

QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **SPRING 2018**

INNOVATION

Innovation On Innovation

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QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **SPRING 2018**

INNOVATION[®]



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Left: Dine with Design. See p. 46.

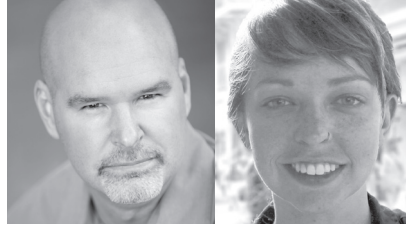


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By **Brian Roderman, FIDSA**, and **Kate Whitney, S/IDSA**
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THE EXPERIENCE REVOLUTION

We stand on the brink of the next seismic shift, ready to declare that the experience revolution is near. We have observed the signs and studied our history. This revolution aligns with a historical cadence of large-scale changes that were industry revolutions in their own rights. Our analysis shows that since the start of the 20th century, every 30 years has introduced large-scale changes to our industry and the world we live in.

These major shifts in the market come in 30-year waves. Let's consult our past and trace exactly how we got here to understand what the experience revolution means for our future as designers and innovators.

1900s – The Physical Revolution

By the early 1900s, the way we built our physical world began to change. With advancements in the technology of manufacturing, we were able to construct massive iron-framed structures. It was then that we started to design and construct the first skyscrapers, like New York's Flatiron Building and the Royal Insurance Building in Liverpool (completed in 1901 and 1903, respectively). New industry rose faster than our buildings as the United States Steel Corporation was formed in 1901, becoming both the largest steel producer and the largest corporation the world had ever seen. Simultaneously, we dreamed electric streetcars and underground railway systems into existence, creating a physical network that connected our large physical structures and contributed to a thriving ecosystem of physicality.

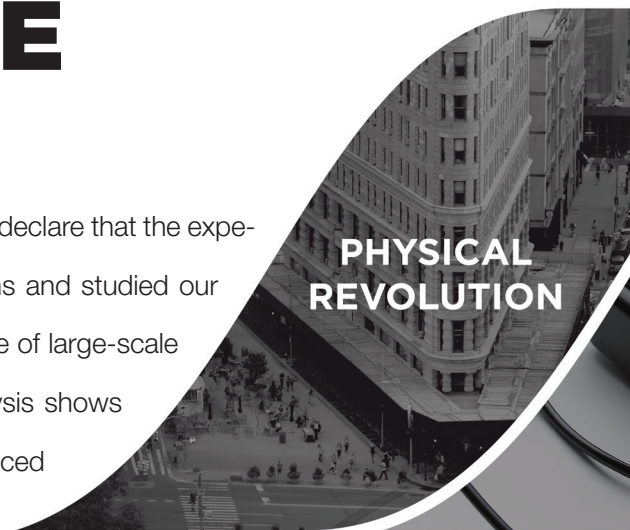
1900

This period represents the physical revolution when the construction of large physical structures became possible in a way never before conceived and unleashed a new era of design. Even existing materials were used in new ways; the Ingalls Building in Cincinnati, OH, became the first concrete monolith of its kind (completed in 1902). Through this revolution, we changed the way we sheltered humans and the ways we could travel and work. Construction of buildings and transportation fundamentally changed, and so did the physical world we inhabit.

1930s – The Product Revolution

The next revolution was born of new materials and methods of mass production. A wave of new plastics or polymeric materials were developed, starting with polystyrene (produced in the 1930s). These new plastics incorporated different chemicals that improved the substance while reducing cost, and this reduced cost translated to new products populating middle-class homes. Equipment once feasible only for businesses were scaled into consumer products, joining the home ecosystem. This period witnessed the advent of

PHYSICAL
REVOLUTION



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© IN2 INNOVATION

1960

1990

2020

electric steam irons and the first domestic dishwasher with an electric motor.

After we changed the large-scale physicality of our world with the physical revolution, these products became the content of those structures, marking the product revolution. During this period, many other polymers were developed (polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride, polyester, polypropylene and polycarbonate, to name a few), allowing for a massive volume of products to be manufactured more quickly and efficiently than our world had ever seen.

1960s – The Digital Revolution

In the 1960s, a new world was being built—a digital world built of processors and code that served as an extension of the logical mind and pushed what we were capable of as humans. This was the digital revolution. Jack Kilby paved the way for microprocessors with a 1959 patent for integrated circuits, electronic circuits on a small plate of semiconductor materials. Computers began to shrink while their capabilities grew. A standard coding language—the American Standard Code for Information Exchange (ASCII)—was developed so comput-

ers, regardless of their manufacturer, could communicate and exchange data, enabling the development of a digital network that could connect our new digital world. And by the late 1980s, the building blocks of the World Wide Web were being laid down to create the first global modern digital networks.

