

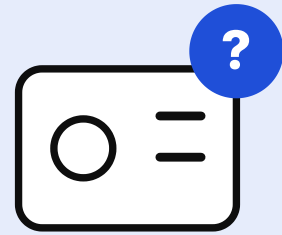
Specialty

Critical design

Uses design to question the assumptions behind products and technology: objects that provoke reflection instead of solving a problem or selling.

In Spanish
Diseño crítico

Origin
Dunne (1999); Dunne and Raby (2001)



What problem it addresses

Almost all design accepts the world as it is; it rarely asks whether it should be that way.

Principles

Ask questions

The object is for thinking, not for using.

Make people uncomfortable

It shows the effects that commercial design hides.

Be believable

Real enough for the critique to work.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Create an object that makes a technology's assumption visible and use it to open the debate before it is taken for granted.

✗ Avoid

Confusing it with making strange objects with no question behind them.

👁 Don't fall for it

Explain the context: without it, the critique is taken for a joke or a product.

Connections

Related to

■ Speculative design

■ Cultural probes

Authors and works

1999	Anthony Dunne	Coined the term in Hertzian Tales, studying electronic objects.
2001	Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby	Developed it with objects that reveal the hidden life of technology in Design Noir.

Sources

Original sources

- Dunne, A. (1999). Hertzian tales: Electronic products, aesthetic experience and critical design. RCA CRD Research Publications.
- Dunne, A., & Raby, F. (2001). Design noir: The secret life of electronic objects. Birkhäuser.

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