Changing Role of the Designer in the 21st Century

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
BA (Hons) Graphic Communication

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<u>ABSTRACT</u>

This dissertation focuses on the changing role of the designer through understanding the need for design, our changing environment, and identifies key areas, challenges and opportunities in which designers in the twenty-first century would resonate and identify with; hence giving designers a value-added proposition to their design perspectives and practices.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

'Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will.' (Romans 12:2)

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I plan to analyse the changing role of the graphic designer, how this would in turn affect and or benefit the graphic designer, and what are the value added points graphic designers can look to use in addition to their specialisation in order to adapt and take advantage of the fast paced 21st century.

The key texts that influenced and informed my thoughts are Alvin Toffler's '*Future Perfect'*(Toffler, 1970) which forms the base for my understanding of accelerated change in the 21st century, how change shapes the culture and practices of consumers and the way we perceive our everyday object in a different light. More specific to understanding what consumers want and need, '*Donald A. Norman's Emotional Design'*(Norman, 2004), and Rob Walker's '*I'm with the brand'*(Walker, 2008) who have written on the semiotics behind the (Newark, 2002) need for symbols and aesthetics in our society. Tom Inn's '*Designing for the 21st Century'*(Inns, 2007) and Jeremy Myerson's (Myerson, 2004) '*IDEO: Masters of Innovation*' and Quentin Newark's '*What is Graphic Design*' (Newark, 2002) shed light on the role of the designer, design perspectives such as collaboration, and evolving design processes in response to pressure and needs in the 21st century. In understanding the concerns of the designer, Kenya Hara, Buckminster Fuller, Victor Papanek, Enzo Mari have also written extensively on the characteristics and considerations of a sustainable designer.

Chapter One gives an overview of the role of the designer, its definition, characteristics, brief history, concerns of past and present practicing designers, and the need for change and adaptability for sustainability in the 21st century. I would also cover on the purpose and scope for this dissertation, the significance of this study, and its desired outcome.

In Chapter Two, I begin by looking at the way our media landscape has changed through the 'death of permanence', and how it has in turn affected the way consumers view and perceive product and services. This will in turn

lead to the challenges and opportunities for the designers, which I will cover and conclude for this chapter.

After understanding the context and establishing challenges, opportunities and the need for change, Chapter Three would be a more in-depth focus on the role of design. Design is centred on human needs and needs; it is the most fundamental and basic concept of design. Clients think of their employees and consumers, brands, identity, relationships and the need to communicate – all these facets represent the little nuances on how design exists based on the human factor. As the whole existence of the designer is based on human wants and needs, instead of what the designer thinks that our consumers needs, this chapter devotes itself to understanding and investigating 'the desire factor', and how we could use existing methods and technologies to achieve this.

Chapter Four is the investigation of the sustainable designer through various existing methods such as design thinking and collaboration across various medias. Although graphic designers are specialists, interfacing and collaboration with other medias and disciplines bring a whole new dimension to just graphic design by itself. At the same time, we would also factor in the concern for sustainable design, and how in the pursuit of it, we would be able to not only design, but to ensure that our design practices would last.

Lastly, I plan to conclude that in order to survive as a designer in the twenty-first century, designers would have to adapt in various factors in regards to change. As technologically driven and industrial age thinking will not cease or slow down anytime soon, designers would have to begin considering ideas such as collaboration, learning the value of interfacing multi-disciplinary medias, and at the same time, factoring in sustainable and eco-friendly designs. Instead of trying to hinder change or rationalise otherwise that technological advances would come to a halt or that change would cease, we may recreate the role of the designer through understanding the benefits of designing in the twenty-first century. Understanding and applying these values

would put us at an advantage ahead of our competitors and give us a value added proposition in our current and future design endeavours.

<u>1.0</u>

CHAPTER ONE

<u>Introduction</u>

1.1.0: <u>Objective</u>

My objective is to investigate the changing role of the designer in the 21st century, and to prove why there is a need for it. There is little said on the changing role of the designer as a result of their changing environment, although most of the articles written about designers do include in-depth focus and research into how to extensively improve design methods through various techniques.

This study seeks to widen the perspectives and raise consciousness about the need for change and adaption in the design industry in a fast-paced world. At the same time, it identifies existing practices and ideas, evaluating what can be improved, adapted or further explored.

The objective is to distinguish and understand the factors that are needed that would strategically support the existing role of a designer, allowing existing designers to further understand the need for change, sustainability and adaptability, and understanding the perspectives that would further facilitate designers in redefining their design practice.

1.2.0: <u>Definition</u>

What defines a designer? Considering that design plays a role in our everyday life, and adding the fact that through the decisions we make daily, we would have designed something at some point of our lives. Hence, doesn't it make every person a designer? There are many views pertaining to these questions. I believe that Mieke Gerritzen has the closest answer to portraying my answer in this quote.

> 'Everyone is a designer' is a marketing demographic, not a statement about the logic of a practice. While everyone has the same statistical chance of chancing upon a serendipitous moment or two, creating a practice of design still requires linking up hundreds if not thousands of

discrete decisions into systems that extend from part to part, from project

to project, from year to year." (Newark, 2002, p. 14)

The designer, as defined by this dissertation, is the designer who plays a role in facilitating and creating design decisions as a practice.

In *Designing for the 21st Century*, Tom Inns proposed that Designers would begin to place additional roles such as the 'negiotiator of value', 'facilitator of thinking', 'visualiser of the intangible', 'navigator of complexity' and 'mediator of stakeholders'. (Inns, 2007, pp. 24-25) Taking these ideals into consideration, we would focus on the emergent positions of the designer through the understanding of concerns and needs of the twenty first century.

1.3.0: <u>Scope</u>

The study of the design characteristics of the role of designers, as a general whole, would entail a wider, a more complex analysis as the scope of designers through various professions is vast. Hence, this study confines its coverage to the changing role of the graphic designer. More elaborately, I would be focusing on the area of a designer as a visual communicator through graphic design.

2.0

CHAPTER TWO

Change and the New Landscape

2.1.0: <u>Death of Permanence</u>

Designers have always been regarded as by the world as tools of the business trade, a creator of attractive aesthetics invoking desirable attributes that promote consumerism, creating and enhancing brand perception through shrewd and evocative advertising and communication strategies. Even though designers became an increasingly valuable competitive asset in areas such as electronics, automotive and consumer packaged good industries in the latter half of the twentieth century, in most others it remained a late-stage add on, seldom being involved in the earlier role of innovation.[1]

Skilled in producing graphical works and communicating with its consumers, through teamwork or via individual process, we have always been the lone entity behind the creation, receiving feedback and making decisions for what we feel is right for the public. And consumers had always been receptive to our beautifully packaged products, watching television and compliantly purchasing the items that we recommend to them through advertising. In a world of shoddy and unsafe materials, they trusted us to direct them with what was good, guiding them in making decisions for whatever they needed (Walker, 2008, p. 7). Through its success, we have somehow successfully created effective consumerism, boosting the economy and maintaining a healthy exchange. As industrial age thinking spurred us on in the creation of better technology in facilitating more effective production and more improved technology, we remained confident that things would remain as it is. Our comfort zone was the belief that although change was present, it wouldn't be such a huge impact and we would most certainly be able to adapt to it slowly and gradually.

