

Unit 3: Week 4: Projections¹

Reference: Editorial Design Digital and Print

Cath Caldwell

Reference

Editorial Design Digital and Print

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PROJECTIONS¹

Summary:

A practical guide to editorial design in print and digital with many case studies of magazines and interviews with leading figures in the industry. Particular relevant Chapter 5 on Seamlessly Integrating Digital and Print

Analysis:

Practical editorial 'standards' guide designers on how to design within magazines, and whilst independent and other examples are plenty in bucking the trend, the 'industry standard rules' are explicitly stated as fact. Whilst they may be how things are, and whilst there are examples that challenge this, there is nothing going deeper than surface level design and the 'way things are' to why they are the way they are and the inherent bias, prejudice, patriarchal and capitalist roots of editorial design.

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Chapter 8 Essential Design Skills

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“Online media and changes in distribution and demographics are having design impact on both newspapers and magazines: formats are shrinking, pages becoming simpler, because, says Mario Garcia “The internet has created savvy, impatient reader who expects hierarchy, good navigation and fast motion on the printed page.”



How digital is affecting print and how print affects digital, a symbiotic relationship?

Question: Not sure I see evidence of formats shrinking, unless this was when ‘handbag’ magazines had a flurry. Recent physical magazines I haven’t noticed layouts getting simpler in my own experience.

Further exploration: Interesting that digital is impacting print expectations. I’m not sure I think this particularly either. But that may be my demographic and younger readers may feel and expect this. See Research Garcia Mario PDF

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Chapter 5 Seamlessly Integrating Digital and Print

Caldwell uses the New York Times feature “What I learned when my husband got sick with Coronavirus” as an example of ‘good’ responsive design - desktop layout to mobile layout



Challenge: I don't think this is a great example of integrated design. Yes a spread goes to a mobile format that is technically 'good' (legible, clear, same words and images) but the design is completely compromised. The impact of the image is reduced significantly and the text is below the image, the exact opposite of what Garcia Mario stipulated made great digital storytelling, “the fusion of narrative and imagery... no longer will you see a photo either before, in the middle or at the end of the story itself.”

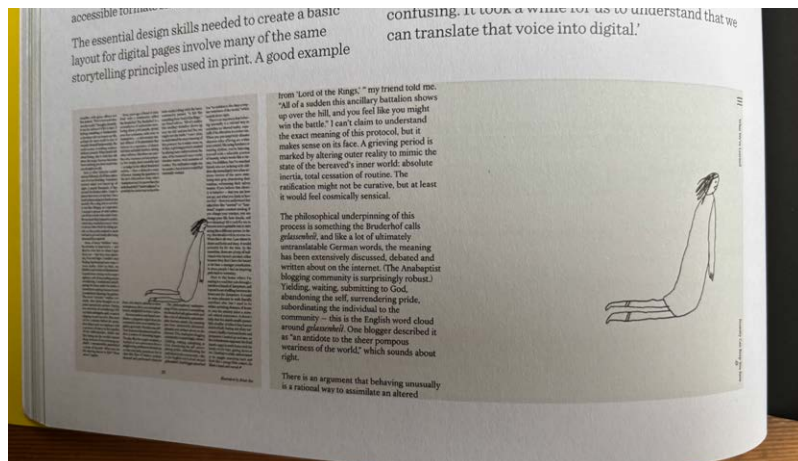
Link: Garcia Mario's 'WED',

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Caldwell also uses the feature 'Insanity keeps you sane', also from the New York Times, as another good example of seamless integration. She notes the the illustrated figure "leans weightlessly against the column on text on the printed page (left), but transfers seamlessly to the white space of the digital frame (right)."



Challenge: I think the digital iteration loses all the fragility and nuance of the printed counterpart. Surely the illustration is amplified by being contained within the text, the space created in the centre of the text is offbeat and unusual for a printed magazine, but strongly denotes the subject matter, is elegant, undersated and clever. The digital version leaves the figure leaning against nothing, floating, and feels separate to the text. Again not fusing image and text at all. I understand the technical constraints of responsive design may well underpin this design, but I this isn't a seamless integration, iteration, translation, creation as the tone, feel and nuance of the printed article is lost.

This feels like the print came first, and the digital is a translation of it, which is absolutely how digital magazines design is approached in its infancy. With digital overtaking print in circulation and distribution (*chk) surely digital should come first, or both should be thought if in the first instance? If both were thought if initially should Garcia Mario's WED is an equal marriage of words, editing, design working together from the outset, should WED expand to become words, editing, design, orientation / publication / format / medium / foregrounding both mediums in initial design?

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Oswin Tickler: designer and educator

Summary

A senior lecturer in magazine and book design and production at the London College of Communication exploring the potential of connecting open source software with digital print technologies, developed HP Spark, software to push the possibilities of digital design and printing.

