

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES



Rick Bennett

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Profile Description

In 1993, Rick Bennett joined the College of Fine Arts (COFA) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney Australia, as a member of academic staff based within the School of Design Studies. The last few years have seen dramatic changes to his responsibilities: from coordinator of the first year Bachelor of Design program to directing significant research into the Internet and possibilities it holds for collaboration across distance for [art and design] education and professional practice. In 2002, Rick was appointed Head of COFA Online: a newly formed academic unit established to design, produce and facilitate a suite of online courses across a range of art and design disciplines.

In 1998, following completion of a Master of Higher Education, Rick founded *The Omnium Project*: an ongoing research initiative investigating online collaboration within the visual arts. In 2001, as a result of achievements in this area, Rick was awarded the first UNSW Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence Using Educational Technology and subsequently nominated for the Australian Prime Minister's Teaching Award for 2002.

Rick's ongoing research has since seen him direct a number of international online design courses and projects and led to the *The Omnium Project* being awarded significant funding through a three-year Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grant for 2004 – 2006. The most recent project as part of this grant is *Creative Waves*: a project linking photomedia and graphic design students, educators, writers and professionals from around the globe, produced in collaboration with ICOGRADA (International Council of Graphic Design Associations). He is also currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Sydney, titled '*Drawing on The Virtual Collective*': *Formalising a Framework for Collaborative Online Creativity in the Visual Arts*.

Rick has presented and published outcomes of Omnium's research, both nationally and internationally, at numerous design and education conferences, as well as many in peer reviewed journals and publications worldwide.

For more detailed information: visit the *The Omnium Project* website: <http://www.omnium.edu.au>