Yet around the turn of the twenty-first century, things began to change drastically for us. We stare, stagnant in horror as newspaper articles began flooding in talking about a brand new consumer that is becoming increasingly

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[1] This theory is agreed upon designers such as Tim Brown (Brown 2008) and Strand Design (Strand Design 2009).

prominent, one that is evasive and immune towards brands and logos, almost like they could see through commercial persuasion(Walker, 2008, p. xiv).

Technologically savvy and well informed by the media and the Internet, the new consumer is a force to reckoned with. The product of a technologically driven fast-paced culture, this new breed of consumer is adept at tasks such as multitasking and processing visually stimulating images and audio, part of growing up in a media saturated environment where they are constantly bombarded with all sorts of information. With life moving at a rapidly accelerated pace in comparison to what their predecessors, the new consumer processes visual images rapidly, needs and expects speedy products and services to keep up with their physical and social lifestyles. By catering to these jet-setting individuals, providing fast relief and supporting instant gratification in the form of Kleenex tissues, instant food and beverages, along with disposable items, we have also inadvertently created a culture of throwaways(Toffler, 1970, p. 42), whereby sentimental value is seemingly less appreciated, where people are less attached to their belongings and have lesser qualms about disposing of it, adding to the amount of wastage of resources and reducing the amount of objects with retained value.

Then, just as we are scrambling about to recover from our shock – to react, another new wave breaks in on the topic of sustainability. The topic of sustainability should not have been much of a surprise, in fact, in a world where resources are rapidly depleting due to the taxing nature of industries and production, it has been a concern of many but a highly ignored fact till recently where the impact of the lack of sustainability and eco-consideration began to catch on.

As such, an increasing amount of companies began coming under fire for wasteful material usage and lack of eco-sustainable methods, which in turn, became an unspoken requirement for designers. With new expectations and responsibilities, the role of a designer was equally affected as well.

At the same time, technology, which feeds on itself(Toffler, 1970, p. 26), constantly upgrades and revolutionises newer technology and products, facilitating social media and creating new media tools for the designer. The graphic designer's world is constantly changing as new tools and systems develop around him.

As new tools – such as software and new media, continue progressing and developing, the designer is then faced with the challenge and option of debating about the need for upgrading his tools, to keep up with the trends so as to be sustainable and not become labelled and be cast off as 'obsolete'.

In the midst of this chaos, we notice other problems arising. Parity of quality, the result of the success of Dr. W. Edwards Deming's popular total quality movement, Six Sigma, was the last management obsession of the twentieth-century(Neumeier, Spring 2008, p. 11). This has resulted in what Rob Walker labels as 'the pretty good problem'. He illustrates this by sharing an article from *Consumer Reports* which tested and ranked fifty-three different kitchen ranges, only to discover that forty-seven were 'very good', four being 'excellent' and only two rated as a 'good', this being a routine example of what is observed in practically every consumer category. (Walker, 2008, pp. 6-7) The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that, unlike the past whereby consumers had to navigate through shoddy and unsafe products and had to put up with unreliable products, quality products and services are now an expected commodity, and can be relied upon.

While businesses face an increasing problem of trying to differentiate their products by applying branding, packaging and marketing tactics in a bid to stand out, consumers also face an equally arduous situation. As they can no longer just look to quality as a sole rational factor, they are hence exposed more rigorous decision-making process where all that is left is to sift among the increasingly minor differences, no matter how absurd the marginal differences are(Walker, 2008, p. 7). Although quality is beneficial for the consumer, this has in turn caused another set of problems, one of which is labelled by Barry Schwartz as 'the paradox of choice'.

Labelled by Barry Schwartz(Schwartz, 2004), it is the result of the parity of quality and the companies' dilemma of differentiating their items. The solution was to create a larger variety of choices that would better appeal to a wider audience. To the confused and befuddled consumer, this has resulted in a paralysis due to overwhelming amounts of choices.

The chaos we see today is a result of change, caused by numerous factors, such as accelerated change caused by the Industrial Revolution.

In order to shed light on our situation, the most effective clue to our solution is to understand what is going on around us.

In a fast shifting environment, graphic designers in turn would have to learn, adapt and facilitate. We have seen how change has affected our environment and how it has impacted the way we perceive information. We have also seen the consequences of remaining ignorant and how we cannot choose to avoid or ignore what is going on around us. Remaining in our comfort zone would cripple us as others move forward, placing us at a disadvantage. In a society of rapid change, lagging behind is not sustainable for the twenty-first century designer.

As we begin to further understand our changing environment, we look to the past to reflect, the present to observe, and eventually we would have to decide where our future lies in, and what further opportunities we have in progression through the 21st century.

2.2.0: <u>Thriving in the New Landscape</u>

In a highly saturated media environment, the two basic notions that would be the important for a designer would perhaps be 'speed' and 'clarity'. Unlike the artist, a designer has lesser use of the abstract form of art. The father of the term graphic design, William Addison Dwiggins, once wrote this statement in 1922:

> "In the matter of art, forget art at the start and use horse sense. The printing designer's whole duty is to make a clear representation of the message – to get the important statements forward and the minor parts placed so that they will not be overlooked. This calls for an exercise of common sense and a faculty of analysis rather then for art."

With hundreds of brand messages in the shape of advertisements, packaging, pop-up ads, flyers and packages constantly vying for their attention, it's no surprise that the consumers of the modern world is one with a short attention span who process visual images at lightning speed. The period of time whereby messages are able to reach the consumer is minimal, and even so, it would have to compete with its easily distracted consumer over new age gadgets such as the portable game devices and phones, which now even comes with its own entertainment system through the form of applications and games. So the question is, how do we as designers, create a way for consumers to listen, interact and respond to us, through a world of distractions and overly saturated messages? In the next paragraph, we will explore the various existing methods to tackle this situation and identify the possible solutions to our problem.

Advertisers and marketing experts have written about how the consumers' attention span is decreasing and that is has become a concern to advertisers and designers alike. In a recent article (That Company, 2010), the author writes that companies, in a bid to get the attention of viewers, have decided to shrink their airtime commercials, hoping that with the shorter timing, they would be able to catch their attention and resonate with them.

Marketer Seth Godin, on the other hand, believes in the concept of the 'Purple

Cow', that while most products are 'invisible', it must be made remarkable to succeed. Instead of being an innovation, it is a novelty, just like an illusion of a purple cow sauntering up to where a group of normal looking cows are grazing. (Walker, 2008, pp. 7-8)

I propose that what they are doing is entirely missing the point. While I do agree that messages have to be short and sweet to hit the spot, I believe that attention span is relative. We as consumers decide how long we decide to focus on anything, be it a commercial, a pamphlet, or a videogame. With a good idea or concept, an advertiser or designer would be able to hold their attention for a longer period of time. A good example is Thailand's Smooth E Baby Foam advertisement campaign, (Smooth E) whose successful short commercial trailers and short stories not only encouraged viewers to tune in to follow their advertisements weekly, but to feel inclined to share them across social media, generating more publicity, attention and hype.

Like all graphic medias, advertising has a hold on us that most advertisers do not necessarily understand. Although the designer's ability to resonate a clear message and identity through visual mediums, without being relevant and resonating well with the consumer, it defeats the whole purpose of the brand identity or advertising campaign.

I propose that there are two stages in accordance to appealing to the customer. A role of the graphic designer's is not only to capture the attention of the consumer, but to follow up as well. After the point of attraction, whether it is by a visually arresting object via its aesthetics or value of novelty, the package has to convince the consumer, whether it is through conscious or subconscious means, that it is the right choice to make by purchasing or acquiring that product.

