Thursday 20 January

I have received a lot of enthusiastically positive feedback from the group regarding my previous logbook and I would like to continue this process throughout the next stage of the project. The previous version was conceived in the final few weeks of the preparation for major project phase and transferring my handwritten notes into a digital format and designing the information graphics over the Christmas break was very time-consuming. I have therefore decided to design the second version now and continue to update it regularly to make this process more efficient and effective. I am personally very pleased with the last version and although I would like the new one to follow a similar format I also want to explore new ways of visualising and documenting my time. The pie charts allowed me to show when I conducted various activities, however they do not clearly communicate which activities I have participated in the most.
Introducing the colour pink in sleep data.

Here I am using some of the pie charts from before Christmas and recreating them to show which activities I have done the most on any particular day. For example in the pie diagram for 11th October above it is difficult to work out which of the six activities shown I have spent the most time on. Below is another way of showing the data with the most participated activities on the outside.

Here is the same activity repeated for 17th October.
Same as before, however the most participated activity is now on the inside of the diagram.

Now going back to showing the most participated activity on the outside.
The same three days of data from before, now represented in circular form and trying different ways to organise the different activities.

Time now represented using area of circles.
Re-introducing pink in these sketch.

17/01/11

Experiments with how to organise these time bubbles.
As judging the area of circles can become tricky when two or more are of a similar size it will be important to show them in order to aid the reader.
I settle on a bubble diagram to represent my time spent on different activities. Although the pie chart I used last semester was extremely successful and effective, I am keen to explore different ways to represent time. The activities I will represent are the same as before with the addition of a pink circle to represent sleep. For each day I will log how long I spend doing each activity and display these records. To do this I will continue to create pie charts as before, then I will use the above chart to record how much time has been spent on each activity.

Friday 21 January

Next page: using data collected from previous weeks to preview how my time will be visualised.
In preparation for my book club on Monday I begin to re-read parts of Snuff and think about some of the questions I might ask to encourage discussion. The book is about a female porn star trying to set a world record for the biggest gang bang, or die trying. The author Chuck Palahniuk has written this from the perspective of four characters, three men in a room of six hundred as they wait their turn, plus the female event coordinator. Information graphics are often used to make large numbers more comprehensible so I decide to turn this into an information graphic. I then decided to use Flash to produce a short movie that would give an idea of what the scale of this record would be like. I spent a full day creating a simple animation but was only today I was able to complete a 30-second video in less than an hour. This is partly because I now understand how to use the motion tween function to speed up the process considerably. A few weeks ago I was very apprehensive about creating information graphic videos, now I am more familiar with the software I am excited by the possibilities.

Sunday 23 January

I have decided to create a series of diagrams to represent the group’s feelings and attitudes towards my book choice as a way of documenting our meeting. I continue to re-read the book and begin to draft some questions that I can ask the group that will provide me with quantitative data to work with. I begin to think about what information graphics I can use to represent this data. The most obvious way is to use a bar chart, however I want to create this in with the theme of the book and combined those with more traditional graphs. I am slightly concerned because one of the only rules was not to include any erections, but as I am using only vector images I have always argued that they are something else. For another diagram I want to show pole dancers dancing around the bars on a bar chart.

In the evening we go to the Odeon to see 127 hours, a true story about mountain climber Aron Ralston who fell down a crack and got his arm trapped behind a boulder. After five days he escaped by cutting his arm off. It’s surprising how entertaining a film can be with just one main character and location.
Monday 24 January

It’s my turn to host a book club meeting and I have selected ‘Snuff’ by Chuck Palahniuk. I chose a porn queen’s attempt to break the world record for consecutive acts of sexual intercourse on film. I have selected this because it is quite short, a little controversial and I believe it will divide the group and encourage debate and discussion. Unfortunately, AJ could not attend this book club as she had other commitments, which is unfortunate because I knew she hated it. In her words the book is, ‘against women and all that we stand and fought for.’ The meeting was divided into discussion and questionnaires, with the results later being used to generate a series of information graphics. Overall I feel that this book club was a success, opinion among the group was indeed divided and some interesting discussions took place.

We were given feedback on our Learning Plan and presentation and I was pleased with the comments I received. John and Neil have suggested that I may drop the concept of branding completely and focus purely on information graphics. I am pleased to hear this as I have felt that branding has been holding me back because I have felt that I was necessary to have this as an overriding theme.

Enjoyed reading ‘Snuff’

57% agree
43% disagree

The sex act described in this book is degrading...

agree disagree

...to men...to woman

agree disagree

Overall this book receives...

26% ‘Thumbs up’

Which character’s perspective of the story did you enjoy the most?

Mr. 72  Mr. 137  Mr. 600  Sheila

I would like to see this book turned into a movie

agree disagree

After reading ‘Snuff’ I would like to read more by this author

agree disagree

The story of this book is believable

57% agree
43% disagree

The sex act described in this book is disturbing

57% agree
43% disagree

The story of this book is funny

57% agree
43% disagree

The story of this book is immature

57% agree
43% disagree

The story of this book is informative

57% agree
43% disagree

Appropriateness of words to describe Snuff
Tuesday 25 January

Yesterday in the studio I created a series of information graphics to disseminate the outcome of my book club. I had an opportunity to show the group these and gain some feedback, two diagrams in particular were clear enough and so I have redesigned these. I decided to present these information graphics on screen because the pink on the black works especially well here, although it would be interesting to see what results I could obtain using some fluorescent coloured inks on the print making studio. One of the images is quite large and I feel that will work well in a video when displayed using a panning and zooming shot. I have a little experience with Flash from the past few weeks so this was used to create the panning shots. I have used to create the slide show. I also had to print this several times from Facebook for the group to view.

We visited Hemswell to see the antique shops, I was shocked at the amount of junk there was here and wondered who would possibly buy this kind of stuff. I was particularly interested by all the Earth globes, we are so used to seeing 2D maps on computers and in books I have forgotten how interesting these 3D representations are.

Wednesday 26 January

In Emma’s lesson we were taught how to make pompoms. In the afternoon I attended a talk held by a designer from Airside, a multidisciplinary design studio in London. I was particularly interested in the information graphic films they had produced which included the price comparison television and print commercials from Asda. Different sized arrows represent the major supermarkets and are scaled according to who has the lowest prices. I was aware of these examples previously and the Friars always remember me of the opening to Dad’s Army. Different sized arrows represent the major supermarkets and are scaled according to who has the lowest prices. I was aware of these examples previously and the Friars always remember me of the opening to Dad’s Army, ironic because Walmart are expanding globally and looking to dominate each tertiary. In the question session I was able to ask whether this had been considered by the agency and was surprised to hear that this was in fact the main influence in the campaign. I was also able to ask whether a client had ever requested that the information graphics were designed in such a way as to portray them in the best possible light, I was informed that they had no experience of this happening.

I bump into Chris, I have a chance to quickly tell him about the changes to my project since I will not be able to see him until a week on Friday.

Thursday 27 January

I return to the printmaking studio to attempt to turn one of my information graphics into a screen print. I have a piece that I would like to print using fluorescent inks onto black paper, however I am informed that the ink will likely be absorbed too much and not leave the effect I am after. I want to print my A2 size and become the largest base printer I have access to, I have to print two sheets, trim them and stick them together to prepare the prints. I need to mix fluorescent ink onto the paper to increase its transparency. I have been experimenting with many combinations of coloured papers and inks. I had originally planned to print blue ink onto black paper however I was informed that this would not work very well unless I print a white layer underneath. I had concerns with this method because I would find it difficult to line up the sheets with the screens the second time around. This did in fact turn out to be the case and so I cut this out as a possibility for printing in future. My original idea for blue ink on black paper turned out a little patchy, however this may be improved by using less absorbent paper and I should have used a second print on top. I also cut this opportunity to print white on white and black onto black which produced subtle but interesting results. I used particularly pleased with the results I obtained by printing the black background onto blue paper. If I were to repeat this process I would like to try using a smaller circle. I also took this opportunity to print white on white and black onto black which produced subtle but interesting results. I was particularly pleased with the results I obtained by printing the black background onto blue paper. If I were to repeat this process I would like to use a smaller circle.
Friday 28 January

I have been advised to try using a program called Processing, a free download that claims to help designers think in code and produce visuals quickly. A Google search shows that many people are using it and getting some very interesting visual results, however I could hardly call any of the pieces information graphics. Despite many of these creators claiming otherwise all the work I have seen would be definitely be filed under information art. I downloaded the program and found it far too random. Although I was not able to produce anything of any real interest I am unable to see any potential for its use within my project.
Monday 31 January

Today, we were taken by Mike Esson, we were given a series of presentations on his work. Although not linked directly to our work, all the things that were relevant to our projects. I was particularly interested in his work on tracking time. In one piece, the movements of a group of ants was tracked across a sheet of paper. A similar approach was used with a tracking the movements of an office worker throughout a week. In another piece, the movements of an office worker were marked throughout a week by placing a large sheet of paper on the floor and applying paint to the bottom of a swivel chair. A similar piece involved a balloon with a pen dangling from it. Balloons and pens were used to create some interesting works of art. Car drivers performed burnouts and were given direction from an external artist so that images were formed from the tire marks. This has given me some things to think about regarding my project including how easily I want others to understand the concept behind my designs.

Saturday 29 January

Social network maps seem very popular with information graphic designers at the moment so I decided to look at my own Facebook profile and attempt to categorise my friends based on what I knew them from. All their names were placed around a globe and I attempted to link each one with a coloured line, yellow if they were from university, red if from secondary school and white if from Tesco. This graph was abandoned fairly early on for a number of reasons, mainly because it was failing to communicate the numbers in any meaningful way.
Tuesday 1 February

In a meeting with John I show him my current work. I am told that I should explore different types of visual language and experiment with more abstract forms rather than the very literal examples I am currently producing. I am currently reading up. I need to become more confident in my opinion of the visual language I use and to try new forms of visual language for other projects. My idea is not currently sticking out of my design booklets and I am advised to look for work for the book by Casey Reas and the bibliography from Data Flow for ideas for further reading.

Above: We are advised to take 10,000 steps a day and this diagram is intended to record a person's progress of reaching this target. A shoe print that is equal in size to the lines represents 10,000 steps on that particular day.

Above: We are advised to eat five portions of fruit or veg a day. The diagram above could allow someone to record and reflect on their current eating habits, a dark green tomato represents a day where five or more portions were consumed, a red one shows that only one or less was consumed. Over time it is hoped that keeping the chart green will become an incentive to an individual eat more healthily.

