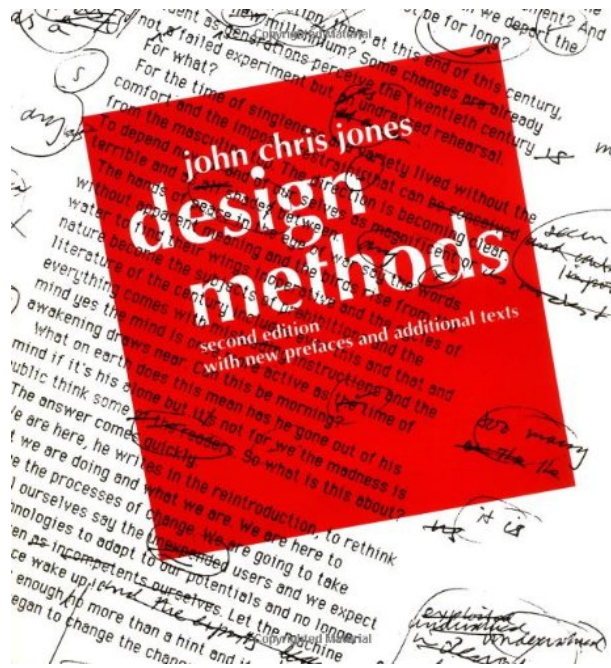
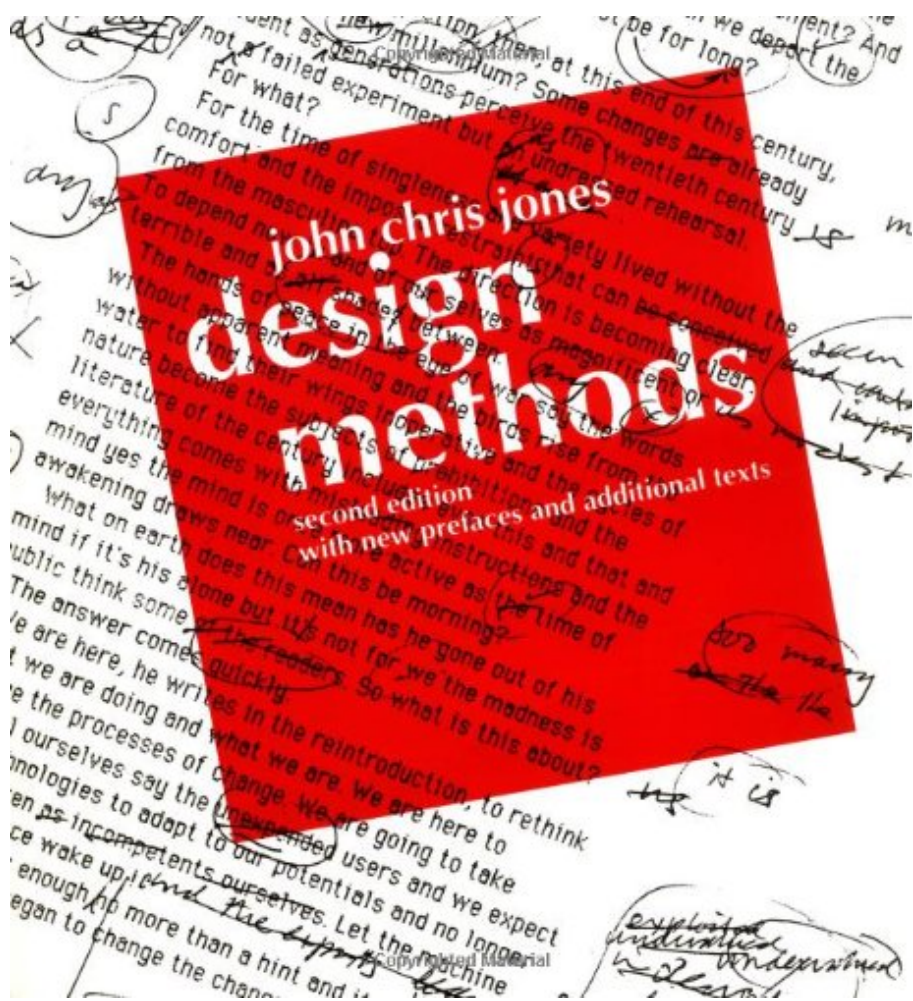


# DESIGN METHODS BY JOHN CHRIS JONES



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- design as participation, the involvement of the public in the decision-making process;
- design as creativity, which is supposed to be potentially present in everyone;
- design as an educational discipline that unites arts and science and perhaps can go further than either;
- and now the idea of designing Without a Product, as a process or way of living in itself."

