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Editorial Forward

Creative Research: The Theory and Practice of Research for the Creative Industries

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When conducting research in and for the creative industries, there are a wealth of different possible research approaches that can be taken - reflecting the diverse nature of the disciplines (design, arts and crafts, advertising, architecture, fashion, film, music, TV, radio performing arts, publishing and interactive software) and academic contexts (art schools, business schools and universities) involved. The result is that there are variations in the emphasis and approach taken to how students are taught to link theory with practice, and how they view and engage with the concept 'research'. The need for understanding and awareness of a range of approaches is critical for anyone learning about and working within design, business and the creative industries today.

Research is a systematic process of enquiry. And design, by its very nature, takes a people-centred approach to problem solving. Currently, the idea of an explicitly defined 'design research culture' is undergoing change, and in particular, how to more closely link design research in academia to design practice in industry. Equally, there is a growing move to establish design and design management as a vital area of academic research, in the same way that social sciences and management sciences have already developed. New models of enquiry appropriate to the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of the creative industries are emerging, in recognition of the fact that, in the creative industries, no one discipline operates in isolation. Because of the user-centred nature of design process, the opportunity exists to take an inclusive, not an exclusive, approach to the creative research process, in a way that is invaluable as a method for facilitating new stakeholder conversations and people-centred, cross-disciplinary investigations.

This book addresses the need for a visual approach to the research process, a teaching tool specifically for students from a range of creative disciplines, where a practice-led approach to academic research forms the main component of the search for knowledge and meaning. Helping students understand the underlying research framework - how to define the research problem, manage the research process, and deliver the results of the research - also enables students to take ownership of creating their own research methods appropriate to their own practices and processes. Students with the aptitude and awareness of the role and value of research practices in the creative arts will, inevitably, be better prepared for being agents of change in the evolution of new approaches to research, and for holding positions of great influence in the creative industries themselves.