

FEBRUARY 10 - 11, 2017

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DEFINING PRACTICES

AUTHORS' CONFERENCE

**DESIGN RESEARCH, ETHICS +
THE DILEMMAS OF ENGAGEMENT**

ART CENTER COLLEGE OF DESIGN

ABOUT

DESIGN RESEARCH, ETHICS AND THE DILEMMAS OF ENGAGEMENT

Defining Practices is a cross-institutional initiative hosted by ArtCenter College of Design. This two-day authors' conference is focused on addressing the emerging issues around design and research ethics including: design ethics in human subject engagement, IRB adoption and accountability, and institutional infrastructure for supporting emerging design research cultures in academic institutions. Initiated by the scholarship of Candice-Leigh Baumgardner, Sean Donahue and Arden Stern, the goal of this event is to launch a national conversation about the growing needs of art and design colleges in terms of human subject engagement, disciplinary ethics, institutional and academic infrastructures, and the research mechanisms needed to responsibly support and legitimize these engagements. The conference brings together leaders in design research and higher education to articulate the issues, identify gaps and opportunities, map best practices, and propose paths forward.

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For more Information Visit

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Defining Practices has been made possible with the support of ArtCenter College of Design, the Office of the Provost, the ArtCenter Library and the Shared Governance Research Committee. Special thanks to Lauren Williams for her critical support in planning this event.

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DESIGN RESEARCH, ETHICS AND THE DILEMMAS OF ENGAGEMENT

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PRE-WRITING PRIMERS

Author

Pre-Writing

PRE-WRITING HIGHLIGHTS

What are the **primary topics** that need to be addressed?

- Design and how it engages human subjects
- The role of IRB and institutional oversight
- The sharing of research methods, practices and ethics across disciplines, as related to design
 - Includes: ethnic studies, American Indian studies, community planning, indigenous studies, decolonized design research

What are the most pressing issues to be addressed by the field of design with respect to **research ethics and human subject engagement**?

- How do we articulate design's responsibility to human subjects and IRB?
- How do ethical obligations/practices translate into instructional and institutional guidelines/support?
- How might we create continuity of ethically responsible practices across this discipline and other disciplines?
- How might we design an IRB review procedure that is robust but also not a threat to the unique affordances and contributions of design?
- How do we integrate human subjects review procedures and guidelines into studio culture?
- What new ethical considerations and obligations must we take on as we expand design into new areas with new outcomes?

What would we like to **contribute** to this conference?

- Best practices
- Personal experiences
- Case studies and examples
- Perspectives on processes, methods and ethics

What would we like to personally **gain** from this conference?

- An understanding of the perspectives and practices of other design programs
- Hear about the scale and scope with which others are implementing and adhering to an IRB protocol across their institutions and classrooms
- Learn from other participants' experiences
- A set of case studies and examples that demonstrate the role of the IRB with design research projects, including examples from a broad spectrum of methods and practices

What would we like to **walk away with** from this conference?

- A framework that helps translate IRB policies and practices in a way appropriate to the contexts and conditions of design, design research, and design education
- Being able to imagine what a critically engaged institutional process would look like for design education
- A map that strategically and tactically guides the discipline toward integrating ethics into our engagements with publics
- Generating ideas together and then piloting them at our own institutions to share back with the group
- A plan for how AICAD can support the research work of faculty at our member institutions and begin to build an infrastructure that can provide centralized IRB services and research ethics resources to our membership
- A collective call to action

FOR FULL REMARKS OF CONTRIBUTORS,
PLEASE SEE THE **REFERENCES FOLDER**
ON OUR SHARED DROPBOX.

Carl DiSalvo, PhD

Associate Professor, Digital Media Program,
School of Literature, Media and Communication,
Georgia Institute of Technology

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
How to ensure that academic freedom and artistic freedom work in synergy with the protection of human subjects, not at odds with.
2.
How to design an IRB review procedure that is robust but also not a threat to those working in design.
3.
How can design schools lead the way for implementing this kind of thinking in the design world.

First, I believe all researchers have an ethical commitment to adhere to IRB processes and protocols. One reason why IRB exists is because of a history of grossly unethical behavior by academic researchers. Even when researchers mean well, we may not always have the insight needed to make proper evaluations of our proposed research, particularly with regards to ethics. A case in point: several years ago a student wanted to do a social design project, working with prison inmates to create virtual worlds. The idea was that the (the inmates) might use these virtual worlds to express their desires for freedom and to begin to explore how they might act once released from incarceration. On the surface, it seems like a good project, perhaps even a project that would provide some real care for those incarcerated. The project was initially denied by IRB. The reason: once the study was completed (once the design intervention was done), the virtual worlds would be taken away from the inmates. IRB believed this was unethical—that the research / design intervention offered something of emotional value to the inmates for the benefit of the design researcher, and then removed thing of value once the design researcher had completed his intervention. Moreover, given the vulnerable status of the population, this was doubly unfair. If the design researcher wanted to conduct the research, IRB requested that he would need to find a way to make the project sustainable, so that the inmates that participated would continue to have access to the virtual worlds after the research was complete. Upon reflection, this, in fact, is the ethical option. I share this as example of how, even with the best of intentions, we may not think through the repercussions of our research or design interventions and that, when IRB processes and protocols work, they can catch those oversights. Moreover, I also share this as an example of how IRB

can actually work to improve our research. In this case, it was not that the design researcher was categorically forbidden to conduct the research under any circumstances, rather, that if the design researcher wanted to conduct the research, it had to be done in a manner that was ethical.