This could be used to record whether someone has brushed their teeth. Fourteen teeth represent one week of brushing for morning and evening.

It is advised to take between seven and eight hours of sleep each night. This diagram is a representation of my sleep over a one week period in January. The time spent asleep is shaded, opacity reduced and then layered over other days. We are told to eat five portions of fruit or veg a day. The diagram above could allow someone to record and reflect on their current eating habits, a dark green tomato represents a day where five or more portions were consumed, a red one shows that only one or less was consumed. Over time it is hoped that keeping the chart green will become an incentive to eat more healthily.

This is a visual representation of how much water I am consuming each day. We are recommended to consume two litres a day, equivalent to a large drinks bottle. I am aware that I do not drink enough water it was not until now that I realised how bad I was.
We are told that to maintain a healthy lifestyle we need to drink about 2-3 litres of liquid a day. Therefore we should aim to drink approximately 2 litres a day. Please include anything we consume that you would classify as a drink. How much are you drinking?

I consider gathering information from others to create some information graphics. Designing a questionnaire to gather the exact information I require proved quite challenging.

We are told that to maintain a healthy lifestyle we need to drink about 2-3 litres of liquid a day. Therefore we should aim to drink approximately 2 litres a day. Please include anything we consume that you would classify as a drink. How much are you drinking?

I consider gathering information from others to create some information graphics. Designing a questionnaire to gather the exact information I require proved quite challenging.
Wednesday 2 February

I have previously been keeping a brief log of some of my daily events to document through information graphics, today I begin to keep an intense diary of events on a range of activities. I begin to keep a food diary and include as much information as possible including details of calorie content, fat, saturated fat, sugar, carbohydrates, salt, protein and fibre.

There is no taught session scheduled for today so we organise a group ‘show and tell’ to see how others are progressing with their projects.

Thursday 3 February

In the library I go through their copy of Data Flow again to find further inspiration for my work. The chapter looking at the body provides some interesting solutions with tools not included in the book. Upon John’s advice I also pick up a number of books related to visual communication. ‘The Graphic Designers Survival Kit: Understanding Graphics and Visual Communication’ by Ryan Hembree (2008) is particularly relevant to my area of study. A diagram showed here of the sender and receiver of a message and the encoder (graphic designer) reminds me of a similar one drawn by John in the last semester. It addresses the difference of graphic design and art. Successful visual communication is easy, it will connect with an audience on intellectual and emotional levels. Of course all parties must speak or understand the same visual language, and if I have read many times before a designers goal should be to produce concise and clutter free visuals to reduce the possibility of unnecesary noise that can hinder communication. An interesting extract from the section ‘Depth Of Meaning’ intellect; images requiring audience participation and interactionsround the stories with deeper comprehension and understanding. Successful design must not only be interesting with digital work via a screen, however once instantly. I also like the idea of producing large scale prints that encourage the reader to stop back to read the entire image so move to slow them through details. Another interesting extract from this book, North American and Northern European are considered ‘Low-context’ societies. Here the content of a visual message is interpreted literally. Organisations, organisation and the promotion of information for clarity and comprehension are the most essential qualities for effective communication. Bullet-point text and images that require little effort to decipher are used. Designers here tend to use static visual solutions that communicate the least via static solutions. In contrast Asian, Eastern Europe and Latin America are considered to be ‘High-context’ societies and respond to an aesthetic that utilises many layers of depth and meaning. Designers here appeal directly to the intellect of their audience through messages that are relevant to them, like an ‘inside joke.’ They challenge viewers to decipher visually sophisticated imagery or symbols which elicits greater satisfaction, emotional connection, and memorability. This is exactly what I am aiming for in parts of my previous log book. I would probably lose some of my audience if I included normal letters in the text but I am often in the accompanying text. Sometimes there would be no explanation at all, the final page for example showed a series of half-filled printer cartridges that actually related to how much ink was required to produce the book, or the first page which resembles a simple series of lines which actually shows how proportion of my entire life is documented on the following pages. Of course this will be considered by many in our society as poor visual communication, but as long as the reader is provided with enough clues I think this is an interesting way to relay information.
I have a meeting with Chris, since our last meeting I have dropped branding as my theme for my information graphics and have begun to collect the data I will use that is around my daily activities and my health. The early work I show are all pictorial and very literal examples of the data and I have been advised by John earlier in the week to explore more abstract ways of representing data. Chris suggests that the final product I am working towards may be an App that is designed to help others gain a better understanding of their own health. Although I will not be required to create a working piece of software I will need to simulate it in a convincing way to explain how the interface will work. I can do this using programs more familiar and accessible to me. However at this point I am advised to be experimental and not be too concerned with what it is I will be producing. We begin to consider what I will produce in the dissemination stage, this could be a piece of writing critiquing information design, examining the conventions and investigating how designers in this field grapple with this type of data.

3736
Saturday 5 February

I begin to assemble my food diary records I have been collecting. I had printed a series of tables that I would add hand written notes to, however it became apparent that making all of the required calculations was a bigger task than I had envisioned. I instead decided to re-design these sheets and input the data into a spreadsheet and allow the computer to automatically work out the totals and averages. I have also created a sheet with all the different types of foods that I have eaten so that instead of referring to my sources every time I can simply copy and paste these into a spreadsheet. I find most of the nutritional information I require is on the packets, however home prepared meals are a little more difficult, especially when loose fruit and vegetables are involved. For some meals I have found a supermarket alternative to get similar nutritional information, and for some I have looked the recipes up online.

Day - Sat 5 Feb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Approx. Weight (g)</th>
<th>Energy (KJ)</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Carbohydrate (g)</th>
<th>Sugar (g)</th>
<th>Fat (g)</th>
<th>Saturates (g)</th>
<th>Salt (g)</th>
<th>Fiber (g)</th>
<th>Protein (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>Slice</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2365.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8812</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Pineapple Juice</td>
<td>250ml</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>510</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Orange Juice</td>
<td>250ml</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>510</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>Seeded Bread</td>
<td>44g</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>Seeded Bread</td>
<td>44g</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00</td>
<td>Sunflower Spread</td>
<td>10g</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have decided to use programs more familiar and accessible to me. However at this point I am advised to be experimental and not be too concerned with what it is I will be producing. We begin to consider what I will produce in the dissemination stage, this could be a piece of writing critiquing information design, examining the conventions and investigating how designers in this field grapple with this type of data.

3736
Friday 4 February

I am working towards an App that is designed to help others gain a better understanding of their own health. Although I will not be required to create a working piece of software I will need to simulate it in a convincing way to explain how the interface will work. I can do this using programs more familiar and accessible to me. However at this point I am advised to be experimental and not be too concerned with what it is I will be producing. We begin to consider what I will produce in the dissemination stage, this could be a piece of writing critiquing information design, examining the conventions and investigating how designers in this field grapple with this type of data.

3736
### Units in Different Measures of Alcohol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>14%</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>125ml small glass</td>
<td>1.8 units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175ml standard glass</td>
<td>2.5 units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250ml large glass</td>
<td>3.5 units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750ml bottle</td>
<td>10.5 units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300ml bottle</td>
<td>2.5 units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25ml single shot</td>
<td>1 unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50ml double shot</td>
<td>2 units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pint glass</td>
<td>3 units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monday 7 February**

It is unfortunate in some ways that I don’t drink alcohol because this could make an interesting chart. There are of course advisory limits about how much alcohol adults should consume, and I think it is fair to say that the majority of people don’t have much of an idea how their drinking compares to these limits. This diagram shows the number of units in different measures of a particular wine. The green bar represents the number of units that should not be exceeded per day for someone my age. I have shown four different measurement sizes and have chosen them to appear the correct size. As I am showing a 2D image of a 3D object I have had to adjust the scale on the y-axis to make the information representative.

In the diagram to the right I have kept the y-axis constant, this has the effect of making the images appear drastically out of proportion. It is however much easier to read and it would be possible to stack the drinks on top of each other to work out your alcohol intake. The blue and pink bars show daily limits for males and females.
Tuesday 8 February

I have recently begun to gather data that I can turn into information graphics, such as wearing a pedometer and by keeping a food diary. I began to look at existing data I have to see how I can use this. Above is my weight in pounds over the last 18 months. I have kept a log of this data by using the Wii Fit almost every day over the last summer. It is shown here as a simple line graph which is not particularly interesting. Gaps in the line represent gaps in my data.

On the right I have used two different y-axes to compare two different data sets. This data shows over a shorter period of time from the graph above, over just over a year. I again show my weight, this time in green. I also show the hours I am currently working at Tesco a week and there is some connection here.
Wednesday 9 February

I had used pie charts to show my daily activities from last semester. I had removed the sections where I had been asleep to show the time spent not doing anything. At the end of the semester it was interesting to see that the gap was rotating clockwise to show that I was going to bed later and waking later. Today I revisit this data to create a graph that just represents sleep. Time spent asleep is represented by a bar that is scaled and positioned along the x-axis. Because the bars are positioned differently they can be difficult to judge so I have coloured them also. Later I removed the colours just to have the shapes.
We rarely see data represented as colour values, colour is more often used to separate different types of data. An exception here is thermal imaging, I am keen to develop this technique to display data in an unexpected way. It was originally quite hard to use colour in my sleep data, however I have recently found a way to use it because I thought it was more beautiful when I used only two and instead relied purely on the bar lengths and positions. Instead of combining a technique of data representation for one data set I decided to use purely colour when I revisited my weight data. The colours were selected to link my weight to my mood at that time. Yellow is used when I am most happy and when my weight is lowest. This moves through to green, blue and then magenta as I become depressed and frustrated. I have represented each day with a block, days where I have no data are not represented. The top of the diagram represents the present, November 2009 is at the bottom.
Friday 11 February

Now that I have two weeks of food diary information I begin to look for trends to show in the data. The obvious trend is that I tend to eat later in the day. I begin by using a similar gradient technique from by weight chart with each day represented by a horizontal bar. In the graph opposite morning is shown on the left and evening on the right. A denser red is used to show when I consume calories. The top row shows data for January 24th, with the next day below. I move on to show my eating patterns using scaled circles placed along an x-axis.
Above: I begin to show this data by superimposing each piece of food, colouring sweet and allowing these peaks for sweet, green for savoury and blue for liquid.
Right: Total calories per hour shown only.
Variations on previous chart, with labelling and different hue values to show different amounts.

