Reflections on Design Methodology Research - DTU Orbit (14/03/2019)

Reflections on Design Methodology Research: ICED11 Design Research Keynote
We shall reflect on the results of Design Methodology research and their impact on design practice. In the past 50 years the number of researchers in the field has expanded enormously – as has the number of publications. During the same period design practice and its products have changed dramatically. Nowadays designers can seldom focus on individual ‘products’ but must address, for example, large complex product/service-systems (PSSs) that require the integration of many different advanced technologies over the whole life cycle of such systems. The processes by which these PSSs are designed and produced are also now far more complex and distributed, putting designers under ever increasing pressure. We shall address the question: Are the results of Design Methodology research appropriate and are they delivering the expected results in design practice? In our attempt to answer this question we shall draw on our extensive experience of design research and design teaching, and on the recent book The Future of Design Methodology, edited by Professor Herbert Birkhofer. We shall also refer to a model that links the Results, Practices, Methods, and Sciences of designing.

Some initial conclusions: Design Methodology research often fails to support the tasks currently confronted by practising designers; many valuable research insights are not transferred into practice; the design research field is fragmented and there is a need for consolidation; however, the current design research community is beginning to demonstrate a greater awareness of the needs of designers and to apply greater rigour in its research. Overall we feel optimistic about the future of Design Methodology research and its potential for improving the design process in practice.