100 Great Designs of Modern Times

Revisiting IIT Institute of Design's 1959 Research Study in 2019

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We think Jay Doblin* would be happy.

*Jay Doblin was the director of IIT Institute of Design (ID) in 1959 and conducted the research for the original survey, "The 100 'Best-Designed' Products."





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Design has grown significantly with respect to its impact in the world at large and its importance to organizations and industries.

*Jay Doblin was the director of IIT Institute of Design (ID) in 1959 and conducted the research for the original survey, "The 100 'Best-Designed' Products."





Part I

ID's POV



POV // Good Design

ADAPTS to the needs of users.
ADDRESSES environmental and societal issues.
PERFORMS well and brings delight.
DEMONSTRATES impact through adoption, scale, o

5. TRANSFORMATIONAL

CHANGES the known.



or growth.

5

1.

Design has graduated from "value-adding" to "value-driving."

1959

In the mid-century, design was as an *afterthought, the cherry on top*.

2019

Today, we've witnessed design emerge as *core to the value prop*.





6

2.

The 1959 and 2019 lists look at design from two opposing historic vantage points: the peak of **planned obsolescence** and the peak of the **disruption** economy.

1959

In Doblin's day, design was nearly synonymous with style. Post-war consumption and the growth of the American middle class fueled the notion that design stimulated repeat consumption.

2019

Today, design accompanies disruption. In the wake of the digital revolution, design's been thrust into the role of disruptor, forcing and helping monolithic industries (news media, automotive, healthcare, etc.) adapt.



3.

The definition of design has expanded, from emphasizing design as a **noun** to design as a **verb**.

1959

n. "the arrangement of elements or details in a product" (i.e. Design Department)

2019

v. "to devise for a specific purpose, function, or end" (i.e. Design Consultancy)



1959 *Design for the few (e.g., White Affluent American Middle Class)*

2019 *Design for the many* (e.g., *International Audience*)



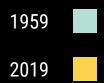
In sum, we're evaluating design differently:

From designing for **delight** to designing for **efficacy**.

From designing **"how it looks"** to designing **"how it works."**

From **designing artifacts** to **designing experiences**.





1. **Brands** retain their status as public-facing purveyors of "good" design. 2. Design remains intertwined with **industrialized economies**. Although challenged, the bias toward **physical artifacts** remains. 3. Design leadership, regretfully, remains mostly white, male-dominated and Euro-centric. 4. The "form factor" remains an essential ingredient. 5.



Part II

Survey Respondents







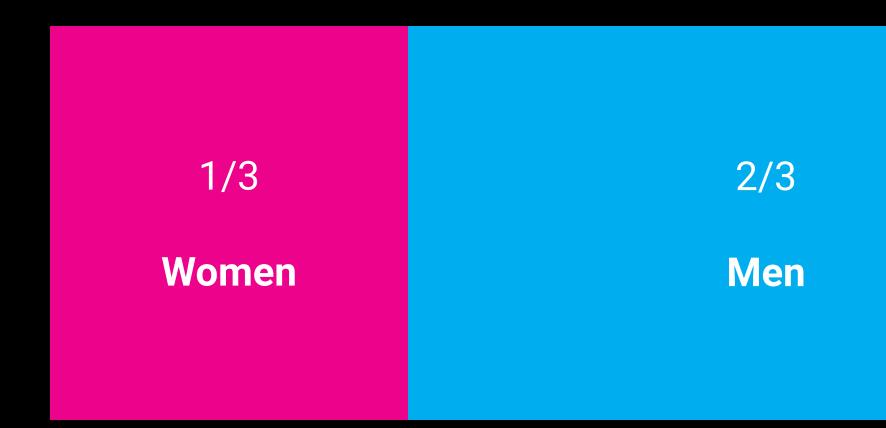








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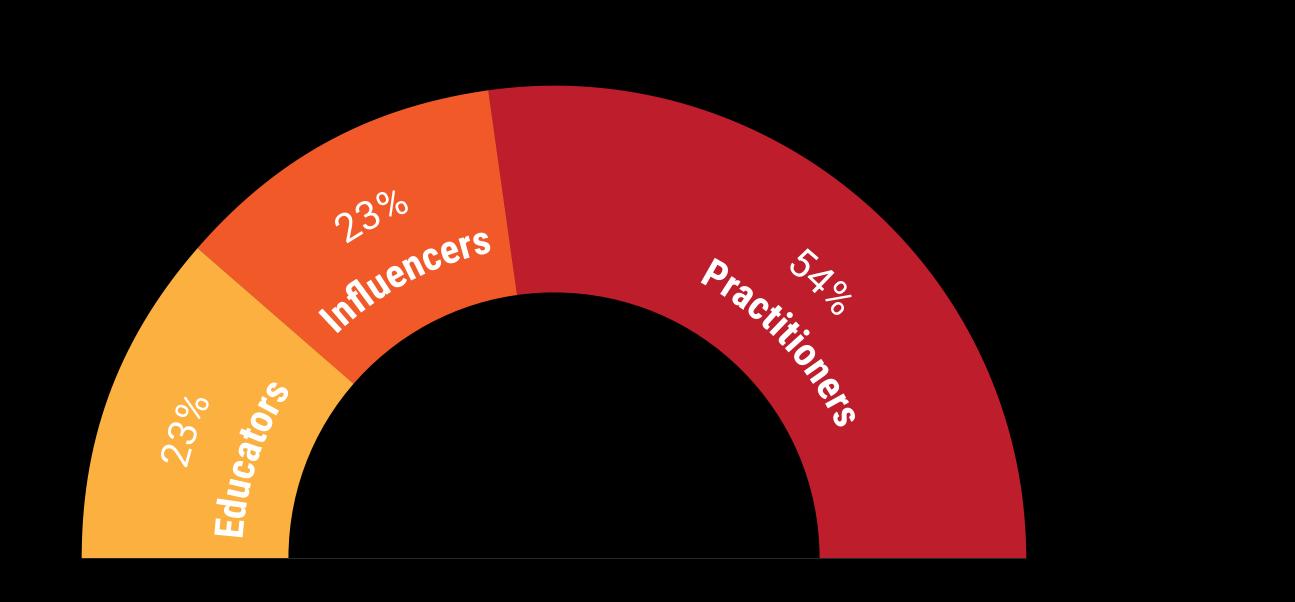
86%