This would be further elaborated on in the next chapter through the 'desire code'.

2.3.0: <u>Challenges and Opportunities for Designers</u>

As concluded from this chapter, designers not only have to be clear and concise in their message, they would also have the challenge of being relevant and resonate well with the consumer in order to get their messages across.

At the same time, with accelerated changes caused by the industrial revolution, designers are not only exposed to accelerated modes of transport, but also new communication channels and new tools such as social media, devices and software, that seek to enhance communication and information-sharing between us and with the rest of the world. While this has caused consumers to be more information savvy and technologically driven, these changes have also given us the opportunity to broaden our scope and to react our consumers and target audience more quickly, efficiently and effectively. With new communication channels, designers can make use of new and existing to test and enhance the quality and effectiveness of their messages. With more amplified communication channels, a platform for participation and collaboration can be facilitated between designers, multi-disciplinary specialists, companies and consumers.

While sustainability is a rising issue, the study of sustainability can give designers new insights on thriving in the new landscape and at the same time, enhancing their design practices and prolonging the design industry through sustainable methods.

Through the next few chapters, we would focus on a more in-depth approach on the main factors that would greatly enhance our perspectives on our changing culture, and question our design practices through the investigation of new and existing methods such as collaboration and sustainable design.

Furthermore, in our changing environment, what is our constant value? Through the next chapter, we will cover more on these questions through the unravelling of the desire code.

<u>3.0</u>

CHAPTER THREE

<u>Designing the Human Factor</u>

3.1.0: <u>Unravelling the Desire Code</u>

> "Human needs are a powerful source of explanation of human behaviour
> and social interaction. All individuals have needs that they strive to
> satisfy, either by using the system, 'acting on the fringes', or acting as a
> reformist or revolutionary. Given this condition, social systems must be
> responsive to individual needs, or be subject to instability and forced
> change. (Coate & Rosati, 1988)

Design is centred on human needs and needs; it is the most fundamental and
basic concept of design. Despite society priding itself for it's long intellectual
tradition on rational and logical reasoning, it cannot escape from the fact that
emotions do exist in playing a role in our decisions and in the way we create,
perceive and design the world around us. In the new landscape whereby
quality is parity, where product differentiation is minute and prices are
competitive, and where rational logic can no longer be counted upon in
making a decision, our senses and appreciation for aesthetics and identity
empower us in our choice and decision making processes. At the same time,
emotions and the 'human' factor should be deeply considered. Donald A.
Norman best reflects this through his publication on Emotional Design:
Despite the common tendency to pit rational cognition against seemingly
irrational factors such as emotion; visceral, behaviour and reflective: these
three different dimensions are interwoven through any design, all a result of a
mixture between cognition and emotions. (Norman, 2004) Most importantly,
these three dimensions are present through any design, explaining the way
we perceive our objects and our environment, consciously and
subconsciously affecting our choices and our decisions in the world.

Regardless of the type of design processes we use, whether it is brand or
brand identity, user-centred design, functional design, emotional design,
aesthetical design, multi-sensory design, sustainable design or collaborative
design, design pushes us to consider centring our ideals on humans needs,
consumer or non-consumer alike. This not only involves the design process,
but also the whole spectrum of processes that design caters to. Clients are

inclined to think of their employees and consumers, brands, identity, relationships and the need to communicate and represent themselves – all these facets represent the little nuances on how design exists based on the human factor.

While our environment evolves and changes around us, a constant we can find is the one thing that never ceases to change, our humanistic instincts and needs. It is something we can never seem to escape from, hereditary in nature (Marker, 2003), inbuilt in us, sort of part of our own DNA. Hence, it is essential for the designer to learn and understand enough of the human factor, in order to progress deeper in depth with his own design and design practices.

As the whole existence of the designer is based on human wants and needs, instead of what the designer 'thinks' that our consumers need, this chapter devotes itself to understanding and investigating 'the desire factor', and how we could use existing methods and technologies to achieve this.

There are a variety of essentials that human beings need in order to survive. Contrary to commonly perceived needs, these essentials go beyond food, water, and shelter. According to psychologists, these needs include both physical and non-physical elements, which are essential to human growth and development, as well as things that humans have an innate desire to acquire. (Marker, 2003) While there are numerous essentials, we would only scope the factors that are relevant to understanding our context today.

According to renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow, needs are believed to be hierarchical in nature, each having a specific ranking or order of obtainment. Starting with the basic needs such as food, water and shelter, these are followed by the need for safety, security, belonging or love, self-esteem, and finally, personal fulfilment (Rothman, 1997), which leads to areas such as the need for identity and participation in a community (Rothman, 1997). Hence, this explains why brands and identities speak so much to us, affecting our choices and shaping our culture. With the rise of new

communication tools and social media, our need for intimacy and relationships to evoke a sense of belonging and allowing us to participate, explains its success, and the crucial need for designers and companies to make use of these mediums through this understanding.

Next, we will use the understanding of the 'desire factor' in application to the environment and the way we perceive objects and design through 'the rise of communities'.

3.2.0: <u>The Rise of Communities</u>

Identity is known as one of many human fundamental needs. It is a sense of self that potentially impacts one's self esteem and the way humans perceive rest of the world around them. (Conflict Research Consortium, 1998)

Rob Walker writes about branding as 'the idea of attaching an idea to a product'. The initial idea behind this concept was for both rational and utilitarian reasons. Originating in the early industrial age, it represented trustworthiness, reliability, effectiveness and a bargain, amongst a sea of unknown provenance and quality. (Walker, 2008, p. 8) Over time it began to represent more elaborate ideas, a result of the abundance of products created through the centuries.

What began as a reliance representing safe products, soon evolved to become a form of necessity in differentiating the variety of products we have today. An idea that is successful tied to a brand or a product goes on to achieve more than a product that is without. What causes this strange phenomenon? That, I believe, is a result of the humanistic need for identity and representation.

Rob Walker interprets the need for 'identity' in the modern world through this quote:

> "(Even) In the twenty-first century, we still grapple with the eternal
> dilemma of wanting to feel like individuals and to feel as though we're
> part of something bigger then ourselves – and that most of all, we all
> seek ways to resolve this fundamental tension of life. (Followed by)
> Seeing how the desire – the need – to resolve that tension is at the heart
> of the stories we tell about ourselves. (And lastly) is coming to grips with
> who we are telling these stories to."

With the rise of the Internet 2.0 and social media, it is no surprise that companies have started to see the potential in piquing consumer's interests

by allowing them to interact and connect with the brand. 'Relationships' and 'participation', previously short-changed components by brand companies, are unresolved needs of the consumer that has been fulfilled by the rise of social media. In fact, the success of social media is not credited to the use of technology itself, but the type of communication, contribution and participation that it allows to facilitate between companies and consumers.

The reasons why consumers would tie themselves down to a brand idea or concept is the fact that it resonates to them and represents a community that they would want to support. When an individual stumble upon an area of common interest, it naturally excites and stimulates his senses. His natural reaction would be to share his ideals, listen to responses from the community, and reciprocate. That also explains why consumers share their passions through word-of-mouth. Without understanding the basics, many companies would tend to stifle such input and communication. A relationship with a company was never meant to be an awkward one-sided affair, and those companies who manage to grasp hold of these ideas manage to achieve much more then those who engage in social media just for the sake of 'keeping up with the trends'.

Harley Davidson is one of such brands that not only understand these needs, but are also made up of the exact passionate individuals. They recognise the need and the potential for such a community, and have actively engaged their users through clubs, a perceived brotherhood(HD Forums, 2006), and the occasional bike trips.

