

Designers reinvent the remote

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Free Hand, by Cleo Jaquet (ECAL). © EPFL+ECAL Lab

Sixty years after its creation under the name "Lazy Bones", the remote control is poised to change our relationship with digital content. The EPFL+ECAL Lab, in collaboration with the Kudelski Group, announced today the project, "Lazy Bytes," which thoroughly reconsiders this connection with the content now available on television. Lazy Bytes brings together creations from ECAL in Lausanne, ENSCI – Les Ateliers in Paris, the Royal College of Art in London, and Parsons The New School for Design in New York.

Why are we attached to a vase, a cup, or a lamp, but seldom to a television [remote control](#)? All of these objects serve a practical function at the heart of the living room. The EPFL+ECAL Lab invited four leading design schools from around the world to work together on this device that is iconic to the extent that television has become the window of preferred access to [digital content](#).

So far, the evolution of remote controls has focused above all on performance, with ever increasing features. However, as recent studies in the humanities have shown, physical ergonomics and the simplification of interfaces alone do not develop exciting and compelling solutions. It is necessary to take into account what this object represents, the value it carries, the references it invokes, the sensations it produces.

With 63 projects, 29 of which were selected for the exhibition, Lazy Bytes opens the field for reflection with its amazing ideas, such as Rolling Control, which is based on an old game, or Zap, the book with conductive ink that combines [handwriting](#) and digital control. Also presented here are concrete projects capable of changing our lives in the near future, for instance the small Free Hand that adheres to glass or a can to turn it into a remote control. Functional versions of many of these projects are now being tested.

These objects are not intended to replace the previous generation of multi-function remote controls. They seek to propose an alternative, to create new experiences, and to create new relationships between the user and the devices that surround him.

Through support from the Leenaards Foundation and the Loterie Romande, Lazy Bytes combines an academic approach with prospects for practical innovation with the involvement of the Kudelski Group and its expertise in the field of digital television. It is part of a larger program that explores our relationship with the digital world, whose importance in our personal and social lives is constantly growing.

After Lausanne, the Lazy Bytes exhibition begins its international tour in 2013, notably in Paris, London, and New York.

Provided by Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne

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