

## Intervention Design

theory and praxis of design(ing) for an accelerating world



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## Introduction

The world is accelerating. The only way to avoid the deadlock of designing for the current status quo is to embrace an unconditional accelerationist worldview. The world not only can be different than it is now, it should be.

By using opportunities and possibilities instead of difficulties and impossibilities intervention design is a positive approach to the now. It leaves conventions, established ways of thinking, existing structures and current values behind. Both scary and terrifyingly exciting.

Some technologies have advanced beyond our ability to conceptualize their implications. In response, a new discipline in design, architecture, and art emerges called speculative design. It takes the uncertainties and ambiguity of new technologies as a starting point and imagines probable outcomes. It includes non-human agents and anticipates a world in which humans might play a less central role. Speculative design poses 'what if' questions to open discussions about the kind of future we want and anticipates at the future to make it more shape-able.

To create a full understanding of the future probabilities design fiction is used to create probable future worlds as environments for new designs. Future worlds are created by introducing just one or two fictional but probable elements leading to an environment that is both familiar and new.

Intervention design doesn't end there. It goes beyond speculative design. Posing questions and open discussions aren't enough. Probable futures, closely tied to the current practice, are used to come with ideas, experiments, and designs that are able to challenge the current status quo and, eventually, blend into the now.

The goal of intervention design is to lead to a new practice that is useful now, not in the future.

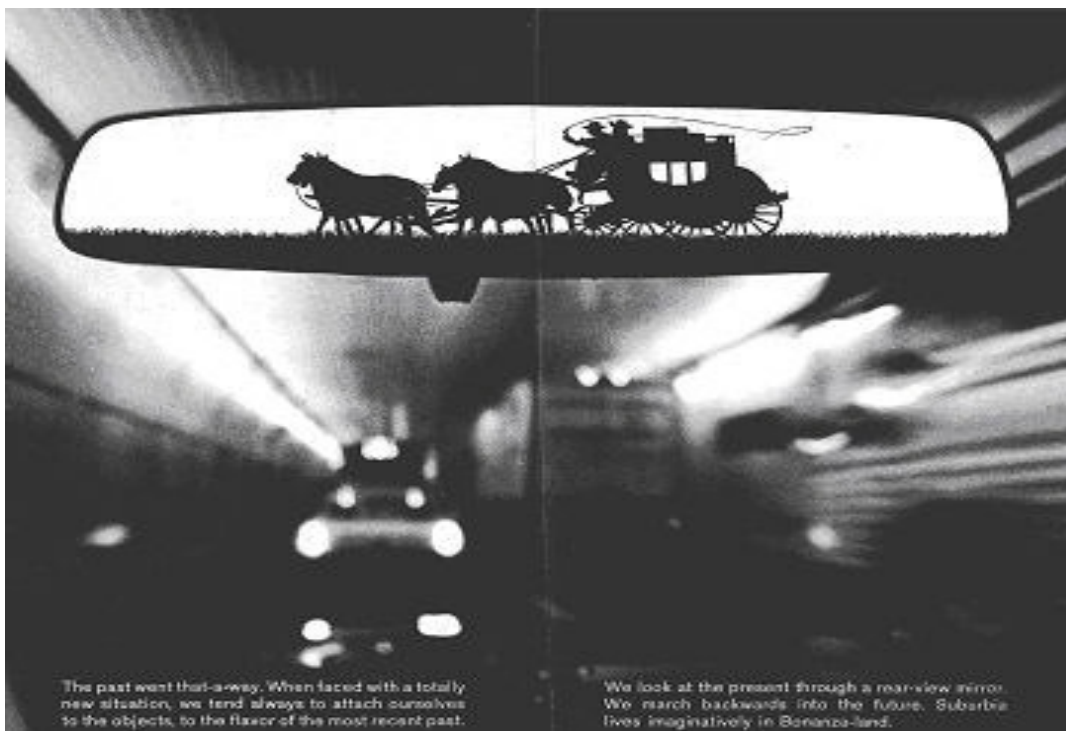
Intervention design is a design approach developed by Studio Hyperspace and currently being fine-tuned at the Digital Society School in Amsterdam.

