

MARTIN TOMITSCH STEVE BATY

DESIGNING TOMORROW

Strategic Design Tactics To Change
Your Practice, Organisation & Planetary Impact

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PART I

CHANGE

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moving downstream. But what's good for the next corporate quarter is not necessarily good for society or our planet.

As designers and decision-makers, we aspire to help people live better lives. The real benefit that we help to create, however, is in the interest of corporations and their shareholders. We are deluding ourselves if we still think that companies are investing in human-centred design to make the world a better place. We may believe we are acting on behalf of the consumer. But the consumer has become the product and human-centred design a mechanism to monetise them effectively and efficiently.



The Limits of Good Design

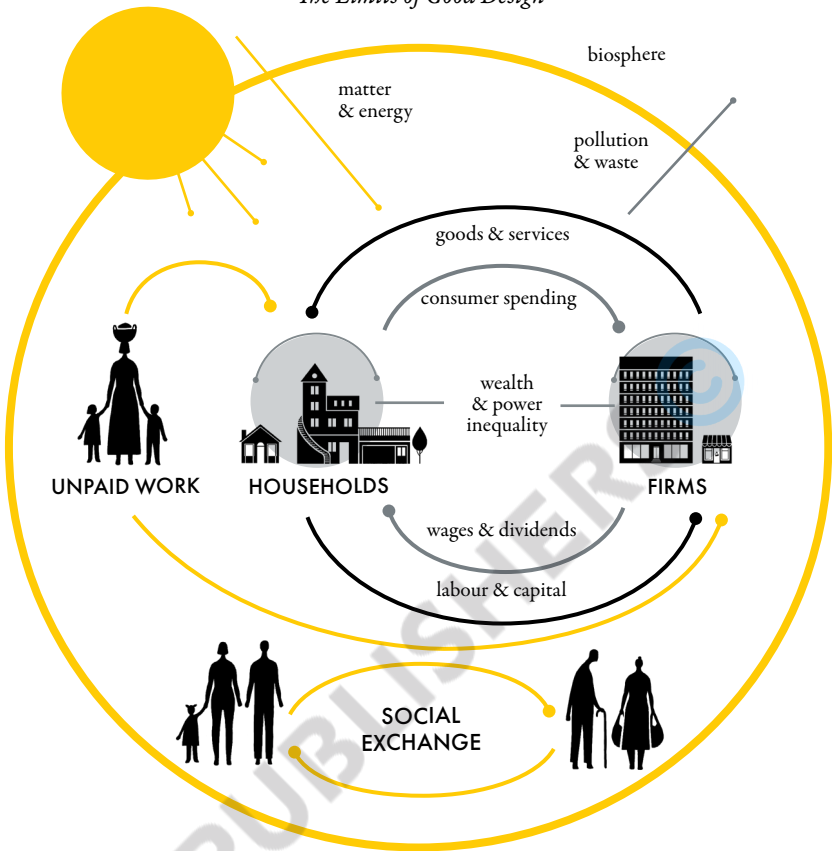


Figure 1.2: Beyond the basic flow of goods and money, economic activity is inherently linked to societies and the environment.¹⁴

What if economics didn't start with money but with human wellbeing, Raworth asks. She goes on to explain that on the one hand, human wellbeing depends on each of us having access to resources to meet our basic needs, like water, food, electricity, health care, and education, and on the other hand, it relies on the health of the planet. Design practice to date has largely supported an idealised economy that is based on the circular flow of goods and money. As designers and decision-makers,



Figure 1.3: Nine tactics to drive positive change in organisations.



During the early days of the internet, the number of users grew exponentially, but it has reached a point where more than 50 percent of the world's population is connected to the internet and the curve is flattening out. However, because of the rising number of applications and time spent online, electricity demands for operating data centres continue an exponential growth trajectory.

