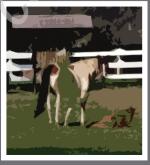
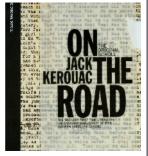
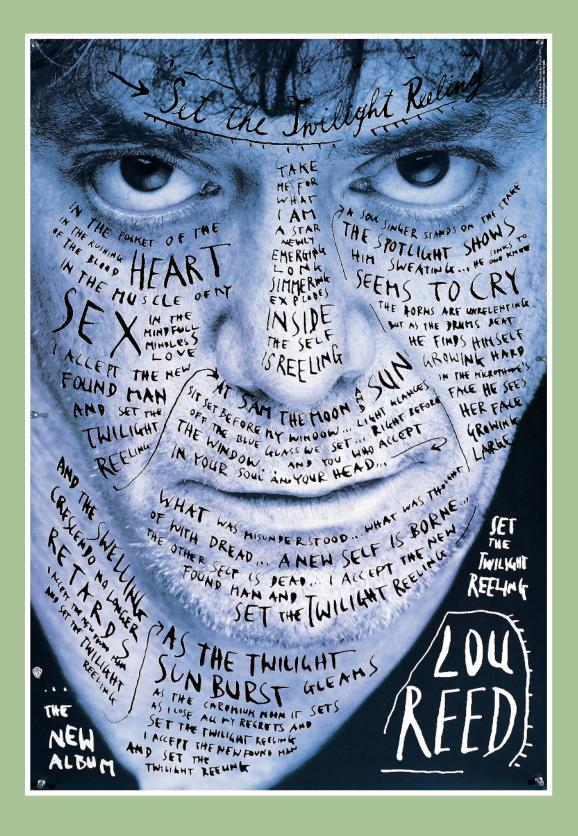
Theory and Principles











CHAPTER 1 Communication Goals

Chapter Objectives

Define graphic communication.

Identify and define communication goals: information, persuasion, education, and entertainment.

What Is Graphic Communication?

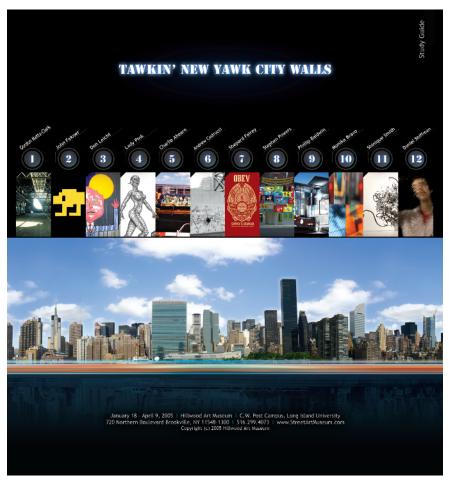
Graphic communication is the result of a long evolution of tools and techniques. That evolution was greatly accelerated by the establishment of modern, industrial societies—and graphic communication itself greatly contributed to modern social and economic development, to the extent that today visual communication is a readily identifiable force in the growth of both Western and Eastern "postindustrial" information economies.

According to historical literature, graphic communication has taken as long as 30,000 years to evolve (Meggs 1998). The role of the visual communicator—and the function of communication—developed slowly: cave paintings done between 15,000 and 10,000 B.C., the invention of writing with pictographs in Mesopotamia (3100 B.C.), the invention of paper and Chinese relief printing (second century A.D.), the rise of late medieval illuminated manuscripts (eighth century A.D.), and the breakthrough of movable type in Europe (1450 A.D.) all contributed to that development. Investigation of communication design over the last century reveals patterns of technological, economic, occupational, spatial, and cultural development that can be attributed to the creation of an information-driven economy and society that relies on communication design and technology for stability and growth.

Although enhanced and changed by modern technology, including software and computers, the basics of communication have essentially remained the same through the millennia. Communication is a process that requires a sender (the designer), a message (information or an effort to persuade), a medium (the delivery platform), and a receiver of that message (the audience). Communication comes in various forms and is delivered in various media, or platforms for communication delivery. These media include all forms of printed paper or material (books, magazines, newspapers, brochures, flyers, signage, and billboards), the Internet, mobile phones and handheld devices, television, radio, CDs and DVDs, videos, video games, and films. Media transmitted to mass audiences is called mass media; it includes television, film, recordings, mobile technology, magazines, books, the Internet, and radio. Conversely, a brochure, part of a collection of collateral material, may only be seen by a few people.

