

Dutch Design Week Impact Study

The impact study for Dutch Design Week 2019 was commissioned by DDW and carried out by the research and consultancy firm *Blueyard*. The responsibility for the research was shared by the market research agency *Dynamic Concepts Consultancy* from Eindhoven (Stein van Klaveren, Niels Kwint and Benjamin Nicholson), and the *Journalism and Innovation Lectorate* at Fontys in Tilburg in collaboration with *Design Academy Eindhoven* (Daniëlle Arets, Daan Colussi).

Each October, for nine whole days, Eindhoven is the epicentre of design and 350,000 national and international visitors encounter inspirational ideas on the latest developments in the field of design across the board. For nine days, Dutch Design Week (DDW), the largest design event in Northern Europe and also one of the largest cultural events in the Netherlands, presents work by more than 2,600 designers in over 450 activities at 110 locations throughout the city. A bustling range of activities including exhibitions, conferences, network meetings, workshops, lectures, award ceremonies and the additional evening programme DDW Music.

Size is also the festival's Achilles heel: it is busy, there is so much to see that it is difficult to know where to start. This is why DDW focuses on guiding visitors to ensure they have a 'better' visiting experience. DDW's public approach is focused on quality rather than quantity. So DDW is not looking to reach a larger audience, but at improving the experience for the public: exploring the impact on DDW visitors.

DDW's mission is to demonstrate the meaning of design for society: designers formulate answers to the challenges we all face and, in doing so, shape our future. To simplify the choices for visitors, DDW has plotted a number of lines: *providing more depth* about what is on offer, *guiding* visitors and *monitoring* the results. The organisation focuses primarily on the general public (roughly 60% of the total visitors) and not on the professionals (who are guided in a different way).

1. *The research*

Guiding next Level

To lend substance to these ambitions, extensive public research of the aforementioned objectives was conducted annually in the past period. The programme was called *Guiding the Mass*, with the aim of offering the various types of visitors more customised programmes.

A positive visitor experience only gives a limited picture of what visitors have actually experienced and provides no insight into whether the intended substantive goals have been achieved; the actual impact of DDW. To get a better picture of whether what was offered corresponded with visitor expectations and to ascertain the impact of a visit to DDW, a combined research approach was opted for this year under the name *Guiding next Level*. Both

quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to generate insights into the relationship between a visit to DDW and the way in which this visit results in greater knowledge and understanding of design.

DDW's strategic ambition is to connect exhibitions, objects and events on the one hand with interested visitors and with customers on the other. One of the tools for doing this as well as possible is the 'Design Motives Framework' that DDW developed (during this study still under the name 'Strategic Framework'). A framework that subdivides into four quadrants. Along the axes *conceptual versus tangible* and *individual versus social*, DDW places an object or exhibition in one of the four categories: *Speculative, Innovative, Artistic, Creative*.

The question of how to bring the public and presentations closer together is increasingly becoming a digital matter too. The sheer volume of presentations at DDW means that it is impossible to see everything and that visitors need support in making the right choices from the multitude of things on offer based on their interests and preferences. So the specific match between audience and what is on offer is important: customised, tailor-made matches between specific audiences and specific exhibits. Analysis and categorisation of what can be seen and analysis and segmentation of the audience should make this possible.

If both sides make the right data available and analyses are made, relevant matches can be established. Research into the effects of those matches will provide the raw material for learning and fine-tuning the matches. Through combining data about the individual visitors with the specific characteristics of what is on offer, an effective and consequently appropriate proposal can be made for those visitors. Based on their intrinsic knowledge of specific visitors and the intended impact, DDW curators can then choose what to offer or propose, ensuring visitors receive relevant guidance. Eventually, an algorithm could be created to indicate with increasing accuracy what the different categories of visitors are interested in. The huge amount of visitor and programming data offers enormous opportunities for targeting audiences. The volume of DDW visitors makes this most appropriate.

