

ECODESIGN IN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CONSULTANCIES – COMPARING AUSTRALIA, CHINA, GERMANY AND THE USA

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Abstract: This paper presents the results of an empirical study, investigating the uptake of ecodesign by industrial design consultancies (ID consultancies) in Australia, China, Germany and the USA.

There still appears to be no widespread uptake of ecodesign into product development praxis by industrial designers, with most ecodesign activity focusing on the engineering phase. Especially seldom are the necessary radical interventions to significantly improve the environmental performance of products. The literature review revealed that ID consultancies might be in a position to improve this situation. This paper presents the findings of a website content analysis, investigating the extent of ecodesign uptake by ID consultancies in Australia, China, Germany and the US.

The paper verifies that ID consultancies have a high potential to improve ecodesign uptake by using their influence especially on early phases of the product development process and by addressing also non engineering related issues for ecodesign. This potential does not appear to be fully embraced yet.

Keywords: USA; INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CONSULTANCIES; GERMANY; ECODESIGN PRACTICE; CHINA; AUSTRALIA