1990s – The Service Revolution

By the 1990s, the digital world was successfully connected. Thanks to early internet pioneers like Netscape and America Online (AOL), our physical world became smaller. To populate the internet, services were created to meet user needs as never before. Companies were able to connect directly with consumers, and new service offerings were possible. In 1995, eBay changed consumer-to-consumer business with an online auction service. The same year, Amazon began selling books. Less than 10 years later, the iPod was released and iTunes soon followed—changing the music industry and proving that digital files and services had the same value as the previous physical products. A shift began wherein products were supported and enriched by digital services.

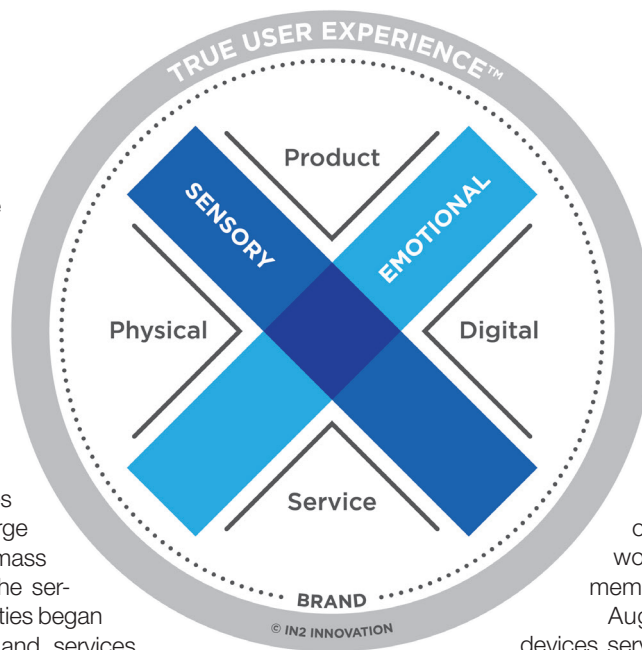
Above: Paradigm-level revolutions hit the market in 30-year waves, with each building on the previous. The next wave—the experience revolution—is poised to begin in 2020.

On another front, upscale marquee names in the automobile industry were being launched in the US by foreign automakers. Around 1990, Toyota had introduced Lexus, Honda had introduced Acura, and Nissan was unveiling Infiniti. This brought a new trend of precision manufacturing techniques along with white-glove concierge service expectations to the mass car-buying market. And with the service revolution, digital communities began to be built around products and services, instead of just physical locations and careers.

2020s – The Experience Revolution

The next point on this timeline is coming up fast—the year 2020. The preceding revolutions affected the physical world, consumer products, the digital world and consumer services. As users and technologies advanced, they allowed designers to explore and conquer these new areas. The next revolution will not be as distinct as those that came before; instead, it will represent a culmination of those revolutions. It will require us to focus not just on physical ecosystems, consumer goods, digital engagement and heightened service interactions alone. It will require all four revolutions combined. Because the next revolution is the experience revolution.

While user experience design has been defined in the past as exclusively digital—the flow of an app, what the user will see, etc.—this definition is woefully inadequate. A true experience isn't just what you see; an experience engages all five human senses: taste, touch, sight, smell and sound. A true user experience balances senses with emotion to create moments of connection and meaning in a busy, chaotic world. Experience design brings into con-



The TUX map represents the true user experience. The two axes of the X represent a sensory and emotional engagement with the user. The four touchpoints are both physical and digital products and services and encircling the map is the brand identity that packages this experiences and allows for connection with the user.

sideration physical and digital platforms, products and service offerings as touchpoints that can work in tandem to create effortless, memorable interactions.

Augmented- and mixed-reality devices serve as the perfect analogy to the new period we are entering—they blur the line between the physical with the digital, allowing us to live in both worlds. These devices are products supported by services and designed experiences. With these and other new technologies, we can design for human experiences that consider how we think with our minds, how we feel with our hearts, and how we express ourselves with our motions and movements. It's this definition of experience design that is the future: a true user experience.

We have long tried to adapt to our technology, but this next revolution will ask that our technology adapt for us. Experience design will bring the human back into focus and will require emotional resonance. And as designers, we must obsess over sense, emotions and these four trajectories—physical, digital, product and service—to create experiences worth celebrating.

Until now, these trajectories have existed in their individual silos. But for the next revolution, we need leaders who can build this combined balanced future. We need designers who can create the balanced world of experiences. If you truly want the opportunity to lead innovation, this is what it will take. We need holistic experience designers. This is the line in the sand. Are you in? ■



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