

# **Building Community: Design Education for a Sustainable Future**

Editors: Arild Berg, Erik Bohemia, Lyndon Buck, Tore Gulden,  
Ahmed Kovacevic and Nenad Pavel



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# **Building Community: Design Education for a Sustainable Future**

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# Table of Contents

xvii	<b>Foreword</b>
xxvi	<b>Design Society</b>
xxvii	<b>Institution of Engineering Designers</b>
xxviii	<b>Keynote: James Carpenter, Design Associates Inc - Light in the Public Realm</b>
xxix	<b>Keynote: Anna Kirah, Assistant Professor and Design Anthropologist - The Future of Design: A Design Anthropological Perspective</b>

## Chapter 1 – Design Education Practice

2	Utilization of Mobile Eye Tracking Data to Improve Engineering Design Education <i>Stephan Hess, Quentin Lohmeyer and Mirko Meboldt</i>
8	Progress Cards as a Tool for Supporting Reflection, Management and Analysis of Design Studio Processes. <i>Tomasz Jaskiewicz and Aadjan van der Helm</i>
14	How Design Education can Support Collaboration in Teams <i>Louise Brigit Kiernan, Anne Ledwith and Raymond Lynch</i>
20	Gizmo – Arcadia, Theatre, Creatures and Orchestra <i>Andrew Brand and Peter R N Childs</i>
26	Critical Design – A New Paradigm for Teaching and Learning Universal Design <i>Anne Britt Torkildsby</i>
32	Designing Interactive Objects through Cinematic Prototyping <i>Gert Pasma and Marco Rozendaal</i>

## Chapter 1 – Design Education Practice cont.

- 38 What on Earth is Responsible Innovation Anyway? (and How to Teach It)  
*Nicholas Spencer, Mark Bailey, Neil Smith, Jenny Davidson and Philip Sams*
- 44 Encouraging Creative Risk to Reduce Risk to Life  
*Ashley Hall, Michael Geoffrey Kann, Laura Ferrarello and Robert Pulley*
- 50 Digital Drawing Demystified: Exploring a Creative Zone of Proximal Development  
*Nils Seiersten and Arild Berg*
- 56 Understanding Group Design Behaviour in Engineering Design Education  
*Thea Morgan and Chris McMahon*
- 62 Cultivating a Universal Design Mindset in Young Students  
*Naoe Tatara and George Anthony Giannoumis*
- 68 Integrating Expert Design Reviews in Project-Based Design Courses to Address Multiple Learning Goals  
*Stacy Benjamin and John Anderson*
- 74 Relating to the Individuals' Level of Consumption – An Indicator of Ecological footprint  
*Nikolai Øvrebekk and Astrid Skjærven*
- 80 The Characteristics of a Successful Framing Process  
*Louise Møller*
- 86 Collaborating with Impact: A Live Industrial Product Design Project  
*Matthew Alan Watkins, Christopher Ebbert, Leslie Arthur and Emma Attwood*
- 92 Empowering Refugee and Host Community Youth with Design Thinking Skills for Community Development  
*Kathinka Strand Hasselknippe, Anna Kirah and Thomas Flygenring*
- 98 Future Scenarios in General Design Education and 21st century competencies  
*Tore Andre Ringvold and Ingvild Digranes*

- 104 Individual Learning of CAD enhanced by Teamwork  
*Claus Pütz*
- 110 “Yacon” Project to Design Promotion of Regional Specialities  
Collaborating with the Local Government and Communities  
*Takao Ito, Mune-aki Sakamoto, Keiko Matsumoto, Jun-Ichi Sagara,  
Ikuhiro Tanida, Satoshi Takeuchi and Miwa Yasukawa*
- 116 Values of Crafting in Design Education  
*Astrid Heimer, Kristin Andreassen and Sigrid Haugen*
- 122 Morphology to Illustrate the Mental Model of a Design Team’s Process  
*Wim Zeiler*
- 128 Redefining the Bachelors Curriculum In Design and Media  
*Peer Mohideen Sathikh*
- 134 Design Projects in Undergraduate Courses– Approach  
and Experiences  
*Robert Watty*
- 140 Practice Makes Perfect: Product Design and External Collaborations  
*Vicki Thomas*
- 146 Evaluating Interdisciplinary Collaboration — Towards a Methodology  
*Matthias Hillner and Stanley Lim*
- 152 Interferences of Industrial Design and Engineering in Future  
Design Education  
*Annika Frye, Frank Gartner and Martin Pietzsch*
- 158 Understanding Sustainability through Making a Basic T-Tunic In  
Primary School  
*Christine Løkvik and Janne Beate Reitan*
- 164 Designing Collaborations at the Intersection of Academia  
and Industry  
*Martin Skelly, Fraser Bruce, Richard Banks and Helene Steiner*
- 170 Crowd Engineering - Bringing Full Cloud CAD into the Lab  
*Martin Eigner, Andreas Eiden and Hristo Apostolov*
- 176 3d Printing in Medical Application: An Educational  
Design Perspective  
*Peyman Mirtaheri, Evin Güler and Terje Gjøvaag*

## **Chapter 1 – Design Education Practice cont.**

- 182 Introducing Second-Year Students to Concept-Based Projects for Increased Success in Third-Year Sponsored Projects  
*Richard Eldon Fry*
- 187 The Future of Design: A Design Anthropological Perspective  
*Anna Kirah*
- 192 Light in the Public Realm  
*James Carpenter*
- 198 Extending Product Affordances to User Manuals  
*Nenad Pavel, Emilene Zitkus*

