John Thackara as a speaker

http://www.thackara.com/

Power Laws Of Innovation
"A new product is launched every 3.5 minutes. Is that rate of change sustainable for a business, or an economy? I don't think so. So what are the alternatives?"

Five points
Director of the celebrated Doors of Perception conference
Programme Director of the Designs of the times (Dott07) biennial
A renowned design and innovation producer
John is the ideal big-picture keynote speaker.
John is also in demand as a chair for events; audiences love his no-nonsense question-and-answer interviews with speakers

Testimonials
"John Thackara has established a global reputation as a cutting-edge design expert"
Wall Street Journal

"brilliant insights into the internet and sustainability"
Economic Times of India

"a design guru, critic and business provocateur…".
Fast Company

John Thackara's latest best-seller

In the Bubble: Designing in a Complex World
We're filling up the world with technology and devices, but we've lost sight of an important question: What is this stuff for? What value does it add to our lives? So asks author John Thackara in his new book, *In the Bubble: Designing for a Complex World.*

"*One of my best business books of the year*"
Howard Rheingold in *Strategy+Business magazine*
www.strategy-business.com

"*John Thackara's brilliant book about quotidian design describes innovation driven by social fiction instead of science fiction.*"
Paul Hawken, author (with Amory and Hunter Lovins) of *Natural Capitalism*

"*Whatever you are designing, keep this book next to you*"
Bill Moggridge, Co-founder of IDEO

"*Design with a conscience: that's the take-home message of this important, provocative book*".
Don Norman, author of *Emotional Design*

"*I eagerly devoured every last page of John Thackara's lofty, captivating book, up to and including his wry footnotes and that superb bibliography.*"
Bruce Sterling, author of *The Hacker Crackdown* and *Tomorrow Now: Envisioning the Next Fifty Years*
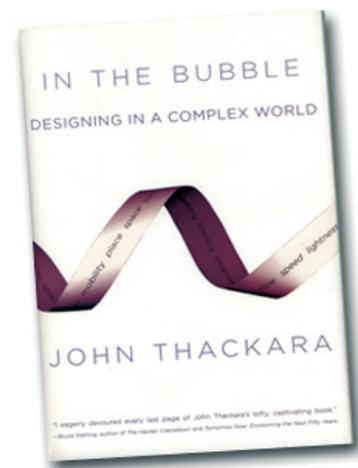
HIS PREVIOUS BEST-SELLER

Winners!
How Todays Successful Companies Innovate by Design

What are the driving forces that prompt small companies to develop new products and services ? And how do these companies use design to innovate? WINNERS! focusses on the why of innovation and the how of design.

At the centre of WINNERS! are real-life examples - successful small businesses that use design to innovate in the new economy. WINNERS! is more about knowledge-sharing among managers, than about experts telling them what to do.

"fascinating...best practice as the smartest way to beat the competition"
FINANCIAL TIMES (lead review)

"a major achievement...stories of innovation, shining examples of design effectiveness"
ID MAGAZINE USA

BACKGROUND

John Thackara is Director of Doors of Perception (Doors), a design futures network with offices in France and Bangalore.

People participate in Doors who need to imagine sustainable and engaging futures - and take design steps to realize them.

Doors is the *World Economic Forum of Design*
NESTA, UK

Founded as a conference in 1993, Doors now connects together a worldwide network of paradigm-changing designers, media artists, technology innovators, and grassroots innovators. Their aim is to learn how to design services, some of them enabled by information technology, that meet basic needs in new ways.

John Thackara also helps cities and regions build next-generation research and teaching institutions. These enable designers, other specialists, and citizens, to learn together in new ways.

A former journalist and publisher, John was the first Director (1993-1999) of the Netherlands Design Institute. He is a member of the Virtual Platform, a club of research institutes which advises the Dutch government.

He also sits on expert groups advising the European Commission on its innovation policy. He was expert advisor to the Hong Kong Design Task Force. And he was responsible for vision building in Convivio, the EU network for social computing.

John is a Fellow of the social innovation incubator, The Young Foundation, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and is Programme Director of Designs of the time (Dott07), a new biennial that launches in the UK in 2007.
http://www.dott07.com

LECTURE TOPICS FOR 2006-2007

"When people talk about innovation in this decade, they really mean design".
BRUCE NUSSBAUM in Business Week

1. Power Laws Of Innovation
"A new product is launched every 3.5 minutes. Is that rate of change sustainable for a business, or an economy? I don't think so. So what are the alternatives?"

2. From Science Fiction To Social Fiction
"How might we design a world in which we rely less on "tech" - and more on people? A transition is under way from innovation driven by science fiction, to innovation inspired by social fiction".

3. Design Vision
"We're filling the world with amazing devices, but we cannot answer the most important question: What is the stuff really for? It's no longer clear to which question all this stuff—tech—is an answer, or what value it adds to our lives.

Interview with John Thackara

by Dagmar O'Toole

Q: John: explain what you mean by our "new times".

A: We're filling up the world with amazing devices and systems—on top of the natural and human ones that were already here. But we've lost sight of an important question: what is this stuff for? What value does it add to our lives? The key question of these new times is this: How might we design a world in which we rely less on "tech" - and more on people? For me, the time to ask what it's for is before we deploy it - not after.

Q: Are you anti-technology, then?

A: I'm pro-tech - but anti tech-push. We cannot stop tech, and there's no reason why we should. Things like airplanes and artificial hearts are handy when you need them. But we have to change the innovation agenda so that the interests iof people come before the interests of tech-pushers. And that's what's happening now. We are regaining appreciation and respect for what people can do that tech can't.

Q: So it's back to nature and hairy shirts?