Saturday 12 February

I have been showing my eating patterns using my calorie intake, however I also have a lot more data to review. I take my salt intake and show this as a series of bars. Bar charts of course vary the length of the bars to represent values. Here I have attempted to show my salt intake by varying the thickness of these bars. Each bar is measured to touch, so if I ate 100% of my recommended limit each day the diagram would be completely blue. I however rarely reach this limit and so the bars are shrunk to reveal white spaces. On a couple of occasions I exceed this limit and so the bars for these days overlap to produce a darker blue. The colour for this chart is inspired by those little packets of salt that would appear in Smith’s Crisps.
Yesterday I attempted to visualise my salt intake, now I take a closer look at my sugar intake. I have been using the area of circles to show values for some time and I wanted to use a line or other shapes as well. I have seen a number of scientific diagrams which represent sugar molecules as hexagons. This shape feels particularly relevant because of the links it has to honey. In the top two examples on the page opposite I show my daily intake of sugar using different-sized hexagons. Below I show the same data with the addition of a centre hexagon to represent my recommended limit; here it is possible to see that I exceed my limit on each day.
Monday 14 February

Mike Murphy came to talk to us about the written piece we will be producing in the next stage of the project. It does not necessarily need to be a traditional dissertation; however, it must have a sense of audience and purpose. It may be a commentary on practice or process, a normal business plan. It could be instructional or exploratory, but should link to my major practical project. It must have something to say, have a structure and arrive at series of conclusions and, of course, the language I use must be fit for its purpose.

In Andrea’s book club we discuss Jane Eyre, a book that few of us including myself enjoyed, however we all agree we have now had the opportunity to read this classic.

Tuesday 15 February

I am already using a pedometer to record the number of steps I take on a daily basis. I enquire at Boots about blood pressure monitors and glucose testing kits to gather further data. I am especially keen to try testing my glucose levels and see how this changes throughout the day and in relation to the foods I eat. I suspect this will show some good variation and be quite insightful. I have a suspicion that my blood pressure will remain fairly constant however it could be interesting to see how exercise, horror movies and other activities affect this. I later purchase a portable heart rate and oxygen level monitor from Amazon.

I revisit my nutritional intake data and attempt to show a pattern. I have observed, I appear to eat similar amounts depending on the day of the week. The graph on the right shows my calorie intake over three weeks, some days have near identical outcomes which sometimes overlap. I will observe this trend more closely as I gather more data.

This design is inspired by scientists work with DNA. The line running through the graph shows the recommended intake of calories for each day. The trails left behind by each line serve no meaning and should be removed as they are serving no purpose.
Wednesday 16 February

I want to recreate the graph from yesterday using a circular design to show an endless cycle of weeks running into each other. This is something I really struggled with, and although I am able to create something which I find interesting, I don’t feel that it is easy to read as the original. The orange diagram opposite is displaying three weeks of data; the green disc shows the recommended daily intake of vitamins. It reads clockwise, Saturdays at the top, Sundays to the right, and so on. Unfortunately, a few of these days have overlapping data which needs addressing.

Meeting with Chris, I showed the information graphics I have been working on. Since last week, I have produced a series of designs, most of which are just raw data set out in the form I have generated. I am advised to begin to think about how I can condense this data and find ways to communicate visually the relationships between them. I should consider using both macro and micro views of the same data to help highlight my information in different ways. Although I have been collecting data that I can accurately measure, I am told to consider measuring the intangible, including my feelings and emotions. I am advised to reduce my designs down to as simple as possible, keeping in one chart I have included some unnecessary decoration. I am reminded that absolutely everything I include should serve some function in displaying information or making it easier to understand. Although I have found that working in two dimensions has allowed me to produce a range of interesting results, I am asked to consider working in three dimensions and explore with moving images and interactivity in the virtual space for applying large amounts of information in one place and allowing certain layers of data to be added or removed.
Saturday 17 February

Spend a day in the Library taking notes from relevant sources regarding particle and upcoming written piece.

Thursday 17 February

I like this quote, “Memory has no taste for noise; it needs a message,” Jeremy Campbell, taken from Graphic Design Sources, (1998) by Kenneth J. Hiebert. A term covered later which I was not aware of previously is ‘Holistic Seeing,’ a way of looking at anything as a whole and in detail. Information graphics often communicate information through abstract form and in context to a sense particularly fitting. The book points out that this way of seeing increases our ability to create relationships. In a later section it covers the communication of statistical data, it points out that many people find statistics alone to be boring and count the ideas that they can be reduced to numbers. It discusses the deciphering process that information graphics provide and how this can be greatly rewarding for the reader. This process aids in the remembering of the message over a longer time than had we simply been told what information we should remember.

I like this extract, in a section titled Perfectionism And Failure the book points out that, “failure is a way to overcome fear. Crossing boundaries means to become disoriented, even lost, but only until a new and greater synthesis is found.” I take comfort in this statement as I seem to be having more failures at the moment. In a separate section I read this, “Everyone spoke of an information overload, but what there was in fact was a non-information overload.” – Richard Saul Wurman. This is a quote I enjoyed and I assume is in response in part to the explosion in the number of information graphics that use large data sets to produce aesthetically pleasing designs with little regard for their communication properties.
I have been researching information graphics for a while now and one name I continually stumble across is Edward R. Tufte. In one of his books titled The Visual Display Of Quantitative Information (2001) there are a number of rules that he believes information graphic designers should abide to. Graphic displays should:

- Serve a reasonably clear purpose
- Show the data
- Cause the viewer to think about the data rather than how the display was made
- Avoid distorting what the data has to say
- Encourage the eye to compare different pieces of data
- Reveal the data at several levels of detail, from fine structure to broad overview
- Be closely integrated with the statistical base of the data and the verbal descriptions, including the title of the display
- Not confuse design variation with data variation
- Not show more information (carrying dimensions) than the number of dimensions in the data
- Assist in remembering the data
- Respect the viewer’s intelligence

I agree with virtually all of Tufte’s points, however, it is my personal belief that aesthetics play a greater role than he gives them credit for. These however are a good starting point for me to form my own rules to work by. As I am already well aware the book points out that graphics can distort the underlying data, making it hard for the viewer to learn the truth. However, it interestingly points out that in this regard graphics are no different from words. It mentions the issues about using circles to represent numerical values through their area. Experiments have been conducted to understand the visual perception of graphics such as these. It turns out the perceived area of a circle probably grows somewhat more slowly than the actual area. Different people see the same area differently perceptions change with experience and are context-dependent. Even length can depend on the context. This is very troubling for the designer like myself, it appears on this evidence that the only thing we can do provide a table to display the numbers. Graphics however are far better at giving a visual, general overview of large data sets. Perhaps non-information graphics can only be successful when they combine the two.

Tufte talks a lot about data ink, every bit of ink on a graph apparently requires a reason, and nearly always that will be to present new information. Ink, it is claimed, that fails to depict statistical information does not have interest to the viewer of a graphic. The purpose of decoration varies, to make the graph appear more scientific and precise, to enliven the display, give the designer an opportunity to exercise artistic skills. Tufte considers this non-data ink as chart junk and should be removed at all costs. I see his point, but designers work on this occasion and believe that the use of colour and subtle or integrated decoration within information graphics are necessary to catch and sustain a viewer’s interest and aid the long term memory of the message behind the visual.
Saturday 19 February

I have been collecting data on my food intake and also urine output. I was in two minds about the relevance of this but thought it would be best to have the data than not have it and make a decision from there. There are a number of reasons why this data could be quite interesting. I have an opportunity to show how amounts and strengths are affected by diet and exercise. I will be able to make changes to my lifestyle and hopefully see results quite quickly. Once again it is quite interesting to discover through this exercise that I am not currently drinking anywhere near the levels of liquid that is considered healthy. Eight glasses are recommended but I rarely drink more than four. Above is a gradient scale I use to record urine intensity, opposite is a series of timelines for three days of data showing liquid taken in and out represented by the area of semicircles.
I try to approach the urine data from a different angle. Before I would only have considered putting the amount along the y-axis but here I instead try showing the colour here. A lighter colour results in the point on the chart being placed further up. The amount is shown by a black circle within a larger circle, the larger one being a reference to my bladders total capacity. White circles are used to show liquid drunk. It is later pointed out that if I choose to join the black dots as shown then I should really do the same for the white ones.

On the following pages I show my urine output over sixteen days. A full bladder is shown as a complete sphere, it rarely gets anywhere near that full. As you would expect it is most full in the mornings and is darkest at this time as well. Days run from top to bottom, times of each day from left to right. During the middle of this exercise I began drinking more to see what effect this would have and as expected I urinated more with a lighter colour.
Monday 21 February
In a session led by Kelly we are introduced to working with clay. We are asked to begin by creating two balls and forming them into bowls. These are then stuck together to form a hollow sphere. I started over a few times in an attempt to get these as perfect as possible. We were then told to pass this to the person to our right who then fine to add a textured effect or make other alterations. I was at first quite distressed at how others were deforming my creation and felt reluctant to dramatically alter anyone else’s, however by the time my lump of clay had made it half way across the room I was beginning to accept that I should learn to not be so precious and accept it’s fate. As it happens I was quite impressed with how it turned out.

Tuesday 22 February
In a discussion with John I get an opportunity to show what work I am currently producing. I am urged I am going to need to clearly explain what it is that I am setting out to do, as well as to make the viewer aware why I am using visuals in this way. This project is moving away slightly from just information graphics into something more expressive; this is fine but needs to be explained. It is pointed out the not everyone will interpret my visuals in the same way and I am going to be required to investigate perception and psychology in design. I share my concerns about too many labels and other detracting from the visual beauty of my designs, some kind of interactivity may be desirable to allow this information to be added or removed when viewed on screen. I am advised to not consider the aesthetic quality of the images in the early stage of designing. I should try doing ‘ugly stuff’ and try adding more labels and keys to test how much I can possibly add.

