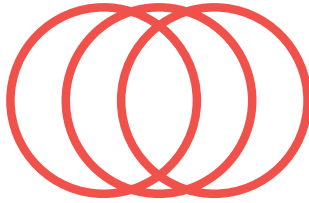




**This is a book I wrote when I was 23.
Well, this is actually a picture of a book
I wrote when I was 23. It's on a table, too.
I hope you make it through the following
pages & learn something. I Sure did.**

**Bachelor Of Fine Arts Thesis
Designing [For] An Experience
By: Andrew Frank**



***Bachelor Of Fine Arts Thesis
Designing [For] An Experience***

ANDREW FRANK

**TO MY FRIENDS, MY FAMILY, AND
MY COMMUNITY. WITHOUT YOU THIS
TRULY WOULD HAVE NO MEANING.**

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Foreword

I still remember how I felt my first day coming into The Communication Design at The Cleveland Institute of Art. I was so excited to finally be starting my education in something I knew I would love. I was full of wonder and astonishment, ready to take everything in and become the best designer I could be in three short years.

The excitement I felt for design then has evolved and matured into something even greater. It has evolved into to passion, obsession, integrity and even sometimes frustration. Together, all of these qualities have given me the mind set to capture the big picture, formulate ideas, and develop detailed work. I wouldn't change any of those feelings that I've developed over the past three years, for they have helped shape the designer I am. They are the feelings that I rely on day-to-day that tie my everyday experiences together.

The excitement I felt at the beginning was accompanied by a plethora of other emotions including hope, desire, fear, and anxiety. I was hopeful for the future, I desired to learn and become something great, but at the same time I felt fear and anxiety towards all of the uncertainties that I knew awaited me. The big bad year long BFA Thesis was one of those uncertainties.

I spent my first two years in the Communication Design Department wondering where I would be at the beginning of my senior year. I always asked myself, "What could I possibly devote an entire year of school working on?" Instead of brainstorming and preparing like I would for any other project, I just brushed those thoughts off and had it in my head that I would figure it out on a whim. Needless to say, when the first day of class rolled up, I was still clueless of what I would spend my year developing. Needless to say, this did not help the fear and anxiety dissipate.

The first week of senior year was hell for me. I was panicking that I wasn't interested in anything enough to spend a year working on. I made lists of things I enjoy, things I hate, and things I wanted to learn about. After those lists and about a million post-it notes on my studio wall, I had it in my mind that I would do my year long thesis project on outer space. I've always wanted to be an astronaut, to experience weightlessness and the fear and wonder that is the universe.

I think outer space had become a cop-out for me at this point. I've done at least three projects on outer space since being accepted into the Communication Design

Department. Luckily for me, my classmates and good friends were there to talk me out of something that would have been a big mistake. They asked me why I would do my thesis on space and I didn't have a legitimate reason besides "I'm interested in it." Next they asked me what do I want to do in my career. My response to them was somewhere along the lines of, "I want to design meaningful experiences for people that change the way they look at things and interact with them." That was the moment when it clicked in my mind what I should do: investigate the intricacies of experience and how one can design an experience. I knew almost instantaneously that I would be investigating and designing for The Communication Design Department that I had been a member of for the previous two years.

I knew coming into my senior year at CIA that there were a couple of major changes happening in the Communication Design Department. There were important faculty changes, class changes, and a large sophomore class entering the department. It was then I started to really think about my experience and my role in the department.

I had always seen myself as an ambassador to the department when it comes to discussing pressing issues with the faculty, starting critiques and rallying students to get involved with the department. It wasn't until half-way through the spring semester of my senior year that I truly identified these traits as qualities of leadership. I am a firm believer that you should leave things in a better state than when you arrived if you are truly passionate about them, and this becomes a duty if you are a leader. I have a love for all things design that I try to get others excited about, and our small community of designers in The Communication Design Department is definitely one of them.

I came to the realization that I could have a positive, lasting effect on how the Communication Design Department functions. I knew then that my BFA thesis was going to be about creating a starting point for a new culture to develop for this community.

I've definitely had my ups and downs with this project. It has affected me emotionally and physically because I have given it everything I possibly can in one year. I have poured my body, mind and soul into this because it is something I believe in. It can and will make the positive change I have planned for if it is embraced.

