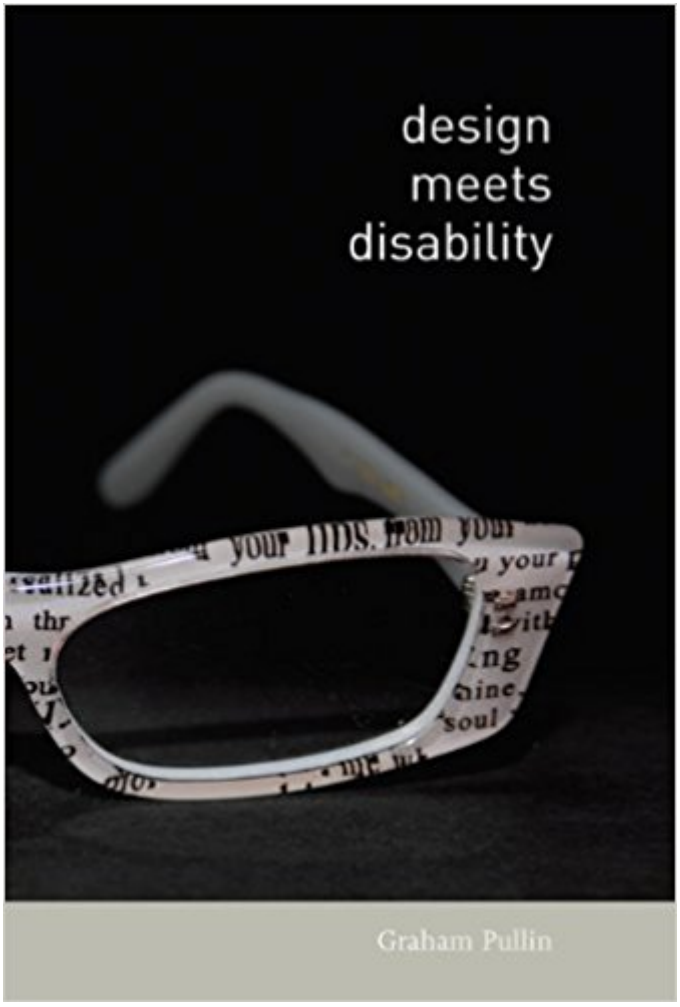
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Design Meets Disability (MIT Press)



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Synopsis

Eyeglasses have been transformed from medical necessity to fashion accessory. This revolution has come about through embracing the design culture of the fashion industry. Why shouldn't design sensibilities also be applied to hearing aids, prosthetic limbs, and communication aids? In return, disability can provoke radical new directions in mainstream design. Charles and Ray Eames's iconic furniture was inspired by a molded plywood leg splint that they designed for injured and disabled servicemen. Designers today could be similarly inspired by disability. In Design Meets Disability, Graham Pullin shows us how design and disability can inspire each other. In the Eameses' work there was a healthy tension between cut-to-the-chase problem solving and more playful explorations. Pullin offers examples of how design can meet disability today. Why, he asks, shouldn't hearing aids be as fashionable as eyewear? What new forms of braille signage might proliferate if designers kept both sighted and visually impaired people in mind? Can simple designs avoid the need for complicated accessibility features? Can such emerging design methods as "experience prototyping" and "critical design" complement clinical trials? Pullin also presents a series of interviews with leading designers about specific disability design projects, including stepstools for people with restricted growth, prosthetic legs (and whether they can be both honest and beautifully designed), and text-to-speech technology with tone of voice. When design meets disability, the diversity of complementary, even contradictory, approaches can enrich each field.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There is huge potential for innovation in the daily lives of disabled people. Graham Pullin’s timely and inspiring book describes a wide range of design challenges; many of these sound niche at first but have broad potential. What are needed are off-the-wall thinking, design craft, and engineering brilliance -- plus disabled people as expert co-designers. (John Thackara, Designer and author of In the Bubble)This book will change your emotional response to disability forever, as you discover that designs can celebrate a medical necessity, as in elegant and fashionable eyewear from Cutler and Gross, or openly express functionality, as in the carbon fiber running legs sported by Aimee Mullins. Graham Pullin creates this change with seven chapters that are rich with examples and luscious images, combining deep thinking with a light touch. In the second half of the book he presents us with a fascinating collection of his favorite designers, leaving us yearning for the meetings between design and disability that such rich talent might generate, given the opportunity. (Bill Moggridge, Cofounder of IDEO and author of Designing Interactions)As a teacher of design through the lens of disability, Graham Pullin is without peer. (Hugh M. Herr, MIT Media Lab) Design Meets Disability may be compared to Donald Norman’s (1988) Psychology of Everyday Things, which showed how research in cognitive psychology can inform commercial design. Similarly, Design Meets Disability explains how commercial design principles can be used to make more personally identifiable and valuable assistive technologies. As important as Norman’s book was to technology design, Design Meets Disability could have a similar impact within the AT field. (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)The book... acts as a manifesto by condemning many of the existing products designed for people with disabilities, and challenging designers to use their skills to develop inspiring alternatives. (The New York Times)

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This book does an excellent job illustrating the intersection of design, innovation, and disability. Having come from a disability and innovation background, I still learned an incredible amount about the development of common products we rely on every day. Not only is this book beautifully designed itself, it should be required reading and a permanent fixture on the bookshelf of every designer and innovator.

With persuasive and well-chosen examples, Pullin encourages more than designing to

accommodate people of all ages and abilities - though this in itself is an important and challenging mission. Pullin demonstrates how the functional characteristics of disabilities offer designers new opportunities for design innovation. A must-read for professional designers and anyone interested in design for people of all ages and abilities.

Fascinating read.

Read as part of a Design and Disability course, though the book was very interesting, and would have been great as a casual read not aligned with any particular course.The author expressed their opinion that lessons learned by designers in the field of general design can assist in creating assistive technology, though the goals of the two industries (general design/assistive technology) may not seem to overlap much at first. Each chapter was a different comparison of two sets of "values" from the two industries, and how general design values could be applied towards developing assistive technology products. Book ends with some case studies of designers creating assistive technology.Great read for designers and engineers, in addition to anyone curious about assistive technology at all!

ordered for class, terrible choose by the faculty. the whole book to me is like a graduate student's research paper, oh Pullin was an art graduate student. You know what a art student research paper looks like, full book of gathered useless information towards his goal. Although i do think we should put emphasis on experience rather than solution, it just washed away as you read across the book, in the end it is a long insensitive thing, boring to finish reading it, though i make it to end. And, yh, i hate it because an undergraduate can do better than this.

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