

Image & Text

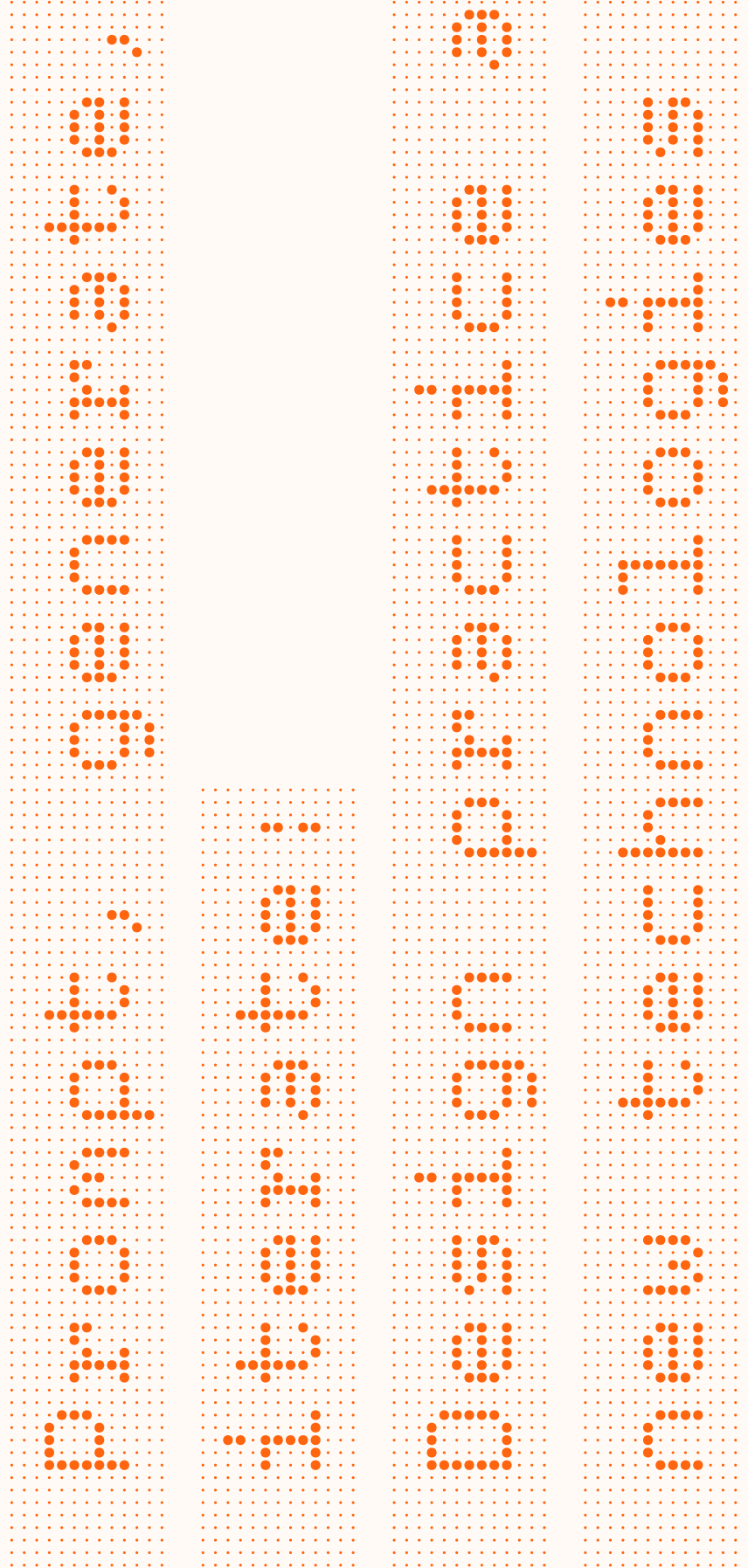
CFP DESIGNED BY
Hıdır Yüksel

In collaboration with

**international
council of
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CALL FOR PAPERS

2026 CFP release | 2027 publication



Prompt, generate, iterate: Design practice and new technologies

DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS → 20 July 2026
SEND ABSTRACTS TO → kyle.rath@up.ac.za

Introduction

Technology has always shaped design. From the Gutenberg printing press – which mechanised text and image reproduction in fifteenth-century Europe and made visual communication widely accessible – to the development of the first daguerreotype (later photography), Adobe’s digital suite, the Internet, smartphones, social media and now artificial intelligence, each technological leap has redefined the designer’s tools and, perhaps more importantly, their role in the process of communication.

