

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