Individuals



14% **Teams**

15



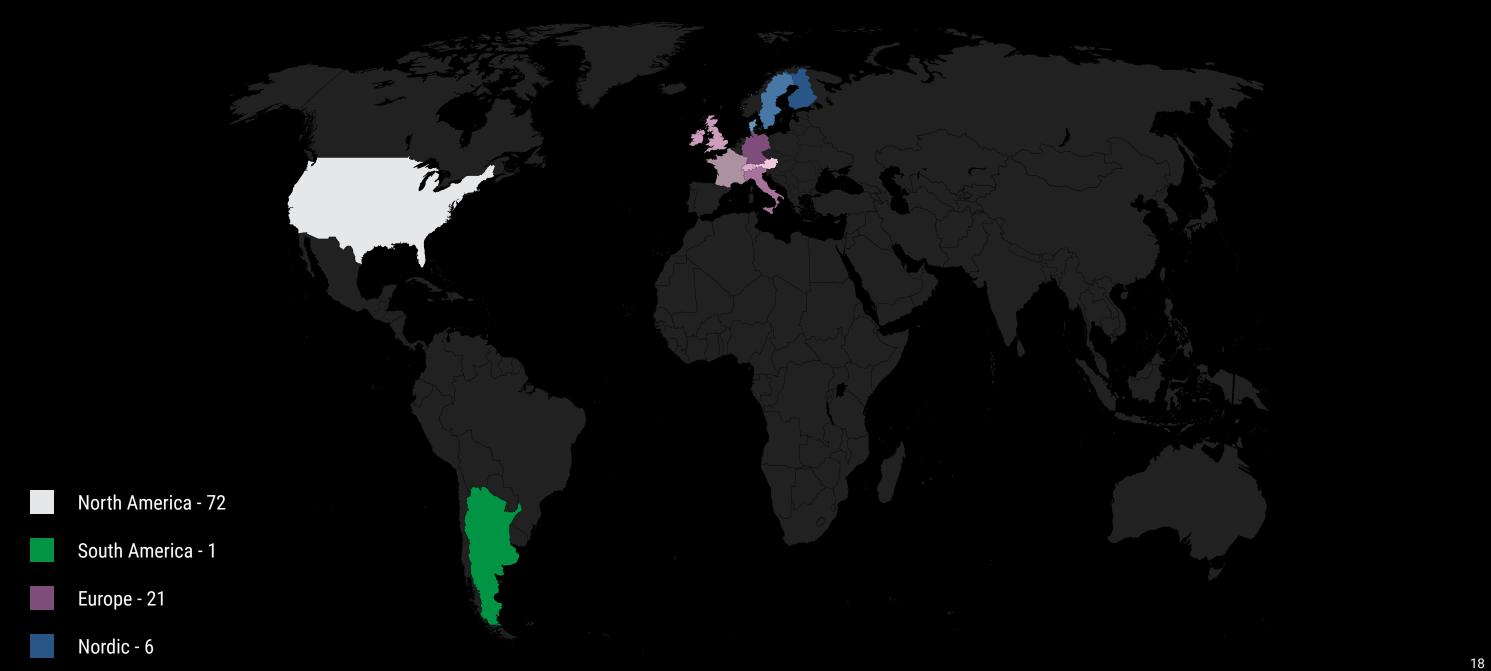


Part III

Comparative Analysis

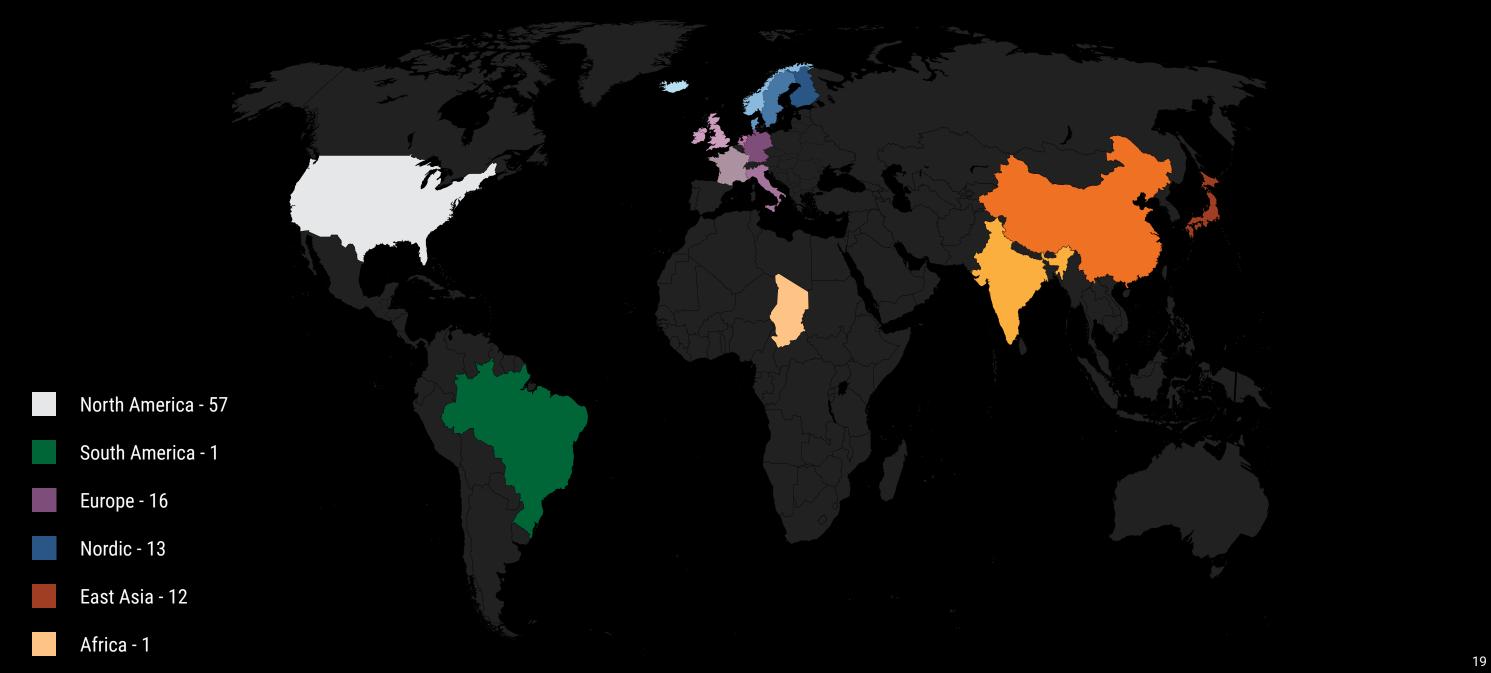


Countries (1959)



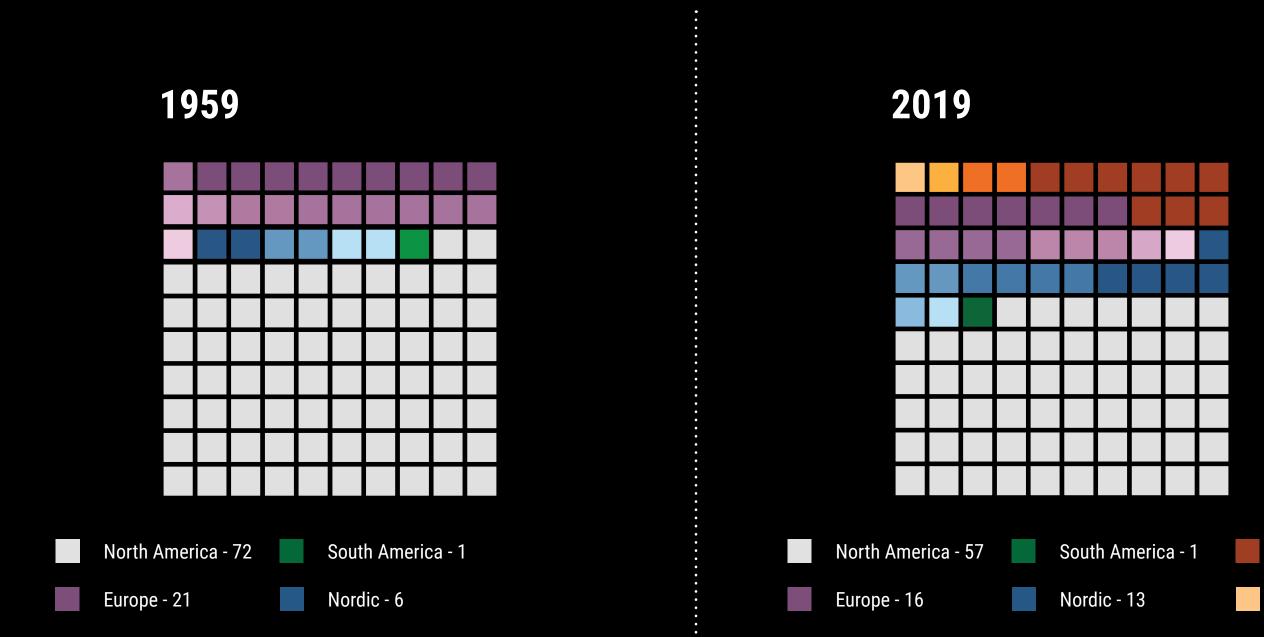


Countries (2019)





Countries (1959 + 2019)





East Asia - 12

Africa - 1

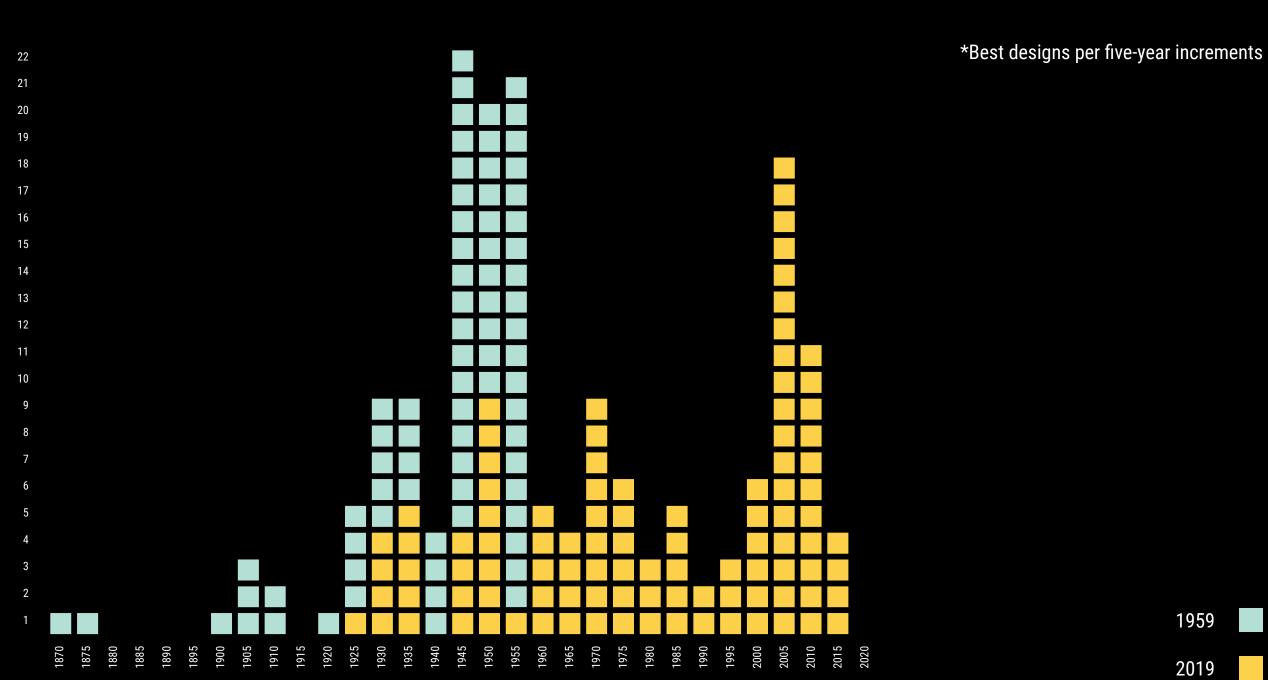
Both lists are US-centric and Euro-centric // The US remains dominant, but its share has declined.

2019 exhibits greater geographic representation // 16 countries are represented in 2019, compared to 11 in 1959.

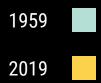




Timeline







Both lists exhibit a bias toward the contemporary // 62% of 1959's "best designs" were developed in the 15 years prior to the list's publication, compared to

34% of 2019's "best designs."

We reflect less positively on the post-war boom // Doblin's list comprised 62 designs developed between 1945–1960. Today, just 15 designs from the same period are represented.



