

Good design

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STV 202

Case study: The Garbino

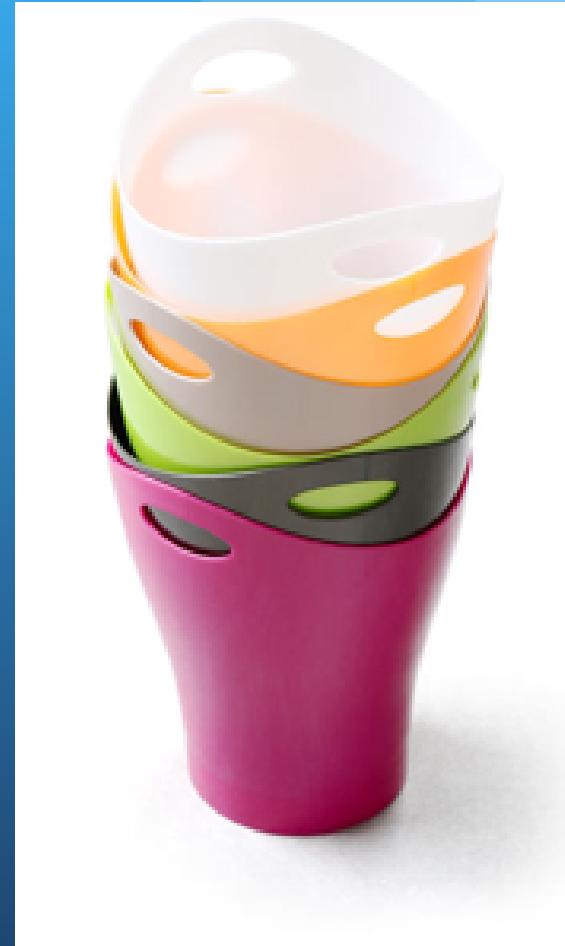
The central theme here is *good design*

What does “good design” mean to you?

The *Garbino*

- Designed by Canadian Karim Rashid, 1997

In what ways is it a good, simple design? Not so?



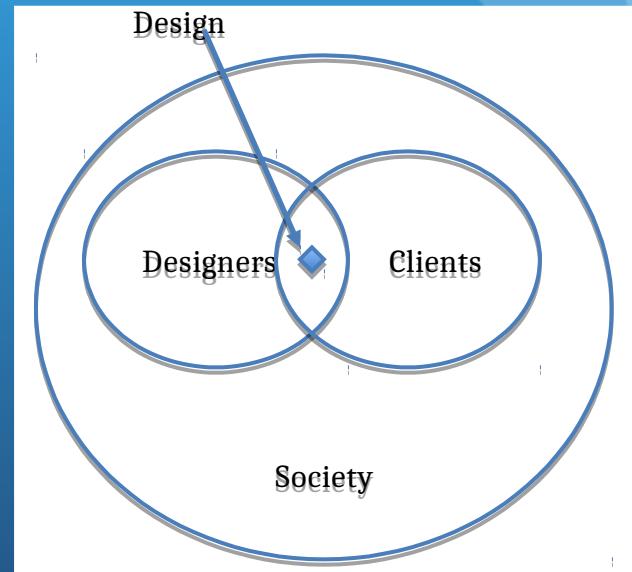
Aspects of good design

Perspectives on *good design*

- Technical
- Clients
- Designers
- General public/Society

Good design involves the broader context

We will look from a *technology-society* perspective



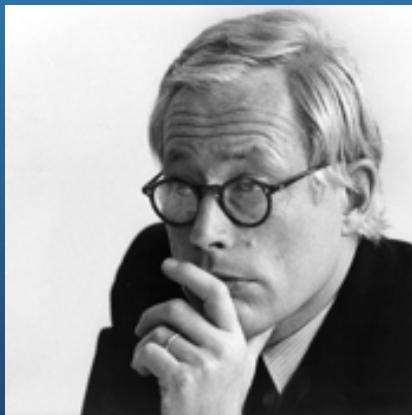
Dieter Rams (1932–)

An eminent 20th Century industrial designer

- Influential to many others, e.g., Jonathan Ive

Attended the Handwerker-und-Kunstgewerbeschule, 1946–1953

- Learned *modernist* design



Braun:

- Joined 1955
- Head of product design 1961
- Co-designed > 500 products
- Retired 1997

Awards include:

- Royal Designer for Industry, 1968
- World design medal, IDSA, 1996

“Less but better”

