



# Hazarding Design

Risks and consequences of design

Annual conference of the German Society for Design Theory and Research ([DGTF](#))

26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in Lucerne/Switzerland

Call for Papers, Deadline: 30 November 2023

At least since the modern era, the design profession has been guided by a belief in its power to change society (Dorrestijn & Verbeek, 2023, p. 46). In doing so, it sees itself fundamentally as a means of bringing about positive change through applied creativity (Simon, 1996, p.111). Ideas about what counts as positive change and how to achieve it, however, have shifted over time. While designers at the beginning of the 20th century still believed in the standardized satisfaction of human needs by means of technical-social engineering, reality proved to be resistant to such planning procedures. Societal, ecological, economic and social problems hardly follow causal chains that can be broken by good design – whatever that may be. Instead, we increasingly find ourselves facing down *Wicked Problems* (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 160 ff.) that arise in highly complex systems, propagated by heterogeneous actors—both human and non-human—and characterized by asymmetrical power relations.

Design, in turn, is by no means a neutral, universally applicable tool; it's a situated “socio-material practice” (Mareis, Paim, p. 11 f.) strongly influenced by white, male worldviews, which inscribes itself in stakeholder networks and societies (ibid., p. 11). Thus, design interventions inevitably create new constellations and thus unforeseen consequences. Design is more than a concrete answer to static problems, deeper than a quick fix. Designers produce meanings (Krippendorff, 2006), find themselves enmeshed in the negotiation processes of actor networks (Latour, 1996) and develop contributions for new ways of coexisting in the field of tension between pragmatism and utopia (Fezer, 2013).

These considerations lead to the central questions of the 2024 DGTF conference:

What effects does design actually have? How does design achieve an impact and how do we deal with the consequences of design?

We invite you to discuss these questions at the 21st Annual Conference of the German Society for Design Theory and Research (DGTF) at the University of Applied Science Lucerne, Switzerland and look forward to your thoughts and projects on the following topics:

- **Impact measurement:** How does design work? What established forms of impact measurement exist, which schools of thought and understandings do they stem from?
- **Achievement of objectives:** Who determines when design is successful? How and by whom are goals and ideas of success negotiated, and what role do competition and benchmarking play in this process?
- **Design impact assessment:** What are desired impacts of design and where do the unforeseen consequences begin?
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Who and what does design affect? Do the actual stakeholders of the design play a role in the development of targets, evaluation methods and evaluation itself? How does this role change in networks with a wide range of stakeholders and species?
- **Error culture:** What does a positive error culture mean in design as a profession driven by perfectionism and success? How do we move away from the dualism of error vs. success toward an understanding of open learning processes and what role do agility and culture play? How are failures evaluated, addressed and communicated?
- **Communication of impact:** How can we communicate and present the impact of design so that it is (finally) understood as more than a cosmetic profession?

We invite researchers and practitioners from all disciplines and sectors to submit papers to the 2024 DGTF Annual Conference. As DGTF, we are concerned with research that addresses, critiques, describes and applies design in its broadest sense, and we particularly value interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. This includes empirical, theoretical, conceptual and exploratory research contributions as well as project contributions or applications from practice. We are accepting contributions in German or English.

The conference team aims to facilitate a lively conference that provides ample space for professional exchange and community building while showcasing the academic quality of design research. We provide five different formats in which contributions can be submitted. All submissions go through a double-blind review process.

Following the conference, an open-access publication will be released (ISBN). All full papers can be revised up to a maximum of six weeks after the conference. Authors of all other conference formats are invited to prepare their contribution as a full paper for publication up to a maximum of six weeks after the conference. We reserve the right of refusal.

The style sheets will be uploaded in a timely manner.

## **Submission categories**

### **Full Paper** (max. 5,000 words)

Full papers represent novel and rigorous contributions to the discourse of design research and may be submitted for a specific topic area from the Call for Papers.

1. Extended Abstract (800-1,000 words + references) by 11/30/23
2. Final Paper by 03/31/2024 (4 weeks before conference start date).

→ To be submitted: Title, abstract, keywords, paper, visuals, references

### **Exploratory & Work-In-Progress Paper** (max. 3,000 words)

Exploratory & Work-In-Progress Papers provide an opportunity to present ongoing research projects, practice projects and positions on each of the main topics.

1. Extended Abstract (800-1,000 words + references) including 2–3 meaningful visuals by 11/30/2023
2. Final Paper by 03/31/2024 (4 weeks before conference start date).

→ To be submitted: Title, abstract, keywords, paper, visuals, references

### **Discussion panels**

Discussion panels provide an opportunity for structured discussion of various aspects of the conference theme. Please submit a methodological concept including the topic, process, potential participants and methodological approach (e.g. Open Space, World Café, Fishbowl).

→ To be submitted: Title, abstract (800-1,000 words), schedule, questions, interactions or number of participants, references and methodological concept by 11/30/2023.

### **Workshops**

Workshop sessions provide hands-on experience with methods and / or research results. Please submit a methodological concept that includes the process, schedule and possible participatory involvement, as well as an application concept for the findings. The workshop material must be procured independently. We are particularly pleased to receive submissions from consortia and teams from different sectors with practical relevance.

→ To be submitted: Title, abstract (800-1000 words), schedule, questions, references, methodological concept and concept for disseminating the knowledge gained in the workshop by 11/30/2023

### **Poster and prototype session**

The session offers the opportunity to present contributions in the form of large posters. The research results are clearly summarized and presented on the poster. The posters will be displayed in the foyer of the conference hall, where they can be explained and discussed. A separate time slot is provided in the conference program for this purpose. Poster printing must be done by the authors. Additionally, working prototypes can be set up to further illustrate the project. We reserve the right to reject prototypes that are not practicable to exhibit.

→ To be submitted: Poster proposal including title, abstract (800-1000 words), visuals in PDF format by 11/30/2023. The layout is not specified. Possible prototypes and what is needed for their presentation must be described on a separate sheet.

More information about the final poster will follow after acceptance (size, format, language, information on the poster).

We look forward to exciting submissions. For any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to [tagung2024@dgtf.de](mailto:tagung2024@dgtf.de).

The conference team

Andrea Augsten, Merle Ibach, Markus Köck & Axel Vogelsang

### References:

Dorrestijn, S., & Verbeek, P.-P. (n.d.). *Technology, Wellbeing, and Freedom: The Legacy of Utopian Design*. International Journal of Design. Retrieved July 10, 2023, from <http://www.ijdesign.org/index.php/IJDesign/article/view/1512/590>

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Krippendorff, K. (2006). *The semantic turn: a new foundation for design*. Taylor & Francis.

Latour, B. (1996). On actor-network theory: A few clarifications. *Soziale Welt*, 47 (4), 369–381. JSTOR.

Mareis, C., & Paim, N. (2021). Introduction and Prelude. In C. Mareis & N. Paim (Eds.), *Design Struggles: Intersecting Histories, Pedagogies, and Perspectives* (pp. 11–22). Valiz.

Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences*, Vol. 4 (No 2, June 1973), 155–169.

Simon, H. A. (1996). *The Sciences of the Artificial* (3rd edition). MIT Press.