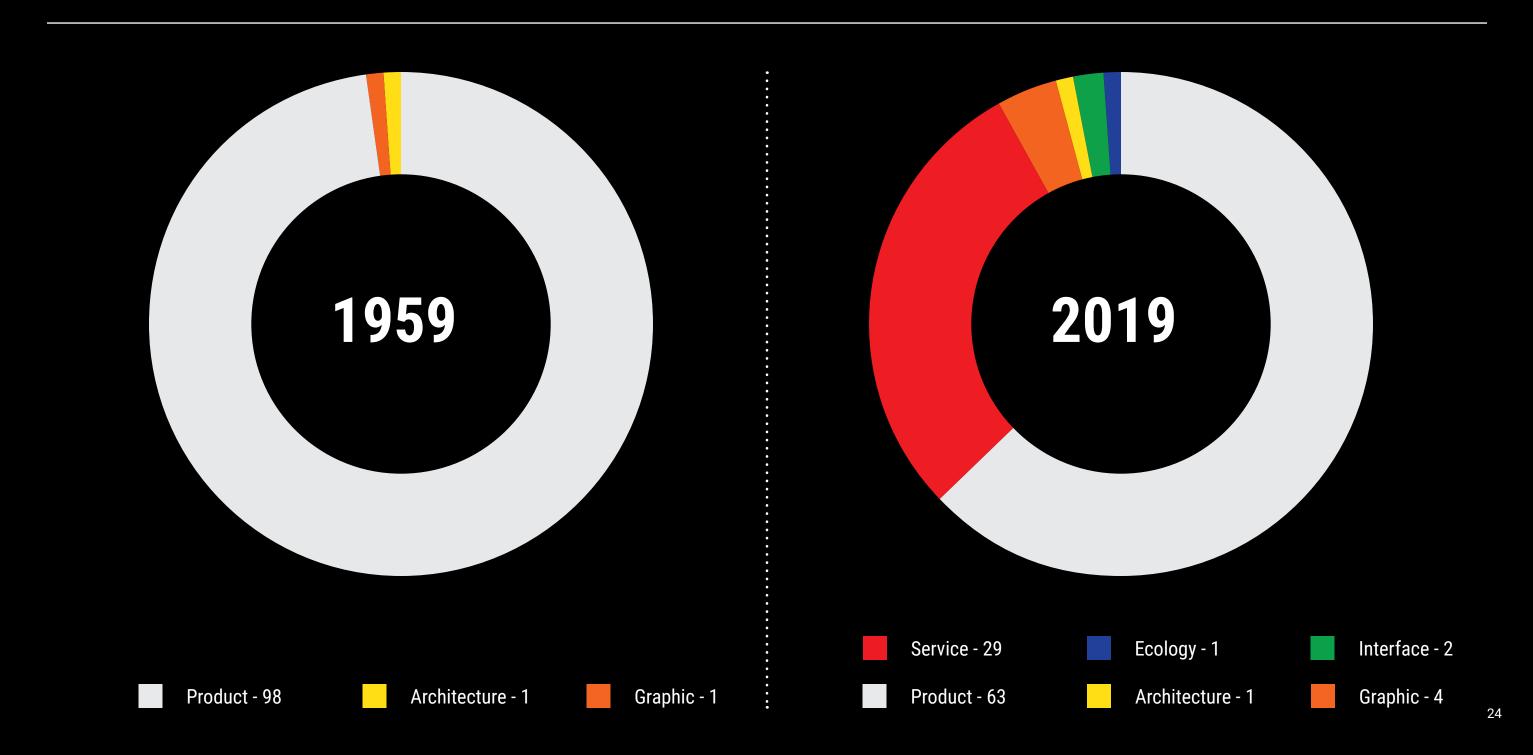








Category





Design was nearly synonymous with product design in 1959 // Doblin's list consists almost entirely of products, with the exception of just two designs.

An expanding definition of design in 2019 //

Our notion of design has broadened to include services (29%), interfaces (2%), graphics (4%), ecological interventions (1%), and architecture (1%).









Products

Ν

Non-products



Non-products

Top Designers

2019

Apple

Raymond

Paul McCobb Marcello Nizzoli George Nelson **General Motors**

Henry Dreyfuss **IKEA** Alvar + Aino Aalto **Ferdinand Porsche** Massimo + Lella Vignelli 2

3

Jon W. Hauser Henry Dreyfuss Eero Saarinen Charles Eames Carl Otto Alvar Aalto



Loewy Assoc.







Apple has replaced Raymond Loewy and Associates // Apple is today's most influential design-led company.

Alvar Aalto and Henry Dreyfuss // Aalto and Dreyfuss are the only designers that contributed two designs in both 1959 and 2019.

Ten designers appear on both lists // Charles Eames, Alvar Aalto, Eero Saarinen, Henry Dreyfuss, Isamu Noguchi, Paul Renner, Buckminster Fuller, Marcello Nizzoli, Eliot Noyes, and Ferdinand Porsche.

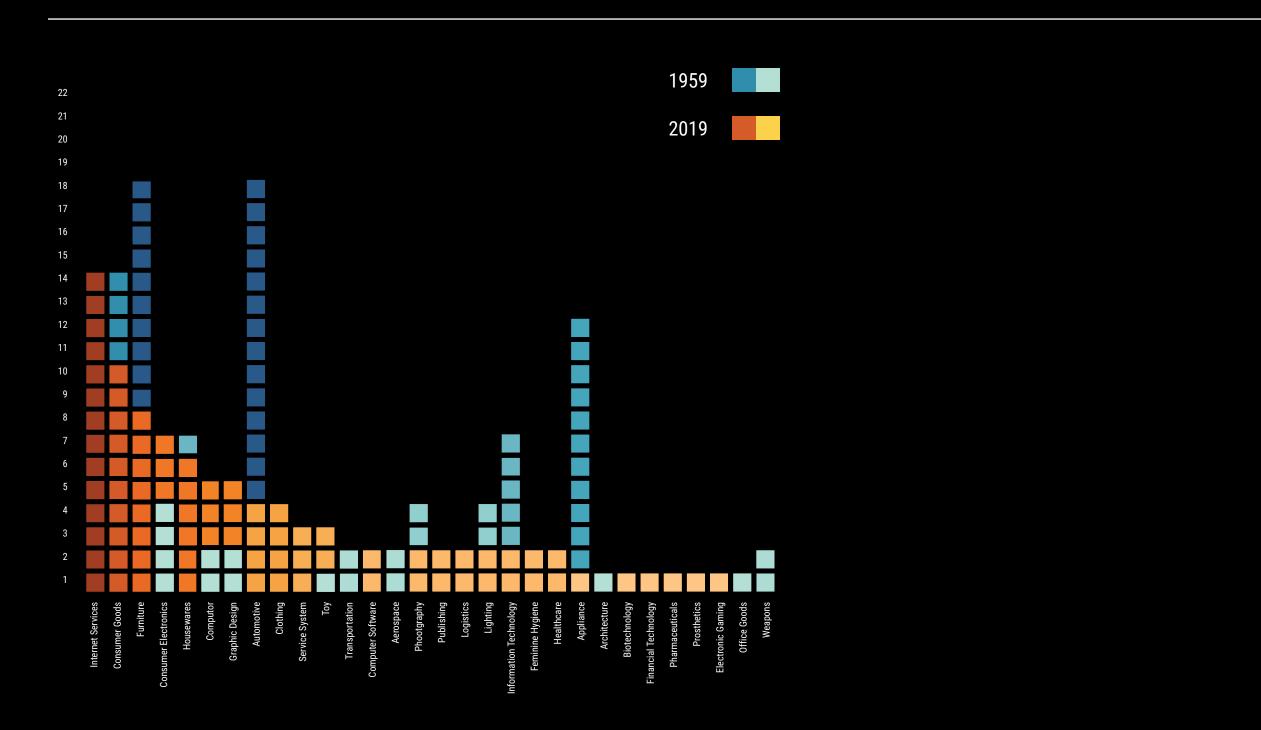


Comparable Designs

2019				1959		
4	DAR Chair	Charles + Ray Eames	1948	32	Fiberglass Chair	Charles Eames
13	Akari Lamp A1*	Isamu Noguchi	1954	56	Noguchi Lamp*	Isamu Noguchi
39	Stool 60	Alvar Aalto	1933	84	Aalto Stacking Stool	Alvar Aalto
58	Leica M*	Ernst Leitz	1954	20	Leica IIIc*	Oscar Barnack
59	Lettera 32*	Marcello Nizzoli	1963	39	Lettera 22*	Marcello Nizzoli
70	Geodesic Dome	Buckminster Fuller	1948	11	Geodesic Dome	Buckminster Fuller
75	Futura Typeface	Paul Renner	1927	99	Futura Typeface	Paul Renner
82	Womb Chair	Eero Saarinen	1948	13	Womb Chair	Eero Saarinen
92	Porsche 911*	Ferdinand Porsche	1963	40	Porsche 1500 Super*	Ferdinand Porsche
97	Model 302*	Henry Dreyfuss	1937	10	Bell 500 Telephone*	Henry Dreyfuss
99	System/360 Model 20*	Eliot Noyes	1964	27	IBM 305 Ramac*	Eliot Noyes

ID

Industry // NASDAQ





Internet Services 14	Consume 10	er Good	Housewares 6	Toy 3 Transport	Photography 2 Publishing 2	Automotive 18	Consumer Good 14
				3	Logistics 2		
Consumer Electronics 7	Furniture 8		Automotive 4	Clothing 4	Feminine Hygiene 2 Info. Tech	Furniture 18	Appliance 12
Computer 7	Healthcare - 2				2 Lighting		
			Aerospace - 2		2		
Service System	Software 1	Biotech 1	Fin-tech 1	Office Good 1	Ecological Intervention 1		
3	Electronic Gaming 1	Pharmaceuticals 1	Prosthetics 1	Appliance 1			



Housewares 7			Information Technology 7		
	Photography - 4	Consumer Electronic - 4	Lighting - 4	Weapons 2 Computer 2	
	Transportatior	1 - 2	Graphic Design - 1	Office Good - 1	
	Aerospace - 2		Architecture 1	Toy 1	

The internet changed everything // "Internet-based Services" emerged as the top category in 2019 while "Consumer Goods" held on in second place.

Less interest in cars, appliances, and furniture // Three of the dominant categories in 1959 suffered significant shortfalls in 2019.

Greater industry variety // The 2019 list represents 33 different industries compared to just 19 in 1959.

Incremental gains in gender and diversity representation // Female designers went from 1 to 5, and "Feminine Products" emerged as an industry. Charles Harrison was the only black designer on either list. (Today, black designers make up less than 3% of the design industry.)



Part IV

Top 25 Designs



iPhone

Apple (Jonathan Ive), 2007



"No other design object has changed the world in recent history—or, one could argue, the last 100 years-more than the iPhone. From a longevity and cradle-to-cradle standpoint, I obviously have major issues with it, but the fact remains, the iPhone is the highest-impact device of our times and has transformed not just how we communicate, but how we live."

Spencer Bailey, Phaidon + The Slowdown



Macintosh

Apple, 1984

K Macintosh Classic	_	

"This product changed the way we understand and use computers. The Macintosh was not the first personal computer, nor was it the first one with a graphical user interface, but it was the first complete product that took all these ideas and more into a complete package. It became a computer one could understand and use using both language and vision, typing and drawing. It changed the way we relate to a computer."

Johan Redstrom, Umeå University



Google Search Engine

Google (Larry Page, Sergey Brin, and Scott Hassan), 1997





"Google put a minimalist, insanely powerful interface on the entire internet, empowering all of us to find anything and everything within the vast Web universe. This force-magnifying access to such a broad and deep collection of information has created a step change in human evolution."

