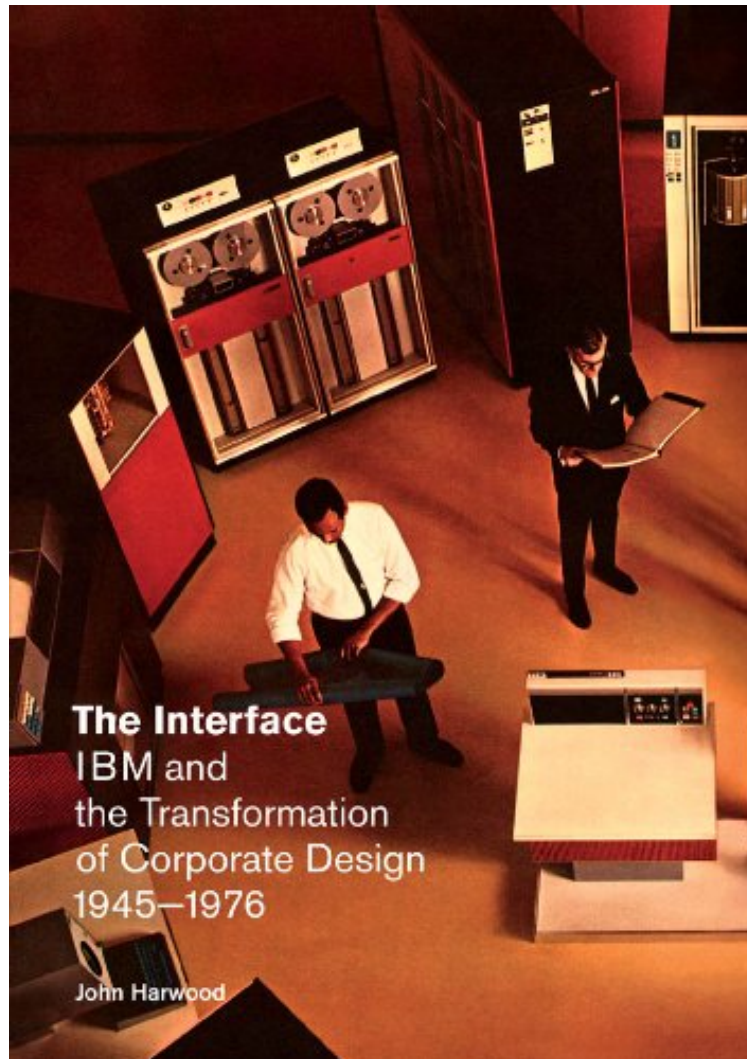


(Online library) The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945ndash;1976 (A Quadrant Book)

## The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945ndash;1976 (A Quadrant Book)

*John Harwood*

*audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#1391365 in eBooks 2011-11-15 2011-11-15 File Name: B00EDDQFXQ | File size: 51.Mb

**John Harwood : The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945ndash;1976 (A Quadrant Book)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945ndash;1976 (A Quadrant Book):

18 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Good intentions but inaccurate and misleadingBy Tom HardyI applaud the author's objective to present the historical context of the IBM Design Program as being the first comprehensive effort of an American corporation to successfully transform corporate identity across a broad range of design on a global basis. This extraordinary effort by Eliot Noyes, Paul Rand and Charles Eames as IBM's original

