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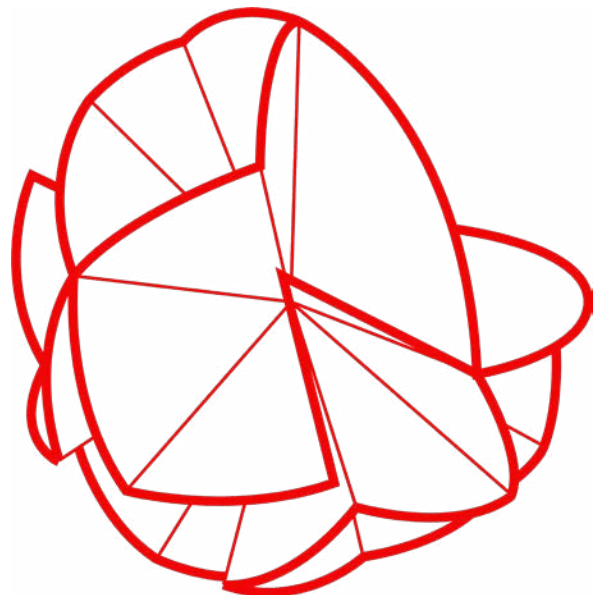
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# Disrupting Geographies in the Design World

Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International  
Forum of Design as a Process

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# Colophon

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# Collaborative Learning of Ph.D. Candidates in Design on Emerging Scenarios in Scientific Publication

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## Abstract

The article describes a collaborative learning process aimed at introducing early stage researchers in design to a non-hegemonic approach to design knowledge production and publications. Four co-creation sessions has been held in the context of *Prode* project, engaging phd students in design to take in account emerging issues in scientific publishing. In specific an innovative *Living publication lifecycle* has been introduced (supporting an iterative model for publications) and the relative *Living publications scenario* (including Augmented publications; Collective authoring; Evolving publications; Publications reuse) has been used to discuss and disrupt traditional publication patterns and envision beyond the “article” format, new typologies of (not only textual) research products and new forms of dissemination, to meet the challenges of an impactful design education. The context of change of scientific publication and hypothesis underlying the paper have been discussed elsewhere (Lupo, 2022; Lupo, 2023). For the purpose of this article, the focus is the training of early stage researchers, in order to make them aware of the potentiality of plurality and diversity of design knowledge publication. The collaborative approach and tools adopted eased the empowering of the PhD students through brainstorm, role plays and hands-on tests.

## Keywords

Scientific publishing  
Living publication lifecycle  
Publication ecosystem  
Co-creation methodology  
Publication impact



The digital transformation and the open access paradigm (Max Planck Gesellschaft, 2003). have a considerable impact on the circulation of high-quality scientific publication at global level: in this scenario high-impact and effective scholarly communication need to be pursued with a hybrid media and content strategy, in order to get an extended impact, while maintaining rigour and authority. New trends therefore emerged (Kim et al., 2018), also questioning the oligopoly of academic publishing (Larivière, Haustein & Mongeon, 2015).

In the design domain too, these changes are asking for a deep knowledge dissemination, fostering new discourses and representations on design (i.e., “viscourses”, Bonsiepe, 2007, p.36). Hence, in the years 2020-22 the *Prode* project<sup>1</sup> has been carried out within the Design Dept. of Politecnico di Milano, with the aim of discussing the contexts in which scientific design knowledge is produced and made accessible (particularly in traditional academic and scientific journals) and proposing new visions and opportunities for scientific publications in the design field.

The state of art of scientific publication transformation and the leading hypothesis underlying the research have been discussed elsewhere (Lupo, 2022; Lupo, 2023) and here will be only briefly recalled.

Scholarly discourse, which was once restricted to printed texts, is now being produced in a variety of formats, including short videos, information visualisations, and networked writing: new types of journal articles (visual essays, video articles) or article elements (graphic abstract, interactive pdf), dynamic and contributive publication formats (Heller, The, & Bartling, 2014) and moreover new typologies of publishable research products (e.g. OpenAireExplore research products categories: protocols, software, data set, models...). Many open access publishing platforms and infrastructures have been established and have gained scientific recognition and reliability (Open Research Europe, 2021). According to these changes, scholars talk about the need to think of scholarly knowledge as an ecosystem (Altman & Cohen, 2022), proposing a holistic and integrated approach to scholarly communication (Birdsall et al., 2005).