Jason Ring, Uber

"Just type in where you want to go or what you want to know in one simple box."

David Kelley, IDEO



Eames DAR Chair

Herman Miller (Ray & Charles Eames), 1948 - 1950



"Launched to the market in 1950, the Eames plastic armchair and plastic side chair created a new, highly customizable typology that has become widespread in the six decades since. Not only are the chairs long-lasting; they're also beautiful. I rarely use the word "timeless" when talking about design, but with the Eames chair, it's an apt description."

Spencer Bailey, Phaidon + The Slowdown

"Free-flowing, ergonomic."

Jamshyd Godrej, Godrej



Sony Walkman TPS-L2

Sony (Norio Ohga), 1979



"Sony's portable cassette player changed listening habits by enabling people to listen to music on the move, adding a personal soundtrack to your everyday life."

Bas van de Poel, IKEA + Space 10

"Changed the concept of listening to music."

Anthony Dalby, Lego



OXO Good Grip Peeler

OXO (Sam Farber) + Smart Design, 1990



"Perhaps the best example of inclusive design, this peeler and the Good Grips line of innovations shows that design made more accessible to all is also better design for everyone."

Brandon Schauer, Capital One

"Showed that there is a place for good ergonomics and aesthetic design in the otherwise utilitarian kitchen tools world."

Carole Bilson, Design Management Institute



Uber RideShare

Uber, 2009



"Simplicity, convenience, and a seamless experience. By truly identifying the 'pain' points' of taxi travel, and designing a great experience, they disrupted an industry and evolved how we move today."

Mark Buchalter, Phillips

"Uber brought the gig economy to a global scale and created a new paradigm for seamless service design."

Logitech Design Team, Logitech



Netflix Streaming

Netflix, 1997 (2007)



"Netflix transitioned the world into a new era of video streaming and redefined how video content is created and distributed."

Logitech Design Team, Logitech

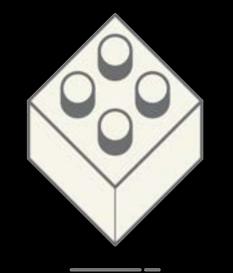
"The rise of Netflix has given television a run for its money, encouraged Millennials to do away with cable, and threatened major networks NBC and FOX to the effect that the networks built their own platform, HULU, to provide streaming of their library of content."

Frog Design Team, Frog Design



Lego Building Blocks

Lego (Hillary Fisher Page), 1939



"Lego would be first on my list in terms of the power of a few simple forms to unlock the imagination of so many generations. I can't imagine a single other product that comes close to the impact that Lego has had over the last 100 years."

Robert Fabricant, Dalberg Design

"Building Blocks to make your imagination and fantasies come to life. Super for development of kids and a different means to express your "design' than text or drawing. I spend hours with it when young."

Ena Voûte, TU Delft



iPod

Apple (Jonathan Ive), 2007



"It revolutionized a category with a closed system, and propelled the music industry forward."

José Manuel dos Santos, Signify

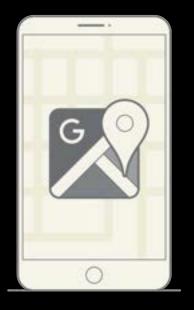
"Revolutionized the way media is accessed and consumed."

Hitachi Team, Hitachi



Google Maps

Google (Where 2 Technologies), 2005



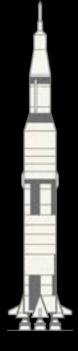
"Where other digital products have transformed communication and commerce, Google Maps has fundamentally altered our relationship with the physical world. Navigating the environment has been critical to human progress for millennia, and Google Maps provides the most powerful, flexible and adaptive navigation product the world has ever known. You know a product is great when even Apple sings your praises."

Jason Gaikowski, VMLY&R

ID

Apollo 11 Spacecraft

NASA, 1969



"On July 20, 1969, the first steps by human beings were taken on another planetary body. The Apollo 11 spacecraft was an integral part of the Lunar Landing Mission, driving monumental achievements in science, technology, engineering, and math. The landing arguably became one of the most important moments in human history, as NASA showed what we are capable of if we put our minds and resources together."

Tanner Woodford, Chicago Design Museum



Akari Lamp 1A

Isamu Noguchi, 1951



"There are few designs as simple and omnipresent as Noguchi's Akari paper lamps, which have been copied to death by this point-most prolifically by Ikea. One could argue that the Akari lamps, which Noguchi presented at the 1986 Venice Art Biennale, are indeed artworks, making them among the most widely disseminated art objects in the world. With the lamps, Noguchi brought together a centuries-old traditional Japanese technique with modern technology, and did so in the most beautiful of ways."

ID

MacBook Pro

Apple (Jonathan Ive), 2006

"It simply changed every part of our lives."

Yongqi Lou, Tongji University





Post-Its

3M (Spencer Silver and Arthur Fry), 1977



"Extremely versatile, cheap, and useful tool. Design thinking sessions couldn't happen without them."

Carole Bilson, Design Management Institute

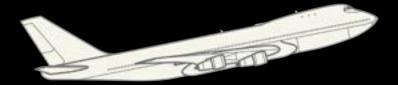
"Still very much used by me being a visual person that recollects what needs doing by making it visible."

Ena Voûte, TU Delft



747 "Jumbo Jet" Airliner

Boeing (Joe Sutter), 1970



"The first commercial airliner made travel to faraway places possible and relatively painless. My personal favorite is the Boeing 747, liked by most people when they first saw it, and part of my work history."

David Kelley, IDEO

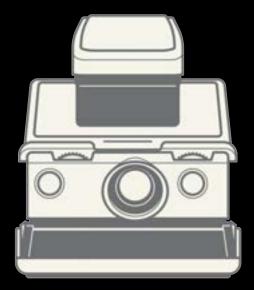
"Making travel easier and bringing the world together while setting the table for Space Exploration."

Bas van de Poel, IKEA + Space 10



SX-70 Polaroid Camera

Kodak (James Gilber Baker and Edwin Herbert Land), 1972



"While Kodak promised 'You press the button, we do the rest,' with its first-ever consumer camera, this product put the entire factory into the palm of your hand, recasting photography as a complete end-to-end experience."

Brandon Schauer, Capital One

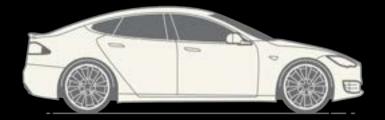
"It was so easy to use and came with tips that could make anyone be or feel like an expert photographer."

Barbara Barry, Mayo-Clinic School of Medicine



Model S

Tesla (Franz von Holzhausen), 2012



"Range, beauty of design, drives multiple innovations over existing automobiles."

Nik Rokop, IIT Stuart School of Business

"It transformed the retail automobile into an exponentially more intelligent and efficient high-performance machine while reducing its environmental impact-potentially at enormous scale."

Jason Ring, Uber



Model 3210

Nokia (Alastair Curtis), 1999



"Freed the world from location based communication allowing people to take and answer calls from wherever they liked. It set the bar for size, battery life and robustness (people *still* use it today). It was also awarded the product of the Millennium and was the first phone to sell past the 100 million mark."

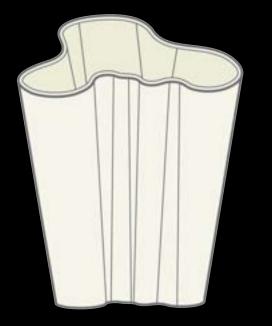
Anthony Dalby, Lego

"The best-selling mobile phone that appeared for the communication of the modern people before the release of the iPhone."



Savoy Vase

Iittala (Alvar and Aino Aalto), 1937



"Holds flowers similar to what a human hand would do. Beautiful full or empty."

Renée Cheng, University of Washington

"The Alvar Aalto Vase is one of the world's most famous glass objects. Each and every vase in the Alvar Aalto Collection continues to be mouth blown at the littala factory in Finland and comes in a wide range of colors and sizes. The Collection is a staple of modern Scandinavian design and littala's most iconic series."



Hue Lighting System

Phillips (Signify), 2012



"Light points are the network for communication, hidden in a light bulb, but capable of much more."

Ena Voûte, TU Delft

"It effectively changed the way personal lighting was perceived and introduced color lighting into homes. "

José Manuel dos Santos, Signify



App Store

Apple, 2008



"Until Apps, phones were full of things manufacturers decided you needed. Then the App store let you decide what you needed."

Anthony Dalby, Lego

"With the App Store, Apple pays developers handsomely to create ever-greater apps that make this all possible. All this is refined by a principled, curatorial force of nature that makes us all feel inspired and optimistic that life is perpetually getting better."

Jason Ring, Uber



Spotify

Spotify (Martin Lorentzon + Daniel Ek), 2006



"Amazing to think that today instead of going to Tower Records and looking at a few newly released albums, we now have access to every song ever recorded and all you have to do is ask for it."

David Kelley, IDEO

"Spotify brought the personalization of audio content to a new level and pioneered the discovery of content seamlessly through shared curated playlists."

Logitech Design Team, Logitech



Prime

Amazon (Jeff Bezos), 2005



"Jeff Bezos changed the way we shop, publish and read through his software design and warehouse system. Amazon Prime's twoday shipping policy even has the US Postal Service making deliveries on Sundays, a once sacred day for government agencies to close."

Anonymous

"Press a button and get almost anything delivered to your door, without paying for shipping."

Jason Ring, Uber



Muji Rice Cooker

Muji (Naoto Fukasawa), 2014



"The design of [Muji's] "brand universe" and all its dimensions show a subtle and strong systemic coherence."

Alok Nandi, IxDA

"Simple, tactile feedback."

Helen Tong, IxDA



Part V

Designs 26 - 100



Airbnb

Airbnb (Joe Gebbia), 2008



"Because staying in the home of a local exponentially increases the learning potential of travel. Airbnb experiences typically cost less for travellers, and they help everyday people earn money in a flexible way."

Jason Ring, Uber



Wikipedia

Wikipedia, 2001



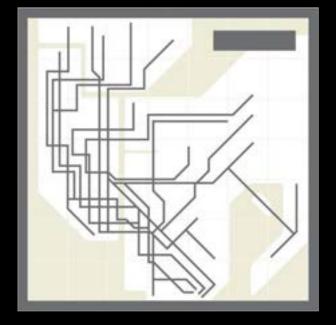
"Intricate interaction design that addresses the complex problem of democratizing and sharing knowledge."

