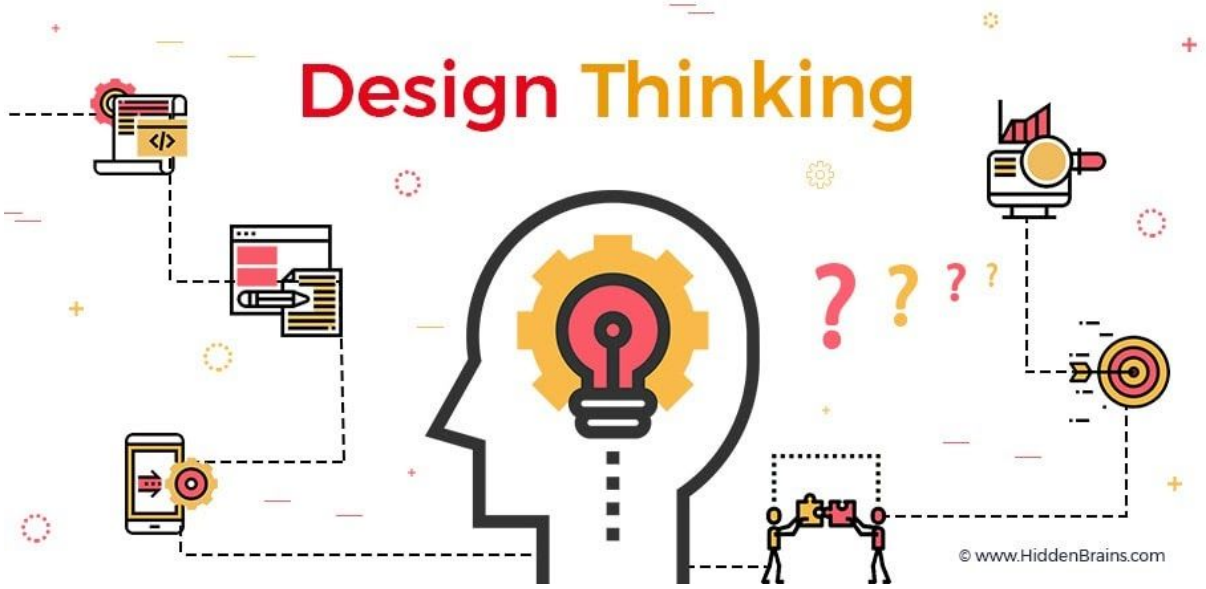
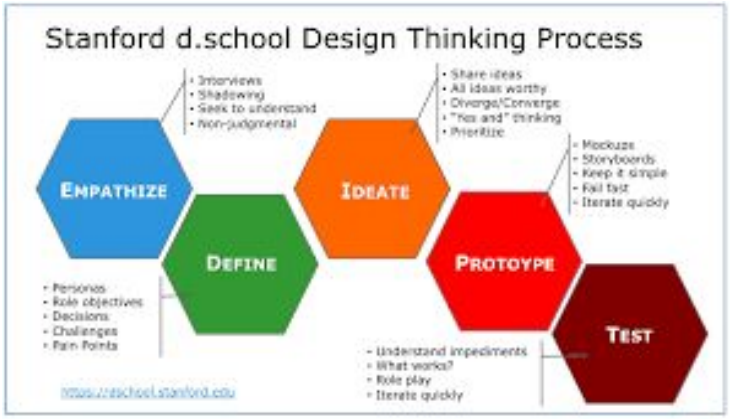
Blog - Design Thinking

This week, we were given a guest lecture by Dr. Peter Robins of the DCU Business School on the topic of Design Thinking. He explained a wide range of topics in great detail, including his own personal experience, the problems facing businesses, the cost of failure and the current state of Irish SMEs.



Beginning

Dr. Robins began the guest lecture by telling us about himself. He told us that he was trained in Design Thinking at the Stanford d. School, renowned for the Design Thinking process below and that he was on the Government's Design Forum and a recent member of the NSAI Innovation Standards Group.



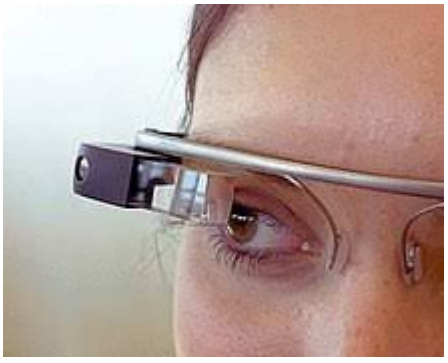
The Problems Facing Businesses

Dr. Robins told us that the majority of businesses are concerned about innovation, saying that 84% of businesses believe that innovation is the biggest challenge they face. He also said that only 6% of

businesses feel that they have the people and the know-how to win at innovation. I found this interesting as it helped me to understand the demand for innovative thinkers in today's economy

The Cost of Failure

Dr. Robins told us some shocking statistics about the cost of failure for major companies today. He told us about Dyson's electric car project into which they had invested $3.5 billion before having to shut it down. He also told us about Google's Google Glass Project which they had to cancel, costing them an estimated $650 million. It was clear from the lecture that failure is far more common than success, but the sheer cost of some colossal failures can be fatal to businesses.



The Situation in Ireland

From the lecture, it was very clear that innovation in Ireland is at a crisis point. Dr. Robins said that Innovation Intensity and Productivity are very low in comparison to other first world countries. We went through some ways to tackle this problem in the lecture, including increasing the rate of business start-ups, encouraging more female entrepreneurs and encouraging young and migrant entrepreneurs.

'Wicked' Problems

Dr. Robins ended the lecture by exploring the topic of 'Wicked' problems. He described them in contrast to 'Simple' problems, which have a verifiable solution and can be solved by applying the correct algorithm. 'Wicked' problems have no exact solution and there is no way of knowing when the problem is solved. The problem is also dynamic in that it changes as you apply different solutions.

All in all, I found this lecture really interesting, as Design Thinking and Innovative Thinking will undoubtedly play a major role in my future career. It was a great opportunity to learn about it from one of the experts in the field.