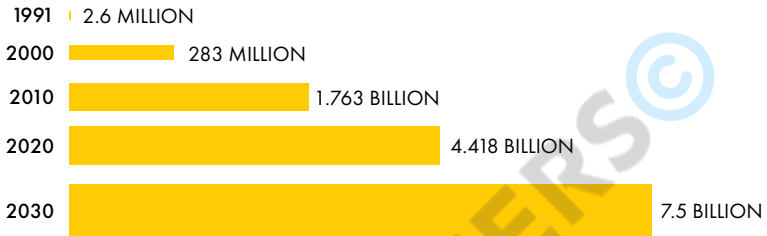


Figure 2.5: The growth of global internet users.²⁴

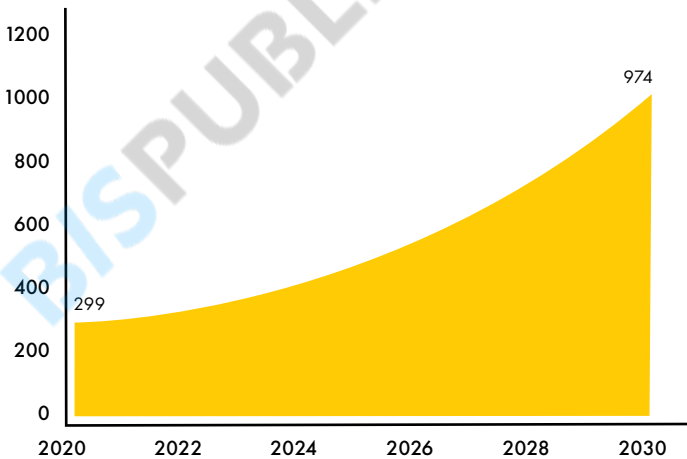
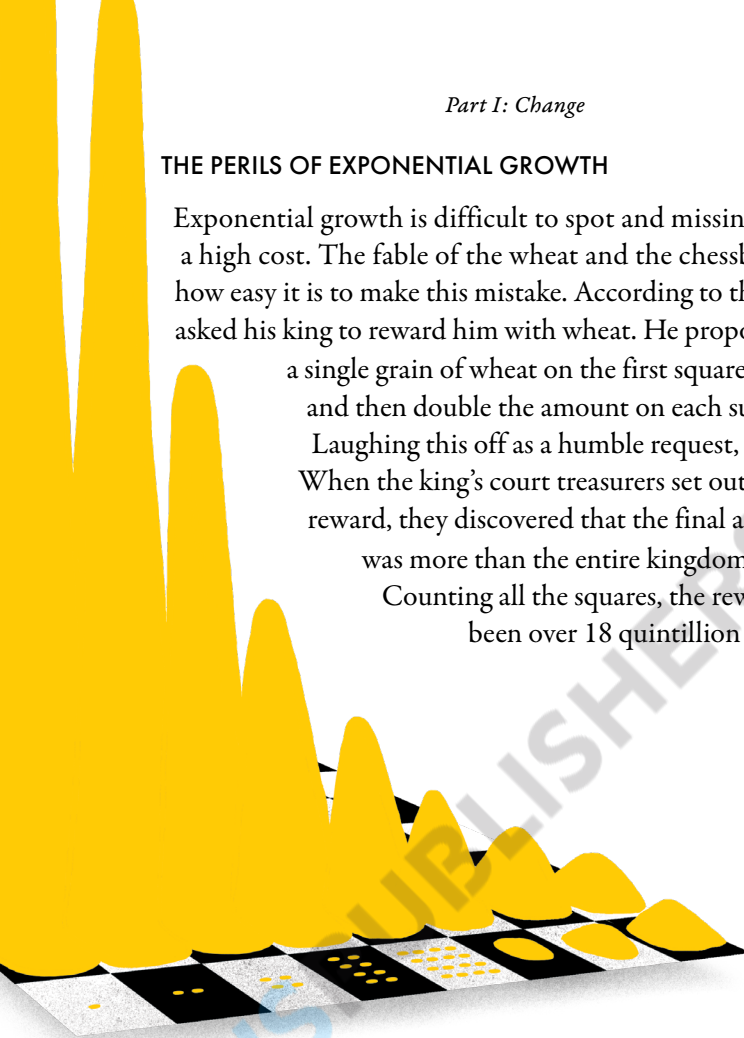


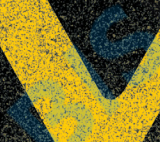
Figure 2.6: The expected electricity consumption by data centres.²⁵

THE PERILS OF EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

Exponential growth is difficult to spot and missing it can come at a high cost. The fable of the wheat and the chessboard illustrates how easy it is to make this mistake. According to the tale, a servant asked his king to reward him with wheat. He proposed payment of a single grain of wheat on the first square of a chessboard and then double the amount on each successive square. Laughing this off as a humble request, the king agreed. When the king's court treasurers set out to calculate the reward, they discovered that the final amount of wheat was more than the entire kingdom could produce. Counting all the squares, the reward would have been over 18 quintillion grains of wheat.