Not only that, but supporters of the Harley Davison brands have taken things into their own hands. Long before social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter started coming up, Harley Davidson fans had been creating their own biker clubs all over the world, all in pursuit of a single passion. In fact, its brand also resonates well and defines its consumers through its identity: a legendary(LogoOrange) freedom-led rebel lifestyle.

Starbucks is another such brand that resonates well with its consumers, and had been actively engaging them in dialogue via various social medias such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs and YouTube. It isn't a surprise to see Starbucks After all, the word 'Starbucks' is music to the ears of a constantly caffeine-deprived world. As consumers struggle in an increasingly fast-paced world to get out of bed every day, sustaining through work and enduring late night shifts, 'coffee' is seen as the grand solution, especially good coffee. The Starbucks brand isn't limited to the working generation alone; as education systems become more competitive, the younger generations are becoming hooked to the caffeine filled beverage. Hence, as coffee is increasingly relevant to our culture, Starbucks's move in engaging its consumers through social media, is empowering its consumers and allowing them to participate in its decision making process. For example, by following Starbuck's Tweets since Christmas 2010, you would see that it's latest Pike Place Roast is a flop, and massive amount of people are giving feedback in light of it. Tweets happen in real-time, and that would give companies fast insights about their products and services, and in some occasions, enough time to salvage the situations.

What else does this hold in store for the graphic designer? This, perhaps, is a sign of the death of the lone designer. While social media is not only efficient in the sharing and exchanging of information, it gives a platform for designers to not only test out and receive ideas, but to also gather feedback and input on how to further improve or resonate with a group of individuals.

Social media is also a potential area of engaging our consumers through various viral channels, and is also a breeding ground for collaborative efforts. This would not only build depth in our design, but also to give ourselves greater understanding of what we could expect should we execute such ideas in real time. A problem that designers could potentially face however, would be the infringing copyright of their original ideas, should too much of it be exposed to the media before production. Hence, a designer's role would also have to involve discerning the amount of information and input when making of the social media platforms.

4.0

CHAPTER FOUR

The Sustainable Designer

4.1.0: Facilitating Co-Creation

In the recent years, the practice of 'co-creation' has risen to become key components of areas such the co-innovation, co-configuration and co-production process in Mass Customisation (Songlin, p. 9), the creation process through open-sourcing applications such as Firefox, co-generation of ideas from both designers and companies in Design Thinking (Brown, 2008), and between consumers and designers in Participatory Design, also known as Co-Design (Thomas Binder, 2008).

At the same time designers are starting to see co-creation not as the solution to numerous problems. In the next few paragraphs, I would elaborate further on this statement.

According to the rule of numbers, the odds and the probability of creations is limited when all attention is focused on a single individual, is limited. That, without even considering the constraints of time, effort, inspiration, and the lone designer's maturity, experience, or lack of. Furthermore, the lone designer is confined to what he knows and experiences in his own lifetime, regardless of how knowledgeable he may be in the industry. While I do not disagree that in many areas, lone designers have thrived and prospered in t, my point here is that through collaboration, more could have been achieved and innovated. Experiences and insights could have been shared; the ideals of a single person also have been developed into more wholesome and multi-dimensional concepts. According to Tim Brown, "The former role is tactical, and results in limited value creation; the latter is strategic, and leads to dramatic new forms of value." (Brown, 2008, p. 86)

In application how does a graphic designer benefit from a multi-disciplinary collaboration? Graphic Designers are mainly visual specialists who are adept at the use of visual media, such as colour, shape, form and semiotics. However, we are living in a world of multi-sensory perception that not only involves the visual aspect, but other four senses, kinaesthetic, audio, scent. Without effective collaboration, just on senses alone, a graphic designer's

practice or form of execution would inadvertently neglect or under-develop certain areas. What more about the other areas that could have been neglected or could have been improved on? At the same time, there are various other successful companies such as Ideo who have made use of collaboration and have succeeded in breaking new ground. Collaborations could exist between different design specialists, across various disciplines and even through the average consumer and civilian. And the age of rapid communication and social media only seeks to empower us in doing so. The possibilities of creation through collaboration are endless.

This, however, does not mean that designers should not be specialists in their area. Instead, there is an even greater need for it as collaboration thrives best in situations whereby a group of specialists are efficient enough in their own field to be able to represent and propose their ideas through the collaboration.

This would also solve the problem of the overwhelming rise in technological software and social medias. My reason for this statement is a result of careful consideration between the shared and conflicting views of designers, and at the same time, my beliefs as a result of my own observations. While some designers believe that knowing a wider range of design is more beneficial, as I have understood from the interviews that I have conducted with practicing designers in the industry, software developers would constantly upgrade their products. Hence, the race against catching up with technology would eventually be a futile attempt.

While the designer does have to read up on current and newer tools of the trade to refrain from being 'obsolete', I believe that he doesn't necessarily have to master all of them. This being said, the designer has to play a part in effectively discerning between the choice of tools and quantity of tools that he chooses to master, that would best bring out his or her message to their clients and consumers. At the same time, in order to place himself at an advantage, he would have to discover his own niche that would distinguish himself amongst other designers.

This has to be followed by understanding the process of interfacing, having sufficient knowledge in order to collaborate across different specializations, between different mediums. This also means that while the designer has a few main specializations and minor specializations that form his niche, he cannot afford to be ignorant and complacent of his surroundings. Instead, while he has to be vigilant in broadening his depth of design, he would also have to ensure that his knowledge is wide enough to discern the right tools and specialists in order to maintain and facilitate a healthy collaboration with.

Gone is the misconception of the lone genius. Thomas Edison, the great inventor, was said to have been a broad generalist who surrounded himself with gifted tinkerers, improvisers and experimenters (Brown, 2008, p. 86) to form his greatest invention of the modern R & D laboratory and methods of experimental investigation. Even the recent success of the politician Barack Obama was not the result of a single person, but the successful collaboration of specialists, individuals, marketers and the average civilian through methods of communication such as social media (Appleton Creative, 2010). Even the 7-year collaboration between multimedia animators, cg artists, graphic designers and various artists in the latest Disney Animation, Tangled. Through this process, the team not only managed to deliver a successful award-winning film (Pamela McClintock, 2010), but also managed to create a new wave in CG technology that was once considered impossible as a result of their success collaboration (Desowitz, 2010).

Collaboration not only seeks to enables us to achieve greater innovation, but also allows us to create the best out of every concept. In our fast-paced culture of technologically advancements, accelerated communication channels and the need for greater novelty and innovations, the twenty-first century is no doubt one of greatest 'breeding' grounds for collaboration. Understanding this concept and applying it in our design practices would allow us to have a greater advantage and perhaps, propel the design industry on to greater frontiers.

4.3.0: <u>Design that Lasts: Sustainable Design</u>

The definition of Sustainability is the capability of continuity with minimal long-term effects on the environment; to keep in existence, to maintain[2]. The design of the earth by itself is sustainable. Long-lived and healthy wetlands and forests are examples of sustainable biological systems[3]. Invisible chemical cycles continuously redistribute water, oxygen, nitrogen and carbon throughout the world's living and non-living systems, sustaining life for millions of years. However, Earth's sustainability has been threatened by the increasing intervention with the earth by humans.

What had previously been a neglected subject, Sustainability has risen to become one of the most talked about subjects in the world.