## **Chapter 2 – Collaboration and Industrial involvement in Design Education**

- 206 Rescued by Design: Enabling Low-Resource Communities to Reduce Global Drowning  
*John Powell and Gary Underwood*
- 212 Decision Making in Product Design – Bridging the Gap between Inception and Reality  
*Julian Lindley, Richard Adams and Les Wyn*
- 218 Older Adult Insights for Age Friendly Environments, Products and Service Systems  
*Linda Shore, Adam De Eyto, Louise Kiernan, Deirbhile Nic A Bhaird, Anne Connolly, Pj White, Tracy Fahey and Siobhan Moane*
- 224 Circular Design – Learning for Innovative Design for Sustainability: Erasmus + Knowledge Alliance Project for Sustainable Design  
*Jordi Segalas, Adam De Eyto, Muireann McMahon, Peter Joore, Marcel Crul, Renee Wever and Alex Jimenez*
- 230 Transdisciplinary Course Work in Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Opportunities  
*Jason Germany and Nathan Lillegard*
- 236 Engineering Design, Apprenticeships & Diversity  
*Tania Maxine Humphries-Smith, Matthew White and Clive Hunt*



- 242 Solving Grand Challenges Together: A Brazil-Norway Approach to Teaching Collaborative Design and Prototyping of Assistive Technologies and Products for Independent Living  
*Frode Eika Sandnes, Fasto Orsi Medola, Arild Berg, Osmar Vicente Rodrigues, Peymann Mirtaheri and Terje Gjøvaag*
- 248 New Methods for the Design of Smart Products: Project Based Learning with Industry  
*Tom Neutens, Jelle Saldien, Steve Verstockt and Francis Wyffels*
- 254 The Challenges Facing Education in Engineering Drawing Practice  
*Nigel Patrick Garland, Richard Glitho and Russell Wade*
- 260 Employability of Graduates: Insights to Enhancing the Employability through Research of Internships of Entrepreneurship Design Students  
*Dorthe Fiona Petersen*
- 266 Carousel: A Study on Collaboration within a Small International Design Community of Practice and its Impacts on Delivering 'One Week' Exchange Experiences  
*Einar Stoltenberg, Richard Firth and Michael Taks*

### **Chapter 3 – Creativity and Innovation in Design Education**

- 274 Game Dynamics in Design – A Process to Achieve Creative Agency (to give people a chance).  
*Vibeke Sjøvoll and Tore Gulden*
- 280 The Creative Engineering Education Imperative for Twenty-First Century Living  
*Jennifer Loy and Samuel Canning*
- 286 Problem Based Learning: Developing Competency in Knowledge Integration in Health Design  
*Kate M Sellen*
- 292 Is Globalised Design Education Killing Design Variety?  
*Ashley Hall*
- 298 Student Design Projects Set in the Space Environment  
*Colin Ledsome*

### **Chapter 3 – Creativity and Innovation in Design Education cont.**

- 304 How Designers Learn – Objects of Representation as Means of Knowledge Transfer  
*Nenad Pavel*
- 310 Design and Innovation with Problem Based Learning Methods: An Engineering Perspective  
*Peyman Mirtaheri and Nils Sponheim*
- 316 The Black Thread Project: Building Student Communities  
*Randi Veiteberg Kvellestad*
- 322 Innovation should be taught to all 14 To 16 Year olds in schools  
*Michael Charles Goatman*
- 328 Growing Spaces: Developing a Sustainability–Literate Graduate  
*Deborah Andrews and Susana Soares*
- 334 Fostering Learning Communities Through Student-led Prototyping Workspaces  
*Jeff Barrie*
- 340 A Tale from the Tropics: Education for Sustainability and the Value of Project-Based Learning  
*Deborah Andrews and Barney Townsend*
- 346 Using Slack for Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication in a Global Design Project  
*Kim White, Hilary Grierson and Andrew Wodehouse*

### **Chapter 4 - Student Papers related to Design Education**

- 354 The Role of Behavior Framing Factors in Industrial Design Education to Inspire the Responsible Attitude  
*Zoha Khaniki and Maryam Khalili*
- 360 ICT Versus Craft In Design Education for the General Public  
*Ingri Strand and Liv Merete Nielsen*
- 366 Integrating a Multidisciplinary Design Methods Mindset into Classroom Practice  
*Camilla Gwendolyn Stark and Bryan Howell*

- 371 The Visually Impaired and Cooking as a Landscape of Practice  
*Malin Brekke Medin and Bente Skjelbred*
- 376 Design Education and the New Culture of Design Centric  
Intellectual Property  
*Bryan Howell and Thomas Briscoe*
- 382 Review Of Creativity Factors In Final Year Design Projects In China  
*Yang Zhang, Erik Bohemia and John McCardle*
- 388 A Shift from Technical Properties Towards Sensorial Characteristics  
In Product Design Education  
*Charlotte Asbjørn Sørensen, Santosh Jagtap and Anders Warell*
- 394 Common Language for Community Building  
*Anita Neuberg and Ingvild Digranes*
- 400 Challenging Briefs; Learning Through Client and Designer Roles in  
Freshmen Design Education  
*Philip Ekströmer, Mats Nåbo, Vanja Pavlasevic, David Eklöf and  
Renee Wever*
- 405 Redesign of Garments in General Education: A Path to  
Reduced Consumption  
*Monica Schlanbusch Orheim and Liv Merete Nielsen*
- 411 Co-creation in Service Design; a Master's Study on How to Achieve  
Sustainable Services  
*Helena Larsson and Arild Berg*

