

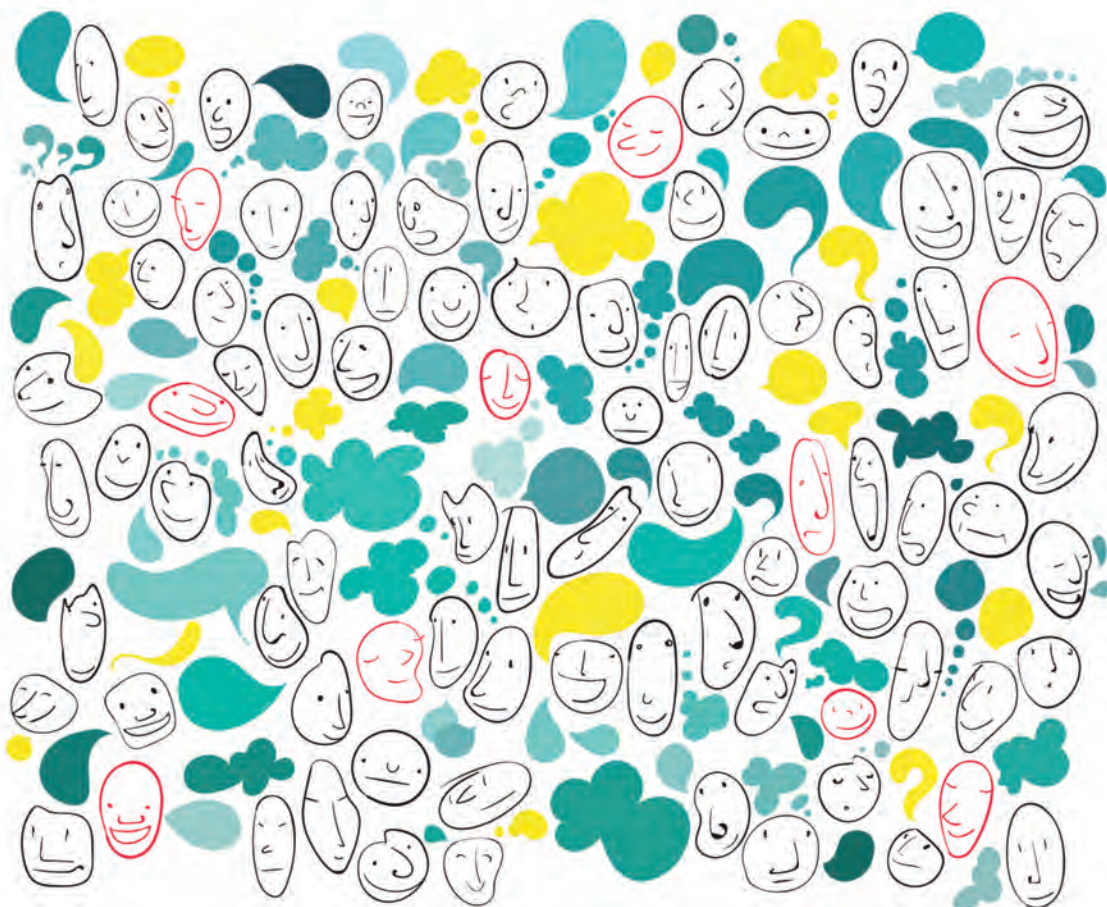
# MASSIVE CODESIGN

A Proposal for a Collaborative Design Framework

Anna Meroni, Daniela Selloni, Martina Rossi

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Anna Meroni, Daniela Selloni, Martina Rossi

Essays by: Stefana Broadbent, Christophe Gouache, François Jégou

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## Authors

*Anna Meroni* is an architect, Ph.D in Design and Associate Professor of Design in the Department of Design at the Politecnico di Milano. Her research focus is on service and strategic design for sustainability to foster social innovation, participation and local development. Specific expertise has been developed in codesign methods and tools. She is the head of the international MSc program in Product Service System Design and coordinator of the POLIMI-DESIS Lab, the Milan based research lab of the DESIS-Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability Network.

*Daniela Selloni* is a Service Designer, Ph.D in Design, Research Fellow and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Design at the Politecnico di Milano. Her research interests cover service design and social innovation, focusing on citizen activism, sharing economy, methods and tools for codesign. She also acts in an advisory capacity for start-up incubation programmes and organisations from the private and third sectors. She is part of the POLIMI-DESIS Lab.

*Martina Rossi* is a Service Designer, Ph.D candidate and teaching assistant in the Department of Design at the Politecnico di Milano. Her research interests and professional activity deal with codesign processes, service design and design thinking, with a specific focus on the private sector. She is also active in engaging the service design community in a discussion about the discipline, therefore, she co-organizes the Service Design Drinks Milan. She is part of the POLIMI-DESIS Lab.

## Contributors

*Stefana Broadbent* is the cofounder of Cleanweb which uses digital media to fight climate change. She is visiting Professor at the Politecnico di Milano and Fellow of the Centre for Digital Anthropology at UCL London. Her research focuses on the evolution of digital practices in society. In recent years she has worked on digital communication, collective intelligence, health and sustainability.

*Christophe Gouache* is design project manager at Strategic Design Scenarios. His focus is on sustainable and social innovation, collaborative and participative scenario building, prospective visions (prospective scenarios of future sustainable ways of living) and service design. He is working on various projects of public policy design and public innovation with local and regional authorities as well as ministries, and finally action-research projects at EU level.

