study  lecture  travel  social  resco  misc
Ancient Berber writing reads from right to left in horizontal lines moving up the page. Ancient Greek writing reads to left on alternating lines. Ancient Hebrew scripts read from right to left in horizontal lines moving down the page. Ancient Chinese writing reads down in vertical lines moving from right to left across the page. Western societies traditionally read from left to right in horizontal lines moving down the page. Ancient Egyptian writing is read from left to right in lines moving down the page. Most of the world's written traditions read down in vertical lines from right to left.
In Neil’s morning session we examine what is meant by the term ‘research for creative practice.’ The solution to a problem can sometimes come from a basic general knowledge rather than through extensive research, a good example being Harry Beck’s London Underground diagram which was a result of his experience as an electrical engineer and his familiarity with circuit diagrams. We also discuss cultural boundaries and how as a western society we read a page from left to right and from top to bottom. This applies not only to the way we arrange text but also to the way we design and organise our spaces.

In the afternoon we are asked by John to think about what is influencing us as designers at the moment. Our task is to visualise the world that supports and surrounds our practice and then present it creatively next week. It could be people, places, films, furniture or anything that is around me that I find important.
I spend the morning in the University Library researching issues surrounding corporations attitudes to the environment. I will record my findings in a note book and keep records of books and page numbers to help me revisit relevant material later. A particularly relevant book I discover is, ‘Beyond Branding,’ (2003 by Nicholas Ind). It suggests that despite old fashioned beliefs a company does not control the life of the brand, the customer does. Good corporate citizenship can have a positive impact on a brands reputation and improve consumer trust. Brands will adopt more responsibility for their actions in future. Another book, ‘Wally Olins; On Brand,’ (2004) is an interesting view from a practitioners perspective. It covers many branding case studies including the transformation of Shell from an uncaring brand before the Brent Spar incident into a listening, caring organisation with concern for the environment.

I have my first meeting with Chris in the afternoon and introduce my project. He speculate that this project could become a guide book for companies to work to in order to create successful brands. He suggests I critically analyse big brands and I begin by researching the financial reports. He also recommends I search for the comedian Mark Thomas and his routines involving Coca-Cola.
We all discuss our projects individually with John and I show him my top 20 brands represented by their logos that I have arranged. He suggests that instead of arranging them randomly as I have done I should consider organising them by category, grouping and resizing them against different variables to understand why I value these brands in particular. This could be due to their performance quality, value for money, commitment to different communities or other ethical considerations so that I can begin to unpick why brand are so interesting. Data mapping techniques could be used to present my findings and communicate what brands are achieving against what they are promising. I could also try using questionnaires to investigate different groups of peoples attitudes to brands, and find answers to questions such as, ‘do older people value brands more than younger generations?’
Following on from the discussion with John yesterday I begin to rearrange my top brands and plot them against different axes based on how I perceive them and whether I value them for their customer care, environmental considerations, etc. I plot my personal relationship with these brands against how I perceive their commitment to the environment and see a clear trend, but I see no visible pattern when I repeat this to show how reliable I believe these brands to be which I find surprising. These charts are only a snapshot of my feelings about brands at the time of making them and I feel they would have far more value if I was able to use data collected from a range of respondents.

I begin to investigate when these brands began trading and soon have a lot of factual information which I used to create a diagram in the shape of a spiral. This shape emphasizes the large number of brands created in recent times against relatively few in the 1800s. This is later shown to the group which interests some members. Many were surprised to see how long some companies like Nokia and Nintendo have been operating and agreed it was interesting to see how the two World Wars affected the types of brands being created around that time.
In the Library I investigate the use of third party seals of approvals and how brands are using these to boost sales. While in the past these were most often used to prove evidence of a product’s safety such as the British Kitemark or the Lion Mark on children’s toys they are now more widely used to promote their products on an ethical level and aim to differentiate themselves from a rival. The most recognisable at the moment is probably the Fairtrade mark, which shows that a brand and the consumer buying it is willing to pay a little bit more so that suppliers get paid a respectable wage. Events such as Fairtrade Fortnight and its presence in the marketing from some retailers has helped raise it’s profile. Others include The Rainforest Alliance and The Carbon Footprint Trust marks that show consideration for the environment. Energy saving marks such as Energy Star are said to be extremely important when Americans buy new electrical goods. Associating your product with Weight Watchers means your product is instantly seen to be healthier than the competitions, although McDonald’s has recently attracted criticism for including this mark on some of its products in New Zealand. I consider the possibility of developing a new mark for an untapped niche, but I am unable to think of any that has not been covered before.
Yesterday while researching third party marks I found the sales figures of Fairtrade products in the UK over the last decade. These were presented as statistics in a table found on the Fairtrade organisation’s web site. I was able to quickly drag this information into a spreadsheet document and create a stacked bar chart and this allowed the data to be assimilated far more quickly. Although it does lack the precision of the raw data this method would have been a much better way to display the information to the general public on their website. The sales cotton products actually fell slightly in 2009 and this is far more visible when the data is presented in a visual form. I began using parts of this data to produce a range of responses that communicate Fairtrade sales in different ways and I would later show these to the group to gain feedback of the aesthetic qualities and gauge how successful they were as communication pieces.

16/10/10
2001
2000
1999
1998
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
In the evening I continue to visualise the sales of Fairtrade products to make this information more appropriate for a general audience. I want to make the visual representations relevant to their subject and so try to use coffee imagery when showing sales of coffee products. The challenge is communicate this data effectively while finding a creative way to do this and while not all of my designs are successful at doing both the group would later decide that this version on the opposite page was the most appropriate.

I continue making notes from books I have borrowed from the University Library this week. ‘A Branded World,’ (2003 by Michael Levine) examines the advertising, marketing and public relations behind branding and uses case studies such as McDonald’s around the time of the Super Size Me documentary, the introduction of New Coke and Steve Jobs return to Apple to show how big brands can reinvent themselves. It uses the term ‘soul branding’ to explain the rise of new types of brands. The Body Shop and Ben & Jerry’s have found success by developing an emotional connection with their customers.
preparation for major project

christmas

major project

easter

dissemination
Neil’s session today is taken by Mike. Using the handouts provided we discuss research ‘behind’ creative practice. It is important to know what has happened before in our practice, if only so that we don’t repeat ourselves and learn from mistakes. Different psychology terms such as cognitive, behavioural, psychodynamic and gestalt are discussed.

