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Design methodology and the nature of technical artefacts

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Abstract

Design methodology aims at the improvement of design processes. In contrast to the methodology of science, it is strongly process oriented and takes a normative point of view. The paper argues that, despite its process orientation, design methodology cannot avoid addressing questions concerning the nature of the products being designed for two reasons. The first is that the design process and the design product are so intimately related to each other that an understanding of the nature of the design process requires insight into the nature of the kind of product designed, and vice versa. Second, in order to justify its normative stance towards design processes, design methodology will have to consider the issue of the quality of the product being designed. To support these claims, the nature of technical artefacts, considered to be the outcome of a design process, will be examined. It will be argued that they have a dual nature: they are physical objects on the one hand, and intentional objects on the other. Some of the consequences of this dual nature of technical artefacts for the research agenda of design methodology will be explored.



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Keywords

design methodology; philosophy of design; design process; design studies; human factors

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