I believe that thinking and practicing design sustainably is one of the vital attributes for the changing role of the graphic designer. It is not simply a choice for re-evaluating our professional practice, improving our environmental footprint or practicing social responsibility, it is valuable asset for surviving in the twenty-first century.

As I have mentioned in Chapter One, an increasing amount of companies have come under fire for not practicing sustainable and eco-friendly options. Due to technological advances and the popularization of the Internet and web 2.0, consumers are increasingly seeing the impact of their consumption decisions on their environment, and the fact that they could exercise their purchasing power to pressurise companies to be more responsible and sustainable.

As reputation is believed to have real financial value in today's market(Sherin, 2008, p. 27), products and services are often purchased based on the trust

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[2] Dictionary.com. (n.d.). *Sustainability Definition*. Retrieved January 07, 2011, from Dictionary.com: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/sustainability
[3] Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Sustainability*. Retrieved January 07, 2011, from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainability

bestowed upon the company by the consumer, which in turn forms strong relationships with the company. Hence, a majority of companies have jumped on the green bandwagon. Hank Stewart of Green Team Advertising in New York, who has seen an increasing number of brands making social and environmental values part of their core brand values, made this comment:

> "Consumers are awakening to the power they wield in the marketplace, and companies are afraid that they are losing out because their competition stands for something they don't." (Sherin, 2008, p. 14)

From changing their production practices to supporting and promoting social responsibility through highly broadcasted campaigns such as the Pepsi Refresh Project(Pepsi, 2010), companies are starting to be more conscious of their environmental and social footprint. Such an example is visible through the observation of what is going on around us. Major brands, such as Nike, Chiquita and BP have reportedly chosen to use environmentally preferable production practices for their annual reports. At the same time, it is observed that many other Fortune 500 companies also produce corporate sustainability reports or corporate citizenship reports in addition to traditional annual reports, highlighting environmental and social commitments of their companies, in a bid to stand out to the eco-conscious consumer (Sherin, 2008, p. 14).

So what has this got to do with the average graphic designer? As graphic designers, our primary role is to create identity[4]. In the creation of areas such as brand identity, the companies have to speak through our branding and collaterals. Hence, in the world that believes in the role of sustainability, a designer is implicated through its practices. Sustainable businesses do not appreciate designers who participate in wasteful processes or pitch ideas that would affect their company's credibility. In short, a designer who does not

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[4] Designer Richard Hollis visualizes graphic design as constituting "a kind of language with uncertain grammar and a continuously expanding vocabulary", it's primary role being identification: to say what something is, or where it came from through various visual medias, followed by information, instruction, presentation and promotion. (Newark, 2002, p. 12)

practice sustainability would find himself at a disadvantage as compared to designers who practice sustainability. A designer, who does not respond well to such changes, loses in his fight against it.

The concern about sustainability is not a new trend. Designers such as Rachel Carson, Buckminster Fuller and Victor Papanek, the pioneers of the Sustainable Revolution, have championed the cause since the previous centuries. Buckminster Fuller believed in doing more with less.

> "Men have felt that they could dispose of annoying accruing substances with which they did not know how to deal with by dispatching them in some cosmic direction, assumedly to be defused innocuously and indefinitely." (Sherin, 2008, p. 16)

Victor Papanek, an industrial designer with ideas ahead of his time, also believed that the designer should possess "the wisdom to anticipate the environmental, ecological, economic, and political consequences of design intervention"(Papanek, 1995). Adding on to that statement, he further questioned,

> "Whether designers, architects, and engineers can be held personally responsible and legally liable for creating tools, appliances, and buildings that bring about environmental deterioration" (Papanek, Design for the real world; human ecology and social change, 1972).

He firmly believed that in all forms of acts of pollution, designers were "implicated at least partially", suggesting a renewed focus on the end user and an obligation to work for the greater good and not just the financial well being of their clients(Papanek, 1972).

Although during their time, both Fuller and Papanek were ridiculed and at worst, forced to resign due to their radical thoughts; those exact ideas about the integration of natural systems, human invention and advocacy for environmental issues begin to resonate ever so clearly in our time and day.

As we are moving towards a consumer-led economy and its impact on climate change, designers can no longer be ignorant of its presence and its impact on shaping our design practices.

So how do we define sustainability in the context of a graphic designer? There are misconceptions, challenges and concerns that sustainable design is an expensive concept that is impossible to achieve, that it should be a job left to the authorities, and at the same time believe that such an effort is unachievable under normal circumstances due to the lack of resources for sustainable design. Other misconceptions show that people believe that products out there cannot be made sustainable, or that products that are labelled 'sustainable' tend to be less productive as compared to normal products. My purpose is to arrest these problems and to debunk them, proving and convincing that sustainable theories are achievable and beneficial to both the consumer and the practicing designer.

Thinking sustainable doesn't entirely mean the reduction of currently unsustainable processes. To elaborate, sustainable design exists to tackle our current existing situations, even as we are concerned about climate change, our technology driven world cannot help but rely on our existing resources, such as electricity for light, water for consumption, daily necessities and raw materials such as metal for accommodation and such. Even if we stopped relying on our resources entirely, the abstinence from the use of such resources could cause a large impact on productivity, crippling the world's finance and economy.

An example we could look at is the meat industry – In the recent news, there has been a green movement campaign by vegans(Supreme Master Tv, 2008), who insist that the total abstinence or reduction in consumption from meat would reduce emission of the greenhouse gases(Juliette, 2008), water consumption(Bluejay), and land. However, as researchers and designers, we have to consider, is such an effort really sustainable? By converting the human population to vegans, we risk causing economical instability. How so? The meat industry uses plenty of fossil fuel, thus relying on workers who work

in cornfields, soy plantations, transportation for the products, so on and so forth(Umbra, 2007), not forgetting employees for fast food chains and steakhouses as well. By reducing meat consumption drastically, we stand a chance of causing massive job losses and bankruptcy of giant corporations. This is what happens when decisions are made haphazardly without consideration of sustainable factors such as socially, economically and environmentally and only focusing on achieving one of its factors and ignoring the rest. Hence, thinking sustainably is needed to consider all these factors to work out a viable solution. By introducing sustainable design, decisions are made to last, for the better of both humans and the environment without short-changing ourselves. From this example, we can conclude that through a sustainable approach, we would then be able to curb our problems and find desirable solutions for the better of the world, our jobs, and humanity.

Another common misconception in the design world that I would like to elaborate about, is to merely use eco-friendly products and labelling it as a sustainable practice. This is not entirely true. To illustrate, I would give this example of creating an invitation card. Simply replacing the card with recycled wood-like paper would do little to help the earth. Why do I say so? No doubt, the practice would reduce the amount of trees being cut down to produce such paper, and by doing so would prolong the life of the recycled paper. However, has the designer considered what the use of the invitation card would be after the invitational process? Could the designer have taken a step by placing a recycling symbol to advise the user to reuse this material? That might work, or not. Depending on the recycling culture the user has, this gesture might be adhered to or ignored.

How about taking it one step further to provide examples of how it could be re-used? Or how about actually allowing the material to be folded and made into a wallet or a usable envelope? What if we totally scrapped the idea of using paper and use cloth instead, so that after the invitational process could be used as a handkerchief for sentimental remembrance? Or perhaps, with the main influx of people going online, we could decide not to use any materials

and opt to go digital instead? Being in a technological driven society has its benefits; at times it would be silly not to use it to our advantage.