The king underestimated the dramatic effect of exponential growth. When COVID-19 started to spread, many countries also underestimated the impact of cases and hospitalisations increasing exponentially. Hospitals were running out of beds, and the healthcare systems of many countries collapsed under the pressure of acute cases. Recognising the threat, governments implemented strategies to ‘flatten the curve’—to break the exponential growth of infections and keep the number of hospitalisations within the capacity of the healthcare system.



Towards Responsible Innovation

LEVEL	KEY CONCERNS
1 CRAFTSMANSHIP	
Emerged from the Arts and Craft movement; focus on achieving a competitive advantage by finding more pragmatic, elegant, and cost-effective solutions to industrial procedures.	- better construction
2 DETAIL DESIGN	
Significantly shaped by the <i>Bauhaus</i> and its contribution to modernist design; marked by the transition from individualistic craftsmanship to mass production; organisations are hiring industrial and graphic designers.	- better appearance - better human factors - better performance
3 CONCEPT DESIGN	
Markets become globalised, creating international competition, and making it easier for products to be copied; accelerated through the digital transformation; organisations are acquiring experience design agencies.	- better ideas, integration, understanding, experiences and social inclusion - deeper penetration - broader consideration
4 DESIGN THINKING	
Work environments and lifeworlds become more complex; design thinking is used as a creative approach to help navigate this complexity; organisations are appointing Chief Design Officers.	- complex environments - intractable human concerns - wicked problems
5 STRATEGIC DESIGN	
Business operations are affected by global events linked to the age of the Anthropocene; strategic design is used to bridge disciplines and calibrate business goals and activities; design is integrated into the DNA of organisations.	- human health - planetary health - sustainability - security (human conflict and natural disasters)

Figure 3.1: The evolution of design as a driver for achieving a competitive advantage.⁴

10% CHANGE

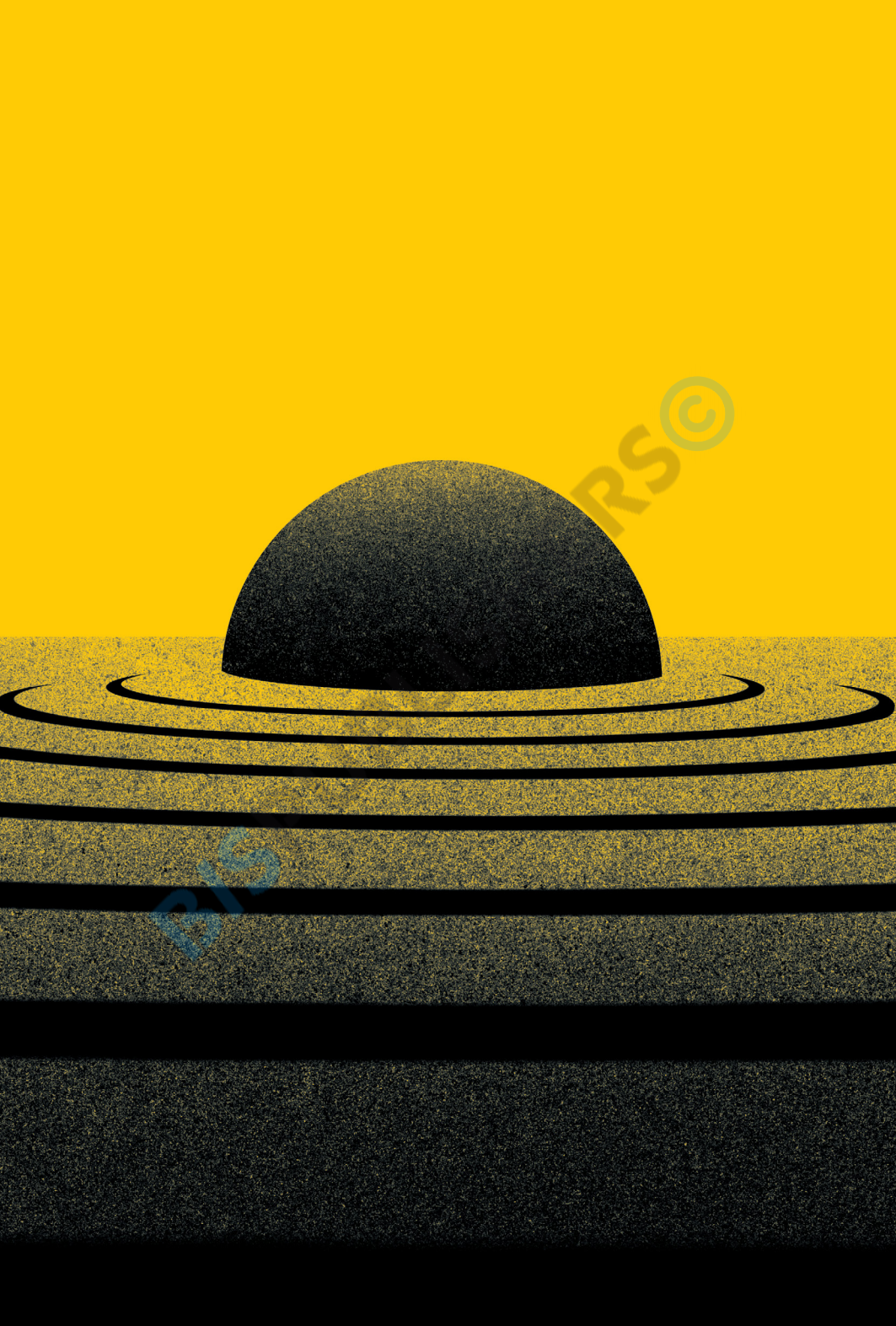
In your next project, work together with your team to create a systems map. It's beneficial to have already collected some data, but you can also research your topic area as you go. Start with a mind map as a way to ease everyone into the systems mapping process, which is cognitively demanding.

