

Product Lifetimes and the Environment Conference

Editorial

We are delighted to present the proceedings of the first international conference on Product Lifetimes and the Environment (PLATE). This ground breaking event, held in Nottingham, UK, included 5 keynote presentations, 62 papers and 6 workshops. Alongside the conference was an exhibition of prototypes, objects, artefacts, posters, photographs and films, details of which are provided in a separate catalogue.

Product lifetimes have become an increasingly important element in the debate on circular economy, resource efficiency, waste reduction and low carbon strategies for sustainability. Consequently a growing body of academic researchers, companies, independent think tanks, government bodies and other policy stakeholders have been addressing the topic in recent years. The aim of this conference was to embrace this emerging area of research, sharing knowledge and expertise in order to explore the influence that product longevity has on environmental, economic and social sustainability.

A multi-disciplinary approach to this topic is vital and contributions were thus invited from scholars from a range of backgrounds, including design, geography, anthropology, business management, economics, marketing, consumer behaviour, sociology and politics. The programme has been structured around seven themes:

- Design approaches to product longevity
- The role of product longevity in resource efficiency and waste reduction
- Strategies for product lifetime optimisation
- Cultural perspectives on the throwaway society
- Business opportunities, economic implications and marketing strategies
- Consumer influences on product lifetimes
- Policies, regulation and legislation.

Around 100 proposals for papers were submitted to the organisers in the form of abstracts. Following a peer review process, just under two thirds of these resulted in papers accepted for publication in the proceedings. We were very impressed by the quality of many papers and are grateful to have had contributions from researchers from many disciplines and 16 countries across five continents.

As editors of these proceedings, we are delighted to put together this collection of thoughtful papers on the topic of product lifetimes in the context of sustainability. We are confident that the proceedings will help to nurture discussion and debate on this important topic, as well as contribute to the growing academic knowledge in the field.

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