## **Chapter 5 – Assessment Methods in Design Education**

- 418 Ready for Success, First Year Efficiency for Industrial Design  
Engineering Education.  
*Stephan Blom and Mirjam van den Bosch*
- 424 Aligning Assessment Results with Learning Outcomes  
*Markus Voß, Hulusi Bozkurt and Thorsten Sauer*
- 430 Light and Shape: Exploring the Impact of Light During the Product  
Design Process  
*Harald Skulberg*

## Chapter 5 – Assessment Methods in Design Education cont.

- 436 Creativity in Children’s Design Processes – Identifying Indicators of Design Fixation:  
*Alice Schut, Fenne van Doorn and Remke Klapwijk*
- 442 Experiences from Implementation Sustainability in a Civil Engineering Course at The University Of Agder  
*Paul Ragnar Svennevig and Eilif Hjelseth*
- 448 The Importance of Practicing Design for Design Educators and Researchers  
*Sissel Isachsen and Janne Beate Reitan*
- 454 A Framework for Understanding Product Design Practice and Education  
*Stephen Trathen and Soumitri Varadarjan*
- 460 Pastel as a Swift Sketch Tool for Design Education and Practice: A Qualitative Review  
*J. Hoftijzer*
- 466 Critical Review of Implementation of Sustainability in Higher Education  
*Eilif Hjelseth*
- 472 Does the Imitation of the Sketch Style of Good Industrial Designers Influence Students’ Drawing Skills?  
*Jan A.M. Corremans and Werner Coppleters*
- 478 Challenges of 3D Printing for Home Users  
*Russell Wade, Nigel Garland and Gary Underwood*
- 483 Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Product Development Education  
*Tero Sakari Juuti, Kaisu Rättyä, Timo Lehtonen and Mii-Johanna Kopra*
- 489 Measuring Creativity  
*Ingeborg Stana*

## Chapter 6 – New Design Education Paradigms

- 496 Developing Empathy for Older Users in Design Students  
*Andree Woodcock, Deana McDonagh, Jane Osmond*
- 502 Interactional Co-Design and Co-Production through Shared Dialogue Workshops  
*Lyndon Buck, Tracy Morse, Kingsley Lungu and Matthew Petney*
- 508 The Estate of Drawing—a Provisional Domain or a Domain of the Provisional?  
*Theodor Barth, Carsten Loly, Bjørn Blikstad and Isak Wisløf*
- 514 Educational Effectiveness of Robot Contest for Students in Design Education  
*Atsushi Mitani*
- 520 Sell It: Design Project Assessment by the Public  
*David Morgan*
- 525 Articulating Knowledge Generation and a Share Net Between Research and Education in Design  
*Rita Assoreira Almendra and Gonçalo Moço Falcão*
- 531 Building Cross-Border Communities: Trans-National Innovation Design Students Create Trans-Cultural Innovations and a Global Network of Practice  
*John Simon Stevens, Hermione Townsend*
- 537 Design Thinking Methods and Techniques in Design Education  
*Ana Paula Kloeckner, Cláudia de Souza Libâni and, José Luis Duarte Ribeiro*
- 543 Problem Framing in the Age of Data Analytics  
*Carolina Gill, Hector Rendon and Judith Rodriguez*
- 549 Is Augmented Reality - a New Paradigm in Design Education when Educational Subsidy Decreases?  
*Yoke-Chin Lai*
- 555 Evaluation of “Codeve” Methodology for Teaching NPD to Virtual Design Teams  
*Ahmed Kovacevic, Nikola Vukasinovic, Neven Pavkovic and Peter Horak*

## **Chapter 6 – New Design Education Paradigms cont.**

- 561 The Role of Co-ownership Within Product Design Education  
*Becky Verthe and Lieven de Couvreur*

## **Chapter 7 – Ethics and Social Issues in Design Education**

- 568 Empowerment Through Product Design: Digital Textile Pattern Design for Grip Development in Healthcare  
*Wenche Lyche, Arild Berg*
- 574 Icons and Archetypes Moving Forward  
*Amos Scully, Aishwarya Uniyal*
- 580 Challenging the Auditorium. How to Flip a Classroom in a Room that Cannot Be Flipped?  
*Nina Hagerup, G. Anthony Giannoumis, Petter Øyan and Peter Haakonsen*
- 585 Analysis and Transformation of Works in Design  
*Bente Dahl Thomsen*
- 591 Crossing Cultures: Creating a PhD Programme in Engineering, Art and Design  
*Ragnhild Tronstad*
- 597 Trials and Tribulations of Teaching Product Design to Non-Designers  
*Mehran Koohgilani*
- 601 Sisters Are Doing it For Themselves?: Exploring Gender in Irish Product Design Education  
*Muireann McMahon, Louise Kieman*
- 607 Makeriet: A Norwegian University Makerspace  
*Evin Güler, Peyman Mirtaheeri, Anders-Petter Andersson and Terje Gjøvaag*
- 613 Beyond Design Thinking – Whose Perspective is Driving the People-Centric Approach to Change?  
*Anders Berglund and Larry Leifer*
- 619 Universal Design Education: Brazilian Students Reflections and their Environment

