnant paradigm in relation to bodies (Davis 2005). He further claims that 'the introduction of the concept of normality [...] created an imperative to be normal.' An understanding of the built environment as a key actor that privileges certain bodies and excludes others by producing barriers that construct disability (Davis, 2002, p. 31; Wendell, 1996, p. 55) has established a basis towards a 'shift from the ideology of normalcy to a vision of the body as changeable, unperfectable' (Davis, 2005).

Design can play an important role here in that its artefacts – in the form of products, services or interventions – can create awareness and can motivate alternative patterns of behaviour. As such, design is required to reflect on the scope of its actions and on the responsibility of the designed artefact's possible effects. It is a question of the social responsibility of design and the potential to design social responsibility.

Thus the participatory shift, which can be observed in various fields of research, design and development over the recent years, plays a key role. The principal orientation of participatory design is to integrate different groups of participants in the design process and to thereby create equal roles for the designers and 'non-designers'. These 'non-designers' are potential end users, employers, public representatives or members from other interest groups. These participants can be subsumed under the concept 'stakeholder', which is to say, every participant possessing a certain, (in)direct interest in the design process, its conception, realisation, implementation or resulting consequences. From the development of questions concerning the generation of ideas and their realisation to the marketing of the products, these participants can be closely integrated in this process in a variety of ways (Sanders 2013). A more political oriented variant of participatory design can be found in Pelle Ehn (2001) and Ezio Manzini (2007). Here the focus is on the inclusion of citizens in societal processes as well as the authorisation for independent improvements of living conditions.

In light of the disabling and enabling dimensions of technology, the level of stakeholder involvement will undoubtedly shape the future impact of technology.

## **Design: Border between disability and 'normal'**

Our common understanding of normalcy is negotiated on a daily basis and therein lies potential for design. If one assumes that the cultural production of normalcy is an act of *creation* that is not founded on pure biological predispositions, then design and normalcy are closely related. The conception of 'normal'<sup>6</sup> is often reinforced by design, not only by means of the images produced by advertisements, but also due to the fact that the design itself excludes certain users from using specific services and technologies.

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<sup>6</sup> Since what is considered 'normal' is relative to cultural practices, definitions and locations in which the social interactions take place, the term appears in quotation marks throughout the paper.



Thus for design research, the question as to how to overcome the established stereotypes of 'disabled' and 'normal' arises. Especially, if design engages in strongly technology-related, or even more tricky: technology-driven fields. Technology marks the border between disability and normalcy, and is eventually involved in their cultural production, as well as in their social, institutional or individual interpretation (see Dederich 2013). Thus a critical reflection in the development and implementation of technology about common understandings and definitions of 'normal' is needed, especially aiming at empowering viewpoints of people with disabilities themselves (Behrisch & Bieling 2015). Therefore some reflections for participatory and inclusive technology design and development need to be discussed. Moreover, in the context of information-communication-technologies and the related media cultures, a critical perspective is needed. As Goggin and Newell describe, disability is shaped or 'made' in them. (Goggin & Newell 2003, p. 4). This raises the question of how to define design as a social (relevant) activity and to propose design as a process of social interaction.

## Normalcy as a Design Playground

Goggin and Newell argue that there should be a *'clear process for the dynamic redefinition of universal service in [technology] that takes into account the changing socio-political spaces of consumers and technology. This means that people with disabilities, as well as all other citizens and consumers, must be able to participate in policy making, research, and knowledge construction on new media'* (Goggin & Newell 2003, p. xviii).

To understand normalcy as a design playground, in which more parties are involved than just the designers, is a special point of view that indirectly allows a fundamental reinterpretation of widely anchored social evaluations and understandings of 'normal'. Adopting a design perspective can be a promising resource to bring about system innovation in which individual interests converge with those of society.

Exploring the opportunities and challenges design represents for the social inclusion of people (not only those with disabilities) opens up new opportunities to restore meaning and value to participatory and inclusive approaches as a counterpart to a purely technology-driven innovation.

For the future development – especially in terms of digital transformation, the enabling and disabling practices of technology need to be critically reflected upon in order to avoid replicating and propagating inaccessibility from the physical into the digital world.

Without doubt technology can provide people who previously existed outside society with means of access to it (Gevers et al., 2010, 212). Yet, if one goes beyond the clichéd perceptions as to how ‘disabled’ or ‘non-disabled’ people would tend to use certain products and listens instead to what real individuals have to say, then new, unexpected and potentially fairer solutions occasionally arise. It becomes clear that concentrating on ‘normalcy’ issues repeatedly requires reflecting upon how much standard roles are thereby implicitly strengthened. It does not necessarily mean that derived concepts contribute to an emancipated, inclusive role understanding per se.

This is for sure a critical junction, since it makes the limits of participation clear and also brings the responsibility for the product back to the designers. Dealing with the results of participatory design processes and inclusive design outcomes therefore requires a high amount of empathy and reflection as to what can be achieved through the products or services originating in this manner.

Nevertheless a large potential is opened up by bringing together people from a variety of contexts (whether those be cultural, social or demographic) into the processes of technological and/or social innovation. Not least in order to clarify that the awareness that society is diverse can also be of aid in developing alternative concepts extending far beyond the stereotypical image of so-called norm- or standard-users.

Nevertheless, interrogating our existing and future technologies helps to reflect upon the values and lived social policy (Goggin & Newell 2003, p. 154), as well as to understand how the associated interpretations of ‘normal’ could be modified and re-designed. After all, this remains valid not only within a disability context, but for any marginalised group. Thus including the perspectives of people with disabilities in the networked digital society is not only a technological question, but a political one.

*This article is a revised and shortened version of a chapter entitled „Interactive inclusive – Designing tools for activism and empowerment“ by Tom Bieling, Tiago Martins and Gesche Joost, first published in: Kent, M. & Ellis, K. (2017): Disability and Social Media. Taylor & Francis, Routledge, London.*

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**USER  
PARTICIPATION  
IN UNIVERSAL  
DESIGN:  
A CASE STUDY IN  
JAPAN AND  
PHILOSOPHICAL  
INQUIRY**



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# User Participation in Universal Design: A Case Study in Japan and Philosophical Inquiry

Hidekazu Kanemitsu

## Introduction

One of the key features of universal design is user participation in the design process. Many interesting examples of this come from Japan. First, this article takes Japanese industrial designer Kazuo Kawasaki as an example to consider the meaning of user participation and to identify the key issues. Then a new academic trend called *tojisha kenkyu* in Japan is examined. This article considers the significance of first-person perspective in the design process and clarifies the need for the perspective of both designer and user. Finally, this article introduces insights from the philosophy of technology to consider the roles of both designer and user and discuss the concrete roles of each.

## A Case Study in Japan: Kazuo Kawasaki's Design

Japanese industrial designer Kazuo Kawasaki is a fitting case in considering universal design and user participation, because Kawasaki helped establish the concept of universal design in Japanese society. When the Good Design Selection System (G Mark System), which was founded in 1957 by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (now the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry), moved to a public interest incorporated foundation, the Japan Institute for Design Promotion, in 1996, Kawasaki was involved in establishing the Universal Design Award as one of the special Good Design Awards (Kawasaki 2002: 73). He himself says that the word "universal design" thus came to be used widely in Japanese society (Kawasaki 2004: 404).

There is another reason to study Kawasaki's work: he is ambidextrous and is also a wheelchair user. Kawasaki started his career as an industrial designer at Toshiba Corporation in 1972. In 1978, while he was working in product development for Aurex audio equipment etc., he had a traffic accident. His spinal cord was damaged by the accident, and he has been in a wheelchair since then (Noguchi 2002: 50). He began to work freelance in 1979, designing various items, from traditional crafts such as Japanese knives to computer equipment. Below, this article will introduce several of his major works and try to identify the crucial issues to consider how to realize an ideal universal design and user participation.

First, we look at the wheelchair, "Carna" (1990).



Fig. 1 Carna (from <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/1512?locale=ja>)

He designed it based on his own experience being in a wheelchair. Just using one, he said, became a chore. Each morning, before getting out of bed, he would look at the wheelchair and think, "Oh, do I have to ride it again today?" Thus he resolved to design a wheelchair that he would like to use (Noguchi 2002: 51). "Kawasaki's goal was to create a wheelchair that felt as good, and looked as cool, as the newest pair of sneakers. The Carna is colorful and has high-tech style. Since it had to be light and easy to carry, an improvement over most collapsible wheelchairs, Kawasaki used a titanium frame, with aluminum honeycomb-core wheels and rubber seat and tires. Moreover, to offer personalized comfort, he designed optional parts that users can add to the standard frame, according to the needs of the moment. Appropriately, Carna was named for the ancient Roman goddess who had power over entrances and exits."<sup>1</sup> Of course, the design is

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<sup>1</sup> This is an excerpt from *The Museum of Modern Art, MoMA Highlights* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, revised 2004, originally published 1999), p. 325. See <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/1512?locale=ja>. Accessed October 3, 2017.



notable, but this wheelchair is also very functional. For example, the seat is not sticky even in the summer heat, and it prevents bedsores. Furthermore, it can be placed in the overhead compartment of an airplane by detaching the seat from the rest of the wheelchair. The Museum of Modern Art in New York added the item to its permanent collection in 1992 (Noguchi 2002: 51).

The second example is the Timer, “Cano” (1993).



Fig. 2 Cano (from <http://www.kazuokawasaki.jp/kk/include09.php>)

A timer is a device that emits a sound after a given length of time. Kawasaki put braille text around the timer to produce a timer for blind people. However, when he took a prototype timer to the braille library, he was laughed at. In Japan, only about 15% of blind people can read braille; especially people who lose their eyesight in middle of life can hardly read it. So the timer is now embossed with marks at the 0-, 30-, and 60-minute points. This timer was given a design award in Japan and an iF product design award in Germany (Kawasaki 2002: 73–4).

The last example is the “Total Artificial Heart” (initial model) (1998).



Fig. 3 Total Artificial Heart (initial model)  
(from [http://www.design.frc.eng.osaka-u.ac.jp/pid\\_j/pid/iko/tah/tah1.html](http://www.design.frc.eng.osaka-u.ac.jp/pid_j/pid/iko/tah/tah1.html))

Kawasaki was invited to work at Apple Inc. by chief executive officer John Sculley in 1991. In 1994, while Kawasaki was expanding his area of activity overseas, he

was stricken with cardiomyopathy. While other people might have become discouraged in such a situation, Kawasaki did not. Surprisingly, he started to design an artificial heart. When he became a professor at Nagoya City University in 1996, at the age of 47, he began work on a design for an artificial heart. And he became a doctor of medicine in 1999. His artificial heart was designed by stereolithography and had the same structure as a real heart, unlike previous artificial hearts such as motors or pumps (Noguchi 2002: 51–2)<sup>2</sup>.

We can learn several things from Kawasaki's design and identify several issues. The first issue concerns the meaning of the user. It is true that the user's perspective is an important element in ensuring good design for all or universal design. In this context, Kawasaki's design seems to suggest that the perspective of interested persons is necessary. In fact, the Carma wheelchair and his artificial heart are things he can design because he is a wheelchair user and a potential user of an artificial heart. However, this is not the case with the Cano timer. Kawasaki is not blind, and therefore, he is not an interested person in its design process. And, interestingly, only this realizes universal design in the examples above. Kawasaki says as follows:

Universal design is an idea as a whole. There can't be things or spaces that everyone can use conveniently. Or rather, the idea of universal design is to build a social system that can supply a system of things for flexibly coping with differences between individuals (Noguchi 2002: 51)

To realize such a system, what kind of role will the concept of user participation play? In the next section, we will consider this issue.

The second issue implied in this quotation is the sociality of universal design. Kawasaki thinks that universal design means a design that can support each person at each stage of the process from birth to death. He thinks also that universal design aims at the realization of ideal of an anthropocentrism that transcends differences in race, age, physical strength, and education. He calls this "human-centered design" (Noguchi 2002: 52). He places disabled persons in the same category as the elderly: disabled persons will take part in social activities in the order of birth, impairment (those dependent on care), disabilities (those capable of daily life by self-help), handicap (disabled persons who can take part

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<sup>2</sup> Kawasaki created many works and won many prizes. For example, he is famous for designing glasses and received the Silmo D'Or award in 2000. His works can be seen in Kawasaki (2014).

in social activities), and death, while the elderly persons proceed toward death in the reverse order (Kawasaki 2002: 69–71). And he claims there is a need for medical, educational, community/company, political, and design support at each stage (Kawasaki 2002: 71–3)<sup>3</sup>. It is true that universal design is relevant to everyone and we cannot deny the importance of social support, but what can design do to improve society? Kawasaki persists in his belief and is ready to face any hardship<sup>4</sup>. Of course, the designer plays a crucial role in realizing such a society, but the citizen should also have a role to play. We will introduce a framework and some vocabularies to consider this issue in the last section.

## User Participation: Significance of First-Person Perspective

When thinking about user participation in the design process, it is important to take into account the first-person perspective. In this context, there is an interesting academic trend in Japan called: *tojisha kenkyu*.

The term *tojisha kenkyu* consists of two Japanese words: *tojisha* and *kenkyu*. *Tojisha(s)* refers to “interested person(s)” and *kenkyu* means “study,” “research,” or “investigation.” Therefore, *tojisha kenkyu* literally means “study by interested persons themselves” (Ishihara 2015: 27). This study has drawn great attention in the context of disability studies. In this context, *tojisha* refers to “disabled persons themselves,” or “patients (service users) themselves,” and *tojisha kenkyu* refers to “a unique activity of self-study by persons with mental health problems or other problems in which they study their difficulty (“symptoms” and everyday worries) with their peers and often with the help of professional supporters” (ibid.).

Some interesting questions arise about the study itself: the objectivity of the study, the relation between the study and the life, and so on. In fact, these are the very problems that are discussed in philosophy, especially phenomenology. For example, Husserl criticized the sciences for emphasizing exactitude and certainty and for lacking real-life relevance. As is well known, he considered this situation a “crisis” of the sciences (Husserl 1954).

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<sup>3</sup> Moreover, he has recently spoken about Peace Keeping Design (PKD), which covers global issues such as regional conflict, poverty, and infectious disease (Kawasaki 2014: 239).

