

It is difficult for designers and innovation managers to make decisions in the face of the many uncertainties brought by globalization and fast paced technological change. This has resulted in a broadening of the focus of design workshops to address topics such as business models and company strategy - particularly in relation to collaborating across disciplinary and organizational boundaries. This dissertation argues that a key aspect of developing effective partnerships is for those concerned to gain a mutual understanding of the different kinds of risks that are relevant for a collaborative venture.

Since it can be difficult to discuss risk, this dissertation brings together a wide variety of experimentation in order to offer a fresh look at building shared understandings of the issue. The cases compared are physical interventions I conducted in interactive art contexts and physical tools tried out in collaborative design activities and at gatherings of industrialists and researchers.

An underlying theme of breakdowns or ruptures as central to facilitating shared understandings of risk is revealed by analysis of the various cases. Important qualities of these breakdowns are shown to be their playful, collaborative and perspective swapping aspects. These qualities are illustrated through presentation of three further examples of experimentation with facilitation.