Last semester I considered the need to remain neutral with my designs. I concluded that is important for information graphic designers to aim for some kind of neutrality, however it is impossible to remain truly unbiased. The latest book I have been reading confirms this, Visual Research, An Introduction To Research Methodologies In Graphic Design (2005) by Ian Noble and Russell Bestley. On the subject of authorship, another subject John has previously talked to the group about, it points out that the designer has an equal role to play in the ways in which a piece of visual communication is read as the originator of the message itself.
Wednesday 23 February

First meeting with Mike Murphy to discuss my project, I am unsure what form this will take except that it will be related to information graphics somehow. I am advised to consider examining how information graphics are used in education and how the benefits different types of learners. There are said to be four main types of learning styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic (learning by doing). I am also told to consider the use of information graphics in the media, particularly newspapers and question why some like The Guardian are embracing this and others like The Sun choose not to feature them so heavily.

Thursday 24 February

Nottingham trip to see the Contemporary. We all agreed that the best thing about the contemporary was the gift shop. There were a number of information graphic books relevant to me and many more children’s books that would interest Jo. The exhibits themselves were average at best. Looking round furniture stores was actually far more interesting and later we ate at a place claiming to be the oldest pub in Nottingham.

Friday 25 February

Use data on walking and try to find ways I can represent this and highlight patterns. I know there are trends in this data although I find that traditional means such as bar charts do not clearly show this. I plan over the next few days to try to create new ways of using combinations of existing methods to find ways of representing this data, without much in the way of success.
More experiments with my walking data. In the images above and to the right I am using four weeks of data to show how far I traveled each week. Each day is represented by a segment, if it is a perfect square this is representing 10,000 steps. Arranged like this it is easy to compare the total steps over each of the weeks. Colours or shades were then applied to represent my current weight on that particular day, green days representing when I have a lower healthy weight and red for when it is higher. The intention was to show how long it takes for a period of inactivity to result in weight gain, although with the limited amount of data I have at this time there is no clear trend.
Sunday 27 February

Day off from Tesco and I am desperate to make good use of today making some interesting visuals. On this chart I am attempting to combine data on food intake, walking distance and existing body weight. The grey blocks show my weight recorded on that day, line width shows walking distance and line area shows calories consumed. For weight to be lost I should aim to walk more and eat less that will result in a wider and thinner line. A narrow and taller line shows I will likely be gaining weight.

There are occasions when I can see this theory working on this graph, however overall it is communicating the in a very poor way, especially to people other than myself.

I am determined to combine my three main data sets, BMI, nutrition and daily steps into a single information graphic, however in the three weeks of data that I have I can not identify any meaningful trend that will make this interesting or relevant. After a while I decide to instead focus on just two data sets over a longer period, my BMI and hours worked at Tesco with data taken from past pay slips.
Just over a year of data, my BMI shown using the thin bars with wider bars representing a wider waist. The large grey bars show number of hours worked at Tesco at that time.

Three weeks of recent BMI data, shown using bar length and tint. Darker tint equal more weight. I like the concept of representing body fat this way rather than using height as it reflects a person growing outward.
Walking distance each day over five weeks. Longer distances represented by longer lines and darker tint.
Monday 28 February

Continue to experiment and trying to represent amount of distance walked and mapping this against other variables such as food and energy consumed and my BMI. When working in Illustrator I accidentally create a visual effect that I am really pleased with (see page opposite). It resembles pools of coloured paint dripping into one another. Although at this stage this is not representing any data I can hope to apply this visual effect to my data sets in future.
Above: Three weeks of walking data, each day represented by a collection of circles. One circle equals 1 km walked.

Shows three days of walking data, each day represented by a collection of circles. One circle equals 1 km walked.
Each week day assigned a colour to compare walking distances for different days.
Comparisons of different nutritional values consumed.
After an exhausting and unproductive day yesterday I leave the work I was doing and instead decide to focus on a new design. I have often considered a star diagram in the past to represent the breakdown of the nutritional content of my food however I believe that I must have dismissed this idea because I feel that it is generally overused, similar to how I have avoided using bar, line and pie charts. The result of laying three weeks worth of data on top of each other is however quite visually interesting and attracted the attention of a couple of members of the group while I was working on it. This inevitably represents layers of data in a clear and simple way. The end result is quite different to a lot of the work I have been producing which often utilise colour, after a series of experiments I find that this works most effectively in greyscale. I believe that this design has potential to be transformed into an interactive piece as I can allow the reader to highlight data from a specific day and make comparisons with the rest of the chart.

In the afternoon we discuss with John our initial ideas for the dissertation phase of our project and are asked to think about themes and ideas for our exhibition. As I write the man in front of me on the bus is reading The Times with some rather interesting information graphics in what look like the business section.
Experiments with my walking data continue. Here I try representing 10,000 steps as a complete circle. Each day is represented by a segment of proportionate length. These are placed next to each other with the segments alternating clockwise and anti-clockwise. This piece is neither a success of information design or information art in failing to communicate and lacks aesthetics.

Wednesday 2 March

10,000 steps

m        t       w       t        f        s        s

10,000 steps

m        t       w       t        f        s        s
Thursday 3 March

Despite being situated right next door to it in TPH I have never used the Lincoln Library so I investigate what it has to offer. It lacked many of the books that are relevant to me however I was able to look through some of the newspapers and journals, and an article in the New Scientist more relevant to what I was discussing with Mike regarding my written piece. The article is about different types of visual intelligence and some tests in the article suggest that I have a good spatial working memory and visuospatial working memory, however a poor paired associate learning memory. This makes sense to me as I also have difficulty matching peoples faces to names and numbers. There are also a range of online tests which I undertake.

Friday 4 March

A few days ago I accidentally created an interesting visual that I felt would become an interesting information graphic. The image resembles a liquid flowing down the image. It is obvious to the reader to start at the top of the image and work their way down. As you go down other data is added on some is lost. I believed this could be an interesting way to show my spending. I gather my bank and credit card statements and compile my spending and saving data for the last two years into a spreadsheet document. It became clear quite early on that this was not going to work out as I had intended, no matter how hard I tried I could not make something that looked as good as the accident version. Judging the area of circles can be difficult on its own, showing these in perspective as ovals is even more challenging. Just four months in and I was having difficulty showing everything without it looking crowded. I am at this point the graphic was aborted.

This exercise has proved to be very frustrating, however just as I was about to give up entirely I noticed that the arrangement of circles I was using to make the previous information graphic was in fact the most interesting than what I was producing. It was just a subtle change of direction and I began to colour these in to show how that money was spent.
Saturday 5 March

I’ve found myself becoming quite frustrated lately because I feel that my work is not communicating as effectively as I would like it. This is because I find myself effectively designing the graphs around the aesthetics. I feel that I should take a short break from some of my current work and approach my data from another angle and use traditional ways of displaying information and improve the visuals secondary. My first attempt was to represent my BMI in a traditional line chart. To help improve its appearance I have adjusted the length of the months slightly so each occupy the same amount of space. February, in particular, was looking noticeably too smaller than some of the others. Slight changes in the background gradient serve as the grid and help to reduce clutter which helps the reader make sense of the information. The entire chart’s area is representative of a BMI that is deemed as normal, if the line were to drop below or above the red area I would be entering underweight or overweight territory.

Another similar chart makes comparisons between my BMI and walking data and utilises two different y-axes, a third shows my BMI over split into monthly sections to create a graph which resembles mountain ranges. World Book Night, James has 48 copies of David Mitchell’s Cloud Atlas to give away in a pub crawl. A few of us assist carrying the books across Lincoln. More people than I had expected were aware of World book night, one pub was even participating by giving out their own books.
I had some success earlier in the week by visualizing my nutritional intake by layering transparent images onto one another. I apply the same technique to my spending data and get equally impressive results. I first try using colored circles to show where I have spent money, but this isn’t as useful as some colors, such as yellow, disappear much more easily. I instead represented each transaction with a black circle with an opacity of 4% and when split by retailer I can see not only the size of my spending but also the frequency with which I use them. The images above represent my spending over two years for Tesco petrol stations, Tesco Stores and Amazon.
Monday 7 March
Kelly’s second lesson, we smoked our pots to colour them. First we prepare them by applying tin foil or wet clay, then we place them in a bin filled with newspaper and set fire to it. The results were not as I had expected, the next day was supposed to be a wholesale failure, which didn’t really matter to me, however it was still a fun exercise. Meeting with Chris, I showed him the work I have been doing to represent my credit and debit card transaction information over the past two years. I am told that I now need to be able to test the success of these designs and for this I will need to define a set of principles to act as a checklist for successful design. I am also advised to try working more with the third dimension to allow me to incorporate comparisons with a greater number of data sets. I am also asked to consider incorporating numbers into my designs and not be completely graphic. For my dissertation I could investigate the importance of both form and function in information design. It could be a critique of where has it come from, why it is popular now, and where it is going from here. I could look at the political impact of this practice and investigate how it can be a force for good (or not).
Some more work on possible formats for my log book. The image above shows how many days we have to complete our projects, including the two week Easter break.

Tuesday 8 March
Emma is interested to learn more about the large digital textile printer and I am keen to find out what possibilities this has for representing my work. We both visit the printmaking studio to find out more. I can see this being a great way to display my work and would make a change from using paper.
With John we have a group discussion about the exhibition and agree that there is a possibility for an overall theme such as colour to tie our work together. The discussion then moves on to our own work and about how visual language fits with our practice, including problems with noise.
David’s book club to discuss Bravo Two Zero, a book I was originally not really looking forward to however we all loved it.
I begin to seriously think about my log book for this semester. I have decided that it will be a combination of my journal and development work for my major project. I am saving all my Illustrator files of my development work and continuing to update a journal on my Mac. At some point I need to combine the two and decide what format it will take. I was originally thinking about a book the same size as the one from last year, however as I will be showing my development work on large scale designs this would not really be suitable. I also want to update this book right up until the final stages of the project, so I decide to use binding bolts to make this process easier and quicker.
Wednesday 9 March

Second meeting with Mike. I discuss the current concerns I have with the dissemination phase of my project. Chris has advised me to critique information design because I am unsure what sort of question I would pose in this case and whether the area is suitable for a question. I am told that a question may not be necessary; a critique may be a way to describe and analyse through research and evaluation. An information graphic covers much such a large area that I need to establish my own definitions for the terms I will use. One area I could explore from the origins of information design is the mapping for the London Underground system, including the typography and I may want to limit my study to the twentieth century or modernist influences such as those from the Bauhaus. As a precursor to frame it in some way, I should find good and bad examples of graphics that make information easier understandable. I should pay closer attention to how the media are currently using information graphics and analyse how different newspapers report on the budget later in the month. Mike also advises that I watch a feature-length documentary called Helvetica as this may prove useful. For next time, I am to prepare an introduction that includes what I will look at, why this interests me and how I will do it.

