

**Public Abstract**

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Title:HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEW MODEL? VISUAL DESIGN AND PRODUCT NEWNESS

Firms must continually innovate to successfully meet both consumer needs and competitive pressures. Previous investigations of innovation have examined this construct solely from the firms' perspective and only minimal work has examined how consumers evaluate product newness. Consumers' adoption of an innovation is central to marketing and understanding the way that consumers react to new products is the focus of this dissertation. Specifically, this work explores the changes in visual form that signal newness and the reactions engendered by the product. Three studies were undertaken to explore the construct and test several a priori hypotheses: a sorting task, an attribute elicitation, and a between-subjects experiment. The research revealed that consumers were capable of identifying product newness from visual form alone, however, they were not always certain of the reasons that they made these judgments. It was also clear that different levels of newness tended to elicit different responses, and generally, higher levels of newness received more positive evaluations by the consumers.