Information gathering is a key phase of industrial design. It has an enormous impact on design solutions and product development.

Information gathering is currently done as and when the need arises. This is a time consuming and inefficient process.

The TRENDS project aims to provide web tools that will facilitate direct information search and also incorporate continuous and systematic monitoring for relevant materials. The aim is to help the design team gather words and images that will better support the design activity.

This work is supported by the European Union FP6 Integrated Project TRENDS (N° FP-IST-27916)

January 2006 to December 2008

www.trendsproject.org
The overall goal of the TRENDS project is to identify and develop technologies that will improve the precision and efficiency with which designers can access inspirational materials (mainly images). The TRENDS system will be moulded to the information gathering process that takes place during industrial design, taking into account task-based requirements, and the cognitive and affective processing of designers.

A participatory design process is being adopted in which industrial designers are involved in all stages of system development. Car design is being used as an exemplar and project partners include Stile Bertone and Centro Ricerche FIAT. A range of qualitative (e.g. interviews) and quantitative (e.g. laboratory experiments) methods are being used to inform an iterative design process with regards to the requirements of users and the usability of the system.

The research partners include:
- Laboratoire Conception de Produits et Innovation, SERAM, FR, Coordinator, Design Methodology, Conjoint Trends Analysis
- Institut National de Recherche en Informatique et Automatique (INRIA), FR, Image Search Engine
- University of Leeds, UK, Psychology, Human Factors
- Cardiff University, UK, Intelligent Agents
- PERTinent et IMMédiat, FR, Semantic Search Engine
- Robotiker, SP, Interface Development
- Centro Ricerche FIAT (CRF), IT, Car Design and Manufacturing
- Stile Bertone, IT, Car Design

The industrial partners include:
- Pertinent et IMMédiat, FR, Semantic Search Engine
- Robotiker, SP, Interface Development
- Centro Ricerche FIAT (CRF), IT, Car Design and Manufacturing
- Stile Bertone, IT, Car Design