Sean Donahue

Core Faculty, Graduate Media Design Practices,
ArtCenter College of Design

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
*Designs Responsibility to Human Subjects/
IRB (What is it? What does it need to be?)*
2.
*Continuity of said Responsibilities across the
discipline*
3.
*How said responsibilities translates into
instructional and Institutional guidelines/
support*

Precisely at a time when research or structured inquiry could provide the discipline a vehicle to develop new modes of knowledge production and areas of contribution (for design and others), the conversation is dominated by identifying how design can fit into the existing needs, methods, infrastructures and validation criteria built to support the epistemological foundations of other bodies of knowledge—their methodologies, their knowledge production needs and modes of communication and dissemination.

The Academy has a unique opportunity to broaden the discourse, broaden the discipline of design and challenge the larger ontological questions of the at-larger knowledge production community—beginning with asking and responding to the following:

- What do research and research outcomes need to be to support design? Our questions? Our contributions?
- To embrace (not ignore) the unique affordances and characteristics the discipline has a past with—serendipity, delight, joy, pleasure and ambiguity as areas of valuable knowledge expression, form making as a methodology for analysis and synthesis, multi-modal inquiry and knowledge production.
- To create a community and criteria that vets out how and where there may be a value in these—for design, for others (precisely at a time when they are asking the same thing of themselves)?.
- Identify a working criteria and qualifications for defining and scrutinizing rigor and validating outcomes of design research (Move the discussion beyond the reliance on observability, generalizability and reproducibility as the unquestionable default criteria).

- To question where and to whom the discipline's contributions can inform. And develop vehicles to support that \neg dialogue. With the above, design becomes a mature, proactive, and responsible discipline from which confidence \neg can be built on by others. It provides a sustainable framework for the discipline to grow and change over time-based on its own rigor and critical investigation—not singularly on the perpetual response to the expectations and requirements of others based on their needs, infrastructure and desired use of our abilities.

Lisa Grocott, PhD

Head of Department (Design), Monash University.
Director of THRIVING a Design and Learning
Research Lab

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.

Researching for Design and Designing for Research

Distinguish between human engagement as it relates to design practice and human engagement in knowledge-productive research.

2.

Elevate the Integrity of Design Research

Focus on the design researchers' capacity to minimize confirmation bias by using speculative thinking to engage others in seeing past what they already believe to be true so we can collectively imagine new futures.

3.

Of the People, By the People and For the People

Identify the graduate competencies we see as core to ethically co-creating with others and need-finding for others to be democratic designers.

I am always curious about the ways design research is akin to and distinct from other disciplines. I wasted decades trying to assert design as other to dominant paradigms of research. Nowadays I am more interested in questioning how it might align with other practices. Not because I seek total alignment, but because in interdisciplinary collaborations I find it critical to be able to talk about where intersections resonate and difference surface. A consistent thread in my research has been a call for designers to be more articulate about the contribution they bring to interdisciplinary collaborations and most recently my focus has been on how this plays out with respect to working with people.

At times I have felt giddily excited by how design can transform research cultures that can tend toward caring more about the data collected than impact on the ground. At other times I feel shamed by the hubris of the designer and the unfounded assumptions we push based on hunches rather than evidence. Most days I see design research as trying to navigate the tension between sense-making how the world is while simultaneously speculating how it might be.

The questions this general terrain raises for me are:

Is it useful to understand the ethics around human engagement by identifying whether we intend to use the insights/data for a situated design project or for generalizable research?

How might participatory practices and reciprocity forge new ways of framing human engagement — not as participants being subjected to, or subjects of research — but as citizen researchers co-creating new forms of evidence?

If we agree that graduates should leave the studio to meaningfully design with and for others, then what are the core competencies needed to design out in the world?

Deborah Littlejohn, PhD

Assistant Professor of Design Research,
North Carolina State University

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
Research methods, developing understanding of ethical frameworks in human subjects engagement — and any topic, subject, or design practice, for that matter — only happens when it becomes regularized through the design curriculum.
2.
The traditional studio-centered, project-focused MFA curriculum does not typically address such topics.
3.
Very few design programs require masters students to document their research in a written thesis; when they do, what happens to this work? It seems that the student output of graduate design program goes into some sort of 'black box' (i.e., the work is not widely shared, disseminated, or archived in a way that it is accessible to the design field at large

I have been through the IRB oversight process as a student, I teach a graduate level research methods course that covers human subjects research and IRB's role — including its history and 'reason for being' — and I am a reserve member of my university's IRB. I can speak to my experiences with conducting scholarly research in a Research I institutional context — the successes and as well as the failures — and the barriers that design schools face in trying to participate in research activities.

