

On the Practice of Design Research in Germany 2024



PRESS RELEASE

New Study Reveals: German Design Research Has Significant Room for Improvement

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Germany is not yet fully tapping into the potential of design research. This is the key finding of a new study published by the German Design Council. Structural deficits and limited integration of design research into businesses are slowing innovation and competitiveness. The study offers targeted recommendations to drive meaningful change.

How well is design research positioned in Germany? The new study [On the Practice of Design Research in Germany 2024](#), published by the German Design Council, reveals that German design research still lags behind international standards. At the same time, the findings show its immense potential to strengthen design practice and significantly boost companies' ability to innovate.

The results are clear: while the value of design research for innovation and decision-making is widely recognised, it remains poorly embedded in both businesses and academic structures. Only 22 percent of respondents – drawn from 150 experts in design, business, and academia – rate the quality of design education in Germany as above average. Furthermore, 63 percent believe that universities are currently driving design research forward. However, this also highlights its lack of presence in businesses, where it is rarely integrated into development processes – and when it is, often too late to make a real impact.

“The results of [our study](#) make it clear that we need to create a solid foundation for forward-thinking design research,” says Stephan Ott, Director of the Institute for Design Research and Appliance (IfDRA) at the German Design Council and author of the study. Together with co-author Jessica Krejci, Ott outlines specific recommendations to strengthen the role of design research in Germany:

- **Building a foundation for measurable performance (KPIs):** A robust data basis, informed by targeted surveys and ongoing evaluations, is essential for assessing the impact of design research.

- **Enhancing international collaboration:** Integrating international exchange more strongly into academic programmes will improve the quality and global relevance of German design research.
- **Promoting practice-oriented doctoral studies:** Encouraging greater practical focus in PhD programmes will bridge the gap between research and real-world application.

“Germany needs to raise its design research to a new level to remain competitive internationally and drive long-term innovation. At the same time, we must fully recognise the impact design research can have on business, transformation, and circularity – and act accordingly,” says Lutz Dietzold, CEO of the German Design Council, underlining the importance of the findings.

[For more details on the study and its recommendations, please visit our website.](#)

About the German Design Council

The German Design Council is Germany’s leading authority on design. Since 1953. As a thought leader in the field, we are committed to realising the potential of design for a sustainable future. We connect business with design – for circular design, transformation, and economic success.

About the Institute for Design Research and Appliance (IfDRA)

Established in 2020 as part of the German Design Council, the Institute for Design Research and Appliance (IfDRA) provides a platform for all areas of design research. Acting as a hub for collaboration, the institute facilitates workshops, conferences, and research projects. Through studies and surveys, the IfDRA builds a robust data foundation, offering valuable insights into the latest trends and developments in design research.

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