Communication and media futurist Marshall McLuhan theorized that "the medium is the message," meaning that we absorb and judge messages based on how they are delivered (Benedetti and deHart 1997). If we see an advertisement in a newspaper, we initially perceive it as factual simply because it comes to us via

the mass media. Then, we step back and decipher the message to determine if it can be trusted, and to what level it can be absorbed and used by us; this process is part of media literacy. In all forms of communication, judicious design and professional production values therefore become vital to the success of a message. The final product—how it looks and performs visually—becomes a factor in the value of the communication and how it meets its goal. The content, design, and medium (output) make up the complete message, and each has an effect on the communication's perceived credibility and persuasiveness.



FIGURES 1-1, A and B (overleaf) This brochure and Web page for the Tawkin' New Yawk City Walls art exhibit combines panoramic photographs of New York City with classic graffiti stencil type that is lit up like a sign in Times Square. The copy takes a stab at the stereotypical New York accent. The exhibit's theme is that the walls of New York City are always talking to us through street art and design. Design by Jeewon Shin.









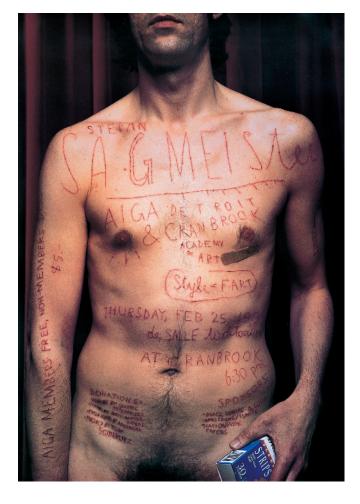
Communication can be written, as with copywriting and poetry. It can be visual, as with graphic design and fine art. It can be verbal, as with speech or song, or nonverbal, as with body language, dance, or instrumental music. This book focuses on visual communication and production in print (i.e., on paper) and on the Web.

The goals of such messages are to inform, to persuade, to educate, or to entertain. These goals overlap in many instances, but ultimately we plan communication vehicles such as brochures, Web sites, advertisements, commercials, animations, posters, flyers, books, magazines, video games, films, newspapers, and presentations with one specific goal in mind. For example, a children's site could have the specific communication goal of educating children

in math techniques. That central goal may be enhanced by using entertainment in the content of the site—for example, interactive games and animation that explain math techniques in a fun, engaging way. A newspaper attempts to deliver news that informs the reader quickly and efficiently by using headline text, charts, and graphs. When newspapers print sensual or shocking images, although the main goal may be to inform, the effect may be also to elicit an emotional response from readers.

Paul Martin Lester (2006, 50–51) outlined two ways that we process communication: sensually and perceptually. These differing pathways have been studied by scientists and other researchers. The sensual process, that which leads from sensation to visual communication, occurs when our eyes see visual forms and our brain takes the sensations (visual input) and makes a coherent image (also known as a gestalt). Perceptual processing occurs

FIGURE 1-2 Sensual: American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Detroit poster designed by Stefan Sagmeister. Arresting imagery is used to convey the message that creating design can be painful. Art direction by Stefan Sagmeister.

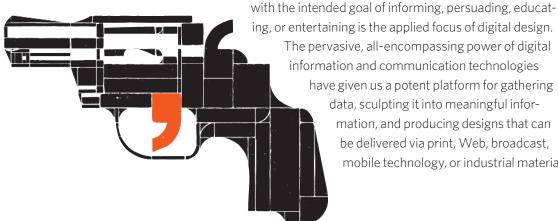


when our brains make immediate meaning from an image we see, such as that of a traffic light. The gestalt principle states that we see the whole before we identify the parts. Our brains separate wholes into parts to establish a figure (foreground) and a ground (background). When we can visually stabilize the parts into a whole image and identify figure and ground, we can make visual sense of an image. Combining images creates new meanings from the identification of associated symbols.

