Digital-Cultural Ecology and the Medium-Sized City
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Abstract Submission Form

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Moving in the digital era: future urban mobility solutions shaped by public involvement in the design process.

2. Format: written paper

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5. University or Company Affiliation: Politecnico di Milano; Royal College of Art

6. Abstract (300 words):

In recent years urban environments have been subjected to significant changes, due to various aspects related to the pervasive use of portable devices and web-based technologies.

The expression "smart city" as a recurring buzzword, is used to indicate responsive spaces where 'everything talks' and feedback loops connect physical and virtual aspects of everyday life, including buildings, citizens and local administrations.

From this perspective, Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) represent a fundamental element embedded into metropolitan spaces where ubiquitous computing enables people to interact, travel, and share information in real time.

Citizens may even become active stakeholders in the value-generation process both offline, through co-design workshops and online, through the use of ICTs and social networks.

Consequently, collaborative methods and co-design – based on digital networking and web-based communities – can be usefully applied to the automotive industry too as a gateway to directly access everyday traveller's experience. Public involvement in the design process offers a fresh interpretation to issues and opportunities of contemporary urban life, supporting at the same time the conception of products, processes and related services.

Groundbreaking technologies are expected to redefine well-established design and manufacturing standards, as shown in the field of driverless cars. These innovative vehicles are set to affect urbanites' habits and travel behaviour by providing a wide range of on-board options for specific user needs and lifestyles. Within this context, local peculiarities, digital technologies and user experience all play a crucial role in redefining new vehicles' interior spaces.

The role of pervasive technologies and collaborative networks, as a catalyst of people's engagement in the automotive field for the design of future urban driverless cars is mostly unchartered territory. Therefore, this action-research paper provides a timely interdisciplinary overview of developing mobility trends, and developments that enable vehicle consumers to be a vital part of the creative process.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Marco Zilvetti

Marco Zilvetti is a PhD student at Politecnico di Milano, School of Design, where in 2012 he started his PhD research on driverless cars and future mobility as a consequence of his passion for car design and digital technologies.

Since November 2014 he is also a Visiting PhD student at Royal College of Art to acquire deeper insights about British society and complete his research.

After receiving his master degree cum laude in product design in 2010, he has been collaborating with major international companies including The North Face, CBRE and Frette, working on several projects in the field of product, interior and graphic design.

Speaker at various conferences, his work includes the publication of a few academic papers where he presents his transdisciplinary experience in the fields of smart cities, future transport and car design. He has also collaborated with the post-graduate Master Course in Transportation & Automobile Design at Politecnico di Milano, providing didactic support about metadesign and scenario building.

Marco's aim is to strenghten his knowledge and experience in the field of car design, related to self-driving vehicles, in order to actively contribute to the design of future mobility solutions and provide commercial value to industry.

Matteo Conti

A specialist in transportation design practice and low carbon vehicles (LCVs) Matteo Conti works as a Senior Tutor for the MA in Vehicle Design at the Royal College of Art.

Conti acts as a program manager and is responsible for curriculum development whilst

coordinating external projects with industry. He is also contributing to postgraduate supervision and research activities.

His main objective is to combine in-depth research and design practice with applied teaching in order to provide the best possible learning experience and deliver creative design output that matters.

His work includes the publication of a number of academic papers in the field of LCVs as well as live-industrial collaboration projects, one of which culminated in the exterior redesign of the Avid CU-EV (in limited production) and another for the design of a new electric scooter for Elecscoot (for large volume production). He previously worked and honed his design skills in the marine industry by establishing and managing Stile Mare Ltd, as a design consultancy.

Conti's aim is to further develop ongoing industrial and academic collaboration, new postgraduate curricula, and commercial value for business both through contract research, mostly in the area of LCVs.

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