Thursday 10 March

Try 3D charts without success. I was hoping to apply different layers of data in this way to encourage comparison of different data sets, however it is simply too difficult to judge distances unless the we are judging those on the same plane, and then there is no need to present the graph in 3D at all. I have more success using 2D techniques to show my walking data.
Friday 11 March

So far I have had little success utilising the third dimension in my designs, however I am keen to find a way because of the aesthetic quality. I have created a visual of my body mass index values using colour gradients previously. I turn my previous 2D image into a series of 3D blocks. I am only using colour gradients so there is no difficulty in reading the data compared to the 2D version I have created, however there is also no benefit to using 3D other than aesthetic reasons. I begin to experiment by introducing further data sets by colouring different sides of the cubes and moving these forwards and back however I encounter many of the same problems from before.
Today I have a small level of success with 3D charts, using 3D cylinders I can show both the distance walked and calories consumed each day over a five week period. I have opted for a different perspective rather than the standard 45 or 26.6 degree grids I was using before, this is so that I am not creating unintentional rows of data that can be read in other ways than I intended. Normally I would use a circle to represent a value, however here I have taken the number of steps to calculate the circumference. The volume of the cylinder is then calculated to represent the calories consumed. The likelihood is that the number of calories is constant rather than the amount of physical activity I participate in. The next stage is to introduce my BMI dataset into this visual to show my resulting weight. I begin by using a colour gradient similar to how I have done before however I feel that the size of the shapes should really be communicating this data, so I will follow this up some other time.

Saturday 12 March

Continuing my attempts to incorporate 3D into my designs I attempt to show my weight as a series of seesaws. The intention is to show each day being added at the front. It became clear that this would produce a very large, difficult to read graph, so I instead opted to show each month and the ranges within them. Once again the problem of representing data in a three dimensional form became apparent here. I added the usual colour gradients to the graph to make it easier to understand, however this obliterated the need for the seesaw complexity.

Sunday 13 March
Monday 14 March

In the morning we visit The Collection to get some ideas and inspiration for how to display our work at the final year show. Later in a collaboration with John my project begins to take an interesting turn, it is clear that this project has become more than just information graphics. I am representing myself and communicating who I am. One possibility is to use my information graphics and apply it to objects to create my own brand. I could apply a pattern of my sleep patterns to a bed cover, or my spending patterns to a money box. This would help give my work a purpose and provide targets to work to. It would also be ironic that I began the project looking at brands, moved onto information graphics and now about to move back into branding.

Tuesday 15 March

Yesterday we were informed that we would all be presenting our progress to the group. I begin to compile some of my recent work into a Keynote document to show my current information graphics and create some mockups to show how these could be applied to household objects.
More representations of liquid intake in and lost each day.
Times of day that I eat, positions relate to a clock face.
Set of coasters to show how much I drink. The outer ring represents the recommended amount (2000 ml). Each coaster relates to one week of data, the top one is using all six weeks.
Place mats showing my nutritional intake over five weeks. From the top clockwise: calories, fibre, fats, protein, carbohydrates, salt, saturated fats and sugars.
Wednesday 16 March

I review the newspaper coverage of the Japanese earthquake from the weekend. I found a map in *The Guardian* to be the most interesting, as it showed where the epicentre of the main earthquake on Friday was with a circle to represent the magnitude of 8.9. A further 250 aftershocks were also shown with smaller circles, 30 of which were magnitude 6. There were also diagrams of how nuclear reactors work and how Japan’s power stations have been affected. *The Independent* and *The Times* included similar diagrams but these seemed to show less information and required the reader to refer more to the written article to extract the information. *The Times* has however included an interesting full-page, colour diagram explaining the effects of different radiation levels on people. Between 0 and 1 mSv of radiation can be obtained from a flight from London to New York, or an X-ray. 20 mSv is the annual safety limit for nuclear workers, 100 is a cancer risk and 5000 would kill half the population of those exposed to it. Current levels recorded outside the Japanese power stations are between 1 and 20. Although I found this information interesting it was not helped by the uneven scale used in the diagram, or the inclusion of radiation readings over different periods of time without being clearly labelled.

Attempts to turn my drinking data into an informative graphic also proved elusive in the absence of liquid in a glass.
I create a chart based on my television viewing. I have awarded what programmes and channels I have watched over the last four weeks and attempted to give each one a score out of eight depending on how much attention I was paying to that program. Of all the data I have collected over the last four weeks this is the least precise, although each programme has a scheduled time it does not necessarily mean that I watched it throughout the entire duration. My attentional levels also vary a lot even within programs. The end result looks quite messy however by using colours to separate the different channels it is possible to see when, how and when I watch television. I especially like this way of showing the data because the waves remind me of visualisations of radio waves, and the colours are similar to those used on the old version of Teletext.

Thursday 17 March

I create a chart based on my television viewing. I have awarded what programmes and channels I have watched over the last four weeks and attempted to give each one a score out of eight depending on how much attention I was paying to that program. Of all the data I have collected over the last four weeks this is the least precise, although each programme has a scheduled time it does not necessarily mean that I watched it throughout the entire duration. My attentional levels also vary a lot even within programs. The end result looks quite messy however by using colours to separate the different channels it is possible to see when, how and when I watch television. I especially like this way of showing the data because the waves remind me of visualisations of radio waves, and the colours are similar to those used on the old version of Teletext.
Friday 18 March

I need to create a mock up for how I can apply my walking data to a rug to show in my presentation. It is quite easy to do this, a rug is essentially a poster on the floor. I used to design I have made previously using the perimeters of circles to show walking distances over different days.

Saturday 19 March

Begin to apply some of my existing information graphics to objects. I have an idea of displaying my walking patterns onto socks, with each day being represented by a particular day of the week. I begin to encounter a few issues with working with 3D objects, firstly it is not always possible to see the entire information graphic at one time. It is sometimes necessary to reorganize how the data is presented and this has issues related to how intended images are to be read. It does however open up opportunities not available before. I have an idea for a drinking glass where the information graphic around the outside of the transparent container directly refers to the amount of liquid currently being held inside the glass.
Size of bars relate to walking distance each day. This is then applied to socks, each represents a different day of the week.
Monday 21 March

Jim talks to us in the morning about exhibitions, how the audiences experience is often not considered to the degree that it should be by those designing the space. Visitors will rarely read all the labels you would like them to read so it is important to keep each piece as short and as relevant as possible, about fifty words is the maximum for each piece.

In the afternoons we began our project progress seminars, I was the only full time student showing and it was interesting to catch up with some of the part time people, some of which we rarely get to see.
Tuesday 22 March

In a meeting with Chris I update him with the change in direction my project has taken over the last week. I have found that this has helped me focus my work, to provide achievable goals that I can work towards. Chris however seemed more concerned that I was now heading in a completely different direction to before at a time when I should be approaching the end of my project. I am encouraged to look at the creation of brands and the methodologies behind this. This will undoubtably affect the way I approach my dissertation, it is important to devise a way to judge the success of the work that I have done or it could be an investigation into the bridge between information design and branding. I am asked to consider what the identity of an information designer will look like if it were to be visualised, it would also be interesting to create a brand identity based on it’s own raw data such as profits or environmental concern. For the next time I should have an introduction for my dissertation prepared as well as the majority of my information graphic designed ready to be applied to a range of suitable applications.

Wednesday 23 March

I have a session scheduled with Mike Murphy, however this has to be postponed. Instead I devise a new way to present my walking data suitable for a rug design. Compared to some other designs for this data this time I focused on offering an aesthetically pleasing solution, however it is still able to communicate the data. The rippling, smoke like pattern shows and compares Monday’s data on the left, Sundays on the right. I have applied a transparent effect like I have done for some of my previous graphs to allow the comparison of multiple sets of data. I have however tried to introduce colour which I was not able to do with any level of success before, and here it has worked well. I also have the idea of applying my sleep data to an alarm clock face. My sleep chart I have created previously is not really suitable for this purpose, however an experiment I did back at the start of February has potential to be developed further. Once again it uses a transparency effect to superimpose. I shade the area of a clock face when I was asleep and with multiple nights of data I begin to build up an image of when I am most likely to be asleep.
Colours relate to amount of time spent asleep, orientation tells us when this was.
Thursday 24 March

I visit Nottingham to look at home ware stores to hopefully get some inspiration for how I will adapt my information graphics to be suitable for a range of applications. The first shop I visit is John Lewis; they have a range of designs applied to crockery. Stripes seem very popular at the moment and I can already see how I can represent my data in this way. However, I must find some way to make these information graphics otherwise engaging when they are not applied to an object. Habitat have an even greater range of products that provide inspiration; one plate in particular actually appears to feature a pie chart. As well as objects I have previously considered such as rugs and bed sheets I also find many other possibilities such as welcome mats and rubbish bins.

Monday 28 March

Nick Hand tells us about his bicycle journey around the UK coastline and shows us the work he did to document this process. His interviews with people are really interesting and it later gives us ideas about how we can incorporate something similar into our exhibition.

I have a lot of data about my eating patterns and I wish to develop designs that can be applied to table cloths, place mats, plates and possibly other crockery. I am keen to show my eating patterns relating to times of the day on a place as the round shape could mirror a clock face, however I can not find any way to get a result I am happy with.
Tuesday 29 March

In our afternoon session we visit the Architecture Building to view our exhibition space. Andrea and I take measurements of our space and distribute a diagram to the group. At this point I am aware that we are the only two who have seen how much space we have to work with so in addition to the measured drawings I provide a comparison with a full-sized tennis court, Justin however hasn’t been on a tennis court for a while and requests a comparison to be made to the turning circle of an Alfa 164. John also finds the size of a tennis court difficult to comprehend and requests a comparison to the Manchester Velodrome.
I use my spending data for 2010 and create a simple bar chart. When the bars are placed together without spaces I discover that they resemble a city skyline. I find this particularly relevant since the city and money are closely linked. I discover that when I repeat this diagram with the data I have from 2009 they are in many ways very similar and when placed one below the other it resembles a reflection. This makes it easy to make comparisons between these two years, we can see that I made large purchases in the late summer on both occasions, however my reduced wages in 2010 means that I was not able to save a similar amount of money before Christmas. The colours for this diagram were selected to match the colours found on an American Dollar note, these have connotations of wealth across cultures.

