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

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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.

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