

Keynote presentation

Designer's Responsibility: Methodological And Ethical Dimensions

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Summary

A designer is anybody who designs, where 'to design' - from Latin *designare* - means 'to mark out'. Those who design professionally are professional designers, i. e. who „see and seek value in new designs“ [1]. Seeing and seeking might be done in two ways: narrower or broader.

According to the approach characteristic for design-methodological reductionism those things which are designed are considered the designed objects. In this approach the designer's task is limited to narrowly understood artifacts like buildings, bridges, machines, devices etc. The relation between a designed object and the remainder of the world is of a secondary consideration or ignored even. The postponed consequences are of physical, social, psychological, and economical nature [6].

Systemic design methodology is different. It describes that 'what is designed' in terms of an object of design, a system (a whole) separated from the 'rest of the world' to an extent that can minimise a negative 'immunological effect'. The object of design is a specified fragment of reality which should be considered by a designer when he or she is devising a way to effect of that fragment or its part, and this is the task of a designer and his/her responsibility as defined from the methodological point of view. In this approach, 'designed objects' are parts of the object of design. Usually, the object of design is decomposed into many designed objects, and this decomposition is a derivative of the structure of the object of design. [5].

In the domain of designing, like in any kind of human professional activity, two types of moral dimensions are identified: endo- and exo- morality [3]. The first deals with the moral code of design activity, the second with social responsibility of what is done by professional designers. Both define elements of designer's accountability [4, 10]: first in respect of truth and honesty in relation to the designer's product - a design, second in respect to societal benefit and not harm, both in respect to relevancy [5] of what is designed for practical use.

Once producing and teaching good science [3] is the main tasks of scholars, those among the scholars who are involved in design science are responsible not only for producing good design science [1, 4, 5] but also for educating designers [7] as reflective practitioners [12] conscious of what every designer should know about objects of design and ethics [8, 9] related to the profession.

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