Consider questions like:

- What are the components your organisation focuses on?
- Which components are within your control? Which aren't?
- How do components affect society, communities, the wider economy, and the environment?
- What are gaps and potential biases in your map?

Use the systems map whenever you make decisions that involve complex questions or situations. Look for opportunities in your map to create interventions that positively impact both your organisation and the environment.





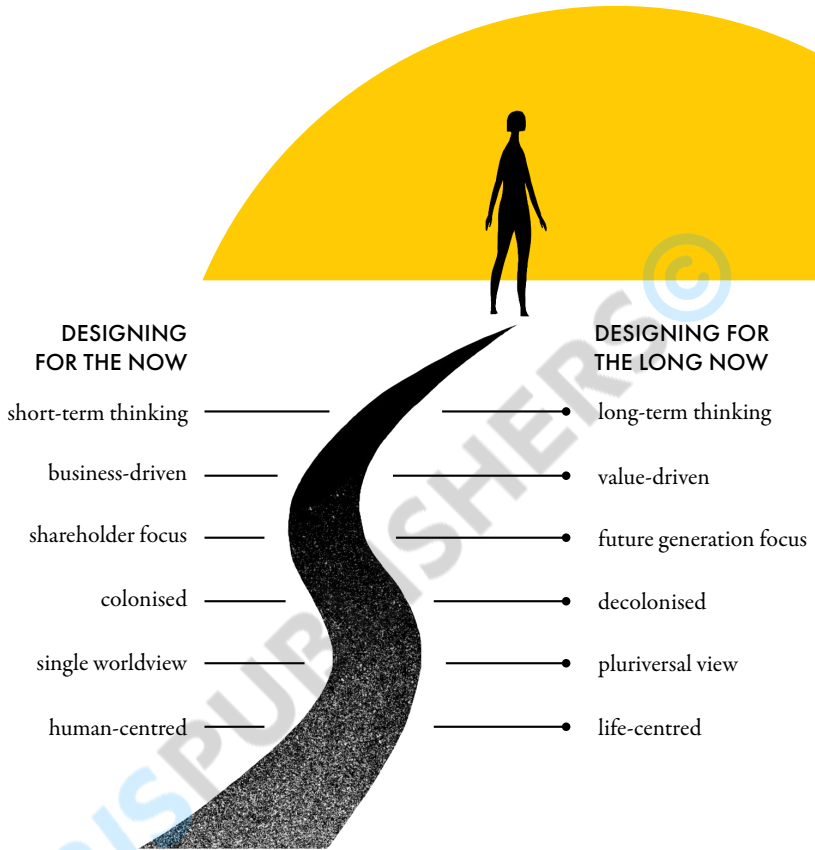
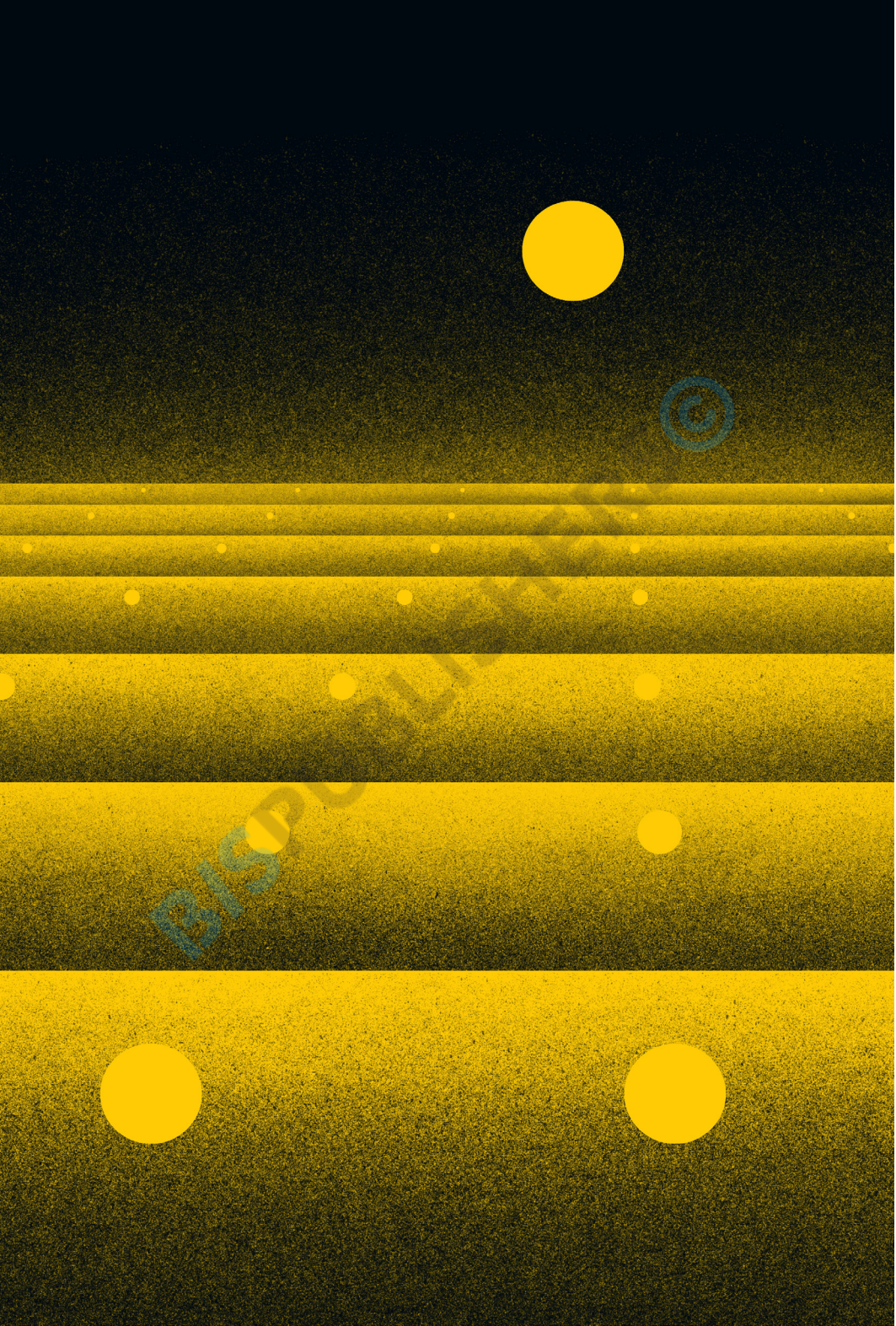


Figure 8.7: The values needed to design with future generations in mind.



Whether we work for a startup, agency, or large organisation, we constantly make decisions about what and how we design and who we involve. Driven by short-term goals, it is easy to miss how our decisions cause ripples that can negatively affect ecosystems and future generations.

Drawing on global trends, academic research, and decades of experience as designers and educators, Martin Tomitsch and Steve Baty demonstrate how we can leverage strategic design tactics to drive positive change.

Packed with case studies, tools, and strategies, the book offers a practical guide for designers, decision-makers, leaders, and anyone looking for ways to shift their planetary impact.

“Tomitsch and Baty present a clear vision for finding a middle ground, empowering you to succeed without selling your soul, compromising the planet, or burdening generations to come.”

Alan Cooper, author of *About Face* and *The Inmates Are Running the Asylum*

“Practical tactics for how to identify hidden impacts and use the power of design to develop responsible solutions within organisations.”

Babette Porcelijn, author of *The Hidden Impact* and founder of Think Big Act Now

“A call to action on understanding the limits of design and the impact of the decisions we make as designers on the lives of people and the world we live in.”

Gregory Petroff, Chief Design Officer, Cisco Secure

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