

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

DECIPHER

2018 **DESIGN** EDUCATORS **RESEARCH** CONFERENCE

27–29 September | University of Michigan

 Design Educators
Community

 **DARIA**
NETWORK | DESIGN AS RESEARCH
IN THE AMERICAS

 **M STAMPS**
SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Decipher is a hands-on design research conference brought to you by the AIGA Design Educators Community in partnership with the new DARIA Network (Design as Research in the Americas). Decipher will address crucial themes of **defining, doing, disseminating, supporting, and teaching design research.**

Hosted by the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan, Decipher will:

- Connect emerging and experienced design researchers in academia and beyond
- Gather and share best practices, resources, tools, and exemplary research matter
- Help participants hone research plans and writing skills
- Create opportunities for dialogues that foster mentorship and collaborative connections

Mission

Designers increasingly work to understand and address complex interconnections while creating new things, especially when taking on challenges like social or environmental concerns. People interpret the word “design” in many ways; when “research” is added to the mix, the ambiguity increases. Decipher will bring together design researchers, practitioners, and educators at all stages in their careers to explore the fusions of research and practice through the ways we accomplish, talk about, and teach design research.

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Prolific form-maker.

Sees design as personal exploration. **No defined research agenda.** Lacks exposure to theory and methodologies from design and other disciplines.

Needs to “do research” for promotion at his new institution.



Some publishing record.

Developed a research agenda in grad school. **Needs a push to the next level, especially to get funding.** Wants to lead a research team and is not sure where to start. **Would like to learn how others manage their research.**



Has design research experience in academia and industry.

Prolific publications in journals, book chapters, conference proceedings. **Wants to inspire a new generation of design researchers.** Would like to lend her voice of experience to shape guidelines and best practices.

Is this conference for me?

YES! Our unique conference format welcomes **novices and experts alike, and designers of all stripes.** This intimate gathering will reinforce hands-on, person-to-person discussion, collaboration, networking, and professional development. Through activity groups, workshops, and other structured conversational formats, your involvement will help participants to gather ideas, best practices, and other exemplary research-oriented matter. We hope to offer resources, tools, and mentorship to our design communities to strengthen the collective quality of our research.

If you're excited to roll up your sleeves, offer your ideas, dive into conversation, and synthesize findings, guidelines and best practices to benefit the greater design research community, this conference is for you. If you're just getting started and are excited to learn more about what design research is all about, this conference is for you. If you want to take a leadership role in the future of design research practice, this conference is for you. If you're just interested in giving a 20-minute talk and then leaving to explore southeastern Michigan, we strongly encourage you to apply to a different conference.

Themes + Topics

Defining design research is concerned with the nature of and knowledge produced by design research: what is design research? What is not design research? What are the types of knowledge design research generates? What is the nature of this knowledge?

- Conducting research to inform the things one makes vs. making things as a form of investigation
- Defining practice-based research across design disciplines
- Production, documentation and transfer of knowledge generated by design research
- Incorporating culturally significant ways of thinking and making

Doing design research involves exploring the theories, methods, processes and creative outcomes that support design as a form of inquiry, and how we “do” design research.

- Developing an academic design research agenda: identifying and framing opportunities, contexts & variables
- Pivoting to a new research agenda
- Tacit & explicit knowledge and skills needed for design research
- Leveraging the [AIGA Designer 2025 trends](#) in your research
- Diversification of the design discipline through research (in terms of cultural perspectives, disciplines, access)

Disseminating design research includes the ways we share this work, such as writing about projects or ideas for publication, and how we communicate the value of design research to other disciplines.

- Writing effectively about design research / Evaluating design research for dissemination
- Advocating for design and design research agendas within the context of larger interdisciplinary projects or research groups
- Sharing design research across channels that engage diverse audiences (in terms of cultural perspectives, disciplines, access)

Supporting design research is concerned with the resources and procedures to sustain financial, institutional, industry, and peer support for design research projects and initiatives, including writing successful grant proposals.

- Writing effectively to fund design research & proposal evaluation
- Anticipating outcomes and assessing design research
- Gaining institutional, peer & industry support for research
- Expanding opportunities for who gets to participate in research
- Grant recipients may share reflections/insights

Teaching design research cultivates an inquisitive mindset in students at the k-12, undergraduate, master's and PhD levels, and includes sharing methodologies, theories and processes that engage making as a form of knowledge production and understanding.

- Bringing research to the classroom by connecting one's design research agenda to curricular activities
- Teaching design research at various levels (k-12, undergrad, master's, PhD, other)
- Research intersections between academia and industry
- Challenging the design research 'canon' in the classroom

Opportunities

How do I participate?

Decipher will be what you make it: all participants will submit a written contribution, which will become part of the record of the various voices at this conference. We include a number of submission and participation formats to engage people at different stages and degrees of comfort with design research.

