Interviews

Our work is empirically based on eight interviews [and counting]. Six of the interviewees had trained as architects, two of them as industrial designers. All are involved in the use of 3D modelling in architectural work, understood broadly to include large-scale spatial design [e.g., memorials and exhibitions].

The interviews brought to the fore issues of the interviewees’ IT skills and tastes. Our interviewees frequently bundled IT tastes and skills together and assigned them to model subjectivities. To stress the crucial role played by ICTs, the concept of technicity was chosen to denote those subjectivities.

Technicities impact technological change.

Digital morphogenesis

Some of the technicities we have outlined to the right are interwoven with discourses such as architectural theory. Here, the “digital morphogenesis” paradigm aims to change architecture’s focus away from its finalised, built form and towards underlying processes. The “bottom-up” technicity entailed in digital morphogenesis [the architect’s fascination with digital technology and willingness to delegate some of his or her power over the design process to unpredictable simulations] resonates with the ideal of architectural design as a collaborative process open to end-users.

References


Dovey, Jon and Helen W. Kennedy (2006), Game Cultures: Computer Games as New Media, (Maidenhead: Open University Press).


Interviewees

Chinese

- Client: Foreign taste (experience over imagination)
- Worker: Skills for routine jobs

Gamer

- Fun over function

Architect

- Superior spatial imagination
- Inherently cultural craft
- Free, abstract thought

Engineer

- Lack of spatial imagination
- Inherently technical craft
- Function over aesthetics

Social media virtuoso

- Share, link, co-create

Virtual world native

- Affinity for ICTs
- Affinity for avatars

Technicities

Motivated by its firm anti-essentialist stance, ANT traditionally avoids zooming in on individuals. However, issues of taste and skill are crucial in the ongoing configuration of ICTs in architectural work. To address these issues, the subjectivity of individuals must be drawn into the analysis. Jon Dovey and Helen W. Kennedy offer the term technicity to encapsulate, in conceptual terms, the connections between an identity based on certain types of attitudes, practices, preferences and so on and the importance of technology as a critical aspect of the construction of that identity. To be subjects within the privileged twenty-first-century first world is to be increasingly caught up in a network of technically and mechanically mediated relationships with others who share, to varying degrees, the same attitudes, tastes, pleasures and preferences.

Digital morphogenesis

- Digital simulation (of processes occurring in nature)
- Form-finding over form-making
- Bottom-up over top-down processes
- Formation over form

Actor-Network Theory

Technological change is a product of heterogeneous actors (Callon, 1991); human interaction between a large number of actors, technical elements, discourses, etc.