Perception to visual communication occurs when we see images beyond the sensations and assign them complex meanings. An approach to understanding perception is semiotics, the study of signs. Signs have complex cultural meanings and can be seen in three ways: iconic, indexical, and symbolic (Lester 2006, 52-57). We are guided by iconic signs in everyday life: iconic signs are intended to be true representations of what they present—such as a photograph. Indexical signs have a logical connection to what they represent, such as dark clouds as a sign of stormy weather or falling snow as a sign of winter. Symbolic signs forge a cultural or social connection between an image or object and what it represents. Therefore, symbolic signs take on different meanings for different audiences—as in the case of a flag, monument, or style of dress.

As designers, we create a series of signs each time we create imagery. Our focus on the goals of a communication helps ensure that we create meaningful, simple, and understandable signs. Creating thoughtful communication requires researching the audience, recognizing its cultural and societal viewpoints, and delivering simple, clear messages that connect with its need or ability to be informed, persuaded, educated, and entertained. Indeed, using communication

FIGURE 1-3 Perceptual: This poster for Neenah Paper uses a single punctuation mark—an apostrophe—to symbolize the gun's trigger. The deeper meaning is that the apostrophe is responsible for letter elimination. Art direction by Stefan Sagmeister.



The pervasive, all-encompassing power of digital information and communication technologies have given us a potent platform for gathering data, sculpting it into meaningful information, and producing designs that can be delivered via print, Web, broadcast, mobile technology, or industrial material.

Information

What Is Information?

Information is a raw material of—and core ingredient in—all designs and is part of all communication goals. Information is gathered in myriad ways and then adapted to fit the goal of the communication—whether to inform, persuade, educate, or entertain. We must have information in order to create a design.

Information is structured data. Data consists of random bits and pieces that can be seen all around us and can be gathered. We process data to create information that has meaning and contextualizes our reality. Numbers are a great example of data. Random numbers have little meaning to us, but when they are placed in a context, such as a birthday, on a player's uniform, or in a name (such as Louis XIV), they become information with meaning.

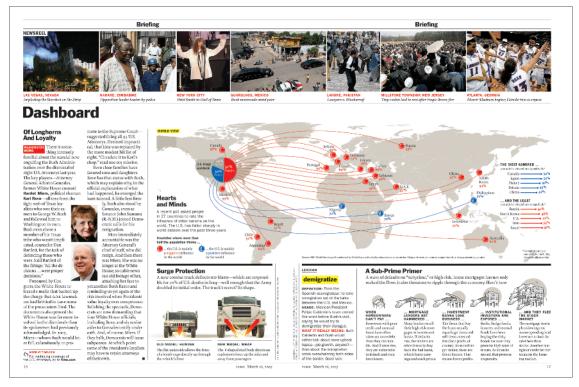


FIGURE 1-4 In this redesign of *Time* magazine, the infographic transforms data into meaningful information through thoughtful illustration and the dominance of some design elements over others. Design by Luke Hayman.

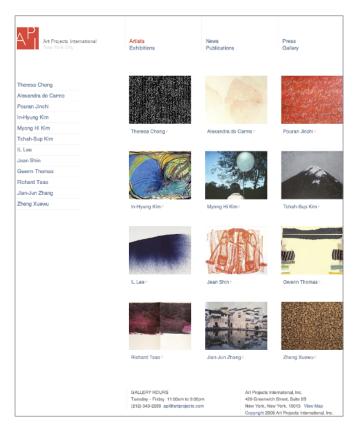


FIGURE 1-5 This Web page for Art Projects International provides small multiples of information in the form of symmetrical thumbnails to unify the visual as a whole. Design by Kind Company.

Information design arranges chunks of data and information to inform the viewer. Information-focused designs communicate to us each day as we stop at a stop sign, read a train schedule, or watch the weather report on the evening news. Information designs are seen in newspapers, newscasts, calendars, timelines, charts, corporate reports, news Web sites, and instructional materials.

The meaning attached to information design can be purposeful, as in a campus map, or it may be lifesaving, as in an emergency exit sign. Information design must have high fidelity in meaning and visual strength in execution-because it guides the viewer during action. People must navigate through a Web site in order find information (text, photos, video, and audio content). Similarly, when read-

ing a newspaper, people must navigate through various articles and sections in order to find information (stories, box scores, and ads) meaningful to them. Although there is an element of curiosity (looking for things) and discoverability (finding things) in print and Web interactions, information design—both for print and the Web—works to guide a viewer toward meaning as quickly as possible. In print design, the message must be read, understood, and processed by the viewer so it can be acted upon. This is known as legibility. In Web design, it is known as usability. The concepts of legibility and usability are discussed further in part 2 of this book.

