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Introduction: Design Creating Value at Intersections

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The theme track includes 11 submissions with 27 authors representing 15 universities from 9 countries. This diversity is also reflected in subjects of the submissions, although sharing an interest to discuss what value creation means in different contexts – and intersections. Our theme highlighted how people from different disciplines coming together create value at different intersections. The subject and field of design has changed, or rather expanded to include new knowledge practices, technologies, including a move from a focus on artificial outcomes to services and business models as outcomes of a design process. The emergences of new intersections where design can create values are hence a logical outcome of this development – and this is of course also reflected in the expansion of design research.

The understanding of design methods and processes can create space for new learning processes in organizations and in different networks. Young, Lievesley, O’Leary, and Warwick present a study where they mean that “Design is actually coming of age” and this has opened up for new roles for design in organizational contexts. They present a revision of the discourse on the nature of and relationship between design and other disciplines. Their article advocates a new para-disciplinary term for the post-disciplinary state of design in its contemporary practices, acting as the ‘inter-discipline’ within organisations that are intent on the strategic development of their innovation capacity and potential. This in turn can increase the adaptability and pro-activity of organizations to meet ambiguity and uncertainties that organizations are working with. This is for instance highlighted in the article by Koria and Best, another submissions in this track, where they, in the form of a conversation, discuss how we need to engage deeply with “evolvability”
to benefit from ambiguity and the unexpected. They claim that this means moving from trying to see the future into trying to create it.

The issue of the value of design for economic development is still an important issue for research. The research on how design brings economic values has had a bias towards industrial countries while ignoring many other countries, sometimes referred to as third world countries. In many NIC (newly industrialized countries), especially in Asia, the interest for design has led to investments and institutionalization of design in the education system. There is a growing interest for design from a business and management perspective also in African countries. The article by El Hilali gives an overview of the situation in Morocco and discusses the emergence of design management and its obstacles to become accepted in an emergent economy based on institutional theories. The issue of how design can contribute to businesses is however still on-going in most industrialized countries. Ford and Terris address the issue of how cooperation between higher education institutions (HEI) engaged in design research, can effectively support SME’s in new product development. This is done when HEI actively participate in the design process whilst simultaneously working with SME’s to facilitate the development of knowledge networks local to specific SME’s. HEI are in this process acting as an intermediary.

Design is often used as a synonymous to innovation without always reflecting upon what constitutes product novelty. Holmquist, Magnusson, and Livholts, in their article discuss the tension between novelty and tradition in design and material innovation. They emphasize how new meanings can rise from the tensions between new and old and they present cases of how these tensions were perceived by customers as particular valuable. They also discuss how designers work deliberately on creating these dissonances although still honouring the quality of the craftsmanship.

Design is increasingly recognized for creating value in the intersections of society and social challenges, sustainability (environment, social, economic), and the circular economy; the oncoming global challenges have an interdisciplinary nature, and design has the potential to create value in multiple intersections. At the same time, the very concept of value is changing. What was seen earlier as a simple profit/loss equation is now recognized as a complex construction where value is created and consumed in novel ways and where well-being co-exists happily with profit, and eco-footprint is increasingly linked to customer experience. Hesselgren, Hasselqvist, and Liridona do claim in their article that design has certain values for exploring and bridging the intersections of everyday life and individual’s decision making to achieve a more sustainable lifestyle, in their case sustainable transportation. In particular they argue that co-design methods can be useful in dealing with complex problems and enable decision-making by communicating the experiences to people with power to trigger and direct change.

There is a growing awareness that designers need to know more about how we as human being changes our capabilities when we grow older. With an increase in life expectancy and decrease in fertility the elderly population has started to account for a disproportionate number in many countries. Innovations for elderly, as a segment, have become a business case. Wang and Chen have conducted a study of elderly users’ understanding of images and perception of products, something that change, as we grow
older. They claim that this knowledge is something designers need to have when designing for elderly. Also children is increasingly a segment with special views of the world, not the least the world of shopping, a theme that Rusman; Yin, and Dhillon have explored in their article about children’s shopping experience.

It is of paramount interest to try to understand what value design does create in new intersections, why it is created and how it happens. Several of the submissions in this track bring up the value of design thinking and the role it has for business strategy, for instance in article by Jalote-Pama, Badjoko, and Deshmukh. They describe an integrated design thinking framework for guiding business problem solving towards nurturing innovation. They demonstrate the value design thinking creates by inducing systems thinking and adopting a human-centred approach to business problem solving. Another approach, also based on design thinking, is brought up by van der Marel and Joore who argue that a designerly approach of design thinking can enhance capabilities in education, an area that to a great extent need new thinking and new ways of approach learning.

Service design is a field that is increasingly seen as one of the core areas of design and innovation, however with many different approaches and a great variety of toolkits to use when developing new services. One submission in this field highlights the role of gamification in service design. Ihmäki, and Heljakka show in their article how the customer journey is enhanced through gamification and how this creates a value system for a ski resort. In this development process the network of actors and their relationships that jointly create an offering are essential for its success.

We were expecting contributions to see how design is creating values in new areas and not only on product and company level but also on social and societal level. Sustainability has a long history of interest among designers and this interest continues with new aspects. We were hence curious to see what those addressing these themes would bring to the conference, and indeed we can see how the field of design and the value creation has expanded without neglecting what we understand as the core of design.

Papers
The following papers are included in the conference proceedings for this track: Design creating value at Intersections

2. El Hilali, N. Design emergence in Morocco as an African country: a pending institutionalization
3. Ford, P., and Terris, D. NPD, Design and Management for SME’s
8. Rusman, M.S., Yin, Y, and Dhillon, Y.S. Effects of atmospheric variables on children during shopping activity: a conceptual framework of children shopping experience

9. van der Marel, F., and Joore, P. Enhanced Capabilities through Design-Based Approaches

10. Wang, Chun and Chen, L. Cognitive Study of Products’ User Interfaces for Use by Elderly People


About the Track Facilitators

Lisbeth Svengren Holm, professor in design management at University of Gothenburg, and head of Business & Design Lab. Her research interest is in organizations’ strategic use of design for the purpose of innovation and strategic development.

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Alison Rieple is Professor of Strategic Management at Westminster Business School and Director of IDEaS: Innovation Design Entrepreneurship and Strategy Research Group. Her research interests include management of design and innovation, especially in the creative and cultural industries.

Birgit Helene Jevnaker is Professor at BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo. She conducts research on design collaboration and is published in Design Issues, Society and Business Review, European Journal of Innovation Management, Design Studies, the Design Journal, and Design Management Journal.