

**DESIGNERS MANAGING TECHNOLOGY**

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**ABSTRACT**

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*In 1993 an undergraduate programme at Loughborough College of Art and Design [UK] in 'Embroidery' changed its name and broadened its curriculum to 'Multi-Media Textile Design'. Student's continued to employ traditional textile processes but were also encouraged to explore unconventional materials, emerging technologies and exploit processes from other disciplines. The results are often extraordinary. The design concepts produced have won many awards and have often been taken up by commerce and industry, however, as a result of taking unconventional approaches, there have often been problems in creating artifacts that would translate into replicable manufacture.*

*In 1998 the College merged with Loughborough University, well known for its comprehensive technological resources and expertise. Cross campus collaboration and the establishment of a graduate programme has produced new opportunities for textile design research students exploring emerging technologies. Their experiences are helping to establish the methodologies that are required to achieve the requisite understanding and skills to produce innovative textile products in the future.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

To combine innovation and creativity with new materials and processes is a way for designers to create products that are a pleasure to the senses; meet the functional requirements needed in a changing world; are economical and environmentally friendly in production; and enhance emotional and intellectual pleasure. Or as Jack Lenor

Larsen once said 'We need something around us in our lives to nourish our souls' - textiles appear to be rather good at this.

Since the end of World War II the field of textiles has struggled to meet the industrial and commercial challenges that globalisation, and a changing infrastructure for both manufacture and consumer behaviour have demanded. In a symposium