I also have an opportunity to sort out my log book. At the start of the semester I had considered continuing the log book from last year with a bubble diagram used to show time. I had also thought at this time that I would like to use a similar layout. It becomes clear fairly soon that this would neither be possible nor desirable. The work had not been done because I needed to be spending my time on other things. When I sort the log book with the tree pieces I was doing at the time, there is now no need to be making additional tree pieces. I also had to sort out the log book with my major project work for my major project. I have been considering combining my log book with my development work for my major project. This way I can show my unsuccessful pieces that I have spent time on and explain what I was intending to do with them, why I think they can be improved and how I will achieve this. One important thing I did want to make was the flexibility of the layout structure. Whereas before I allocated myself 200 to 220 words per day and had a very rigid structure, I now want a layout that allows me to greatly expand particular days and reduce or miss other days out entirely depending on how much progress I make. Although I really liked the thin landscape format from before I also wanted an opportunity to show off some of my designs in a larger scale. As an additional feature I decide to compromise and use an A3 x 340 page size, this is the same aspect ratio and only a tiny bit larger than my MacBook's screen and may help me when it comes to visualising how the printed thing will appear.
Thursday 31 March

It is pointed out that whereas my original sleep chart uses white to represent sleep on a blue background, this is reversed in my clock image. If I am to use the same colours in these charts I will at least need to remain consistent.

I revisit my spending data after thinking about how I can turn this into something which resembles a series of barcodes. What I have created is quite different to what I had in mind when designing it on paper however I am very pleased with the outcome. Each credit or debit card transaction and ATM withdrawal in 2010 is shown as a bar and these are grouped in order and separated by month. As well as showing my total spending for each month I have also shown my personal surplus or deficit, that is whether I had money left over or borrowed from my earnings in previous months. If I have spent more than I have earned then the right side of each bar is positioned to the right of the red line, if I have saved money I have shown this by placing it to the left. Aesthetically I prefer this design when the black and white are reversed, this makes it less obvious but still recognisable. The colour for the dividing line was selected originally to show when I was moving further into the red, i.e. spending more than I have. This red line also resembles a laser scanning the barcodes which is a touch I really like.
Friday 1 April

This simplified design to represent my walking is hopefully easier to read than my attempt at using circles. Each short bar represents 2500 steps, or approximately one mile. It is very easy to add up the lines to see exactly how far I have traveled as well as make general comparisons like below.
Saturday 2 April

After reviewing my previous attempts to represent my weight using colour gradients and a key I am keen to try and show the same data with shades of grey. This would be preferable in many ways to using colours as I can associate having a lower BMI with a lighter shade and being heavier with a darker shade, rather than using colours that have no real significance. Having a gradient scale of just two shades also has the benefit of the reader not having to refer to a key as often as was the case when I used several. I would like to represent the data in a way that does not require any further explanation. However I am also thinking about how this design can be applied to a set of weighing scales. I have therefore decided to represent 12 months in a wheel separated into 360 segments. Each part is assigned a shade of grey to represent my BMI on that day. Any missing data is filled in with an average of the surrounding data. As we naturally read a circle clockwise from the top I have arranged the data in this way. It starts on April 1st 2010 and continues for twelve months. The bottom of the chart represents September and the right side shows my weight before starting the MAs, and the left shows my weight after starting the course. We can clearly see the minor fluctuations in my weight as well as the larger changes and trends.
Sunday 3 April

I have been using my weight data quite a lot over the last few weeks, it is a data set which is quite important to me because it was this which helped me lose a lot of weight and regain some self confidence. I see many information designers showing a person’s weight using bar charts. To me this always seems a strange way to do it and appears to be somewhat reversed in what I would expect. When a person’s weight is shown a lower point on the chart represents a lower mass, however that person will be lighter and so I feel this should result in a point higher up the chart. Likewise when a person is heavier they are exerting a greater pressure on the ground, therefore the bar should be shown to be pushed down further.

This graph is designed to address this confusion. It has gone through numerous versions over the months and is currently looking like this. Rather than using bar height, I am showing their width, which makes far more sense as people gain weight around their sides rather than gain height. This version shows my BMI over the last year and a half and how I quickly lost and then slowly began to gain weight. I feel this is particularly successful because rather than just showing my weight it also shows how this relates to whether I am classified as underweight, normal, overweight or obese. I have tried to create this type of diagram before however I would represent each days reading with a separate bar. As there was often very little variation over the days I would find that it was difficult to identify trends in this data. Rather than adding too many data points I have taken my average weight from all the readings I have in a month. This bar that represents the data have rounded corners to they resemble rolls of body fat, and the wider they spread the greater my body mass at that time.
Presentations on project progress by James, Paul and Emma.

I got sucked into this book a while ago but have only today got around to reading it. *Show Me The Numbers, Designing Tables And Graphs To Enlighten,* (2004) by Stephen Few. The author takes a similar view on information graphics as the highly regarded Edward R. Tufte. He strongly opposes area graphs of all kinds, even pie charts which are widely used and understood in society. The reason for this is they communicate poorly because our visual perception is not designed to accurately assign quantitative values, especially when these dimensions are involved. He argues that both line length and 2D position are the only techniques that can accurately communicate quantitative data. Line width, shape size and colour intensity can be used with limited success, other methods including orientation, shape, curvature and colour hue are not able to express quantitative information. I agree with some of his points because I don’t think colour hue can be written off; it is an established way to represent temperature through thermal imaging techniques and is used in medical practices when scans are taken inside the body, and I feel I have had some success representing my weight in this way.

Like Tufte this author makes references to data-ink and believes any unnecessary ink is removed, or at the very least de-emphasised. Again this is an area I do not totally agree on as I find there are occasions that the reader should feel more engaged, and this can be achieved through colour. I agree with many of his bar chart points, does it individually re-organise the information for the reader to support the clarity of the narrative being communicated. Communication involves much more than knowing what to say; it also involves knowing how to say it. A single message may require multiple tables, graphs, or a combination along with additional text, which could be made up of bullet points or sentences. This all needs to be arranged in a story. It is important to consider what needs saying first, what should be said last and what needs emphasising the most. The data should be grouped, it is my job to make the grouping obvious to the reader; it should not be up to the reader to arrange the information into meaningful groups where I can do this in advance. From here I should prioritise and sequence the data so that it makes sense.
Tuesday 5 April

I use the A0 plotter for the second time. This did not go as smoothly as before; I was required to load the paper and then when it failed to print I was forced to reduce my file size as it was just over the 30 MB limit. I am however pleased that I was able to become more familiar with it for future reference.

I try to make a visual representation of my movements to and from my own house. This is a data set which I started a few weeks ago, and on my trip to Nottingham I got the idea of turning this into a welcome mat. The data I have shows what I have done and where I have been each day, where I am going, when I leave and when I return, what I do, etc. I then start thinking about how I can represent these places and the data. I normally only regularly visit two places, University and Tesco. I assign these the colours of yellow and blue respectively and use red to indicate any other places.

I then begin to think about how I can represent these places on the door mat. If I visit two different places I mix these colours to produce another colour, for example if I go to University and then coming back I will represent that day with a green circle. If I then go to a third place I will again mix the two colours to produce another colour, for example if I go to University and then coming back I will represent that day with a yellow and green circle. I then begin to think about how I can utilise the properties of the door mat better to fit this data and start to use arrows that will either point towards or away from the house to show whether I am at home or not.

I then begin to think about how I can show patterns in the data relating to the times and places I go to, as well as the amount of time I spend at each of these locations. I begin to experiment with a circular design to resemble a clock face, which time I adapted into a diagram of the movements of the sun and moon throughout the sky. Showing the data I had problems, however, because the data for the other days had to be shrunk significantly making it less visible. I eventually give up on this design as I am not that aesthetically inclined and now try to show this data in a more visual way. I do not feel that it really reveals much about my personality.
Wednesday 6 April

Today I compile all of my development images to date into my log book document. In the evening I try to visualise another data set I have not yet attempted. I feel that my electricity usage is quite interesting and reveals quite a bit about my personality. I am already aware of some of the differences in energy consumptions of different appliances, however I have never really considered how much total power I use when I consider the amount I use these devices. To begin with I create a simple line graph to show this data and then try to think about what I can do to make it more visually engaging and how I can apply this to an object. I feel that changing case would be a fitting application. However I am unsure about the visual style I will adopt. I consider taking inspiration from circuit board diagrams and bolts of lightning however I can not get anything to work as well as I would like.

Thursday 7 April

I continue to think about my electricity chart and have the idea of representing my energy usage as smoke coming from a power station chimney. This would still function as a timeline that others could easily understand and would also allow me to layer different data or appliances on top of each other to allow the reader to make comparisons in the data. When I start to visualise my data I discover that the flowing curves I had imagined that would form the smoke are misrepresenting the data, so I instead try the same method but with only straight lines. Nonetheless I still find the resulting image quite informative and interesting.

Monday 11 April

In a discussion with John I show him my spending charts which I am currently very pleased with. However without me to explain the charts to the reader these pieces are failing to communicate. I then realise that I have fallen into a very obvious trap of losing focus of who the target audience is. Whereas I have designed these charts to communicate with myself I was intending to use information graphics to tell other people something about me. I have forgotten that my current work would be completely meaningless to someone else. The obvious thing to do would be to add titles and labels, something which I have been resisting because this would ruin the aesthetic qualities of my images. Instead of treating these labels as an after thought I should closely integrate them into my designs, using typography, colour and other visual clues to help communicate the subject of my charts further. John suggested not only one of my charts that I was currently unhappy with and showed a food chart that shows my calorie intake over five weeks. It is a particularly difficult graph to apply labels to but I am advised to split it up and show the viewer how to read it in a separate part next to the diagram. The other chart’s I dislike this graph as the moments is because visually it has no link to food and therefore feels totally inappropriate, especially when compared to my money charts.
Tuesday 12 April

I join Emma to see her fabric being printed at the printmaking studio. While we were there I got to see some other peoples work being printed which suggests that this printer could indeed prove very useful for my exhibition. While waiting in the printmaking studio I make the necessary changes to my food chart. I also use a colour that links my design to a pizza. It is not too obvious but I am surprised that my design has a direct link to the subject matter I have shown it to my brother who remarks it looks like a pizza which I found surprising as I though it was only something I would pick up on.
Wednesday 13 April

I even had trouble explaining my circadian sleep to John on Monday, so I know I have a communication problem here. To show him it worked I have decided to show a step by step process of how data are combined to make one large image. The reader also then has the benefit of seeing my sleep patterns for specific months, weeks or days as well.