<sup>4</sup> One of his books is titled *Dezaina ha Kennkasi de Are (Designers, Be Fighters)*, Ascii, 1999. (in Japanese)

Although the investigation of the study itself is important, here we will focus on another issue: who is the *tojisha*? As Ishihara points out, it can be crucial to determine who is qualified to be a *tojisha* (Ishihara 2015: 35). It is worth considering the issue of user participation in this question.

Some people consider the definition to be based on the idea of service-user rights. They say that t “when someone has needs, s/he is already a *tojisha*,” so, “*tojisha* refers to the end-user of the service” (Ishihara 2015: 35; Nakanishi and Ueno 2003: 2). This model leads to the idea that “*tojisha* know about themselves best” (Ishihara 2015: 35; Nakanishi and Ueno 2003: 12). As Ishihara points out, this idea echoes the international disability rights slogan: “Nothing about us without us” (J. I. Charlton, *Nothing about Us without Us: Disability of Oppressions and Empowerment*, University of California Press, 1998/2000).

However, other people disagree. Ishihara asks: is it true that we know ourselves best? Are they sure of who they are? And he introduces Kumagaya’s idea as an incisive comment: “We don’t know ourselves well. We ask ourselves who we are, what we will do, together with peers” (Ishihara 2015: 35; Kumagaya 2013: 219)<sup>5</sup>.

Ishihara sees the crucial point here: “Although *tojisha*’s participation in and control over research are important issues, it is more important for *tojisha kenkyu* that patients themselves study and create or enter into communities through that study” (Ishihara 2015: 36). He emphasizes the significance and functions of study for human beings, which are to grasp and express their conditions, to access the public sphere, and to make a community.

This idea has significant implications for the issue at hand. In fact, Kawasaki says that the seven principles for universal design by Ronald L. Mace (1. equitable use, 2. flexibility in use, 3. simple and intuitive, 4. perceptible information, 5. tolerance for error, 6. low physical effort, 7. size and space for approach and use) are based on objectivity (Kawasaki 2004: 408). And he claims that we need to deal with the design from a standpoint of subjectivity, putting ourselves in the position of patients, and also need to grasp its subjective standpoint from a viewpoint of objectivity (*ibid.*). We think true user participation will be realized

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<sup>5</sup> Kumagaya is regarded as one of the most symbolic figures in *tojisha kenkyu*, for he suffered from cerebral palsy as a result of neonatal asphyxia and now is a pediatrician with a degree from the University of Tokyo.

where subjectivity and objectivity intersect. To achieve universal design, the first-person perspective and the perspective of society should unite. In other words, the designer should consider the perspective of the user and vice versa to improve society.

## **Role of Designer and User: Mediation Theory**

Finally, here we introduce insights of the philosophy of technology to consider the role of both designer and user. We consider the notion of “technological mediation” introduced by Peter-Paul Verbeek<sup>6</sup>.

Verbeek adopts the postphenomenological approach that advocated by Don Ihde. According to the postphenomenological point of view, the subject and object constitute each other (Verbeek 2005: 113).

The key concept of his approach is “mediation.” According to Verbeek, technological artifacts take part in the human act and decision-making by mediating human perception and human praxis. These analyses from technological mediation have significant implications for design: “Designers should focus not only on the functionality of technologies but also on their mediating roles. The fact that technologies always mediate human actions charges designers with the responsibility to anticipate these mediating roles” (Verbeek 2006: 377–8). This implies that a designer should design a product “not only on the basis of the desired functionality but also on the basis of an informed prediction of its future mediating role and a moral assessment of this role” (Verbeek 2006: 372).

From the perspective of mediation theory, designing should be regarded as a form of “materializing morality” (Verbeek 2006). Accordingly, more serious consideration must be given to the moral dimension of designing. This is true of universal design as well.

Verbeek talks about the approach of “moralizing technology”: Rather than working from an external standpoint vis-à-vis technology, aiming only to either reject or accept a new technology, the ethics of technology then aims to accompany technological developments [...], experimenting with mediations and looking for ways to discuss and assess how these mediations could fit with the way humans live. (Verbeek 2011: 95)

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<sup>6</sup> The author has discussed the significance of mediation theory from the point of view of engineering ethics (See Kanemitsu, forthcoming). The following is based on it.

The author thinks this is the crucial point, because this implies the concrete roles of both designer and user. Verbeek presents the real task of the ethics of “technology accompaniment”:

Its primary task is to equip users and engineers with adequate frameworks to understand, anticipate, and assess the quality of the social and cultural impacts of technologies. (Verbeek 2011: 165)

In other words, both designer and user should consider the social and cultural impact of the design. It may sound trivial, but it would be most productive for designer and user to engage in dialogue to that end. Moreover, to create venues or opportunities for such dialogue, professional societies should play leading roles. The author has discussed the importance of cooperation between professionals and the citizens and the need for the leadership of professional societies in the field of engineering (see, Kanemitsu 2010). He considers this imply also in the field of design as well. For example, the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design can and should promote such dialogue between designer and user.

To achieve the task of technology accompaniment and to make the dialogue more productive, we need insight from the philosophy of technology, especially of mediation theory. Therefore, the insight from the philosophy of technology needs to be introduced into the design itself.

## Conclusions

The case study of Japanese designer Kazuo Kawasaki provides significant insights into user participation in the design process, because Kawasaki is a real or potential user of the devices he designed. However, there are no things or spaces that everyone can use conveniently, so Kawasaki’s perspective cannot be universal. Universal design is, as it were, an idea, and it aims at building a social system that can supply a system of things for flexibly coping with differences between individuals. Thus we should consider the issue of the real role of user participation in the design process and the realization of the sociality of universal design.

To consider the first issue, it is helpful to pay attention to the insight of *tojisha kenkyu*. It clarifies that the significance of first-person perspective lies in the creation of communities or in taking a community-based perspective. True user

participation is realized where subjectivity and objectivity intersect. Thus to realize universal design, the first-person perspective and the perspective of society should unite. In other words, the designer should consider the perspective of the user, and vice versa, to improve society.

This leads us to our second issue: How can we realize the sociality of universal design? The mediation theory of Peter-Paul Verbeek provides a way in which to consider the issue. According to this theory, designing should be regarded as a form of “materializing morality.” Therefore, more serious consideration must be given to the moral dimension of designing. This is true when we think about universal design. Verbeek presents the concrete task and suggests the way to realize the sociality of universal design. In other words, both designer and user should consider the social and cultural impact of the design. And to accomplish that, it is most productive if designer and user enter a dialogue with each other. To achieve the task of technology accompaniment and to make the dialogue more productive, we need insight from the philosophy of technology, especially of mediation theory. Therefore, insight from the philosophy of technology is necessary for meaningful user participation in the design process and the realization of good design for all.

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**'SPIELRAUM' OR  
THE SCOPE OF  
'HOW' – ETHICS  
AND DESIGN  
FOR ALL**

# 'Spielraum' or the Scope of 'How' – Ethics and Design for All

Manja Unger-Büttner<sup>1</sup>

Especially in design, writing down something 'philosophical' on the basis of vague terminology seems to be a popular activity.<sup>2</sup> It can produce creative solutions – but these could possibly be reached by using something like tacit or implicit knowledge of designers,<sup>3</sup> too, in other mind-refreshing ways. Philosophically, ethically and also ecologically or socially grounded design solutions require conscious thinking, research and reflection of the individual designer respective teams – again and again, as long as life and the world are changing. In my daily work with designers of all ages I experience the fact that designers are able to do this at the appropriate level and in most cases really like it.

Adding ethical expertise from professional philosophers and ethicists to design and technology development has been proved to be a productive element in my practice for developing well-founded and, moreover, identity-generating solutions or decisions. Unfortunately, this approach is still not widely used.<sup>4</sup> Beside this, fortunately in Germany, there is already a widespread introduction of the subject ethics (as a part of philosophy), at least in the design study curricula. As an ethicist, of course, I very much welcome these first attempts to implement a *philosophy of design* (in German: Designphilosophie) by name into the theories of design.

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<sup>1</sup> For CV see above, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Some examples: „Die Philosophie unseres Designs“ <https://www.daimler.com/innovation/design/designphilosophie.html>; „Design Philosophy“: <https://www.kiwisecurity.com/design-philosophy>; <http://www.swissotel.de/design/philosophy> - last seen 2017-11-27.

<sup>3</sup> See Irrgang, Bernhard: Grundriss der Technikphilosophie. Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2009, p. 26-28; Polanyi, Michael: The Tacit Dimension. Doubleday, New York, 1966.

<sup>4</sup> That does not mean that every design studio would have to hire a philosopher. Similar to other individual and group coaching, these ethicists could be temporarily and perhaps repeatedly brought back into the relevant topics for a collective reflection, weighing up and deciding. I by myself am part of a network of philosophers of technology working for ethics and philosophy in different fields of technology development (Networking Philosophy of Technologies e. V. – [www.NetPhilTech.org](http://www.NetPhilTech.org)).

In this essay I would like to do some philosophical and ethical reflections on the terms *design for all/universal design*<sup>5</sup> and their relation to the word *design* itself. For this I will use a phenomenological hermeneutically-interpretational method<sup>6</sup> with a, hopefully, productive perspective on differences in the use of these terms internationally and in German-speaking regions. For doing this I will take a look at the subject of ethics in design and at connections the term *design for all* can make between different professions – for finally looking at the scopes<sup>7</sup> in design and ethics in their relation to some central claims made about universal design/design for all.

## "Good design enables, bad design disables"<sup>8</sup>

Designers love manifestos.<sup>9</sup> For me, it is not clear what was there first – this enthusiasm for manifestos and codices or the desire for quickly exploitable inspiring philosophical approaches. Though, manifestos and codices mostly are the result of years of brooding, discussing, and arguing about each of the seemingly simplistic and plausible points.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the handling of these topics to be dealt with in *personal everyday life* can never be treated as completed anyway.

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<sup>5</sup> Both terms seem to be used quite equivalent, in German universal design seems to be used more often. So I will try to use both terms in this paper and also reflect on their relation in short.

<sup>6</sup> See: Unger-Büttner, Manja: Design und Ethik. Hermeneutische Ethik als Anleitung zu einer ethisch fundierten Designpraxis. In: Leidl, Lars und Pinzer, David (ed.): Technikhermeneutik. Technik zwischen Verstehen und Gestalten. Frankfurt am Main u. a.: Peter Lang 2010, p. 231- 247.

<sup>7</sup> In German: *Spielraum* – directly translated it means something like play-room, as will be seen later, page 44.

<sup>8</sup> The EIDD Stockholm Declaration 2004. Online: <http://dfaeurope.eu/what-is-dfa/dfa-documents/the-eidd-stockholm-declaration-2004/> - last seen: 2017-11-27.

<sup>9</sup> For example *The Bauhaus Manifesto* by Walter Gropius (1919), *First Things First* by Ken Garland (1964), *Ten Principles for Good Design* by Dieter Rams (1987), *First Declaration of the St. Moritz Design Summit* (2002) – see a long list online under: <https://backspace.com/notes/2009/07/design-manifestos.php> (last seen 2017-11-27) – here also: *This is Not Manifesto – towards an alternative design practice* by Jared Davidson (2009).

<sup>10</sup> I had the chance to accompany the development of the *Code of Ethics for Industrial Designers* made by the VDI (Association of German Industrial Designers). It took at least 7 years of thinking, reflections and discussions for a group of industrial designers, beside their every day work, until it was published. Since 2012 the Codex is online: [http://www.vdi.de/inhalte/pdf/91\\_2.pdf](http://www.vdi.de/inhalte/pdf/91_2.pdf)

Not only because *reflection* seems to belong to a complete life and thinking, I like to emphasize, that morally or philosophically relevant topics should be considered and reflected as often as possible. Accordingly, it also seems sensible to me to illuminate the appropriate terms themselves from time to time and to *question their function or relevance*.

In this context, I would like to ask if it really needs a special terminology in order to suggest people that they design, produce and sell *for people*. *Universal design/design for all* seem to become such auxiliary terms. Initially, these terms have been quite meaningful and necessary to free the benevolent design of the newly discovered target group of the "old" from its narrow, sometimes stigmatizing focus. This exemption seems quite effective and implemented today: at least in Germany, the term *universal design* hardly seems still to be necessary to make it clear to *designers* that a design made e.g. specifically for "the elderly" can stigmatize and separate social groups from each other.

In parallel, at least in German-speaking regions, the terms are increasingly adapted. *Universal design* is used more and more frequently as a synonym for *design for all*, and the emphasis is now much less on opening up the corresponding design approaches, moving away from *design for the old*, towards a *design for everyone*. Today, the emphasis is more on the fact that design should be *generally* oriented to *humans*. This mostly happens in contrast to other goals that designers and developers might also still pursue – e.g. market economy.

For example, in an eloquent message by Prof. Gunnar Spellmeyer on the website of the University of Applied Sciences Hannover/Germany, *universal design* was named the *brand for human centered design*.<sup>11</sup> Businesses have often tended to pay more attention to immediate realities and hard facts than to the needs of the *marketplace* – or better: the *consumers* – or: the *user*, Spellmeyer said. Very interesting and really valuable here is the argumentative intensification on humans, starting from the concept of the market. This mustn't be interpreted as a commercially minded perspective on man, but rather can stimulate to make market and economy clear as something *man-made* and, simultaneously, *made for man*, too. On this basis, it becomes even clearer that simply any specification of design should be focused on humans – *human centered design*.

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<sup>11</sup> Hochschule Hannover, Fachbereich Produktdesign, 27.2.2016: Universal Design? Design for all? Inclusive Design? – online <http://produkt-design-studium.de/neuigkeiten/universal-design-design-for-all-inclusive-design/> - last seen 2017-11-24.

As Michael Krohn mentioned in an earlier issue of this publication, a close perspective on the user has *always* been essential to design in general: „What was always inherent to design is the close view on the user.“<sup>12</sup> If this perspective is not adhered to, it can happen that products are recumbent in the way of users and other people like stones. In German, latest since Immanuel Kant, artifacts are called Gegenstände – something, that stands *against* somebody or something, in a meaning like *resistance* or *objection* – finally a direct translation from the latin *objectum*.<sup>13</sup> In other words, artifacts that are designed without a view on the user could happen to be more ‘*in the way*’ of people than *present-at-hand* or, even better, *ready-to-hand* (borrowing briefly from Martin Heideggers terminology<sup>14</sup>).