Pardis Mahdavi, PhD

Dean of Women, Director of the Pacific Basin Institute,
Associate Professor and Chair of Anthropology,
Pomona College

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.

How to ensure that academic freedom and artistic freedom work in synergy with the protection of human subjects, not at odds with.

2.

How to design an IRB review procedure that is robust but also not a threat to those working in design.

3.

How can design schools lead the way for implementing this kind of thinking in the design world.

How can we ensure robust methodologies of designed centered human subjects research? How do we ensure that research is conducted in a way that harms neither the people involved nor steps on academic and artistic freedoms? What are the threats to artistic freedom that people feel from IRB systems? How can we overcome this? Why is an IRB necessary for this kind of research? And why is it important to think through the ethics of research for design?

Shana Agid, PhD

Assistant Professor of Arts, Media and Communication,
Parsons School of Design

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
Training for and identifying practices of accountability to / structure of involvement of people with whom research is being conducted (establishing complex / flexible, but real guidelines (?) for engagement with the impacts of design research on people, places, communities)
2.
Articulating a separation from and differentiation from traditional Social Science frameworks for naming and framing research, not specifically in terms of articulating a differentiated "design research," but as a means of raising significant questions about the value and valuing of specific forms of research and outcome.
3.
Addressing if there should be requirements in framing a project for ethics approval (for example) that researchers demonstrate an engagement with the historical or contextual frameworks surrounding their area of inquiry / or previous research in and with marginalized people and communities (there is probably a better way to think through this, and certainly to articulate it, which maybe we can talk about?)

In my work as a teacher and designer (and political organizer), the question of how to build capacities and relationships for working collaboratively is central. Increasingly, I am thinking about this in terms of building or making collective knowledge, which is inclusive of disagreement and difference, so not necessarily unified, but collective. While both articulations and practices of design research arguably out forward a number of research methods and frameworks, I have found that the analytical lenses offered by Critical Studies (specifically theories of representation and of contextual, historical analysis of the issue presently at hand in research) and Critical Participatory Action Research (specifically the epistemological arguments here about collective knowledge and the development of research processes as a group engaging in knowledge production finding together) especially helpful, alongside practices developed through Participatory Design that foreground relationality and embodied, situated practice. All this is to say, that I am interested in framing design's engagements with people in ways that prioritize and critically engage how that work is made, with what goals and understandings of the stakes of the work, and what investments in building long-term capacity and resources, and am engaged in trying to understand / ask about the ethics of that work over time.

In my most recent work, I found that I had been / would come to be guided in my work by a range of questions, including:

*How do I understand the work?
How do I understand it in relationship to what I believe,
imagine, desire, hope for?
What am I afraid of?
How am I a part of the work and how did it get that way?*

*What have I learned by listening?
 What space have I been offered and how have I occupied it?
 How have I been accountable?
 Where do I find myself? Find myself designing?
 What happens when we see things differently?
 When we agree?
 How have I made a context through which I see
 and understand this work? What have we made?
 Is this a way to make self-determination?
 To fight policing and prisons, racism, sexism, borders?
 To make power? Action? Theory?
 To make systems?
 What risks am I taking, asking them to take?
 What do we get good at over time?
 What gets lost? And who brings things back and how?
 How can we remind ourselves of what we've learned and
 made?
 What is at stake, according to whom?
 What is the language of this work, here?
 What have we learned?
 What did we know already, and know how to do?
 What do we know now?
 What have we learned together, through this process,
 through the work?
 What are we learning by making?
 (How) will we keep (the work) going?*

The process of having to go through Ethics review in the Australian University system for my Ph.D. helped me to begin framing the emotional investments and potential impacts of my research on the people who agreed to do it with me as ethical concerns about which I needed to be aware and take accountability for communicating about with them. I have not had to go through any similar work in the US, and, from my colleagues who do Critical Participatory Action Research, my understanding is that the standard social science ethics review leaves little room for methods that grow from and through collaborative or participatory practice, so this seems a potential place for contributions from other design research and ethics practices.

Joanne Kersh, PhD

Assistant Director of Research Services,
Association for Independent Colleges of Art & Design

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.

As I'm not intimately familiar with the research going on in this area, I may be off base, but...

2.

I would assume that there is a need for education around best practices, including matters of informed consent.

3.

I know from my discussions with faculty and administrators that there is an acute need for oversight around ethical issues.

Coming from a background in the social sciences and education, my past research activities have been strictly controlled by Institutional Review Boards, especially as much of my work focused on K-12 students and/or children with developmental disabilities and their families. A large part of this work involved either conducting one-on-one interviews or conducting pilot programming with youth in community settings, so my team and I needed to comply with rigorous ethical standards of human subjects engagement.

As the person primarily charged with overseeing all centralized research activities for the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), I have had several conversations with faculty and staff from various AICAD schools about the need for ethical guidance and oversight in research activities. Because many of our institutions lack experience and necessary resources in this area, I have entertained the idea of trying to create a centralized AICAD IRB that can meet these needs for our member schools.