- 625 *Cláudia de Souza Libânio, Fernando Gonçalves Amaral, Srgio Almeida Migowski*  
 Universal Design in the Technology Education Curriculum,  
 Experiences from Norway  
*Frode Eika Sandnes, and Evelyn Eika*
- 631 *Handle Diameter and the Influence on the Ergonomics of Crutches*  
*Guilherme da Silva Bertolaccini, Melissa Marin Vasquez, Ana Carolina Bianchi, Frode Eika Sandes, Luis Carlos Paschoarelli and Fausto Orsi Medola*
- 637 *Advancing Community Design Education*  
*Alireza Borhani and Negar Kalantar*
- 643 *Culture Sensitive Design Education – The Best of all Worlds*  
*Annemiek Van Boeijen, Marieke Sonneveld and Chen Hao*

## **Chapter 8 - Design Education for the General Public**

- 650 *Developing Co(Design) Process and Tools to Innovate Education Through Digital Do It Yourself*  
*Carmen Bruno and Maria Rita Canina*
- 656 *'Hands On': A Design Project for a Sustainable Future*  
*Jeanette Helleberg Dybvik, Lise.Kari Berg*
- 662 *Narrowing the Gap Between General Design Education and Higher Education in Design*  
*Laila Belinda Fauske*
- 668 *Responsible Creativity in Design Education*  
*Eva Lutnæs*
- 674 *Either/Or: Reflecting Design Thesis Orientation*  
*Ermanno Aparo, Liliانا Soares and Fernando Moreira da Silva*
- 680 *How Lighting Dynamics Create Social Interactive Game*  
*Elham Atighi Lorestani and Maryam Khalili*
- 686 *How Elderly People Experience Videos in Moocs*  
*Anna Nishchyyk, Norun Christine Sanderson and Weiqin Chen*

## Chapter 8 - Design Education for the General Public cont.

- 692 Systematic Cooperation for Improved Practice in Primary Schools' Design Education in The Arts And Crafts Subject  
*Irene Brodshaug and Janne Beate Reitan*
- 698 Planting the Seeds of Future Mechanical Design Engineers – Learning Skills  
*Selin Ureten, Gregor Beckmann and Dieter Krause*
- 704 A 21st Century Approach to Teaching Engineering Mechanics  
*Mark Jacobus Smit and Stefan Maxim Persaud*
- 710 Play Lab: Creating Social Value through Competency and Challenge-Based Learning  
*Mariana Maya, Mariano Garcia, Ella Britton and Alejandro Acuna*
- 716 Culture Sensitive Contextmapping: Discovering the Strengths of Eastern and Western Participants  
*Chen Hao, Annemiek van Boeijen and Pieter Jan Stappers*
- 722 Combining Online Courses, Method Portal And Online Exercises for Education in Engineering Design  
*Ann-Kathrin Bavendiek, Tobias Ring, David Inkermann, Thomas Vietor and Sabine C. Langer*
- 728 The Positive Effect of a Morphological Approach on Design Team Cooperation  
*Wim Zeiler*
- 734 Results from Cross-Fertilization of Courses for Improved Student Learning  
*Jörgen Normark, Therese Öhrling and Anders Håkansson*
- 740 Beyond Lampshades – Teaching Upcycling in a Meaningful Way  
*Christopher Michael Ebbert, Oskar Rexfelt and Isabel Ordoñez*
- 746 Participatory Research with Refugees – Can Industrial Design Engineers Implicitly Cope with Social Design Problems?  
*Tina Bobbe, Christian Wölfel and Jens Krzywinski*



# Foreword

## Building Community: Design Education for a Sustainable Future

The 19th International Conference on Engineering and Product Design Education (E&PDE) was held at the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HIOA) the 7th and 8th of September 2017.

The conference was hosted by the Institute of Product Design HIOA, at Kjeller and Oslo, Norway, and made the main event for the centennial celebration of the institute. We planned and arranged the conference in close collaboration with the Design Education Special Interest Group (DESIG) of the Design Society, and the Institution of Engineering Designers (IED).

The E&PDE conference was initiated in 1999 in the United Kingdom and was consolidated as an international conference in 2004. Its objective is to facilitate conversations between people from within education and industry who are interested in sharing expertise on the implementation and analysis of contemporary and developing methodologies in engineering and design education. It provides educators and researchers from product development, engineering and industrial design, together with industry and government representatives, with a platform for discussion on topical educational issues in design education and their future directions.

### Conference Theme

Our society's future is determined by today's education. The knowledge and skills acquired by students in design and engineering contribute to the establishment of new products and services that influence systems on various levels of society. Designers and engineers develop solutions to problems recognised by society, such as machines that make washing clothes easier and technology that makes information more accessible. However, the creations of these professionals sometimes have additional, unwanted consequences for both people and nature. That is, students often do not obtain sufficient knowledge and skills to explore the possible rebound effects of their developments. This points to how important it is to provide students with alternative understandings, skills and methods rather than merely transferring what individual educators consider to be central to their disciplines. Accordingly, one must question the idea of basics in education and look towards how students can become critical thinkers as professionals rather

than uncritical doers. This involves educators ending their ideological indoctrination of students and instead opening a path for students to explore and discover for themselves what might be meaningful, engaging, good, effective, ethical and so forth. The theme 'Building Community: Design Education for a Sustainable Future' encourages the exploration of yet unidentified factors that will contribute to a sustainable future.

