

RESEARCH THEME

XXXVIII cycle – a.y. 2022/2023

Title of the doctoral research Design For Meaning Framework For Autonomous Vehicles

Proponent professor Marco Ajovalasit

Abstract

The emerging field of autonomous mobility is characterised by technological challenges (AI, mapping, guidance systems and roadway infrastructure) and human centred design challenges (ergonomics, inclusivity and ethics). While substantial resources are currently being dedicated to progressing the technical tools, less effort is being made to identify the human centred design parameters.

The proposed research will address matters which lie within the human centred design space, with particular focus on the issue of meaning. There is currently little information available to designers which clarifies what is meaningful to people in relation to autonomous mobility, and even less information regarding how those meanings translate into values which can be designed for.

The research will build upon a preliminary framework of “design for meaning” which was established by Giacomini (2017) and further developed by Ajovalasit and Giacomini (2019), applying a three-category-model to examples of autonomous mobility and then using the findings to expand the approach into a design tool. The research will produce valuable empirical data relative to how the public views autonomous mobility systems, and will define new categories of meaning which are specific to autonomous mobility systems. The empirical data and the new categories of meaning will be brought together in the form of a design tool (framework or canvas).

Keywords Human-centred design, mobility, innovation