PRESS INFORMATION

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iF Design Trend Report 2026 published

The fifth Trend Report published by iF International Forum Design analyzes four key sets of trends and countertrends that are shaping design against the backdrop of technological, social, and environmental developments.

>> A free download is available until 7July 2026.

International design experts share insights into key developments and challenges, while the report also provides statistics and international best practice examples.

For the fifth consecutive year, iF International Forum Design is publishing the iF Design Trend Report in collaboration with **The Future:Project**. This interdisciplinary analysis links design trends with key technological and societal developments, highlighting the role design plays in shaping products, services, spaces, systems, and relationships.

The future is not shaped solely by major individual trends. Rather, it evolves where trends and countertrends intersect. With **Age of Average | Recoupling Design**, **Convenience Culture | Skillization**, **Next Nature | Human Enhancement**, and **Unfolding Cities | Urban Villages**, this year's report focuses precisely on these areas of tension.

As creative processes become faster and more automated, the role of designers is also changing. Significance no longer arises solely from the final result, but rather from the very way problems are formulated, processes are designed, and questions about the future are made tangible. The ability to bridge the gap between technological possibilities, social reality, and ecological necessity is becoming a core design competency.

The iF Design Trend Report 2026 is addressed to designers, companies, institutions, and anyone involved in product development, innovation, strategy, architecture, communication, or transformation. It offers guidance, reflection, and inspiration for a time when design extends far beyond the creation of individual products and services.

The most important key learnings are summarized at the end of each chapter. The online report can be explored interactively and supports a flexible reading experience.

The current Trend Report is available for free download at
https://ifdesign.com/en/trend-report until 7 July 2026.
Starting 8 July, the report will be available for a fee (299 EUR).

Uwe Cremering, CEO of iF Design, outlines the initiative's purpose: *"The iF Design Trend Report 2026 is intended to be a source of guidance, reflection, and inspiration. It invites designers, companies, and institutions to discover new approaches to forward-looking solutions, because design today is not just about shaping products and services - it's about shaping relationships, systems, and possibilities."*

Four pairs of trends and countertrends take center stage in 2026

The report shows that current challenges such as climate change, social alienation, and infrastructure deficits cannot be viewed in isolation. They form complex, interconnected systems. Design can help make these interconnections visible, redefine problems, and open up new spaces for solutions. The following key areas of tension are presented:

Age of Average | Recoupling Design

With the integration of AI into nearly every product and design process, a new age of the average is emerging. Algorithms often repeat the most likely and well-known solutions, accelerating uniformity across many fields. **Recoupling Design** responds to this by breaking with purely algorithmic logic and rediscovering distinctive, pre-digital, and attitude-driven design approaches. Materiality, cultural context, craftsmanship, human judgment, and real-world experience are regaining importance.

Convenience Culture | Skillization

The pillars of **Convenience Culture** are minimal effort, immediate availability, and ease of use. Design principles such as friction reduction, snackification, and modularity create maximum convenience for users. **Skillization** forms the conscious counterpoint to this: learning, practice, and the realization of one's own potential foster self-efficacy and control. Design can enhance learning experiences, empower people, and build communities of skills.

Next Nature | Human Enhancement

As technology accelerates and ecological crises intensify, new worldviews are emerging. **Next Nature** demonstrates that nature and technology can no longer be understood as opposites. **Human Enhancement** explores how the body, health, and abilities evolve through science and design. Design connects nature, technology, and culture, laying the groundwork for an integrated, regenerative future.

Unfolding Cities | Urban Villages

Cities are constantly changing. They unfold as existing spaces and structures are repurposed, hybrid spaces are created, and new connections are enabled through targeted design and mobility solutions. **Urban Villages** demonstrates how community and neighborhood can be shaped in cities: urban districts become vibrant neighborhoods, and non-places become places of encounter. Design plays a crucial role in addressing current and future

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About iF Design
iF Design is one of the world's leading independent design institutions. Since 1954, iF Design has organized the internationally renowned **iF DESIGN AWARD**, which receives more than 10,000 entries annually from over 70 countries across more than 90 design categories. iF International Forum Design GmbH, headquartered in Hanover, has a global presence - with offices in Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Brazil, Turkey, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States.

iF Design represents **excellence, objectivity, transparency, and impact** in design. The **iF DESIGN STUDENT AWARD** helps iF Design foster the next generation of creative talent; the **iF SOCIAL IMPACT PRIZE** supports projects worldwide that highlight social responsibility. The **iF DESIGN ACADEMY** prepares design leaders for the future, while the iF Design Trend Report sheds light on the meta-trends of our time. The sole shareholder is the non-profit **iF Design Foundation**, which advocates for the social value of design through international projects and research initiatives.

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