

Rethinking Prototyping

Project Type Research

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Questions and Content

The notion of the prototype is the main focus of "Rethinking Prototyping". Until recently, the prototype has been a central element in technical as well as design processes. Out of the diverse scientific and artistic disciplines and their perspectives, three mixed groups of researchers explore and test new approaches to prototyping. "Rethinking Prototyping" addresses questions specific to design, technology, and economy.

One research group investigates combined product and virtual services in the subproject "Hybrid Prototyping", focusing on applying new technological accomplishments in a way that enables the connection of physical objects to virtual or real services.

The second research group is engaged in questions pertaining to design and usability research. By means of "Blended Prototyping" in the development of mobile interfaces, alternatives to the established concepts of low and high fidelity prototyping can be tested. The use of manual drawing (low fidelity) in connection with digital functions allows quick usability testing, e.g. in smartphones.

The third research group, "Beyond Prototyping", focuses on prototyping in times of rapid manufacturing. The prototype might become obsolete with this technology and end users will design their own products to be truly unique copies. This project explores the roles of the protagonists in the design process.

Use and Target Audience

The collision of methods and knowledge from a wide range of disciplines offers all of the participants deeper insights beyond their respective subprojects: a re-actualization or renewal of the different notions of the prototype in the particular disciplines. The findings will be incorporated into teaching at both universities.

Support from the Hybrid Plattform

For this project, Hybrid Plattform provided the framework for the development of the research field, connected the experts, and prepared and submitted a joint grant application from both universities at Einstein Foundation Berlin. The first transdisciplinary investigation into the field of prototyping occurred in November 2011 at the Hybrid Talks and the Hybrid Symposium.