Barbara Barry, IDxA



NYC Subway Map

Unimark (Massimo Vignelli & Bob Noorda), 1972



"As a born and raised New Yorker, I would not be working as a designer if not for Vignelli's ground-breaking work on the NYC subway system, one of the most powerful and ubiquitous civic service experiences on the planet. Though not strictly a product, the cumulative result of all the different elements of the identity was to take something as dynamic and amorphous as the NYC commute and transform it into something that feels like one."

Robert Fabricant, Dalberg Design



iOS

Apple, 2007



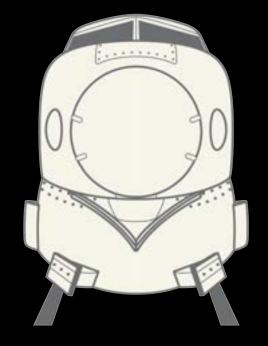
"Pluggable platform with (probably) wellbalanced democratic contribution and quality control. Also, a decent user experience that even babies can figure out without being taught."

Hitachi Design Team, Hitachi



Shinkansen

Japanese National Railways, 1964



"The high-speed train is the symbol of a combination of multiple expertise of multiple design skills. Its impact on the planet shows that 'responsible design' and high tech and sustainable environment should be possible with new behaviours."

Alok Nandi, Architempo



WeChat

Tencent (Zhang Xiaolong), 2011

"An app [that] integrates so many daily mobile applications, makes our life much easier."

Yongqi Lou, Tongji University





Nest

Nest Labs (Tony Fadell), 2011



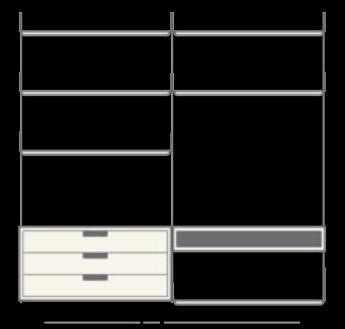
"Because the Nest ecosystem makes your home come to life with intelligence, in a highly integrated, easy-to-use way."

Jason Ring, Uber



606 Shelving System

Vitsoe (Dieter Rams), 1960



"This is one of the most—if not *the most* functional and well-built designs I can think of. It fits into practically any interior, and truly lasts a lifetime. Like the Eames chair and Noguchi's Akari lamps, it's a timeless creation, one that is of clean design and impeccable quality."

Spencer Bailey, Phaidon + The Slowdon



Skype

Skype, 2003

"The ability to connect visually anytime and anyplace furthering opportunities for stronger connection and social human experience."

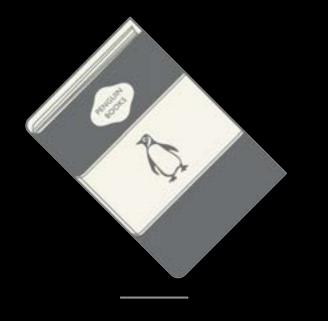
Kathleen Brandenburg, IA Collaborative





Modern Classics

Penguin (Jan Tschichold), 1952



"The decision of the British publisher Allen Lane to reproduce great writing in the inexpensive, easily portable form of a paperback book was a key catalyst of social mobility and self-improvement in the 20th century. Lane insisted that each book should cost no more than a packet of cigarettes, and must fit in a typical man's jacket pocket. From a graphic design perspective, the archetypal Penguin paperback is the one devised by the German typographer Jan Tschichold as Penguin's head of design from 1947 to 1949."

Alice Rawsthorn



ClearRX

Deborah Adler, 2005



"Inspired by the need for safety, the drug delivery system was reformed around creating confidence in key consumer moments - it's not a pill bottle as much as it is a system."

Brandon Schauer, Capital One



Mobike

Beijing Mobile Bike Technology, 2015

"Bridges the gap of the 'last kilometer.""

Yongqi Lou, Tongji University





Round Thermostat

Honeywell (Henry Dreyfuss), 1953



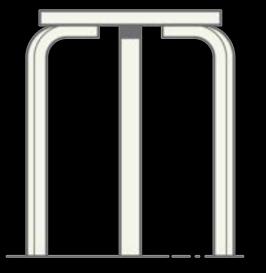
"The seamless marriage of information and interaction into a unified design of unprecedented simplicity long before the rise of Apple. Dreyfuss insisted on the power of design to bridge engineering complexity with consumer taste as a means of elevating the lives of middle class."

Robert Fabricant, Dalberg Design



Stool 60

Artek (Alvar Aalto), 1933



"Alvar Aalto's iconic Stool 60 is the most elemental of furniture pieces, suitable as a seat, a table, storage unit, or display surface. Democratic, cheap, stackable."

Rebekka Bay, Uniqlo



Facebook

Facebook (Mark Zuckerberg), 2003



"Facebook (and its subsidiaries) has connected people and become a platform for a myriad of movements from political to social. Thanks to this platform, advertising and ecommerce has made way for massive digital sharing, click-bait, and the rise of the 'influencer' economy."

Frog Design Team, Froq



Billy Bookcase

IKEA, 1979



"A Swedish design icon that is affordable and highly adaptive to the different needs and homes. More than 60 million people have trusted their personal belongings to Billy since its introduction."

Bas van de Poel, Space 10

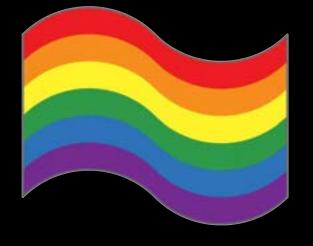


Pride Flag

Gilbert Baker, 1979

"Iconic rainbow is unmistakable, infinitely customizable, and speaks pride for an increasingly wide range of LGBTQ+ people."

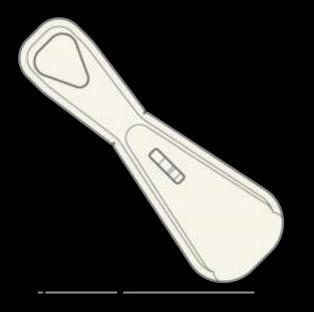
Sara Aye Cantor, Greater Good





Lia Pregnancy Test

Bethany Edwards, 2017



"First flushable pregnancy test that's discreet, sanitary, and designed to be environmentally sustainable."

Zoë Ryan, The Art Institute

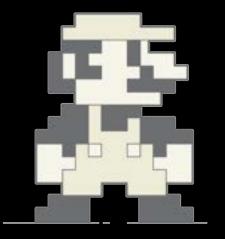


Super Mario Bros.

Nintendo (Shigeru Miyamoto), 1985

"A masterpiece of horizontal scroll action. Contributed to massive expansion of gaming industry [and had] a large impact on how so many people spend their time."

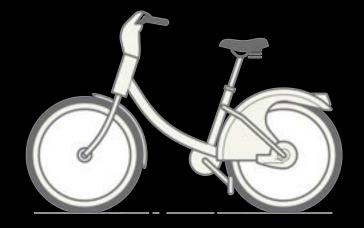
Hitachi Design Team, Hitachi





Vélib Bike Service

JCDecaux, 2007



"The 'Vélib' project is a best practice in social design that goes beyond the limits of bicycle transportation. A project that stimulated Paris' new urban experience and mobility change under a shared economy."

Bas van de Poel, Space 10



Apple Watch

Apple (Kevin Lynch), 2015



Bas van de Poel, Space 10





Bialetti MOKA Pot

Bialetti (Alfonso Bialetti), 1933

"Iconic coffee pot designed in Italy in 1933 and popular around the world. Easy to use on a gas or electric stove."

Carole Bilson, Design Management Institute





Poäng

IKEA (Noboru Nakamura), 1974

"A blend of Japanese and Nordic design that has democratized furniture design worldwide over the past 40 years, the Poäng is practical, adaptable, simple, and comfortable."

Logitech Design Team, Logitech



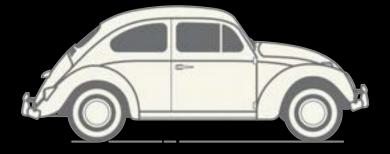


Volkswagen Bug

Volkswagen (Ferdinand Porsche), 1938

"Iconic and unmistakable, and promoting a fix-it-yourself car culture that reflected the freedom of the times."

Barbara Barry, Design Management Institute



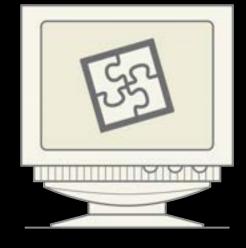


Office 360

Microsoft, 1990

"The most widely used desktop software and productivity tool is virtually unrivaled in the business space. Excel is the Kleenex of spreadsheets."

Frog Design Team, Frog





Tupperware

Earl Tupper, 1948

"Excellent for storing food hygienically. Washable, re-usable, [and available in] multiple sizes"

Ena Voûte, TU Delft





View-Master

Charles Harrison, 1962



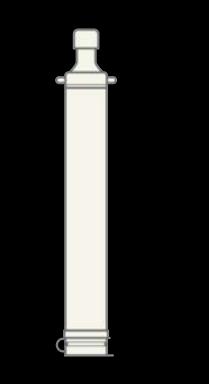
"Simple design toy for kids to see 3D images. Over 4 million sold and designed by the 1st African American Industrial Designer to head up a large corporate studio (Chuck Harrison of Sears, Roebuck & Co)."

Carole Bilson, Design Management Institute



LifeStraw

Vestergaard Frandsen, 2005



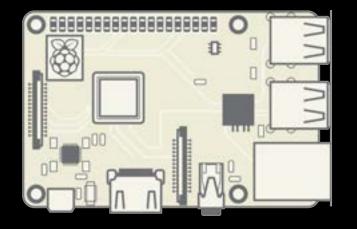
"Portable water purifier that cleans contaminated water. It can be useful in water-scarce countries, such as developing countries. Design using appropriate technology."

