In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the human, social and economic benefits that experience design can bring to nations and organisations. Experience design is the process of enhancing users’ trust, satisfaction and recognition of a product, service and system by improving the users’ perception of the innovativeness, aesthetics and relevance of the experience provided in the interaction between the users and the product, service and system’s design elements in a particular context. It takes the users’ cognitive and emotional experience as its starting point and focuses on developing products, services and systems that could enable that experience. Experience design elements include information, navigation, engagement, entertainment and personalisation (adapted from Cheung 2016; Cheung 2020). Google Search, Google Maps and YouTube are illustrative of how intrinsic to our daily lives innovative experience designs have become. Tencent has its WeChat platform able to support location-based social plug-ins, allowing users to befriend and chat with nearby strangers through a simple shake of their smartphones. These types of experience systems did not exist in the pre-digital era and are now the focus of creative design. Alibaba’s Tmall and Taobao implement technology-enabled forms of electronic payment security, product quality assurance and online dispute resolution to combat user distrust of online purchases. The success of these companies stems from the experience design strategies that they use, in which users are reached and connected through multiple touchpoints and interactions relevant to their sociocultural contexts. Experience design changes the nature and environments of physical artefacts by integrating digital systems and resources with the physical world. It can redefine the functionality, meaning and value of products, services and systems, strategically transforming them into highly integrated ecosystems capable of enhancing the sustainability and humaneness of our social and economic environments while offering industries a competitive edge. The sustainability of the experience ecosystems also relies on involving the users in exchanging value in ways that are mutually beneficial socially, economically and technologically over time. For example, Amazon, eBay and Taobao provide user-friendly interfaces that have enabled their users to create a new wave of small businesses and services on their platforms.

Yet as a relatively new area in the design field, experience design is in need for further research into developing a more sophisticated methodological framework for guiding its processes, and at the same time, creating evaluation criteria for measuring its outcomes in a more systematic and comprehensive manner. This track on “Experience Design – Method and Evaluation” aims to provide a platform for design researchers and practitioners interested in experience design to discuss its method and evaluation. The four papers accepted for this track propose a range of perspectives on the topic.

The first paper by Chen and Cheung, *Consumption experience on Tmall: a social semiotic multimodal analysis of interactive banner ads*, contributes to the methodology literature of experience design. It examines consumer-oriented advertising in e-commerce in China through analysing banner ads on Tmall with a synthesis of social semiotics, multimodal analysis, and interactivity. Departing from Tmall’s annual Double 11 Carnival,
the analysis shows that the banner ads have been incorporated into a gamification design to encourage consumers to spend more and buy things they may not need even after the event has been completed. The authors’ approach of analysing the ads on both the syntagmatic and paradigmatic dimensions is explicitly multimodal, taking the tri-fold convergence of linguistic, visual and interactive resources into consideration to study new phenomena in an e-selling environment. The approach could be helpful to scholars and practitioners in the field of experience design, where multimodality and textual analysis of visual information is of great importance.

The second paper by Alaali and Pitsaki, *Experience design at Starbucks: from global brand management to local spatial experiences*, explores how Starbucks achieves global consistency and meaningfully localised experiences within the context of global brands management and the need for integrating local identities. Through a review of literature and a series of interviews with store designers, design managers and brand concept experts at Starbucks, the authors compile the most commonly applied branding and design methods, with an emphasis on the locally relevant spatial experiences that the global brand would like to deliver. They also classify their findings in a way that could assist other brand and experience design teams in overcoming shared challenges. The findings focus on the management of the grounding brand concept, as well as operations and real estate teams. Through presenting some tools, manuals, guidelines and sample checklists, the authors suggest that store design teams in different locations can build strong, locally relevant spatial experiences that tie in successfully with the brand’s global principles.

The third paper by Tellez and Gonzalez-Tobon, *Empathic design as a framework for creating meaningful experiences*, introduces empathic design as a framework and a strategy that can be adopted by the emerging field of experience design to create meaningful experiences connected with people’s lives and needs. The paper presents the rationale behind the emergence of empathic design, the traits that characterize this approach to design, a collection of empathic design methods and practices, and a critical discussion of the limitations of empathy in design. The paper is developed based on a systematic literature review on empathic design, human-centred design, and empathy. The paper contributes to the broader discussion of how traditional design practices are adapting and evolving to respond to new realities, and how new design paradigms are needed to address the very complex challenges that we are facing in the 21st century.

The fourth paper by Capra, Berger, Szabluk and Oliveira, *Experience design applied to research: an exploratory method of user-centered research*, is presented based on the rationale that an accurate understanding of users’ needs is essential for the development of innovative products. The paper presents an exploratory method of user-centered research in the context of the design process of technological products, conceived from the demands of a large information technology company. The method is oriented - but not restricted - to the initial stages of the product development process, and uses low-resolution prototypes and simulations of interactions, allowing users to imagine themselves in a future context through fictitious environments and scenarios in the ambit of ideation. The method is effective in identifying the requirements of the experience related to the product’s usage and allows rapid iteration on existing assumptions and greater exploration of design concepts that emerge throughout the investigation.

In conclusion, the track facilitators are glad to see that the four papers are enriching the knowledge and skills regarding experience design and informing potential directions for further research.

**Reference**