The other chart tackled today was for my television viewing. I have decided not to alter too much from the previous design except to add some more labels to the axes. Unfortunately, however, I have split the data in two ways, by week day and by channel, to help viewers find patterns which would be difficult to otherwise.
my weight

March 2011

April 2011

JULY 2009

MARCH 2011

ideal

overweight

obese

underweight
Friday 15 April

I update a chart I designed six weeks ago and haven’t touched since. My nutrition chart already has labels attached however it is lacking something aesthetically. I retain the 100% nutrition circle and add a 200% line for further reference. A key and title are added and I spend some considerable time trying different typefaces, sizes and colours. I make the background 97% black, the white area has 10% yellow added and a 50% black key line is added, all to make this chart as easy to read as possible.

I’m pleased that Emma and Jo both leave feedback on my work, I am also pleasantly surprised that I have a few positive comments from other Flickr users.

Thursday 14 April

Chris meeting, I am pleased that he is happy with progress since last time. However he is keen that I still my more 3D work including the test. We also discuss my section piece and exhibition. I briefly speak with John as he thinks I will obtain and have the same with my learning plan. I had concerns about the subject I had prepared as

I would like to develop this only when I have completed all of my designs. I am told that I will be able to show a concept mental sharing much earlier and then have it approved and be structured. I am pleased with the progress of my week this week and offer some further advice; including the placement of some of the tiles and a change to a sans serif typeface for my second sleep chart.

I set up a Flickr account and post my current images on here and a link to here on our groups Facebook page. I urge others to leave any feedback as I am aware that we will not have an opportunity to discuss each others work for a couple of weeks at least.
Saturday 16 April

Chris has requested I spend more time trying to incorporate 3D into my work. This has caused problems in the past because I do not feel that it is possible to accurately represent data in this way. I try again and attempt to show my weight over time using cubes positioned at different altitudes, however this was unsuccessful.
Wednesday 20 April

A chart I have been wanting to make for some time is my eating patterns. I have already shown how this varies from day to day but I also want to show how this varies for different times of the day. After organizing the data I have I revisited a previous version created back at the start of February using a bubble chart. Here the day is split into hours and the number of calories I consumed within each of them is represented by the area of a circle. I was originally quite impressed at the time with this chart using just two weeks of data however I have now fallen out of favour with bubble charts. Using a circles area is fine if all you want to say that one value is larger than another, however it is virtually impossible to understand exactly how much larger. Different people compare the growth of circles in different ways and adding a key to show values is not really going to help. Regardless of that I was curious what it would look like if I updated my old chart with the extra data I had, and the extra three weeks of data certainly made it more interesting. Seeing the data like this produced some extraordinary patterns that are quite beautiful but quite meaningless. My heart is telling me develop this bubble design further but my head is telling me to abandon it now. I attempt to recreate the bubble chart using bars that are scaled two dimensional, however this no longer has the same visual impact and is hardly more efficient at communicating.
I feel that I have had some success representing the time of day in the second of my sleep charts by representing an analogue clock face without numbers and this is something I wish to reproduce in my meal time chart. Using a circle to arrange my data could help the reader understand the time of day my data is referring to, however I have a problem here because my data is taken throughout the entire day where the hour hand makes two complete turns around the clock face which could cause the data to be read incorrectly. I am also aware that I don’t want this chart to look too similar to my previous food diagrams which both also use a circular design. I attempted to place my data in bar form around the outside of a circle, the idea was to put morning data on the inside and afternoon data on the outside, however depending on the scale I used this either appeared too spaced out or too crowded. I also tried rearranging my bubble chart around a circle, this was communicating the frequency of eating well enough but the actual amounts poorly. The next development was to represent this data using area, not bars as before. This is something I have recently been reluctant to do since judging different areas can be problematic however I have had the idea of combining this with a grid which will allow the reader to obtain values, similar to a bar chart. The circle is split into twelve and represents an area scaled to represent the data. I intentionally avoid the Florence Nightingale approach to creating this type of diagram by simply measuring out from the centre so the shape of these wedges naturally exaggerate the data. My resulting chart looks somewhat unspectacular as it does not truly represent the differences in data that I can see when I look at the data in a table.
Friday 22 April

The final outcome for my meal time chart is somewhat of a mixture of techniques I have used over the last few days. It does indeed feature a circular design to represent a clock face, and I have used bars to represent my data. These bars are half the width of the segments I was using previously. I can show differences in the data more without distorting it. This also leaves me enough room on the diagram to separate morning and afternoon data which I can separate with different colours. Separate versions for each day are arranged next to the main image which includes further details about how to read the data. Although these are smaller than the central image I have always used the same scale that will allow the reader to make direct comparisons within the data. I have not felt it necessary to include all labels on these versions as this is all explained on the central example. A grid is applied so that the reader can determine the number of calories I have consumed per hour. I feel that I have included enough detail to allow the reader to make accurate enough readings without being overwhelmed with too many that would harm the communication qualities of this piece.
Final adjustments to meal time chart. The contour like features on this diagram resemble a curved, round surface so colours were selected to resemble a donut or bagel. The majority of my charts so far are quite dark so I wanted this one to complement these. I am particularly keen on the biscuit dough version shown here, although, I am aware that the charts now somewhat resemble a running track, something I would be more interested in if I were dealing with my exercise data.

Have more feedback on Flickr regarding my images and more praise in particular for my weight chart using colours. A lot of users have added me as a contact which is encouraging as it shows that they appreciate the collection of work I have uploaded. However, I would prefer if they would favourite or comment on my individual images so that I could find out which are working well and which need some improvements.

Beginning to really think about how I can combine different data sets. This is something both John and Chris have strongly advised that I do and something I am determined to do well. I begin by combining just two, my walking and my body weight. I do this by simply combining existing graphs and techniques. The number of steps I take is shown using a series of hills and my resulting body weight is represented using a colour gradient. There is a problem here, the number of steps determines the amount of area that can be coloured which is unfair and misleading.

I feel that introducing more data to this will be highly confusing and not allow for accurate comparisons.

I also create a scatter graph to show the number of steps I take each day of the week. Each of the seven days is then given a separate colour. I introduce the number of calories I have eaten on the y-axis to allow for comparisons.
Number of steps taken on the x-axis, number of calories consumed on the y-axis. Colours relate to days of the week.
Try to combine my food, exercise and weight data. I have recently read some interesting thoughts on information graphics in a book by Stephen Few. Here he says that a piece of information design should tell a story and this can be achieved through multiple graphs, tables and text. This gives me great comfort. I have a lot of data I wish to combine and splitting it up and making comparisons with a limited amount of data is going to be a far more efficient way for the reader to absorb the information. I begin by making comparisons by overlaying my weight over my calorie intake, then having another graph that compares my weight to my sugar intake and so on with salt, carbohydrates, protein, fat and saturated fat. I can then make a number of charts that make comparisons to my walking. These will all be long images arranged moving down the page so that the reader can view them in the order I intend. I am not convinced this is working well in its current form, all the different ways of showing my food are producing similar looking results and including them all seems a little pointless.
Focus on comparisons simply between calories eaten, burned and resulting body mass. This way I can incorporate my deep patterns too since I have determined that sleeping uses a surprising amount of energy. In fact on many occasions I lose more energy through sleeping than walking. The fact above I find really interesting and think that many people will be surprised by this also. Walking actually accounts for a relatively small amount of my overall energy use, as only a small percentage of my energy is lost through inactivity such as staring down into a plate of food. Sitting down or standing still results in no energy use. Men are generally advised not to eat more than 2500 calories per day, when I add up the number of calories I typically eat it comes surprising close to this figure. I find that I am only able to make a comparison between my energy eaten and used and this will vary considerably from day to day. At times I will eat too much and other times not enough. It is interesting to note however that these figures balance out to be very similar over time which shows my methods of data collection and processing this data are fairly accurate. More interesting still is how closely my daily weight tracks these rises and falls in calorie intake.

Tuesday 26 April

22.95 22.99 23.02 23.05 23.09 23.12 23.15 23.19 23.22 23.25 23.29 23.32 23.35 23.39 23.42 23.45 23.49 23.52 23.56

22.95 22.99 23.02 23.05 23.09 23.12 23.15 23.19 23.22 23.25 23.29 23.32 23.36 23.39 23.42 23.46 23.49 23.52 23.56
Wednesday 27 April

With all of my charts to date I have designed them with consideration for the aesthetics from the start. I am finding this impossible to do for my current chart partly because of the complexity of the data but also because of the subject itself. I found it difficult enough for some of my charts to resemble the data without being too literal, but because there is no single theme for this data I have no option but to design with a form follows function in this case. If I had attempted to design this chart a few weeks ago it would be completely different. Like many other information graphic designers I was using area to represent values, particularly circles as these are easy to produce and adaptable for many designs, and often look quite impressive. They do however have a major disadvantage: they are very difficult for the reader to accurately read and different people have been shown to interpret these in different ways. As a result I now refrain from using area to represent quantitative information. Using colours to represent values has shown to be successful to a degree however the most effective way is undoubtably to use 2D positioning: it may be a little dull but bar charts seem to be the way to go. For each day I will show calories gained and lost in four ways. By representing these as different coloured bars on the same scale I can allow for easy comparison. There are several ways of doing this: I have used instead of each day to show if calories from the day before and I will use a line chart to show this data.

In the evening a few of us go to see the new Red Riding Hood movie, particularly relevant to Jo who is creating a fairy tale.

Thursday 28 April

Changes to the layout of my graphs, I have decided to show the number of calories entering my body on the left and leaving to the right. We generally read an image from left to right and I feel this will make the information easier to understand. In the middle of this I will show whether calories have been lost or gained and show my body weight in a similar way to how I have shown my BMI in a previous graph.

Friday 29 April

After difficulties yesterday I have reverted back to a previous design for my graph of everything. I will however retain the idea of showing my weight and calorie difference between the intake and output. I have almost fourteen weeks of data now but for symmetry reasons in my graph I don’t think including any more information than this would be especially beneficial.
Saturday 30 April

Today I pay special attention to the labelling and other information that allows the reader to understand the chart. I am pleased with the results I obtain by wrapping the grid lines around so they work in two different areas of the graph, this both visually attractive and demonstrates that both areas are representations of calories using the same scale. I have also added key that not only explained what the bars represent but also in which order the viewer should read them so make the most sense from the data.