John introduces us to the course structure and explains how our study will be split across the three semesters. We are also introduced to the Learning Plan that we will create for our project. We are asked to begin and write a couple of paragraphs for each of the three stages, the preparation, doing and reflection as well as make a list of books that will be relevant and I intend to read through my study. We are also asked to present our Contextual Reviews we have been preparing. I have brought in some information graphics from Interbrand’s top 100 brand report which I fell communicate information in a visually engaging way. This is a great opportunity to see what everyone else is doing for their project.
I spend the majority of the day in the University Library trying to draft my Learning Plan sections. I find this an extremely frustrating and annoying process as I still don't really know what direction my project will take at this point. I find it difficult enough to write about what I intend to do in the preparation stage let alone what it is I will be producing and disseminating later on in the year. Overall I feel at this point I am wasting my time and could be making much better use of my day by doing something creative. I find the Marketing Week section and begin going through the articles and making notes on articles I feel may be relevant to my project. In the evening I begin reading ‘Belching Out the Devil: Global Adventures with Coca-Cola’ (2009 by Mark Thomas). I have bought this book because a lot of his material I wanted to see has been removed from YouTube and 4oD which I assume is Coca-Cola’s doing. The book tackles issues that the drinks company wouldn’t want its customers to hear and takes a similarly cynical view of brands as ‘No Logo,’ but many of the issues raised here are connected with Coca-Cola in the past, such as their involvement with the Nazis. Overall I find the majority of its claims made in this book to be either speculative or irrelevant. Later I would investigate the sugar content from drinks marketed at children. Using 100ml as a standard amount I demonstrate using information graphics which have the most sugar present.
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After my attempts last weeks to organise and categorise different brands according to my own personal opinions I decide to gather the thoughts and opinions from other people. I am keen to know what brands other people like and dislike and more importantly how important they feel it is for brands to show consideration for the environment and other people, etc. I design a questionnaire with 10 brands, for each one I create a series of statements asking the participant to consider among other things the quality of its products, its environmental concern and treatment of its suppliers. Participants were asked to agree or disagree on a scale of 5. My first test subject got the tick boxes muddled up and I also found that many of the answers were falling into the centre column of neither agree or disagree. Johns advice was to remove this centre column to force participants into having an opinion. He also suggests getting in contact with Barrie who runs the third year Graphic Design course to have his students help by acting as participants in future surveys. I later return to the Library and borrow some books about questionnaire design.
shows consideration for the environment
Following on from yesterday’s trial questionnaires I design a new version. With the centre column now removed from the agreement scale, participants must either agree or disagree to some extent with each statement. The disagree boxes have been all shaded red and the agree boxes all shaded green to avoid the confusion issue from before. I also change some of the brands as I felt some were too similar. The Body Shop now replaced Waitrose to join Tesco and Starbucks replaces Burger King to join McDonald’s and both Coca-Cola and Pepsi have been replaced with car manufactures Toyota and Peugeot. I am hopeful these changes will provide a wider range of responses. My original intention was to only feature two brands in each questionnaire as I am aware that people think that their time is precious and I do not want to bother them for too long, but yesterday John was keen that I had all ten on one sheet and was confident that once people understood the way it flowed it would only take a few extra minutes to finish. I would later use the information gathered to attempt to identify whey people like the brands that they do. The graph on the left shows that a brands environmental concern does not appear to affect peoples relationship with it.
willingness to use the brand
I use my brother as a test subject for my latest questionnaire. He is unfamiliar with the work I am doing at the moment however he was able to complete it relatively quickly without any confusion. Satisfied with the design I take fifteen copies of my questionnaire to Tesco with me and hope I can get a few of my colleges to fill some in while I am at work. I was anticipating people who I have known and worked with for some time would show a little more enthusiasm however it was quite a struggle to convince many people to help me by filling one in. Many people seemed concerned that they did not know enough about the brands selected to make a proper decision. I assured them that in depth knowledge of these brands was not necessarily as I was more interested in their personal perceptions based on the marketing they have been exposed to and that the results will be valuable to me in many ways. By the time I finish I have just four surveys completed. I would later use the results gathered from all the completed surveys to visualise the data. The chart to the left shows that there dose appear to be a connection between how much a person is willing to use a brand based on the value for money it offers, although Apple and Starbucks are anomalies here.
performs reliably and consistently

willingness to use the brand

agrees

performs reliably and consistently

disagree
The questionnaires were again taken to Tesco and I get a further five filled out. One thing I did notice from today and yesterday was that most participants are filling it out reading down the page in two columns rather than from left to right across the top as intended. As the brands are grouped in pairs side by side many people did not realise this. I also feel that some of the terminology I have used is too complex for most people to fully understand and I even feel the term ‘brand’ may be a difficult concept for many people to grasp. In future I need to use simpler terms and explain things more when needed. I also feel that the repetition in my questionnaire did not help at all. I was hoping that by repeating the same questions for ten different brands the participant could complete many questions relatively quickly, but the people I observed filling it out never seemed to get into a flow and each one took a lot longer than I anticipated. I also got the impression that the wording for one of the questions was being interpreted differently from what I had intended, it asks how much consideration companies show for the environment. Many people commented that an oil company can never be environmentally friendly, however I intended for there to be a difference between being environmentally friendly and environmentally conscious. While I am not too hopeful about the results I will obtain from this process I have leaned a lot things that I can to address in future surveys.
I am happy to use this brand and associate it with myself.

I believe this brand will become stronger over the next 10 years.

Brands mentioned:
- Tesco
- Toyota
- Microsoft
- BP
- McDonald's
- The Body Shop
- Peugeot
- Apple
- Shell
- Starbucks
Today was the final day I asked for people to help me with my questionnaires and I faced the same problems I had experienced from the previous two days. I really didn’t have very high expectations for the results I would obtain from this exercise however I was pleasantly surprised that I was able to identify trends in my findings. To do this I disseminated my data by producing a series of charts to highlight patterns. The logos were arranged vertically with the ones at the top being the ones people liked the most overall. By assigning them colours against a key I can identify patterns for different criteria quickly and effectively. I have included a selection of these in this log book over the last few days, the first shows that people don’t appear to care about a brand’s consideration for the environment, the next one however shows there is a general desire for brands to offer good value for money. The most striking observation I made was for the statement that asks about a brand’s ability to perform reliably and constantly as there was a very clear trend here. I conclude that although many people may appear to demand that brands act ethically, they are actually more concerned with what is being offered for them. Overall I find this a valuable exercise as I have learned a lot about both about people’s attitudes to brands and the whole process of questionnaires and disseminating information.
design is beauty
design is function
neil
In Neil’s morning session we discuss ‘art vs. design.’ We were each asked for our own definition for the term ‘design’ to which I reply, ‘something that has been considered.’ This definition seemed appropriate in the discussion which followed and I was satisfied with this response. When asked about the term ‘art’ I suggested ‘something designed to evoke a response.’ In hindsight I am less sure about the appropriateness of this definition as it suggests all art has been designed however it was clear by the groups other responses that this was a more challenging term to define. When asked to name a bad piece of design I mentioned a vegetable peeler I have had experience with that was completely useless functionally. Most others selected similar examples but interestingly a few picked objects that were lacking aesthetic qualities. Design is perhaps too often associated with a products ability to function, objects created to be beautiful should also be regarded as well design pieces.

John introduced us the Personal Progress files we are required to fill out before each mentor session to record our progress and then talks to us about language in design.
I begin to investigate different brands attitudes to their corporate social responsibility (CSR). I begin by downloading CSR reports from a range of brands including retailers, electronic and car manufactures and was initially hoping to make direct comparisons between some of the brands from the statistics I hoped to obtain. However I found very few cases where direct comparisons could be made as each company seemed to only present a small snapshot of data that portrayed them in a favourable way. Instead I decided to skim read each one and list the topics each covered in the most detail. After reading about 30 reports I had a snapshot of each brands main attitudes to their CSR. Tesco for example seem to address a large number of issues from environment, sourcing sustainably and healthy choices. John Lewis seems more focused with how it treats its own people, its customers and surrounding communities. It was also interesting to see how seriously different brands take their CSR. Some have a link to their CSR report from the home page, others have it tucked away deeper into the website. A few didn’t even seem to make any mention at all to their responsibilities. The environment was by far the most prominent issue having been mentioned in nearly all of the reports. To conclude I created a bubble chart to display the frequency these issues were mentioned.
We are informed by John that we will each be leading the Wednesday afternoon sessions in the following weeks before Christmas. We discussed what factors we feel makes a good lesson and identified some things to consider in preparation to teach. It is important to consider what it is we want our audience to walk away with. The lesson should have a structure and a few aims and objectives. We all agree that we should involve others when teaching, to invite questions and interaction. Handouts are a way of summing up everything that you have done, however be careful of handing out at the start or the middle. We should consider using visual aides, props and materials where necessary. We can give further things to do as a follow up to help carry on the learning process to other sessions. The lesson should introduce what you are going to do, then do the main thing and finally sum up. This is an opportunity to tell others something they didn’t know.

