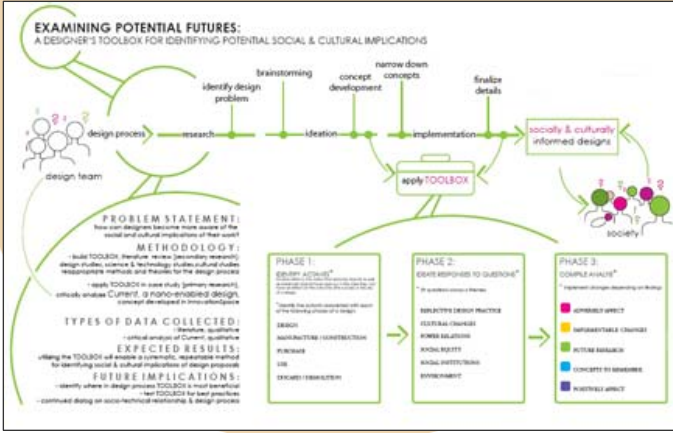


InnovationSpace and CriticalCorps Challenge Nanotechnology Designers

InnovationSpace at Arizona State University is a transdisciplinary program in which teams of design, engineering and business students develop Innovation Proposals that include a product design concept, business/marketing plan, engineering feasibility assessment and communication strategy. CNS-ASU sponsors three teams to visualize how futuristic nanotechnology product scenes can translate into usable products. Teams must critically examine how people's everyday lives could change because of nanotechnologies. In this process they are supported by CriticalCorps, an interdisciplinary group of researchers and educators who use critical and cultural theory as a means to understand the social significance of the designed environment. Together, InnovationSpace, CriticalCorps and CNS-ASU examine the role that designers and users both play in assimilating nanotechnology into the objects, images, and spaces of everyday life.

In the 2007-2008 academic year, three teams visualized socially beneficial opportunities for nanotechnology in the areas of human health and enhancement. The resulting product ideas were: a hand-held device that can scan text and instantly convert it into Braille on a haptic screen that forms itself into the tactile shapes; a device with a computer screen on which cancer patients can observe their own healing process as nanodevices eradicate malignant cells; and a fusion between a cast and a brace made out of polymer material grafted with "molecular switches" that change rigidity when exposed to a certain wavelength of light controlled by the doctor. InnovationSpace has submitted invention disclosures for these three products to Arizona Technology Enterprises.



CNS-CriticalCorps research assistant Shannon Lidberg recently successfully defended her master's thesis, which involved creating a designer's toolbox for identifying potential social and cultural implications of designs.

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