

# Introduction

How effective is a legal system that people cannot understand how to use? How can we use participatory, creative design methods in public institutions to serve people better? These questions, posed by guest editors Margaret Hagan and F. Kürşat özenç, are at the heart of this special issue: *The Rise of Legal Design*. They are undeniably design questions, involving issues such as usability, capability, human-centered and service design. In their effort to answer these questions, contributors to this issue apply the skills, methods, and insights of design theory and practice to promote greater transparency and accessibility throughout the legal system. A special issue like this operates on multiple levels. It focuses attention on a significant topic and weaves together the threads of earlier work. As such, this issue marks an important milestone in the maturation of significant areas of inquiry. Long-time readers of *Design Issues*, for example, will recognize links between the arguments presented here and previous work published in this journal such as Liesbeth Huybrechts, Katrien Dreessen, and Ben Hagenaars's *Building Capabilities Through Democratic Dialogues* (vol. 34, no. 4 Autumn 2018), Marc Steen's *Organizing Design-for-Wellbeing Projects: Using the Capability Approach* (vol. 32, no. 4 Autumn 2016), Ezio Manzini's *Design Culture and Dialogic Design* (vol. 32, no. 1 Winter 2016), and Andy Dong's *The Policy of Design: A Capabilities Approach* (vol. 24, no. 4 Autumn 2008). *The Rise of Legal Design* is a notable step in the process of building a bridge between communities of expertise both legal and design. On another level, this issue is an important part of the effort to promote greater rigor, develop appropriate metrics, and collect the kind of case studies that can support evidence-based arguments for legal design and identify best practices. As this special issue demonstrates, the design community has much to contribute to the development of legal design. At the same time, there is ample evidence here that designers have much to learn from their peers in the legal profession.

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