In the design domain, the reflection is monitoring trends in journal expansion, in the increase and acceleration of publishing, as well as improvements in the quality of publication (Cross, 2019; Atkinson, Valentine, & Christer, 2021). Anyway, apart from more efficient editorial management systems, the patterns of scientific publishing in design are remarkably stable (Gemser, & De Bont, 2016) and the journals format, or the concept of publications, remains attached to the idea of traditional articles (Lupo, Gobbo & Lonardo, 2021). Finally, quality of perception, visual designs and reading experiences of design journals can be improved (Gemser et al., 2016; Barness & Papaelias, 2021).

We strongly believe that the design discipline can be a pivotal field for the experimentation and discussion of new scientific publication formats for scientific research.

Therefore *Prode* project started a reflection around the following hypotheses:

- 1 *Innovative forms of publication*: Envisioning and supporting innovative (e.g. augmented, enriched, interactive, contributive and collectively-authored) forms of publication, as mixed media ecosystems of content, optional and complementary to traditional linear articles. Strengthening the impact by supporting the discoverability and re-usability of knowledge beyond mere citation and critically approaching AI and content creation.
- 2 *Plurality of design publications*: Promoting choral narratives on contemporary design, for instance representing the plurality of editorial platforms, journals, initiatives, and publications from different geographies outside the mainstream.
- 3 *New models for quality and impact assessment*: Reshaping the evaluation and quality assessment of new publication forms, basing it primarily on qualitative evaluation and responsible use of quantitative indicators and by conferring the same level of academic credibility and accreditation that traditional articles receive.

Especially young researchers need to be aware and attentive of the current and emerging practices concerning scientific publications and the related issues and opportunities: therefore, with the precise intention of educating and training early stage researchers in the design field, in Nov. 2021, in the context of the *Prode* project and the course “Scientific Production”, within the Ph.D. program in Design of Politecnico di Milano, a specific module on the topic of emerging formats of scientific publication has been arranged. The module has been organized as a design-driven and collaborative model of education while engaging Ph.D. candidates in the envisioning phase of the research. In doing so, we wanted to introduce early stage researcher in design to a non-hegemonic approach to design knowledge production and publication, considering also the scientific, academic and cultural implication of new publishing formats validation (from technical, practical and legal feasibility, regarding especially assessment, reviewing procedures and copyright issues); this rethinking at the same time new educational co-created frameworks in which designer can apply their productive thinking and have an impact on collective learning systems and processes.

For the purpose of this article therefore, the focus is exclusively on the training of those early stage researchers, especially about the topic of innovative formats of publication and on the two theoretical outcomes of the research: the *Living publication lifecycle* and the relative *Living publications scenario* (described in the next section).

### **An Innovative Lifecycle and Ecosystem of Content for Scientific Publications: The Living Publication Scenario**

The *Prode* project focused on envisioning two key concepts related to scientific articles: the publication lifecycle and the article as an “ecosystem of content”. Methodologically, case studies research and inductive reasoning have been used for exploring and envisioning new stages in the lifecycle and new scenarios of content. Mock-up, prototyping and testing have been used for the production of a beta-model of a new publishing format. This process ended up with the

proposition of the *Living publication lifecycle* and the relative *Living publications scenario*. We aim these modalities will complement the ones already in use by academic and scientific journals on a regular basis, to promote a cultural shift in scholarly and scientific publication toward open science.

The *Living Publication Lifecycle* Fig. 1 has been envisioned, from an initial case studies research (Lupo, Gobbo & Lonardo, 2021), as a circular lifecycle model, including all the stages present in the various models and inserting new ones.