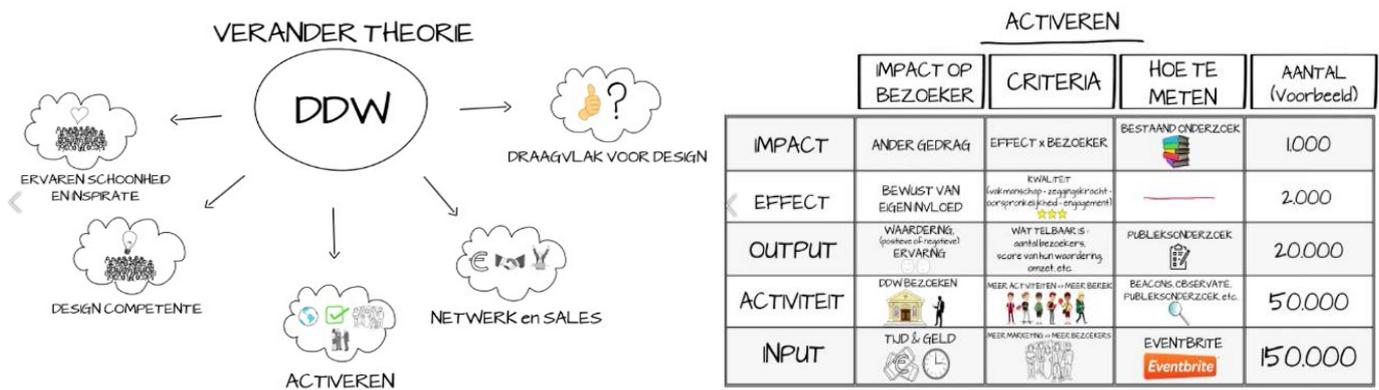
In *Guiding next Level*, the various raw materials in the model are described in detail. Data is collected, segmented and categorised. Visitor experiences and behaviour has been recorded and examined. And the relationship between these data has been analysed. This report presents our initial findings.

2. Theoretical substantiation

Impact

The definition of impact used as a starting point was "a permanent change in a person's life as a result of the activity in question, which would not have occurred had the activity not taken place". Impact is a term from the *Theory of Change* (H. Clark & D. Taplin, 2012). In a work session, five change theories were formulated with corresponding framework based on DDW's mission and vision:

1. visiting DDW leads to experiencing beauty and amazement
2. visiting DDW activates more 'socially responsible behaviour'
3. visiting DDW leads to greater 'design competence'
4. visiting DDW increases the business network and sales opportunities
5. visiting DDW leads to more support for design



Hypotheses have been formed from three of these change theories - DDW's impact goals - which form the basis for the research:

- A. Visitors experience a sense of beauty through the quality of what is presented and/or are surprised and inspired through seeing something new or adventurous. They take these positive experiences away with them.
- B. Visitors are encouraged to reflect on the influence of design on social themes and acquire the insight that a different way of interacting with their environment can influence these themes. And following the visit they intend to change their behaviour accordingly.
- C. A visit to DDW contributes to increased knowledge/understanding of design.

The starting point for our substantiation was that the effect on a visitor is determined by a combination of the 'nature and quality of what is on offer' and the 'visitor': $\text{exhibits} \times \text{visitor} = \text{effect}$.

Based on this, a number of assumptions were formulated for each hypothesis, which were examined before, during and after DDW – to be able to confirm or reject the hypothesis.

- the assumption that all visitors report on the aesthetic experience;
- the assumption that the particular reason for the visit (*in search of inspiration, a nice day out, etc.*) influences the visitor's answers;
- the assumption that observing the exhibits exemplary for a category in the Design Motives Framework influences the answers;
- the assumption that the visitor's preference for a particular category in the Design Motives Framework influences their responses.

Data

DDW is a festival with *many* visitors and *many* participants and exhibitors. There is *a lot of* data available.

- All displayed objects or exhibitions are labelled by curators and exhibiting designers in a number of categories, such as design discipline (e.g. *technology, fashion, mobility, social, etc.*). And on the basis of the substantive Design Motives Framework that DDW curators employ (conceptual versus tangible and beauty versus solutions).
- All online ticket purchasers and other interested parties can record personal information in their My DDW account and indicate their preferences and interests with regard to what is on offer.

