

Towards prospective design: building a capacity for anticipation in design

Abstract

Are all futurists designers? And are all designers futurists? Do they need to be? Can they be? Is either a condition or requirement of good design and good foresight work?

This session is based on the work to date of a PhD examining the use of futures thinking, strategic foresight and anticipation in design. The research will use grounded theory and critical realism to consider the emerging nexus of strategic foresight, design, policy, technology and culture.

The investigation also aims to explore awareness and use of futures thinking and strategic foresight in design and clarify the distinction between the futures and design disciplines. This includes an audit of the use of foresight tools and methods in design practice globally and the awareness of strategic foresight and futures thinking in the design sector. The research will seek to clarify the difference between strategic foresight and futures thinking, and contemporary design methodologies and theories including establishing a lexicon to use in design practice. The research will also compare models and frameworks for design processes and strategic foresight processes to determine if 'futures literacy' can be embedded in design practice through the use of futures thinking and/or strategic foresight. Using the discipline of anticipation as a framework to explore anticipatory thinking and anticipatory behaviour, the study will also establish if design can 'use' or incorporate futures in its strategic and creative processes.

The aim of the research is not to provide an absolute solution or universal theory of strategic foresight and its relationship to design. Therefore, the intention of the sessions is to present initial ideas and insights about a complex, plurally-defined collection of theories, tools and processes that appear to be used both explicitly and implicitly in design and strategic foresight.

References

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