Design Thinking and Social Justice

Design Thinking is in its approach similar to participatory design, as developed by Scandinavian design researchers from the 1970s onwards. Design as process, or design thinking, has also become a common strategic tool in many countries worldwide, as design research is increasingly conducted with stakeholder groups affected by a societal problem or challenge (Björgvinsson et al 2012; Johansson-Sköldberg et al. 2013). Thus, design thinking-- with its intent of applying an inclusive design process on societal challenges and issues—begins to form the core of re-framing our organizations and society with an ethically grounded larger purpose in mind. In participatory design and design thinking processes, it has become clear that there is an *educational dimension* as well as a *democratic urge* to understand the needs and motivations of different sections of society.

Our **Design Thinking and Social Justice** stream brings into focus the need for the creative impulse as well as the foundational basis of design to bring about socially just and sustainable values in the organizations were we work and in society at large. This stream invites accounts of experiences of and research on environments/ processes/ scenarios/ road maps of design thinking and participatory design where everyone becomes a part of creating a more desirable future by taking action when faced with a challenge.

We welcome contributions that reflect on, exemplify, criticize, or theorize design thinking as empowering design processes at the individual, organizational, or societal levels. Topics of specific interest might include:

- How does participatory design processes lend itself to the corporate world?

- How can issues of social justice become embodied in organizational processes?

- What are the limitations of design thinking and participatory design?

- How can design thinking be used in educational contexts to introduce real and meaningful change?

- How do we create a model in our organizations that enables the pursuit of both profit and purpose?

Specifications:

We welcome your proposal addressing our stream, **Design Thinking and Social Justice**, in an abstract that is **500 words in length**. Your proposal **should be emailed to all three individuals** on the contact list below as an attachment no later than **December 5, 2013.**

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