



International Journal of Design: A Step Forward

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Welcome to the *International Journal of Design*, an open-access journal dedicated to publishing peer-reviewed research papers in all areas of design.

The field of design is growing, and is moving closer towards becoming a fully recognized academic discipline. During the last decade, we have witnessed the phenomenal expansion of graduate design education globally. A survey conducted by Kazuo Sugiyama in 2003 found more than twenty universities worldwide offering doctoral programs in design, with more than 350 doctoral students enrolled in these programs (Sugiyama, 2003). In fact, the total figure for doctoral design students in 2003 probably exceeded 500, as not all universities were accounted for in Sugiyama's survey. We have also seen that, from 1990 to 2007, subscriptions to *Design Research News* increased to 7500 (Friedman, 2007). And in 2005, a new chapter of international collaboration in design research began with the founding of the *International Association of Societies of Design Research* (IASDR) by the *Chinese Institute of Design* (CID), the *Design Research Society* (DRS), the *Japanese Society for the Science of Design* (JSSD), and the *Korea Society of Design Science* (KSIDS).

Although the number of researchers in design is close to reaching the critical mass needed for dramatic growth, the lack of publication venues still hinders the transformation of design into an academic discipline. The situation has improved significantly over the last forty years through the efforts of many pioneers, as recounted recently by Nigel Cross (2007). We now have several journals, including *Design Studies* (since 1979), *Design Issues* (since 1984), the *Journal of Design History* (since 1988), *Design Management Review* (since 1990), *The Design Journal* (since 1998), the *Journal of Design Research* (since 2001), *CoDesign* (since 2005), *Artifact* (since 2006), and *Design Research Quarterly* (since 2006). However, the number of papers that can be published in these journals is still quite limited.

Partly due to the limited number of journals, and partly due to the pressure to publish in SCI, SSCI or A&HCI journals, many researchers opt to publish their works in journals of related fields, such as engineering, computer science, ergonomics, management, and psychology. The positive side to this is that researchers in those areas might learn to better appreciate design research. But the negative side is twofold: First, design researchers are sometimes forced to adjust the direction of their research in tune with the interests of these other disciplines, rather than those of design. And second,

because design research is dispersed in journals across many different fields, it is difficult for design researchers to locate and read each other's works, diluting the impact of these works on the field of design itself.

The growth of any discipline relies on the accumulation of knowledge. Design is no exception. As suggested by Ken Friedman (2007), we need to reach a critical mass, we need a richer flow of knowledge, and we need a progressive research program to support continuing growth of our field. In addition to achieving the necessary critical mass of design researchers, we need open publication venues so that new theories in design can be proposed, analyzed, challenged, and confirmed or rejected. However, at present, not only do we not have a sufficient number of journals devoted to publishing design research, but often our access to these journals is restricted by subscription fees set by commercial publishers. Such constraints inhibit the healthy development of the emerging design discipline.

The *International Journal of Design* represents an effort to publish high-quality design research, and to disseminate this research to the widest possible audience. The journal places strong emphasis on quality. Our Editorial Board consists of leading design researchers from all over the world, all of whom have proved willing to contribute their valuable time to the development of this new journal. After the journal was formally announced in August 2006, we received 42 submissions from 16 countries within six months. We see this outpouring of interest as clear evidence that we have taken the first step towards becoming a respected journal.

To reach the widest possible audience, the journal will be published both online and in print. The online version will be open access, freely available for anyone, anywhere to download, read, distribute, and use, with proper attribution of authorship, for any non-commercial purpose. A printed version of the journal will also be available for the costs of printing and distribution.

To distinguish this journal from existing design journals, we have identified two main focuses of research for the *International Journal of Design*: social-cultural impacts on design, and relevance to design practice. The journal aims to provide an international forum for exchange of ideas and findings from researchers across different cultures, by encouraging research on the impact of cultural factors on design theory and practice. The journal also seeks to promote the transfer of knowledge between professionals in academia and industry, by emphasizing research in which results are of

interest or applicable to design practice. Every article in the journal will include a short description of its relevance to the actual practice of design.

To help make our vision a reality, we invite you to submit your best work to the *International Journal of Design* and to encourage your colleagues to do the same. All of us can contribute to building a common theoretical foundation, one which can then be passed on to future generations of designers.

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