Sustainable does not only include the use of eco-friendly products. Instead, it is a careful consideration of choices of what would affect the decision in the long run. It is design that can last, it also involves asking vital questions like – how would it be able to sustain in the long run in areas such as the economy, the environment and socially? How sure are we that these resources we use today in such a manner would still be around in the future? How sure are we that the resources, after being used, is not used to clutter and waste valuable land, but in turn be able to be used fully in another manner?

Although these are fundamental decisions and considerations that designers make, thinking sustainable adds a whole new dimension to the way we think about the way we apply design.

The last misconception I would like to debunk for sustainable, is that the quality of products made from sustainable decisions would be affected adversely. It would have been true back in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, back at the birth of the technological revolution, and where machinery and industrial techniques were still raw and unstable. However, this is no longer a concern in the twenty-first century. Technological advancements have progressed in such a vast manner that depending on the scale of the production; good quality materials through new technology and mass production could be achieved at a low cost. Hence, designers could rest assured that with the right decisions, their sustainable design choices wouldn't affect the quality of their products.

To conclude, practicing sustainability through graphic design would no doubt be a challenge for designers. Yet all it takes is perhaps a re-evaluation of how we have been making our design decisions, whether it is in the choice of media, materials, concepts or processes. – Habits change through constant practice. Yet through this simple change of mindset, we as designers would be able to sustain our practices for the better of our future.

5.0

CHAPTER FIVE

Research Methodologies

5.1.0: Case Study: <u>The Design Revolution</u>

A new and existing trend that has effectively adapted and is thriving in the twenty-first century is 'Design Thinking'. The new frontier for designers that has been establishing its path through the twenty-first century through groundbreaking innovations products such as the iMac and iPhone, upsetting major leaders and giants in the industry such as Microsoft, Nokia and Samsung. In what seems to be a major paradigm shift, these companies, such as Apple, has taken over and is now leading the new frontier in innovation.

Another such case that is closely relevant is the Obama Campaign. Previously seen as an underdog, analysts have concluded that the campaign is no fluke, but a careful consideration of various factors that led to the political party's victory. Hence, closing to the end of the election, it came as no surprise to the world that had expected that Barack Obama would have won the election.

These two examples have some factors that they have in common. Besides both of the subjects mentioned being underdogs, one of the factors that both parties understood were the basic fundamentals of the human factor, the needs for identity, relationships and participation, and hence created a platform to facilitate such goals.

We can see that in through the charismatic delivery of Obama's speech and delivery, the way people were influenced and found that they could heavily identify and resonate with the Obama identity. We saw dialogue between masses, activating and driving a people through real life experiences and the use of social media. We saw how an effective brand identity could identify with individuals and spur them on in pursuit of the same cause. We also saw how building a platform and allowing the participation of a community achieve so much more.

Kenya Hara, when writing in his book *Designing Design*, spoke of a 'sense-driven world' via his concerns and ideals. He believed that design processes should begin not from technology, but instead, from sensory perceptions that would in turn process parallel to various disciplines. (Hara, 2007, p. 145)

Apple Company, is one of the companies that has successfully delivered these ideals, through its products such as the iMac and the iPhone.

For years, computer companies have been fighting tooth and nail for consumers, baiting them with greater technology advances, such as the integration of blue ray and high definition (HD) technology in their computer models, faster processor speeds and multiple functions. Various designs computer models in different colours, shape and forms were also created in a bid to differentiate and sell their products. Yet with its humanistic interface through collaborative efforts, Apple has managed to capture the heart of the consumers. Besides that, through the sharing of the apple platform, it has also managed to allow other developers to tap on the market, creating a collaborative community who benefit just as much. Not forgetting its advertising campaign, which instilled a deep resonance with its consumers through its identity.

Furthermore, Apple has managed to foster a close-knit community of consumers, who not only use the brand, but also represent its voice and identity. A former editor of Windows magazine, Mike Elgan, best represents these through two insightful sentences:

> "Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer is famous for a crazy video in which he yells, I – LOVE – THIS – COMPANY. With Apple, it's the customers who shout that." (Neumeier, Spring 2008)

Its simple yet effective approach proves once again of the success of collaboration, active participation between consumers, understanding the intrinsic need for the human factor, and using the tools of our generation, technology, to solve it.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

> "This trend will continue, and those companies left behind will indeed be left behind." (Sherin, 2008, p. 33)

As technology advancements becomes the driving force behind our economy and the world around us, there is little doubt that it would be here to stay for the centuries to come. However, though our analysis, there is much that the designer can do to thrive in the twenty-first century. The solution is the acceptance of change: that by observing how industrial age thinking has impacted us, our world and our economies would continue in its pursuit of technological advances.

Our challenge as a graphic designer would be to readily adapt to our changing environment, to find the constant in change – which is the human factor, and to reduce our limitations in the design sphere through the exploration of sustainable methods such as collaboration, multi-dimensional design processes, sustainable and eco-friendly practices. As long as the designer does not continue in remaining ignorant, stagnant and change-adverse, the designer would then be able to see the benefits of a changing culture and henceforth, achieve greater depth and scope through the tools of the twenty-first century and beyond.

Being vigilant in studying the new landscape, consumer and tools that we have, we would then be able to further prepare ourselves for the fast-changing culture that resonates throughout the twenty-first century, giving us a value added proposition to our design practices as a change agent and trend setter, allowing us to adapt and survive, granting us an advantage over designers that are change-adverse and slow to change.

As technology and our environment continue to create new and fresh possibilities, this begins a new design revolution in the way designers begin to see and perceive their practices in a new light, creating opportunities and unfolding the way of the changing role of the designer in the 21st century.

APPENDIX

Appendix I: Factors affecting Consumer Choices Questionnaire

Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 43
Total Completed Survey: 43 (100%)

PAGE:

1. Thank you for helping me with this survey! Please begin by indicating your age:

🥧 Create Chart   ⬇ Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
<16		4.7%	2
16-20		20.9%	9
21-29		67.4%	29
30-39		2.3%	1
40-49		2.3%	1
>49		2.3%	1
	answered question		43
	skipped question		0

2. How often do you purchase products?

🥧 Create Chart   ⬇ Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
Often		34.9%	15
Rarely		14.0%	6
Sometimes		37.2%	16
Occasionally		14.0%	6
	answered question		43
	skipped question		0

3. On a scale from 1~5 (1 being the least), what are the factors that inspire you to purchase products?

🥧 Create Chart   ⬇ Download

	1 (least)	2	3	4	5 (most)	Rating Average	Response Count
Pricing: Depends on the cost	0.0% (0)	9.3% (4)	14.0% (6)	34.9% (15)	41.9% (18)	4.09	43
Aesthetics: Looks good and appealing	0.0% (0)	2.3% (1)	14.0% (6)	44.2% (19)	39.5% (17)	4.21	43
Identity: Reflects who I am as an individual	7.0% (3)	14.0% (6)	30.2% (13)	27.9% (12)	20.9% (9)	3.42	43
Novelty: Something new and interesting	4.7% (2)	4.7% (2)	39.5% (17)	27.9% (12)	23.3% (10)	3.60	43
Status: Reflects my status, wealth	55.8% (24)	16.3% (7)	14.0% (6)	9.3% (4)	4.7% (2)	1.91	43
					Others (please specify) Show Responses		4
					answered question		43
					skipped question		0