Principles and Goals: Design for Information

When creating designs for information, decisions related to what viewers want—and what they need to be informed—become critical to success, and smart choices must be made based on the product definition, the audience, the

environment, the development tools, and available raw materials. Decisions about text, images, and technology, which are needed to develop and deliver the message, should always be planned out.

Structure is the key component in information graphics (also known as infographics); achieving the proper gestalt (unification of the parts) leads to understanding on the part of the viewer or user. Therefore, information designers frequently use fact boxes, tables, diagrams, and illustrations. In his classic text *Envisioning Information*, Edward Tufte describes the flat, two-dimensional paper or video/computer screen media used in information design as "flatland." "Escaping flatland," states Tufte, is a key goal in designing the presentation of information (Tufte 1990, 12). He promotes information density (quantity) and resolving power (clarity) in information design. He suggests the following principles to help escape flatland and build meaningful designs for information:

 Micro/macro readings represent information that is rich in detail and in overall structure. Micro refers to critical information that is read carefully to extract meaning. Macro refers to the larger whole that contains the micro components. We frequently see micro/macro readings in maps, flowcharts, blueprints, timetables, and monuments.



FIGURE 1-6 This spread from the book *100 Baseball Icons* shows how composition can be used to present a rich overall structure (macro) using detailed visual components (micro). Design by Kit Hinrichs.

Layering and separation represent an informational structure through overlapping elements, grids, margins, and white space. We frequently see layering and separation in Web pages, charts and graphs, catalogs, ads, magazines, newspapers, books, and brochures.

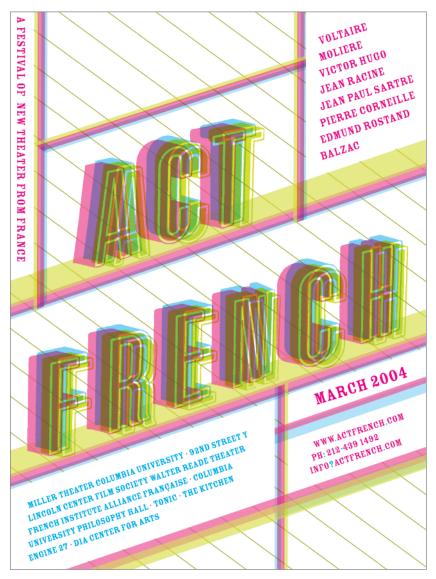


FIGURE 1-7 The Act French poster design uses layering of type and creates separation using line and space. Design by Julia Hoffmann.

 Small multiples represent information using repetition, consistency, mimicry, and iconic representation. We frequently see small multiples in instruction manuals, road maps, posters, computer interfaces, data tables, and charts.

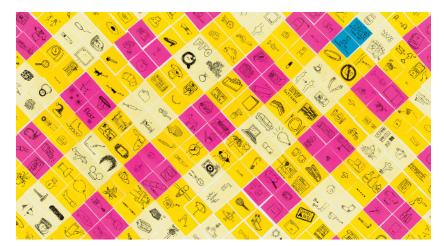


FIGURE 1-8 This wrapping paper for AIGA presents a fun overall visual structure using patterning. Smaller, detailed images create micro structures that can be viewed independently, which is also fun. Design by Julia Hoffmann.

Color provides hierarchical value, sensation, contrast, and visual texture.¹
 Color is a fundamental component of all design.



FIGURE 1-9 The Alvin Lustig history site by Kind Company uses black and white and warm colors to separate sets of visuals and information and to establish a stylized retro mood. Design by Kind Company.



FIGURE 1-10 This poster for the 2007 Shakespeare Festival uses sensual colors to evoke the feeling of love. Design by Paula Scher.

Persuasion

What Is Persuasion?

The notion of persuasion is essential to many scholars' definitions of communication. David Berlo's definition of communication states, "All communication behavior has as its purpose the eliciting of a specific response from a specific person (or group of persons)" (Berlo 1960, 16).