In the evening a few of us attended the Townley and Bradley talk in the Sam Scorer Gallery which introduced us to some of their work. Chairs were placed facing forwards and backwards and slides were projected on one side of the room while the artists read from the other side. We found ourselves constantly looking over our shoulders and not knowing where we should be looking.
fun

embarrassing

stone skipping on steep hill
running down a steep slope
running past a university classroom
Following on from the introduction last night we visited Townley and Bradby at their windmill home. The views of Lincoln were fantastic and at the very top in the dome there was a pool table in the shape of a hexagon. After lunch we participate in and a guided tour of Lincoln city centre which was based on observations made by their two children during their explorations of the streets the week before. Hoping across cobbles and hiding behind benches would have been extremely embarrassing in a smaller group but it somehow seemed acceptable in our large gathering.

In the evening I continue to develop my questionnaire ready for the next exercise. It is similar to the last version however I allow the participant to pick their own brands, three they like and three they don’t. I tested this questionnaire on myself and I was surprised to find that the brand I considered to be my third favourite actually scored higher than the rest. I believed that Apple and Nintendo would come top but they were both beaten by Amazon. Either I secretly love this online retailer more than I thought or I need to rethink my questionnaire design.

28/10/10
In the Library I follow on my research into CSR and find some interesting articles in journals ‘Marketing’ and ‘Marketing Week.’ I have recently been investigating how brands try to show that they are concerned with the environment, but these articles show that it important not to overdo it otherwise their attempts will be labelled as ‘greenwashing.’ The overuse of some terms like ‘green’ and ‘eco’ have become so widespread that they no longer have any real meaning and consumers are becoming sceptical about the claims made by brands.

By late afternoon I have finished reading ‘Burn a Million Quid’ for the book club. I was surprised how quickly I was able to read this as it looked really thick. Half the pages were images though and some of the other pages only had a few lines of text. Although I felt it was not necessary to read the whole thing for the purpose of the book club, I did actually finish it as I found it really interesting.
I do some further work on the Learning Plan and begin thinking about some of the deliverables. I have the idea of presenting my research I have conducted on corporate social responsibility reports by creating a set of Top Trump playing cards. Each brand will have its own card with a list of attributes based on their perceived concerns for issues such as customer care, environment, suppliers, etc. I also consider the idea of producing a board game that could function as a game while articulating my research.

In the evening I drive Sara, Jo, James and Justin to Woodhall Spa to see ‘Made in Dagenham’ at the Kinema. The film about the female workers at Ford’s Dagenham plant going on strike in the 1960s over sexual discrimination. We all agree the Kinema is fantastic and are pleasantly surprised how good the movie was. It was the perfect type of movie to see in this setting as it really does feel like you have been thrown back in time. Some of the group were quite shocked to see the organ player rise from the floor during the interval in the middle of the film. Surprisingly to me this movie turned out to be particularly relevant to the branding side of my project, I am currently researching how brands are evolving to be more corporately and socially responsible and this film was an interesting view of the way corporations like Ford have treated their own staff in the past and how they have needed to change.
need to clarify my area of study
need to decide on my project aims
think about my projects deliverables
write the learning plan

how I feel about the progress of my project
how I would like my project to be at this point
I was hoping that my weekend away from Tesco could have been spent more productively, however I spend most of the day stuck for ideas and worrying about my project. I am really concerned as I don’t know what type of work I will produce for the final year show. I feel that I really want to create something three dimensional and move away from purely print based work.

In the evening I watch ‘The Corporation.’ This is essentially a movie documentary with interviews from corporate insiders and critics including Michael Moore and Naomi Klein. It has a lot in common with Klein’s book ‘No Logo’ as it examines the power and influence corporations have over our lives. Like ‘No Logo’ it documents the backlash against brands including Nike and Shell due to their unethical business practices. It reports on the enormous number of lawsuits brought against these companies and how a corporation will often knowingly break the law as fines are often cheaper than the money lost through their illegal actions. It also studies how brands manipulate people, especially children, to make purchases they do not need or want and questions the ethics of this.
neil's sessions are entertaining and thought provoking

making some progress researching brands attitudes to the environment

group bonding activities going well outside of the studio

we are informed we will take turns teaching the group

trip to kinema is fun

learning plan feels like an obstacle obstructing my creative practice

i struggle to identify suitable deliverables for my project

i begin to question my research project

i begin to question my area of study
Neil talks about research ‘in/through’ creative practice in his morning session. We discuss how theory has been elevated above practice in western society and how designers bridge the gap between the ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’. I am asked to consider the raw materials in my practice but I am unsure what a computer user would consider to be their raw materials. This session concludes Neil’s taught sessions and we are asked to prepare for a discussion next week.

In the afternoon John talks to us about authorship, the role of an author in design practice and the challenges faced in communicating effectively with an audience. I am asked who are the authors in my subject area (branding) to which I can not think of any. Moments later I am angry at myself for not mentioning either Henry Ford or Steve Jobs who would both have been good examples to give. Having not made much progress deciding on the direction of my project I arrange to have a chat with John at the end of the week. The diagram to the left shows my feelings at this present time.
how I want to be feeling right now

how I feel about the status of my project before meeting with Chris

how I feel about the status of my project before meeting with Chris
I meet with Chris and show him the results I have obtained from my questionnaires and the research I have conducted through CSR reports. He agrees with my concerns about some of the terminology I have used being too complex. I have previously believed that I would be able to obtain information from surveys to use in my information graphics however Chris suggests that the results from surveys can be used to support the need for the project, or be a way to test the success of the project but they will not be the project itself. I share my concerns that I am unsure about the route my project will take and I am currently unsure about what form the work will take. He suggests my work may take the form of a set of guidelines for a company to use to ensure their business is seen to be operating in an environmentally and sustainable manor. This could then lead to me using my own guidelines to design a new brand. If so I will need to research the process of designing brands. This project could be a way to educate people or make them more aware of an issue with brands. I am urged to always think about how I can learn from this work and what others will learn from it. There is a need to remain neutral and I must be able to justify my work and the need for it to be carried out. I must identify a problem then specify how I am going to tackle it. For next time Chris asks that I do the following; define my audience, define my problem and state how I will achieve this.
thomas parker house

the engine shed

22 pool lengths
In Andrea’s lesson we are asked to do some drawing exercises. To begin with we are given 30 seconds to draw a shape on a sheet of A3. We are then asked to redraw our shape with another shape attached on to it but the time we are given to do this is decreased. This continues until we are unable to add any more to our shapes and our final shape is outlined. The sheet is passed to the person on our left and they have to design a product from the shape. After this exercise we are asked to draw a chair that has been placed on the table. We are asked to render our drawing by adding a heavy outline and scribbling over it.

In the afternoon I go for a swim with a friend. On each visit we try to swim a little further than last time, today we managed 22 lengths of the 25m pool.

Later I take on board the advice from Chris about simplifying my questionnaires and create a new version I will distribute among our group. Instead of picking the brands myself I will allow the participants to pick their own. I will ask them to list their favourite retailer, car brand, etc. I will then ask why they rate this brand highly and ask if they consider themselves loyal to this brand. I hope that by collecting qualitative rather than quantitate research will provide me with more accurate and meaningful results.
James invited us to his house for the first book club to discuss ‘K Foundation Burn a Million Quid.’ To document the discussion James had hired a video camera and we took it in turns to film each other while talking about the book. The club was attended by James, Jo, AJ, Andrea, Kelly and myself. Sara could not make it today but had read the book and forwarded her notes with a summary of her feelings. James had prepared a number of questions to promote discussion and afterwards most of us agreed that this was an ideal book choice as everyone who reads it is likely to have strong opinions on its authenticity and the ethical issues it raises.