Elizabeth Chin, PhD

Professor, Graduate Media Design Practices,
ArtCenter College of Design

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
Vulnerable populations
2.
Cross-cultural work
3.
Establishing human subjects review procedures and guidelines

As an anthropologist who has worked in a design department for six years, the general lack of attention to ethics across design broadly is something I find both striking and terrifying. Anthropology has a long history of self-critique -- and as partial and problematic as those critiques may remain, the open dialogue about complexities of ethics is one that has been tremendously important. My PhD advisor, Delmos Jones, was an African American who studied in Thailand in a time when the CIA was using ethnographic materials for its own purposes. Knowing that should he publish much of his work that it would be used to hurt the people among whom he had conducted his research, Del chose not to publish, a move that had huge implications for his professional status. Not all ethical dilemmas are so dire, but the potential for our work with people to go places and do things for which we did not intend it is something that every fieldworker should seriously consider and prepare for. Even in more innocuous settings and projects, both students and professionals in design need to have a grasp of the basics in ethical engagement. These ethical values, practices and positions may or may not align well with the imperatives of the IRB. As I wrote in my paper "The Neoliberal IRB" the ways in which human subjects review have been institutionalized and bureaucratized have, more often than not, resulted in processes that are designed more to indemnify the institution than they are to protect the rights and interests of research participants. As an ethnographer who does qualitative research, I find that dominant IRB models, calibrated for experimental science, do not understand how ethnography works, or what its risks might be. Designers are likely to face similar problems vis a vis human subjects review, but without training and developing designerly investigations into ethics itself, the discipline is at a huge disadvantage. That is, while

grappling on the one hand with an IRB that may not understand the work itself, design researchers may well also need to create for themselves robust ethical frameworks that allow them to proceed. As design aspires to move into humanitarian and development spaces, ethical considerations become sharp indeed, and in the response to the Haitian earthquake, for example, it was quite well demonstrated that development workers themselves could use ethical training. Ultimately, if design and designers wish to be serious researchers, the rigor with which they develop and approach their own deployment of ethics cannot be ignored, since one's personal ethics are a poor substitute for research-oriented questions, values, and protocols that are designed to protect research participants, engage with informed consent, and ensure research integrity.

Candice-leigh Baumgardner

Associate Professor, Director of Research,
Humanities & Sciences, ArtCenter College of Design

Arden Stern, PhD

Assistant Professor, Humanities & Sciences,
ArtCenter College of Design

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
What different models of ethical oversight exist in art and design institutions, and is there a larger vision for ethical practice?
2.
How do we evaluate our work in this sphere?
3.
How might we share knowledge across institutions?

The adoption of IRB has been a site of debate and contestation across fields. As Mary Brydon-Miller and David Greenwood have argued, with the adoption of IRB as institutional protocol there has been a shift in emphasis from protecting research participants to holding institutions legally harmless in the case of ethical violations. Additionally, the bulk of the principles and guidelines underpinning IRB are based in quantitative, positivist research practices (such as biomedical research). So while there is a mandate for ethical oversight in the social and behavioral sciences, certain incompatibilities have emerged between qualitative research methods and the practical realities of the IRB application and approval process. It is this complex and contested landscape that art and design schools inherit as they attempt to negotiate the challenges of ethical oversight in their own methodologically diverse institutional settings, while also (as academic entities) operating in accordance with federal law. And, into this mix, we introduce both established and emerging curricular concerns and pedagogical practices, client-sponsored research engagements, and the serious work of preparing students for careers in which they are responsible for the ethical impact of both HOW and WHAT they design.

Within design fields, the dovetailing histories of participatory design, user-centered design, and human-centered design have been well documented; so, too, has these fields' adaption of qualitative research methods from the social sciences been both documented and carefully critiqued. The development of research methodologies in these fields is connected to both academic research paradigms and branded corporate research strategies. The transfer of research methods across various

sectors of the academy and industry has been widely critiqued, perhaps centrally around whether it's possible to adopt methods without also incorporating their attendant theoretical concerns. Proponents of ethnomethodology maintain that there are responsible and rigorous ways to formally integrate ethnographic methods into disciplines outside the social sciences, such as design. But beyond the problem of transferring methods without their broader theoretical contexts, there is also the problem of whether and how the systems of ethical oversight that have shaped ethnographic research methods (often adapted from academic fields like sociology) also make their way into design practice and education.

Joseph Kunkel

Executive Director, Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative.
Visiting Eminent Scholar, Del School of Sustainable
Engineering and the Built Environment (SSEBE),
Arizona State University

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
Health | Community Health | Health Impact
2.
*Public Policy Housing Policy | Homelessness |
Housing Insecurity*
3.
*Ethnic Studies | American Indian Studies |
Community Planning*

Design education at it's core has the potential to impact across a myriad of disciplines. Specifically the work SNCC has been focused on is how design has the potential to impact community health, housing policy (public policy) and ethnic studies. While design itself is not the main focus, design and design education has the ability to support the various systems that make up these disciplines.

