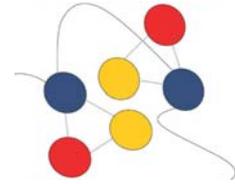


Practices, Materiality and Product Design

A workshop at Durham University, 6-7 July, 2006



This will be the culmination of a series of four workshops held at Durham University, each exploring ideas at the interface of design research and social science and each examining the role of products in shaping everyday life. The series is an integral part of a two year research project, *Designing and Consuming*.^{*} Previous workshops have successfully generated conversation and debate between disciplines, through presentations, discussions and creative workshop activities (see www.durham.ac.uk/designing.consuming for reports). As the last in the series, this workshop aims to move beyond conversation to definite outcomes, and to do so by confronting challenging questions about what social sciences can do for design practice; and what can be drawn from design to enhance the practice of social science. To this end, activities and discussions at the workshop will be structured around a proposed approach to 'Practice-Oriented Product Design' (POPD).

The concept of POPD allows us to articulate and exploit synergies between design and areas of social theory. Taking the insight that design is about not products but about people's experience of using them, POPD makes connections with contemporary social theorisation of consumption, materiality, technology and practices. It provides a framework within which to appreciate the collective dynamics of product development, interactive understandings of processes of technological diffusion, domestication and evolution and through which critical understanding of the role of design can be brought to bear upon pragmatic issues of product design.

We present POPD not as a finished approach, but rather as a provocation for dissent and collective reformulation through structured discussion of the theoretical basis of the approach, and of its practical and intellectual implications. To make space for such discussion, we have built the workshop around "semi-structured" contributions from all participants.

The workshop will take place at Hatfield College, Durham University, UK, from 12.30pm on Thursday 6th July to 2pm on Friday 7th July. Attendance is free and standard class travel expenses within the UK can be reclaimed. However, places are limited, and registration is required no later than Friday 2nd of June (though it is possible all places will be allocated before this date). The registration form is available at www.durham.ac.uk/designing.consuming/events, or contact Hannah via h.watson1@lancaster.ac.uk, or +44 (0) 191 334 1856.

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