

A Socio-Psychological Perspective on Design Thinking in Online Environments: The Promises and Perils

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Abstract

Design thinking (DT) as an innovation method has become increasingly important over the past decade. However, digitization is rapidly accelerating across all domains of the modern working world which has also changed the way innovation management and DT, in particular, is conducted. That is, formerly highly interactive offline workshops have become remote online workshops. This radical change also warrants a reconsideration of the potentially changing socio-psychological dynamics within DT workshops. To explore this, 16 qualitative in-depth interviews with renowned DT experts from various backgrounds were conducted. By contextualizing the interview findings with construal-level theory and embodied cognition, we explore how the DT process is affected by the changing socio-psychological dynamics created by the shift from an offline to an online environment. In sum, we identify promises and perils of DT in online environments and derive propositions for future research and practice.

Keywords: *Design thinking; Construal-level theory; Innovation management*

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