Gwynne Keathley

Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies,
Maryland Institute College of Art

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
What are the appropriate protocols and processes to guide design practices and research that engage human subjects, users and communities?
 2.
What are best practice guidelines for human-subject research that take into account participatory design methodologies, co-creative processes and cross-sector and cross-disciplinary collaborations?
 3.
How do designers engage IRB processes when approaches, methodologies, even the research questions may change, shift or be re-directed over the course of the project?
- MICA is establishing the infrastructure we need to support, advance and encourage research activity for our community of artists, designers and scholars. We recently received our official IRB registration from the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Department of Health and Human Services. The IRB process will be a new requirement for design research and MICA faculty and members of the Research Committee have raised questions about the extent and depth to which traditional IRB review (and its lengthy online educational test/introduction) is relevant to the methodologies of design practice and its application. The concern is that the traditional model of the online IRB educational test seems not only onerous, but also a potential deterrent to conduct the work. While we are committed to using these processes to educate our faculty and student researchers about ethical practices and methodologies, some are asking if traditional IRB practices create barriers to the work and research of designers? How might IRB be positioned appropriately to ensure ethical research standards related to human subject research, yet appropriate to the application and practice of design?

Alternatively, as we set up this process how can we manage is so our IRB will not be overrun with submittals? Are there opportunities for streamlining the process to encourage the activity, not scare researchers off, and also create manageable system that will not slow down the work?

At MICA we were also challenged with establishing an IRB committee and identifying the appropriate membership when we do not have traditional scientists on staff/faculty. It necessitated inviting professors at neighboring universities. An applied psychologist in the department of Applied Behavior Science at the University of Baltimore agreed to serve on our IRB as the science-oriented member of our group.

Elizabeth Tunstall, PhD

Dean, Faculty of Design,
Ontario College of Art and Design

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
Do no harm in research and design engagement.
2.
Indigenous perspectives on research and design.
3.
Decolonizing design research practices.

I have taught and written about blended design and anthropology research methods that seek to bring a decolonized approach to design research and a high level of ethics to design engagement.

Stacie Rohrbach

Associate Professor, School of Design.
Head, Communication Design Program,
Carnegie Mellon University

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
Elevating the validity of design research methods
2.
Advocating IRB policy changes in working with human subjects in the context of conducting design research methods
3.
Providing insight into ways of effectively engaging human subjects and fostering relationships

Engaging human subjects in the evaluation of prototypes/concepts is critical to designers' understanding of perspectives that differ from their own. This process also aids design students' transition to professional practice where they work on behalf of their audiences rather than simply creating pieces that express their voice. Knowing that such steps are critical components of the design process, how can we ensure that our (and our students') engagement with human subjects is meaningful/productive for all parties involved?

Facilitating and maintaining formal collaborations with human subjects puts a strain on educators as the efforts are time-consuming. Nonetheless, students frequently seek input from human subjects to evaluate their prototypes/concepts. Given that they often have limited venues and contacts for soliciting proper feedback, the results of their efforts run the risk of being misleading and/or shallow. Thus, students' limited engagement with human subjects can lead them to make poor design decisions. Based on the aforementioned challenges how can we improve the brokering of relationships with human subjects to aid the gathering of useful feedback?

Capturing data from design-based research methods (which are often qualitative in form) and translating them into quantitative metrics can cause critical findings to be lost and/or deemed invalid. Designers are often compelled to make such translations as the larger scientific community frequently discredits qualitative research methods. In addition, university internal review boards tend to approve proposals to work with human subjects that align with prior models, causing designers to consider such concessions. Thus, how can we aid the perception of design research methods as reputable and trustworthy, which, in turn, may improve their validity?

Liz Saunders, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Design,
Ohio State University

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.

The IRB process and related paperwork is based on a scientific, usually quantitative, hypothesis-testing approach to research. This makes it difficult to describe and get approval for other types of research approaches such as those that are used in design research.

2.

The IRB approval process is very slow. At the university where I teach, the approval of a new study takes about 8 weeks after completion of the detailed paperwork. An amendment can take several weeks. I have lost many opportunities for conducting research due to the time lag.

3.

Design research benefits from the ability to be improvisational when conducting the fieldwork or the group sessions. The IRB process takes away this possibility. You can submit amendments to an approved protocol but this is a very slow process.

The IRB assumes the scientific model of research where people are regarded as "human subjects". Design is moving toward an alternative mindset wherein people are regarded as co-designers or participants in the design process. The IRB does not accommodate these emerging needs of designers and design researchers.

Laura Forlina, PhD

Assistant Professor of Design, Institute of Design,
Illinois Institute of Technology

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES WE FACE?

1.
Collecting, presenting and publishing images and video data
2.
Human subjects data in the studio environment
3.
Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of human subjects data
4.
Collecting data on human subjects as part of research for the greater good

As design expands beyond the corporate sector and becomes more deeply engaged in social innovation and the public sector (including projects on health, education and "wicked problems"), the need for a deeper understanding of ethics, values and responsibilities around engaging human subjects is vital. As design moves beyond the discrete "user" as consumer frame and towards larger socio-technical systems, it must also consider ethics with respect to participatory design methods. These relationships, which require partnerships, greatly complicate traditional research methods in the social sciences, which are more familiar to institutional IRBs. Who is the researcher and who is the researched in a participatory design project?