The proceedings were based on a call for research that could contribute to break with the established and recognized education paradigms in order to:

- Provide a platform for a broad variety of participants
- Explore how managing different perspectives on community can help students and scholars to develop projects in a larger and more complex context
- Seek new perspectives on what "building community" means and involves
- Seek aesthetic engagement with game dynamics in product design
- Explore the broadening of the design profession on health and service design.
- Explore how engineering and product design education contributes to a balanced development of technological opportunities and the needs of people in the future

These aims were addressed through the following conference topics related to the Engineering and Product Design Education that made the tracks for presentation:

- Design education in practice
- Collaboration in industrial involvement in design education
- Creativity and innovation in design education
- Ethics and social issues in design education
- Assessment methods in design education
- New design education paradigms
- Student papers related to design education
- Universal design in education
- Aesthetics and cultural practice in design education
- Design education for the general public

During the conference 18 countries were represented. 172 contributions were received which explored the various subthemes. Amongst them were 16 student contributions. After reviewing abstracts, full paper submissions and subsequent revisions 125 contributions were selected to be included in the proceedings, 11 of which were poster presentations at the conference.

## **Acknowledgements**

This 2017 edition of the E&PDE conference was made possible through the commitment and efforts of many people. We would like to thank Ahmed Kovacevic, Judith Grace, Lyndon Buck, Erik Bohemia and Jean Evans for very effective and warm collaboration.

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Christian Tollestrup

**Arild Berg, Tore Gulden and Nenad Pavel**



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The Design Society was founded in 2000, taking on the previous activities and responsibilities of the Workshop Design Konstruktion (WDK) Society, especially the organisation of the International Conference on Engineering Design (ICED) series of conferences, which had been running since 1981. Since 2000 the Society has organised ICED conferences in Stockholm, Melbourne, Paris, Stanford, Copenhagen, Seoul and Milan. The upcoming 2017 conference will be hosted in Vancouver.

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# Keynote Speakers: Thursday 7th September 2017

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENGINEERING AND PRODUCT DESIGN EDUCATION  
7 & 8 SEPTEMBER 2017, OSLO AND AKERSHUS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCES,  
NORWAY

## **LIGHT IN THE PUBLIC REALM**

James Carpenter, James Carpenter Design Associates

### SUMMARY

Densification of cities present an accelerating need to revisit daylighting codes and zoning. In order to address daylight as a meaningful presence in the urban context, light needs to be understood as a public resource and one that offers a collective engagement with nature and our biological connection to nature.

All those who contribute to the built context of our daily lives might well have a host of ideas about design quality and purpose, working within varying economic restraints, but how often do they consider the essential place that our experience and perception of light plays in our lives? Do they consider our dependence on a temporal sense of light, both diurnal and seasonal, both to our physiological and psychological health?

Our interest is not so much a didactic approach to providing proven intensities or durations of light necessary to human health. We collaborate with engineers and scientists to have our work embody this knowledge, however our goal is a more poetic and aesthetic one that focuses on qualities of light and perception that embraces the necessary performative characteristics. Consequently the potential is for a design that articulates a powerful sense and perception of light within the very fabric that makes up the public realm, whether it be in the design of curtain walls or street furniture. At every scale of design there is an opportunity to articulate the presence of light and to unpack the dense information contained within light.

### KEY MESSAGE:

Both civic and commercial contexts have an increased need for innovative strategies that heighten our collective awareness of light and nature. By working at the intersection of art, engineering and architecture, materials have the potential to activate and transform both private and public spaces with observable qualities of light that define a specific experience of place bound to a greater and collective sense of the universe.

## **THE FUTURE OF DESIGN: A DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Anna Kikrah, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

**KEYWORDS:** design anthropology, design education, design practice, user experience

### **SUMMARY**

The future of design is a series of reflections from a design anthropological perspective. My job has often been to unveil truths for my clients. I have always said that there is no one truth, that in any argument - both sides are correct - partially. But there is one truth: the world is changing and will continue to change. We are part of this change as long as we breathe on this planet.

While we often speak of the positive effects of our work and the pride in relation to user experience and design, we neglect to articulate negative consequences of our work and how this affects the world we live in. With this in mind, what should our focus be in the next ten years and how can we incorporate this in the education of designers as well as in the practice of design?



# DEVELOPING CO(DESIGN) PROCESS AND TOOLS TO INNOVATE EDUCATION THROUGH DIGITAL DO IT YOURSELF

Carmen BRUNO and Marita CANINA  
Politecnico di Milano

## ABSTRACT

The current societal trend of digitally enabled self-production (i.e. digital Do-It-Yourself) is emblematic of the contemporary and diffuse attitude to make and create. It also reflects the new attitude of people to rely on the strengthen of collaboration to improve their life. It has been seen as an opportunity for social and technological innovation based on collaboration and knowledge sharing. These practices and technologies have many potentialities that are changing the world on an everyday and community level (i.e. attitudes to consumption, sustainable solutions and community networks). The resurgence of DIY and craft industries “is a strong indicator that people are seeking ways to express their creativity” [1].

In this context where Digital DIY is playing a leading role in developing a more creative society and where everyone does design, professional designers may have to find their new roles.

The paper describes the DiDIY design process as a result of human centred co-design workshops held within the framework of the EU funded project ‘Digital Do-It-Yourself (DiDIY) in two different countries [2]. The main workshops objective was to test and validate a specific co-design process and the related design toolkit, developed by IDEActivity Centre, helping people to apply the innovative aspects of DiDIY in their professional field. In the specific case the paper present the application of the process in the Education&Research area investigated by the EU project.

