

UNEASY PARTNERSHIP: COMPUTING AND DESIGN (ACADIA)

Moderator: Carmina Sanchez, Hampton University

Panelists:

NANCY CHENG
University of Oregon

ANAT GEVA
Texas A&M University

BRANKO KOLAREVIC
University of Pennsylvania

Digital technology has swept into architectural teaching and practice with great force, but few unquestionable benefits beyond drawing productivity. Firms and schools see budgets for information technology continuously expanding and watch as lunchtime discussions of architecture are displaced by discussions of CAD tools. At the same time, digital tools have brought access to information, people, and experiences that were not previously available. As designers, studio faculty, teachers, and researchers intimately involved in the "digital revolution," members of the Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture (ACADIA) have had unique opportunities to use, explore and understand the changes.

This session's papers and panel discussion reflect on the changes, opportunities, best practices, and limitations of this phase of the digital revolution in architecture, as computers move from drafting to design.

Drawing from her experience teaching digital design courses, Nancy Y. Cheng makes a detailed assessment of the efforts to define content focus and delivery techniques. She observes a successful digital design is well integrated into its curricular context. The major challenges that must be addressed are responding to different skill levels within one class, efficiently providing individual assistance, and overcoming equipment impediments.

Anat Geva analyzes the teaching of a History of Building Technology survey course, which utilizes both a traditional lecture format and a class web site providing access to all the images presented in class. Student response to the course format has been positive. However, there is as yet, not enough data to determine if this way of teaching can improve students' comprehension and retention of the course content.

Branko Kolarevic discusses approaches in contemporary architecture that use digital media as a generative tool for the derivation of form and its transformation. He demonstrates how these digitally driven processes are opening new possibilities for architectural design and construction. Kolarevic argues the success of these processes is dependent on the designer's perceptual and cognitive abilities to interpret and manipulate computational constructs.