I distribute my new questionnaire to the assembled group while waiting for the book club to start and begin to assimilate the data later on that evening.
before meeting

branding | information graphics

after meeting

branding | information graphics
I arrange to have a chat with John to discuss the concerns I have with my project. I am concerned because I still don’t know what type of work I will be producing and I’m uncertain about my project overall. John has talked to me previously about incorporating information graphics into my work, but until now my research has all been around branding. I am urged to embrace information graphics more and make it the focus of my study. In response to the questions set by Chris my audience is now ethically engaged people and my problem is to investigate how information graphics can articulate and communicate the numerous ways people engage with ethical brands. My contextual review will comprise of research in two main areas, information graphics and the ethical issue of brands.
bank account balance

oct

nov
On Saturday afternoon I start looking for information graphics information online. I find some interesting examples but not a lot of information regarding the theory aspect which I require so I begin looking at the books on information graphics from Amazon. I have very little money at the moment so instead of buying them I intend to read the reviews online before deciding which ones I should request from the British Library. I place requests for a few including 'Digital Information Graphics,' (2002 by Matt Woolman), and 'Data Flow,' (2009 by R.Klanten). I did purchase one for myself though, 'Information is Beautiful,' (2010 by David McCandless). I read most of it in the summer when I was in the gift shop at the Nottingham Contemporary. I must have spent at least ten minutes reading it and found it fascinating, but I didn't realise at the time what work I would be doing for my MA and how important it would become for my study.
quality

local

value

sizing

selection

personal preference

staff
I had designed my third questionnaire before the discussion with John last Friday, the information I had intended to collect from it now seems much less relevant to my project however I will continue to analyse the results I have collected so far because it will be a useful personal exercise to help me with surveys I will conduct later in the course. The first version was designed to collect quantitative data, this one however is intended to collect qualitative information, the intention being that I believe qualitative information is potentially more accurate because it is not restricted to predetermined responses. I was anticipating that this type of information would not as well suited to information graphics as quantitative statistics and this turned out to be correct. I began by categorising the responses and effectively turned them into quantitative information that I could use. One interesting observation I did notice was that despite using different audiences and methods of data collection the results were actually surprisingly comparable. In the first survey I learned that people don’t appear to care about a brand’s environmental concern as they believe that quality, reliability and value for money are far more important factors. I have shown on the opposite page the factors which contribute to brand loyalty from the latest survey. Remember that these were not predetermined responses and notice how ethical issues such as care for the environment are not mentioned at all.
In Neil’s session we are told about the two different types of dissemination, a formal review of my theory subject and documentation of my practice/design process. I could produce a dissertation of the academic side of my branding project. The final year show is one form of dissemination, blogs are another. I could seek to exhibit somewhere else or have online exhibition. I could also do a lecture of my experience of the program.

In the afternoon we have a lecture from Chris to tell us about his experience with the MA program last year presented as a projected presentation. He wanted to get away from working on a Mac and so began engraving letterforms into stone. It was interesting to see how he had disseminated his work, such as writing articles for magazines. He also passed books around the group that he created at various stages throughout the project.

While in the studio I attempt to show the others how to operate the ridiculously complex padlock AJ has purchased for us to use on the communal locker. The process required to open it is shown to the left.
I meet with Chris in the afternoon, previously I had some concerns about how I was going to be able to turn the theory side of my study into a project suitable for MA level. After my discussion with John I have decide to make information graphics the main focus of my study and use branding as the theme. Chris seems happy with this new direction I am taking and immediately recommends that I take a look at how The Guardian use information graphics to communicate current events. He also suggests it may be worthwhile to consider using the freedom of information act to obtain large amounts of data which will be are required to create my work. As for research into branding he suggests that I spend more time looking at this are from a cultural position rather than from a design background. We also discuss the Learning Plan and I ask about what deliverables will be expected in each of the stages. I am advised to consider some kind of conference as part of the dissemination process, similar to the Ted Talks. I am asked to email Chris a current copy of my Learning Plan as soon as possible ready to be discussed in our next meeting.

Today sees the release for the new Call Of Duty game. Although I enjoy many games I have no interest in this franchise, however I still read the reviews and follow the media coverage. I have compared the money grossed by this game and this years biggest movies by showing their opening weekend and end of year totals in the USA.
In James’s lesson we are asked to leave the University building and explain our project to someone unfamiliar to us. The aim is to encourage us to gain the confidence needed to make connections in business. I am required to explain what my project is about in a way they can understand before asking their name and an interesting fact about themselves. After leaving TPH I walk to the bus station to find someone who has some spare time. I explain my project to a lady called Dot who enjoys Big Brother and other reality programs. Despite my best efforts I don’t think she really understood my project or the concept of information graphics.

When I return home I find my book ‘Information is Beautiful’ has arrived and it is every bit as fantastic as I remember it from before. It is crammed with diagrams, maps and charts and is entertaining, funny and insightful. Many of the pieces communicate environmental and sustainability issues that really make you think about the state of the world we live in.

I spend the evening preparing my Learning Plan and send it off to Chris ready to be discussed in our next session. The preparation stage is quite large but I have not included much at this point in the project or dissemination stages as I don’t know what I can put. I hope to ask Chris how I can expand on these when we meet next.

10/11/10
Yesterday I picked up the information graphic books that had arrived from the British Library and I spent today reading these, making notes and copying images to annotate in my sketchbook. ‘Digital Information Graphics,’ (2002 by Matt Woolman) is mostly concerned with images for screen. As it is eight years old some of the technology is looking rather dated already, however it does serve as a valuable introduction to information graphics and explains that there is often no standard or ideal mapping process for the majority of situations. There have been numerous efforts made to map the Earth in two dimensions. The three main methods used, Mercator, Gall and Goode all have different advantages and disadvantages and are suitable methods for different situations. ‘Data Flow,’ (2009 by R.Klanteen) is a fantastic book containing great visual examples and is also full of valuable theory material. It features interviews from information graphic designers and discusses the emotional relevance of hand drawn diagrams. The images range from simple pieces to large scale mapping projects and include examples of vector based as well as photographic information graphics.

11/11/10
I feel that yesterday was a really productive day and so visit the University Library to find any other relevant books on information graphics. ‘Information Graphics: Innovative Solutions in Contemporary Design,’ (1998 by Peter Wildbur and Michael Burke) has only a few images I find of interest, however the theory side is excellent. It uses an interesting metaphor by comparing raw data and information graphics to analogue and digital clock faces. It covers the use of information graphics through history such as the Bayeux Tapestry, the visual aids created by Florence Nightingale and work by Otto Nearth, an Austrian Philosopher and social scientist working in the 1920. ‘Diagrams,’ (1969 by Arthur Lockwood) may be a very old book but I still found it surprisingly relevant and interesting. Despite its age I was amazed how creative some of the diagrams were, one information graphic in particular was especially stunning considering its age, this was a visually distorted map of the UK and surrounding countries which showed the distance from London to other destinations in travel time using the most appropriate mode of transport. I would never have expected work like this to have existed before computers did. It also covers Isotope images I feel still look modern today.