The EIDD Stockholm Declaration, adopted on 9 May 2004, at the Annual General Meeting of the European Institute for Design and Disability in Stockholm simply says: "*Good design enables, bad design disables*".<sup>15</sup> This short sentence distracts the gaze of any defined target group for which it is designed – and still keeps an eye on the person: What does good or bad *design* to those who use it?

So, it seems that the term *design* itself is an adequate reference for evaluating products. Of course, the *designers* behind a design should not be forgotten: If it is clear that *they* have the people in mind (the design itself cannot do this) – then it appears to be *good design*. A postulation specifically for the terms universal design or design for all would be redundant in that sense.

Interesting, by the way, is, that various times within the history of universal design it was mentioned to become obsolete: In 2009, Managing Director of the German Universal Design GmbH, Thomas Bade, emphasized: "*At the age of 53, I wish that I and my commitment will have managed to make our approach to universal design superfluous in 14 years. Then I will be 67 and could be satisfied.*"<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Krohn, Michael: Design – for and with the others. In: Design for All Institute India: Design for All 2017, Vol. 12, No. 1: Agency by Design. Ed. by Buurman, Gerhard M., p. 130.

<sup>13</sup> See Mauthner, Fritz: Wörterbuch der Philosophie. Erster Band, A - Intuition. Diogenes 1980 (first published 1910): „Gegenstand“.

<sup>14</sup> See Heidegger, Martin: Sein und Zeit. Niemeyer, Tübingen 1967, p. 71ff.

<sup>15</sup> See above, p. 36, FN 8.

<sup>16</sup> Brade, Thomas, in: universal design Expertenkonferenz 12.–14. November 2009 Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Dokumentation, p. 13; online: <http://mobile.ud-germany.de/resources/expertenkonferenz-ud-2009.pdf> , last seen 2017-11-27; translated from German by M. Unger-B.

Today, in November 2017, an article by the above-mentioned, well-known German thinker and journalist on universal design, Oliver Herwig,<sup>17</sup> was published in a major Swiss newspaper, in which he emphasized that universal design was not a fashionable trend. Rather, universal design is something "*that wants to make itself superfluous by just being taken for granted.*"<sup>18</sup>

However, the internationally much broader meaning and use of the word *design* could speak *against* replacing the composite terms 'universal design' or 'design for all' simply with the word 'design'. As already mentioned, the terms universal design and design for all have emerged in a phase of an increasing awareness of the size and needs as well as the purchasing power of the group of older people. It is well known that not only trained designers struggled to meet the needs of this population group. Whole industrial, scientific and economic sectors developed in parallel with the attention to demographic change. Many of the possible and sometimes actually necessary tasks fall under the international usage of the term *design*.

In the German-speaking area, the concept of design is still defined much narrower – even though today, of course, it is clear to many people that the word *design* generally covers significantly more designing activities in the international field and so the term seems to expand even further here.

But a closer look at the differences in the use of the term design in the international and the German-speaking area can help to demonstrate a further function of the terms universal design and design for all: As just indicated, the design term in the English language also applies to Engineering. Sometimes it is called more precisely 'engineering design'. In German language the terms *to draft* (German: das Entwerfen) or *to shape* (German: das Gestalten) etc. work beside the English term *design*, too ('Design' is in German language used directly in English, but sometimes with reference to the Latin designare – to draw). This sometimes leads to minor misunderstandings – but opens up productive thinking from a German-speaking perspective:

In German, the demands on 'design' are usually understood more in relation to the profession of designers (industrial, communication, media designers,

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<sup>17</sup> See above, Guest Editorial by Manja Unger-Büttner, FN 4 and 7.

<sup>18</sup> Herwig, Oliver / Stahl, Antje: Design fürs Alter. Senior allein zuhaus. In: Neue Zürcher Zeitung online, 2017-11-07: <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/senior-allein-zu-haus-ld.1326438> - last seen: 2017-11-27.

etc.) and only on the second view on the engineering, writing or fields such as ICT. These are fields that are handling the topic of design for all the same way the design profession does. The design profession now can be seen as a kind of touchstone for the meaningfulness of these demands and new buzzwords: The more generally and more fundamentally such demands on the quality of designing and developing professions and activities are formulated, the better they are understandable from many different professional perspectives, one could say.

Professional designers have long been called the *lawyers of the user*<sup>19</sup> – precisely because it is an essential feature of their work to have the users in mind and, in the best case, to work together with them, too – the *participatory in design* is a central topic of the whole this month's issue of Design for All India. Of course, designers also have to question their own stereotypical assumptions about 'the user' and target groups every now and then or whether they really need to be limited to specific target groups (and the exclusion of other people). But as we saw above, it should be clear that unduly restrictive design is simply *bad design*.

## Design for all as a connecting element between professions

This should not be understood as a criticism of the other professions dealing with universal design/design for all. Quite the contrary – the topic of design for all and universal design seem to me today to be a *connecting element* between the different professions. So, if designers have been users' advocates for years and human centered design could be taken for granted in the design profession, then these central demands and goals of *design for all* can bring together very different professions today and in the future – and designers could be seen as the lawyers of these demands, too.

It seems, today's emphasis on the use of the term universal design in the German-speaking world seems to be still necessary for some areas of technical and social development. In any case, this assumption could best explain the recurring remarks on technically or capitalistically oriented development projects. So, if, in the case of engineering, it has to be assumed that engineers' focus is more on what is feasible or how it has been done so far than on humans – then the concept

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<sup>19</sup> See, e.g.: Oehlke, Horst: Design im Konflikt von Anspruch und Realität. In: Ethik & Design. 15. Designwissenschaftliches Kolloquium Burg Giebichenstein, Halle/S. 1994, p. 111-116 (p. 111).



of universal design or design for all, which tends toward human-centered design, seems to be still appropriate as a sort of tool. It would, of course, be pleasant if the respective professional groups had perhaps long ago taken the same approach to center the human being – as far as possible to *all* human beings. If this is just as self-evident as it seems to be for the design professions, then the corresponding statements should soon be brought together and the consensual conclusions drawn accordingly.

So, a catchword like *design for all* can, in all respects (in form of acceptance as well as denial of the term), generate a tremendous connection between different professions. Ultimately, in each of these areas, it is above all a question of avoiding stereotypical assumptions about any supposedly-limited target groups, as well as simply limited perspectives that could lead to social, political, disability, gender- or age-related exclusion or stigmatization. Maybe, things like these happen because our devices today *can do almost everything*, as Oliver Herweg mentioned in 2008. People are „simultaneously being smothered by the technical bombast of cunningly refined niche products“ – and more and more often they are „on the search for intuitive, self-explanatory devices and easily understandable computer programmes.“<sup>20</sup>

The points of the Weimar Declaration of 2009 still today are fitting perfectly:

*universal design opens to all users.*

*universal design is not just a design theme.*

*universal design is an interdisciplinary task.*

*universal design is a process, not a norm.*<sup>21</sup>

This processual, non-normative and interdisciplinary approach may directly lead to a notion of ethics and design that has emerged in the context of my studies to universal design and philosophies of aging: As much as design professionals are concerned with ethical manifestos and codes of ethics, this type of mission statement can also be called into question – as well as morality in and of itself. The great German design theorist Otl Aicher in 1992 emphasized that designers are

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<sup>20</sup> Herwig, Oliver: Einfach gut für alle. Im Universal Design liegt unsere Zukunft / Simply Good For All. Universal Design is Our Future. In: International Design Center Berlin: (editor): universal design. Unsere Zukunft gestalten Designing Our Future. Berlin 2008, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> Weimarer Erklärung der universal design Expertenkonferenz vom 12. – 14. November 2009. Online: <http://www.recherche-und-text.de/dokumente/wmerk.pdf> – last seen: 2017-11-27; transl. by M. Unger-B.

*moralists*: They constantly have to evaluate between the most diverse demands – and finally have to ask what the product should be good for.<sup>22</sup> So designers seem to be well-placed to challenge standards and show the limitations of standards and norms. The concept of being a ‘moralist’, in connection with norms, can be found in philosophy and ethics, too, e.g. at Michel Foucault. He has questioned morality in various writings<sup>23</sup> and did never want to be called a moralist. In a legendary interview, however, he finally stated:

*„In a sense, I am a moralist, insofar as I believe that one of the tasks, one of the meanings of human existence – the source of human freedom – is never to accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, or immobile. No aspect of reality should be allowed to become a definitive and inhuman law for us.“*<sup>24</sup>

In short, in this sense, values and morality can best be practiced through the attitude of *each individual* in their daily lives and through the conscious acceptance of responsibility. According to Foucault, and much like Hannah Arendt, this is what constitutes what we call personality. To consider how something can be called morally good – can be called doing ethics.<sup>25</sup> And as many will know, two further points of the Weimar Declaration 2009 are quite fitting here and now:

*universal design is attitude and responsibility.*

*universal design must be anchored early and continuously in education.*

## Design and philosophy for all

What Michel Foucault emphasized in the context of the moralist's question can be found in Hannah Arendt, e.g. under the phrase “thinking without a banister”.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Aicher, Otl: die welt als entwurf. Berlin: Ernst & Sohn 1992, p. 78.

<sup>23</sup> For example in: Sexualität und Wahrheit (Histoire de la Sexualité). Bd. 2: Der Gebrauch der Lüste. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1993, p. 36-39.

<sup>24</sup> Bless, Michael: Power, Moral Values, and the Intellectual. An Interview with Michel Foucault. In: Journal History of the Present Nr. 4, University of Illinois Press 1988, p. 11-13.

<sup>25</sup> See: Pieper, Annemarie: Einführung in die Ethik. Tübingen, Fracke 2007, p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> See: Arendt, Hannah: Denken ohne Geländer. Texte und Briefe. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bonn 2006.

This means an open, risky and critical thinking that can move *in all directions without any prejudice* and can not be constrained by any tradition or authority. Getting to know and practicing to deal with a variety of previous traditions or traditional and new own approaches should be an important task of education. My experience in the education and training of designers shows that especially *them* seem to be quite impressed and also motivated by the call for thinking by and for oneself.<sup>27</sup>

With regard to various codes and manifestos in the design, Arendt's comments on having (moral) rules can briefly be mentioned here: Having such rules and being used not to think for or by oneself would have its own pitfalls: By shielding people from the dangers of critical scrutiny, it teaches them to stick to whatever the prescribed rules of conduct at a particular time may be in a given society. People would just get used to *owning rules*, not to the rules themselves. And then, if someone came, who, for whatever reason, wants to abolish the current values, it would be pretty easy for him – because then it's just about *having* values and rules and not why or how they are better or not.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, as not-thinking seems not to be an alternative, so it is an integral part of my work on responsibility and ethics in design to show that you *can't not design*. There is no herb grown against the curse of being forced to design – the great Austrian writer Karl Kraus (1874 - 1936) emphasized more than 100 years ago.<sup>29</sup> Things have to have a sort of form, shape, interface – a design. There is no question, that it has to be designed (German: 'gestaltet'), but it is a question of *how* it will be designed. This perspective is quite near to the German understanding of the term *design*. Taking this into account can help to interpret the interdisciplinary orientation of the call for a *design for all* in a slightly different way: *design* for all.

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<sup>27</sup> More to this topic, see: Manja Unger-Büttner: „Ich, der ich Einer bin“ – von sokratischen Stechfliegen, eingefrorenen Häusern und kreativem Umgang mit Moral. In: Allianz deutscher Designer (AGD) e.V. (ed.): agenda design. Magazin für Gestaltung. Ausgabe 1. Braunschweig 2015, p. 12 - 17. A more detailed version online as [PDF](#).

<sup>28</sup> See: *ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> In German, originally: “Gegen den Fluch des Gestaltenmüssens ist kein Kraut gewachsen” – Kraus, Karl: Sprüche und Widersprüche. In: Die Fackel, Nr. 272/273, Wien 1909, p. 40-48.

In current philosophical reflections on the relationships between aesthetics and ethics, the professor of aesthetics in Graz/Austria, Andreas Dorschel, stresses that even the decision to leave the design of a surface to pure coincidence or convention is a *design decision*.<sup>30</sup> It is therefore always someone to answer for *how* an artifact or a surface looks like or how it should be used or understood or – e.g. in the sense of mediation theory,<sup>31</sup> what things do (with us).

Interesting at this point is also the issue of the scope (German: Spielraum) within which these design decisions are made. With reference to the philosopher Eduard von Hartmann, who has already been mentioned in my guest editorial, Dorschel explains the scope of the design, that opens up in between purposes, technologies and material. In this scope, things can then be designed ‘this way – or another’.<sup>32</sup> The aesthetic can also be located within the scope of action shown here. In there, ethics and aesthetics overlap.

The concept of the ‘Spielraum’ (directly translated into English: play-room), incidentally, does not coincide with the concept of a playground, however, something playful, experimental should be perceived here. It is able to connect this design-philosophical term with the exploratory notion of a "normalcy as a design playground", mentioned by Gesche Joost and Tom Bieling in their paper.<sup>33</sup> In my reflections on ethics *in and with* design and also in my studies on aging and disability,<sup>34</sup> I have learned to deploy the explorative nature of design for ethics. Also in the context of moral considerations, an explorative approach seems possible – in delimitation or rather extension of previous considerations on the experimental in ethics.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See Dorschel, Andreas: *Gestaltung – Zur Ästhetik des Brauchbaren*. Heidelberg 2003, p. 62.

<sup>31</sup> See also the contribution by Hidekazu Kanemitsu in this paper as well as: Verbeek, Peter-Paul: *What Things do*. Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency, and Design. Pennsylvania State Univ. Press 2005.

<sup>32</sup> See above, Manja Unger-Büttner: Guest-Editorial, p. 3, and FN 1: Hartmann, Karl-Eduard von: *Philosophie des Schönen. Ausgewählte Werke, 2. Ausgabe, Bd. IV*, Leipzig, p. 140; see Dorschel, Andreas: *Gestaltung – Zur Ästhetik des Brauchbaren*. Heidelberg 2003, p. 62.