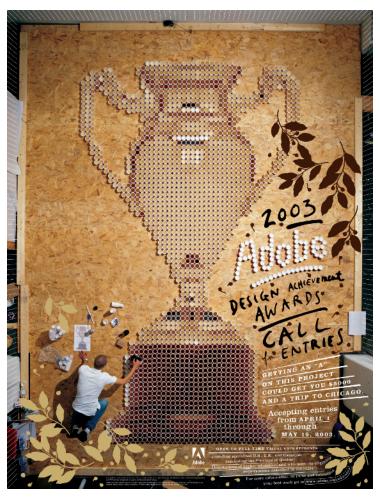


FIGURE 1-11 This advertising poster for the Adobe Student Design Competition depicts a designer creating an award-winning work out of paper cups (real coffee was used). This emotional approach targets the design student who identifies with carefully crafted work and caffeine, as many do. Art direction by Stefan Sagmeister. Design by Matthias Ernstberger.

Persuasion is central to all communication, especially digital design, and particularly as it is applied to advertising. Information is converted into persuasive arguments during the advertising creative process (White 2007, 11). Persuasive arguments provide controlled messages that highlight features, advantages, benefits, and a unique selling proposition to a target audience. Persuasion is attempted by delivering rational appeal (using factual argument) or emotional appeal (using values, opinions, and attitudes) to bring someone to action. Action comes in the form of buying a product or service, subscribing to an idea, donating to a public service organization, or voting for a political candidate.







FIGURE 1-12 The pieces of a standard corporate identity package are the business card, letterhead, and envelope. This design mark uses repetition, shape, and color to convey a visualization of science and media. Art direction by Stefan Sagmeister. Design by Matthias Ernstberger.

FIGURE 1-13 For the Barron's logo, designer Milton Glaser married a strong illustration with reversed serif type that leaves no question about the brand name or the company focus on book publishing. Design by Milton Glaser. Courtesy Milton Glaser Studio.

Brands, an essential tool in persuasion, are "created in the mind," according to Walter Landor

> (Wheeler, 2003). Brands become the icons that customers look for when purchasing

> > products. Built around symbolic logos, brands evolve into identities recognizable to consumers. The designer works to establish a visual icon—a logo—that represents the brand and creates a channel of persuasion built on trust

and recognition. We recognize and connect to certain brands as they become iconic, indexical, or symbolic to us. The look of the corporate identity is critical in representing the company and its products and services.



FIGURE 1-14 Paula Scher quickly made visual sense of the Travelers merger with Citibank. She effortlessly mocked up the concept on a napkin during the pitch meeting. Design by Paula Scher.



FIGURE 1-15 The Citi logo. Photo by John DiMarco

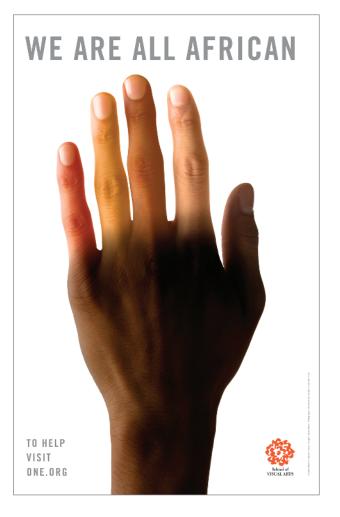
Principles and Goals: Design for Persuasion

Our goal as designers who create persuasive documents is simple in theory, but quite challenging in practice. We must use type, image, and multimedia to bring the viewer to an understanding of the message and a desire to act upon it. We want the viewer to understand the feature, advantage, or benefit we are presenting. We want the viewer to agree to the unique selling proposition we are pitching through the visuals we present in our persuasive designs.

Certain elements of persuasive designs have resonance in the human mind. A design cannot be persuasive if it cannot be understood. Concentrate on one idea for each persuasive communication. Follow these suggestions in your print and Web designs to increase their persuasive value:

FIGURE 1-16 A digitally created, thought-provoking visual dominates this poster, "We Are All African," which forges a persuasive message. Design by Milton Glaser.