12/11/10
Having read a lot about information graphics recently I today turn my attention to creating some. A few weeks ago I began to visualise the statistics I had found on the sales of Fairtrade coffee and bananas in the UK over the last decade. I now revisit this work and create more variations on this theme. Later I used some statistics I have found from Greenpeace where they rank all of the electrical companies based on their policies on toxic chemicals, recycling and climate change. There are currently 16 versions of this report and my initial idea was to represent the movement of the brands in this list using a line graph with the lines restricted to a grid formation to resemble a circuit diagram. After a lengthy process of design and development and many versions later I had a version I was happy with. Although I felt it was visually attractive and interesting to look at I knew that the restrictions on the line movements I had set myself had made the information difficult to disseminate. I designed a new diagram that is simply a list of the featured brands coloured from red to green on gradient scale. Although this does not show the movement of the brand over time I feel this is far clearer to understand. I would later show these to the group to gain their comments and feedback.
In the evening I watch the DVD, ‘Super Size Me.’ This is movie documentary featuring Morgan Spurlock and is an investigation into the increasing spread of obesity throughout the USA. This has possibly been made in response to a recent lawsuit brought against McDonald’s by two overweight girls who became fat due to eating McDonald’s food. Although this case has failed, McDonald’s and other fast food chains receive a lot of criticism through this movie for marketing products that are both physiologically addictive and physically harmful. It questions who is to blame, if it is the corporations who are responsible or if consumers should share some of the blame. Interestingly it uses statistics and information graphics to highlight issues. It aims to persuade us to make more informed choices although I found it to be a rather biased towards the documentary makers opinions.

A book I borrowed that looked useful despite its age is ‘Information Graphics: A Survey of Typographic, Diagrammatic and Cartographic Communication,’ (1988 by Peter Wildbur). Most of the computer generated images look dated and blocky however it was still worth reading. It covers the main types of graphs such as bar, line and pie charts and discusses when it is appropriate to use each one. It also covers Otto Neurath and Isotope diagrams is some detail once again.
learning plan word count alteration required
We are all given a short one to one meeting with Neil to discuss the deliverables for the Research and Enterprise in Design module. A short essay on branding as part of my preparation work will demonstrate my research and understanding in this area of my project. I should also submit visual test pieces and show evidence of visual communication, both visual and written.

Chris emails me with notes on my learning plan. I knew there were likely to be some spelling mistakes in it at this stage but I wasn't expecting Chris to find so many. I spend the evening reflecting on the feedback and begin preparing another draft before our next meeting. Chris is concerned that there is too much about branding and reminds me that I should approach the Plan as a practitioner. I am advised to show more evidence of research into information design and investigate the problems and opportunities this style of communication presents. Information design should not be ‘tacked on’ to my project but should be more integral to my work as a creative practitioner. Chris also points out that the preparation section of my Learning Plan has become an overly long indicative review and it would be preferable to remove this information and include it in a separate document.

In the evening we attend the Dress for Success fashion event hosted by the fashion guy from GMTV. It was sponsored by Primark and was both awful and entertaining.
We spend an hour in the afternoon in the studio meeting the External Examiner to introduce ourselves and briefly tell her about our work. I spend the rest of the day redrafting my Learning Plan and taking onboard Chris’s advice. I remove the majority of the literature review information from the preparation stage and discuss information graphics more. I have begun to hate this learning plan and this process takes me all day. Even then I do not feel I have made all the alterations I would like to have made. I had previously told Chris I will have this latest version sent to him by Tuesday night so I finish up and email it just before midnight.
my ability to draw straight lines
In David’s lesson we do some drawing exercises. We are asked to draw straight lines down a sheet of A3 paper as close as possible to each other. We are then asked to draw ovals and then more ovals from different perspectives. Finally we were asked to draw a mini manikin figure that is placed in the centre of the table. After resetting the manikin pose and several drawings later we are asked to draw the same manikin on a different sheet of paper to the same scale. After the lesson we attach all the sheets to the wall.

Neil gives an evening lecture titled, ‘Ruins, Rust and Rubbish; the Aesthetics of Waste’ in which he considers aesthetic responses to different objects and materials. He points out that while modern Western cultures often consider smooth and shiny objects to be most aesthetically pleasing we can still find beauty in ruins. We are also asked to consider the beauty that can be found in rubbish and clutter which goes some way to explain why so many people feel the need to hoard stuff.
I continue to create information graphic test pieces using statistics from my research. In one piece I intended to show the amount of sugar present in different processed drinks such as Coca-Cola, McDonald’s milkshakes and innocent smoothies. The statistics on their own were quite amazing with innocent smoothies containing more sugar than the other drinks I investigated, although this sugar is naturally present in the fruit and not added artificially. I also represent the data I have gathered on different cars by showing the CO2 emissions and miles per gallon for the five most popular cars in the UK last year. I was quite disappointed with this graph because I found that there was surprisingly little difference between all of the manufacturers of the main cars. I was also hoping to see some kind of trend between the cars environmental impact and popularity but none existed. To improve the graph I added a few more cars such as the very environmentally friendly Smart Car, a popular sports car and a Land Rover. I also added a scale along the bottom to show the miles per gallon. This was more interesting and I felt that this could serve as a useful information tool for environmentally or money conscious buyers of new cars.

18/11/10
learning plan word count

version 1

version 2

alteration required
I meet with Chris to discuss the current version of the Learning Plan I forwarded to him earlier in the week. I had run out of time when drafting the last version and so before I begin I tell him about the changes I am intending to make in the next draft. Currently the preparation stage begins with my plans to research branding followed by information graphics, however I intend to switch the order of these to emphasise that information graphics is my main focus. In the dissemination phase I will instead investigate the use and value of information graphics in society rather than the changing characteristics of brands. Chris is happy with the changes so far but adds that I need to do more work criticising information graphics and investigating why it is used. He also make the suggestion of investigating the use of information graphics in propaganda. Although I have now included details on the deliverables within the text I am advised to also include a list at the beginning of each section in bullet point form.
the staff are great
i can get what i want
i don't queue
the aisles are clear
the prices are good
On Thursday I was enjoying having the opportunity to create information graphics and I find myself searching for information everywhere that I can later transform into visual models. At Tesco we have a facility where customers can text or email their comments about their shopping experience with us. An information board in a staff area is updated every few weeks and shows what percentage of comment are positive or negative for different areas of our business. This information is presented as statistics and I feel it generally goes unnoticed. An information graphic would attract far more attention, however after looking at the results more closely I can see why our store isn’t making them more prominent.

I spend most of my Saturday evening writing my Learning Plan.
Although I don’t enjoy working for Tesco right now, at least it is getting me away from the Learning Plan. Sundays are my longest day there and from approximately 7:00 to 18:30 every week I am responsible for reducing today’s dated items on the chilled section, recording and skipping damaged and out of date products as well as a number of other jobs around the department. In their wisdom the company has decided that almost all products should be displayed in ‘retail ready packaging,’ which basically means ripped up cardboard boxes. After just a few hours the place always looks a tip. We do our best to remove as much as possible around midday but we are fighting a losing battle. Milk needs to constantly monitored and if we get an opportunity we try to put some stock on the shelves. After we close I help with stock counts across the fresh food areas. As stock is sent in automatically as products are sold it is important that our computer records are as accurate as possible. It’s all very boring but is nice to be able to switch off from time to time.

When I return home it is back to the Learning Plan, just one more week and it will all be over.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 days later</td>
<td>★★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grave of the fireflies</td>
<td>★★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i am legend</td>
<td>★★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planet of the apes (2001)</td>
<td>★★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resident evil: extinction</td>
<td>★★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shaun of the dead</td>
<td>★★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the day after tomorrow</td>
<td>★★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the road</td>
<td>★★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wall-e</td>
<td>★★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waterworld</td>
<td>★★★★★☆</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neil is absent from today's session however John joins us early and gives us all a one to one session to discuss our progress with our Learning Plan. I discuss some of my concerns with what information I need to include in the dissemination phase and clarify how to match the deliverables to the learning outcomes.

Next week we will be discussing Jo’s book choice in our book club and I have found a cheap second-hand copy on Amazon that I have started reading. As I was finding it difficult to get into I have decided to watch the movie first and hope this will spur my interest. I thought that the flashbacks helped a lot because in the book we are rarely told about any of the previous events in the characters lives which I find quite frustrating. I had previously seen some very positive reviews for this movie and I understand it has won some awards. Although it was certainly useful for me to see this movie before reading the book I did not find it a very enjoyable film and by the end I wasn’t paying much attention. It certainly doesn’t rate very highly compared to other the other post-apocalyptic movies I have seen.