<sup>33</sup> See: Bieling, Tom / Joost, Gesche: *Hacking Normalcy – Disability from a Design Research Perspective* – page 17 of this paper.

<sup>34</sup> See: Unger-Büttner, Manja: *Reflexionen zur Technikgestaltung – eine designphilosophische Kritik von Ideen zu Ambient Assisted Living und Universal Design (working title)* – to be published 2018.

<sup>35</sup> In my talk “Design as Experimental Ethics – Moral Skepticism and the Value of Exploration” at SPT 2017 – The Grammar of Things I was able to valuably discuss this widening of ‘experimental

The notion of scope/Spielraum can help to focus on the question of responsibility for decisions in the field of tensions between purposes, technology, material and aesthetics, as well as the social, ecological or economic. The moment we realize that there can always be a different way to decide, it becomes clear how important the role of designers as *intermediaries* between technology and people can be: once you have decided in a special context for a special design – and not for another – you can and must take responsibility for this decision. To do this *with good reason* should be a central part of design expertise and should be termed as such.

Finally, designers would not only be mediators of form or use in the field of tension between purposes, technology and material. They just would be able to convey communicatively, *why* the design decision for this problem is fitting, good and right. This mediatory function is also important in the interdisciplinary field, e.g. for the topic of design for all/universal design. In extension of the phrasing about designers as lawyers of the user,<sup>36</sup> one could say thus: Designers are the lawyers, or, better: intermediaries of 'how'.

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ethics' like mentioned in: Verbeek Peter-Paul: Technology Design as Experimental Ethics. In: van der Burg S., Swierstra T. (eds.) Ethics on the Laboratory Floor. Palgrave Macmillan 2013.

<sup>36</sup> See quotation Horst Oehlke, above, p. 40, FN 20.

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Manja Unger-Büttner: „Ich, der ich Einer bin“ – von sokratischen Stechfliegen, eingefrorenen Häusern und kreativem Umgang mit Moral. In: Allianz deutscher Designer (AGD) e.V. (ed.): agenda design. Magazin für Gestaltung. Ausgabe 1. Braunschweig 2015, p. 12 - 17. A more detailed version online: [http://designethik.de/downloads/Unger\\_Buettner\\_Ich\\_der\\_ich\\_Einer\\_bin.pdf](http://designethik.de/downloads/Unger_Buettner_Ich_der_ich_Einer_bin.pdf)

Unger-Büttner, Manja: Reflexionen zur Technikgestaltung – eine design-philosophische Kritik von Ideen zu Ambient Assisted Living und Universal Design (working title) – to be published 2018.

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**Helge Oder, Ralf Pohl**  
Industrial Designers, Design Researchers,  
Dresden & Weimar/Germany

# **SIMINIS - ELECTRIC VEHICLE FOR THE URBAN SPACE**





**Helge Oder** is a trained gold-smith and studied product design in Dresden. From 2010 to 2014 he taught as an artist at the Bauhaus University Weimar in the field of materials and the environment.

In his doctoral project at the Bauhaus University Weimar, he explores the autonomy of design in open development processes on the basis of experimental innovation projects. His design and research activities are accompanied by teaching, workshops and journalistic work around the topic of design and innovation.

From 2014 to 2016 he was interim professor of design theory at the HTW Dresden/University of Applied Sciences.



**Ralf Pohl** is a trained graphic designer and studied product design at the HTW Dresden. In 2010 and 2011 he taught analytical principles of drawing and design processes. In 2011 he founded the design office scoop-id in Dresden with Mirko Gabschuß. One example for the outcome of this cooperation is SIMINIS.

As a member of the VDID (Verband Deutscher Industrie Designer/Association of German Industrial Designers), he was involved in various communications about design on the design-festival *Designers' Open* in Leipzig by means of special exhibitions and series of talks on innovation through design and the interplay between design and business.

<http://www.scoop-id.com>

# SIMINIS – Electric Vehicle for the Urban Space

Helge Oder, Ralf Pohl

**Helge:** “Artifacts can have an exclusionary effect. This happens not only on a social, but also on a functional level. One form of exclusion will be obvious looking at the example of the wheelchair – which can be stigmatizing, functionally deficient and aesthetically rudimentary at the same time. Small quantities are responsible for high initial costs, low technology spectrum and the lack of creative depth.

The design of SIMINIS has a range of functions that allow a wide variety of application scenarios, from indoor use to climbing stairs, to participation in public transport as well as motorized private transport on public roads in urban and peri-urban areas. Several of the currently used categories of vehicles for mobility problems and wheelchairs will become obsolete by this product.

Furthermore, SIMINIS should even address users without special needs by embedding in sustainable mobility scenarios and aesthetic autonomy. The approach known as *universal design* propagates the usability of a design for everyone. SIMINIS extends this human-centered approach by empowering people with special needs to act as trendsetters, implementing a product that can be used by anyone, and builds on contemporary concepts of mobility. So SIMINIS reflects basic need for cultural participation through mobility and communication "at eye level" and thus addresses, on a further level of meaning, the active shaping of everyday culture by the user. There are questions of marketing strategic alignments that need to be discussed. Are these effects being planned in advance, or are only appropriation strategies and cultural momentum being promoted?

The SIMINIS-based product family can be adapted to different possible applications by using standardized components. The complex stair climbing mechanism and electronics can be omitted. Even in normal driving mode of the non-ascending variant, the significant wheel-pylones generate a functional and aesthetic autonomy. By using the same chassis parts for every different scale, according to usage, a sort of economy of scaling leads to a significant reduction of manufacturing costs and allows the use of large-scale production techniques. The thereby expanded repertoire of forms is reflected in a functional exoskeleton aesthetic.”

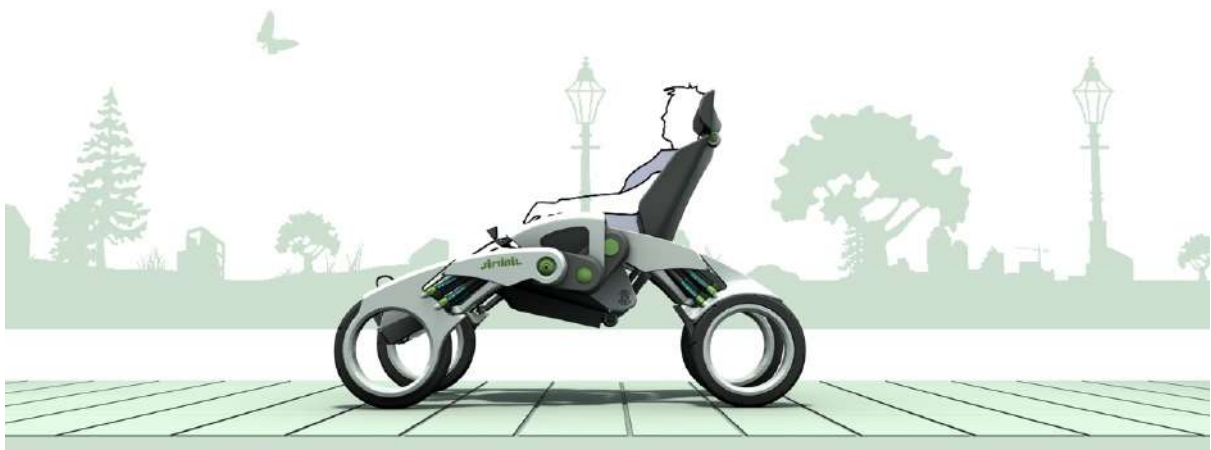


**Ralf: "Freedom through independence.** These are the maxims of SIMINIS. At the moment there is no solution for wheelchair users to handle stairs without outside help and heavy equipment. Siminis gives people the opportunity to move around in the stairwell and in public space without help.

The technical package includes electric single-wheel drive by linear motors, lithium-nano-phosphate batteries and position stabilization by computer-controlled semiconductor gyroscopes. These tilt sensors detect possible tipping and the wheels immediately balance the wheelchair. The vehicle is controlled by body displacement or by two control elements.



Siminis overcomes the stigmatization as a necessary evil and, in addition to the parameters of wheelchair use, also brings up acceptance by non-wheelchair-users. A solution that combines a natural simplicity with formal lightness. By the many degrees of freedom one can 'read', understand, the functioning of Siminis without imposing a sense of technical rationality on the person. Instead, elements of bionics, such as muscles and arms and their aesthetics, were recorded, evoking a natural identification. Thus, a coherent design language emerges, which stands out beneficially from previous drafts and appeals to a large group of users.



Social interactions are characterized by conscious and unconscious interpretation of the other's habitus. In particular, a conversation at eye level allows handicapped as well as non-handicapped people a relaxed and equal conversation. In addition, the technical layout, the active balance, creates a new sense of agility and offers the user extended possibilities of body language."



See also:

<http://www.scoop-id.com/project/animation-siminis/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rुकmDZc3EiA>

# FORTHCOMING ISSUES



## January 2018 Vol -13 No - 1

North Carolina State University Department of Industrial Design Prof Sharon Joines will be the Guest Editor for our inaugural issue. Sharon Joines, PhD Professor of Industrial Design, Director of the Research in Ergonomics & Design Laboratory, Director of Industrial Design Graduate Programs.



## February 2018 Vol -13 No - 2

Colleen Kelly Starkloff is the Founder and Co-Director of the Starkloff Disability Institute in St. Louis. She is also the Founder of the Universal Design Summit series of conferences focused on home and community design. She remains the Conference Organizer of these summits. These conferences, 5 of them already, have brought best practices in Universal Design together into one



national/international conference since 2002. Ms. Starkloff did not want an “academic” focus on Universal Design for these conferences. Rather a focus on what works, what doesn’t, what’s the difference between Universal Design and Accessible Design and how the use of universal features in home and community design best integrates all people in communities and improves housing choice for all.

March 2018 Vol -13 No - 3

Christian Guellerin has been the Executive Director of L'École de design Nantes Atlantique since 1997, an institution of higher education in design, which has campuses in Nantes (France), Shanghai (China), São Paulo (Brazil) and (Dehli) India. The institution has developed significantly, striving towards the professionalization of design studies and establishing relationships with businesses.



He was President of Cumulus, the International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design & Media from 2007 and 2013 (250 members from 46 countries). He is also President of the France Design Education and Honorary Consul of the Republic of Estonia for the West of France since 2009.

He has regularly taught courses and given academic lectures on design and innovation.

He was a consultant for various institutions and worked on a frequent basis as an expert to set up design centers.

In 2015 and 2016, he was elected by L'Usine Nouvelle magazine in the "50 people who made innovation in France".

Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Merite since 2016.



April 2018 Vol -13 No - 4

Dr. Lee Christopher is the Director of eLearning at Arapahoe Community College and also an ACC instructor. Lee has a BA in Philosophy, an M.Ed, and a M.F.A in Writing and Poetics. Dr. Lee is currently in the dissertation phase pursuing a Doctorate in Education from Capella University. Her dissertation title is Universal Design for



Learning: Implementation and Challenges of Community Colleges. Lee's publications include: "Digital Storytelling" in Handbook of Research on Transformative Online Education and Liberation: Models for Social Equality, Kurubacak and Yuzer, Eds., IGI Global, 2011, "Hype versus Reality on Campus: Why eLearning Isn't Likely to Replace a Professor Any Time Soon" with Brent Wilson, The E-Learning Handbook, Carliner and Shank, eds. Pfeiffer, 2008, and "What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy," located at <http://edrev.asu.edu/reviews/rev591.htm>, Lee is on the Colorado Community College System Task Force for Web-IT Accessibility. She has a passion for Universal Design for Learning.

May 2018 Vol - 13 No - 5

Dr. Antika Sawadsri", She is an Assistant Professor and the Director of Inclusive Designed Environment and Research (IDEaR Unit) at School of Architecture, KMITL, Thailand. As both professional and academic interested in Inclusive City, her contribution ranges from home modification to urban public space development for users with all life's spectrum."





## June 2018 Vol - 13 No - 6 (150th milestone issue)

Prof Ricardo Gomes will be the Guest Editor for our 150th special issue. Professor Ricardo Gomes has been a faculty member in the School of Design (formerly the Design and Industry (DAI) Department) at San Francisco State University for nearly 25 years. He was the Chair of the DAI Department from 2002-2012. Prof. Gomes



coordinates the Design Center for Global Needs and the Shapira Design Archive Project in the School of Design (DES). This non-profit international research and development center is dedicated to promoting responsive design solutions to local, regional and global issues such as: inclusive/universal design, health care, the aging, community development, social innovation and sustainability of the built environment.

Prof. Gomes is on the Board of Directors of the Institute for Human Centered Design in Boston. He is also a member of the Industrial Designers Society of America; and Epsilon Pi Tau International Honor Society for Technology.

Prof. Gomes received his MFA in Industrial Design for Low-Income Economies from the University of California, Los Angeles (Design of a Container System for Mobile Health Care Delivery in East Africa).

## July 2018 Vol - 13 No - 7

Professor Maria Luisa Rossi, Chair of MFA Integrated Design Program at CCS, has agreed to be the guest editor for the issue. Students in her program as well as other programs at CCS have developed a number of socially responsible design projects.



She is the Chair and Professor of MFA Integrated Design at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit where she brings an entrepreneurial culture, globally-focused and cultural empathetic approaches to the growing of the next generation of designers. Her works focus on the seamless capacity to deal with tangible and intangible aspects of user experiences, preparing “facilitators” capable to address global-glocal grand challenges.

Strongly centered on the design process, the program prepare students for the practice of designing omni-channel journeys [products-strategy-services] focused to the quality of the users experience with a special eye to socially relevant solutions. As an undergraduate in Florence, Italy, her wearable computer project work was featured in the prestigious Domus magazine, earning her a scholarship to attend the premiere master’s program in industrial design at the Domus Academy in Milan where she got her Master of Industrial Design.

