



Disseminating and Reviewing Design Research

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This panel session highlighted strategies to successfully disseminate and review Design Research. As co-editors of CTRJ Focused Issue on Advancing Design Scholarship, Bye and Haar shared experiences that brought into focus challenges with developing and reviewing a manuscript based on creative design work. In the session, the panel looked specifically at stronger research design, methodology, and manuscript preparation, shared strategies for advancing and supporting the design and publication of more purposeful design research. Hahn, Chen, and Lapolla shared their experience with writing and revising design research, key challenges, knowledge gained via the revision process, and the role of partnerships in the writing process.

While authors were fluent in sharing what was done, they often omitted the methodological or theoretical foundations that the work was building upon or contributing to or the ‘lens’ the work was framed in. A methodological foundation is the overall approach to design/research linked to the paradigm or theoretical foundation (Gray & Malins, 2004; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006); a theoretical foundation or framework comprises existing theory (assumptions about the phenomenon under study) of a field and structures relationships between concepts and constructs from what is known (Kivunja, 2018; Touliatos & Compton, 1988); and a conceptual framework may be the research designer’s own or adapted model of the variables being investigated and encourages development of theory. The selected foundation will influence methods for gathering and analyzing design data.

There was debate if the design process or Research through Practice are a theoretical framework. If it synthesizes prior knowledge of the field and if the concepts represent known knowledge/theory of the field, then they can be. Bye’s (2010) framework for design scholarship is not a methodological or theoretical foundation, but rather an approach to frame the three types of design scholarship with a call to publish in the Research through Practice category.

Contextual review is critical to design scholarship and goes beyond written resources to include citations from designs, exhibitions, and the range of digital media in the public domain. Though formulated inquiry can be difficult to define, having an aim, objective, or question to

guide the scholarship is essential even as it is likely to change overtime through practice. Hahn asked how can surface designs be developed to express sacred geometric patterns with textiles and used Abduction: What(thing) + How (working principle) = Value (aspired) to guide her practice. Chen and Lapolla explored modular shapes and interlocking systems for apparel design using a research through practice approach.

Hahn shared her methods of analysis which included comparison and reflection around the reasoning patterns of abduction as well as an iteration cycle that included analyzing a previous artifact, reviewing the problem/improving methods by exploring possibilities (Brown, 2008), reflecting on practice, and applying new methods/materials, stemming from the urge to create something new (Boland et al., 2008). Synthesizing her analysis, she proposed a Body of Work design framework.

Chen and Lapolla presented an excellent example of design data documentation in relation to the guiding questions used. Design data in the form of sketches and digital drawings was extremely valuable, especially early in the practice. Triangulated analysis during practice informed decision making. Analysis across practice synthesized themes which shortened the design process with more experience and design refinement. The functionality needs addressed in earlier designs allowed for exploration of surface and transformation in later designs. Their framework, Focused Knowledge Design Practice, shares of a cycle of inquiry and discovery that directed their approach. They continue to build on this framework while keeping the aesthetics of the designs at the center of problem solving.

Bye and Haar shared a proposed CTRJ Guide for Design Scholarship Reviewers that clarifies points unique to design scholarship. They encouraged reviewers to be open to and argue for other ways of knowing, presenting, and using alternative methodologies. Reviewers can advance design scholarship by partnering with the Associate Editor and Editor for enhanced reviews and submissions. It is critical that we support each other to build a broader understanding of the practical details and strategies for dissemination of design research.

References and Background Reading

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