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20 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

Great recipe book for designing in teams; a classic.

By Rhodes Hileman

Design Methods: seeds of human futures By John Chris Jones 1970,1980,1992

Architects, confronted in the 1950s and 1960s with design efforts involving many designers and many stakeholders, were forced to study their methods to make them more open to scrutiny and input at all stages. By the time "Design Methods" was published in 1970, architects, engineers, and industrial designers had begun to raise their perspective to include a much larger picture, ranging from the designer's internal processes all the way to planetary conditions. As a society, we were re-designing design. Many of the design methods which Jones presents in his "recipe book" grew from this design group work. Even today, best

practice for design teams is largely developed from methods described almost thirty years ago in this book.

From the Introduction:

"Jones first became involved with design methods while working as an industrial designer for a manufacturer of large electrical products in Britain in the 1950s. He was frustrated with the superficiality of industrial design at the time and had become involved with ergonomics. When the results of his ergonomic studies of user behavior were not utilized by the firm's designers, Jones set about studying the design process being used by the engineers. To his surprise, and to theirs, Jones' analysis showed that the engineers had no way of incorporating rationally arrived at data early on in the design process when it was most needed. Jones then set to work redesigning the engineer's design process itself so that intuition and rationality could co-exist, rather than one excluding the other."

This cooperation of multiple faculties seems to be a consistent thread throughout his work.

"Design Methods" is divided into two parts.

Part one gives a brief history of design, argues that new methods are needed for today's more complex realities, breaks down the design process into three stages, and shows us how to choose a design method for each stage. The 1992 edition has added several prefaces which are well worth reading. They help explain how to use the book.

Part two consists of descriptive outlines, or recipes, for 35 design methods. These methods include: logical, data gathering, innovative, taxonomic, and evaluative procedures. Reading part one gives you a grasp of the book. After that, the methods in part two are best read singly or a few at a time, as you would any recipe book.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jones breaks design down into three stages: 1) Divergence, 2) Transformation, and 3) Convergence.

The divergence stage is ".. extending the boundary of a design situation .. to have a large enough, and fruitful enough, search space... The objectives, and the problem boundary, are unstable and tentative. Evaluation is deferred. Every effort is made to escape old assumptions, and absorb new data."

The territory of the problem is tested to discover limits, consequences, and paradoxes. The questions are: What is valuable? What is feasible? What is dangerous? Where are the dependencies between elements? What are the penalties for getting it wrong? Are the right questions being asked?

The transformation stage requires a shift of gears. The territory of the problem has been mapped. Operative words here are: eliminate, combine, simplify, transform, modify.

"This is the stage when objectives, brief, and problem boundaries are fixed, when critical variables are identified, when constraints are recognized, when opportunities are taken and when judgements are made. [It is] pattern-making, fun, flashes of insight, changes of set... Pattern-making .. is the creative act of turning a complicated problem into a simple one by .. deciding what to emphasize and what to overlook."

At the last stage, convergence, "the problem has been defined, the variables have been identified and the objectives have been agreed. The designer's aim ...[is to] reduce the secondary uncertainties progressively until only one of many possible alternative designs is left... Persistence and rigidity of mind is a virtue: flexibility and vagueness are to be shunned."

Convergence can be done, as a programmer would say, from the top down or from the bottom up; or architecturally speaking, from the outside inward or inside outward. Often the best approach is to do both at once, and resolve differences as the two processes meet.

\* \* \* \* \*

Design today is an increasingly social art, involving multiple designers, and multiple stakeholders as client/sponsor, suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, consumer/customer, and citizen groups and government agencies concerned with a shared environment, all get into the act. Individual design geniuses now must learn to communicate and negotiate effectively to succeed in the current enterprise environment.

Advances in the capabilities of engineers and engineering tools must be matched with advances in techniques for resolving a broader range of issues and demands, and more effective communication skills and design transformation skills among designers and design managers.



Computers will drive the role of humans in design to the earlier stages - divergence and transformation - of the design process where flexibility, intuition, and soft-focus attention are required. Knowledge base systems will take over the convergence stage, kicking the problem back to us only when discovered contradictions force re-evaluation of design goals. The iteration of complete designs from a given design problem definition will become faster as our knowledge base improves and as computer power increases. As the speed of iteration increases, a threshold will be passed where qualitative changes in both design and designing will result.

"Design Methods" is a seminal book which was widely credited with stimulating fresh approaches to design thinking. It will continue to be recognised as a classic work, and a useful text kept handy by every drawing table, CAD system, and engineering manager's desk.

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

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