All contributions, regardless of length, are of equal value.

Because everyone will bring something to the conference, there will be no mere “attendees”—everyone will participate in different capacities!

Taking into consideration [ALGA's current trends](#) for the future of design education, research, and practice and their relation to our conference themes of defining, doing, disseminating, supporting, and teaching design research, we strongly encourage submissions to acknowledge and address these trends in some way.

In addition to conference participants, we also welcome [submission reviewers](#) and [conference volunteers](#).

Will I get published?

Whether it's your first or fiftieth time, we feel that it's important to share your design scholarship with the larger community. Accepted submissions for facilitation or participation in activity groups, conversations, workshops, and the graduate student forum will be included in the conference proceedings. There may be opportunities to further develop some of the initial submissions. Those selected as Activity Group, Conversation, and Workshop facilitators will document and synthesize findings from their sessions to be considered for possible publication in a special issue of *Dialectic*.

How do I become a facilitator?

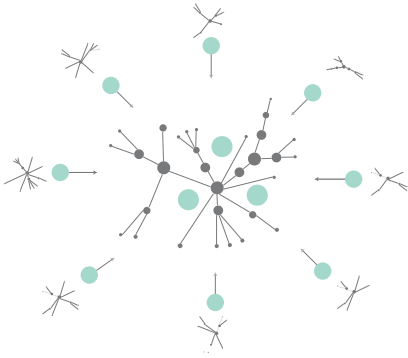
If you indicate interest in being considered to facilitate an activity group, conversation, or workshop, you should be prepared to submit additional information regarding your intended audience(s) and possible outcomes as part of your online submission form. Your important role will add lasting value and meaning to our research community by making the outcomes of your session accessible beyond the conference. (See additional submission details for facilitators below.)

Submission Options

Activity groups

Conversations

Workshops

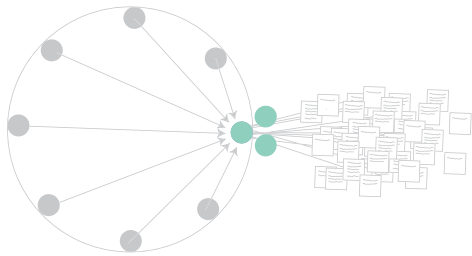


What are activity groups?

An activity group is an intensive hands-on session in which all participants collaboratively discuss and ideate from their submissions to discover emergent themes and issues, develop best practices and guidelines, and gather resources. Accepted activity group facilitation and participation submissions will be included in the conference proceedings. Outcomes will be documented and disseminated to the larger community through presentations and publications by selected group facilitators; activity groups occurring on the same day will present these outcomes to each other. Documentation and synthesis generated by the designated facilitator(s) will become part of the official proceedings and be considered for possible publication in a special issue of *Dialectic*. More than one facilitator may be selected to guide an activity group and to document, present, and publish outcomes.

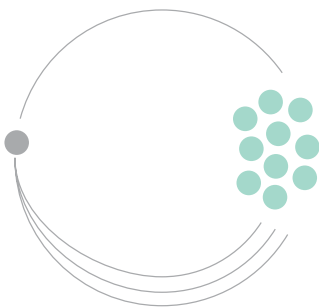
What are conversations?

A conversation is a more relaxed environment to allow participants to discuss the intersection of their contributions through the lens of the conference topics as well as the [AIGA 2025 trends](#). Accepted conversation facilitation and participation submissions will be included in the conference proceedings. Insights from conversations will be synthesized and documented through a written submission by designated conversation facilitators. Written outcomes will become part of the official conference proceedings and be considered for possible publication in a special issue of *Dialectic*.



What are workshops?

Workshops are more traditional learning sessions in which one or more facilitators leads participants to engage in a topic within the conference themes. Facilitators should have specific learning outcomes in mind for participants and expect to lead the entire session. Accepted workshop facilitation and participation submissions will be included in the conference proceedings. As with activity groups and conversations, workshop facilitators are expected to document and share findings from their sessions. Documentation and written outcomes from sessions will become part of the official conference proceedings and be considered for possible publication in a special issue of *Dialectic*.



See submission details below!

**Submission
Considerations
Activity groups
Conversations
Workshops**

Only one submission is required to participate in Decipher. The additional information you share in your submission form will help us understand your level of interest in the themes and develop the conference structure accordingly. If selected, we will ask you to take part in a specific session organized with your designated cohort. Beyond your designated session, you are free to join any other cohort as a participant as long as there are available seats. While you are welcome to enter as many submissions as you wish, multiple submissions are not necessary to participate in the various tracks and themes of the conference.

