

QUARTERLY OF THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS SOCIETY OF AMERICA **SPRING 2010**

INNOVATION

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See page 54 for more consumer electronics showcase submissions.



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FROM THE EDITOR



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WHAT IS DESIGN RESEARCH?

What design research really *is* varies depending on who you ask. There are diverse design disciplines involved; many product management, marketing and planning functions engaged; and product and experience categories concerned that think of and deploy design research differently. We use the term all the time, but you can't count on two people to share the same concept.

Design has always had a research component—whether it was a lone quest for inspiration or a complex study in search of unmet needs or desires. It is a conscious act of design to follow your own insight or to search for and integrate insights from outside sources. Whether it is foolish or courageous to do the former is an enjoyable debate. There are many examples where breakthroughs come from a flash of insight versus formal inquiry. Of course, an onslaught of cases show how disciplined design research has discovered previously unseen opportunities or uncovered what could have been catastrophic weaknesses in a developing design.

What consistently inspires me is how great teams have adapted and innovated in design research, and the awesome contribution this has had to the bottom line of many businesses. The combination of great design thinking and great research has cleverly *designed* research. This reinforces that design applied to almost any discipline can yield repeatable process innovation. Whether you call it design thinking, design process or just design, a diverse set of disciplines, principles and tools have been creatively applied to

evolving problems and forged new opportunities for business and design alike.


Design research is also rapidly changing, being reshaped and combined to achieve even greater results. Marty Gage, IDSA, our guest editor, has pulled together a snapshot of a field in motion. I think you will find many useful insights and approaches from the contributions that he has carefully assembled.

This is my first issue as executive editor of *Innovation*, and I am excited to participate in a journal that is so highly valued by our membership. *Innovation* is consistently cited as one of the highest benefits of membership, and yet we know that there is a need to continue to evolve. That said, *Innovation* is among a very few magazines that our members keep on their shelves and archives. The Yearbook is a valuable time capsule, and each issue has deep knowledge about design and *designing*.

Since *Innovation* is really by the members and for the members, please help to keep the content fresh and relevant by getting involved in future issues. In addition to the Yearbook, upcoming issues will focus on *experiencing interaction design* and *frontiers of design*. Visit www.idsa.org to see the editorial calendar, and consider contributing your experience and knowledge to a future issue or promoting your work with advertising.

We would love to hear your feedback any time. Just send email to innovation@idsa.org.

—Alistair Hamilton, IDSA
Innovation Executive Editor



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