August 2018 Vol - 13 No - 8

Sameera Chukkapalli (1992) is currently a fellow at the FabCity Research Laboratory, Barcelona, Spain. She founded needlab, a non-profit organization to create a model of optimized practice to deliver maximum impact with the objective of making a difference to the communities. She was the project director and tutor for the Needlab\_Kuwait Matters, India Matters, Vietnam Matters. She is working as Space Designer with CARPE LA Augmented Reality project in Los Angeles, USA, funded by the LA2050 program, to eliminate gray zones in public parks and to make them user-friendly. She has represented needlab and lectured in five countries on three continents, actively initiating a conversation about Human Centered design with Policymakers.



Sameera graduated, with MAArch in Digital Matter and Construction, and completed Open Thesis Fabrication, on Large-Scale Natural additive construction using robots, from IAAC, Barcelona, Spain. Obtained B.Arch degree from BMSCE, Bengaluru, India, and the University of Berkeley, USA; Worked with External Reference Architects in Spain; Worked with VTN Architects in Vietnam, on the Tokyo pavilion "Bamboo Forest" for Japan and "S House"(low-cost housing prototype) for Vietnam.

# NEW BOOKS:

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As larger numbers of people with disabilities attend postsecondary educational institutions, there have been increased efforts to make the full array of classes, services, and programs accessible to all students. This revised edition provides both a full survey of those measures and practical guidance for schools as they work to turn the goal of universal accessibility into a reality. As such, it makes an indispensable contribution to the growing body of literature on special education and universal design. This book will be of particular value to university and college administrators, and to special education researchers, teachers, and activists.

**SHERYL E. BURGSTAHLER** is an affiliate professor in the College of Education at the University of Washington in Seattle, and founder and director of the university's Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT) and Access Technology Centers.

“Sheryl Burgstahler has assembled a great set of chapters and authors on universal design in higher education. It’s a must-have book for all universities, as it covers universal design of instruction, physical spaces, student services, technology, and provides examples of best practices.”

—JONATHAN LAZAR, PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCES, TOWSON UNIVERSITY, AND CO-AUTHOR OF *ENHANCING DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH PROCESS AND POLICY*

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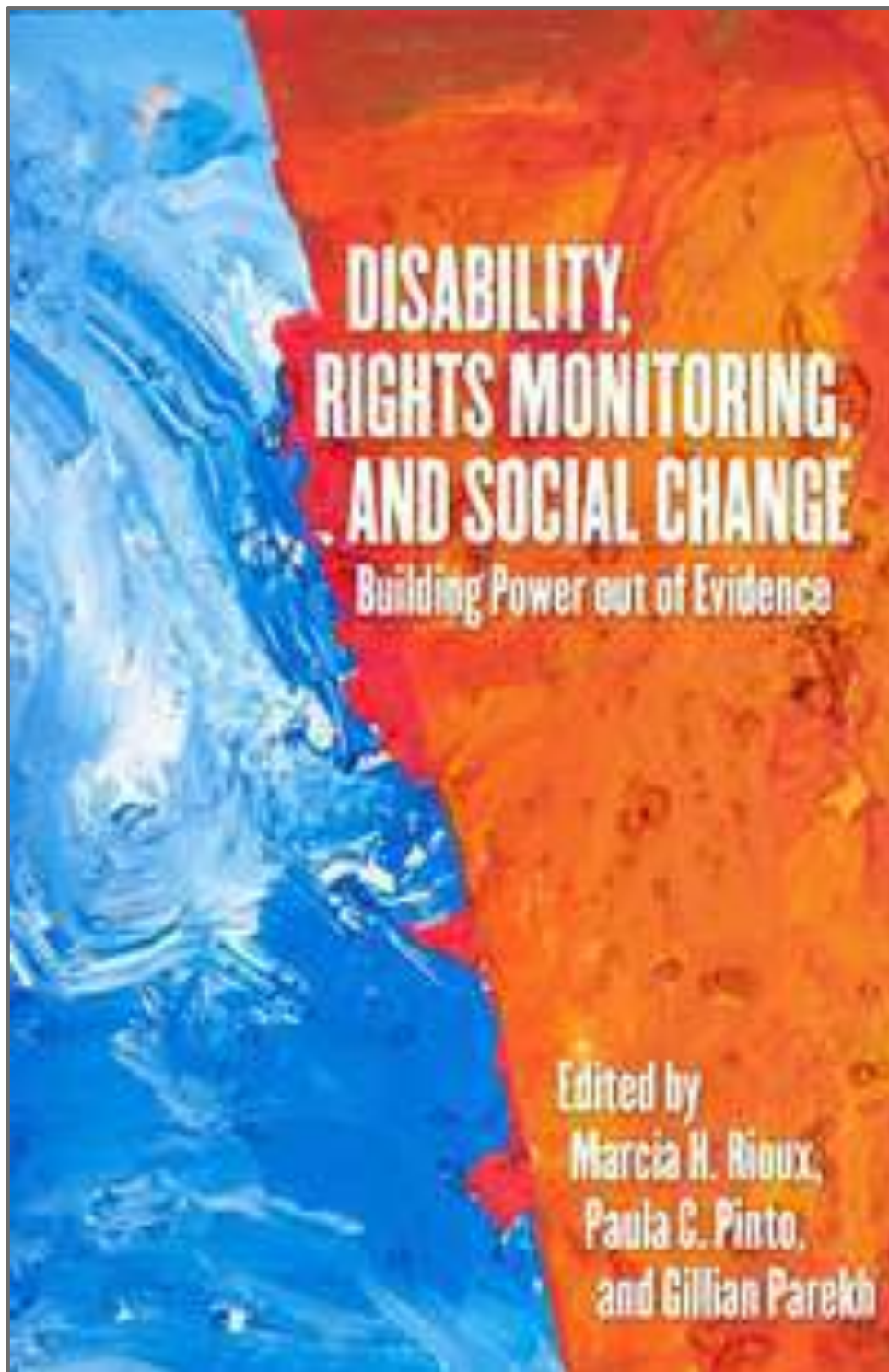
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#### Product Description

In this book, Elvio Bonollo takes us on a 'learning journey' about design including a scholarly explanation of the characteristics and power of the design process. It provides valuable insights into the attitudes, knowledge and skills that underpin the design discipline at an introductory level of expertise, and has been developed to meet the needs of aspiring designers in many areas including industrial design, design and technology, art and design and architecture. Elvio uses an operational model of the design process - along with related educational strategies, learning outcomes and an ordered set of design briefs - to develop a systematic, problem-based method for learning design from a first principles viewpoint. The beauty of this approach is that it brings structured learning to aspiring designers whilst being mindful of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Each part of this book encourages self-expression, self-confidence and exploration: it is has been carefully designed to take the reader on a highly motivating journey of design thinking and creativity, supported by excellent sample solutions to design problems, lucid discussions and extensive references. These solutions, developed by design students, serve as novel examples of how to solve real problems through innovative design without restraining creative freedom and individual personality. The design learning method and strategies in this book will greatly assist design and technology teachers, students of design, aspiring designers and any individual with an interest in professional design practice.

I cannot recommend this book highly enough, it was a complete lifesaver throughout my undergraduate studies and honours degree and now continues to serve me well as I move into industry practice. The content is easy to understand and follow, providing a practical guide to understanding design principles and every aspect of the design process. It includes great project examples and reflects the wealth of knowledge and experience possessed by this accomplished educator. I have purchased multiple copies of this book for peers and would suggest any student who is studying a design discipline to pick up their own copy as this has quickly become the most useful book in my design collection.

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★★★★★ **A 'Must Have'.**

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As a Design Education professional of many years standing, I endorse this book without reservation. It is comprehensive, lucid and above all, useful in a very accessible level at the coalface. Professor Bonolo has an enormous cache of experience as an engineer, designer and design educator and his experience is well demonstrated in this book. A 'must have' for anyone in the business of educating or being educated in the product design arena.

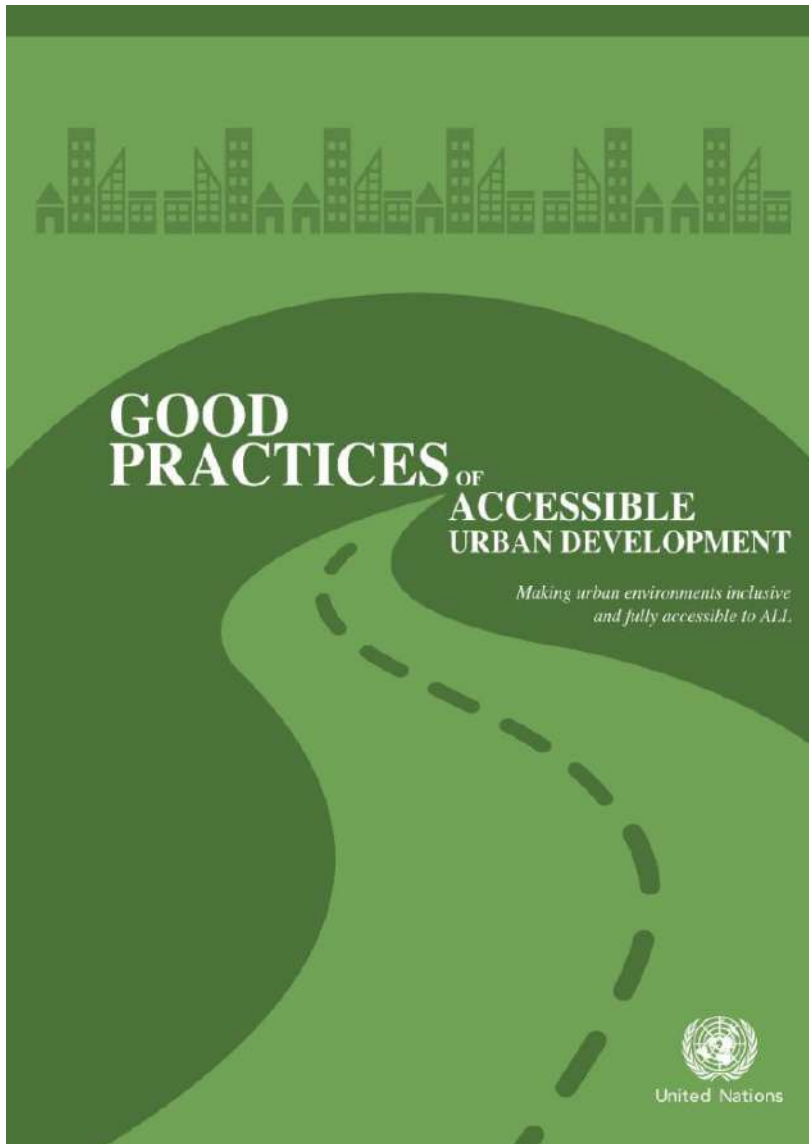
# TAPPING INTO HIDDEN HUMAN CAPITAL

How Leading Global Companies Improve their  
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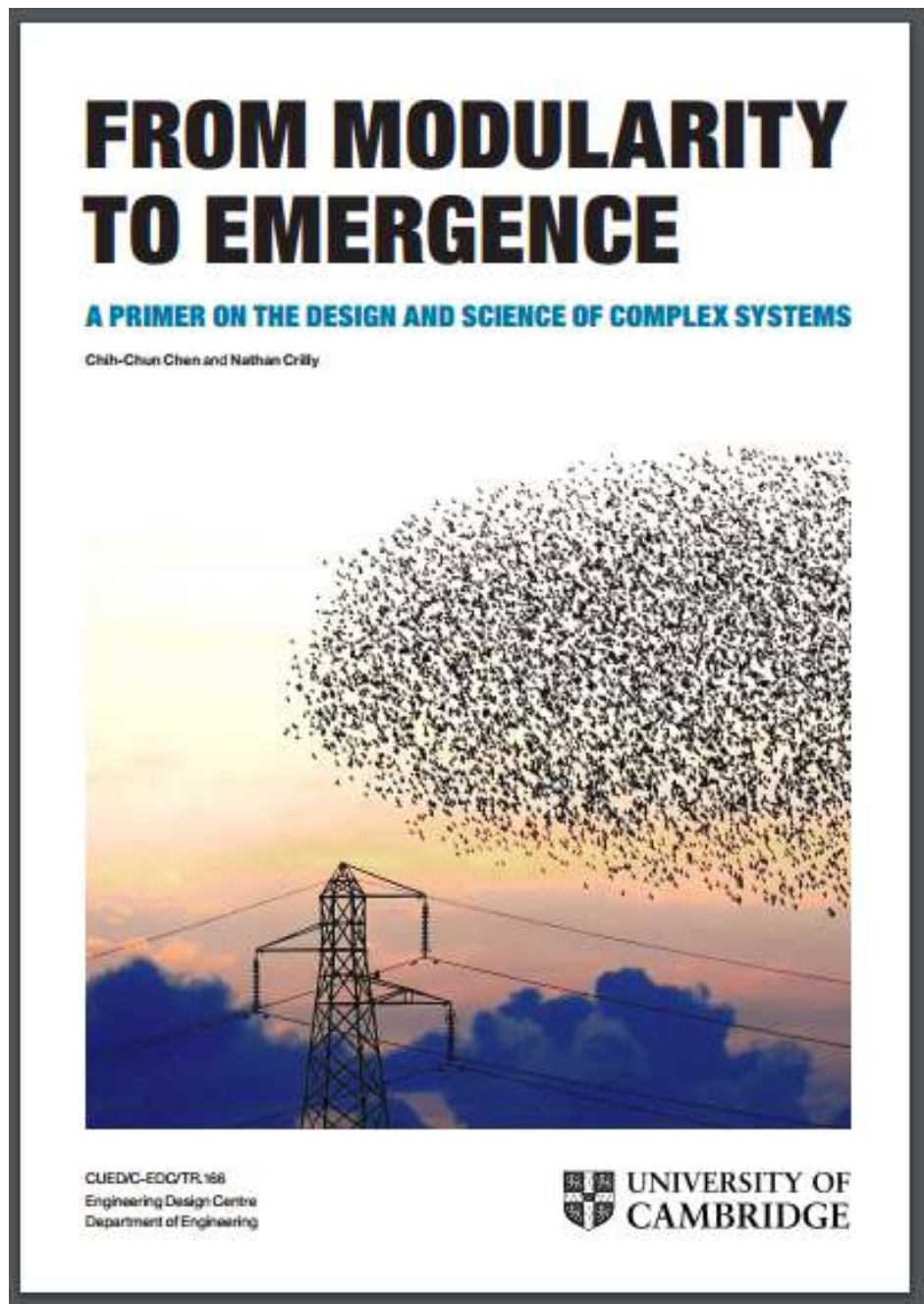
In light of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III) and the imminent launch of the New Urban Agenda, DESA in collaboration with the Essl Foundation (Zero Project) and others have prepared a new publication entitled: “Good practices of accessible urban development”.