Jooyun Kim, Hongik University



Raspberry Pi

Raspberry Pi Foundation, 2012



"The Raspberry Pi is a simple, single-board computer, designed to promote basic computer science education in schools and developing countries. The product only costs \$35 off the shelf, without peripherals like a screen, keyboard, or mouse. The company was founded in 2012 so that "more people" are able to harness the power of computing and digital technologies for work, to solve problems that matter to them, and to express themselves creatively."

Tanner Woodford, Chicago Design Museum



Flex-Foot

Össur, 1971

"Game changing life enhancer."

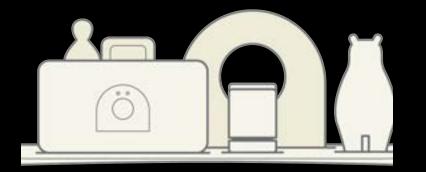
Zoë Ryan, Chicago Design Museum





Medical Toy Blocks

Össur, 2012



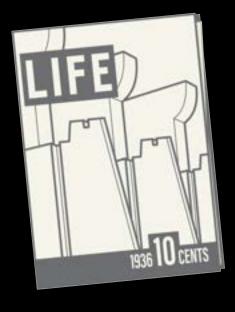
"In a world where our technology and its sideeffects can be frightening, these simple and empathetic toy blocks help prepare a child mentally and emotionally for what could otherwise be a very terrifying experience to receive the care they need."

Brandon Schauer, Capital One



Life Magazine

Time, Inc., 1936



"The first issue in 1936 lead to the most emblematic of all the American weekly photojournalism journals. It was as significant a medium for introducing images to the world as television later in the century."

Steven Heller, AIGA

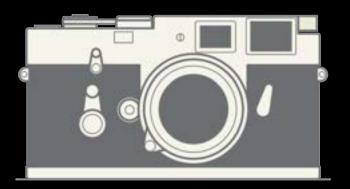


Leica M

Ernst Leitz, 1954

"Legendary combination of beauty and function."

Yongqi Lou, AIGA





Lettera 32

Marcello Nizzoli, 1963





Airtable

Airtable, 2012



"I'm new to this 'groupware' platform, but so far I'm super-impressed. Adopting everything you love about spreadsheets, combined with resolving everything you hate about spreadsheets, is where Airtable soaks its sweetspot."

Allan Chochinov, Core 77



Forever Stamps

USPS, 2006



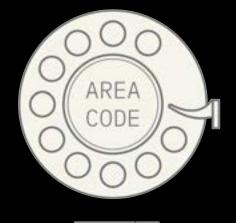
"Brilliant business model ensures they will always be the best price and relevant as long as the USPS exists."

Sara Aye Cantor, Greater Good



Telephone Area Code

Bell Labs (Ladislav Sutnar), 1947



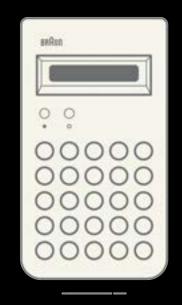
"The numerals that would allow the Bell Telephone system to expand its overall coverage were placed inside parentheses, an idea conceived by designer Ladislav Sutnar."

Steven Heller, AIGA



ET66 Calculator

Braun (Dieter Rams), 1947





Apple Pay

Apple, 2014



"Because it's safer and easier to use than credit cards (which would be on my list if it were not for the fact that ApplePay is infinitely better)."

Jason Ring, Uber



Flyknit

Nike, 2008



"This shoe marked a move away from conventional mass production, redefining manufacturing customization in lockstep with world's move towards sustainability."

Logitech Design Team, Logitech



Orange-handled Scissors

Fiskars, 1967



"The orange-handled scissors are one of Fiskars' best-known products. They are the world's first plastic-handled scissors, manufactured since 1967. Over one billion Fiskars scissors have been sold worldwide, and Fiskars has registered the color orange in scissors in Finland, the United States and Canada."

Jenni Marsio, Fiskars



Pokémon

Satoshi Tajiri, 1989

"It captures the attention of so many people."

Barbara Barry, Mayo Clinic





EpiPen

Mylan, 1987



"A design that saves lives and gives patients the freedom to monitor their own health on the go."

Zoë Ryan, Art Institute of Chicago



Medical Drones

Zipline, 2014



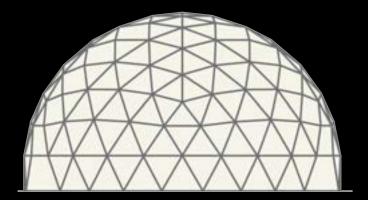
"In less than three years, Zipline's drones have flown over a million kilometres to make more than 500 daily deliveries of blood, vaccines and other urgently needed medical supplies in Rwanda and, more recently, Ghana. Zipline's geographical expansion promises to have a dramatic impact on the access to-and quality of-healthcare for many millions of people worldwide, and is an exemplar of the imaginative and hugely beneficial application of a potentially threatening innovation."

Alice Rawsthorn

ID

Geodesic Dome

Buckminster Fuller, 1948

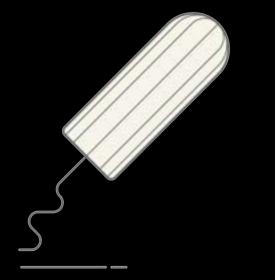


"The Geodesic Dome is a design template developed by R. Buckminster Fuller in collaboration with the fellow teachers and students of his summer schools at Black Mountain College in North Carolina during the late 1940s. Designed as a response to the post-war housing crisis, the Geodesic Dome is a formula to construct a robust domed shelter from whatever materials are available at the time. It has since provided sorely needed shelter for millions of people, many of them in desperate circumstances."

ID

Tampon

Earle Haas & Gertrude Schultz Tenderich, 1933



"The design of the tampon-originally patented by Earle Haas, and developed by Gertrude Schultz Tenderich from 1933-was one of the chief catalysts for the liberation of women during the mid and late 20th century by freeing most women from the physical and hormonal constraints of menstruation."

Alice Rawsthorn



23 & Me

Linda Avey, Paul Cusenza, Anne Wojcicki, 2006



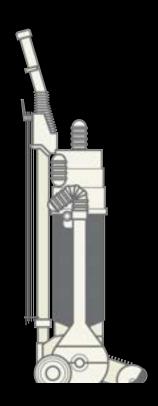
"It introduces a complex scientific idea in the context of everyday life."

Barbarra Barry, Mayo Clinic



Dyson Bagless

James Dyson, 1980



"It was a great combination of design & engineering, successfully creating a space among established brands."

José Manuel dos Santos, Signify



Netscape Browser

AOL & Mercurial Communications, 2005



"The same consistent buttons, behaviors, and that tag made the Web a consistently navigable and visual world, accessible to hundreds of millions."

Brandon Schauer, Capital One



Futura Typeface

Paul Renner, 1927



"Futura, as a typographic family remains strong on multiple surfaces and especially on the digital ones."

Alok Nandi, IxDA



SUICA

JR East, 2001



"With its interoperability with multiple modes of transportation, [SUICA] increased convenience and took away a lot of user concerns from Japanese mobility scenes. Its wide adoption also provided a usable platform for additional, pluggable services."

Anonymous



Air Jordan 1

Nike (Peter Moore), 1985



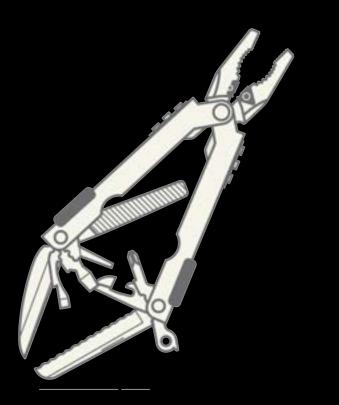
"A performance product once banned by the NBA helped Michael Jordan become the most beloved and successful athletes of all time, while also setting the stage for current day sportswear."

Nathan Van Hook, Nike



Pocket Survival Tool

Timothy S. Leatherman, 1983



"This multi-tool offers uncompromising performance through revolutionary design. The innovative center-axis driver opens to align like a real screw driver, yielding maximum torque and rotation."

Jenni Marsio, Fiskars



Box Chair

Enzo Mari, 1971



"Representative of rational chair design using modern materials, such as plastic and metal, the design realizes democractic values. Easy to assemble and disassemble."

Jooyun Kim, Hongik University



Ultra-Light Down

Uniqlo, 2011



"Because they take up no space, can be used as pillows for travel, and are affordable and warm. You should publish this and shame Uniqlo into providing them free of charge, all over the world, for migrants and refugees. That's what a circular economy should be for: and if there was ever a modern conceit, it's that design needs to solve more than one problem, for more than one person, in more than one place at one time."

Jessica Helfand, Design Observer



Havaianas

Robert Fraser, 1966



"Simple, functional, and inexpensive design, as close to barefoot feeling while providing foot protection for all. Unlimited styles available today at every price level."

Carole Bilson, Design Management Institute



Womb Chair

Knoll (Eero Saarinen), 1966

"Style, comfort, and personality. Perfection."

Marcia Lausen, University of Illinois at Chicago





PeaPod

Andrew Parkinson + Andrew Parkinson, 1989



"Peapod extends me [...] I really dislike grocery shopping. Every store has a different layout. The stores are large, so when you forget something in one section, you need to trek back to get the forgotten item.

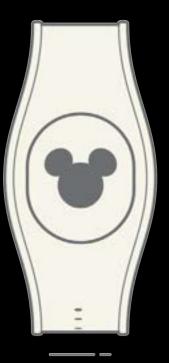
With Peapod, this chore takes 45 minutes versus 3 hours. I gain 2 hours and 15 minutes of value back on a weekly basis, totaling 117 hours yearly."

Brianna Sylver, Sylver Consulting



Magic Band

Disney (Frog Design), 2013



"Frog's work for Disney resulted in an connected, seamless and overall improved theme park experience. It reduced lines, allowed over 5000 people into the park faster, allowed quick access to a user's digital wallet, acted as a hotel room and photo pass, and signaled to beloved Disney characters to greet the children as they made their way through the park. Add to that the elegant and beautiful design of the band itself."

Andrew Zimmerman, Frog

ID

Type 2

Volkswagen (Ben Pon), 1950



"Since the 1950s, [Volkswagen] has consistently delivered 'the people's van,' through 5 generations of product. There's something for everyone: from a classic utility vehicle for tradespeople the world over, to dreams of escape and adventure promised by 1960s 'hippy busses' and modern day T5 'California' models alike."