## Theory and praxis

Intervention design is the theory and praxis of design(ing) for an accelerating world. By using new theory about media, society, design and technology intervention design creates new practices of design (we call them praxis, because it is a beautiful German word).

Since the rise of mass production after world war II design has become a practical design solutions and grasps opportunities within the ideas, models and structures of current hierarchal society. In short: designing for the world as it is.

Internationally there is a shift towards a new sort of design: design for the new world, the network(ed) society, the accelerating world. That isn't easy. Most people find it difficult to think in new, often not yet existing, models. According to media theorist Marshall McLuhan mankind is 'marching backwards into the future'. We look at the new world using descriptions and prescriptions of the old. Hence we are living in the past. That 'self-hypnosis' has far-reaching consequences: we are unaware of the psychic and social effects of new technology. As a result they've become invisible.



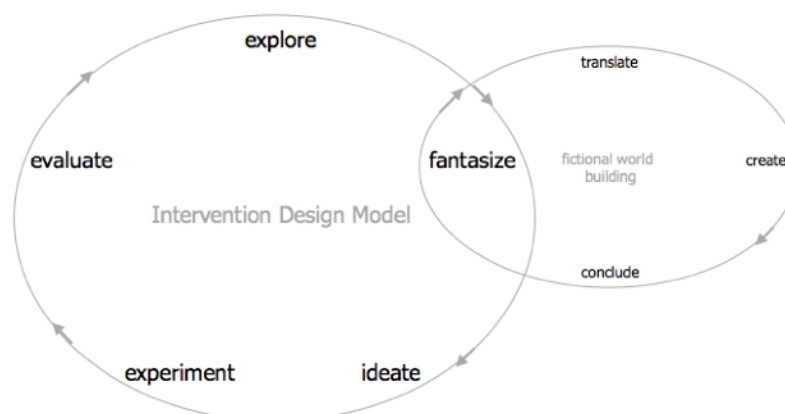
## Design and art

Design is, even more so than art, suitable to intervene between old models and new environments. Showing people the magnitude and directions of change. While most design currently focuses on existing environments, intervention design uses new ideas and ways of thinking to describe the new environment, using the difference between old and new as a catalyst. Intervention Design combines media and design theory with social design practice. The message / meaning of the design is probably the most important part of intervention design. Intervention design needs to alter the perception of the target group, giving way for new ways of thinking and acting.

## It's about you

You, as de designer, must be able to understand the world you are living, define your role in this world and design meaning in a world that is accelerating. This is in line with how we at MAMDT think about the future (role of the) designer. In the minor Intervention Design we are using old and new theory about the influence of media, the network society and change, ideas for design theory and praxis and the framework of the Intervention Design Model (IDM) to come up with meaningful design.

Intervention Design  
a speculative approach of designing for the new world by studio hennicke



### **But what about the user?**

Although we are not found of the word user the main objective of Intervention Design is to come up with a design that the other (human or nonhuman) understands.

We agree with Irving Wladawsky-Berger that:

“Design processes have become increasingly complex, so the acceptance of new design becomes equally complex. The design of the intervention – the introduction and integration of design into the status quo – is even more critical to the succes of design than the design artifact itself.”

In Intervention Design we aim for the integration of design into the status quo.

### **What are you going to do?**

You are going to think about the role of design and the designer in an accelerating world and apply your findings to your own role and praxis as a designer (and reflect upon it).

With one or two other students you design a prototype using the Intervention Design Method (IDM). Your own role must me manifest in the design and the design process.

There are two assignments:

#1. Design an intervention with use of the IDM for a social problem/ possibility/ opportunity. End product is an evaluated and well-researched prototype (with research and design documentation and a presentation) and can be launched into the status quo. This is a team assignment (two or three students).

#2. Write an article about why and how the end product solves the problem or takes the opportunity. The article should be well documented, easy to read and show your attitude to the new world as a designer. This is an individual assignment.

## Structure of the course

In this course theory of design and praxis is integrated.

