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Editorial:

Tangible and embedded objects and practices

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1. Introduction

This track combines submissions to two DRS Special Interest Groups – tentSiG (Design for Tangible, Embedded and Networked Technologies) and openSIG (Objects, Practices, Experiences, Networks). Both these have as part of their mission to build on the connections between design research and other work in the human sciences, and these contributions to DRS2022 share that characteristic. It allows the set of papers a broad scope, which gives an encouraging view of the extent of the field of design research and the range of approaches and theoretical scaffolding that can support it.

Several of the papers draw from recent ways of thinking about humans' relationships with non-humans, notably the Object-Oriented Ontology that positions us in a flattened hierarchy with our products – recognising their agency. This orientation opens the possibility for exploratory questions and creative methods, reflected in some of the papers. What would it feel like to have antennae, like an insect, or whiskers like a cat, and what can we learn about the design of interactive clothing by giving research participants an experience that approaches this? Ossevoort and Bos' paper gives a dead-pan description of a piece of work that adopted this strategy – scaffolded with principles from phenomenology.

Hur, Markopoulos and Bruns explore the experience of interactive ecologies through an embodied method using movement; Lin, Hall and Sommer bear down on the question of whether UX design as hitherto conceived can work with networked products by working with groups of speculating designers proposing phreaked applications for a smart watch.



Behind these explorative topics and methods there is a sense of urgency and dread. Fear of environmental catastrophe, and a frustration with design's seeming inability to extricate itself from myopia. There are intimations of a communal response to this existential threat to the continuation of (any) life in Pilling, Coulton, Lodge, Crabtree and Chamberlain's implicit critique of assumptions about technological innovation, appealing to Bogost's Ontography.

Design must at least recognise the degree to which it is trapped in the ontological assumptions of modernity if it is to contribute to changing the ways in which people and things (and the world) get along. These concerns are to the fore in Stead and Coulton's contribution to the track – focusing on the right-to-repair, which if enacted can bear directly on the environmental consequences of consumption. Here, the proposition of More Than Human Centred Design brings the various strands of the track together.