INSPIRATION, IMAGES AND DESIGN: AN INVESTIGATION OF DESIGNERS' INFORMATION GATHERING STRATEGIES

Abstract:
Computational tools should efficiently support, and even enhance, designers' creativity. As a ground for such developments, design cognition studies aim at describing designers' mental strategies within the design process. So far, most researches have been focused on the idea generation phases, e.g. sketching activity, which is explicit enough to be observed and described. However, the early stages of design remain incompletely understood, while the informational phase is identified as a crucial step of the design process. In this context, our objective is to identify and evaluate inspirational information used by designers before generating ideas, and to describe how inspirational information is used. In this article, we report a two-part study (interviews and experimental protocol) carried out with professional designers. The main outcomes demonstrate that traditional and electronic resources are not used in the same way by designers. We also show that information gathering strategies are strongly influenced by designers' preference.

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"Design Thinking" may seem tautological (after all, what design process doesn't involve thinking?), but this is a relatively new user-centred approach to design, which marries many of the tried and tested methods previously employed with a strong focus on empathising with the intended users. In The Sciences of the Artificial, Herbert Simon (1969) outlined one of the first formal models of the Design Thinking process. ABSTRACT Bio-inspired design and the broader field of design-by-analogy have been the basis of numerous innovative designs throughout history; yet there remains much to be understood about these practices of design, their underlying cognitive mechanisms, and preferred ways in which to teach and support them. In this paper, we work to unify the broader design-by-analogy research literature with that of the bio-inspired design field, reviewing the current knowledge of designer cognition, the seminal supporting tools and methods for bio-inspired design, and postulating the future of bio-inspired design.

I learnt the craft of fashion design with brands such as 7 for all Mankind, Ripcurl, and Triple 5 Soul and branched into trend forecasting at WGSN, where I was in charge of forecasting future trends for Womenswear. I'm now a fashion trend consultant based in London, travelling frequently to Paris and New York. Personally I'm constantly collecting ideas and images and have built an archive over many years of designing and researching. Once I see there is a flurry of images with one particular thread running through, it's very easy to see this is a trend, although sometimes a single image can be so powerful that it triggers an instant conviction. What she's referring to is the importance of recording information.