

MISE ÉIRE?

Irish Designers as Future Change Agents

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The designer's role as 'change agent' has evolved greatly over the last century. Plotting the evolution of the designer, Bousbaci describes this as one from intuitive and artistic designer, to logical designer, to reflective practitioner (2008). This evolution has allowed for the democratisation of Design, and has led to Design's thought and behaviour processes increasingly being used in complex problem solving (White, 2012, 2013).

Irish designers have an active and unique role to play in reframing how Design is being democratised, and how and it can be used in future change agency. This paper will discuss broad areas in which Irish designers can be influential future agents of change. It will discuss how 'soft skills' of empathy and human understanding will be important future design competencies. Furthermore by becoming a country of empathic designers we can humanise technology to address "Wicked Problems" (Rittel and Webber 1973) addressing social or cultural problems that are difficult or seemingly impossible to solve. Illustrated will be examples of future areas that could be addressed by Irish Designers, such as:

1. Population Shifts. Addressing complexity in Ageing Populations and displacement of populations.
2. Economies. Developing future Circular Economies and Moral Economies.
3. Transferring Big Data into Thick data. Humanising large complex data sets into information that provides insights into the everyday emotional lives of people.
4. Designing Design. Irish Designers have a role in redesigning the design profession by engaging in interdisciplinary research and creating future design discipline composites.

References

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