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DESIGN RESEARCH, ETHICS +
THE DILEMMAS OF ENGAGEMENT

DAY 1 READER

ARTICULATING

THE

ISSUES

&

SHARING

OUR

EXPERIENCES

Presentation Questions

1.

How can we advocate reasonable IRB policy changes in conducting design research methods with human subjects?

2.

How can we elevate the perception of design research methods so that they are regarded as reputable, trustworthy, and valid?

3.

How can we improve the brokering and fostering of relationships with human subjects to ensure that interactions are meaningful and productive for all parties involved?

4.

What commonalities and differences exist among the practices we've employed and roadblocks we've encountered?

5.

What approaches for engaging human subjects do we deem effective?

6.

How do our programs handle university IRB policies and adherence?

7.

How do we integrate the engagement with human subjects into course-based research projects?

8.

What successes and challenges have resulted from our experiences?

9.

How do we create an IRB that supports the unique features/needs of design?

“How do we
define what an
Accountable
Practice is?”

Shana Agid

“Why don’t we
have a shared
resource that
can be used
by all institu-
tions?”

Gwynne Keathley

“Create a scaffold
of experiences
that can intro-
duce & progress
students
through these
ethical issues”

Stacie Rohrbach

MAPPING THE ISSUES

THEMATIC TERRITORIES

1.

What is Ethical Practice?

(Including discourses of exception)

2.

Designs' Roles & Values

In shaping human engagements

What is designs authority, voice?

What are venues for ethical guidance (IRB)

3.

Structures, Support & Risk

Policies, procedures, Capabilities

Building Capacity

Overcoming institutional resistance

4.

Definitions/Perceptions of Design Research

Who is doing it?

Knowledge producing through practice

5.

Dilemmas of Engagement

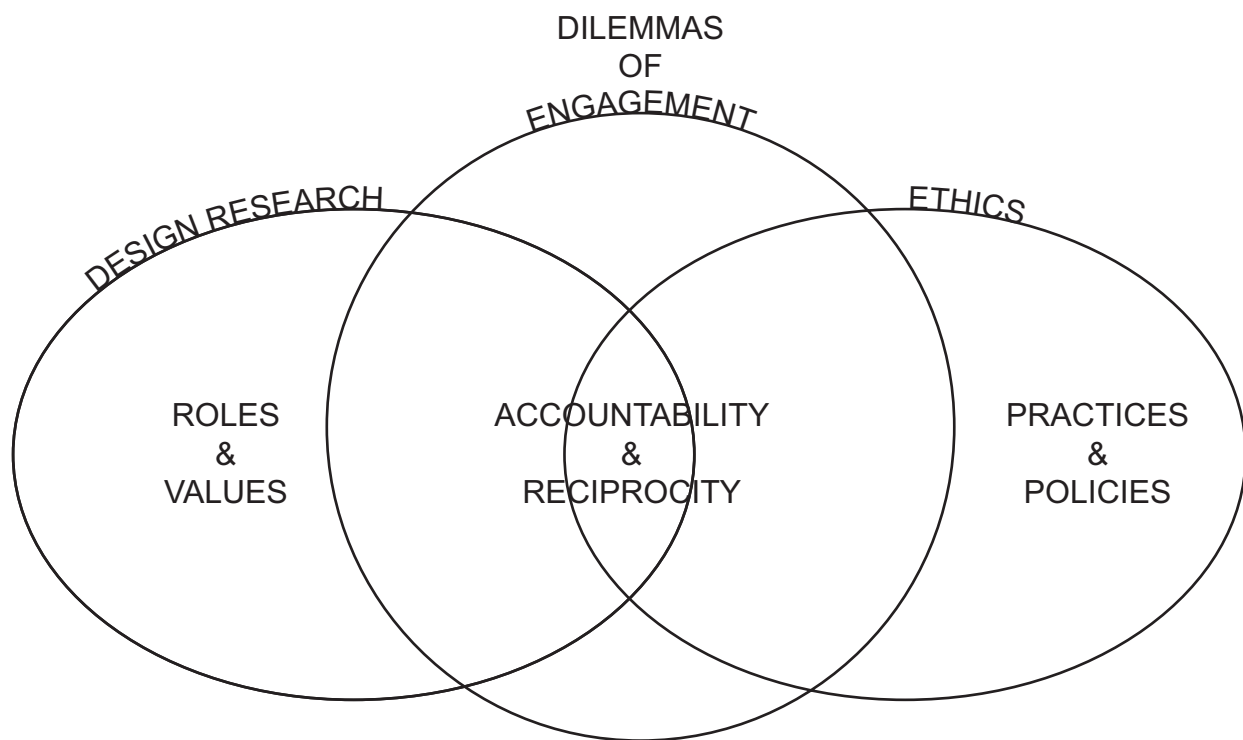
Accountability & Community

Who produces knowledge

Decolonization

Pedagogy

Socio-political questions



ARTICULATING AREAS

Practices & Policies

DISCIPLINARY CODE OF ETHICS

(humans, community, environment, institution)

