

Introduction

Innovation is one of the inescapable buzzwords in contemporary discourse across a wide spectrum of interests and issues. Commentators in fields as diverse as management, entertainment, education and public policy try to identify the habits of minds and the professional skill sets that promote “thinking outside the box” and “envisioning problems as opportunities.” Increasingly linked in the popular imagination with design as a way of thinking and as a practice, innovation is hailed as critical to saving everything from a struggling business to the planet itself. The hype surrounding innovation is difficult to ignore, but the real challenge is to transform the undeniable interest and enthusiasm for the concept into genuine knowledge and productive understanding. As a forum for provocative probing, thoughtful discussions, and reasoned arguments—buttressed by convincing evidence and documented experience, *Design Issues* has a role to play in supporting the design community’s efforts to meet this intellectual challenge.

Innovation is certainly a familiar topic to readers of this journal. Past issues have included noteworthy articles by Nicola Morelli on social innovation (vol. 23 no. 4, Autumn 2007) and Barry Wylant on innovation and design thinking (vol. 24 no. 2, Spring 2008). More recently, the journal published a substantial two-part review of perspectives on innovation authored by Mike Hobday, Anne Boddington and Andrew Grantham (vol. 27 no. 4, Autumn 2011 and vol. 28 no. 1, Winter 2012). This issue of the journal is devoted to the topic and brings together a set of papers presented originally at the 2011 Designing Pleasurable Products and Interfaces (DPPI) conference held in Milan. In their introduction, the guest editors of this special issue explain the genesis of this material and outline the main arguments of the collection.

In an age of seemingly instantaneous communication, digital dissemination and incessant buzz, it is worth noting that two years have elapsed since the original versions of these papers were first presented. Buzz fades; energy generated by conferences is absorbed and transformed in different and personal ways by those

who attended the event; and presenters continue on their own ways, pursuing or abandoning lines of research for whatever reasons drive their own developments. But a journal like *Design Issues* endures as a repository of important work—a trusted vehicle for the dissemination of ideas and a stimulus to the next generation of scholars and scholarship.

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Note to Our Readers

With volume 30, *Design Issues* marks three decades of publication. Anniversaries are milestones worth celebrating; they also provide occasions for reflection. Thirty years is an intriguing span of time—a generation in demographic terms, an entire career for an individual but only a beginning for a young discipline like Design.

As part of our reflection upon three decades of design discourse, the editors have compiled a list of thirty articles—one per volume—published in the journal since its inception. Each of the current editors contributed suggestions to this list. We make no claim that this constitutes a “best of” list nor claim that it is merely a list of personal favorites. Instead, we offer this as a sampler of the enduring themes, emerging questions, and the thoughtful voices that readers have encountered in the pages of the journal.

The 30th anniversary list is available on the MIT Press Journals website for *Design Issues*. All of the articles included on this list will be freely available to the public through December 31, 2014.