A: No way! One of my key point is that respect for people can inform design decisions without impeding social and technical innovation.
Besides, technology has a crucial role to play as we move to a sustainable economy. The most important impact of wireless communications, for example, will be on the resource ecologies of cities. Connecting people, resources, and places to each other in new combinations, on a real-time basis, has the potential to reduce drastically the amount of hardware—from gadgets to buildings—that we need to function effectively.

Q: Some of the assertions you make in your lectures don't seem to be backed up by scientific evidence – or any evidence at all.

A: Are you by any chance referring to "Thackara's Law"? It's true, I just made it up. My law states: "If you put smart technology into a pointless product, the result will be a stupid product". So I did no research or experiments. But tell me, do you think my law is untrue? The same goes for Thackara's Second Law, which I also made up. (It's also called the "Law Of Diminishing Amazement".)

It says: "the more gadgets you cram into a simple product, the harder it will be to impress people, let alone to get them to pay a heap of money for it". Am I wrong about that? I don't think so.

Q: You often talk about about health and care as an innovation challenge. What do you mean?

A: Health spending is out of control and will get worse unless we change the question. The average person with diabetes spends about three hours a year with doctors, checking prescriptions and general health. That same person spends thousands of hours a year self-managing their condition. The service design challenge is this: how can we support them better?

Q: You also talk about time as a design opportunity?

A: Most of us pass many hours a week waiting for things to happen: waiting to see the doctor, waiting for a bus to arrive, or waiting for a package to be delivered. Waiting occurs when our personal time schedules do not coincide with the schedules of the people and services with whom and with which we interact.By connecting people to critical time-based information, the service supports flexible time planning according to personal needs. By accessing data in real time, the system delivers accurate information about when and where a desired service might be available.

Q: How else do we get to live more lightly?

A: The average power drill is used for ten minutes in its entire life. Most of us are potentially both users and suppliers of resources. With networked communications we can access and use everything from a car, to a portable drill, only when we need it. Combinations of demand-responsive services, location awareness, and what network designers call "dynamic resource allocation", have the potential to reduce drastically the amount of hardware that we need to function.

Testimonials

In the Press

"a business provocateur…."
Fast Company (Usa)
http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/36/ifaqs.html

"has established a global reputation as a cutting edge design expert"
Wall Street Journal

"a wired era visionary…."
San Francisco Chronicle (Usa)
http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/05/22/RVGA6CO6NC1.DTL

"(insights on) innovation that contributes to Europe's new identity"
Le Monde, France

In the Conference Hall

"John Thackara was an excellent choice…he combined a deep knowledge of the subject with a relaxed and entertaining style that gripped and entertained our large international audience"
paul desruelle, european commission, Information Society Technologies Conference Helsinki

"I found his opening plenary to be not only the most thoughtful but also the most useful and practical plenary I've seen at many conferences…"
brad weed, Microsoft

"83%"
Percentage of delegates who found Doors of Perception 7 to be "inspiring" or "very interesting"
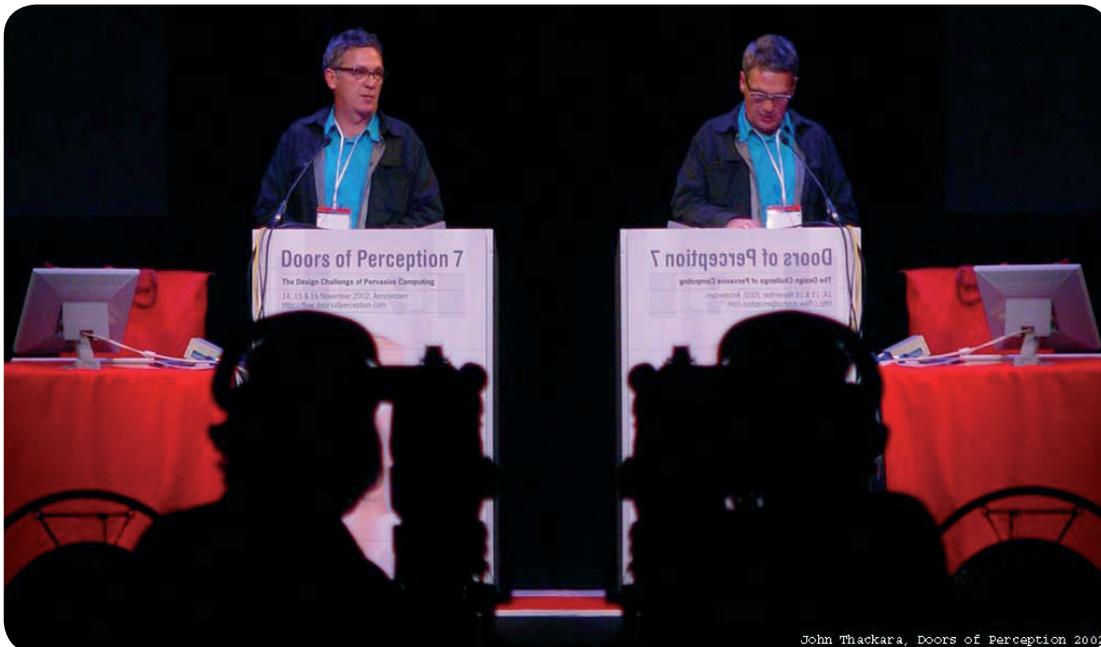
John Thackara, Doors of Perception 2002

In the Blogosphere

"… top dog in the space of flows"
rhizome (usa)
http://www.heise.de/tp/english/inhalt/konf/4421/1.html

"resets the bottom line for design intelligence."
klooij (netherlands)
http://www.klooj.net/

"always provocative and intelligent..."
core77 (usa)
http://www.core77.com/chicago99/sat.html

Contact Details

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