

## Design for Wellbeing, Happiness and Health

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## Design for Wellbeing, Happiness and Health

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## Editorial:

# Design for wellbeing, happiness, and health

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## 1. Introduction

More than 2 years ago, Covid-19 penetrated our societies, economies and health care systems, impacting our health, our wellbeing and our lives. Since the end of February 2022, a war started in Ukraine, impacting again our societies, economies, and people all over the world. Wellbeing, Happiness and Health are precious in these challenging times and are more pertinent than ever.

SIGWELL is the Design Research Society's Special Interest Group (SIG) focusing on Design for Wellbeing, Happiness and Health. The SIGWELL community has an interest in advancing knowledge with the development and application of design research in the broadest sense to improve the wellbeing, happiness and personal and societal health of people. After careful selection through a double-blinded peer review process conducted by an international review panel, eleven conference papers were accepted, each linking to our SIG's key themes and issues as well as to the DRS 2022 conference themes.

## 2. Design for Wellbeing papers at DRS 2022

With the call for papers for DRS 2022, we noticed a particular focus on topics relating to wellbeing and happiness. Inspired by the ongoing challenge regarding the construction of ev-



idence-based research to demonstrate specifically how design (of products, services, systems or environments) affects people's wellbeing, a **diversity of topics** emerged in the submitted papers. Examples of accepted papers demonstrate the depth and breadth of this diversity.

Park & Kim (2022) elaborate a case study of a comprehensive design process of a medicalized wellness service clinic design project, to discuss how design can support wellness services. Salaric et al.'s study (2022) explores potential connections between the interaction design of a selection of dating applications, user interactions and user experiences. They posit that the way applications are built and influence behavior and foster communication can be crucial, not just for romance, but also for overall users' health and wellbeing. Kopanoglu et al.'s paper (2022) elaborates how design can facilitate patient empowerment, in particular for people living with a chronic condition and their healthcare providers. Stevens' paper (2022) focuses on a completely different yet pertinent, target group of design interventions: pupils of K-8 schools. Kim et al. (2022) discuss nature and wellbeing, how nature experiences induce relaxation, and what qualities of nature stimuli induce relaxation.

Different contributions within SIGWELL have a technology-oriented focus. This focus ranged from Lin & Luo's study (2022) that examines the influences of using emoji in health information on receivers' risk perceptions and preventive behaviors. Five papers aim to foster design for wellbeing via particular tools and technologies. Overdijk et al. (2022) investigate people's preferred ways of mood tracking and how tangible interactions with a potential prototype can support these preferences. Faulk et al. (2022) explore how interaction design using directional ambiguity can support subjective well-being by encouraging a search for positive behaviors that suit users' resources, goals and preferences as users are free to choose their own positive behaviors. Hermsen (2022) reports on the improvement of an existing mobile app to better support at-risk groups with healthy nutrition. Javadi et al. (2022) explore if VR and AR technologies can be used to help people cope with anxiety associated with a surgical procedure. Lusi et al. (2022) elaborate about designing compassion-based technological interventions so the process of designing compassionate technology for healthcare and wellbeing can be further explored.

With the broad diversity regarding topics within SIGWELL, the papers also demonstrate how **Covid-19 made designers re-think ways-of-doing things**, or inspired them in a particular way. Some examples include Hermsen (2022), who discusses a design cycle that was set up to improve an existing mobile app to better support particular at-risk groups of people with regards to healthy nutrition and healthy eating, a risk that has been extra triggered certainly since the start of Covid-19. The paper of Lin & Luo (2022) indicate that since the onset of Covid-19, the information communication generated along with the pandemic can be labelled as an 'infodemic'. This also impacted their research, in the sense that they were inspired by the tactical use of visual communication design – emojis – to improve the quality of health communication and reduce impacts caused by information communication barriers.

**Covid-19 impacted** on the way research could be performed **methodologically**, instigating that particular collaborations happened with a sample of university students, in an online way, in one-to-one contacts, and so on. Researchers demonstrated their flexibility both from an academic research point-of-view, as well as from a very practical point-of-view.

Lastly, various SIGWELL papers have a particular **focus on precious target groups, implying ethical implications** on design for wellbeing projects. Some examples include Stevens' paper (2022) that discusses design for human flourishing of K-8 school children. It explores how a qualitative approach can develop insights into their wellbeing, and how such approach can lead to a novel type of design brief that can instigate design interventions that both trigger and uplift wellbeing in school environments. In another example, Salaric et al.'s work (2022) explores the use of dating applications, and Kopanoglu et al.'s paper (2022) discusses experiences of patients living with chronic conditions and their healthcare providers.

### **3. Reflections on the future**

The papers accepted for the SIGWELL tracks at DRS 2022 show a growing attention to the contribution of technology as a means to improve personal or societal wellbeing, and the need to develop more evidence-based design showing links between design of products, services, systems and different kinds of environments and wellbeing of people.

Many challenges lie ahead of us in these trying times, with Covid-19 still wandering around, and the worldwide impact of the ongoing war. We can only hope that the eleven papers presented at the SIGWELL's streams at DRS 2022 inspire you to continuously investigate design for wellbeing, so our design community can grow and inspire academic research as well as practitioners now and into the future.