

**ethics and sustainability
in design education**

may 15-16, 2010_toledo, ohio

sat. roundtable notes

table one:

eric benson_ *beyond the grid system*

in/out

Designers tend to solve problems with material objects. The artifacts solve smaller problems within a system of other issues, however they are really only bandages masking deeper and possibly more sinister ones. How can graphic designers help solve our contemporary issues outside of the traditional poster campaign making us aware of teenage pregnancy or a website asking for donations to stop rainforest destruction? Moving beyond the systems we use in layout, what broken systems of commerce or interaction should the graphic designer focus their energies on solving? Is the jump from the systems we're used to, to those much bigger and in many ways intangible realistic? This roundtable discussion will focus on the possible options for creation graphic designers have moving forward, when faced with the knowledge that their current method of making is unsustainable.

Is the current graphic design curriculum capable of adapting quickly to new changes in technology and culture? Why or Why not?

Moving beyond the systems graphic designers use in layout and typography, what broken systems of commerce or interaction should we focus their energies on solving?

- How they designed the line for Disney theme park attractions.
- Designing Australian tax system not the actual form.
- Where can design go outside objects?
- Can we design a better system?

Disciplines need to reevaluate what our jobs are. Designers of experiences and environments. We are in a new position to change the system. Inspire everyone to rise above. Experience design beyond the artifact. Designing for the needs of the people rather than the object needed. Design the system not another useless object, not the problem presented by the client but the problem we think we need to solve.

- How do we pitch these ideas to clients? Whose responsibility is it? Focus on the "why" not the "what." Designers need to have dialogue with the client.
- How can we break out of our typical design habits? How do we teach our students to not be order takers?

State the problem and let the students figure out solutions rather than telling them what to do. Be more general in our teaching. Informed intuition: to teach designers to test solutions and let that decide the design.

Follow shoppers to see what they are thinking and feeling rather than what they are saying and doing. Take design research process, learning it and then implementing that through our teaching and allowing their intuition to be informed.

Tim Brown-: Idea
Valve: branding term, but sense with systems.

Eric Benson's example of its failing in the classroom: example of designing a conference, here's the general message...majority of students, well we do need these artifacts, can there be signs or people? They all gravitated to printing things. What about smart phones? Just didn't get it and think outside printing.

- What about reflecting on why they are printing?
- Packaging prospect?

- Package with no packaging but how do we ship? Students say how will I show that in my portfolio?

The idea of portfolios is limiting students on thinking outside of the box. Culture change: worrying about portfolios. Regarding portfolios, wouldn't it be valuable to provide more substance to the portfolio to where students can explain their processes and procedures? Two year students have no way of explaining the meaning behind their work.

Re-think and re-define ourselves as designers.

- Is the curriculum set up to experience more experiences rather than pieces for your portfolio?

Undergraduate is much different than graduate. Let's stay focused on the undergraduate level because it's the practices level. Teaching them the aesthetics. Things shown in portfolios are not necessarily the meat of the work and rationales we need to visually articulate our work. We need to teach students how to present their work explaining the methodology in their portfolios. Project showing all their methodology and process work. Some design schools are only teaching, learning the software, and aesthetics, but nothing about methodology.

A lot of the immigration population attend community colleges. Art institutes: anyone can get in if they write the check. All about the teaching of software.

Self initiated projects we feel passionate about rather than trying to change the world with small clients who just need a brochure.

Print advertising is losing 40%; everything is going online. Magazine and editorial designers: when everything changed and the Mac came in, moving from conceptualizing to typesetting everything yourselves, which meant re-training. Students need to re-train to the medium or to the methods of what they want to do.

Honolulu newspaper went under, so a new paper does online live stories...you can see the story literally as its changing. Why can't we embrace this? Quit complaining and re-inventing everything! Change or die. I'd like to hear more stories like the Honolulu paper.

Respect designer's do and do not set. If we can start with the designer leading things rather than stating how we do it.

Creating experiences, and who are the clients, embracing this theory, the service industry. Looking at the entire experience if we can get a few great examples, maybe we can get people to do this and be partnered with designers. Partnerships between designers and business. Research psychologists collaborating with designers has been a great success. Changing the mindset on how we use design in our own environment. The community needs to buy into these things.

I don't tell them what to do; I give them suggestions and let them figure things out. People feel strongly to be prescriptive but prescriptive can be destructive to creative. Students feel less creative after college because it's too prescriptive and they don't want to be told what to do. Students, who are more academically inclined, thrive. Allow the students to self choose their topics and they will really get into their work.

Linda Freidman tutorial on software; some faculty feel threatened. Much more useful than textbooks that they don't read.

Thinking in Systems by Donella H. Meadows; Eric recommends this book, input and output for systems.



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