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DRS2020 Editorial: OPEN Sig

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Editorial: OPEN Sig

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The mission of OPEN is to facilitate and explore Design's connections beyond the areas of practice and research that characterised it after the middle of the C20, connecting it to networks of theory and method that can elucidate design practices, and experiences of the designed world. This is answering a situation where the definition of design is getting broader, from machines, to services, to policies, to politics. In academic discussion this broadening is allied to the goal of making better futures – Design retains its progressive mission of addressing futures, even though challenges and controversies await. The papers in this section address the ways in which design can work with these challenges to create opportunities for future designs. They are linked by the principle of trying something out before you commit to it - a principle deeply embedded in the DNA of Design practice. In two of them this is through prototypes, of policy or AI interaction, and in the third through engaging with political campaigns through social media. Stoimenova and Kleinsmann's paper, 'Identifying and addressing unintended values when designing (with) Artificial Intelligence' (paper 222) draws attention to unexpected and oftentimes not favourable side-effects of designed systems, drawing on the philosophy of technology to engage with the ethics of designing with AI, in the face of its independence of action. They show that prototyping, as well as testing the potential functioning of the products in use, also uncovers unforeseen actors that can come into play in the valuation of designs. In other words, by enabling a demo-run of the product in real life, prototyping provides designers to identify different and unforeseen stakeholders that can result from designs and their outcomes. Alvarez, Auricchio and Mortati's paper, 'Design prototyping for policymaking' (paper 271) presents a typological analysis to comprehensively review prototyping methods relevant to policy and outline approaches to prototyping. They direct our focus towards the use of prototyping for policy making and provide a method to approach "policymaking as designing" by locating recent moves to adopt design-process thinking in government policy development to precedents in design practice. Design connected to political campaigning is a fruitful avenue to engage

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with questions that point to the ethical validity, or otherwise, of design and Suhendra, Wragg and Barnes' paper 'Social Media Research and the Impact of Graphic Design: a case study examining an Indonesian political campaign' (paper 265) shows the ways in which graphical elements of a political campaign were helpful to provide a campaign brand that attracted attention and allowed large scale publicity. This paper showcases how politics, and this can be extended to policy makers, can make use of design. The relevance of the three papers to OPENSIG is nicely summed up by the quotation with which Stoimenova and Kleinsmann end theirs, offering a valid challenge to Design research:

"...do we hide behind the notion of technology we don't understand, or do we take full responsibility for all the unintended values we create?"

About the Author:

Tom Fisher is Professor of Art and Design at Nottingham Trent University, UK. His research spans disciplines and forms of skilled (craft) practice. He is widely published in Design History and Archaeology and other forums.

For more information on the Objects, Practices, Experiences, and Networks SIG, please visit the SIG's webpage at <https://www.designresearchsociety.org/cpages/open-sig>. To find out whether the SIG is organising a satellite event to the DRS2020 conference, or just to get in touch with members and see news on the SIG, please visit the SIG webpage.