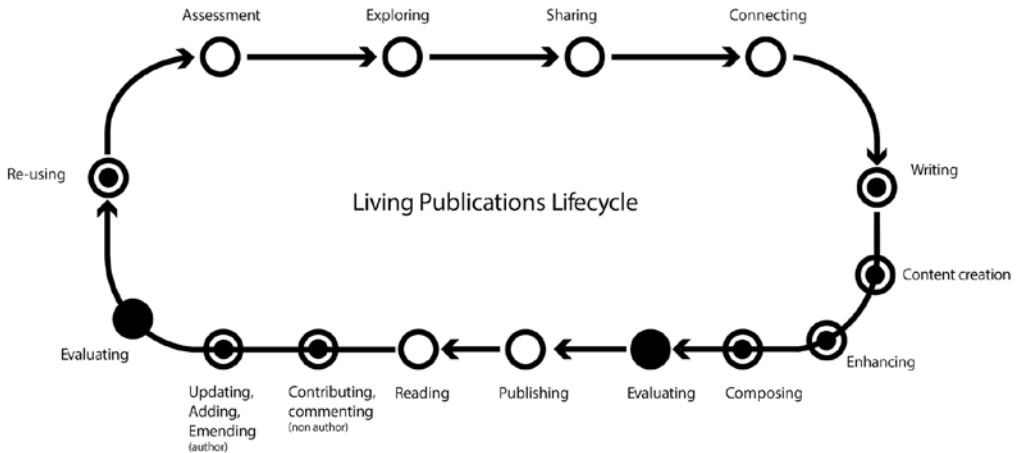


Fig. 1  
The *Living publications Lifecycle*, by Authors.

The Living publication lifecycle is an iterative approach to publication, that enables in an open way the co-creation and co-contribution paradigms in the circulation, use of re-use of scientific contents. For doing this, the lifecycle stages are empowered by including new stages and innovative features and functionalities to support the shift from closed articles to multi-layered and growing publications, explaining the idea of liveability.

According to this lifecycle, a new scenario for the scientific publications has been designed as well: the *Living publications scenario*. In this scenario, open publication models allow (at the same time):

- 1 to explore in innovative and interactive way the content;
- 2 to enable flexible and dynamic writing processes, also by editing minimum discrete units of content (textual *and* non-textual) *and* by collective authoring ;
- 3 to permit to augment and enhance those content;
- 4 to reuse content;
- 5 to assess contents along all stages of the lifecycle.

Within the scenario, four specific trends, complementary each other, have been identified Fig. 2:

- Augmented publications;
- Collective authoring;
- Evolving publications;
- Publications reuse.

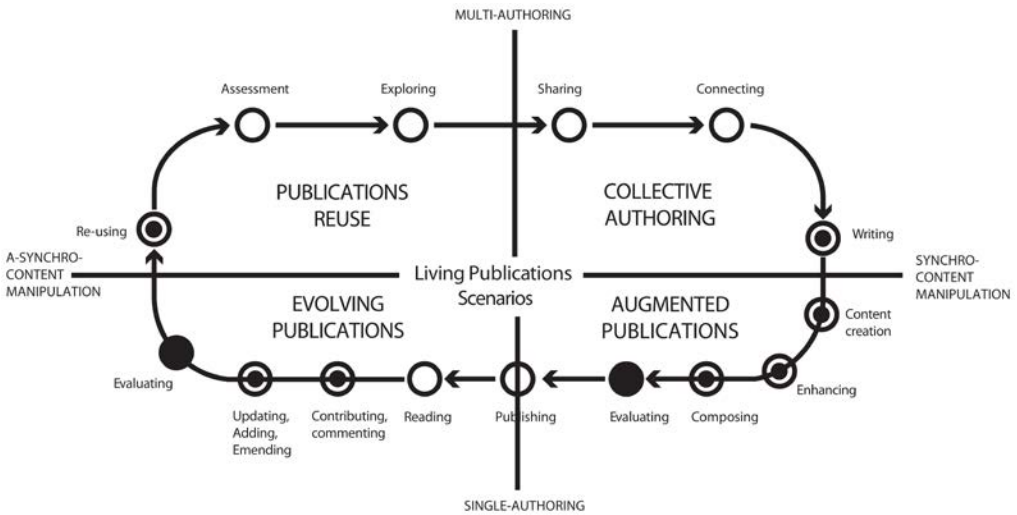


Fig. 2  
The four trends of the *Living Publications Scenario*, by Authors.

The educational training proposed to the Ph.D. candidates in design, based on collaborative learning and a hands-on approach, has been focused on the experimentation of the more innovative stages of the *living publication lifecycle* of the scientific publication, and on the four emerging trends of the *Living publication Scenario*.

