ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
The Perceived Suitability of Online Applications for Design Education

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• Abstract:
Design has deeply set pedagogical traditions for mentoring and assessing student work. Critiques that evaluate physical artifacts of work throughout the phases of development are at the core of such traditions. This has made it challenging for design programs to move courses online during the pandemic, especially studios that require frequent and fluid exchange of feedback about projects. However, the resistance against digital modalities is not circumstantial to the times. Ample research supports that this condition stems from a firm critiquing culture that is both analogue and rigorous. For this reason, many made the shift to distance learning without experience or knowledge about the online applications that could support their course. It is uncertain when in-person instruction will return to the usual methods. In the meantime, existing research suggests how online alternatives can facilitate learning experiences that are comparable to the rigor of those encountered in-person. This paper presents the results of a survey aimed to know the suitability of online applications for exchanging project feedback. The data comes from students who were forced to use a variety of applications during the pandemic. The preliminary results suggest that specific attributes define the suitability of an effective application for communicating about design in a virtual space. Applications that support drawing are essential, and the ability to record drawing and talking at the same time is more important than being able to do it in real-time. Applications that automatically generate a repository of correspondence are highly valued; the burden of pressing ‘record’ on some applications is problematic. Applications that allow outsiders to participate in a critique provide students with a sense of connecting to industry. Last, applications that facilitate peer reviews are successful if they support
asynchronous functions similar to social media. This research is invaluable beyond conceptualizing online courses. The internet is host to a wide variety of tools -- knowing more about the suitability of such tools puts design educators in an exciting position to enhance in-person and online design courses alike.

• **Author Biography:**
Jody Nyboer, PhD is an Assistant Professor at the School of Design, Syracuse University. She teaches undergraduate and graduate design courses in the Environmental + Interior Design and MFA Design programs, and courses in creativity. Her research and teaching reflect her education and professional experience in architecture and education. Her scholarship is best defined by formalized studies concerning design, teaching, and creativity and include investigating the relationship of school design and creative instruction, creative workplaces, space planning and creative behavior, the relationship of creativity training to the creative ability of learners, and how online alternatives for feedback impact the learning experience of Generation Z design students.