The publication provides case studies of innovative practices and policies in housing and built environments, as well as transportation, public spaces and public services, including information and communication technology (ICT) based services.

The publication concludes with strategies and innovations for promoting accessible urban development.

The advance unedited text is available at:

[http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/desa/good\\_practices\\_urban\\_dev.pdf](http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/desa/good_practices_urban_dev.pdf)



Dr Chih-Chun Chen and Dr Nathan Crilly of the Cambridge University Engineering Design Centre Design Practice Group have released a free, downloadable book, A Primer on the Design and Science of Complex Systems.

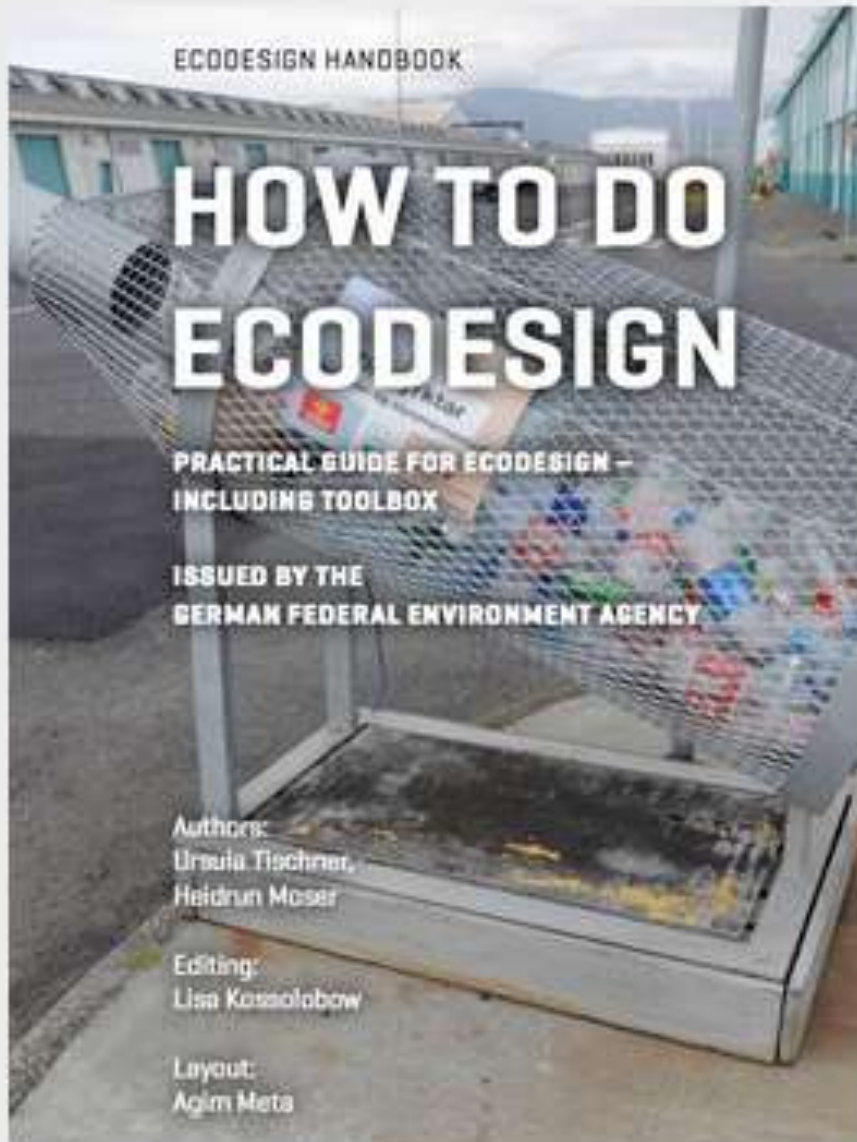
This project is funded by the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EP/K008196/1).

The book is available at URL:

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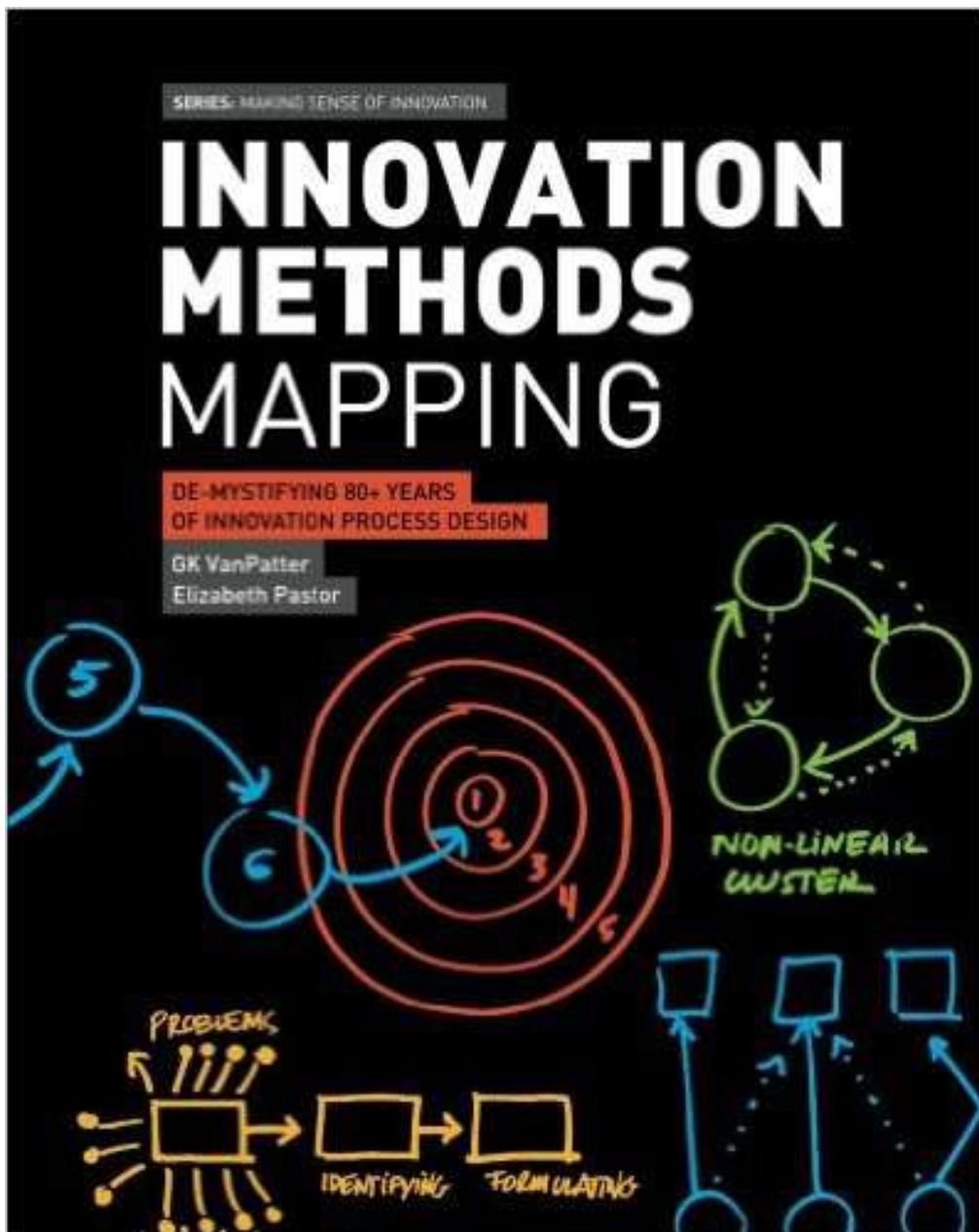


# New iBook / ebook: HOW TO DO ECODESIGN



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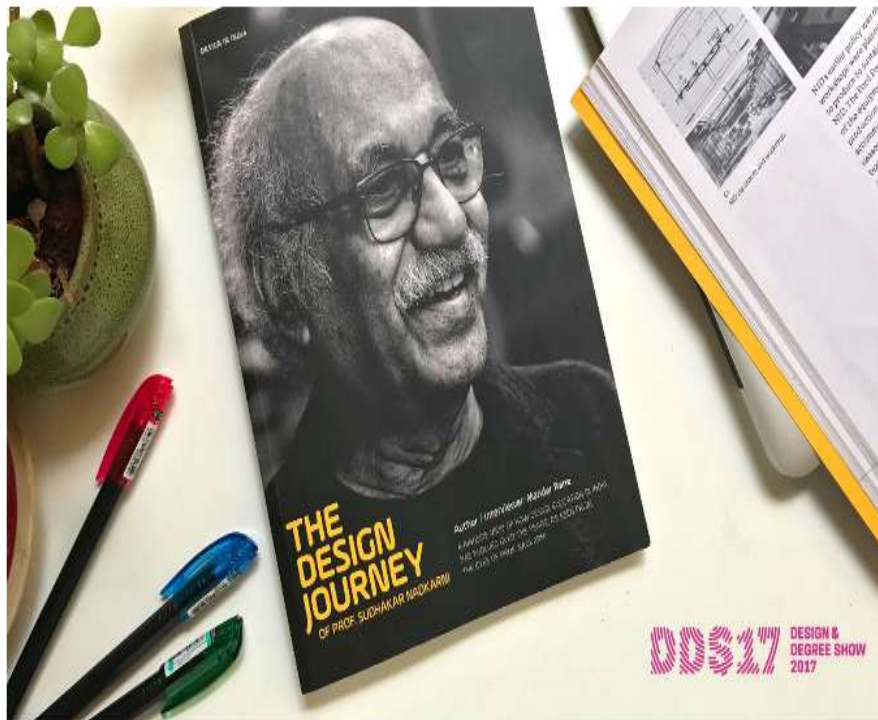
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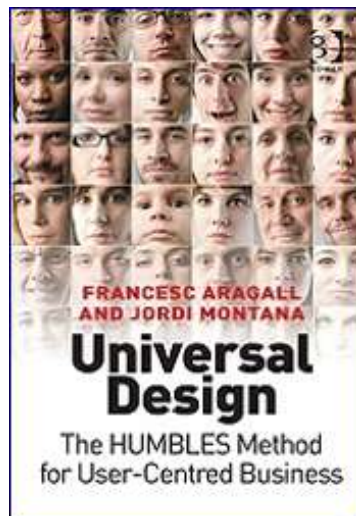
Thank you for your interest in the book, 'The Design Journey of Prof. Sudhakar Nadkarni'. Few limited copies will be available for purchase on the day of IDC Alumni Meet, on June 11th, Sunday, 5:30 to 6:30 pm. Rest of the book orders will start shipping June 25th, 2017 onward.

\* Required



How many copies of the book do you wish to buy? \*

# Universal Design: The HUMBLE Method for User-Centred Business



“Universal Design: The HUMBLE Method for User-Centred Business”, written by Francesc Aragall and Jordi Montaña and published by Gower, provides an innovative method to support businesses wishing to increase the number of satisfied users and clients and enhance their reputation by adapting their products and services to the diversity of their actual and potential customers, taking into account their needs, wishes and expectations.

The HUMBLE method (© Aragall) consists of a progressive, seven-phase approach for implementing Design for All within a business. By incorporating the user’s point of view, it enables companies to evaluate their business strategies in order to improve provide an improved, more customer-oriented experience, and thereby gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. As well as a comprehensive guide to the method, the book provides case studies of multinational business which have successfully incorporated Design for All into their working practices.

According to Sandro Rossell, President of FC Barcelona, who in company with other leading business professionals endorsed the publication, it is “required reading for those who wish to understand how universal design is the only way to connect a brand to the widest possible public, increasing client loyalty and enhancing company prestige”.

To purchase the book, visit either the [Design for All Foundation website](#)



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# Engineering for Industrial Designers & Inventors

FUNDAMENTALS FOR DESIGNERS OF WONDERFUL THINGS

Thomas Ask

Copyrighted Material

I have a new book that presents fundamental engineering concepts to industrial designers that might be of interest to you. This is the link:

[https://www.amazon.com/Engineering-Industrial-Designers-Inventors-Fundamentals/dp/1491932619/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1506958137&sr=8-1&keywords=engineering+for+industrial+designers+and+inventors](https://www.amazon.com/Engineering-Industrial-Designers-Inventors-Fundamentals/dp/1491932619/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1506958137&sr=8-1&keywords=engineering+for+industrial+designers+and+inventors)

# APPEALS



1.

Toyota Mobility Foundation launches \$4 million challenge to expand mobility for people with lower-limb paralysis

**LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA:** The Toyota Mobility Foundation, in partnership with Nesta's Challenge Prize Centre, has launched a \$4 million dollar global challenge to change the lives of people with lower-limb paralysis, culminating in the unveiling of the winners in Tokyo in 2020.



The Mobility Unlimited Challenge is seeking teams around the world to create game-changing technology that will help radically improve the mobility and independence of people with paralysis.

The Mobility Unlimited Challenge aims to harness creative thinking from across the world to accelerate innovation and encourage collaboration with users to find winning devices to transform the world for people with lower-limb paralysis. The Challenge will reward the development of personal mobility devices incorporating intelligent systems.

The mobility solutions of the future could include anything from exoskeletons, to artificial intelligence and machine learning, from cloud computing to batteries.

Around the world, millions of people have lower-limb paralysis (the most common causes being strokes, spinal cord injury and multiple sclerosis). While there are no statistics on paralysis worldwide, the World Health Organization estimates there are 250,000-500,000 new cases of spinal cord injury globally every year.

Innovation in “smarter” mobility technology has the potential to create personal devices that are better integrated with the user’s body and the environment. But the application of this groundbreaking technology is slow due to disincentives such as small and fragmented markets, regulatory burdens, and reimbursement complexities from healthcare systems and insurers.