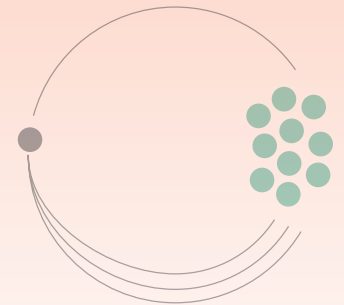
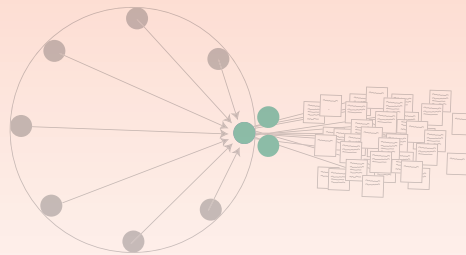
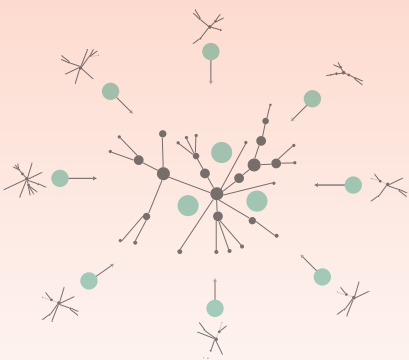
- Submissions should be saved as a PDF based on [Decipher's .doc template](#).
- You will need a free [EasyChair account](#) to complete your submission.
- Contributions can range from discussions of in-progress to completed works (frameworks, methods, design outcomes, etc.), research articles, as well as reflections and positions within Decipher's key theme and topic areas.
- Contributors are strongly encouraged to include at least one annotated image in their submissions; these may be selected for conversational activities during the conference.
- References and annotations are excluded from the word count.

Deadlines:

May 15, 2018
Facilitators

June 15, 2018
Scholarships &
Graduate Forum

August 1, 2018
Participants



Submission Guidelines

Activity groups Conversations

To participate in activity groups and conversations, submit:

1. A **250-word document** about a Decipher theme and/or topic.
2. A **140-character summary** of your written document. *Enter this text in the online submission form.*
3. A **150-word bio**
Enter this text in the online submission form.
4. A **headshot**
In color, 500 x 500px at 300ppi, JPEG; *Upload as part of the online submission form.*

To facilitate activity groups and conversations, submit:

1. A **500–750-word document** about a Decipher theme and/or topic.
2. A **140-character summary** of your written document. *Enter this text in the online submission form.*
3. Describe **prospective audience(s)** for your conversation or activity group. *Enter this text in the online submission form.*
4. Describe a **vision for possible session outcomes** that could be shared with the wider design research community following the conference. *Enter this text in the online submission form.*
5. A **150-word bio**
Enter this text in the online submission form.
6. A **headshot**
In color, 500 x 500px at 300ppi, JPEG; *Upload as part of the online submission form.*

Those selected as facilitators will be responsible for planning and leading an interactive session. In addition, facilitators agree to document, synthesize and report outcomes to become part of the official conference proceedings, and will have an opportunity to be considered for publication in a special issue of *Dialectic*.

DOWNLOAD .DOC TEMPLATE

SUBMIT VIA EASYCHAIR

Submission Guidelines Workshops

To participate in workshops, submit:

1. **A 250-word document** about a Decipher theme and/or topic.
2. **A 140-character summary** of your written document. *Enter this text in the online submission form.*
3. **A 150-word bio**
Enter this text in the online submission form.
4. **A headshot**
In color, 500 x 500px at 300ppi, JPEG; *Upload as part of the online submission form.*

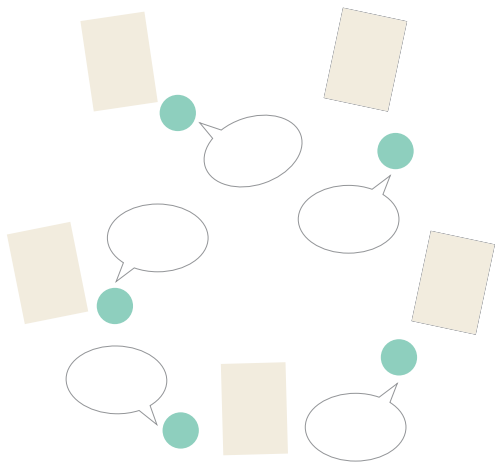
To facilitate workshops, submit:

1. **A ~1,500-word statement** that:
 - Indicates your interest in a Decipher theme and/or topic
 - Describes your planned activities and learning outcomes
 - Articulates your intended audience(s)
 - Explains outputs that will contribute to knowledge beyond the session
 - Logistical information, such as ideal session length (e.g. 1.5, 3, or 6 hours), ideal room configuration, and/or AV requirements.
2. **A 140-character summary** of your written document. *Enter this text in the online submission form.*
3. **A 150-word bio**
Enter this text in the online submission form.
4. **A headshot**
In color, 500 x 500px at 300ppi, JPEG; *Upload as part of the online submission form.*

Those selected as facilitators will be responsible for planning and leading an interactive session. In addition, facilitators agree to document, synthesize and report outcomes to become part of the official conference proceedings, and will have an opportunity to be considered for publication in a special issue of *Dialectic*.