Carole Bilson, Design Management Institute

ID

Unix OS

Bell Labs (Ken Thompson + Dennis Ritchie), 1970



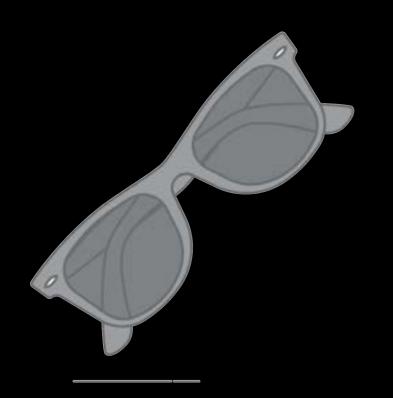
"The Unix operating system was designed by Dennis M. Ritchie and Ken Thompson at Bell Labs in the 1960s and 1970s. Unix and its successors enabled and empowered the development of the open source movement, which has fuelled experimentation in software design."

Alice Rawsthorn



Wayfarer

Ray-Ban (Raymond Stegeman), 1952



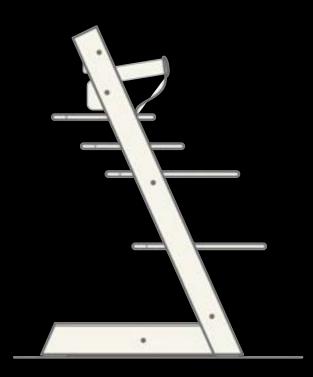
"Every face is improved by this frame."

Mark Frauenfelder, Boing Boing



Stokke Tripp Trapp

Peter Opsvik, 1972



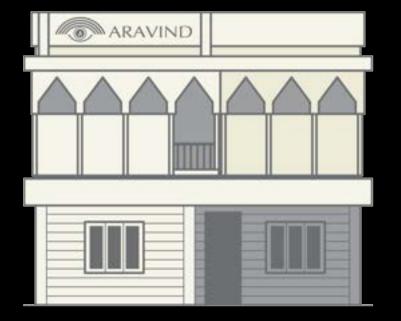
"One of the greatest increases a person can make to their carbon footprint is having a child. The Tripp Trapp chair is perhaps the only product that you can provide to a child at birth and will last and fit them until they are an adult."

Brandon Schauer, Capital One



Avarind Eye Hospitals

Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy, 1976



"Aravind pioneered the application of sophisticated design principles to transform the lives of the poor in India, by addressing the issue of needless blindness at a cost, quality and scale previously unimaginable. The Aravind model represents a high bar for the holistic application of design to an entire interconnected system of care that is adaptive, flexible and unwaveringly usercentered."

Robert Fabricant, Dalberg

ID

Bitcoin

Satoshi Nakamoto, 2009



"Bitcoin wasn't invented, it was designed so that a wide range of stakeholders developers, investors, businesses, miners, individuals—all had incentives that reinforced adoption of a new digital currency, without any central issuer or governing authority. In just over 10 years since it was released, it is now worth nearly \$200B and is used by millions of people in countries around the world. I don't think any product in the history of the world has bootstrapped quite so effectively."



National Park Map

Massimo Vignelli + Lella Vignelli, 1977



"Visual, educational, authoritative, inviting systems-based information design about national treasures in the USA."

Marcia Lausen, University of Illinois at Chicago

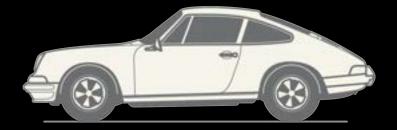


911 Carrera

Ferdinand Porsche, 1963

"Continuous design evolution and perfection of a single platform dating back over 60 years. Elegant, timeless form."

Carole Bilson, Design Management Institute





Teema Tableware

Kaj Frank, 1963



"Functional, durable, and refined, Teema is the perfect tableware for everyday use. Plates, platters, cups, and bowls, each and every Teema piece is oven, freezer, dishwasher, and microwave safe. So not only will they look beautiful on dining table, but they'll make cooking, serving, and clean-up fast and easy. Launched in 1952, [Teema] follows the belief that objects should always be designed with thought and be available for everyone."

Anonymous

ID

LINN Sondek LP12

Edgar Villchur, 1963

"More than simply playing music."

Yongqi Lou



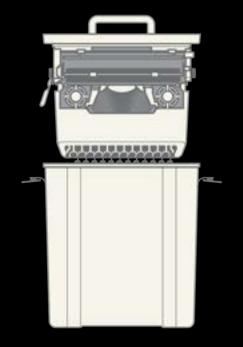


Valentine Typewriter

Ettore Sottsass, 1963

"An outstanding and delightful design. Changed an industry."

Marcia Lausen, University of Illinois at Chicago





IBM Logo

Paul Rand, 1963

"Paul Rand's redesign of the logo and visual identity defined the computer and information ages in relation to the corporation."

Steven Heller, AIGA





Model 302

Western Electric (Henry Dreyfuss), 1937





Great Green Wall of Africa

Panafrican Agency of the Great Green Wall, 2007



"The epic design endeavour to plant and cultivate a 5,000 mile swathe of trees and other plants across the southern edge of the Sahara Desert-from Senegal in the West to Djibouti in the East-is an inspiring, optimistic, and wildly ambitious attempt to address the damage caused by drought, deforestation, land erosion, the climate emergency and the social, economic and political problems they cause in one of the poorest parts of the world."

Alice Rawsthorn

IBM Mainframe

Eliot Noyes, 1952

"Raw computing power."

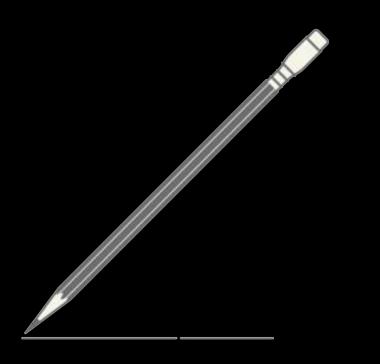
Jashmyd Godrej, Godrej





Blackwing 602

Eberhard Faber, 1934



"Buttery-smooth lead and an adjustable eraser."

Mark Frauenfelder, Boing Boing



Part VI

The Full List



Best Designs // 1 - 40

1	iPhone	Apple (Jonathan Ive)	2007	21	Hue Lighting	Signify
2	Macintosh	Apple	1984	22	App Store	Apple
3	Google Search	Google	1997	23	Spotify	Spotify (Daniel Ek)
4	Eames Side Chair	Ray + Charles Eames	1950	24	Amazon Prime	Amazon
5	Sony Walkman TPS-L2	Norio Ohga	1979	25	Muji Rice Cooker	Muji (Naoto Fukasaw
6	OXO Good Grips Peeler	Smart Design	1990	26	Airbnb	Airbnb (Joe Gebbia)
7	Uber	Uber	2009	27	Wikipedia	Wikipedia
8	Netflix	Netflix	1997	28	NYC Subway Map	Unimark (Massimo Vi
9	Lego Building Blocks	Hilary Fisher Page	1939	29	iOS	Apple
10	iPod	Apple (Jonathan Ive)	2001	30	Shinkansen	Japanese National Ra
11	Google Maps	Where 2 Technologies	2005	31	WeChat	Tencent (Zhang Xiaol
12	Apollo 11 Spacecraft	NASA	1969	32	Nest	Nest Labs (Tony Fade
13	Akari Lamp 1A	Isamu Noguchi	1954	33	606 Shelving	Vitsoe (Dieter Rams)
14	MacBook Pro	Apple (Jonathan Ive)	2006	34	Skype	Skype
15	Post-It Note	3M (Arthur Fry)	1977	35	Modern Classics	Penguin (Jan Tschich
16	747 "Jumbo-Jet"	Boeing (Joe Sutter)	1970	36	ClearRX	Deborah Adler
17	SX-70 Instant Camera	Polaroid (Edwin Land)	1972	37	Mobike	Beijing Mobike Techn
18	Tesla Model S	Tesla (Franz von Holzhausen)	2012	38	Round Thermostat	Honeywell (Henry Dre
19	Nokia Model 3210	Nokia (Alastair Curtis)	1999	39	Stool 60	Artek (Alvar Aalto)
20	Savoy Vase	littala (Alvar + Aino Aalto)	1937	40	Facebook	Facebook (Mark Zuck



	2012
	2008
	2006
	2005
wa)	2014
	2008
	2001
Vignelli)	1972
	2007
Railways	1964
olong)	2011
lell)	2011
)	1960
	2003
hold)	1952
	2005
nology Co.	2015
reyfuss)	1953
	1933
ckerberg)	2003

Best Designs // 41 - 80

41	Billy Bookcase	IKEA	1979	61	Forever Stamps	United States Postal Service	2006
42	Pride Flag	Gilbert Baker	1978	62	Telephone Area Code	Bell Labs (Ladislav Sutnar)	1947
43	Lia Pregnancy Test	Bethany Edwards	2017	63	Braun Calculator	Braun (Dieter Rams + Dietrich Lubs)	1987
44	Super Mario Bros	Nintendo (Shigeru Miyamoto)	1985	64	Apple Pay	Apple	2014
45	Velib Bike Service	JCDecaux	2007	65	Flyknit	Nike	2008
46	Apple Watch	Apple (Kevin Lynch)	2015	66	Orange-handled Shears	Fiskars	1967
47	Bialetti MOKA Pot	Alfonso Bialetti	1933	67	Pokemon	Satoshi Tajiri	1989
48	Poang	IKEA (Noboru Nakamura)	1974	68	EpiPen	Mylan	1987
49	Volkswagen Bug	Ferdinand Porsche	1938	69	Medical Drones	Zipline	2014
50	Microsoft Office	Microsoft	1990	70	Geodesic Dome	Buckminster Fuller	1948
51	Tupperware	Earl Tupper	1948	71	Tampon	Earle Haas	1933
52	View-Master	Chuck Harrison	1962	72	23 & Me	Linda Avey, Paul Cusenza, Anne Wojcicki	2006
53	LifeStraw	Vestergaard Frandsen	2005	73	Dyson Bagless	James Dyson	1980
54	Raspberry Pi	Raspberry Pi Foundation	2012	74	Netscape Browser	AOL	2005
55	Flex-Foot	Össur	1971	75	Futura Typeface	Paul Renner	1927
56	Medical Toy Blocks	Hikaru Imamura	2012	76	SUICA	JR East	2001
57	Life Magazine	Time, Inc.	1936	77	Air Jordan 1	Nike (Peter C. Moore)	1984
58	Leica M	Ernst Leitz	1954	78	PST	Leatherman	1983
59	Lettera 32	Marcello Nizzoli	1963	79	Box Chair	Enzo Mari	1971
60	Airtable	Airtable	2012	80	Ultra-Light Down	Uniqlo	2011