The four trends have been selected as the most interesting for educational purposes because they deal with publication lifecycle stages that imply an active role of the authors and a direct impact on the content manipulation.

The Augmented Publication scenario involves all those innovative practices of enriching a publication, by embedding media, visualisations, links, datasets, but also creating non-only- textual content, such as visual essays, video articles, up to articulating and structuring the final scientific publication, by creating an ecosystem of mixed media content. Relevant cases for this scenario are, beside traditional supplemental material encouraged by the most of publishers, new visual format (visual essays, visual case discussion) and above all new content ecosystem e.g., *Stanford Digital Projects* launched in 2016 by Stanford University Press or the *Journal of Artistic Research*.

The Collective Authoring scenario deals with collective authoring processes, co-authoring a publication or contributing to a non-authored publication. A relevant case for this scenario is the concept of *Open Annotation* by Hypothesis (<https://web.hypothes.is/>).

The Evolving Publication Scenario implies processes and tools to modify post-publication an authored article by scaling up discrete minimal content, adding new content data, case studies...), or updating (bibliography...), re-editing, emending (correcting mistakes...) data and content. Relevant case for this scenario are the *Evolving article* concept by Elsevier and the Dynamic Publication Formats of the Opening Science Project (Heller, The, & Bartling, 2014).

The Publication Reuse scenario deals with reusing publications content (over citation) for producing new original content ecosystems, by remixing, embedding, linking (tracking attribution and

authorship). Relevant cases for this scenario are again the Dynamic Publication Formats of the Opening Science Project (Heller, The, & Bartling, 2014) and the concept of *Supporting or contradicting citation* by Scite (<https://scite.ai/>).

### **Methodology. Designing Co-creation Sessions as the Educational Training for Ph.D. Candidates in Design**

Focusing on these four trends of the *Living Publications Scenario*, four co-creation sessions were designed and ran with a group of ten Ph.D. candidates in Design of Politecnico di Milano, with a twofold objective:

- 1 Enabling an effective training of Ph.D. candidates on the subjects of the research, by using a design-driven and collaborative model of learning;
- 2 Incorporating into the research design process a group of people — early-stage researchers — who are among the target audiences of the research itself.

At the envisioning stage of the research, the purpose of these co-creation sessions was therefore to incorporate young researchers themselves into the design process, not just for sharing ideas and opinions, but for empowering them through brainstorming, role plays and hands-on tests, while getting them engaged around the open questions and issues related to emerging and possible future publication formats, that would arise during the sessions.

Additionally, in this specific situation, the effectiveness of the co-creation sessions was amplified, as all the participants of the co-creation sessions were early-stage researchers in the design disciplinary domain (and, furthermore, some of them were also design professionals). This circumstance made it possible to exploit the participants' disciplinary-specific creative thinking, as applied both to the development of the research design process and to the tweaking of the used design-driven and collaborative model of learning, for its possible future structured use.

Each session, lasting overall about four hours, was planned to be conducted in a hybrid mode — in person and online — and was structured in the following subsequent stages:

- A brief lecture introducing the theme of the session: 1) *Augmented publication*; 2) *Collective authoring*; 3) *Evolving publication*; and 4) *Re-using, over citation*, and the explanation of relevant related case studies.
- Round talks, a two-minutes presentation performed by each participant about a personal article they would like to work with during the session.
- “What if” activity, during which participants, divided into small groups of 2-3 students, work both on individual and other participants' articles, using a pre-set Miro board as a practical tool for collective visual annotation Fig. 3. The focus of this activity is to explore and discuss which actions authors must perform and *what* kind of contents and in which formats they have to use for augmenting, collective authoring, evolving, and re-using a publication, and *why* they should want to do so.

- Conversation starters, aimed at getting a reaction and sparking dialogue among participants, typically about the difficulties they encountered or might encounter during the previous stage.
- Guided brainstorm and final collective discussion.

### **Results. Execution, Evidence, and Criticalities of the Four Co-creation Sessions**

The scheme described above, worked overall well for effectively engaging the participants about the general subject of the research and the topics addressed in the four sessions. In fact, from each session specific matters and critical suggestions emerged both at theoretical and practical level, also achieving the goal of involving young researchers — through these co-creative sessions — into the research design process itself.