3. Research method

Various approaches to the research have been opted for. In line with the hypothesis and the nature of DDW and the research topics, we opted for both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Survey

The *Dynamic Concepts Consultancy* from Eindhoven researched hypotheses A and B. They interviewed visitors prior to, during and after their visit and compared the results with data about their predefined preferences and interests and the works the visitors observed during DDW.

- Prior to their visit to DDW, visitors were asked about their reasons for visiting and their interests. This data originated from the My DDW account database. This dataset had results from over 2,000 respondents.
- During DDW, the visitors' experiences were measured using an interactive survey on tablets (Motify Experience Monitor) placed at eight leading and accessible locations. Among other things, visitors were asked which of the eight objects pictured they had seen. There were more than 5,500 respondents.
- After DDW, the same questionnaire was sent to DDW visitors who had purchased a ticket online. There were more than 500 respondents.



Use of tablets in the exhibition spaces for the survey.

Interviews

The Fontys *Journalism and Innovation Lectorate* in Tilburg researched Hypothesis C. They opted for a combination of semi-structured interviews and design research.

- At six locations in Eindhoven, four researchers interviewed a number of randomly selected visitors about their views on design. The interviews were structured on the basis of a topic list. There were 95 respondents, after deduction of respondent forms without permission, 75 remained. Audio recordings were made of all the interviews and subsequently analysed afterwards using analysis software ATLAS.ti.
- Because the research concerns 'design', the interview form was combined with design research employing a number of design-related assignments. *Probes* were used. Probes are small assignments with designed objects, with which user experiences, thoughts and ideas are easy to document (drawing on a map of Eindhoven, choosing from a number of material samples for a building assignment, creating a news item). The researchers collected the results and added them to the interview.



Probes: ten material samples for respondents to choose from

Work sessions

During DDW, a work session was organised with the international research team from *The Leapfrog Project* from Lancaster, a collaboration between The Glasgow School of Art Institute of Design Innovation (GSA) and Imagination Lancaster University, focusing on the design research of public engagement in the cultural sector. During the workshop, the DDW approach to impact research was shared, as well as the results of Leapfrog's method and tools for monitoring and evaluation.



4. Results

Hypothesis A: visiting DDW leads to *experiencing beauty*

Approximately 70% of all visitors indicated that during DDW they were 'touched by the beauty of design'. We dare to claim that the impact goal 'DDW leads to experiencing beauty and amazement' is **achieved**.

The hypothesis that this can be traced back to a specific exhibit, reason for visiting or design preference **cannot be confirmed**. Almost all categories of visitors gave the same average and extreme scores; no significant differences were found in this study. The assumption that DDW could steer or guide this impact goal has not yet been demonstrated by this research.

The assumption that objects or exhibitions from the Design Motives category *Artistic* are assessed in a more positive way was not confirmed. The category is not considered as the most interesting by visitors, but the objects in this category *are* most commonly recognised.

[For detailed information, see Appendage 1](#)

[Impact Study DDW 2019 - *Dynamic Concepts Consultancy, Eindhoven.*](#)

Hypothesis B: visiting DDW leads to *more socially responsible behaviour*

Approximately 68% of the visitors indicated that DDW 'has made people more aware of the influence design has on social themes'. This is in line with the picture that emerged from last year's modest baseline measurement – the format of which is not entirely comparable.

We can **confirm the hypothesis**.

What is striking is that visitors with a preference for design that focuses on solutions (*Innovative* and *Speculative*) clearly report a stronger awareness, just like visitors who remember seeing objects or exhibitions from this category. This also applies to visitors who indicated that their reason for visiting was that they wanted to know more about design.

You could say that DDW is especially strong at provoking thinking and reflection. When questioned further about the themes they have started to think differently about, it is striking that sustainability, circularity, social cohesion and society are most commonly mentioned. After visiting, the reported interest in design disciplines such as *technology, circular and social* increased. Among the group of people who visited mainly for a nice day out, we find more disappointed visitors than in other groups.

