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Editorial: Designing for Diversity: Inclusive Design as a catalyst for change?

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This session aims to review contemporary contexts and new dimensions of design for human diversity, and explore the state-of-the-art in research, design and policy-making in this area. Within the past three decades, the concept of design for inclusion (also referred to as Inclusive Design, Universal Design or Design for All) has witnessed recognition and growth as an important and relevant area of practice, research and policy-making, contributing to overall quality of life. However, as the field matures and as we face rapid and complex socio-demographic, economic and political challenges, the need to revisit the core concept of design for inclusion, and to enhance its theories, scope and applications, becomes increasingly urgent.

This sense of urgency is clearly highlighted as we extend our definitions and dimensions of design for inclusion beyond the conventional age & ability axes. The contemporary societal context we operate in, presents us with complex cases of diversity and exclusion far beyond physical or sensory ability. Lifestyle exclusions such as obesity and diabetes, gender and sexual orientation diversity, invisible disabilities and neurodiversity, and social mobility are all pressing examples of such diversity. On another hand, the focus of inclusive design, research and policy-making needs to extend beyond physical accessibility. Thus, moving from 'physicality' to overall 'quality' of life, exploring non-physical and psychosocial elements of inclusivity.

On the other hand, the rapid growth of social networks and makerspaces facilitated by recent advances in ICT and rapid manufacturing, allow for innovative designs to be created, tested and made by a significantly larger part of society including extreme users, hobbyists and entrepreneurs. Social Product Development paradigms (including crowdsourcing, crowdfunding and mass collaboration) together with accessible home-use design and manufacture kits (3D printing etc.), could act as catalysts for inclusive design. This could pave the way for a new era of user co-creation driven by the people, not the enterprise, handing over the power to control inclusivity to the user.

This all builds a strong case for inclusive design to embrace and explore the full spectrum of 'human diversity' - if it is to act as a catalyst for change. This well aligns with the theme for DRS 2018, exploring and questioning the role of design as an agent of change. Hence, the Inclusive SIG this year, has adopted a more critical and reflective approach. This is intended to question the status quo, highlight the current state of the art and outline future opportunities for inclusive design,



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research and policy-making. The scope and focus of papers selected under three main streams in Inclusive SIG 2018, well reflect this priority.

The first stream called 'Advancing Definitions & Methods', presents an excellent range of latest definitions and methods for inclusive design. In 'Capturing and Communicating Individual Narrative Timelines to Reflect Real Life', the authors capture the many human sides of the concept of retirement using empathic qualitative method of narrative timelines. In 'Evaluating Inclusivity Using Quantitative Personas', authors build a strong case for use of quantitative personas as a tool to better capture design exclusion. In 'Numeral Legibility and Visual Complexity', the authors present a rigorous process and investigation of engaging with textual information. In 'Beyond Accessible Aisles? Psychosocial Inclusivity of Shopping Experience' the authors argue for the need to define and detail concept of psychosocial inclusion, moving away from physical accessibility as the only measure for inclusion.

In 'Redefining Diversity' stream, we discuss an impressive range of cases which demonstrate the wide and varied the dimensions of diversity. Moving beyond the conventional, we delve into cases ranging from kids, to citizenship and self inclusion. In 'Seeking for Diversity Among Young Users' the authors build the case for children's photography and discuss use of photography as a tool to engage and include children. In 'Smart Citizenship: Designing the Interaction Between Citizens and Smart Cities', the authors address the critical topic of human centred design of our future smart cities, aimed to accommodate and facilitate inclusive interactions between their diverse inhabitants. In 'Are two thumbs better than one?' the authors adopt a philosophical approach to exploring the concept of diversity and inclusivity, questioning the very foundations of inclusion. And finally, in 'Design for self-inclusion: supporting emotional capability', the authors present yet another interesting angle on inclusion, initiated and owned by the individual, exploring the concept of agency, ownership and self-inclusion.

In 'Assistive Futures' stream we specifically focus on new technologies as catalysts for inclusive design and explore the intersection between technology, assistive devices and inclusion from perceptive, collaborative and practical points of view. In 'Investigating perceptions related to technology acceptance & stigma of wearable robotic assistive devices', the authors present useful insights in regards to adoption, rejection and overall perception of smart wearables amongst older adults. In 'A Study of Roles and Collaboration in the Development of Assistive Devices for People with Disabilities', the authors discuss the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of the design process, specifically focusing on interactions between clinical experts and designers. In 'Designing Play Equipment for Children with Cerebral Palsy' the authors discuss the context and report on a useful set of guidelines for designing play equipment for the children.

We hope the divergent and forward thinking presented in Inclusive SIG2018 papers, stimulates questions, insights, and a drive to move forward - collectively and forcefully.