- Within research
- For engagement
- Bring awareness
- Develops mindsets

NEED

- Awareness of landscapes of engagement in art and design
- Guidelines for working in transnational settings
- To define research
- Tools for explaining/framing ethical practice
- Develop mindsets
- Train faculty / knowledge exchange
- Some institutions require training/Online
- Training/ educational modules for artist/designers
- Certification
- Develop standards of practice

HOW

- Role of AICAD to convene/ develop
- Look at Precedents (AAA)
- Taking leadership w/ setting expectations with partners
- Creating a safe environment for rich learning
- Multiplicity+recognition of resources
- What are components of ethical work?
- Contexts/levels of scale, Assumptions, Prior experiences
- Grasp that process takes time/longevity
- Transparent of what is realistic in short-term/initial steps

ARTICULATING AREAS

Accountability & Reciprocity

WHAT IS DESIGNS' ROLE IN SHAPING ETHICAL PRACTICES OF HUMAN ENGAGEMENTS (WHEN DESIGN GOES INTO THE SOCIAL)

1. Engaging rigorously, contextual, reflectively, historically,
2. What does human engagement “look” like? (Institutional culture, racism, sexism?)
3. Can't expect all designers to have the same values, but they must articulate the and defend them, their values
 - Giving permission, infrastructure and support for students
 - Discipline of exceptional-ism
4. Ethics of deployment, materials, aesthetics, people (all together)
5. How can design shape anthropological practices? (Modes of communication)
6. Corporate design can look really different if we tackle this, send different types of designers into that space?
7. Whats the institutional vision?
8. What are the Implications for pushing back against existing IRB structures?
9. What are the dangers of hubris?
10. What does this questions mean at different scales?
 - In design education?
 - What is the role of failure?
 - Small d design
11. We are assuming that design is not monolithic and is always, already connected to their disciplines and conversations
12. **Can we radicalize this question?**
13. Mechanisms of holding design/designers accountable (higher, ethics)
14. How have (or could) designers earn/ed the authority to answer this?
15. How would different designers answer this question? How would design educators answer this?

ARTICULATING AREAS

Roles & Values

WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

Students

Faculty

Admin

Other designers

Community Partners

Future Employers

WHAT IS THE LANDSCAPE OF DILEMMAS?

Practice

Teaching & Education

Engaging People

Process

WHAT INFLUENCES THESE DILEMMAS?

- Lack of education about issues
- Position & Location of Designers + Students
- Ignorance of Students, Practitioners and Faculty
- Historical Contexts, Making Meaning
- Critical frameworks are not empathy and empathy doesn't necessarily give you critical competencies
- Critical thinking VS empathy
- Students being sent out in mass & Communities pushing back

ARTICULATING AREAS

ROLES & VALUES

1. What builds Ethical Design Practice?
2. How to engage people
3. Embodied Practices, Role playing
4. Not just ethics but ability to actually see and recognize world view
5. Scaffold of experiences to help students learn to listen & experience
6. Be present in the work
7. Humility / Comfort & Discomfort
8. New students not able to see their own positionality
9. Need critical skills and how does that translate into critical making and vice versa
10. How to have students question their assumptions and recognize their role
11. Issue is reified in practices that reinforce western centric normativeness
12. What is design education responsible to develop?
13. What are the 21st century skills it requires?
14. What are our new core competencies
15. What are designs minimum expectations for obtaining a degree?
16. Portfolio, project and experience based education
17. Crit/Studio culture – unique offerings of this environment on the above
18. Studio culture as a space to help students learn humility/world-view
19. Visual arguments and Modalities of knowledge production
20. How does what is needed may be not fit into the academic timeliness
21. For designs students, building on another students work / body of work doesn't fit into the myth of the genius artist
22. What re the new project scales/time-lines? Infrastructure time / beyond project time, How does the project stretch across systems
23. What is the JR version of this game?
24. The reality is that these critical consideration ultimately need to translating into design and that those two knowledge areas may not be rectifiable.
25. We are taking 21st issues and funneling them through a 20th century formalist vocabulary

ARTICULATING AREAS

ROLES & VALUES

26.

What is a starting place?

27.

How can we learn from other disciplines then do the hard part internal to explore our own ///NOT just appropriate their response?

28.

What outputs are needed for design to know?
How does this align or contradict with IRB and what other disciplines need?

29.

We are multi-modal (look at what we have as a positive)

30.

What does reciprocity look like for design...Workshops, speed, prototyping? These are not slow, laboratory?

31.

Maybe it is the negotiation w/ collaborators that is the critical ethical engagement?

32.

What are the disciplines baseline critical capacities? How can that become a shared platform (like foundation studies)?

DEFINING PRACTICES

AUTHORS' CONFERENCE

DESIGN RESEARCH, ETHICS +
THE DILEMMAS OF ENGAGEMENT

DAY 2 READER

2 /11/17

SETTING
THE AGENDA
&
PROPOSING
PATHS
FORWARD

Presentation Questions

1.

How do we teach design ethics and the challenges and responsibilities of engaging people?

2.

How do you address the tensions that sometimes arise between studio and humanities culture for students around research ethics and engaging people?

3.

How can we create ethical guidelines that are open enough to accommodate the different research approaches used by each of the design disciplines.

4.