This can make the field unattractive to small or new entrants, and prevent innovative solutions by existing innovators from getting to market. Even though huge advances have been made in improving travel between places, innovation in everyday functionality still lags behind.

The Mobility Unlimited Challenge Prize is supported by a number of ambassadors from around the world, all of whom have experience of living with lower-limb paralysis. Global ambassadors include: Aki Taguchi, Director, Paralympian Association of Japan; August de los Reyes, Head of Design at Pinterest; Indian athlete and campaigner Preethi Srinivasan; Dr Rory A Cooper, director of the Human Engineering Research Laboratories at the University of Pittsburgh; Sandra Khumalo, South African rower; Sophie Morgan, British TV presenter; US track & field athlete Tatyana McFadden; and Yinka Shonibare MBE, Turner-Prize nominated British/Nigerian artist. *(All global ambassadors are available for interview on request).*

“This is the beginning of our challenge, a three-year journey concluding in Tokyo in 2020. A journey where the greatest minds in technology, design and engineering, from every corner of the world, will compete to make the environment and society more accessible for people with lower-limb paralysis. We know we don’t have solutions yet: this Challenge is about working with the people who can help develop them.” said Ryan Klem, Director of Programs for Toyota Mobility Foundation.

“Challenge Prizes are a way to make innovation happen. The Mobility Unlimited Challenge is about the freedom to move. It will support innovators, creating cutting-edge personal mobility devices incorporating smart technology and intelligent systems that will transform people’s lives.” said Charlotte Macken of Nesta’s Challenge Prize Centre.

A panel of expert judges will pick five finalists who will each receive \$500,000 to take their concepts from an intelligent insight to a prototype. The Challenge winner will receive

\$1,000,000 to make the device available to users- with the winning concept unveiled in Tokyo in 2020.

The Mobility Unlimited Challenge aims to attract and support smaller innovators who might otherwise struggle to break into the assistive technology market. The Discovery Awards will provide seed funding of \$50,000 for 10 groups with promising concepts, but who might otherwise lack the resources to enter the Challenge. Interested innovators can apply online at [mobilityunlimited.org](http://mobilityunlimited.org).

Building on universal design principles to create a more equitable environment, entries for the Mobility Unlimited Challenge will be user-centered. The Challenge will be a catalyst for innovation through co-creation with the people around the world who will benefit most from the solutions discovered by our entrants.

At the end of the Mobility Unlimited Challenge, the Toyota Mobility Foundation and Nesta’s Challenge Prize Centre will have supported teams of innovators in creating leading edge technological solutions, opening a new chapter in personal mobility for people with lower-limb paralysis.

For more information, go to [mobilityunlimited.org](http://mobilityunlimited.org)

(Courtesy: Americas, Assistive Technology)

2.

Professor Y.D.Deshpande(Ph.D. – IIT Guwahati)

Research Domain:Human Computer Interactions (HCI)

Interactions between humans and computers should be as intuitive as conversations between two humans. However we find many interactive products around us that fail to achieve this. The research in “Human-Computer-Interactions (HCI)” focuses on human aspects of these interactions with a goal of making these interactions enjoyable and useful to the user. HCI study involves observing and modeling interactions and designing new technologies that let humans interact with

computers in novel ways. The research in HCI combines fields of computer science, behavioral sciences, design, media studies, ergonomics and several other fields of study.

Research Interests:

- Interactive learningspaces
- Augmented reality applications to education
- User experience design
- Software-Usability Engineering
- Educational Technology
- Context-aware computing

3.

Request everyone to share widely my open letter to PM published in Moneylife. We wish him to add Spinal cord Injury as a SEPARATE Disability in our RPWD Act. 3rd Dec 2017 will be joyous & memorable for our community and we know GOI cares. Please forward it

<http://www.moneylife.in/article/open-letter-to-pm-narendra-modi-from-people-with-spinal-injury/52323.html>

Keep Smiling

Thanks & kind regards

Dr (Ms.) Ketna L Mehta

Founder Trustee

Nina Foundation

[www.ninafoundation.org](http://www.ninafoundation.org)

4.

I have completed my post graduation in design. I am passionate about a product with a keen interest in aesthetics, technology, engineering and understanding of user perspective.

I am looking for an Internship/Job in product design.

I have skills like Sketching, Photoshop, Illustrator, visualization, Solidworks, Alias, and Rhino.

I am requesting please, help me to get a platform to start my career.

Regards,

Amit Kumar Verma

amitverma\_531@yahoo.com

5.

## SESSION – Work, Consumption and Social Relations: Processual Approaches to the Platform Society

organised by Chiara Bassetti (University of Trento), Annalisa Murgia (University of Leeds), Maurizio Teli (Madeira Interactive Technologies Institute)

In the last decades, the widespread adoption of digital technologies has been characterised by the increasingly intense use of “platforms” that burst into our everyday professional and personal lives (Huws, 2014; Kalleberg, Dunn, 2016; Srnicek, 2016), from consumption to working activities, from intimate relationships to new forms of organising as both workers and citizens (Scholz, 2016; Schor, 2016; Armano et al., 2017). Governments, companies, unions, and the academic community alike seem to converge on the idea that digital platforms represent a game-changer for economic, political and social activities and relationships. This is what we refer to as the “platform society”, in which such platforms are supposed to change, when not to innovate, almost every aspect of social life.

The aim of this session is to critically engage with such an assumption, by focusing on platforms not only as techno-economic objects, but as processes of agencement (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980; Gherardi, 2016), in which subjects, artefacts, regulations, geographical contexts, technologies, knowledge, politics and economics may connect in different ways, in a mixture of continuity with previous experiences and emerging practices. What is new, in the platform society, and what is a rearrangement of well-known economic and social processes – as the polarization of economic resources – is a crucial question which is not satisfactorily answered yet. Adopting a processual approach to the study of digital platforms allows challenging monolithic views of their nature and to understand the domination or emancipatory effects they may produce.

How are digital platforms designed, developed and implemented? Is it possible, and how, to re-appropriate their use and to challenge the current neoliberal economic model (Bassetti et al., 2017)? To answer these questions, a pluralistic and interdisciplinary analysis is necessary, in order to understand how digital platforms can be regulated, how computable algorithms are applied to

several social activities – from consumption to employment relations – and how new forms of organising, involving both trade unions and social movements, can defend the rights of platform-workers at the global level. Finally, if we want to engage in a critical debate of the uses and effects of platforms, we should also interrogate our practices in using platforms both as individuals and in studying/designing them as a research community. An ethnographic approach able to look into the details of everyday practices of use, design, research and interaction, and the discourses surrounding and shaping such practices, represents a powerful tool to tackle the questions above by avoiding rhetoric and unilateral answers.

In this session, we solicit ethnographic and qualitative contributions, including comparative ones, that explore how digital platforms are enacted through different technologies, territories, timings and practices. Contributions may examine any of the following or related aspects:

- Ethical registers beyond digital platforms;
- The regulation of online platforms and the protection of workers' rights;
- Workers and clients in the gig- and sharing economy;
- The introduction of HR information platforms;
- The design and development of mainstream and alternative platforms;
- Platform cooperativism and the counter-use of digital technologies;
- Emerging forms of organising of trade unions and social movements in the platform economy;
- The use of platforms for political actions.

In this session, we invite an interdisciplinary conversation, and we welcome participation by academics, activists and unionists. Young scholars with “work in progress” papers are welcomed. We are interested in empirical contributions as well as empirically grounded theoretical explorations.

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## IMPORTANT DATES

- 15th January 2018: Abstract submission deadline
- 12th March 2018: Notification of acceptance
- 16th April 2018: Registrations deadline
- 06th-09th June 2018: Conference dates

# NEWS



1.

## India's largest design hub T-Works to go online in 2018



**HYDERABAD:** Telangana's bid to set up India's largest prototyping and design hub and one of the world's largest maker spaces – T-Works, which has been in the making for over two years now – will become a reality by the end of 2018 and will house equipment worth \$20 million, Telangana IT minister K Taraka Rama Rao said here on Tuesday.

"T-Works is going to be set up in a 2,50,000 sft facility and will have equipment worth more than \$20 million with many partners offering their tools, software and equipment," KTR said at the inaugural of the two-day 17th India Design Summit organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) along with the National Institute of Design (NID) and the Telangana government.



2.

## NID placements: No takers for Universal Design graduates on day 1



### Day 1 of placement process in progress at NID's Paldi campus

It was a day of mixed emotions for students at NID. At the end of Day 1 of placements at National Institute of Design on Monday, there were unhappy faces. While 47 companies offered jobs as well as graduate projects to nearly 300 undergraduate and post-graduate students, a few were either left out or felt the offer was too less. The placements will continue on Tuesday at Paldi campus and on Wednesday at Gandhinagar campus.

Students of PG course in universal design, who had come down from Bangalore campus, said not many recruiters knew about the course and hence they got very few offers. "Our course is not among the preferred ones. So recruiters first call in students from other disciplines. We are the second batch of universal design," said a student who found it ironic to be studying a new course at a reputed institute and yet not having a job offer.

"Not only are there fewer recruiters but the minimum salary offered is also a measly Rs4.5 lakh per annum. We are hoping more companies with better profile will visit the campus," said a student of textile design. However, Subhrajit Ghoshal (22), a student of product design, seemed to have a different experience. "I am happy. I am a product design student but I was looking for opportunity in craft-oriented project for my graduation.

(Source Ahmadabad Mirror)

3.

David Hammons, Chang Yung Ho, Yona Friedman, and others gather at the 2017 Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture in Shenzhen to discuss “Cities, Grow in Difference”

(December 4, 2017, Shenzhen) The Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture (UABB), the only exhibition in the world to explore issues of urbanization and architectural development, will be opening for its 7th edition on December 15th, 2017. UABB will be held at Nantou Old Town in Nanshan district, an urban village that was once the administrative center of the Bao'An County. Hou Hanru, Liu Xiaodu, and Meng Yan (in alphabetic order) make up the curatorial team, all known for notable accomplishments in their respective fields. UABB is thrilled to host more than 200 award-winning exhibitors from 25 countries to share their perspectives on diversity and urban villages at this year's biennale.

Exploring Integrated Diversity in the Urban Context

Cities, Grow in Difference, organized into three sections, will represent the interpretation of Chinese/global urbanization and the future prospects of cities. Shenzhen's urban villages are a combination of top-down urban planning and bottom-up spontaneous growth, making up 45% of the population while occupying only 16.7% of the space. Cities, Grow in Difference seeks to embrace diversity at different levels of society while resisting cultural centralism by creating alternatives to mandatory planning. UABB's main venue is Nantou Old Town, an urban village that embodies the past and present, East and West. The exhibition will be spread throughout the community of Nantou, creating an interactive experience for locals and visitors alike. UABB is both an exhibition of the urban site witnessing the most dramatic urbanization in the 20th and 21st centuries.

This year UABB will be partnering with architects, artists, and designers to share their thoughts about urban culture through its first ever art exhibition. UABB 2017 aims to gain examples of urban development in Shenzhen and create a broadened discussion of urban issues. Despite the distinctive venue and topics, this year's biennale is only not restricted to discussions of urban villages in China, but it also serves as an opportunity to experience resistance and find alternatives to mandatory planning.

Two Worlds Collide: Architecture and Art Connoisseurs Gather at UABB 2017

Under the theme of Cities, Grow in Difference, there will be three sections to provide context, real examples, and interventions to further understand and improve quality of urban villages in China. The first section World | South, curated by Liu Xiaodu, will provide a background for the theme Cities, Grow in Difference. To share a spectrum of perspectives on the relationship between geographical

space and urban development, World | South will present the Southern world from dimensions of natural evolution, historical change, geopolitical shift, and world development. It will also explore local-global governmental dynamics and its effect in modern society. This section features Chinese architect Liu Jia Kun whose works have been featured in Germany, France, and Italy.

The City | Village section is curated by Meng Yan and will detail the situation of China's urban villages. Urban | Village consists of four sections: the Archive, featuring architectural photographer Zhang Chao, who has been featured in multiple international magazines, present the origin and development of urban villages; the Armoury details archived cases and proposals; with Iranian-American architect Nader Tehrani alongside Dutch architecture team MVRDV who will exhibit The Why Factory installation. UABB's premier curator Chang Yung Ho will also be working to make Nantou a cultural stop for the future.

The Art Making Cities marks UABB's first ever art exhibition, directed by co-curator Hou Hanru, and opening new grounds in the art design world. Art Making Cities explores the unorthodox city-making approaches and its effects on villages. A series of urban art intervention projects will be conducted by exhibitors who have organised their own social experiments: World War II survivor Yona Friedman, will be arriving for his first time to Shenzhen; David Hammons, known as one of the most expensive artists in the world, will be joining UABB for his passion in social issues; Cinthia Marcelle, will bring her award-winning pieces to interpret urban villages; Brazilia artists Boa Mistura will colour the streets of Nantou, while Tatzu Nishi will transform it as he has done with landmarks in Manhattan and Amsterdam.

### Rejuvenation and Preservation Intertwine at Nantou Old Town

Experiencing immense pressure from rapid urban growth, the urban village of Nantou underwent spontaneous development due to its historical legacy and local policies. In a rush to meet growing housing demands, villagers built higher levels atop the regulated two-storied residential buildings resulting in high-density blocks of "hand-shaking towers" in the urban village. This presents local governments with a dilemma between protecting historical heritage and renovating to improve quality of life. Refurbishing the venue according to villagers' feedback serves as an alternative to the demolition old spaces. The exhibition will place art works throughout the village, including lanterns and plants, to create a spontaneous atmosphere for the space. UABB's design team hopes that their efforts of art and architecture in the venue will help to reestablish opportunities for Nantou Old Town.