As Meggs (2016:58-61) observes, the press standardised letterforms and workflows, transforming design into a communicative industry. Photography extended the designer’s vocabulary through reproducible realism (Jubert 2006:122-126), while twentieth-century digital tools such as PostScript and Illustrator merged production and authorship within a single interface. By the late 1980s, desktop publishing had democratised technical skill, making software literacy a central requirement in design competency – required to bridge conceptualisation and final execution (Lupton 2014:2). Heller (2024:[sp]) and Norman (1988) note that with the Internet (and later, social media), communication (encoding and decoding meaning) became continuous and global, design evolved from a discrete object into a participatory process of iteration and dialogue. Every shift has had immense ramifications for design practice and renegotiating the role of the designer.

Today, designers have at their disposal, a plethora of ‘new technologies’, from virtual, augmented and mixed reality, to virtual assistants and artificial intelligence amongst several others. These sophisticated tools (and AI in particular) are seemingly able to automate many of the design processes typically undertaken by the human designer. As Verganti *et al* (2020:214-216) argue, when these tools undertake problem-solving, and largely influence technical execution, the designer’s role shifts once again, this time, from the traditional circular process of conceptualisation, prototyping, execution and testing to *sense-making*.

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[3]

On the one hand, this frees the designer to focus on fundamental design problems; to zone into defining which problems matter and why. On the other, designers understandably express growing unease surrounding what some argue to be invasive rather than productive tools. For instance, Irbite and Strode (2021:540–543) record widespread anxiety about automation and authorship. They argue that the traditional designer may ‘vanish’ while new hybrid forms of labour emerge, requiring fluency in data, systems and ethics. Other areas of concern include issues of co-creation, originality, ethics, surveillance, innovation, education, over-reliance and the evolving role of the designer (Rath *et al* 2025:[sp]).

In design education, a primary concern appears to be on an over-dependence on these new technologies; as tools used for convenience rather than appropriateness. In this case, designers risk becoming curators of machine output rather than active communication encoders compounds the problem (Rath *et al* 2025:[sp]). For instance, Zhou (2024:50–52) comments on distrust surrounding the transparency of AI usage and particularly over-reliance on generative AI. Shi *et al* (2023:14–16) agree and maintain that meaningful human–AI collaboration requires shared agency, not substitution. In writing on new technologies generally speaking, Zeegen (2025:[sp]) warns of Generation Alpha’s potential lack of ethical and social literacies, and recommends that we need to revisit creativity as a means of engaging with systems that shape culture itself. The conversation, however, is not only limited to AI.

Whether and to what extent new technologies seriously threaten or are immensely beneficial to the design profession is of course a highly contentious point. A consensus appears to be that, like all major technological advances before it, new technologies today are reshaping the *profession*, not replacing the *designer*. Verganti *et al* (2020:226) argue that this is a move from designer as problem-solving to designer as prompter (design as leadership; designers as interpreters who define value within complex systems). Zeegen (2025:[sp]) extends this view, positioning empathy, diversity and ethical awareness as essential skills for designers in a culture driven by technological advancement.

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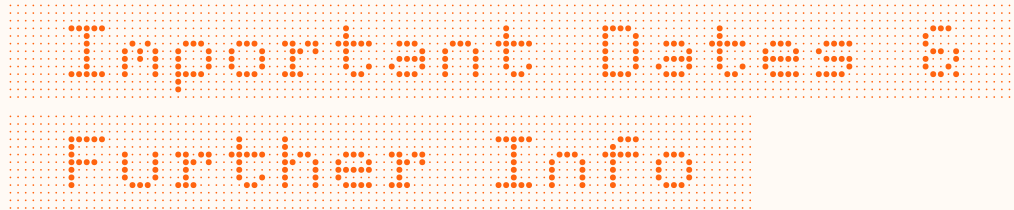
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Our Call for Papers

With this in mind, we are pleased to announce a call for papers for a special section of *Image & Text* focusing on the ways in which new technologies have, do and will potentially shape the design profession.

In particular, this special section, in collaboration with the International Council of Design (ICoD), explores the transformative role of new technologies in reshaping creative practices, educational methodologies, as well as the ethical, cultural, and societal implications of these advancements. Furthermore, we are interested in day-to-day impacts and practical examples of how new technologies affect the practicing designer from a variety of perspectives. We therefore invite researchers, educators, designers, and interdisciplinary scholars globally to submit original research articles, reviews and/or case studies that address the evolving relationship between AI as a technology and design.



[5]

Submission Timeline

SUBMISSIONS OPEN → **01 June 2026**

SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS → **20 July 2026**

NOTIFICATION TO AUTHORS/CONTRIBUTORS → **21 August 2026**

SUBMISSION OF FULL MANUSCRIPTS → **16 October 2026**

**Further dates will be distributed to successful applicants.*

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