The ideas that emerged from the four co-creation sessions, originally formulated by the participants as related only to their specific paper, have been then generalized by the authors for their possible application also to the contexts of other scientific productions.

Among the problems highlighted by the Ph.D. candidates during the co-creation session on *Augmented publication*, those considered to be most relevant, are related to “*how*”, at a practical level, it would be possible to *link, embed, compose*, etc., various media into a published and already structured article. In response to this challenge, from the guided brainstorm, emerged the possibilities of providing authors with templates with different format examples to choose from, as well as structures of contents to facilitate the composing of enhanced contents. According to participants, the main reasons “*why*” an author should be willing to augment a publication, include: having more space to put contents in short papers; having a better way to present produced content; visualizing a complex premises; making it easier for the reader to understand some concepts; giving proof of evidence through additional embedded and interactive contents to research questions, hypotheses, and outcomes.

During the second co-creation session about *Collective authoring*, the key concept of *Minimum Units of Content* emerged, defining “*what*” kind of content an author can contribute to others’ articles: an organized, standing alone, discrete unit of content that can also be reused for publication and whose authorship is recognized. This definition includes, for example, a case study discussion or a reference to literature, in which it is specified the relevance and the original idea of the contributor is clearly expressed, excluding thus, for example, a simple comment, which does not add a new layer of knowledge to the existing publication.

Within this envisioned ecosystem of publishing, comments to others’ articles are allowed in the foreseen context of an open platform model, whose users belong to an identified scientific community, in order to prevent sterile criticism, while avoiding the need of moderation.

Thanks to the Ph.D. candidate feedback and insights after the *what-if* activity, during the third co-creation session on *Evolving publication*, the differences among *augmenting* and *updating* were

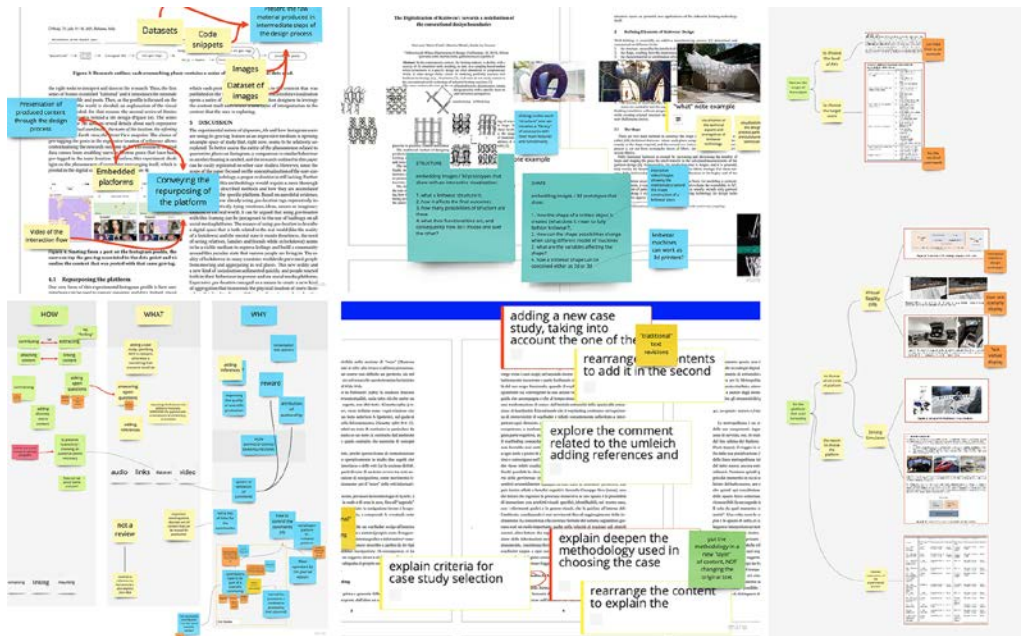


stressed. Though the practical tools required for performing these actions could be the same, the contexts and the reasons for doing it are different: while *augmenting* an article can occur both before and after the publication, *updating* can occur only after the publication, in order to *update, add, emend, modify, or re-edit* an article because, for example, new content is available, or peers asked for changes.