## Theory of media and design

Media and design theory aims to make students aware of the context behind design and designing and the role and influence of technology in culture, society and design. Design is about changing the environment, creating meaning and thus has an impact on society on different levels. A self-aware designer is able to relate the design process to the impact design has on society and to the designers own set of values. A design is not just a design, it is a reflection of the designers values. The theory is applied in the IDM. The Outcome of the theory of media and design is an article about why and how the end product solves the problem or takes the opportunity.

## Design praxis

Design praxis learns students to translate the designers own values into the design praxis (German for practice). Design praxis is the lab the open space to discuss design ideas with other designers and to visit and experience different designers and design practices in their natural habitat.

The research component deals with relevant aspects of doing research and aims on giving a sufficient research basis for both minor and graduation project. The outcome of the praxis part is a prototype for an intervention design with the usage of the IDM, including presentation and research documentation.



## Partner organisation and external expertise

During the design praxis part of the minor we will be guests of Cube ([www.cubedesignmuseum.nl](http://www.cubedesignmuseum.nl)), a museum entirely dedicated to design with the aim to display meaningful design that has an impact on the world. Cube provides an insight in the design process, it inspires visitors to take an active part in thinking about shaping the world. Cube does not only stage exhibitions of trend-setting international and Euregional design, it also functions as an multidisciplinary laboratory where visitors can take part in innovative product design together with students and designers. The end presentations will take place at Cube.

We will do our best to invite design professionals to work with us. In the last editions we've worked together with designers and design agencies like Imagination of Things, Dear Hunter, Monnik, The Beach, Maurer, Ruben Pater and Catherine van Holder.

There will be a couple of interesting events to visit, but at this point it is unknown if we will join them together or make a visit optional.

What Design Can Do (Amsterdam, May 24 and 25) is a world leading conference on social design and designing for the new world. More info: [www.whatdesigncando.com](http://www.whatdesigncando.com).

The Next Web (Amsterdam, May 24 and 25) is a world leading conference on internet and digital business and culture. More info: [www.thenextweb.com](http://www.thenextweb.com).

Symposium Violent Patterns (The Hague, June 6) on public security under algorithmic control. More info: [www.violentpatterns.net](http://www.violentpatterns.net).

Border Session (The Hague, June 13-16), Tech Lab Festival. More info: [www.bordersessions.org](http://www.bordersessions.org).

Coded Matter(s) (Amsterdam, May 17), Brakke Grond, More info: <https://www.codedmatters.nl/news-item/coded-matters-2018-worldbuilding/>

## Intervention Design week by week

week	Workshop	Weekly assignment
Week #1	<p>Monday (Mai 7) location: MAMDT (RA.B.06) Start: 13u/1pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction intervention design</li> </ul> <p>Wednesday (May 9) location: CUBE Design Museum Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Getting to know the IDM</li> </ul>	- announced by your lecturers.
Week #2	<p>Monday (Mai 14) location: MAMDT (RA.B.06) Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshing your knowledge of the theory of media and society</li> <li>- Research in Intervention Design</li> </ul> <p>Wednesday (May 16) location: CUBE Design Museum Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making teams</li> <li>- Selecting a development</li> <li>- Presenting and coaching</li> </ul>	- announced by your lecturers.
Week #3	<p>Monday (Mai 21) location: MAMDT (RA.B.06) Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theory of media and society</li> <li>- Research in Intervention Design</li> </ul> <p>Wednesday (May 23) location: CUBE Design Museum Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fictional world building</li> <li>- Presenting and coaching</li> </ul> <p>Thursday and Friday (May 24 and 25):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What Design Can Do</li> <li>- The Next Web</li> </ul>	- announced by your lecturers.



