

# **A WORKSHOP SUPPORTING CREATIVITY IN DISTRIBUTED DESIGN EDUCATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The practice of distributed design is gradually being adopted by leading organisations which view this approach to the new product development (NPD) process as an opportunity to achieve competitive advantage. A large body of work exists on distributed design teams. However, there is still relatively little research literature that deals specifically with distributed design creativity. This represents an interesting challenge for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) involved in design education. If we are to meet the future needs of industry and adequately prepare graduates for the challenge of a global digital workspace, greater support for creativity in virtual design teams (VDTs) needs to be achieved. Therefore, the aim of this workshop is to expand existing knowledge in this area by taking advantage of the international experience of workshop participants in global design. In this workshop the inhibitors and enablers associated with creativity will be explored with the key purpose of identifying the means to overcome them and move towards the creation of guidelines to support and maximise the impact of distributed design education efforts. The workshop will involve a short presentation, attendee participation, small group discussions, mapping activities and feedback opportunities. It is anticipated that parts of the workshop will be recorded. This information will be analysed and used to support further research which will be disseminated in a paper publication.

*Keywords: Creativity, distributed design, virtual design teams, educational guidelines*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

A large body of work exists on distributed design teams covering critical topics such as coordination, communication, collaboration, conflict and trust. [1] Several studies have been undertaken to compare and contrast creativity in distributed design with collocated design [2], however, there is relatively little research literature that deals specifically with distributed design creativity. [3] Creativity in virtual teams is an area of research study emerging from the work of Ocker [1], Nemiro [4], MacGregor, Torres-Coronas [5] and most recently Chamakiotis et al. [3]. Creativity can be managed through the effective design and management of virtuality in NPD teams [6]. The opportunities and the inhibiting factors impacting on creativity in a distributed setting are becoming apparent but how can we preparing students today to perform creatively in a global digital economy? This workshop explores this question.

## **2 WORKSHOP OVERVIEW**

### **2.1 Workshop Aim**

The Workshop aims -

- (i) firstly, to review the current enablers and inhibitors associated with creativity in virtual teams in a distributed-design educational context, and
- (ii) secondly, through smaller group discussion, to focus on specific areas, exploring the means of overcoming these inhibitors to creativity in VDTs towards the development of a set of Educational Guidelines to support distributed creativity in design education.

The workshop will take place during a 90 minute conference session and will involve a short introductory presentation, participants' contribution in the form of small group discussions, mapping activities and feedback opportunities. This workshop will suit those with an interest in or experience of NPD in a global project work context in education or industry. It is the intention to share personal

experiences and best practice from practitioners in the area of distributed-design creativity in the field of global design education and to start to develop a set of Educational Guidelines to support distributed creativity in design education.

## 2.2 Workshop Session Schedule

The proposed schedule for the session is outlined as follows:

(i) **Welcome, Introduction and Review of Enhancers and Inhibitors of Creativity in Virtual Design Teams**

*PPT Presentation and participant contribution.*

Background, Motivation for Workshop and Workshop Aim (*5 mins*) followed by a review and expansion of the current enhancers and inhibitors of creativity in VDTs. (*15 mins*)

(ii) **Develop Guidelines** to support distributed creativity in design education (*50 mins*)

*Activity.*

In smaller facilitated groups, each with a different specific focus on the variables relating to VDT Creativity participants will categorise the inhibitors through mapping. Then means and ways of overcoming the inhibitors through social, technological, organizational processes, etc. will be discussed towards developing Guidelines to support distributed creativity in design education through the sharing of best practice and personal experience.

(iii) **Conclude** (*20 mins*)

*Activity.*

Share findings and then prioritise Guidelines as a group.

## 3 WORKSHOP DELIVERABLES AND DISSEMINATION

Through the sharing of best practice and experiences, the outcomes of the Workshop will include a Review of Inhibitors to Creativity on Virtual Teams; discussion on the means of overcoming these inhibitors; and the development of a set of Guidelines to support distributed creativity in design education. Aspects of the Workshop will be recorded, via flipcharts, post-its and digital voice recording (with participants' consent). Any subsequent data will be analysed. It is proposed that the Workshop findings and further work will form the basis of a publication on the current state of Creativity in Distributed Design Education and a set of Guidelines to support distributed creativity in design education.

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