*François Jégou* is founder and head of Strategic Design Scenarios. He has 20 years of experience in strategic design, participative scenario building and definition of new product-services-policy systems. François is a professor of strategic design at La Cambre, Brussels and Design manager of the Laboratory of Usage and Innovative Practices at the Cité du Design in Saint-Etienne, France. He is the Lead expert of URBACT and founding member of the DESIS Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability network.

# Introduction

This book focuses on codesign, and, more specifically, on “massive codesign”: the idea that multiple and/or numerous participants having different voices collaborate in a design process broken down into different steps and formats and resulting in a relevant and diversified amount of data.

Services, strategies and scenarios are presented as the main field of application: these are complex items that demand complex processes be tackled, processes in which it is necessary to involve a variety of players who are largely interdependent and therefore who must collaborate in order to achieve any goal.

Moreover, the processes analysed in this book fall within the spheres of public participation and social innovation, two areas in which the most pressing challenges for codesign are currently arising, since they require collaboration both to practise a more extended idea of democracy and to develop solutions that correspond to collective social needs.

This book essentially makes two main contributions:

- a “Collaborative Design Framework” to identify and structure codesign activities, methods and tools within massive creative processes;
- a “set of quick lessons learnt” to provide guidance to the conception and organisation of other massive creative processes.

The whole book is oriented at practice: it discusses codesign activities from the designer’s point of view, detailing issues such as process from beginning to end, activity flow, manipulability of tools, roles and rules for participants and many others. It is intended as a support for designers dealing in massive codesign processes and aims towards improved results.

The book is divided into 3 main parts:

- “Scoping Codesign”
- “Experimenting with Codesign”
- “Designing Codesign.”

(1) The first section is devoted to outlining the notion of codesign from different perspectives. It initially provides a synthesis of the main challenges for codesign today, highlighting how the idea of codesign has extended and blurred its boundaries, focusing in particular on the areas of public participation and social innovation. We then discuss codesign, also touching on anthropology and ethnography as codesign employs a number of methods with bases in these two fields, often misinterpreting and simplifying them.

More importantly, the first part introduces the Collaborative Design Framework which provides the structure for the analysis developed in the second part of the book. This framework, building upon the well-known Double Diamond design process, combines 2 polarities of concepts: one summarises the subject matter which drives design (between “topic-driven” and “concept-driven”); the other outlines the style of guidance by designers (between “facilitating” and “steering”). The result is a compass of 4 quadrants in which the various codesign activities may be positioned and highlight the evolution thereof from the initial stage of understanding a topic to the eventual development of a concept.

Finally, in order to understand what type of approaches and resources can be employed within this evolution, a basic glossary is provided defining key-notions such as boundary objects, tools and prototypes.

(2) The second part of the book analyses 4 applied-research activities according to the Collaborative Design Framework. They are:

- “CIMULACT”: a European research project involving citizens and a wide range of stakeholders in redefining the Research and Innovation Agenda for the Horizon 2020 programme;
- “Creative Citizens”: a codesign experiment devoted to developing services to improve the daily life of a Milanese neighbourhood, working with a group of citizens and multiple stakeholders;
- “Feeding Milan”: an action-research project funded by local institutions aiming at creating a network of services to connect farmers in the suburban area with consumers in the town;
- “SPREAD”: a European research project in which various societal stakeholders from business, research, policy and civil society

backgrounds participated in the collaborative development of a vision for sustainable lifestyles in Europe by 2050.

All these projects include a number of codesign activities that are analysed by describing aims, participants, guidance style, subject matter, Double Diamond stage, environmental set-up, duration, main phases, boundary objects and final output.

This comparative analysis allows us not only to better understand how these projects worked, but above all, to focus on how the Collaborative Design Framework can be interpreted and what its possible applications and extensions may be.

(3) Building upon the projects illustrated above, the third part of the book presents a more detailed elaboration of the Collaborative Design Framework, expanding it with a set of lessons learnt and actionable recommendations. They may only serve as a few examples, however they aim to provide insight for other designers performing similar activities.

The quick lessons learnt refer mainly to 3 cluster groups: process, experience and boundary objects, and they specify each area providing several focal points such as “engagement and recruitment”, “intensity and fun”, “relationships with participants”, “visual thinking”, etc.

The Collaborative Design Framework is detailed by characterising the activities of the 4 resulting quadrants: “discovering and exploring options”, “imagining options beyond the world as it is”, “expanding and consolidating options”, “creating, envisioning and developing options”. A set of recommendations is provided for each area in order to make the framework more concrete and applicable, and thus, to provide a practical guidance for undertaking massive codesign processes.

The book concludes with a prediction: massive codesign processes should become standard, especially within public participation and social innovation spheres. They may help to improve results and, hopefully, increase the level of transparency, accountability and democracy.



This book focuses on “massive codesign”: the idea that multiple and/or numerous participants having different voices collaborate in a design process broken down into different steps and formats and resulting in a relevant and diversified amount of data.

Services, strategies and scenarios are presented as the main field of application: these are complex items that demand complex processes be tackled, processes in which it is necessary to involve a variety of players who are largely interdependent and therefore who must collaborate in order to achieve any goal.

The book essentially makes two main contributions: a “Collaborative Design Framework” to identify and structure codesign activities, methods and tools within massive creative processes; a “set of quick lessons learnt” to provide guidance to the conception and organisation of other massive creative processes.

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