*Keywords: DiDIY co-design process, Co-design workshop, Design Thinking, Toolkit, Creativity.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In a changing world, everyone does designs: each individual person and each collective subject, from enterprises to institutions, from communities to cities and regions, must define and enhance a *life project*. Sometimes these projects generate unprecedented solutions: sometimes they converge on common goals and realize larger transformations. [3]

Digital DIY is one of the ongoing social innovation phenomena in which people reinvent their ways of living, especially thanks to ubiquitous digital technologies, connecting people on a global scale (e.g. Internet 2.0).. [4]

The phenomenon has been acknowledged as an opportunity to generate innovation. It was estimated that 80% of innovation in scientific tools have been generated by amateurs. [5]

The contemporary making attitude is considered creative, innovative, inventive, collaborative, resourceful and empowering. Makers and digital DIYers are non-linear thinkers, curious inventors and problem-solvers. This social phenomenon do allows the increasing of a diffused creativity that represents the intangible substrate for innovation. [6]

Creativity in this sense *enables* a person, or group working as co-creators, to generate new ideas and outcomes, such as original or inventive projects at different levels.

In this context of diffused creativity, design is called to identify a role to play and some designers have been investigating potential areas of intervention.

The analysis of the current scenario of digital DIY as a social innovation phenomenon and the changing role of design enabled us to make reflections about the possibility of educating active communities of people to apply a specific design process to face challenges in their specific field of knowledge, bringing innovation through a strategic application of digital technologies.

Within the framework of the EU funded Digital DIY project, IDEActivity Centre has developed a design toolkit and guidelines based on a specific co-design process built with and for non-designer with a specific methodology.

The main objective of this paper is to describe the approach used in the construction of the digital DIY co-design process based on a Human Centred Design. The paper will also highlight the twofold intention of building a process with people using a bottom up approach training them at the same time to let them become ambassador of that method.

The resulting process can be applied and repeated in different field of interest. In this paper we present experience of application in the education area where a group of multidisciplinary experts were involved.

To this purpose, section 2 briefly introduces our idea regarding the role of the design in a DiDIY context, section 3 describes the DiDIY co-design process and the approach used to build it, section 3 presents the experimentation had in the specific case of the educational field.

## **2 DIGITAL DIY ENHANCING DIFFUSE CREATIVITY**

Digital DIY is here envisaged as a creative practice through which people may generate innovation increasing their self-confidence and empowerment by developing new skills and knowledge.

Since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, research in learning processes have suggested the importance of making and doing as a means to foster the acquisition of skills, especially the creative ones. Creativity and the ability to produce ideas, knowledge, and innovations is a key player.

Within this research, the term “creativity” is intended to encompass a range of creative interactions. It includes the creativity of individuals who are making objects using DiDIY technologies; the creativity that results from the social interaction of individuals coming together and exchanging ideas and working on DiDIY projects; and creativity in the wider community, for example, the creative impact on society that results from how DiDIY projects are manifested in the wider world.

There are creative implications for this progressive engagement, for example, the exchange of creative ideas and inspiration via online communities enables widespread dissemination of designs.

Collaborative engagement opens the way to potentially enabling creative solutions to local, social and environmental problems. Free and open access is concerned with the protocols allowing or restricting the use and modification of designs and as such has implications for both the creators of designs and those wishing to use them, moderating the shared use of creative capital.

Digital DIY enables the shared production of creative content and therefore greater opportunities for co-design and the creation of collaborative value chains.

### **2.1 How design can foster Digital DIY creativity**

What does it mean to design in a world characterized by diffused creativity?

Design literature has suggested since a long time that everybody is a designer [7] [8], and more recently that “in a world in rapid and profound transformation, we are all designers”. [9] These theories refer to the ability and need for untrained people to create what they need even without the support of professional designers.

Manzini stresses that *“if it is true that we live in a society where ‘everybody designs’, designers should accept that they can no longer aspire to a monopoly on [...]. In this new environment of diffuse creativity, designers have to learn how actively and positively to participate in the social processes where new and, hopefully, promising ideas are emerging”*. [10]

The role of design in the era when everybody does design needs to be reshaped. Indeed, professional designer could lead, guide, provide scaffolds, or offer a clean slate to DIY practitioners, according to their interests and creativity level. [11]

The challenge lies in the ability of facilitating participatory processes, where phases of listening, observation, inspiration, involvement and verification with users become essential components of the project. As facilitators, designers support the development of the project drafted (or defined) by the DiDIY practitioner.

In this research, we propose that professional designers may contribute by facilitating the creative process of making, especially within the digital social innovation phenomenon frame, as a means to foster people empowerment. *As design researchers, we aim at contributing by developing an ad hoc co-design process and related (co)design-driven tools specific for Digital DIY that can help people to create innovative digital solution in their professional field.*



We decide to create a design toolkit for the digital DIY *because the people are the experts*. They are the ones who know best what the right solutions are.

The toolkit doesn't offer solutions. Instead, it offers creative techniques, methods, tips, and worksheets to guide people through a process that gives a voice to communities and allows their desires to guide the creation and implementation of solutions.