### UABB History: Past, Present, Future

Initiated in 2005 by Shenzhen and later co-organized by the two neighboring and closely interacting cities of Shenzhen and Hong Kong, UABB

situates itself within the regional context of the rapidly urbanizing PRD. Curated by China's "Father of Architecture" Zhang Yung Ho, the first UABB was themed "City, Open Door!". Since then, UABB has gathered crowds from all over the world, making it an internationally acclaimed event. 2007's edition was themed "City of Expression and Regeneration" and was curated by Qingyun Ma. As UABB moved from passive observation to active intervention, 2009 was themed "City Mobilisation" and was curated by Ou Ning. Terence Riley was the first non-Chinese curator for UABB in 2011 and curated it under the theme "Architecture creates Cities. Cities create Architecture". The 2013 exhibition themed "Urban Border" curated by Ole Bouman, Xingning Li, and Jeffrey Johnson explored the distinctions between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, the biennale transformed two neglected industrial sites in the Shekou. 2015 had Aaron Betsky, Alfredo Brillembourg, Hubert Klumpner, and Doreen Heng Liu guiding the biennale under the theme "Re-living the city". This year, the curatorial team will lead UABB 2017 to greater heights under the theme of Cities, Grow in Difference.

The Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture 2017 (Shenzhen)  
December 15, 2017  
Nantou Old Town, Shenzhen  
<http://en.szhkbiennale.org/>

# PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS



**core77**  
**conference**  
**designing**  
**here/now**

2018 SEPTEMBER 29 - 30  
LOS ANGELES, CA

The Core77 Conference returns to L.A.'s vibrant design community — same venue, more activity. This year, we've put together two days of panels and presentations, workshops and tours, catered meals, and fabulous evening receptions. Come join designers, scientists, entrepreneurs, and business leaders in exchanging innovative ideas on working and tools for cultivating exceptional interdisciplinary success.

THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL BERKELEY UNDERGRADUATE PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN EXCELLENCE 2018

2018  
berkeley  
prize

Applying the Social Art  
of Architecture



ABOUT THE PRIZE  
ESSAY PRIZE COMPETITION  
TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP  
PREVIOUS FELLOWSHIPS

2018 2017 2016 2015 2014 2013 2012 2011 2010 2009 2008 2007 2006 2005 2004 2003 2002 2001 2000 1999

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY!

## The 2018 NKBA Design Competition Is Open



**The 2018 NKBA Design Competition is open and accepting submissions. The annual competition provides the opportunity to recognize the association's designer members for their outstanding kitchen and bath projects completed between Jan. 1, 2016, and Aug. 4, 2017.**





# Typoday 2018

International Conference, workshop, exhibition:

[Typography Day 2018](#)

1st to 3rd March 2018 at Sir J J Institute of Applied Arts, Mumbai, India

<http://www.typoday.in>

The poster features a collage of images: a group of healthcare professionals in scrubs, a doctor with a stethoscope, and a patient being attended to by a nurse. The background is a geometric pattern of overlapping triangles in shades of blue, green, and pink.

  
**GCIC**  
**2018**

Global Conference  
on **Integrated Care**

**2018** ADVANCE! Accelerating  
the Integration of Care

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1 - 3 FEB | Resorts World Convention Centre  
Resorts World at Sentosa, Singapore  
8 Sentosa Gateway, Singapore 098269

**REGISTER NOW**

Early bird rates end on 30 September 2017

**ABOUT THE CONFERENCE**

The **Global Conference on Integrated Care (GCIC) 2018** is an international conference that will bring together clinicians, health and social care professionals and practitioners, and policymakers from around the world to share knowledge, experiences, ideas and innovations



Join us for the **2018 EDRA49 Annual Conference** in the **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma!** Walk along the streets of Oklahoma City, home to an attractive variety of historic buildings. Eye-catching religious buildings, and magnificent structures of great architectural and historic significance. **Stay tuned for registration to open in late Fall.** Check out what OKC has to offer, [click here](#).





In association with Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Islamic Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Research Laboratory of Technologies of Information & Communication & Electrical Engineering (LaTICE) at the University of Tunis, and the Tunisian Association E-access, Sultan Qaboos University will host the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Information and Communication Technology and Accessibility from 19-



In association with Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Islamic Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Research Laboratory of Technologies of Information & Communication & Electrical Engineering (LaTICE) at the University of Tunis, and the Tunisian Association E-access, Sultan Qaboos University will host the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Information and Communication Technology and Accessibility from 19-21 December



## UXINDIA2017: Intl Conference on UX Design

1, 2, 3 & 4 November 2017

Marriott Whitefield, Bangalore

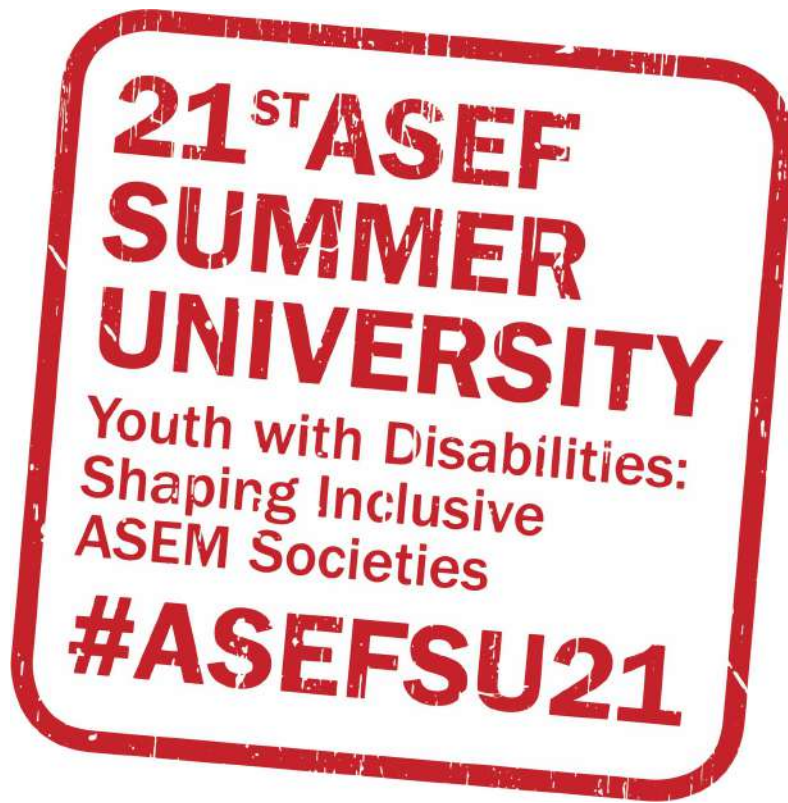
[www.2017.ux-india.org](http://www.2017.ux-india.org)

**REGISTER NOW**

4 days of inspiration, education and skills development for user experience designers, UX leaders, program managers, user researchers, startup founders and design students



*purpose.do*



The [21<sup>st</sup> ASEF Summer University \(ASEFSU21\)](#) will take place on 27 January – 10 February 2018 in Melbourne (Australia) and Christchurch (New Zealand) exploring the topic of Youth with Disabilities

# JOB OPENINGS



## 1. Job Opening

Looking for graphic designers (freelancers) to support an online weekly publication. Job is straight-forward: every week we will release a 500 word story for which you will have to create 5 graphical illustrations.

Must-have:

Proficiency in graphic design fundamentals (typography/ colour theory/ layout/ composition) is a must have!

Good-to-have:

Skill in hand illustrations as well as computer based illustrations ... someone who can create a confluence using both mediums.

This will be a weekly task to do. If you have the proficiency and skill and can deliver in time every week, week on week (since it is a weekly publication) please send in your application and portfolio links to: [gaiky\(at\)tictactohub\(dot\)com](mailto:gaiky(at)tictactohub(dot)com)

## 2. Job Opening

We had a exciting opportunity for the Final Year PG students for the DIP Project ( 06 month duration) at GreyOrange (<http://www.greyorange.com>) for Industrial Design.

About Greyorange- GreyOrange is re-imagining the warehousing & supply-chain industry. We design, develop and deploy advanced robotics systems at warehouses, distribution centers and fulfilment centers. Our expertise in robotics, hardware and software engineering help companies solve operational inefficiencies in their warehouses.

At GreyOrange Student would be working with best technical minds in Man-Machine Interface in domain of Robotics and AI.

Interested students , for more details contact and send resume+portfolio ( pdf - less than 5MB) to [nisha.d@greyorange.sg](mailto:nisha.d@greyorange.sg) No Online link please.

## 3. Job Opening

Product design team at VMware is looking for senior product designers in Bangalore. If you are interested, please forward your resume and a portfolio to [manaswis@vmware.com](mailto:manaswis@vmware.com)

### Description

A Product Designer is responsible for the end to end experience of a product, a project, or a feature. This starts with the initial research that comes with understanding the customer, business and technology space to specifying end to end workflows, interactions and pixel-perfect experience. A product designer collaborates with cross-functional product teams across the globe, to create experiences for challenging problems around cloud computing.

A Product Designer is expected to:

- \* Work with their product management and engineering teams as well as other designs to help define product goals, requirements and represent user's point of view throughout the product planning process.
- \* Design the workflows, wireframes, prototypes, sketches, and final end to end pixel perfect and ready for delivery high fidelity mockups, to illustrate design solutions.
- \* Work with the engineering team to deliver those workflows the same way they were envisioned. Remember that a design is not "done" until it is actually delivered to customers.
- \* Work with the design, product management, and engineering leadership to improve the design and product development process.
- \* Verify and improve on designs through reviews, validations and formal usability testing with end users.
- \* Ability to rapidly prototype and deliver multiple iterations and versions of a design to quickly advance VMware's product portfolio. Speed and agility are extremely important.
- \* Have the ability to make sensible design decisions even when not all data is available and be able to figure out and correct possible mistakes that ship or are discovered before shipping a product or a feature.

What we look for:

- \* Expert skills defining and analyzing user flows and workflows.
- \* Expert skills in interaction design with a grasp of UCD process.
- \* Story telling - ability to tell simple user stories illustrating solutions.
- \* Excellent oral and written communication, presentation, and analytical skills.
- \* Agile, adaptable, and capable of delivering new products and features.
- \* Possess a very high level of comfort in working with developers in the presentation layer (for example, HTML, CSS).
- \* Good aesthetic sense and attention to details.
- \* Strong prototyping skills.
- \* Experience with conducting user research is a plus.
- \* Online portfolio.

Design at VMware:

We're a dedicated team that moves fast, upholds design quality, values consistency and simplicity, and focuses on customers and their needs. We work together and value "we" over "me". We believe in inclusion both within our team and in the way we build products and make that clear in the way we hire, design, and execute. We value growth and encourage, not just respect, our differences. We're the organization to "get it done" together. We're not afraid to make new mistakes, learn from them, and grow together as a team and an organization.

We love what we do and build products that are used by hundreds of thousands of productive individuals and organizations around the world.

## 4. Job Opening

We are hiring Lead User Experience Designer

if you are - HAVING THESE SKILLS

Clear Design Fundamentals Strong Visual Design Sense Leading Teams & Projects Effective Communication Passionate, Curious, Meticulous  
4+ Years of Experience

INTERESTED IN

Learning Something New Every Day Exploring Innovative Design Solutions  
UI/UX Design of Mobile & Web Applications International and Domestic  
Market

Managing Projects and People

Working at a Design Consulting Startup  
WILLING TO

Think out of the box Take Initiatives, Ownership, Lead  
Work in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

then - APPLY WITH CV & PORTFOLIO  
designjobs@auberginesolutions. com

## 5. Job Opening

Interested candidates can send in their resumes to Swati Kamble -  
Swati.Kamble@greenpointglobal.com

A publishing company is coming up with an online product in an education  
domain.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Position Title:                     | Senior UI/ UX Designer   |
| Position Description<br>(In Short): | We are looking for a user-experience designer responsible for conceiving and conducting user research, interviews and surveys, and translating them into sitemaps, wireframes and prototypes. You will also design the overall functionality of the product and iterate upon it to ensure a great user experience. Demonstrable UI design skills with a strong portfolio |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Qualification Required:                | HFI, HCI, UX (online certifications etc) desired but not mandatory.  |
| Minimum Experience Required (Details): | 3 years  |
| Years/Months of Experience Required:   | 3-5 years or more  |
| Reporting To:                          |  |
| Key Responsibilities:                  | <p>Translate concepts into wireframes and mockups that lead to intuitive user experiences.</p> <p>Facilitate client's product visions by researching, conceiving, wireframing, sketching, prototyping, and mocking up user experiences for digital products.</p> <p>Design and deliver wireframes, user stories, user journeys, and mockups optimized for a wide range of devices and interfaces.</p> <p>Identify design problems and devise elegant solutions.</p> <p>Make strategic design and user-experience decisions related to core, and new, functions and features.</p> <p>Take a user-centered design approach and rapidly test and iterate your designs.</p> <p>Collaborate with other team members and stakeholders.</p> <p>Take smart risks and champion new ideas.</p> |
| Technical Skills/Competencies          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three or more years of UX design experience. Preference will be given to candidates who have experience designing complex solutions</li> </ul>  |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Required:</p>                        | <p>for complete digital environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Expertise in UX software. Basic HTML5, CSS3, and JavaScript skills are a plus.</li> <li>· Ability to work with clients to understand detailed requirements and design complete user experiences that meet client needs and vision.</li> <li>· Extensive experience in using UX design best practices to design solutions, and a deep understanding of mobile-first and responsive design.</li> <li>· A solid grasp of user-centered design and testing methodologies, subsystems, and usability and accessibility concerns.</li> <li>· Ability to iterate your designs and solutions efficiently and intelligently.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Soft Skills/Attributes Required:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ability to clearly and effectively communicate design processes, ideas, and solutions to teams and clients.</li> <li>· A clear understanding of the importance of user-centered design.</li> <li>· Be excited about collaborating and communicating closely with teams and other stakeholders via a distributed model to regularly deliver design solutions for approval.</li> <li>· Be willing to help teammates, share knowledge and experience with them, and learn from them.</li> <li>· Be open to receiving feedback and constructive criticism.</li> <li>· Be passionate about all things UX and other areas of design and innovation. Research and showcase knowledge in the industry's latest trends</li> </ul> |

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
|      | and technologies. |
| SBU: | TG Campus         |

Interested candidates can send in their resumes to Swati Kamble  
Swati.Kamble@greenpointglobal.com

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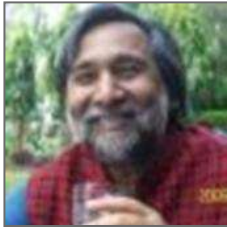
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