

Editorial

Celebrating 20 years of InfoDesign

1 A team constituted, among others, by Carla G. Spinillo (then at UFPE, now at UFPR), Edna Lúcia Cunha Lima (then at PUC-Rio, now retired), Guilherme Cunha Lima (then at ESDI-UERJ, now passed), Priscila L. Farias (then at Senac University Center, now at USP), and Solange G. Coutinho (UFPE).

Twenty years ago, the editorial introducing InfoDesign first issue described information design as a new research area and also as a transformative approach that would influence design practices, processes, and their outcomes. This was a conception shared among a prominent team of Brazilian researchers¹ that led to the establishment of SBDI (the Brazilian Information Design Society) and the organization of the first International Conference on Information Design (CIDI), in Recife. InfoDesign, in that context, was conceived as a platform for sharing research findings and critical reflections, fostering the growth and consolidation of the field. Twenty volumes and over 50 issues later, more than 300 articles, coming from 20 different countries, plus dozens of interviews and reviews have been published in the journal.

Over the past two decades, Information Design has evolved into a mature, multidisciplinary and essential field at the critical intersection of technology, communication, and society. This journey has been shaped by advancements in technology, the surge in data availability, and the growing demand for effective communication. The rise of the internet, social media, and digital platforms drove the exponential growth of data, creating an urgent need for systems to organize and make sense of it. Alongside these technological shifts, emphasis on usability and accessibility ensured that interfaces become more intuitive and impactful.

The relevance of diversity and contextualization has played a pivotal role in substantiating information design. Over the years, we have seen increasing recognition of context and cultural nuances in shaping how information is represented and understood. Movements like data feminism have further emphasized the inclusion of diverse perspectives and challenged traditional power dynamics in information representation. Meanwhile, advancements in machine learning and AI have introduced generative design, automating aspects of the design process while sparking essential conversations about authorship and interpretability. Recent global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, underscored the field's critical role in crisis communication, with clarity, trust, and timeliness emerging as core principles.

The four articles in this special issue cover most of those issues, dealing with historical, contemporary and prospective aspects of information design research.

In 'Family Album: the people who make up 20 years of Information Design research in Pernambuco', Guilherme Ranoya, Eva Rolim Miranda and Solange Galvão Coutinho narrate the history of the group of professors and researchers responsible for the establishment of information design as a research line in the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) and

reflect on its legacy. This group (Coutinho included) were also part of the ‘prominent team’, mentioned above, who set off SBDI, CIDI and InfoDesign, and the article shows how, along the years, the group widened and became responsible for training researchers on all levels (undergraduate, master and doctoral degrees, post-doctoral research) having a strong impact on the Brazilian design research scenario.

Lara Lima Felisberto and Vanessa Casarin look at studies on the out-of-home media perception since 2007 in their ‘The influence of digital out-of-home media on driver perception and driving: an integrative literature review’. The results obtained by Felisberto and Casarin suggest that, if drivers and road safety are a serious concern, new regulations should be implemented and existing regulations should be or reviewed in the light of recent findings, particularly in regards to digital resources.

A challenge to hegemonic values in information design is at the heart of Bianca Novais Queiroz and Virginia Tiradentes Souto’s argument in the essay ‘Who does the norm affect? Information design from a feminist perspective’. The authors identify, in the literature revised, a number of critical and methodological principles that challenge the norm in favour of socially responsible practices in information design and data science, and conclude that there is a remarkable dominance of women in discussions that contradict design norms.

Finally, in ‘Form over function: an analysis of Midjourney-generated infographics’, Sara C. Klohn Reader and Alis Iacob present preliminary results of an explorative study on infographics generated in 2023 by Midjourney. The authors applied a qualitative approach centred around visual methodologies to analyze 23 infographics considering potential informative functions. Reader and Iacob conclude that the outputs produced by generative technologies, while superficially recognizable as infographics, do not comply with the essential functional principles of infographic design, being, therefore, inadequate, as they do not serve the expected informative functions.

It is fair to say that the four articles tackle relevant changes occurring in the field of information design in the last 20 years. Coming back to the journal, InfoDesign witnessed many changes along those years too, particularly in regards to its Editorial Board. Priscila Lena Farias has been an Editor-in-Chief since the journal inception, having as co-Editors-in-Chief Carla Spinillo (2004–2014) and Luciane Fadel (2014–2020), as Managing Editors Isabella Aragão (2020), Virgínia Tiradentes (2021–2022), Letícia Pedruzzi (2022) and Sara Goldschmidt (2023–current), and Jade Piaia as the journal Editorial Secretary (2023-current).² Having decided to step down, Farias acted as a co-Editor-in-Chief with Doris Kosminsky in 2024.

This twentieth anniversary is also marked by the integration of new international Associate Editors in InfoDesign Editorial Board, by the decision of publishing in English only from 2025, and by the acceptance of coverage by scientific abstract and citation database Scopus.

What remains unchanged is our permanent commitment to open science. As an open-access, peer-reviewed, double-blind journal, InfoDesign continues to pioneer advancements in the field of information design,

² The Editorial Board, over the years, included dozens of scholars affiliated to Brazilian and international institutions, and counted with the support of other dozens of reviewers. Over the last 10 years, efforts have been made towards ensuring international representativeness among the Editorial Board and the reviewers team. The design and layout team included, over the years, contributions from Guilherme Falcão Pelegrino (then a design student at Senac University Center, responsible for InfoDesign logo), Fernanda Vieira Nunes dos Santos (then a design student at FAU USP, responsible for the first version of the journal interface at ojs platform), and Christopher Hammerschmidt (UFPR, responsible for the current layout of the journal contents).

fostering scholarly discourse and supporting research in Latin America and beyond.

As we look ahead, we hope you will stay with us charting the future of Information Design – a future guided by excellence, ethics, and care.

Doris Kosminsky and Priscila Lena Farias
Editors-in-Chief