I

4. Without considering price value, do you believe that design / aesthetics is important in making a choice? (e.g. a sports shoe, a jacket, a teapot)   Create Chart   Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, but it has to work well as well		74.4%	32
Yes, even if it doesn't have a usage, it is good for display and appreciation		18.6%	8
No, it just has to work well		7.0%	3
	Others (please specify)		0
	answered question		43
	skipped question		0

5. Would you support a brand / company and continue purchasing its products and services if you knew that they do not use eco-friendly materials and/or contribute to factors such as wastage and pollution?   Create Chart   Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		23.3%	10
No		23.3%	10
Maybe		53.5%	23
	Others (please specify) Show Responses		3
	answered question		43
	skipped question		0

6. Would you prefer a brand / company where you can get opportunities to get involved in? (e.g. participate in competitions, contribute ideas to their latest products, chat with them on facebook, try out new products)   Create Chart   Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I'm all for it		14.0%	6
Yes, but it depends on whether I support the company		67.4%	29
No, definitely not		18.6%	8
	Other (please specify) Show Responses		1
	answered question		43
	skipped question		0

7. Would you prefer products that are customizable? (e.g. fixed template but allows changes in colour, processors, design, etc.)   Create Chart   Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, but only certain components		44.2%	19
Yes, the more variety the better		48.8%	21
No, it's too complicated, I would prefer a fixed design and components		7.0%	3
	Other (please specify) Show Responses		1
	answered question		43
	skipped question		0

8. Cost and pricing aside, would you prefer products with more functions?   Create Chart   Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, the more functions the better!		23.3%	10
Yes, but a reasonable amount		27.9%	12
Yes, but it depends on the product		48.8%	21
No, too much, too complicating		0.0%	0
	Other (please specify)		0
	answered question		43
	skipped question		0

9. Cost and pricing aside, what are your reasons for previously not purchasing products? (You can select multiple choices for this question)   Create Chart   Download

		Response Percent	Response Count
Inefficient services (e.g. Too slow, too complicated, horrible staff)		76.7%	33
Unfamiliar brand		58.1%	25
Too much variety, hard to choose		30.2%	13
Not relevant, there are too much designs, just not what I want		30.2%	13
Unsupported brand		25.6%	11
Not eco-friendly / sustainable		18.6%	8
Too little variety		18.6%	8
Not customizable		20.9%	9
Lack of need for it		88.4%	38
Bad previous experience with brand products		55.8%	24
Lack of design, looks horrible, plain		72.1%	31
	Other (please specify) Hide Responses		1

1.	It's too common and everyone have one.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 1:19 PM	Find...

10. Last of all, (yes we are almost finishing this survey, thanks to you!)   Create Chart   Download
Price aside, on a rating scale from 1~5, how much do these options appeal to you?

	1 (least)	2	3	4	5 (most)	Rating Average	Response Count
Simplistic design that has a huge variety so that I can mix and match (e.g UniQlo, Zen-like)	0.0% (0)	7.0% (3)	25.6% (11)	37.2% (16)	30.2% (13)	3.91	43
Customizable products that has a fix template yet gives me variety (e.g. iMac)	2.3% (1)	2.3% (1)	30.2% (13)	48.8% (21)	16.3% (7)	3.74	43
Products that are aesthetically pleasing - looks good!	0.0% (0)	4.7% (2)	20.9% (9)	39.5% (17)	34.9% (15)	4.05	43
Eco-friendly, sustainable products	0.0% (0)	7.0% (3)	51.2% (22)	23.3% (10)	18.6% (8)	3.53	43
Durable products that can last	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	11.6% (5)	25.6% (11)	62.8% (27)	4.51	43
Products with good service standards	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (6)	40.5% (17)	45.2% (19)	4.31	42
Products that have good quality	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	21.4% (9)	76.2% (32)	4.74	42
Brands that I can trust - service, values, etc	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	28.6% (12)	69.0% (29)	4.64	42
Products that are relevant and represents me - gives me my identity, individualistic	7.3% (3)	12.2% (5)	22.0% (9)	36.6% (15)	22.0% (9)	3.54	41
What other options appeal to you? Further questions / comments? If you want to leave your contact details so I can thank you or some random message, add them here: Hide Responses							6

1.	Products that are able to inspire or motivate an individual.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 9:31 PM	Find...
2.	Well, u have my contact already(: good luck! sorry it took me sooo long to take this survey.. :P	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 12:44 PM	Find...
3.	You have my facebook and see me in church every day. Distrurb me anytime. My wall open 24 hours,hope my answers will help your research as i had done essay before n i know its hard...... All the best. David. (SES)	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 11:07 PM	Find...
4.	Heeeey Sandra... I like purple if the products are purple it would appeal me even more. :D	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 1:19 PM	Find...
5.	i think question number 2 should have the option to choose "often" because all seems to make me say i dont purchase products often.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 11:01 AM	Find...
6.	Korekimi, over and out!	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 10:38 AM	Find...
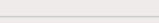
Appendix 2: <u>Factors affecting Consumer Choices Questionnaire</u>

Response Summary

Total Started Survey: 6
Total Completed Survey: 6 (100%)

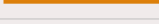PAGE: QUESTIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNER IN THE 21ST CENTURY

1. (Starter) As a practicing designer, what are the concerns you have for the design industry, especially in the 21st century? (You can select multiple choices for this question)   🌐 Create Chart   ⬇ Download

	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of design exposure to consumers	66.7%	4
Lack of sustainable options	33.3%	2
Need for more platforms for collaboration	33.3%	2
Need for more multi-disciplinary designers	50.0%	3
Lack of expression: Confined decisions due to company choices	66.7%	4
Lack of funding	50.0%	3
The need to constantly upgrade for new media / software	50.0%	3
The changing consumer: technologically / information / social media savvy	16.7%	1
Uncertainty over what the consumer wants or needs	16.7%	1
Consumers in a media saturated environment who neglect advertising efforts	33.3%	2
What other concerns do you have regarding the role of a designer and the design industry? *Hide Responses*		2

1.	Lack of comprehensive courses to help designers further their development skills in new media.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 10:51 AM Find...
2.	Too many wannabes to steal our jobs. More and more elementary schools are exposed to design softwares like photoshop and learning more about advertising/typography.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 7:29 PM Find...

answered question	6
skipped question	0

2. Overwhelming choices, the parity of quality and the speed of living has affected the way ⬇ Download consumers view and perceive products and services. With almost everything similar on the shelves and nothing to differentiate except the packaging or brand identity, what do you propose designers should do to change this?

	Response Count
Hide Responses	6

1.	understand consumer's needs through surveys	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 9:29 PM	Find...
2.	A good grounding in the basics of marketing communications is important. Understanding the consumers. Creativity must be directed and relevant in order to be effective.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 10:51 AM	Find...
3.	Almost every product of the same genre offers the same, if not similar featured qualities can be found in the same market. What designers can do is through advertising and proper marketing strategy.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 3:31 AM	Find...
4.	having their own identity means they must have something DIFFERENT from others. they need to look more into their so-called identity. search through themselves and don't copy others.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 9:39 PM	Find...
5.	Boycott commercialism, start up design collectives, design home-made brands, hand-made stationary, notebooks, eco-products.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 7:29 PM	Find...
6.	To change this, more expose should be make. Nothing change overnight and should input into people bit by bit.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 12:36 PM	Find...

answered question	**6**
skipped question	**0**

3. Companies are becoming more eco-conscious and believe in sustainable options. How ⬇ Download has this affected you in practicing design?

