EDITORIAL

The Computer and Design

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When we first discussed creating the journal that became Artifact, we simply could not believe that it had not been created already by somebody, somewhere. In little more than a quarter of a century, the computer had changed every aspect of design. The design process had changed with the introduction of AutoCAD and PageMaker, the manufacturing process had been automated, the form of the resulting products had changed, the computer software itself had become a design object, and the functions of physical designed objects increasingly relied on built-in computer intelligence. We kept looking for the international, academic journal that recorded all this in vain.

Moreover, it seemed obvious that the importance of design was increasing rapidly. In the global marketplace, the fierce competition on price and quality continues to drive down the price of consumer goods. Saturated with material goods, consumers look for experiences instead. Such experiences must be designed. Also, the proliferation of computers and Internet access brings a growing demand for software architects and game designers to shape the virtual world beyond the screen. In our professional lives, we sensed a global trend towards incorporating the education of designers and architects into academe, and a growing pressure on lecturers to publish in academic form. Design research is increasingly becoming an academic field and no academic field can exist without journals.

Finally we saw a need to create closer contact between research and industry by providing researchers, practitioners, and people from industry with the possibility to publish their results and exchange ideas on specific areas and issues.

Creating a journal to record and analyze the fascinating combination of computer and design just seemed to be the right thing to do.

In its content, the journal will embrace experimental research approaches to design with a basis in applied design practice. It will capture and utilize the knowledge that is produced in the varied transitional zones that characterize design practice today. The journal will feature articles based on historical, cultural, and philosophical studies that do not spring directly from applied design practice, but which make qualified contributions to the field in the shape of insights, concepts, and ideas. Assuming an attitude of openness, we shall strive to promote transdisciplinary design research and prepare the ground for cross-fertilization, interconnections, and crossbreeding among different scientific and practice- oriented disciplines.

When we began to ask the best people we knew whether they would join us in our efforts, we were surprised again by the warm reception given our fledgling venture. We are deeply grateful to our Advisory Board who individually and collectively represent what we wish Artifact to stand for and to our publisher, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Gradually, we have come to understand who an academic journal belongs to. Like the many virtual communities on the Internet, it belongs to no single person or entity, but to those who decide to contribute their time and efforts. With gratitude, we welcome yours: Our readers and, it is hoped, future contributors.