Sunday 1 May

Small refinements, text added to further explain the data and how to read it. Colours have been selected to contrast well and work in each section of my previous charts, yellow for food, green for walking and blue to sleep. I am now calling this chart My Weight Flux.

Monday 2 May

I need to demonstrate how these information graphics could be displayed on a website, I have decided to make this a very simple structure similar to how information designer Nicholas Felton displays his pieces with a white background and simple headings. Chris has asked me to come up and demonstrate how I could use my visual for an App. Although there are many Apps that allow users to enter their own data to create charts there does not appear to be way that rises from the traditional types such as bar, line and pie. The work I have produced some extensively well suited to this kind of application as targeted to the general public and not for serious particle use where accuracy of data representation is paramount.

Tuesday 3 May

I used the A3 colour printers at the University and got some very disappointing results, the colours are poorly reproduced, the black of colour look coarse and the text flat is visible when I print at reduced size on my home A4 printers in readable at full scale. I will need to find alternative printing arrangements when it comes to creating my portfolio. I also did a series of prints from the mono copier to decide on layouts and font sizes for some of my designs.
Wednesday 4 May

Using the points from yesterday I began to finalize the layout for my portfolio. Although I was intending to fill each A3 sheet with my visuals I was not pleased with the results from yesterday and have decided to add more white space around the edge and use a wider aspect ratio. Colours for my weight flux chart have now been totally reconsidered. I have also been considering what information I should include in my portfolio in addition to the final graphs. I have previously thought about adding a short written piece explaining what the chart is representing, how it is intended to be read and why I have designed it in this way. Thin now could be placed on the same page as the chart itself, however I really want the work that I have done to sit on its own. A short written piece would look a little awkward on its own sheet, although I then decide to include the raw data in a table to encourage the reader to make comparisons between the two.

Further labelling. On my BMI chart I have now added the actual figures instead of relying on the graph entirely, and I shall name each month so that the reader is not required to work this information out for themselves. Similar additional labelling has been added to my spending chart which now also features labels which tell us exactly how much money I spent.

My Monthly Earnings

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<th>Month</th>
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</thead>
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<td>June</td>
<td>18.21%</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>48.30%</td>
</tr>
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<td>August</td>
<td>75.54%</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>138.16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>26.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>80.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages show amount of monthly income that was spent.

My Body Mass Index

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<th>Month</th>
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<th>February '10</th>
<th>March '10</th>
<th>April '10</th>
<th>May '10</th>
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<td>May</td>
<td>23.75</td>
<td>28.52</td>
<td>24.43</td>
<td>22.55</td>
<td>22.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Ideal

Underweight

Overweight

Obese
Thursday 5 May

It’s been a few days since I did any design work and although I am aware this is a late stage of the project I want a few more pieces of work for my portfolio. All of my pieces to date are representations of quantitative data obtained from my own life and I want to try something a little different. One idea I have is to select a number of movies and assign them scores. I would then find the movie on internet sites like Metacritic or Rotten Tomatoes and use their own scores to create a scatter graph. Any movie shown on the diagonal line shows that myself and the website are in total agreement, those positioned above the line shows that I believe they are overrated, below the line shows I believe they are underrated.

Friday 6 May

Many weeks ago I used my credit card transactions to create some interesting charts. Another vast source of information I have is my Tesco payslips from the last eight years. I had originally planned to make comparisons in the amount I get paid in the amount I get paid every four week period. This would have been a useful exercise for me to do so that I can discover how much overtime I can work without significant deductions. I initially dismissed this idea because I do not want money to feature too much in my work. I already have two charts on this subject and I was not originally even sure if I was completely comfortable sharing this particular piece of information with others; however, my Tesco payslips are a relatively small area of my life and I am pleased with the aesthetic qualities of these charts that I can justify these existences. Any more though would be unnecessary, besides having a large amount of statistics available to me. Recently though I have been thinking about how I can show my happiness levels and how I can relate this to other events over the years. Instead of using my payslip data to show money earned and deducted I can show the number of hours that I have worked, I can then relate my happiness to this. I go through about one hundred payslips and compile the data into a spreadsheet document.
Saturday 7 May

Begin to develop my happiness chart, originally this was to be over the last ten years, then I began to think about how I can extend this so that I can show my feelings during my GCSE and A levels. This concept was then expanded further as I began to layer on further information such as where I live and my current interests. A circular timeline became quite appealing because the whole graph now also functions as a pie chart, telling us what fraction of my life I have spent doing different activities in different situations. I could also link the visual style to the game of Life board game which features a multicoloured spinning wheel in the middle. Around the outside I have shown the average number of hours I am working at Tesco in each four week period. Selecting colours and applying labels is going to be quite a difficult task as there is quite a lot of information that needs categorising, as well as making easily distinguishable.
Monday 9 May
First day back in the studio after the Easter break. Bit strange to be back and don’t have a very productive day.

Tuesday 10 May
Meeting with Chris, I have to admit that I have had no luck incorporating 3D layering techniques into my work despite my best efforts. This is of course disappointing however I was always able to show the information more effectively in other ways. I have had much better luck combining data sets with my weight fluctuation chart. I also show him my log book and possible changes as well as the happiness chart I am currently working on. Overall Chris seems pleased with the work I will be submitting.

Work my final pieces ready for printing, my BMI chart is the only one which isn’t quite a 16:9 aspect ratio and I rectify this although I have had to make major changes to get this to work without distorting. I also add in one more month of data rather than I have a full set of data for April. Also add some minor changes to type size and positions of some of the labels.
Wednesday 11 May

Work on perfecting my spending graph, it was my intention to only add a key and possibly a few more labels that would allow the reader to understand how the graph should be read. However, I soon began making further enhancements and in the end, I created the whole thing from scratch to ensure all elements are equally spaced and consistent. I am aware that there is a problem with the way this chart has been designed; the gaps between each transaction contribute to the bars overall length, so my overall spending for the month is slightly smaller than the area I have shown it as. It is a very minor fault and there is no way around it, however I take this opportunity to reduce these gaps to minimise this distortion of information. This has the downside of reducing the graphs apparent representation of barcodes, but I feel it is a necessary alteration.

I also wanted to make the red line more prominent as it has been pointed out to me in the past by others that this can easily be missed. I instead divide the chart into two, the left shows when I am in the black, the red shows when I am in the red financially. For aesthetic reasons I have made the red section into a gradient that fades to black; I feel this works particularly well and fits the subject matter as it now also mimics a laser scanning the image.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Money Not Spent</th>
<th>Money Spent</th>
<th>Percentage Of Wages Spent</th>
<th>Total Money Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£10</td>
<td>£50</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Monthly Spending</th>
<th>Percentage Of Monthly Income That Was Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10</td>
<td>£10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The only chart I am currently not happy with is my first sleep chart. My second sleep chart is a representation of what time I went to sleep and I feel that it does it much better than this one. I would like one of my charts to compare the amount of time I spent asleep and so I altered my first attempt so that it now shows it in two sections. The first is essentially the original but rotated onto its side, I have then repeated the diagram below with all the bars aligned against the x-axis to allow for comparisons of time asleep. Originally I had labelled the y-axis more heavily, however I later decided to remove all but two readings that show the recommended amounts of sleep we should be taking. I found that having more than two was difficult to read and easily to get values confused. This should have been a simple process however I had not taken as much care to ensure all my bars were correctly aligned when I originally created it back in February. I felt like I had little choice but to start again from scratch and create each bar separately once again.
Friday 13 May

I have been aware for a number of weeks that there are mistakes in my money saving chart. Originally I used a spreadsheet document to create bar charts which I then exported into Illustrator to edit. This process appears to have distorted the charts a little and so I feel I have no option but to start over and create it again from scratch in Illustrator by creating each of the 750 readings individually which took all morning and afternoon. The end result is nearly identical to the original, however I was not comfortable knowing that some of the readings were slightly wrong. Clutter has been reduced from around the edges of the chart and I have removed the vertical grid lines and instead used different shades of green to aid the reader distinguish between different months.
Saturday 14 May

I have been printing my work on the mono printers to make fine adjustments to layout and font sizes however I am concerned how accurately the colours will reproduce when I have them printed by an external company. I decide to test how well the plotter prints my work at the University as I can print the entire range for just £2. Although the flat colours are reproduced well the colour balance is miles off. Black isn’t too bad, its certainly better than the A3 lasers but many of my brighter primary colours are far darker than they should be.

Write the copy that will accompany the charts in my portfolio and layout the raw data into nice neat tables.

Sunday 15 May

I am starting designing my website and constructing in Illustrator. It is essentially just my portfolio on a digital form. Before the latter realization of computerisation I had included four views of my work which included an overall image and close ups of the title, parts which explains how to read the graph and a finally a close up of the graph itself. These are selected by simply moving the cursor over a thumbnail at the bottom, clicking on the main image will bring up an extra large image that will fill an iMac screen. Any larger would be unwieldy and would slow down loading times. I have decided against including the raw data sheets like the ones in my portfolio because these will be far too large to be viewed effectively on screen. I have been dreading using Dreamweaver again but I decide to attempt to build my site. Surprisingly I find I am able to create my first page relatively painlessly and I eventually have two data sets ready to show at the session tomorrow.

Monday 16 May

Shots and still images were selected for hand in. I have only prepared black and white prints in my portfolio just in case I am asked to make any last minute changes. I’ve selected that the four alterations I required to make are to change the orientation of three of my portfolio sheets from landscape to portrait. Feedback on my website from the group is positive and I feel nicely on track.

In the afternoon I finally decide to get my work printed. I have to admit that this is something I have wanted to put off for as long as possible because I am scared that the printed colour results will not live up to my expectations. I have had great results from using Staples printing service last week so I went there. It’s £22 of my twelve prints, although expensive when compared to the university facilities it produces infinitely better results on quality superior paper.

Tuesday 17 May

Final adjustments to my website. I finally get an opportunity to speak with John who offers good advice about how I should position my copy in the end. I decide to use the same content I have previously written in my portfolio. I eventually get the site uploaded to a free hosting service and test it on a range of browsers and devices including my MacBook Pro, a Windows PC, an old iPod touch, a Wii and a PS3. Firefox and Explorer however still add an ugly blue border around some of my images however it Google this issue and it is very simple to resolve in Dreamwaver.