<p><b>Week #4</b></p>	<p>Monday (Mai 28) location: MAMDT (RA.B.06) Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theory of media and society</li> <li>- Research in Intervention Design</li> <li>- Half way presentations</li> </ul> <p>Wednesday (May 30) location: CUBE Design Museum Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presenting and coaching</li> <li>- Half way presentations</li> </ul>	<p>- announced by your lecturers.</p>
<p><b>Week #5</b></p>	<p>Monday (June 4) location: MAMDT (RA.B.06) Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theory coaching</li> <li>- Research in Intervention Design</li> </ul> <p>Wednesday (June 6) location: CUBE Design Museum Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presenting and coaching</li> </ul>	<p>- announced by your lecturers.</p>
<p><b>Week #6</b></p>	<p>Monday (June 11) location: MAMDT (RA.B.06) Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theory coaching</li> <li>- Research in Intervention Design</li> </ul> <p>Wednesday (June 13) location: CUBE Design Museum Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presenting and coaching</li> </ul>	<p>- announced by your lecturers.</p>
<p><b>Week #7</b></p>	<p>Monday (June 18) location: MAMDT (RA.B.06) Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theory coaching</li> <li>- Research in Intervention Design</li> </ul> <p>Wednesday (June 20) location: CUBE Design Museum Start: 10u/10am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presenting and coaching</li> </ul>	<p>- announced by your lecturers. - prepare for end presentation on June 27 at CUBE Design Museum.</p>

### **Deadlines**

Intervention Design prototype, blog, presentation: Wednesday June 27.

Intervention Design article: Wednesday June 27.

## Learning objectives

- The student is able to translate the theory of media and design into the praxis of design.
- The student is able to form an opinion about the effects and affects of design and translate this opinion into the design (process).
- The student is able to investigate a design practice from the view point of different design models and theories.
- The student has adopted a critical attitude with respect to futurists. He/she can look at predictions within a broader perspective, not purely economic and technical. This enables him/her to work constructively towards a society in which new technologies have a supporting function within society, rather than dominating it. Every minor change within the system itself, could result in the system being completely changed.
- The student learns to put his/her personality to one side and to approach theoretical topics in a scientific manner.
- The student is able to think in an innovative manner and to develop his/her own visions using the visions of great thinkers within the field (whom he/she has learned about) as a source of inspiration and a frame of reference.
- The student is able to fall back on cultural and philosophical ideas within his/her professional thinking and action.

## Mandatory study material

McLuhan, Marshall and Fiore, Quinten (1967). *The Medium Is The Massage: An Inventory Of Effects*. London: Penguin Books.

Monteiro, Mike (2013). *How Designers Destroyed The World*. Lecture at the Webstock Conference in Wellington. link:  
<http://www.webstock.org.nz/talks/how-designers-destroyed-the-world/>

Williams, Alex and Nick Srnicek (2013). '#Accelerate Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics'. *Critical Legal Thinking*. Link: <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics/>

Ploeg, Theo (2016). 'Utopia as Practice: Future Thinking as Tranquilizer in an Accelerating World'. *Journal of Humanity*. Haarlem: Nieuwe Vide.

We highly recommend you to buy the following books:

Senova, Melis (2017). *This Human: How to be the person designing for other People*. Amsterdam: Bis Publishers.

Kees Dorst, Lucy Kaldor, Lucy Klippan en Rodger Watson (2016). *Design for the Common Good: A Handbook for Innovators, Designers and other People*. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

Nick Srnick en Alex Williams (2015). *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work*. London: Verso.

Besides this essential book and video we are going to read, watch and use a wagonload of additional material in this module.

Playlists of videos about design, technology and media at Youtube/Vimeo:  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrpNfewn-C5p7s8Rjw8tCquMx3Luh9Rmx>  
<https://vimeo.com/channels/962491>

Articles about design and media theory on Flipboard: <https://flipboard.com/@theoploeg/the-future-of-design-fc8u96pry>

## **Examination**

Work for all three parts separately must be sufficient (5,5 or higher).

### **Intervention Design assignment (50%, group assignment)**

Students work as duo or trio and design an intervention using the Intervention Design Model (IDM). All steps of the model have to be taken.

#### **Deliverables**

- Detailed research documentation (blog) of the design process using the IDM.
- Prototype of the designed intervention.
- Presentation of the design process and prototype.
- Prove that the design can be introduced in the status quo.

#### **Evaluation criteria**

- Quality, completeness and structure of the documentation of the design process.
- Quality and usage of media and design theory in the design process.
- Quality and effectiveness of the prototype of the designed intervention.

### **Research assignment (25%, individual assignment)**

The student does research for the design assignment and documents it.

