



DIGMA Aims to Boost Bay State's Design Economy

[Roxanne Palmer 6/11/09](#)

Design isn't just about deciding which shade of taupe to paint City Hall or whether to make a water bottle square or round. It can mean the difference between comprehension (think iPhone) and confusion (think butterfly ballot). A new multidisciplinary organization launched yesterday is out to promote the importance of the Bay State's design industries, and to serve as a resource for the more than 44,500 people in Massachusetts who work in graphic design, industrial design, landscape architecture, and interior design, among other fields.

Called the [Design Industry Group of Massachusetts](#), or DIGMA, the organization had its coming-out party at the West Newton design firm Continuum, birthplace of the Swiffer mop. Housing and Economic Development Secretary Gregory Bialecki announced at the event that DIGMA would receive a \$150,000 grant from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's John Adams Innovation Institute. Additional funds for the group came from Massachusetts Cultural Council, The Boston Foundation, and the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

DIGMA's leadership comprises CEOs, professors, and leaders of universities, including Kay Sloan, the president of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, which is a large sponsor of the organization.

"MassArt has invested in DIGMA in order to ensure the Commonwealth's competitive advantage in the design industry is maximized to its full potential," she said in a press release.

As one of its first initiatives, DIGMA will organize the first annual Massachusetts Design Festival—to be held from September 24 through October 24, 2009—in order to publicize examples of design around the state. The Festival encompasses several other design-related events: Boston Design Center's Design Boston 2009, Boston Fashion Week, and National Design Week.

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