Submission Guidelines

Graduate student forum



Graduate Student Forum

Decipher's graduate student forum is an opportunity to share graduate work with our design research community. We welcome current students concerned with research on and through design, regardless of their disciplinary label and degree. We encourage recent graduates (2016–2018) to apply as well. Work will be displayed as posters during the conference and included in the digital proceedings. You can submit posters that discuss any course, process, methods, project, or thesis work. Works-in-progress and final works are welcome.

To participate in the graduate student forum, submit:

- 1. 200-word abstract** that illustrates the research aspect of the project. *This abstract should be submitted as a PDF using the Decipher .doc submission template.*
- 2. A 140-character summary** of your written document. *Enter this text in the online submission form.*
- 3. Draft of the poster**
 - Posters should have a dimension of 36" x 48" (vertical)
 - Both initial and final posters should be submitted as PDF
 - Works-in-progress should be at least 60% complete for the initial submission
 - Final version to be submitted upon acceptance
- 4. A 150-word bio** *Enter this text in the online submission form.*
- 5. A headshot**
In color, 500 x 500px at 300ppi, JPEG
Upload as part of the online submission form.

Deadline for abstract & poster draft: June 15, 2018

Decipher Equity Scholarships

The Design Educators Community, DARIA, and Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design want to ensure that this conference is informed and enriched by people of diverse backgrounds.

The Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design will provide ten \$1,000 scholarships to actively support more diverse participation at Decipher.

Faculty and graduate students who identify as members of underrepresented groups (see list below), have interest in pursuing design research, and who submit successful conference proposals are eligible to apply for this scholarship. Candidates will be selected to attend Decipher, the 2018 Design Educators Research Conference at Stamps School of Art & Design, University of Michigan, September 27–29, 2018.

Scholarships include conference registration, and up to \$1,000 toward lodging at the conference hotel and travel to and from Ann Arbor.

Decipher Equity Scholarship applicants should identify as a member of one or more of these underrepresented groups:

- Indigenous people of North America
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Middle Eastern and/or North African
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- LGBTQIA+
- Rural
- First generation college-bound
- Historically-underrepresented or other non-traditional groups in higher education

1. Personal statement: Submit PDF via EasyChair

- Essays should not exceed 750 words.
- Please do not identify yourself or your institution in the essay.
- Upload a PDF of your personal statement as part of your submission package.
- It is not necessary to use the Decipher .doc template

Your written statement should address these questions:

- Why are you applying for the Decipher Equity Scholarship?
- What draws you to attend Decipher?
- What are your career plans regarding design research, and how would participating in Decipher contribute to your plans?

2. Online application: Complete via EasyChair

- Under “Title,” please submit a title for your personal statement
- Under “Keywords,” please add 3-5 keywords related to your interests in teaching, research, and/or practice
- Under “Submission track,” please indicate in which track your conference submission was accepted; note that scholarship eligibility depends upon acceptance of your conference submission

3. Letter of recommendation: Recommender submits via email

- Request one letter of recommendation from a faculty/administrator and/or previous employer, or another significant reference who can speak to your interest in design and design research, as well as your future potential.
- Recommenders should email PDF letters directly to: decipher.scholarships@umich.edu with the subject line “Decipher Equity Scholarships Recommendation: Your Name”

Review Process

The Decipher Scholarship Committee will select up to ten awardees via internal blind committee review, with selections based on:

- Stated goals
- Potential for growth
- Potential for leadership

For more information

Contact Scholarship Committee Chair Amy Fidler: decipher.scholarships@umich.edu.

Deadline: June 15, 2018

SUBMIT VIA EASYCHAIR

CONTACT

General

decipher2018@umich.edu

Scholarships

decipher.scholarships@umich.edu

Reviewers

decipher.reviewers@umich.edu

Volunteers

decipher.volunteers@umich.edu

DECIPHER

2018 **DESIGN** EDUCATORS **RESEARCH** CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

From the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design,
University of Michigan

Kelly M. Murdoch-Kitt, Chair

Omar Sosa-Tzec, Co-Chair

Hannah Smotrich

John Marshall

Nick Tobier

Franc Nunoo-Quarcoo

Sun Young Park

From Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities

Gabriel Harp

From the AIGA DEC Steering Committee

Kenneth Fitzgerald, Old Dominion University

Michael Gibson, University of North Texas

Meaghan Dee, Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Amy Fidler, Bowling Green State University

Marty Maxwell Lane, University of Arkansas

From the DARIA Steering Committee

John Zimmerman, Carnegie Mellon University