#### **Deliverables**

- Research report of maximum three pages.
- Presentation of the design process and the research conducted.

#### **Evaluation criteria**

See research documentation at the end of this module info.

### **Designers article (25%, individual assignment)**

The student writes an article about why and how the end product solves the problem or takes the opportunity.

#### **Deliverables**

- Blog (proof of research for the assignment).
- Written article of 1200 words.

#### **Evaluation criteria**

- Quality of translation of media and design theory.
- Usage and mentioning of sources.
- Correct usage of a minimal five sources that has been discussed during the workshops (and listed as notes in APA).

## Research in Intervention Design

### Research in Intervention Design

Within the module Intervention Design, your end product will be a design made for the new world. A rather abstract notion but the design should either solve a problem or seize an opportunity. In order to come up with a design like that, you need a fair amount of creativity combined with a framework as used in this course. In the design research classes, we will look into different research approaches and methods that can be used to go through the different stages of the framework in order to gain relevant insights and information to design your solution with.

### The assignment

The subject of the module Intervention Design, requires a more exploratory research approach. This means that the approach will be largely similar to more defined project (desk research and field research) but the methods will be slightly adjusted. For example: the sources used might come from the arts and the movies, we will work with an experiment and rather than creating a regular persona, we work with a protagonist. However, the end result will remain an informed design with a solid ground in research.

The description of the assignment is as follows:

- 1) Formulate a preliminary topic you will focus on during this course.
- 2) Conduct a desk research on this topic to get a better understanding of the chosen subject. Use the gained insights to redefine your subject accordingly.
- 3) Conduct a field research. The choice of your method is related to your subject and must be relevant but otherwise you are free to choose. With the exception of the experiment, that part is obligatory. Use the insights gained from your field research to further define your subject and to define your protagonist.
- 4) Test your first ideas and prototypes in a relevant manner and setting. This should be done on in least two different rounds. Use your gained insights to further define and modify your design.
- 5) Your research process will be presented in the final presentations and in a separate research report. The report is maximum three pages and contains an overview of the chosen methods and the results and insights gained and applied.

### Practical aspects of the research classes

- 1) The assignment is an individual assignment. This is to ensure that every student develops the required research skills. It also ensures that the project group has different insights to use in the design process. The final presentation is done as a group but each group member has to equally participate in the presentation and has to be able to respond any question relating to the research. The report however, is strictly individual.
- 2) There are several sessions with the entire group to go over the theoretical framework of the research. In addition, students will meet in smaller groups to work on their own assignment and to receive feedback on that. The specific group composition will be organised later.

### Literature

The required literature in the research class is:

- Additional documents will be handed out by the lecturer.

Bijlage Beoordelingsformulier onderzoek

Beoordelingscriterium	Feedback
<b>Aanleiding en onderzoeksvraag</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>De student kan een voorlopig onderzoeksonderwerp formuleren.</li> <li>De student kan deze keuze onderbouwen en toelichten.</li> </ul>	
<b>Deskresearch</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Op basis van het voorlopige onderzoeksonderwerp, heeft de student een relevante deskresearch gedaan.</li> <li>De student maakt gebruik van meerdere bronnen met verschillende perspectieven en afdoende diepgang.</li> </ul>	
<b>Exploratief field research</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>De student kan een exploratief onderzoek opzetten en uitvoeren, inclusief het experiment.</li> <li>De student kan de gemaakte keuzes onderbouwen en toelichten wat de implicaties zijn.</li> <li>De uitkomsten zijn goed vastgelegd en uitgewerkt.</li> </ul>	
<b>Conclusies en ontwerpimplicaties</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>De student kan de resultaten op heldere wijze weergeven en hier logische conclusies en verbanden uit halen.</li> <li>De student kan op basis van zijn resultaten aangeven welke bevindingen relevantie hebben voor het te realiseren ontwerp.</li> </ul>	
<b>Rapportage</b>	



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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• De student heeft het onderzoeksproces helder en gestructureerd vastgelegd in een rapport van maximaal drie pagina's.</li><li>• De student heeft een heldere en logische presentatie gehouden en kan zijn keuzes mondeling toelichten.</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|