Creativity is the context and the reference frame where innovation can develop in a sort of humus and rich soil in order to be fostered and spread. The future of the economy and society is becoming more and more influenced by creativity and by the ability to produce ideas, knowledge and innovations. This ability has always been important, but in the last twenty years has literally exploded. Relying on the idea that creativity is the basis for innovation, to learn and manage creativity techniques becomes strategic to meet a company or organisation's need for innovation.

We planned to use co-design methods and tools to involve people in the construction of the design process and in the creation of knowledge about Digital DIY. Therefore, we make use of human-centred co-design workshops because it can help connect better with the people involved allowing the transfer of the design process while it is creating.

### 3 THE DIGITAL DIY CO-DESIGN PROCESS

Within the framework of the EU funded Digital DIY project, IDEActivity Centre has developed a process and a set of tools for design, focusing especially on the importance of creativity in achieving innovation.

IDEActivity identifies a *design and creativity based model* that is able to generate innovation in different areas of interest (i.e. education, work, legal system) through the exploration of digital DIY as a mindset and a social practice. We can consider it as a process, with a strong social connotation, where people's creativity and self-improvement through the development of new skills and knowledge are key elements.

This iterative DiDIY co-design process focuses on two main stages, *Explore* and *Generate*. The first stage – *Explore* – aims at the identification of a significant objective and its possible development in relation to a given context. Users are supposed to structure a common vision in relation to a problem or challenge with the actors involved in the creative process. Reciprocal understanding of needs, hopes and the aspirations is crucial, and an analytical process of information interpretation is fundamental to identify opportunities.

The second stage – *Generate* – aims at delivering and prototyping ideas, through creative sessions based on a series of tools designed to stimulate people creativity and generate suitable solutions in line with the given context and the objective.

The Process is moving through four main steps: Immersion, Define, Ideation, and Build to Think.

1. **Immersion** (within the Explore area), which aim is to get closer to the social and cultural context of Digital DIY. The Immersion step, is broken down into two parts: Preliminary Immersion and In-Depth Immersion. Preliminary Immersion seeks an initial understanding of the context. In-Depth Immersion aims to identify the needs of the people involved in the DiDIY, and the opportunities that are likely to arise from an understanding of their experience regarding the issue under scrutiny. This “plunge into context” frequently generates a mass of information so vast that it becomes necessary to organize the data visually so as to indicate patterns that will help to provide an understanding of the whole and identify opportunities and challenges.
2. **Define** (within the Explore area), which aim is to identify potential opportunities. This step is essential for the goal to be fully understood. Through different approaches, research can reveal valuable information providing potential opportunities, in ways that are unexpected at times. This practice trains participants' intuition and awareness, using tools that prompt new avenues of consideration, and gives shape to the project's scope, providing relevant and viable opportunities.
3. **Ideation** (within the Generate area), which aim is to generate innovative ideas. The idea generation phase usually begins with creative sessions conducted by the team with regard to the theme to be investigated. This activity is carried out with support from different tools, used to stimulate creativity and generate suitable solutions consistent with the context and the goals to be achieved. The tools used during this phase are aimed at: generating numerous ideas, selecting ideas, visualizing ideas.
4. **Build to think** (within the Generate area), to prototype and implement a concept. It helps to make ideas tangible, so as to provide continuous learning and eventual validation of the solution.

Each step has specific activities and tools that guide non-trained people in the definition of a design challenge and the creation of a concept based on the fundamental element of Digital DIY.

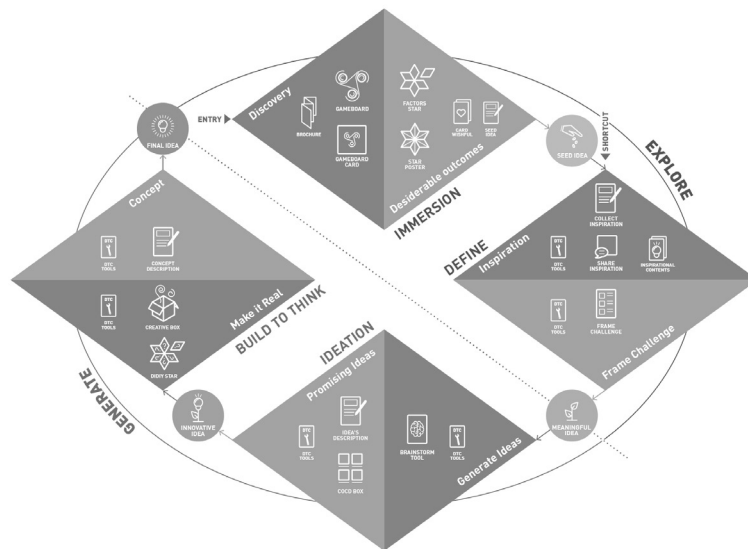


Figure 1. The DiDIY Design Process

Each of the main steps of the creative design process has two phases: *Divergent and Convergent*.

In other words, each step starts with a 'problem' definition, followed by a divergent phase which includes the 'creation' or 'widening' of a field of possibilities which includes collecting and generating facts, problem statements, and ideas, without criticism. Then resultant solutions are clustered and categorized, followed by a convergent phase in which there is a narrowing of choices based on criteria of what is useful and relevant.

So, we explored ways of fostering participants' creativity collaboratively drawing on design thinking. We first modelled a possible process reflecting how participants could develop such knowledge co-design experience and eventually we developed and applied a supporting toolkit.

