

Call for participation:
NORDES SUMMER SCHOOL 2008

Research and Design Experiments

KROGERUP HØJSKOLE, COPENHAGEN , 25.8 – 29.8, 2008

It is becoming more and more common for design researchers to engage various kinds of design experiments as part of their research, yet we do not have much debate about the foundation, methodology and knowledge production that such a research involves.

The Nordic Design Research Conference (NORDES) summer school 2008 is addressing these issues at a five-day course for PhD. students where research and design experiment is the common theme. Modes of experimentation are addressed at morning workshops. Translating experiments into arguments is the topic of afternoon seminars where analysis and lines of argument are taken up. Both workshops and seminars will include space for the work in progress of the participants.

During the summer school the participants will be paired in teams that prepare a synopsis for a joint presentation at the end of the summer school on a topic of their own choice. The participants are encouraged to develop this synopsis into a text for publication after the summer school.

The notion of design experiments

The summer school applies a broad definition of design experiments. Whenever design researchers are making design suggestions or interventions, as part of their research inquiry we will call such research experimental design research. Design experiments can for example be conducted in such traditions as co-design, critical design, concept design or radical design. Experimental design research as we define it here is in many ways similar to research-through-design or practice-based research. What makes design experiments part of design research is that they are carried out in order to gain knowledge about what and how to design, and furthermore that they in themselves carries a statement about “what could be”.

Knowing through experimentation

Design research involving design experiments must produce new knowledge. This knowledge must have similarities to the kind of knowing that develops also in designing. In the summer school we will examine the idea that design research can be likened with designing in the way that both employ iterations between programmatic statements about what can (or ought to) be done and explorative proposals for how this can take shape. We propose that what makes design research different from designing is that design research aims at developing and exploring the programmatic statement whereas designing aims at establishing workable proposals. The interplay between program and experiments in experimentation will be a core theme of the summer school.

From experiment to argument

A design experiment must be critically evaluated to disclose what can be learned in relation to what the experiment intended. Experimentation must be made transparent to the audience that the design research is addressing in order to produce arguable knowledge. Several analytical strategies may be applied to accomplish such an evaluation. Broadly speaking these strategies can address either the transient process of experimentation (for example through interpretative analysis), the design experiment as proposed artifact (for example through a textual reading of the artifact in the context of other artifacts) or the experiment as prototypical practice (for example analyzed in an anthropological or ethno-methodological perspective). The summer school will take up these different analytical strategies and examine how they translate experiments into arguments.

Tentative program

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arrival	9-12 workshop: Knowledge of form – forms of knowledge	9-12 workshop: Designing design research	9-12 workshop: From designing to a research contribution	Participants present theme to be developed into paper for joint publication
Research and design experiments Introduction (chair: Thomas Binder) "Speed dating" – quick project pitch	14-17 seminar: Design as research result – beyond the empirical	14-17 seminar: Worlds of Design and management, different paradigmatic founda- tions	14-17 Preparation of synopsis and presentation	Departure
19-21 Visit to the beach	19-21 Common playground	19-21 Visit to Louisiana Museum	19-21 Forum discussion: Why design research	

Workshops & Seminars

Knowledge of form – forms of knowledge

(Pelle Ehn, K3, Malmö University)

Can design be production of knowledge? How is knowledge then formed by the designer? In this workshop we explore such questions by experiments inspired by Johan Asplund's "meta theoretical" reflections in the book "What is the sound of thunder?". We produce recordings, sketches, metaphors, multimodal synaesthetic expressions and not least artifacts or machines. Reflections on production of this web of expressions are related to actor-network theory and the idea of "circulating references" and knowledge production as design of chains of material transformations of the object of knowledge, rather than as abstractions of something concrete.

Designing design research

(Thomas Binder & Eva Brandt, Danish Design School)

Design experiments are not only experiments of design they are also themselves designed to explore a particular program. In this workshop we will discuss the relation between program and experiment in design research, and we invite participants to analyze their own on-going research as an interplay between an evolving program and series of experimentation.

From designing to a research contribution

(Ben Matthews, MCI, University of Southern Denmark & Tuuli Mattelmäki, University of Art&Design, Helsinki)

This workshop/seminar will introduce, from precedents, several different models of the role that design projects (processes and artefacts) have played in making research contributions. From this initial discussion, participants will be organised into groups to engage in a practical design exercise, which will form the basis of and material for trying out the different models for turning design projects into design research. We will conclude with a discussion comparing the different approaches as archetypal models of research.

Design as research result – beyond the empirical

(Lars Hallnäs, The Swedish School of Textiles, University College of Borås and Chalmers University of Technology)

We generally agree that research is supposed to produce knowledge. We look for research results that in some sense extend and deepen our knowledge about this or that. To analyze the meaning of this is the main subject of the philosophy of science whereas to provide proper working foundations is the main challenge for research methodology. Central to all this is the basic notion of a research result we assume. What does it then mean to assume that a design process can produce a research result? This workshop/seminar will introduce a discussion about the distinction between propositional knowledge and definitional knowledge and relate this to a more general discussion about the issue of results in practice based design research.

Worlds of Design and management, different paradigmatic foundations

(Ulla Johansson, Business & Design Lab, University of Gothenburg & Håkan Edeholt, K3, Malmö University)

Design and management differ in their epistemological foundations – that is something most researchers agree about. But in what way do they differ, and how to describe this difference? We are both interested and engaged in this construction of knowledge and taken for granted assumptions related to design-

ners, managers and engineers. In the seminar we will start with an overview of alternative possibilities to construct the world of design and the world of management – similarities and differences. After that, the participants are asked to discuss and relate themselves in this multiple universes.

Follow up publication

After the summer school a book will be published containing papers from the participants. The participants will be grouped in writing pairs based on their position statements. The writing teams work together during the summer school and are also writing together for the follow up publication.

Date and Place

The Summer school will be held from 25.8 to 29.8.2008 at Krogerup Højskole in the Copenhagen region, where all participants can stay the whole week (see www.krogerup.dk).

Participation:

The summer school is mainly for ph.d.students in design research. The language of the summer school will be English. Registration is limited to 25 participants.

To register you must send a motivation including: **a project summary, a brief argument for how the summer school is relevant for your research, a short statement about a position you want to challenge or defend in relation to the summer school theme relevant for you, and an indication of in which workshops or seminars you would particularly like to have your work taken up. (max 2 A4 pages).**

Participation costs are 3000 DKK. This price covers accommodation with all meals.

Admittance to the summer school will be based on evaluation of submitted motivations. Deadline for registration is June 15'th, 2008, notification of acceptance by June 22'th. Registration and further information: thomas.binder@dkds.dk.

For more information contact: thomas.binder@dkds.dk

The summer school is organized by NORDES (the Nordic Design Research Conference) with support from the Danish Center for Design Research and the Swedish Doctoral School in Design.