corporate consultants is without peer. However, while the author's intent is commendable, there are many glaring inaccuracies. One of several major errors is the author's assertion that after Noyes and Eames passed away in 1977, "...IBM did not deign to replace either of its leading consultants. A design system was in place, and it only required consultants in minor areas." In this regard, the author claims: "Richard Sapper was given responsibility for overseeing graphic and industrial design in the European laboratories, but the rest of Noyes's and Eames's responsibilities were distributed to a cadre of thirteen design managers." I spent twenty-two years in the IBM Design Program (1970-1992) as an industrial designer, design center manager, division design manager and corporate head of the IBM Design Program and, as such, interacted directly with Noyes, Rand and Sapper during my tenure at the company. Therefore, I can attest to the fact that Richard Sapper was never given any responsibility whatsoever for overseeing graphic design in Europe, nor anywhere else in IBM for that matter. Furthermore, Sapper's industrial design responsibilities were on a global basis, not only limited to Europe as the author asserts. The IBM corporate consulting role for Sapper mirrored those of Noyes within the context of designing archetypal IBM products (as exemplified by Sapper's ThinkPad), and regularly providing advice and counsel for the entire IBM product line across 15 global IBM design centers. Therefore, the author's concluding supposition of the IBM Design Program's "...eventual failure to outlast the lives of its main protagonists, Noyes, Eames and Rand", is woefully incorrect. While the presence of Noyes's overarching leadership was truly missed, Sapper was appointed to the product design consultancy position in 1980 and brought his extraordinarily successful innovation track record to IBM. Also, Rand continued to serve IBM as a corporate graphic design consultant into the 1990s and also recommended distinguished information designer Edward Tufte to consult with the company, as well as utilized Swiss designers Josef Müller-Brockman and Karl Gerstner to help with graphic design across Europe. Additionally, following Noyes's death, Gerald McCue, Dean of Harvard University Graduate School of Design was appointed to be IBM's corporate consultant on architecture. Yet another inaccuracy is the author's assertion that the iconic IBM Rebus design by Paul Rand (1981) "...was a violation of every rule he had established in the preceding years regarding the sanctity of IBM graphics" and implying Rand's innovative rebus concept was due to the IBM Design Program being "greatly weakened in Noyes's absence." The truth is that only IBM's legal department initially thought Rand's innovative rebus would somehow violate IBM's logo trademark protection. Rand and design management fought this perception and eventually prevailed, resulting in the IBM rebus becoming a classic icon in the annals of graphic design. IBM continues to use the rebus today to symbolize IBM as humanistic and innovative. While this book provides a generalized insight into the IBM Design Program's scope and impact on modern design culture, its content contains numerous mistakes and the author's concluding supposition is based on inaccurate claims. Consequently, this book is not recommended as an accurate, scholarly account of IBM Design Program history. Instead, read: "Eliot Noyes" by Gordon Bruce, "Paul Rand" by Steven Heller and "Eames Design" by John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart and Ray Eames for a credible history of the seminal IBM Design Program.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Intense but Informative  
By Devin S OBryan  
Great historical writing. Harwood's retelling was quite a bit more academic than I was anticipating, but it very engaging as he weaves together a tapestry of design history and theory.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. good synthesis in need of original conclusions  
By re-viewibm's design story ties together the motivations of the most celebrated graphic and product designers of the post world war ii period : rand, eames, noyes. ibm computer was the worthiest product that postwar "commercial artists" could imagine developing designs for  
dash;who may have considered the computer a much higher achievement than hats, cigars, food mixers, or lounge chairs. the book is meticulously researched and synthesized, only to be held back by compulsory Foucault references (that are necessary to get published by the minnesota press perhaps). final conclusions suffer, since facts are filtered through someone else's lense / theory /opinion, not strictly by the author's own personal agency (which is the standard post-modern architecture-school-model that passes as "methodology" today). high design couldn't last forever, definitely not into the 1970s and the 80s. but why? for original and insightful answers to all these question and what it "means" to design computers as they become less and less tangible see meikle's chapter from "design in the usa." also see otl aicher's "world as design" for insights about design touching on the engineer's territory. dash;these are answers that do not hold on "theories" for dear life.

In February 1956 the president of IBM, Thomas Watson Jr., hired the industrial designer and architect Eliot F. Noyes, charging him with reinventing IBM's corporate image, from stationery and curtains to products such as typewriters and computers and to laboratory and administration buildings. What followed— a story told in full for the first time in John Harwood's *The Interface*— remade IBM in a way that would also transform the relationships between design, computer science, and corporate culture. IBM's program assembled a cast of leading figures in American design: Noyes, Charles Eames, Paul Rand, George Nelson, and Edgar Kaufmann Jr. *The Interface* offers a detailed account of the key role these designers played in shaping both the computer and the multinational corporation. Harwood describes a surprising inverse effect: the influence of computer and corporation on the theory and practice of design. Here we see how, in the period stretching from the invention of the computer during World War II to the appearance of the personal computer in the mid-1970s, disciplines once well

outside the realm of architectural design—information and management theory, cybernetics, ergonomics, computer science—became integral aspects of design. As the first critical history of the industrial design of the computer, of Eliot Noyes's career, and of some of the most important work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames, *The Interface* supplies a crucial chapter in the story of architecture and design in postwar America—and an invaluable perspective on the computer and corporate cultures of today.

"This study is as essential for historians of postwar American architecture, corporate culture, and applied cybernetics as it is a vital archaeology of our current world of digitized experience, in which few aspects of daily life have not been restructured by the science and business of computing." - Barry Bergdoll, Columbia University "Getting a look inside the box, and figuring out who stuffed the wires in there, is one of the pleasures of *The Interface*... 'The world once wondered: What would a computerized world look like?' *The Interface* reminds us of the question, and tells us who answered it." - *The Daily* "This handsome, wide-ranging book makes clear that IBM's integrated design effort, in which a vision of the power and potential of information technology was married to a protean but cohesive aesthetic, is the forerunner of and model for Apple's equally—but by no means more—influential design achievement." - *The Atlantic* "Harwood's *Interface* offers an insightful, engaging, and exquisitely researched account of the design of one of the twentieth century's most recognizable brands and most ubiquitous objects, the IBM computer." - Margaret Maile Petty, Victoria University of Wellington, NZ, in *West 86th* Winner of the 2014 Alice Davis Hitchcock Award from the Society of Architectural Historians "In this fascinating book, John Harwood shows clearly and convincingly how architects and industrial design consultants calculatedly worked with IBM to shape the public image of the corporation and its products. *The Interface* is eye-opening." —Henry Petroski, Duke University, author of *The Pencil* and *The Essential Engineer*