Best Designs // 81 - 100

81	Havaianas	Robert Fraser	1966
82	Womb Chair	Eero Saarinen	1948
83	PeaPod	Andrew Parkinson + Thomas Parkinson	1989
84	Disney MagicBand	Frog Design	2013
85	Volkswagen Type 2	Ben Pon	1950
86	Unix OS	Bell Labs (Ken Thompson, Dennis Ritchie)	1970
87	Ray-Ban Wayfarer	Raymond Stegeman	1952
88	Stokke Tripp Trapp	Peter Opsvik	1972
89	Aravind Eye Hospitals	Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy	1976
90	Bitcoin	Satoshi Nakamoto	2009
91	National Park Map	Massimo + Lella Vignelli	1977
92	Porsche 911	Ferdinand Porsche	1963
93	Teema Tablewear	Kaj Frank	1952
94	LINN Sondek LP12	Edgar Villchur	1972
95	Valentine Typewriter	Ettore Sottsass	1969
96	IBM Logo	Paul Rand	1956
97	Telephone Model 302	Henry Dreyfuss	1937
98	Great Green Wall	Panafrican Agency of the Great Green Wall	2007
99	IBM Mainframe	Eliot Noyes	1952
100	Blackwing 602 Pencil	Eberhard Faber	1934

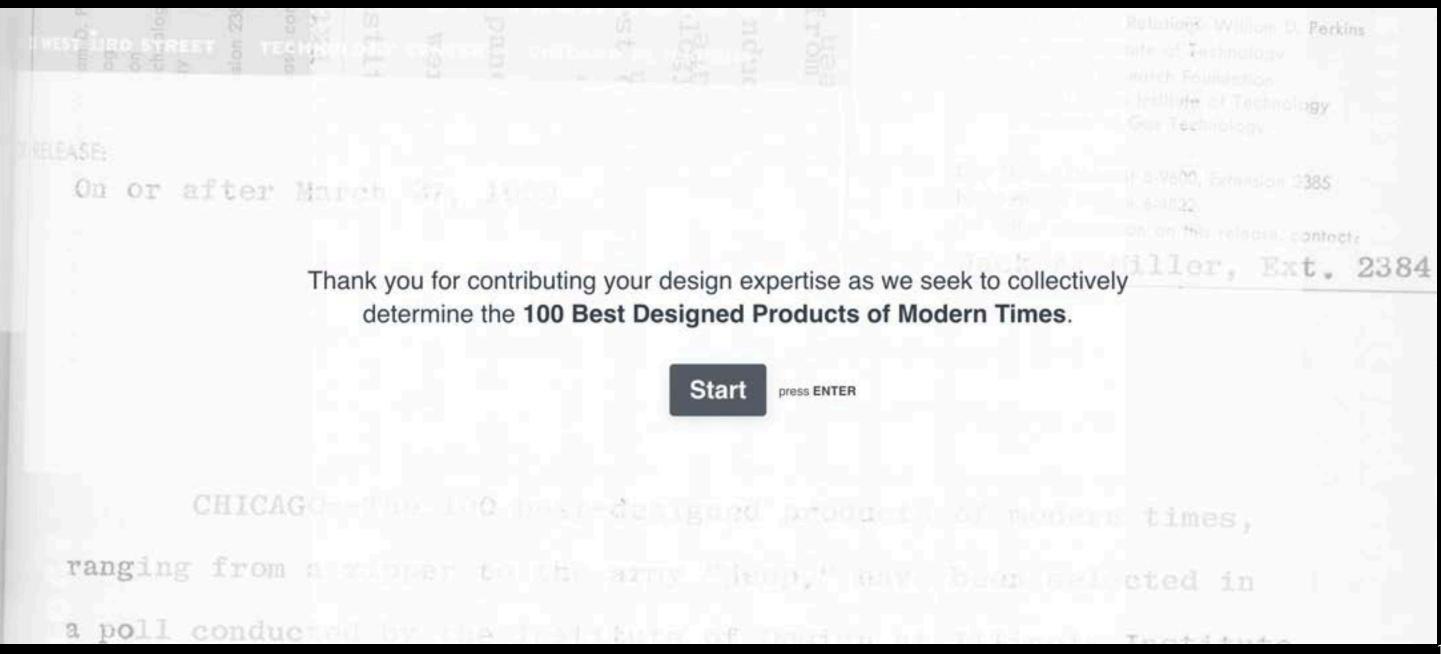


Part VII

Methodology



Methodology // Independent Submissions





In 1958, Jay Doblin finished a monumental survey to determine the 100 best products of modern times. The results were published in *Fortune* magazine the following year.



In 1958, Jay Doblin embarked on a monumental survey to determine the 100 best products of modern times. The results were published in *Fortune* magazine that same year.

Doblin polled the leading designers, architects, and educators of his day. In updating Doblin's study 60 years later, we followed his methodology whenever possible and appropriate.



However, we made several notable adjustments:

- We expanded our sample size to a curated list of **200 leaders in design**. 1
- We broadened our target audience to include **design practitioners** (teams and 2 individuals), design educators, and design influencers.
- We required each nomination be accompanied by the submitter's rationale for 3 nominating a given design.
- Rather than ask participants to re-rank the submissions, as Doblin did, 4 we assembled a team of design researchers to conduct a peer review.



We received 303 unique nominations, excluding those that were disgualified for not meeting the stated criteria. Convergence emerged around 25 designs which became the "top 25 designs of modern times."

(Doblin failed to achieve his goal of 100% convergence in the original study as well.)



143

For designs in which there was convergence (i.e., multiple submissions) we determined their rank based on the quantity of submissions.





In the case of a rank-based tie, the ranking position was determined by an analysis of the distribution spread.

Within the three groups, we ranked designers first, influencers second, and educators third and assigned numeric values accordingly (i.e., 3,2,1) to tally the results.

The only exception was if a practitioner, educator, and influencer all independently nominated a design, that constituted a consensus, thereby garnering a score of 10.



We treated submissions for which there was convergence differently from independent submissions. In order to assess non-duplicated results, we conducted a linguistic meta-analysis using the rationale provided by the survey participants to determine an abstract set of principles for "good design."

To do so, we scripted a Python program that counted select words grouped into like sets, for example:

democraticList

["democratic", "social mobility", "liberation", "freedom"]









The researchers then grouped the sub-categories that emerged into a higher order of categorization, from which we arrived at five principles for good design:

- **Adaptable + Expandable** 1.
- **Society + Environment** 2.
- 3. **Great to Use**
- 4. Market Success
- 5. **Redefined Category**



Methodology // Independent Submissions

1	Adaptable + Expandable 208	System 58	Platform 72	Adaptable 14	Connected 67	
2	Society + Environment 189	Affordable 27	Inclusive 22	Sustainable 22	Democratic 29	Life
3	Great to Use 165	Time-Saving 9	Experience 43	Usable 36	Form 45	
4	Market Success 82	Commercial Success 43	Iconic 43			
5	Redefined Category 77	Transformative 13	Superlative 27	Contemporary 13	Ubiquitous 26	





Methodology // Independent Submissions





Finally, a blind study was administered to six design researchers, each of whom independently ranked the submissions using a 1-5 Likert scale.

We then tallied, weighted, and averaged the results in order to determine the selection and ranking of the remaining 75 "best designs."



Methodology // Independent Submissions

	٨	в	C	D	F	E	0
1	Product	I. Adaptable & Expandable		III. Great to Use	IV. Market Success	V. Redefined Category	G
2	Tampon	2 *	4 *	5 *	5 -	5 *	
3	Lia Flushable Pregnancy Test	2 *	3 *	4 -	4 -	4 -	
4	Rubiks Cube	1 *	3 -	4 -	4 -	3 -	
5	606 Shelving, Dieter Rams	4 *	3 *	5 -	4 -	5 -	
6	Apple Watch	5 *	1 *	4 *	4 *	4 -	
7	Uniqlo Ultra Light Down	2 *	3 *	4 -	3 *	4 *	ļ.
8	Airpod	2 *	2 -	5 -	5 -	4 -	i.
9	Airbnb	5 *	5 *	5 *	5 *	5 *	
10	Wikipedia	4 *	5 -	3 *	4 -	4 *	
11	Apple Pay	3 *	2 *	4 -	3 -	3 *	
12	Facebook	5 *	5 *	4 👻	5 *	5 *	Ĩ.
13	Futura Typeface	3 *	5 *	3 *	2 *	2 *	l.
14	Nike Flyknit	3 *	3 *	4 *	4 *	3 *	
15	Leica M	3 *	1 *	5 *	3 *	3 *	
16	Arne Jacobsen Soup Spoon	1 *	3 *	4 *	2 *	4 *	1
17	Expunge.io	2 *	5 *	4 *	3 *	2 *	
18	Box Chair, Enzo Mari	1 *	2 *	4 -	2 *	2 *	
19	Barcelona Chair	2 *	1 *	5 *	5 *	5 *	
20	Electric Bicycle	4 *	3 *	4 *	3 -	3 *	1
21	Breast Pump	3 -	4 ~	2 *	3 *	3 *	



Part VIII

Meta-Analysis



Meta-Analysis

	Adaptable	Impactful	Usable	Successful	Transfo
Total	394	429	478	471	489
Median	2.5	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.7
Average	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.2
Range	4.7	4.7	4.3	4.3	4.2
Variance	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.9
Standard Deviation	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3
Highest Ranking (Average)	24				
Lowest Ranking (Average)	7				



rmational	Average
	452
	3.2
	3.0
	4.4
	1.7
	1.2

That's all, folks.

<u>lee</u>

FAIR USE, PUBLICATION, AND CIRCULATION

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RESEARCH SYNTHESIS + DESIGN

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