TEACHING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN INDUSTRIAL/PRODUCT DESIGN COURSES IN PORTUGAL

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In full 21st century and living in a digital age, technology advancements have led to the development and use of digital media for execution of product design projects. It starts on education and training, with student’s familiarity with the tools and methods of computer aided design (CAD). Believing that the level of digital technologies knowledge to design and representation is one of the basic requirements to get a position, and sometimes it makes the difference in choice requisites, this study presents the results of a critical diagnosis about the presence of informatics contents applied to design in the academic curricula of industrial/product design in Portugal. As part of a PhD research focused on product design curricula’s adequacy to business challenges, this study aims to demonstrate how important is to keep up the rapid technological development, increasing the professional perspectives for design students. Editing/treatment of image and sound, printing technologies and multimedia communication are some of the significant contents covered by those courses. Based on the gathering and interpretation of several portuguese design education curricula (undergraduation and master degrees), it turns out that the introduction of the principles and practices of digital tools and methods are early transmitted in the education process, specially on undergraduate courses, contributing to better preparation of the design students to the market and its demands and challenges.