In other words: a visit to DDW raises awareness of social themes among a relatively large proportion of the visitors. This is not yet changed behaviour, but we know that awareness and intention are conditions (but not decisive) for changed behaviour.

Because the degree of reflection varies for different categories of visitors, DDW could steer towards this impact goal.

For detailed information, see [Appendage 1](#)
Impact Study DDW 2019 - *Dynamic Concepts Consultancy, Eindhoven*

Hypothesis C: visiting DDW leads to more design competence

On the basis of the interviews, a cautious assumption can be made that a visit to DDW contributes to increasing/enriching knowledge and competencies in the field of design. Which confirms the hypothesis to a degree.

Particularly important here is the combination of two observations: most visitors come to DDW well prepared and with the intention of learning something. We can also claim that there is a relatively high initial competence among DDW visitors. Because they know what they are coming to 'see', where they can find knowledge and inspiration, and because we know that this desire will be more than satisfied by what is on show at DDW, we can assume that this has an impact on a person's design competence.

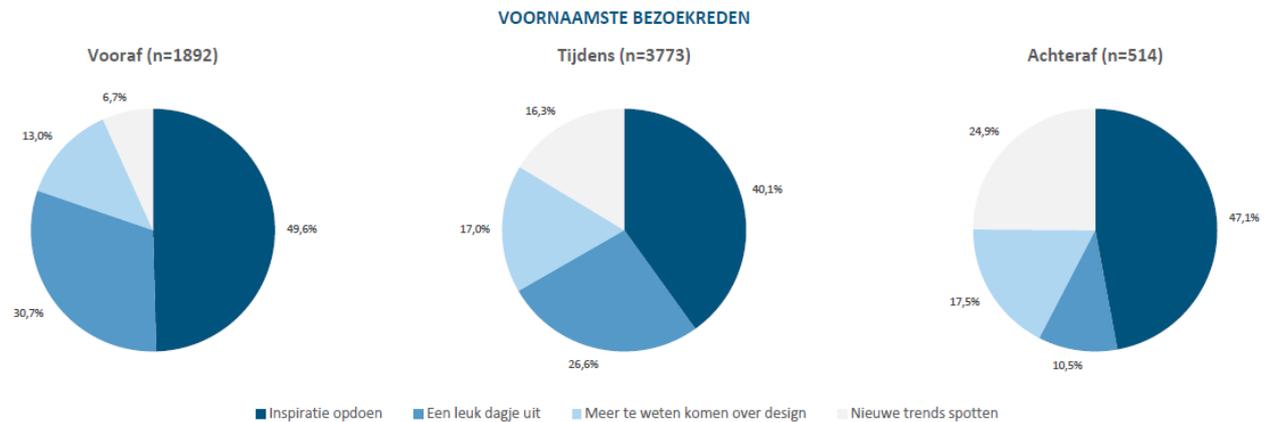
The study did not determine whether the various predefined categories of visitors gained more or less knowledge about design. However, five profiles (personas) have been defined with which this can be explored more thoroughly. The motivation for visiting seems to be the most important factor here.

For detailed information, see [Appendage 2](#)
Public Research DDW 2019 - *Fontys, Journalism and Innovation Lectorate, Tilburg.*