22/11/10
10 steps
I spend the morning reading and taking notes from more books I have borrowed. ‘Information Design Workbook, Graphic Approaches, Solutions and Inspiration plus 30 Case Studies,’ (2008 by Kim Baer) is a little disappointing after the positive reviews I have read on it. It is mostly theory based and includes few noteworthy visual examples. It emphasises the importance of knowing your audience and why testing is crucial. One of the case studies however is particularly interesting and relevant to my study, Chris Jordan is an American artist/photographer who is best known for his large scale works depicting mass consumption and waste. He points out the statistics can be daunting and dry and so manipulates photographs to illustrate the effects of consumerism. The sometimes staggering quantities have a far greater impact when we can actually see them for ourselves. We are told 2,000,000 plastic bottles used every five minutes in the USA, actually seeing this represented in a photograph is more shocking. Jordan’s work educates its audience, allows us to reflect on our own actions and hopefully will cause us to change our behaviour. This is comparable to my own work which I hope will enable the audience to make more informed choices in order to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

I have recently found a pedometer at home and have begun wearing it everyday.
In Sara’s lesson we are given an introduction to photo shoots. We are taken to a studio upstairs where we take turns to be photographed. We were informed beforehand that we should bring in something for other people to wear in the shoot so I provided a selection of bright men’s ties. We took turns wearing the props provided by others and having our photos taken. The photos were later added to our Facebook group for us to see and were hugely embarrassing. On a scale of my most embarrassing photographs these would feature somewhere near the top.

Chris sends me an email with my feedback on my latest Learning Plan. Overall he is happy to support my plan with the addition of a few minor changes. I need to elaborate on how I intend to measure, adapt and change my work in light of new knowledge or information and show that I am being dynamic in the design process and demonstrate an ability to make an informed response to change.

24/11/10
With the Monday deadline almost here I spend all my time ensuring I have covered everything that I need to in my Learning Plan and I forward Chris what I hope is the final version.

In the evening I watch the first episode from a new series on BBC Four called ‘The Beauty of Diagrams.’ These programs examine pieces of iconic information graphics through history and investigates the impact these have had. The first episode looks at Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man image. This world-famous diagram shows the human body inside a circle and square. These are two shapes that are considered the most perfect and symmetrical, two qualities Vitruvius believed essential for true beauty. Leonardo da Vinci drew Vitruvian Man in the 1480s to illustrate how man relates to perfection. This famous image has been copied and parodied many times.
I spend another full afternoon on the Learning Plan. I have spent a considerable amount of time on this over the last few weeks and the version I have now is almost indistinguishable from the early versions. The first version that I forwarded to Chris contained a lot of unnecessary information in the preparation section which was later removed and I have since expanded the other sections so that it is now far more balanced. With the content document now complete I now begin to consider the layout design. I have written all the current versions using the provided template in a basic word processor however I now copy my Learning Plan into InDesign and lay it out more professionally.

While at work I spend my breaks reading “The Road” in preparation for the discussion on Monday afternoon.
Saturday afternoon was spent finishing ‘The Road’ for Jo’s book club. It’s a book I was never able to get into despite everyone else saying how good it was. If I hadn’t seen the movie adaptation I would have really struggled with this one. I understand why the author has chosen not to write about the nature of the cataclysmic event in this book but this really bothers me and I feel like I can’t concentrate on the events until I know more. At least the movie made some attempts to explain the previous events by using flashbacks.

The final touches are done to the Learning Plan ready to be printed tomorrow after returning home from work.

Throughout this week I have been carrying a pedometer to count my steps taken each day. Even a relatively short shift at tesco can more than quadruple the distance I travel throughout the day, as seen by comparing this chart to Tuesdays.
acceptable temperature for fresh food chillers

- Temperature outside this morning
- Temperature of air inside Tesco this morning
- Temperature inside the sandwich chiller

Temperature Scale:
-4 -2 0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18
I discovered the sandwich chiller had broken down overnight and is now running at 16°C (legally it must be between 1°C and 8°C). I therefore have to destroy almost £800 worth of sandwiches by throwing them in the skip before we open.

After work I drove straight to the University Library to print my Learning Plan. I could have done this the next morning however I always seem to encounter printer problems close to deadlines. This was my first experience with the new wireless printing facility, I had sent my document from my Mac at home the previous night so I had my laser printed Learning Plan in only a few minutes.

I watch the next episode of the BBC Four series, ‘The Beauty of Diagrams.’ The second program covers Nicolaus Copernicus’s sun-centred universe. I don’t find the diagram itself as visually attractive as the Vitruvian Man in last weeks program and this episode is more concerned with the revolutionary theory behind the diagram. When published in 1543 the diagram was responsible for kick starting a series of events that changed our understanding of the Cosmos forever. Although it is not really a very accurate diagram (it lacks some planets and is incorrectly scaled), it is interesting to see the social impact this diagram once had.
I travel in early to have my Learning Plan wire bound at Kall Kwik. It was beginning to snow as I walked up to TPH to hand it into reception.

We are introduced to Jim Shorthose who will take over Neil’s sessions for the following two weeks. Our first lecture is about creative networks. He uses a rather interesting metaphor of a plane journey from London to Barcelona to compare the predicted vs actual path of a creative practitioner and how going straight your destination can cause you to miss things creatively. However you will never arrive at your destination unless you correct yourself. When testing your creative work you should always aim to convince someone who is critically awkward and be prepared to test things to destruction.

In the afternoon we all attended Jo’s book club to discuss ‘The Road.’ Jo had prepared a beautiful sheet to spread across the coffee table for us to write our comments on.
I make preparations for tomorrow’s lesson that I will be teaching. Originally I was going to teach the group something about branding and gather their attitudes on this to help me with my research. Now that my project is more heavily focused towards information graphics I have decided to introduce the group to this style of visual communication. In James’s lesson I found it very difficult to explain information graphics to a stranger so I hope this lesson will help me articulate what it is that I intend to produce. I feel that the best lessons from the last few weeks have been the ones where we have been given a drawing task so I try to think of a suitable exercise we can all do in mine. I consider asking everyone to create a hand drawn map to show directions to somewhere. Place names could be written onto cards and everyone would have to pick one before drawing their map to that location. This could be a problem if people don’t know where the places are. I also consider asking everyone to draw a process like how to cook beans on toast or how to make a cup of tea. Eventually I decide to just talk and show them examples of information graphics from my research and show some of my own test pieces to gain some feedback on these. Most of the visuals I want to show are from the book ‘Data Flow,’ so I attach numbered post-it notes to the relevant pages and make notes to read from.
There was major snow fall overnight, if it had today been any other day I would not have attempted the journey into University, however with both printmaking and my lesson scheduled I feel I must make every effort. With no busses running today I set off extra early after digging the snow from around off and around my car and begin the drive to Lincoln. There was barely any traffic but a journey that would normally take 15 minutes was taking forever. I stopped half way and parked at Tesco and walk the rest of the way as I feel it would be quicker.