- Do research on the audience and the competition to put you in the viewer's situation.
- Use arresting or thought-provoking images (photos or illustrations) that act as a magnet for the viewer's eyes.
- Use display type (which is larger and more dominant than the body text) that draws the reader in. Create visually dominant attention-seeking headlines.
- Explain and clarify features, advantages, and benefits in highly legible body copy.
- Use grids to arrange elements in order of importance.
- Use size to clarify meaning and create visual hierarchy.
- Use color to attract attention, group elements, indicate meaning, and enhance aesthetics (Lidwell et al. 2003, 38).
- Keep messages and visual elements simple so recognition is quick.
- Use themes to connect with the audience.



Education

What Is Education?

Simply stated, education is the process of transferring knowledge and skills. Instructional design is also known as designing for education and is also used in designing for training. The goal of education design is to translate learning objectives (lessons) into measurable outcomes for the learner. Connecting a lesson-based communication into a learning experience requires instructional design; the designer must create engaging, understandable chunks of communication that guide the viewer toward comprehension, application, criticism, and synthesis of something that is new. We see design for education in textbooks (such as this one) and children's books, online learning objects (such as interactive games and activities), educational brochures (like the one at your dentist on how to properly brush your teeth), educational television and videos (Sesame Street and Blue's Clues, for example), posters, classroom teaching materials, and e-learning courses for academic credit or corporate training.

FIGURE 1-17 E-learning is used to educate employees at Canon. This screenshot from Canon and the Imaging Industries e-learning course uses small multiples and chunks to deliver the history of the organization. Design by John DiMarco.

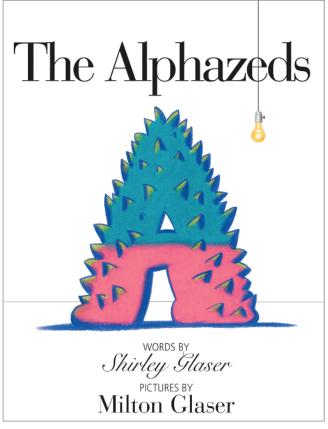


Principles and Goals: Design for Education

In their book *Universal Principles of Design*, Lidwell, Holden, and Butler answer the question, How can I help people learn from a design? The authors provide some fundamental sections on how a designer can enhance the learning experience for the viewer.

- Use chunks (small units) of information in designs. Chunking involves combining many units of information into smaller units, or chunks, so it is easier to remember the information (Lidwell et al. 2003, 30). Using bulleted lists, tables, and short paragraphs of text helps the learner grasp topics and avoid overload when absorbing new information.
- Use hierarchy in designs for education. Using trees, nests, and stairs in educational graphics helps the viewer make relationships to the material presented and emphasizes the importance of each element (Lidwell et al. 2003, 104).
- Pursue legibility at all costs in design for education, because it is critical to understanding. Legibility ensures that items are as clear and simple as possible so that the viewer can digest the information without questions. Using contrast, space, type, and images consistently helps build legibility in your education designs.
- Use mental models to illustrate concepts that involve user experience and how something works (Lidwell et al. 2003, 130). Use real-life models if available and appropriate, but do not use models that are not specific to the task. The design should incorporate the real event and the expected outcome in order to create scenario-based learning. Mental models are used in simulations. For

FIGURE 1-18 Children's books are educational design projects. They require the designer to focus on using communication to educate and entertain through design and, most importantly, illustration. Design and illustration by Milton Glaser.



- example, flight simulators teach pilots how to use aviation instrumentation without being in planes. For the designer to understand the model and to grasp key interactions, he or she should use the model in real life first, before—as well as during—the design process, if possible.
- Use progressive disclosure in education and instructional designs to manage complex information so that it is displayed only at the necessary time (Lidwell et al. 2003, 154). Give viewers only what they need to learn at that particular moment. New, more complex information should be discovered upon request or after simpler information is digested. In print design, progressive disclosure is seen in footnotes, appendices, and instructions. Instruction manuals guide the reader toward learning about a product by revealing more complex features as the reader gets deeper into the manual's contents. In Web design, progressive disclosure is seen by clicking a button labeled More or Next. Web-based training, also known as e-learning, uses progressive disclosure to pace the learner through the materials and to give relevance to each chunk of information being presented.