Change and attribution

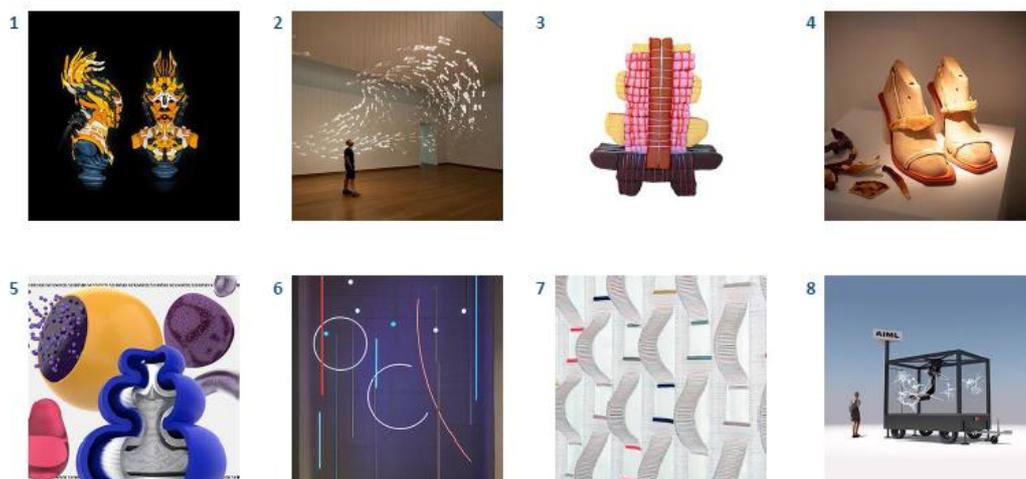
Impact research looks at a *change* in a person's life. This is difficult to determine on the basis of interviews. The large number of respondents at DDW from comparable groups of visitors who were interviewed prior to, during and after their visit allows us to make reliable statements about this, as well as about the attribution of this change due to their visit to DDW.

The diagram below shows the change caused by the visit to DDW. What is striking is that the main reason for the visit shifts: 'spotting new trends' and 'learning more about design' score much lower before than after the visit. While the 'nice day out' reason for visit decreases during and after visiting.



Whether this change is 'permanent' and these visitors will come to DDW next year with different expectations is of interest and we could investigate this during the next edition of DDW.

It is obvious that what DDW offers has an impact on visitors. That this cannot always be determined can be explained by the relatively small number of objects shown in the survey (eight) compared to the sheer volume on show at DDW. Additionally, they are not presented in these categories but mixed. Apparently, seeing a handful of iconic objects is not enough to leave a lasting impression. The large number of objects or projects may cloud the results.



The eight images of objects that exemplify a category from the Design Motives Framework.

Effects

All the statements enquiring about the effects of a visit to DDW were assessed positively. The effects 'made to think' and 'fun day out' scored highest, 'a feeling of connectedness with other visitors' lowest. The positive statements are in line with the relatively high *Motify Experience Value*.

Design Motives Framework

What is striking is that visitors did not recognise the use of the Design Motives Framework by DDW curators to categorise the huge volume of exhibits (in the four design perspectives *Speculative, Innovative, Artistic, Creative*), nor can it be traced back to any of the answers. As a model for segmenting visitors, it is therefore, at least on the basis of this research, of only limited use for this purpose. Segmentation according to interest in design disciplines (*art, interior, craft, technology, food, bio, etc.*) seems a more obvious choice.

Profiles and personas

On the basis of analysis (coding) of the semi-structured interviews, five visitor profiles were compiled. They can be described in terms of design competence, visit motivation and interests. These are:

1. **Annemieke** (40+), Amsterdam, gallery director. DDW is a given in Annemieke's diary. As director of an art and design gallery in Amsterdam, she uses the week to spot trends. To maximise the effectiveness of her visit, she searches the DDW website in advance for interesting exhibitions. She is also inspired by tips from her network, including Alice Rawsthorn who was this year's ambassador for DDW.
2. **Mike** (26), London, designer Mike lives in London and works as a professional designer for his own studio. As a former Design Academy Eindhoven student, he visits the DDA almost every year, to see work by friends and colleagues. He also visits one or two events as standard, especially for interesting business meetings. "It is *the* moment when the design community gets together, a perfect opportunity to pitch ideas."
3. **Marlene** (55), Geleen, quit working. Shall we do DDW for the Girl's Day Out this year? Marleen and friends organise a day out every quarter; they usually opt for cultural activities. This month the choice fell on DDW and they may well come back again; there is a lot to see and the food is very tasty. Although it's very busy and there are long walks to all the locations. They will be better prepared next time they visit.
4. **Ellen** (35+) Eindhoven; talent scout for a big company. Spotting gems, that is what Ellen comes to do. DDW is the perfect opportunity for spotting young talent from technical or design schools for the company she works for. She usually hunts alone at the beginning of the week and returns later with colleagues. She visits the graduation show and the Klokgebouw as standard. She collects business cards and distributes her own everywhere she goes.
5. **Bart** (40), journalist Bart lives in Eindhoven (Sintebuurt) and has witnessed his neighbourhood transform into a fairground during the autumn holidays for many years. He does not visit DDW every year, but this year there were a lot of interesting things in his field. He prepared thoroughly, reading reviews, consulting the DDW website and also asked colleagues.

