

Editorial

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Welcome to the proceedings of the 2010 conference of the Design Research Society hosted by Université de Montréal, Canada.

The international biennial conference of the DRS is held during even numbered years in various countries around the world. The most recent conferences have been held in London, Melbourne, Lisbon, Sheffield, and now Montréal. We are most grateful to the hosts of this year's conference for the hard work they have put in since the early discussions some two years ago.

By close agreement, DRS biennial conferences alternate with the biennial conferences of the International Association of Societies of Design Research which are held in odd numbered years, thus consistently ensuring that a world class general design research conference is held somewhere in the world each year as a service to the international design research community.

Organisation of the DRS biennial conferences is taken very seriously. Host institutions and their organising teams are often new to the special demands of DRS conferences, though the collective experience of the Society is provided to organisers as published guidelines, and members of the Society assist organisers as advisors, reviewers and sometimes convenors of focused strands of presentations.

One firm principle of these DRS conferences which has been honed over several events, is to ensure the highest standards of selection of papers that will be presented at the event and subsequently published in the proceedings. This principle is important for two reasons. Firstly, delegates tell us that they prefer to attend conferences where only the strongest research is presented that is appropriate to the audience, is communicated clearly, and demonstrates research that has reached a stage where there are findings worthy of transmission. Secondly, as the oldest learned society of its kind, the DRS believes that the interests of the community of scholars - including early career researchers and doctoral research students - are best served by adequate screening of submissions to include only work that is demonstrably robust research worthy of publication.

Review of proposals is overseen by a small internationally based Review Committee comprising several skilled reviewers, which is appointed by the DRS. This committee is chaired by a member of the DRS Council and operates independently of the host organisers. In this way, the focus is rightly on academic judgement of the research.

All reviews are double blind - that is where the reviewer and the author are unknown to each other. We rely heavily upon independent reviewers who have either been invited due to their previous good record of conducting reviews, or who have volunteered and been vetted for the purpose. Reviews

were conducted by 209 reviewers plus the committees. Each full paper was read by at least two independent reviewers as well as at least one member of the Review Committee.

The quality of peer review is of course only as good as the judgements that reviewers make. Reviewers may have varying levels of expertise. Some are expert in certain closely focused topics, others may have a more encompassing view of research beyond their deeper expertise. We are fortunate to count among our reviewers for this conference some of the most prominent scholars globally. Where possible, we have matched reviewers' expertise closely to the topic of the paper. Reviewers are also expected to provide feedback to authors for improvement of their paper, or to justify their decisions.

DRS considers that maintaining a high standard of acceptance to its conferences both sets a benchmark for peer review of research papers, and attempts to provide a solid body of work to which future scholars, including research students, may refer.

DRS conferences attract many more proposals than organisers can accommodate. In our experience about one third of initial proposals make it through to the final publication. In other words, about two thirds of applications are rejected either at the proposal stage or after submitting a full paper. In rounded figures, the total of initial proposals for this conference numbered 600, from which 380 authors were asked to submit full papers for a second round of reviews. 250 full papers were received. Following final judgements, 150 papers were selected for presentation at the conference and for subsequent publication in the proceedings, thus giving an exceptional ratio from initial submission to presented paper of about 4:1. In this sense, DRS conferences are nearer to a good journal review process than many other conferences in our field.

The working language of DRS conferences is English. On this occasion, being located in a French speaking country, we optionally invited papers in French. These were reviewed by a Francophone team, and the results calibrated with the main review. The papers are published in the proceedings in their original language, though French presentations at the conference have the benefit of simultaneous translation into English.

The programme of presentations is rich and extensive, with discussions ranging across various practices which cover the recurring topics of our field of design research. Parallel sessions provide strands that run throughout the conference programme. Here we find many strands that seem common to these kinds of events such as: methods for design and research; reflective practice; interaction; user centred and participatory designing; and many others. Also, newer strands are appearing representing perhaps current or emerging concerns such as: design and society; creativity; sustainable design; and growing work across or between disciplines. In addition there are specially convened strands that address issues arising from DRS special interest groups, for example well-being, pedagogy, and experiential knowledge.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our host organisers, the large body of reviewers based around the world, my colleagues on the Review Committee, and advisors who have been instrumental in bringing together a collection of papers clearly demonstrating the health of research in our community at this time.

We hope that you enjoy the conference, and that these proceedings provide valuable reading for you, your colleagues, and your students.

David Durling
(*Chair, Review Committee*)