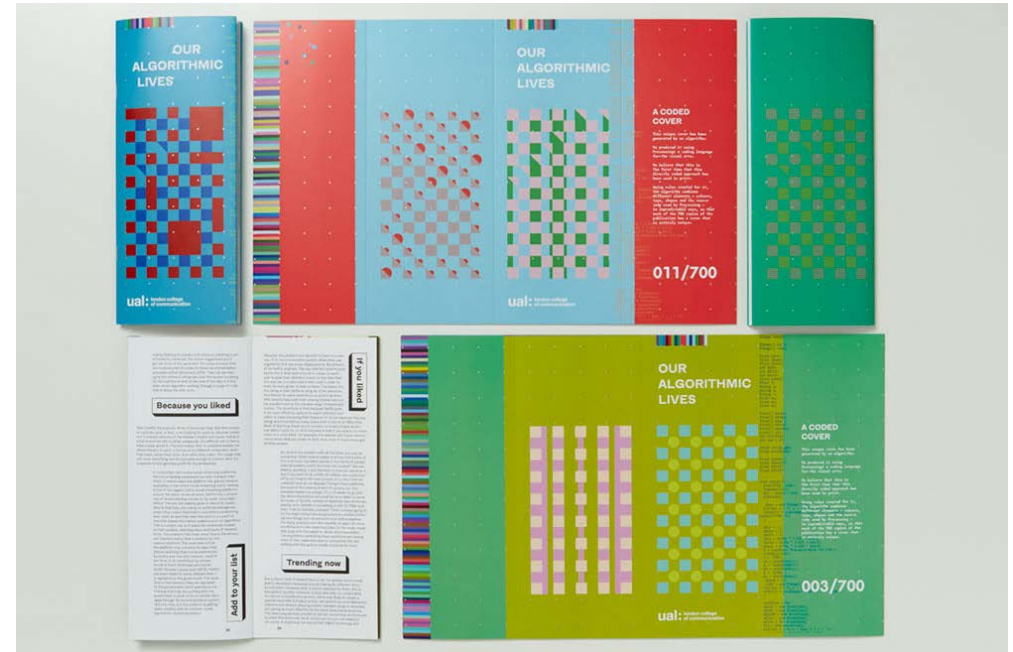
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Project: Using open source creative code to generate variable digital print.

Tickler started with how to visualise algorithms in print. Using creative code to design allowed each cover to have a unique design.

Developed software with HP Indigo to develop HP Spark to do this through FE Burman - digital print specialist.

<https://www.oswintickler.com/work/fusing-frontiers>



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An excellent example of an iterative and expanding line of enquiry. Initiated by a desire to explore visualising an algorithm digitally with intention to print.

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Whilst the software was created with packaging in mind, Oswin feels, due to his background in print, that there are “huge amount of scope for editorial content” he is “intrigued to see ideas” on if this could apply to editorial publishing.

Tickler is not a coder or developer, his background is print, he says its about being “curious”

At most art colleges there will be a variety of different equipment, both traditional and very modern. There’s always new areas to explore, and the way I did it was to combine two existing areas that didn’t really communicate much.”

Opportunity: Feels like an opportunity to explore this further with my thoughts to digital to print design for magazines with digital being the primary audience at present.

I am not a coder or developer and don’t want to be one, but I am curious on how to create what I view as better digital magazines that editorial print designers can design to utilise print design techniques in the digital space. I don’t know if this is possible, maybe this is my curiosity?

I am interested in traditional forms of making (screenprinting, weaving, letterpress) and am in a location where I can access these. Can I use a traditional form of making to explore digital to print design? Is letterpress the best for this as its the original typesetting?

Link: Shelie De Beauvent - Typesetting allowed her to consider every word in prinitng.

Question: Slowing down. Digital fast. Challenging the speed of the medium in some way? I don’t know what this is.

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Discusses 'value' in print.

"Print still has an allure. The more the world goes digital, the more print will have value. But there's no room for just any old print now. Mass-produced print is largely dead outside of books and certain magazines. The market shrinks and I think that's where the luxury of or alternative side of printing speaks to - and could perhaps connect with - the digital world. That's where you create that value."

Discusses sustainability

Pros to digital printing you just print what you need. Must be aware of digital not being 'free' and the energy, hardware and carbon outputs.

Further: Not entirely sure what he means by value being created in alternative ways of printing. This is a concept I need to explore further.

Further: Also the physicalness of digital which is ignored by many as the content isn't physical, you can't get hold of all that fragmented and floating content. Nature analogies used for digital products - sad but clever from the creators - as it removes carbon print from use and product, but the more we use digital the worse this is going to get.

Further: Stats on carbon use of digital for specific stuff. Climate Course coming up in February.

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