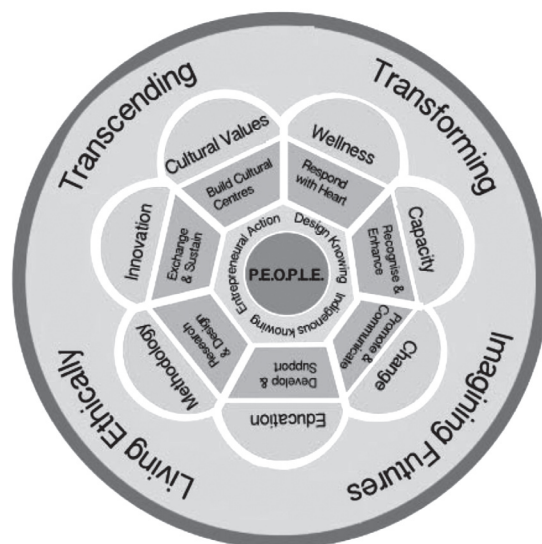
What are the cautionary tails of design research and engaging with people that we can all learn from?

5.

How can we use design processes and artifacts to work with groups to shift hegemonic value systems that are detrimental to the holistic well being of vulnerable groups, dominant groups, and their extended environments and what are the ethics around that?

6.

How do we embrace the diversity of approaches to research in design and develop a guide to ethically reflect on and exercise them as a responsible member of the discipline?



Sustainable Principles with the Bellagio Mandala
from Dori Tunstall

“What are the tensions in design around the ethics of research and designing?”

Candice-Leigh Baumgardner

“What do we
need to provide
faculty to give
them a sense of
the competencies
and confidences
of working ethically
with people?”

Elizabeth Tunstall

“Who are the existing IRB process for and how do they support, or not support, design?”

Sean Donahue

PATHS FORWARD

Notes for Further Conversation

from Arden Stern

Continue a series of ongoing and interrelated conversations about the ethical dimensions of design education (on micro/macro levels; as well as design disciplines, making, research practices, institutional infrastructures, etc.)

The collision of design education and existing systems of ethical oversight have yielded various responses and questions, which coalesce into multiple overlapping categories:

1.

What constitutes “ethical practice” in the context of a design institution, department, discipline, program, project, and/or class? What does this look like in these various contexts, in what ways is it dynamic and responsive to diverse contexts and groups, and how do we assess it?

2.

What constitutes “research” in the context of design education? How do different design and design-adjacent fields define this differently?

3.

What does (or should) institutional oversight look like for design education? What design educational systems, structures, and practices are incommensurable with existing structures of ethical oversight? Is IRB appropriate? How might design push back against and/or inform existing oversight structures like IRB?

4.

What projects and practices would (or should) be considered “exempt” from existing structures of ethical oversight?

5.

What does an ethical design educational institution look like and how does it work? What does ethical design coursework look like and how does it work?

6.

How are design professionals, instructors, administrators, and students engaging communities and individuals? What elements (or “dilemmas”) of these engagements might necessitate particular accountabilities?

7.

How does industry shape design education with respect to definitions of design, research, ethics, and accountability?

PATHS FORWARD

Example Of A Code Of Disciplinary Ethics For Design Research

from Sean Donahue, Gwynne Keathley, Joanne Kersh & Elizabeth Tunstall

1.
Do no harm and mitigate harm when you see it.
2.
Respect the wellbeing, dignity and worth of everyone and everything.
3.
Acknowledge, value and respect the importance of human relationships and their relationships to the natural and material worlds.
4.
Be generative and create conditions of compassion and harmony with the environment.
5.
Engage the research process with care, consideration, and integrity.
6.
Be accountable for the outcomes you design, develop or produce.

PATHS FORWARD

Example Of A Faculty Led Series Of Classroom Activities *(not a tool kit...tool kit)* *from Shana Agid, Candice-Leigh Baumgardner, Elizabeth Chin, Laura Forlano, Lisa Grocott & Stacie Rohrbach*

1.
Send a series of activities to a pilot group of faculty to used in their classroom.
2.
Activities help faculty and students articulate the specific instances where design engages people in a design studio/class and the unique ways that plays out.
3.
The finished activities can be collected and compared to those completed by faculty and students at other schools, in different design fields at different levels of education.
4.
Resulting emerging themes and patterns can be used to articulate the scope of issues, instances and overlaps across design and in teaching this material.
5.
Sent back to educator communities to further develop best practices, exemplars and ethics of practice.

POST EVENT SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 11

- Writing proposals
- Reader

MARCH

- Identify Platforms for Sharing
- White Paper Draft
- Teacher led Classroom Activities proposal
- Identify conferences/publications

MAY

- White Paper Group Draft
- Teacher led Classroom Activities proposal Group Draft

SUMMER 17

- White Paper
- Teacher led Classroom Activities outlined
- Develop an evaluation metric
- Recruit group
- AIGA educators conference & DRS conference

FALL 17

- Teacher led Classroom Activities Piloted
- AICAD conference & Imagining America Conference

SPRING 18

- Teacher led Classroom Activities
- Analyze returns
- Develop outcomes and next steps