I arrived on time for printmaking only to discover it had been canceled and all University campuses had been closed. When the other members of the group arrived the decision was made to buy a sledge and forget work for the day. We spent the morning sledging down hills by the Usher Gallery with varying degrees of success before heading for hot chocolate. We decided to go and see a movie after lunch as some of the group wanted to see London Boulevard. Although this type of film isn’t really my thing I have enjoyed gangster movies in the past. I found this one rather uninteresting though with dull characters and random and pointless violence. Overall though we had a fantastic day.
introduction
analogy with clocks
some of my work
hand drawn diagrams
maps
pie charts
photograph charts
With my presentation delayed until next week I have decided to review how I intend to present the visuals. Using printouts and post-it notes in books now seems a very clumsy way to present so I decide to use my MacBook to present slides. I am completely unfamiliar with presentation software, I was introduced to PowerPoint many years ago but have never used it since. I have Keynote installed so I began to experiment with this and found it surprisingly easy to get the results I wanted. I want this to be a completely different type of presentation to the style Jim uses in his sessions so I’m only using text to introduce new sections to help break up my images and give the lesson some structure. I spend a lot of time re-ordering slides to allow themes to flow from one image to another.
0 degrees celsius highs and lows

3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th
I pick up my latest loan from the British Library, ‘Visual Language For Designers,’ (2009 by Connie Malamed). A large section of this book is concerned with the study of how our brains read information graphics, scanning an image areas that are interesting and informative and skipping over monotonous, empty areas. The book also covers various techniques used by designers to make their work more effective. One example is to reduce the realism of diagrams as low-fidelity images help shift focus on to the more essential details. These are particularly suitable for general audiences who need to quickly comprehend the message being conveyed.

I begin to review my diaries and log books to create visual representations of how I have utilised my time over the last few weeks. I intend to continue this process until the new year to create a poster of 31 pie chart diagrams. I begin by including many different activities each represented by a different colour but later decide to simplify it down to just six.

It is extremely cold at the moment and I have resorted to covering the windows at home in bubble wrap to try and keep some of the heat in.
meat

department waste budgets

poultry

chiller cabinets

£100
One of my pet hates is the wastage of food in our society. At Tesco I am responsible for recording and skipping the damaged and out of date food and I am often shocked how wasteful we have become. Over £300 of out of date food discovered by the night team last night, and that was just on the chilled areas. This includes £40 worth of Gü deserts on yesterday’s date, which as a chocoholic I find particularly distressing. Several cases of fishcakes were also discovered out of date in the wear house chiller, these did not even make it onto the shop floor before being skipped.

After lunch I design and make my puppet for the nativity puppet show. I have been assigned the role of narrator and have decided my character will take the form of an owl because owls are perceived as being very wise and trustworthy. I will also be able to manipulate the beak movements with my speech. I sketched some different designs and using scraps of fabric and felt I found at home I stitched together my patchwork owl.

In the evening I trial my lesson on my brother using my Mac. Afterwards I make some minor changes to my Keynote, mostly to the ordering of the slides and I add a few more examples I hope the group will find interesting.
meat

department waste budgets

poultry

£100

chiller cabinets
Yesterday I attempted to visualise our waste at Tesco and show how this compares to our departments budgets. The following data is for 4th December 2010, (£):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Waste</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chiller Cabinets</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I decided to represent the data using circles and I began using the area to represent the values, however despite being technically correct these graphs looked misleading (see charts on previous page). Today I recreated the graphs using exactly the same data but instead I used the circles diameter to represent the values. These charts however look even more misleading and so I decided I need to gain some feedback from the group to find the best way to represent data using this method.
yummy
Jim Shorthose takes over from Neil’s morning session and talks about values and ethics for creative practice. Most creative businesses don’t see profit as the most important issue. Happiness should not be considered to be a goal, it should be a by-product. Are we hard wired to be selfish or cooperative? To be ethical we have to feel something emotionally.

We had less that one hour to present our nativity puppet show. All seemed to go well but we didn’t review the tape afterwards.

The session in the afternoon was lead by Barrie Tullett and Philippa Wood and introduced us to their work. As I have little experience with bookbinding at this stage I was particularly interested in Japanese stab binding as it looks quite easy and is simple yet attractive.

Christmas dinner at the Slug and Lettuce was superb. The soup, which I think was tomato and basil, was probably the best I have ever had. After this impressive start I was slightly disappointed by the hard and tasteless vegetables that accompanied a slightly dry turkey, but the cheesecake desert was sound. This was followed by drinks at the Tap and Spiel that rounded off a fantastic evening.
In the morning I see piece on BBC Breakfast about how little some retailers give to charities from the sale of charity Christmas cards. This data is compiled by the Charities Advisory Trust and so I email them to request further information.

This evening was Sara’s photo shoot, due to the extreme ice and heavy equipment I am asked to pick up Sara’s photographer friend in the afternoon before taking the others to the shoot location on Lindum Hill. It takes three trips across Lincoln in rush hour for me to take everyone to the house and then I have trouble finding somewhere suitable to park. I had originally agreed to have my face painted and then photographed in this shoot however as I was feeling a little ill by this point so I went home. I was later called and asked to return to Lincoln to take Sara’s friend home after they had finished.
feedback for two of my test pieces

- greenpeace
- graph
- greenpeace
- list

clarity

aesthetics
In my lesson and I gave the group an introduction to information graphics using visuals I have obtained through my research and created myself as test pieces. I wanted to use this opportunity to introduce the group to the type of work that I will be doing and explain the process I will be going through in order to test the effectiveness of these pieces. I was keen to point out that this was not a presentation and encouraged others to contribute whenever and as often as possible. I presented four different pieces of information graphics I have created from the same data on sales of Fairtrade coffee in the UK over the last decade and asked for the group's feedback on their aesthetic and functional properties. The group was then able to decide on a favourite and this process was a valuable teaching and presentation experience for myself. I was quite surprised at the beginning how unfamiliar the group was with information graphics but the feedback I received afterwards was surprisingly positive with others saying how interesting and informative it was. James later showed me a comedian on YouTube who uses information graphics in his routines and Jo found an upcoming exhibition in London on isotope graphics.

In the evening I join James to watch ‘Exit Through the Gift Shop,’ a superb film about Banksy and other street artists. James and myself thoroughly enjoyed this documentary however both of us question the authenticity of some aspects.
someone else

me (mon am)

me (mon pm)

me (tue)

me (wed)

me (thurs)
Today was an opportunity to regroup and reorganise. The development work printouts that have littered my noticeboard from the last few weeks are trimmed and stuck into a sketchbook. I also take a final look through all my library books in anticipation for returning them tomorrow.

I receive an email from Kayt Newman of the Charities Advisory Trust in response to my request for further information concerning their Scrooge Awards. My afternoon is spent generating ideas and developing an information graphic for this information.

In the evening I reviewed my reflective journal notes that I have been compiling and begin to design a booklet that incorporates my thought process as well as information graphics to represent this.

Earlier in the week AJ had made a chocolate cake for the group. Only half was eaten in the studio that day and so I was asked if I wanted to take it away with me.
deadlines are looming and I have a lot of work to do

puppet show is done

the group’s Christmas dinner was entertaining

Tuesday was a frustrating day

my lesson on Wednesday was successful

valuable feedback gained about my work

reply received from the charities advisory

I am constantly freezing cold

I have no money

I still need to do my research essay

I need to do my research essay

my log book has become an interesting project

I have no money
I have become quite excited by the concept of my new information graphic led log book and spend the morning designing different forms this will take. I decide to incorporate the pie charts of my days along with written documentation of my activities. On each verso page I will design an information graphic to represent and communicate part of my day. A landscape format is chosen that is to be held together with Japanese stab binding. The front cover will be blank apart from the colour coded key, I feel this is quite unusual but makes sense in this situation because it will be something the reader will need to refer to often and having it on the cover makes it easily accessible. Although I haven't decided on the paper stock yet I would like it to be printed on something quite thick and on pure white.

I am informed at Tesco that I have been assigned 10am to 7pm shifts overtime everyday in the week running until Christmas. I politely refused explaining I have too much University work to be getting on with. My manager is unhappy with this as he has already gotten a similar response from my other work colleges, but what do they expect when they employ students?

