Special Issue on Designing for Wearable and Fashionable Interactions

Full Paper Due: Extended to 20 December 2016

Call for Papers

Technology and fashion are currently undergoing a unique convergence. This is perhaps most evident in the growing attempts at fashion-oriented designs for smart phones and other wearable technology. From a bigger perspective, we can see that two broad design domains are beginning to mix: the domain of technology, electronics, product and interaction design and the domain of wearables, clothing, textile and fashion design. However, while we can see plenty of examples in the media of products that fall under various labels such as “Fashionable Tech,” “Smart Textiles,” or “Wearable Computing,” we do not see many of these examples actually being worn on the street. Furthermore, we can see many such examples being designed, but few attracting the attention of design researchers.

Rather than simply converging, therefore, we might also observe these two domains colliding and clashing with each other, due to their very different cultures, practices, and research traditions. As with all revolutions that encompass both technology and meaning, such clashes bring challenges as well as opportunities, raising many questions for both design practice and research. We offer a few such questions here:

- How will fashion evolve in response to the opportunities of using light, heat, tactility and even shape-changing in wearable products?
- Why is so much wearable interaction not being worn yet?
- How can seamless interaction be designed into a seamless garment?
- Do we need new theoretical underpinnings for human-garment interaction?
- What is the role of the moving body and of felt experience in the design of wearable and fashionable interactions?
- How can we design for the intersubjectivity of a user being at the same time a wearer, a performer, and an observer?
- What might be the most effective collaborative practices between, for example, textile engineers and digital data crafters?
- Is there an alternative, soft approach to sensing, actuating, and computing, rather than the almost reflexive hardware approach?
- What can we learn from traditional crafts as we move further into the 21st century?
- How can we personalize mass-produced textiles and garments?
- How can we prevent fast-fashion consumption cycles for interactive technology?
- How can we best mediate the theoretical clash between embodied interaction theories and semiotic theories of fashion?

The answers to many of these questions are not yet known. Because old knowledge often settles and becomes isolated within a particular domain, and new knowledge often has trouble gaining exposure beyond those happy few who discover it, we would like to encourage the sharing of knowledge both old and new.
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The field of Fashionable and Wearable Interaction is indeed emerging—and in many different directions, with different definitions, different models, different implementations. This special issue of the International Journal of Design aims to reflect on the status quo and to find new paths toward a maturity in this area of research. We are seeking high-quality, original papers that address conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and practical issues of designing for fashionable interaction—papers that will serve to enhance the overall body of design knowledge that bridges these different disciplines.

Suggested Research Themes

Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

- Theoretical approaches to fashionable interaction: foundational notions, theoretical frameworks, philosophical embedding, and links to existing theories that are relevant to the cross-over between interaction design and fashion design.
- Methods, tools, and approaches for designing and evaluating wearable and fashionable interaction.
- Design and evaluation cases, including experiential prototypes.

Schedule

- Full Paper Due: Extended to 20 December 2016
- Notification of Acceptance: 28 February 2017
- Final Version of Paper Due: 31 March 2017
- Special Issue Publication Date: 30 June 2017

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