

Preface

This book has two underlying messages, the emerging importance of the social issue of inclusion and human diversity in contemporary society, and the increasing awareness that there is no such thing as a ‘standard human being.’ The first question is considered to have a primarily political repercussion. US President Obama spent his mandate championing inequality and social disparity as a necessary milestone toward economic revival, among other things, while a vital role in the strategies adopted by the European Union’s Horizon2020 framework program is played by the ones that focus on strengthening equality, participation, and accessibility for all to goods, services, and what Dahrendorf called ‘life chances.’ What this means is that the issue of social inclusion of diversity and for equality is firmly on political agendas all over the world, not least because of increasing awareness that new visions, new strategies, new tools, and new approaches are needed, if we are to tackle the challenges arising from recent phenomena of economic and cultural globalization, demographic change; economic migration from poorer countries and an ageing population in wealthier countries, a phenomenon that is destined to upset the entire planet’s micro- and macro-economic and social structures in years to come.

The second issue tackled in this book is more technical in nature, since the paradigm changes from ‘designing for standards’ and ‘inclusive products and service design’ to the enlightened awareness that there are no such concepts to fit the standard human being, and this has immediate, direct repercussions on the specialized dimension of designing. The realization is at last taking hold not only that those individuals are physically, psychologically, and culturally ‘diverse,’ but they also have widely diversified skills, abilities, aspirations, and desires that make each one of us unique and not at all replicable. Since the diversity of individuals is the rule, not the exception, it makes sense to consider it as a resource, not as a limiting factor or a restriction on design, while equality between individuals, communities, and peoples should be treated as fundamental strategic inputs to the sustainable development of contemporary society, where everybody should have the same opportunities to experience places, products, and services. Numerous design approaches have been adopted to facilitate social and cultural inclusion in recent decades: Design for Disability, Universal Design, Inclusive Design, and

Design for All. All of these philosophies, approaches, and methodologies aim to build value on all aspects of human diversity, from psychophysical to cultural issues, and to offer equal opportunity to everyone in order to experience places, products, services, and systems. With this in mind, this book sets out to forge a climate conducive to discussion and comparison between these approaches, without any prejudice in favor or against any one of them, but attempting to identify the elements they hold in common and to build each one's heritage of originality, because we are convinced that the true resource of Design for Inclusion may well be found in this very diversity of opinions.

In particular, this book describes the state of the art of recent research conducted in a variety of fields that share the focus on Design for Inclusion and was presented in the second international conference on Design for Inclusion (AHFE 2017, Los Angeles, California). On this occasion, the numerous research papers presented were collected together into seven different thematic areas, corresponding to different sections of this book:

- Design Driven Social Innovation: Methodology and Training;
- Advances in Design for Ageing Population;
- Inclusive Products and Service Design;
- Smart Tech, Web and Media for All;
- Design for Inclusion in the Living Environment;
- Inclusive and Universal Design in Clothing, Footwear and Accessories;
- Design for Users With Disabilities.

Each section contains research paper that has been reviewed by members of the International Editorial Board. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to the board members as listed below:

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