



COLLEGE of ENGINEERING AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

MSc Seminar

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One size fits all? Evaluating and exploring size and problems with Design Systems across organizations

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Abstract:

Design Systems are a relatively new phenomena within industry, serving as an evolution of previous human-computer interaction paradigms (such as design languages). Design systems bundle UI component libraries, style guides, design patterns, and other content guidance in one place, usually within a centralized repository with the aim to increase developer/designer collaboration/productivity, better manage visual identity, increase UI/UX design consistency, and provide more accessible experiences across various digital platforms and mediums for increasingly rapidly developed, complex software applications. They have gained popularity across organizations of various types including Google, Microsoft, as well as The Government of the United Kingdom, and the Government of Canada.

However, the successful creation of design systems seems to be limited to larger organizations (see above list), but the benefits of design systems are indifferent to organization size. This begs the question, at what point do design systems become viable for organizations to implement? Additionally, many grey literature sources are now indicating existential problems with the use of design systems, including increasing “design debt”, and overall unsuitability. So, despite being hailed as groundbreaking just a few years ago, have design systems outstayed their welcome? What does the future of design systems look like? To answer these questions this study will set out to interview those who build, maintain, or use design systems across a variety of organization sizes to help unravel the size conundrum outlined above. In these same interviews, data will also be gathered to supplement the grey literature reports, perhaps pointing out what the next steps of design systems might be.