During the fourth co-creation session on *Re-using (over citation)*, the final discussion focused on the actions-phases of re-using and embedding, exploring the feasibility of some metaphors of organization of contents (maps, timelines, stories, canvas, boards...) within the concept of “remixing”, emphasizing the hint that authors should be fully aware that *composing* within this publishing ecosystem, necessarily involves making new meaning to personal and other authors pieces of contents (*Minimum Units of Content*). In this sense, most Ph.D. students argued that the architecture of contents should come from authors, and the metaphors should support it, and not influence it, leaving open the question if having a template structure could be inspiring for authors or, contrariwise, it can influence the composition of contents.

Overall, besides the specific matters that emerged from each session, the main discussed issue — transversal to the four trends of the *Living Publications Scenario* — concern the essential theme of authorship (e.g., “How is it possible to provide scientific validation to the augmented content within the current publishing system?”). The concept of *Minimum Units of Content*, which originates during the sessions, could partly address some of the open questions related to control over contents.

Fig. 3 Examples of the visual annotations made by participants on the paper used as actual case study for the session and visual annotation of the collective discussion, by Authors.



## Conclusion

In this article, after briefly introducing the reasons for looking at new ways of publication in the design field and some challenges to overcome, we stressed the importance of designing innovative training formats for early stage researchers (Ph.D. candidates) on these emerging trends in scientific publication.

To answer to the challenges of this new publication scenario is beyond the scope of this article, and we provide some responses elsewhere (Lupo, 2022; Lupo, 2023; Formia, Lupo & Mehmeti, 2023). Here we presented as possible response to the specific need of training the design community in the topic, the organization and development of structured co-creation sessions within the Ph.D. program on Design of Politecnico di Milano, whose content has been based on the first outcomes in terms of case studies and scenarios of the Prode research project.

We argue that the participative format was beneficial both for the Ph.D. students and for the project advancement: the creative sessions participants' disciplinary-specific creative thinking, revealed to be effective in stimulating discussions oriented to achieving practical outcomes, which were considered in the envisioning of the living publication platform.

The research and reflection about how scientific production and publication in design is renewing and transforming to better respond and serve to the needs of the research community is ongoing in various venues (a national research group within the SID-Società Italiana di Design), a panel in the International Conference IADSR 2023, a regular call for article in *PAD journal*) in order to keep a more structured institutional dimension after the completion of the funded project.

The works concerning the design of the living publication have been advanced, starting from the design of the architecture of a web-based platform, the needed software components; the definition of the functionalities and the patterns of access and navigation within the platform, available for the different types of users; and the development of an interactive detailed mock-up (Radice, 2022). This prototype will go again under usability testing and discussion.

The overall educational aim of the project includes also the planning of other dissemination tools and seminars at national level (ongoing), and a more specific and formally structured educational training about the living publication scenario for Ph.D. candidates (planned for Oct-Nov. 2023).

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The 8th International Forum of Design as a Process, themed “Disrupting Geographies in the Design World” was held in Bologna from 20 to 22 June 2022. The event was organised by the Advanced Design Unit of the Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, Department of Architecture, in collaboration with two partner universities: Tecnológico de Monterrey (TEC) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

The Forum engaged speakers from the Global Design community, expanding the original vocation of the Latin Network for the Development of Design as a Process to include researchers and designers of the Mediterranean Area, Middle East, IOR (Indian Ocean Region), and Global South regions. The goal was to share new perspectives on imagining design futures in a responsible and just perspective, at the forefront of change, while building strategic partnerships and creating accessible knowledge.

Structured around three pillars — seminars, workshops, and exhibitions — the Forum hosted meetings, reflection opportunities, networking activities. It involved designers, scholars, young researchers, design entrepreneurs, in an experimental format.

Speakers’ contributions not only inspired the practices of the designers’ community, but also resonated with students and the broad audiences. The presentations explored intersections of materiality and culture, post-coloniality, decoloniality, gender studies, and other areas of human thought and action which seek to analyse, question and challenge the disruptive geographies in the world, today.

The papers submitted to the five tracks proposed are published in the Digital Special Issue 1 of *diid. disegno industriale – industrial design*, celebrating during those days its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and serving as the fourth partner of the event.

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