Later I reflect on what is going well and also the concerns I have at the moment.
conceived

designed
Waste is once again shocking on our department, £67 of pilau rice, £54 of pork pies and £54 of snack sized quiche as well as the mountain of other stuff is skipped because it has gone out of date unnoticed.

After returning home I feel I have had another very productive day working on my log book. I begin to think about the designs on the verso pages and map out how many I am required to design. It looks like a bigger task than I had originally envisioned but I already have some completed. Some of the charts relate to a response I got from showing other people some my work, some others show an event that took place while I was socialising with friends such as our snow day last week or our Christmas dinner. As I have decided to include minimal information on the front cover of my log book I consider incorporating my name into a barcode along with my student ID number on the back cover. After a while I abandon this idea because it doesn’t look as good as I had imagined and it and I doesn’t feel especially relevant to the style of the rest of the books.
This was a long Tesco day, 7am until 8pm. This was because all fresh food counts were canceled last week due to the snow and we were effectively required to count double this week. I have collected the waste data for various departments for the past week and I would later represent this using carefully scaled coloured blocks.

After returning home I go straight to bed and watch the third episode of BBC Four’s, ‘The Beauty of Diagrams.’ Isaac Newton demonstrated that that white light is actually made up of different colours. This diagram looks like it has been drawn in a hurry, it’s rather sketchy and the rays of light are not perfectly straight as you would expect them to be drawn in a more considered design. It is a drawing of a room with an arrangement of prisms and includes unnecessary details like a tree outside the window. We also see another set of Newton’s more considered diagrams including a pie chart that shows the proportions of colours present in the visible spectrum. This concept was later used as the inspiration for the Dark Side Of The Moon album cover and this is actually a much clearer and more beautiful diagram than Newton’s because of its simplicity.
conceived

designed
In our session with Neil in the morning we discuss the presentation that we will be giving in January. In the afternoon I had a one to one session with John to discuss the progress I am making with my project. He seemed pleased with the test pieces I was currently making and I was very pleased that John was happy with the direction I was taking with my log book, he seemed particularly interested in the graphs that will appear on the verso pages that communicate an element of my day through an information graphic and how this compared to the more formally written and structured feel to the page opposite. He leaves me with some things to consider such as when it is appropriate to include or exclude the scale on some graphs and consider justifying my reasons for this choice. I am asked to consider if I need to develop a series of systems to be able to measure the success of my work against the critical theory. Later on in the project I may be able to use my work to measure the success my work has had by looking at someones room and calculating the impact before and after. Think about what can I do with information graphics as a tool and how can I apply it and measure its success.

I continue to design the mini charts for my log book and review my progress for designing and conceiving these.
a = 10 b
I spend all full day in the studio working on my log book. As well as transferring my notes from my previous journal I design, develop and create a range of information graphics for the verso pages. These include a range of responses from the various questionnaires I have developed over the last few weeks. I created a bubble chart in week five to represent the information I had obtained from company corporate social responsibility reports. I had created this by creating circles with a diameter equal to the number I wished to represent, however this was inappropriate and misleading. Today I revisited this work and redesigned the bubble chart but this time used the circles area to represent the value. This chart I feel is far more successful as it is a clearer reflection on the values.

In the evening I prepare for the groups critique we will hold the next day. I have prepared some pages of my log book to show and I also print a series of circles and squares. This is to investigate how others read these different sized shapes and interpret the values they represent. In the example to the left I will assign the centre square a value of 10 and ask others to judge the value of the others. The correct answers are 50 and 80. The accuracy of the groups responses will determine how I represent data in my later work.
In Jo’s lesson we learn about the process of creating a fairytale, we are each required to write a section as we sit around the table and then are sent away for half an hour to illustrate our interpretation of someone else’s section. I am required to show a mouse transforming into a human and so after a few sketches have decided to document this process through an information graphic. I draw 5 stages of evolution from mouse to human and placed them inside the axis of a graph. The process of the eating of the cheese is plotted along the bottom.

In our critique I show the group my latest version of my Greenpeace information graphic. Everyone agrees that this latest version is the most successful version as it combines the clarity of the last version with the graph version which plots the brands movements. I also show my charity Christmas card comparison graphic and explain the challenge in creating charts that use a shaded area to represent a value. I pass around the sheets I have prepared and ask the group to write the values of the blank shapes. I was pleasantly surprised that most of the group got these correct or very close which has eased some of my fears about using this method of representing data.
conceived

designed
I travel in early and spend a day in the studio transferring the information I have amassed from various reflective journals into a word processor ready to create my log book. I also update my pie charts that represent my days activities and arrange them ready to be printed on the plotter. I feel that I am making good progress designing and creating new charts to appear on the verso pages of my book and even decide to dedicate a few pages to show this progress. Chris emails me to apologies for not responding earlier and explains that workload is heavy at the moment. He suggests that I forward a PDF with design work if I have any corners. I feel that progress on my log book is going pretty well but decide to send him a copy anyway for him to take a look at.
Neil has previously said that I should write a short essay to hand in as evidence for the research I have carried out around the branding aspect of my work. In the early stages of the preparation stage of this project I have spent quite a lot of time researching and taking notes from books, journals and documentaries about how corporations have adapted their brands to be more appealing to modern consumers. Today I returned to the University Library with my notes and began to compile this information into a written document. In this essay I will investigate three of the world’s largest brands that have run into difficulties in recent years after being criticised for their unethical business practices and examine how they have overcome these problems. All of the brands I covered have been operating for many years previously however they all experienced difficulties around the same time as each other which shows that in the late 1990s an early 2000s there was a dramatic shift in consumers attitudes to branding and the wider world around us.

While at work I am constantly thinking about what information graphics I can use for various days in my log book. When I have the opportunity I transfer ideas into a tiny sketchbook I carry around in my pocket.
books
- beyond branding 2003
- no logo 2001
- a branded world 2003
- on brand 2004

journals and newspapers
- defra proposes tighter control of green claims, marketing 2010
- consumers sceptical over sustainability claims, marketing week 2009
- third-party coalitions get seal of approval, marketing week 2010
- poisons that pollute marketing, marketing 2009
- nike accused of tolerating sweatshops, the observer 2001

websites
- interbrand’s top 100 brands 2010
- sales of fairtrade products in the uk
In the afternoon I continue work on my research essay. In the introduction I discuss what the term branding means today and how this contrasts to its meaning a few decades back. The word ‘branding’ originally came from the process of marking a farmer’s livestock, although I didn’t investigate the term as far back as this. Brands were originally highly regarded because they offered a promise about a product’s reliability or consistency, however a consumer will now often use a brand because it communicates something about themselves to others. I have read many books and articles before writing this essay however I have only found it necessary to include a selection of these in the bibliography. I have directly referenced four books, five journal articles and two websites. The order these have been used and repeated throughout my essay is show to the left. By the end of the day I have completed this document and have laid it out in InDesign with all the relevant footnotes.
After returning home from work I ask my brother to read through my essay and identify any spelling or grammar mistakes. I had previously done this myself however I am particularly poor at identifying these. I was pleased that there were only a few more that my brother identified, although I am not really sure how good he is at spotting mistakes either.

I later watched the next episode of 'The Beauty of Diagrams' on BBC Four and the fourth episode was the most relevant for me yet. Florence Nightingale was the first to use statistics to create a graphic as a call to action. Her Rose Diagram shows how hospital infections can kill and how this can be avoided which completely changed attitudes to hospital care at the time. She believed diagrams can, 'communicate through the eyes what we fail to convey to the brains of the public through their word proof ears.' Bar charts had been used before however she wanted something more eye catching. Even today Ministers can have as little as four minutes to make a decision so information graphics remain a valuable propaganda tool, they grab attention, engage the reader and make them want to get involved. They also help make a lasting impression that can be remembered decades later. They allow us to convey a message instantly in an emotional way.