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Editors

# Design Thinking Research

Studying Co-Creation in Practice

 Springer

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# Preface

This volume presents the second comprehensive collection of research studies carried out by the HPI-Stanford Design Thinking Research Program, a joint program of the Hasso-Plattner-Institute of Design at Stanford University in California and the Hasso-Plattner-Institute (HPI) for IT Systems Engineering in Potsdam, Germany.

Design Thinking is a framework to understand the issues people are experiencing in their daily lives and to generate accordingly helpful innovations for them. In Design Thinking, interdisciplinary teams set off to learn about people's concerns and the obstacles they are facing. By means of Design Thinking, the teams head for solutions regarding the identified problems which are supposed to be genuinely new as well as extensively useful. Thus, Design Thinking teams work towards products or services that are technically feasible, economically viable and, in addition, truly desirable for people.

While practice has proven that Design Thinking is a promising approach for companies in particular and society in general, looking at it systematically and with scientific rigor is a rather new endeavor. Therefore, we may still be curious in what ways exactly this research will shape our understanding of innovations in general and of Design Thinking in particular. The predominant questions to us are: if we will arrive at new and sensible descriptions of how to generate innovations, and if and to what extent we will apply new methods or tools. Or, might it even be possible for us to change our ways?

But now that I have contrasted Design Thinking as a long-established practice, and Design Thinking research as a rather new outlook on the matter, let me point out an issue that is pivotal to both: communication. In Design Thinking as a practice, much is done to facilitate communication – be that within the design team, when consulting users or other stakeholders. But communication is likely to be as central to the research endeavor as it is to Design Thinking itself.

The evolution of our society runs parallel to the evolution of communication: from the sign language of early hominids, the development of spoken languages, the introduction of script, the conveyance of information via signals, the invention

of printing, the distribution of information thru phone, radio and television, to the advent of the internet. The more information we can share, the more likely we are to progress. In the early days of civilization, a joint location was the common precondition of information exchange. Once we were able to reproduce large amounts of information by printing books and journals, spreading them to other locations and times, the process of generating new ideas and technologies sped up immensely.

If Design Thinking Research is not to be an idle exercise, communication is certainly crucial: we need to share our observations and thoughts, we need to sift them, to meld them, and, essentially, to make something new and valuable out of them. Thus, it is a rewarding pleasure for me to disclose and share the results of our latest research work in this book. May it contribute to a prospering discussion and stimulate new, sensible solutions.

Potsdam/Palo Alto

Hasso Plattner

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