	Response Count
Hide Responses	6

1.	i'll have to constantly upgrade myself which I think is good as I can get this opportunity to expose myself to more areas in designing.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 9:29 PM	Find...
2.	Don't think companies are that eco-conscious yet to affect design practices.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 10:51 AM	Find...
3.	More thoughts have to be taken in consideration with the materials used for print and overall marketing strategy.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 3:31 AM	Find...
4.	to ensure that this particular is eco-conscious which will bring the whole package out with some unique identity but i think its kind of repetitive and its going on with the trend...nothing's special about it.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 9:39 PM	Find...
5.	I guess it have affected me on regular basics, sending vitaminwater bottles to recycle bins, looking out for more home-made designs to use as references. Sustainability can be fun yet it helps to make the world a better place a step at a time.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 7:29 PM	Find...
6.	With company getting more eco-coscious, we somehow limit ourselves to the use of layout and color scheme and turn out that every design seem to be the same and hence becoming common.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 12:36 PM	Find...

answered question	**6**
skipped question	**0**

4. In my dissertation, one of the components I am writing about is the emergence of the multi-disciplinary designer: a designer who is able to take on a few disciplines (for example, multimedia, web, perhaps even engineering) to be able to survive in the design world. I believe that the average designer specialist should be able to practice, if not, be able to interface and collaborate between other medias to bring a whole new dimension to graphic design. What are your thoughts on this? ⬇ Download

		Response Count
Hide Responses		6

1. It can be quite tiring, but again i think it is good in a way that I could expose myself to different areas. — Sun, Jan 9, 2011 9:29 PM — Find...

2. In today's design industry, I don't think there is a role which is purely graphic design. The need to be versatile, multi-disciplinary with good communications and marketing skills are a must and are basic requirements to survive. — Sun, Jan 9, 2011 10:51 AM — Find...

3. Jack of all trades, master of none. Period. — Sun, Jan 9, 2011 3:31 AM — Find...

4. being a designer generally means that he/she can be anything. there is no constraint in this field. — Sat, Jan 8, 2011 9:39 PM — Find...

5. In times like this, it's inevitable that designers are taking up multiple roles to cope with the overwhelming demands for more up and going trendy designs. Every year there will be new designers showing up and getting hired for their area of expertise. If we don't keep up, i'm afraid that our roles will be taken up by designers who can do a better job than us. On the other hand, learning more things helps us gain a wider perspective of the design industry, I believe it will help us to mature better as a person as well as a multi-layered designer. — Sat, Jan 8, 2011 7:29 PM — Find...

6. I totally agree with it as no designer can survive with only a single skill even you are very good at it. By having multi skill and knowledge will sure to bring design to the next level. — Sat, Jan 8, 2011 12:36 PM — Find...

	answered question	6
	skipped question	0

5. Do you believe in collaboration with consumers? (e.g. engaging in social media such as facebook to create products for consumers) What are your thoughts on collaborating with consumers? ⬇ Download

		Response Count
Hide Responses		6

1. yes! so that we can understand their needs — Sun, Jan 9, 2011 9:29 PM — Find...

2. It depends on who are your consumers. There is no blanket rule that is absolute. To engage your consumers is an evolving art form. — Sun, Jan 9, 2011 10:51 AM — Find...

3. its beneficial to get feedback from consumers to know what they want and how they feel about the product. — Sun, Jan 9, 2011 3:31 AM — Find...

4. if you want to make it big,why not. — Sat, Jan 8, 2011 9:39 PM — Find...

5. Using platforms like facebook, twitter, they do help in giving consumers a better knowledge of up and coming products. We can make use of this social media platforms to update consumers of the product or company, to inform them of road shows, giveaways and also at the same we as designers can have a better idea of what consumers want nowadays, at a lower budget and faster replies. — Sat, Jan 8, 2011 7:29 PM — Find...

6. I think is a good idea. Having your ideas and design to be spread with the help of media as it have been done over the years. — Sat, Jan 8, 2011 12:36 PM — Find...

	answered question	6
	skipped question	0

VII

6. According to your practice and experience, how would you define your role as a designer?   ↓ Download

		Response Count
Hide Responses		6

1.	Making something out of the norm and stand out in the crowd	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 9:29 PM	Find...
2.	From where I started from as a business graduate, I see it differently as would one from design. I see myself as a trained marketing communications professional providing creative solutions to my clients of which design is just a small part of the whole package.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 10:51 AM	Find...
3.	bringing the consumer to see products in other perspectives and also create awareness.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 3:31 AM	Find...
4.	design is a huge thing. the role of being able to create something zero to something is not an easy task. every design is our babies...and we need other people to appreciate our designs as well. this is the tricky part and i hate it.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 9:39 PM	Find...
5.	My role as a designer is to be a visual/words receptor, to take in as much information as i can like a sponge. Then make use of the information in my designs, be a flexible designer who can change according to environments and projects.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 7:29 PM	Find...
6.	I feel that there is much to learn and explore in this field as it is no limitation in design.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 12:36 PM	Find...

	answered question	6
	skipped question	0

7. Design softwares, new media and an increasing amount of technology and design tools ↓ Download
are constantly upgrading and promoted to the designer, (e.g. Iphones, social media, facebook, Adobe software upgrades, Indesign) causing designers to constantly ponder if they should upgrade their tools or continue with what they have. What are your thoughts on it and how would you suggest tackling this situation?

		Response Count
Hide Responses		6

1.	To me there's a need to constantly upgrade by knowing whats the newest stuff however you may choose the one that you can work comfortably on.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 9:29 PM	Find...
2.	It is always a challenge for designers to catch up with technology. Unfortunately, it is either you do so or become obsolete very soon.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 10:51 AM	Find...
3.	basic fundamental knowledge of design software will never change, its just more features are added, therefore it won't be a huge problem. New media and technology on the other hand are constantly changing and being embraced by masses, therefore creating more opportunities and learning curves for designers to adapt and learn. In this situation, designers need to be constantly be kept in the loop about upcoming technology and new media so as to keep in touch with the consumers on the ground.	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 3:31 AM	Find...
4.	upgrade their tools. you can't stuck on ur own technology forever..its a learning journey everyday...you need to adjust your mindset,move on with the time and upgrade yourself and the stuffs you're doing.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 9:39 PM	Find...
5.	Personally i still believe in designing with our bare hands, the raw materials and then getting our hands dirty. Design is about using our experiences and then including them in our designs. Softwares can be a way to enhance our designs, mix medias, photography. We are the main course, while softwares/social medias are like our condiments, it's how we mix and match to make our designs in our own flavour and style.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 7:29 PM	Find...
6.	Technology is moving fast. But it doesnt make company to pour more money into software upgrade rather they would make use of free media to spread their ideas with the same speed of work.	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 12:36 PM	Find...

	answered question	6
	skipped question	0

8. Thank you for your patience and participation, it is greatly appreciated! Before we round ⬇ Download up this survey, could you indicate your name / contact / job so that I could cite you in my dissertation? If you would like to remain anonymous, please indicate a suggested name with quotes (e.g. "melody") Thank you once again!

	Response Count
Hide Responses	6

1.	hw	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 9:29 PM	Find...
2.	Marcus Lim	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 10:51 AM	Find...
3.	"melody", designer	Sun, Jan 9, 2011 3:31 AM	Find...
4.	"jonne"	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 9:39 PM	Find...
5.	Jean Chen 91881175 Design Student	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 7:29 PM	Find...
6.	Moko	Sat, Jan 8, 2011 12:36 PM	Find...

answered question	**6**
skipped question	**0**

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