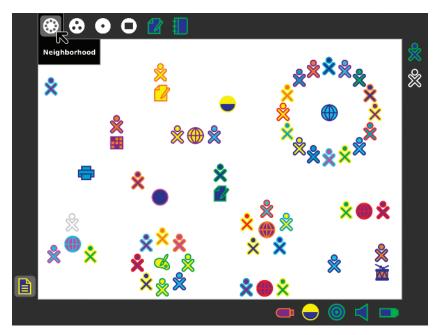


FIGURE 1-19 The Sugar interface design for the One Laptop per Child Foundation is built for intuitive operation and uses a mental model to represent neighborhoods. Design by Lisa Strausfeld.

Entertainment

What Is Entertainment?

Dictionary.com defines entertainment as "something affording pleasure, diversion, or amusement, esp. a performance of some kind." Design for entertainment is seen in fine art, television programs, plays, animation (for TV, Web, and gaming), video games, films, books, magazines, movies (on television or the Web), e-books, and digital video on the Web.

Principles and Goals: Design for Entertainment

Entertainment design requires focus on creating an art form that has the ability to engage the viewer or listener to appreciate a product emotionally and intellectually (Pramaggiore and Wallis 2008, 3). The basic framework of items that you would need to focus on when designing for entertainment are:

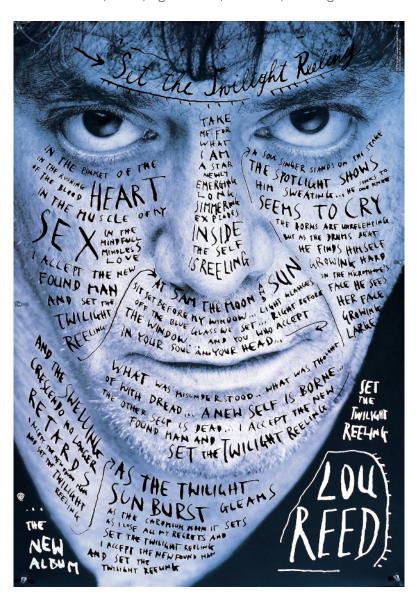
- Narrative or documentary (the story and the writing: fiction or nonfiction)
- Cinematography (the camera work: shot setups, framing, lighting)
- Staging (the set design: stage or screen)
- Audio (dialogue and sound effects)
- Characters (the talent: actors or animations)
- Visuals (titling, images, special effects)
- Style (the look and feel of the details)
- Delivery medium (television, print vehicle, Web site, DVD, video, CD-ROM, movie theater, stage, concert hall).

FIGURE 1-20 The A&E Web site is built to entertain and persuade the viewer to explore the program offerings and visit the site's banners and links.



Entertainment design as a visual product (not a manuscript of text only) relies upon images and narrative to create connection with the viewer. The digital design of visual entertainment content is seen extensively in works with moving images, such as movies and animations. Entertainment design is also seen in the packaging of entertainment content and news, such as posters, CD and DVD covers, books, digital videos, Web sites, and magazines.

FIGURE 1-21 This poster for recording artist Lou Reed's album Set the Twilight Reeling uses handwritten typography over a tightly cropped photograph of the artist to transfer the personal emotions embedded in the lyrics. Art direction and design by Stefan Sagmeister.



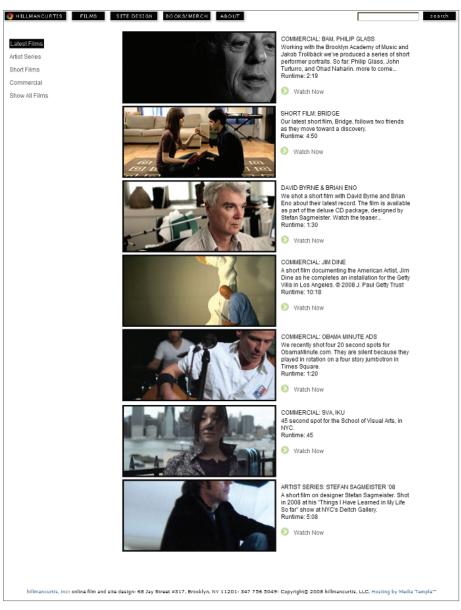


FIGURE 1-22 The Hillman Curtis Web site is a functional business promotion site as well as an entertainment portal showcasing short films shot and designed for both Web and broadcast output. Design by designer and filmmaker Hillman Curtis.

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Notes

- 1. Holtzschue (2006, 30) writes that sensation is the body's response to stimulus.
- 2. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/entertainment