Reflection

- We see that types 1, 2, 4 and 5 have a high degree of design competence, which is evident from the fact that they mention clear motives for visiting DDW, do so regularly, have thoroughly prepared their visit and are able to recognise and apply materials well.
- We see that type 1 and type 2, the design professionals, visit DDW to gain inspiration, to be fed with new design knowledge and to maintain their network of relations, while type 3 and type 5 mainly have a nice day out but possibly also involve colleagues.
- We see that the respondents mention themes such as circular and social design with striking regularity in the interviews. Given that these themes receive explicit attention with

the themed design routes and the design embassies, we can cautiously claim that these curated sections result in a better understanding of these themes by visitors.

5. Visitors, appreciation and economic impact

Not investigated within the framework of this study, but certainly related, is visitor appreciation and the economic impact of DDW. Below is a summary of previous research results.

Appreciation

Until last year, visitor satisfaction was measured using the *Net Promoter Score* (NPS). A version suitable for use on small screens (tablets) the *Motify Experience Value* (Du: Motify Belevingswaarde, MBW), has recently been developed.

In 2018 DDW achieved an NPS score of +38.7. This is comparable to the MBW score of +59.0 measured in 2019. This is not only positive, but also relatively high. Based on previous research by *Dynamic Concepts Consultancy* it appears that a score of +59.0 is comparable to, or even more positive than popular day-trip destinations that have a relatively high experience intensity (usually between +40 and +60).

Economic impact

Commissioned by *Dynamic Concepts Consultancy*, Dr. Jeroen Klijs of the *Breda University of Applied Sciences* researched the economic impact of DDW on the surrounding area, in this case the municipality of Eindhoven, in 2017. The structure and scope of DDW has not changed substantially over the past year compared to 2017, so we can assume that the main conclusions are also applicable to this year's edition.

Visitor spending was investigated on all levels. For the economic impact, only the *additional visitors*, i.e. visitors from outside Eindhoven, who came to Eindhoven for DDW or who stayed in Eindhoven longer than planned because of the event, were taken into account. This is more than half. Eindhoven residents would have spent money on other things if DDW had not taken place. So it is the expenditure from people who came to Eindhoven especially for DDW that can be attributed to DDW.

The total impact, the added value for the municipality of Eindhoven's economy, amounts to 9.6 million euros.

6. Conclusions and follow-up

Conclusions we can draw on the basis of this research:

- The impact targets that DDW sets for itself are largely achieved. The majority of visitors experience a sense of beauty, are motivated to consider more conscious social behaviour and increase their design competence;
- A specific relationship between these goals and what DDW offers has been demonstrated, with the exception of the experienced beauty, which is so general that it applies to everyone in roughly equal measure;
- The chosen indicators and categorisation are comparatively suitable for steering this relationship. However, DDW's Design Motives Framework cannot be used for the segmentation of visitors. The reasons for visiting, preference for design disciplines and - to a lesser extent - the recollections of what the visitors have seen are more useful;
- Due to the size and diversity of DDW, it is difficult to investigate the effects of individual works;
- It is possible to guide visitors with specific recommendations based on visitor characteristics and exhibit categories - although it is more obvious to limit this to groups/categories of people and exhibits.

Based on the research, sufficient information has been collected for conducting follow-up research during the next edition, in particular with respect to guiding visitors. We could investigate the effects of this on the basis of a defined group of visitors who received recommendations versus (the same categories of) visitors who did not receive recommendations.

7. Appendages

Impact Study DDW 2019 - *Dynamic Concepts Consultancy, Eindhoven.*

Public Research DDW 2019 - *Fontys, Lectoraat Journalistiek en Innovatie, Tilburg.*

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