Motto: “Weniger aber besser” = Less but better



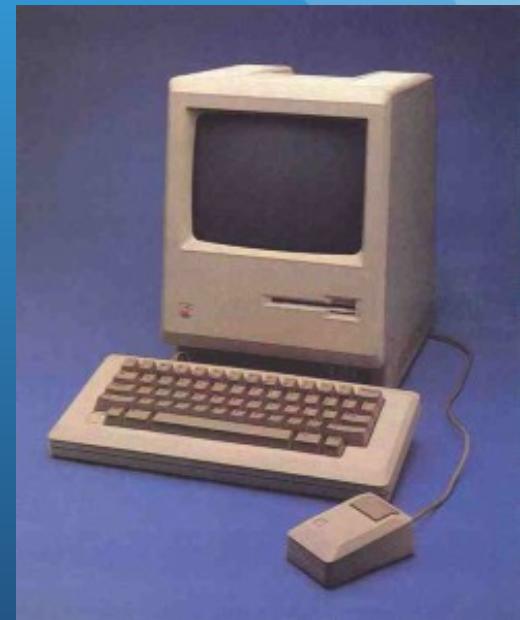
Good design is *minimalist*

- E.g., the lack of cursor keys on the Macintosh (Jobs)
- Users already have the mouse!

Commandment of Good Design #10: Good design is as little design as possible

- Less but better—because it concentrates on the essential aspects, and the products are not burdened with inessentials.

What about the iPhone 7 without an earphone jack? Other designs?



Omit the unimportant

Minimalism and importance

- One of the most significant design principles is to omit the unimportant in order to emphasize the important... [e.g.,] items that have unconstricted obvious-seeming functionalism in both the physical and the psychological sense. Therefore, products should be well designed and as neutral and open as possible, leaving room for the self-expression of those using them. (p. 111)



Braun Atelier

How does this system satisfy “omit the unimportant”?

What other designs satisfy this criterion? Fail to satisfy it?

Commandment #6: Good design is unobtrusive

- Products fulfilling a purpose are like tools. They are neither decorative objects nor works of art. Their design should therefore be both neutral and restrained, to leave room for the user's self-expression.

Dogbert, bad product designer



Clarity

Communicating clearly

- ... items should be designed in such a way that their function and attributes are directly understood... Design riddles are impudent and products that are informative, understandable, and clear are pleasant and agreeable. (p. 112)

In what ways is this design clear or legible?

What other designs are clear? Unclear?

Commandment #4: Good design makes a product understandable

- It clarifies the product's structure. Better still, it can make the product talk. At best, it is self-explanatory.



Braun ET 66

Progressive

Designers have social responsibilities:

- Design means being steadfast and progressive rather than escaping and giving up. In a historical phase in which the outer world has become less natural and increasingly artificial and commercial, the value of design increases. The work of designers can contribute more concretely and effectively toward a more humane existence in the future. (p. 113)

How is this design progressive?

What other designs are progressive?



Vitsoe 606 USS

Case study: The Carleton

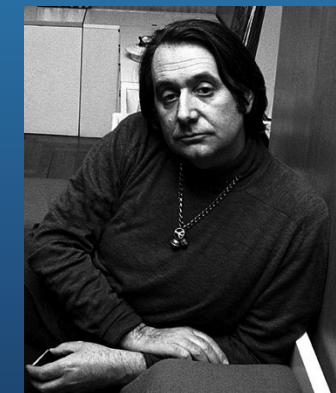


Carleton bookcase

The Carleton bookcase (Sottsass 1981)

In what ways is the Carleton not progressive?

What other designs are not progressive?



Ettore Sottsass

Innovative

Commandment #1: Good design is innovative

- The possibilities for innovation are not, by any means, exhausted. Technological development is always offering new opportunities for innovative design. But innovative design always develops in tandem with innovative technology, and can never be an end in itself.

Consider the Bruno smart trash can

Is the Bruno innovative?

What other designs are innovative, or not?



Critique

Rams's principles are largely negative

- When should features be *added*?

Simplification can lead to dullness

- “These are efficient objects, beautiful in their purposefulness, yet they fail to enlighten or revive their surroundings.” –Gadi Amit

This problem might undermine Rams's social program

Others could “jazz up” minimalist designs

- Perhaps minimal could be made “cool”?
- Would that be underhanded?



Braun Citromatic

Administration

The syllabus

Auxiliary materials:

- Blog: <http://cstv.uwaterloo.ca>
- Twitter: @UW_CSTV

Your TA:



Graeme Epps

The image shows a promotional graphic for CSTV. At the top, the acronym 'CSTV' is written in large, bold, black letters, with 'Centre for Society, Technology & Values' in smaller text below it. Below this, the word 'Technology?!' is displayed. The central part of the image features a close-up of a red octopus's head and tentacles. In the bottom right corner of the image area, the text 'Is it a trap?' is written. At the bottom of the graphic, there is a white rectangular box containing the text: 'Let's talk Technology and Society! CSE List A courses. Take the STV option. Details at cstv.uwaterloo.ca'.