



## Hot Debate: More Synergy Needed

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## **IMPERATIVES EFFACED (HOT DEBATE)**

# Hot Debate

## More Synergy Needed

**Anne-Marie Willis**

Things are hotting up. Signs of climate change abound.

Extreme weather events are on the increase all over the world. Just two instances: europeans are experiencing hotter summers while in Australia, severe bushfires, which used to occur only intermittently are now becoming a regular feature every summer, and occurring in areas where they rarely have before.

But Hot Debate is going decidedly cool!

There seems to be an inverse relation between extremity of conditions and preparedness to contemplate them.

Recently a small flicker of debate was sparked on the PhD Design List when I expressed surprise at the fact that no-one on that list (of approximately 1100 design researchers and academics) engaged with the content of what DPP published, although people occasionally made reference to its existence. I had in mind issues such as design and cultural difference; design's relation to unsustainability and to technology; user-centred design – all topics addressed at length by DPP contributors as well as being discussed on the PhD Design List.

The replies were depressingly procedural (along the lines of: “why should DPP be referred to rather than any other journal?”; “this list is a forum in its own right;” “DPP’s concerns are too narrow, etc, etc”). The point was missed, just as it was again when a spin-off exchange occurred over whether one of the List’s occasional contributors was in fact an alias for one of its more prominent ones: concerns over ‘netiquette’ and List rules dominated, with nobody considering why someone would bother with such an elaborate charade or why they behaved as if they couldn’t say openly what they wanted to say.

Avoidance of difficulty or unpleasantness; disavowal of extreme situations; retreat into distraction – these appear to be the hallmarks of the fast-encroaching New Dark Ages.

Anyone want to take this on?