Our objective is to provide participants (and eventually everyone) with these tools and toolkit which will enable local groups and citizens to develop their 'design thinking capability', through a structured design process substantiated with their experiences, emotions and thoughts.

This process and related tools and activities will end up in a design toolkit that will enable collaborative actions aimed at identifying and solving problems through the direct involvement of users.

The toolkit represents all the techniques and tools designed and collected whilst the guidelines include the conditions necessary to start and set up a session of co-design and the flow of activities to be performed during the session, referring to the specific tools.

The toolkit doesn't offer solutions. Instead, it offers techniques, methods, tips, and worksheets to guide participants through a process that gives a voice to communities and allows their desires to guide the creation and implementation of solutions.

### 3.1 Co-design as a tool of analysis and as a process for DiDIY

In order to achieve this objective, we used Human Centred Co-design workshop based on IDEActivity [12] i.e. a human-centred participatory methodology formerly developed by IDEActivity Centre and applied in contexts where innovation is pursued (e.g. companies, institutions and organizations), using the potential of creativity and Design Thinking while co-creating with the people involved in a project. Human-centred design offers a chance to design with communities, to deeply understand the people, to dream up scores of ideas, and to create innovative new solutions rooted in people's actual needs. [13] (Ideo, 2015). To meet the objective of creating innovative solutions that engage the technological universe and are aimed at the DIY, the co-design workshop was designed by us.

By using co-design workshops we involve non trained designer in the testing and refinement of the Digital DIY design process creating tools that speak the language of common people.

In this way, we give the possibility of such approach to be adapted and used as an empowerment tool by people of different Digital DIY communities. Empowerment tool is here intended as something allowing people to ‘take control’ of their ideas in a participative and pro-active way instead of reactive one, in a system where self-improvement through the development of new skills and actionable knowledge is pivotal.

In this perspective, people are considered all the way as co-design researchers and companions. The division between expert designers and the laypeople becomes blurred and so do the borders between research and practice. In order to do so, Scheldeman (2012) suggests that the designers should allow for “meaningful relation... design should not prescribe or predict, but enable.

On the other side, co-design workshop represents the opportunity to train specific people to use and apply a method and a design process allowing them to become ambassador of that method and to replicate it in their specific professional field. The co-design workshops give us the opportunity to explore whether people can go through this design process on their own, supported by our toolkit.

The experiences of the workshop have contributed to continuous experimentation, verification and implementation of a project-building process, of specific activities and relative tools in order to produce the toolkit and the guidelines.

#### **4 DIDIY CO-DESIGN PROCESS AND EDUCATION**

The chapter describes the application of the Digital DIY co-design process in the specific field of Education&Research investigated by the EU DiDIY project. [14]

The aim of the Education workshop is to test and design, together with teachers and educators, the design process and to train them to apply it in the different educational environment to increase such skills as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication.

The final goal is to contribute to the creation of a valuable learning experiences based on creativity where the teacher became the designer of the activities and the facilitator of the learning process.

According to some literature issue, it was important to identify the correct personalities to involve in order to create a group with mixed skills that could observe the phenomenon of DiDIY and education from different points of view: primary and secondary school teachers that already apply digital technologies at school, high school and university professors that use alternative educational methods, makers interested in education, educators that run educational programs outside schools using digital making (inside museums or Fablabs), professionals in different departments of the school system.

One explorative and one generative workshop - in two different countries -have been organized.

In particular, the explorative workshops allowed collecting the fundamental elements that the people involved deemed were qualifying for digital DIY, together with a series of challenges that tackle real needs in the area of education.

To make some example of educational challenge:

- *How can digital DIY be exploited to keep ‘motivation high and constant’ during educational activities?*
- *How can we organize and manage an educational community of digital DIY including through assigning roles in it?*
- *How can digital DIY become a strategy or a system of connections to create an educating community?*

Some of this challenges were answered in terms of possible scenarios and innovative ideas during the generative workshops, where the participants defined a concept of the selected idea, considering the fundamental factors identified in the exploration phase.

To see some of the ideas and concept designed during the DiDIY&Education workshop with the application of the DiDIY design process please consult the project deliverable at this link:

<http://www.didiy.eu/public/deliverables/didiy-d4.7-1.0-pub.pdf> [15].

A significant concept that emerged from the workshops is that teaching can no longer be understood solely within the scholastic system, but it is fundamental to speak of an ecology of the educational system, understood as the set of components that intervene and impact education and the relationship between them. The “educating community” include not only the family, the school and educators, but also the local area of reference, therefore the neighbourhood or, better, the city. Thanks to the spread of digital technologies, the distances in the area are shortened and the possibility of action of education by formal and informal experience has extended. Building up an educating community is a new skill of the teacher that weaves relations with the local area, the families and the educators, and also ought

to know and map out the local, national and international possibilities of intersection, connection, support and learning.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The experience of applying the methodology and toolkit at the workshops led to very positive feedback. Participants pointed out how the effectiveness of the transfer of the methodology and the toolkit materials had been facilitated by the overall atmosphere, space and communication management.

It is widely recognized that the use of creative techniques enhances competitiveness and efficiency of the organization or group production process. These kinds of playful activities are intended to stimulate people's creative potential, and preventing negative emotions. They promote active and creative relationships at both cognitive and relational levels and have proven, in our experience, to be a very effective means of knowledge-transfer.

An entrepreneurial culture to stimulate, encourage and foster the development of individual and group abilities emerges as an inspiration for innovation strategies.

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