CHAPTER ONE: KNOTS & PUZZLES.

AN

EXPERIENCE

VS. EXPERIENCING

Before We Start

Before I start to explain my thesis, there is a little bit of background knowledge I need to share with you. In order to fully grasp the concept behind my thesis, you must understand a little bit about the structure of experience and what designing [for] an experience means.

What is An Experience?

Experience is what gives structure and meaning to life. It is something you have to embrace, to interact with, and put to memory in order to have a lasting effect. Experience affects your future interactions, perceptions, and helps shape your values and personal beliefs. It shapes who we are, how we do things, and is the reason why we do them.

I would like to share two metaphors for experience that I have come up with. The former will be an introduction to what the structure of an experience is, and the latter is about the importance of integrating interactions to form an experience.

Imagine a long straight thread. This thread represents your life time line. There is a beginning and an end, but what is most important is what falls in between. This part of the thread is where all of the experiences you will have occur. As life moves forward your thread starts to develop little tangles and loops along that middle section. These loops are representative of your previous interactions and experiences. The more you progress, the more the thread tangles, eventually weaving the tangles in and out of each other. As your life progresses and your experiences build upon each other, your thread will become a ball of tangles that all affect each other's perceptions, aesthetics, and interactions. The ball of thread is the culmination of your life's experiences, and the emotions that connect all these in your life.

Now step away from the ball and imagine a puzzle. Puzzles cannot be considered complete until every last unique piece is in its place. The puzzle pieces represent interactions. Without even one piece, the puzzle cannot reach completeness (fulfillment). It is crucial that these pieces all fit together to create the complete image. Only when the puzzle has all of its pieces can we consider an experience to be had.

Designing (for) an experience is a method of integration that leads to achieving an overlying purpose. Designing things that influence relevant interactions will contribute to the overall experience and purpose. Without the context of the designed experience, these interactions have no definition for integration.

Regardless of the form an experience manifests, it will always require subject specific qualities in order to be successful.

CHAPTER TWO:

I'VE GOT A PROBLEM,
AND I WANT TO FIX IT.

CAN I TELL YOU
SOMETHING?

LET'S TALK

I NEED TO BE FRANK

Let Me Tell You Something

I am very interested in how people interact and communicate with each other. Cultures are either made or broken based on how their members interact. People create connections, interact with each other, and from these interactions memorable experiences are had. The idea of designing an experience that ushers in positive interactions for a community is one that I am extremely interested in. That is why I chose to do my BFA Thesis based around designing an experience for The Communication Design Department (CD) at The Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA).

By the end of this project I have been a member of this community for three years. At the beginning of my senior year I sat down and evaluated my own experiences in CD at CIA. I was able to make a list of the things I would change that I believe will be good for all. It was from this list that I was able to eventually identify key issues that lead me to my problem statement. Before we get to that good stuff, I'll tell you the story of how I got there.

A Community In Need

My experience as a member in CD has been both positive and negative. I have worked on some great projects, learned many new skills, met some great people, and overall had a fun time.

The part that I wish would have been more prominent throughout my time in CD is a relationship with upperclassmen. I really never spoke with any upperclassmen throughout my entire time in CD—I never felt comfortable approaching them or asking questions about my work or their work. I never got to know them on a personal level because I was unable to know them on an academic level. I'll never be sure of why I was unable to interact with upperclassmen, but I suspect it has to do with feelings of discomfort coming from both sides. For these reasons, I feel I did not get as much as I could have out of the department. I was unable to utilize the community to its fullest extent because I realized too late how important those interactions can be. I realized that I am a member of a community that does not function in a healthy, inspiring, or collaborative way.

So after taking a very in-depth look into my time in CD, I started to do the same by asking my classmates. I wanted to find out if my experience is unique, or if this is

something common in CD. I mainly focused on seniors, as our time spent in this department is the longest compared to the rest of the students. Unfortunately it turns out that most of my senior classmates all had similar experiences to my own.

At this point I started to realize that this is both a good and bad thing. It is bad because a community of 24-30 people (depending on current faculty) is not functioning in a way that best promotes the growth and advancement of its members. It is good because the opportunity to investigate and create some observable change to this community is present.

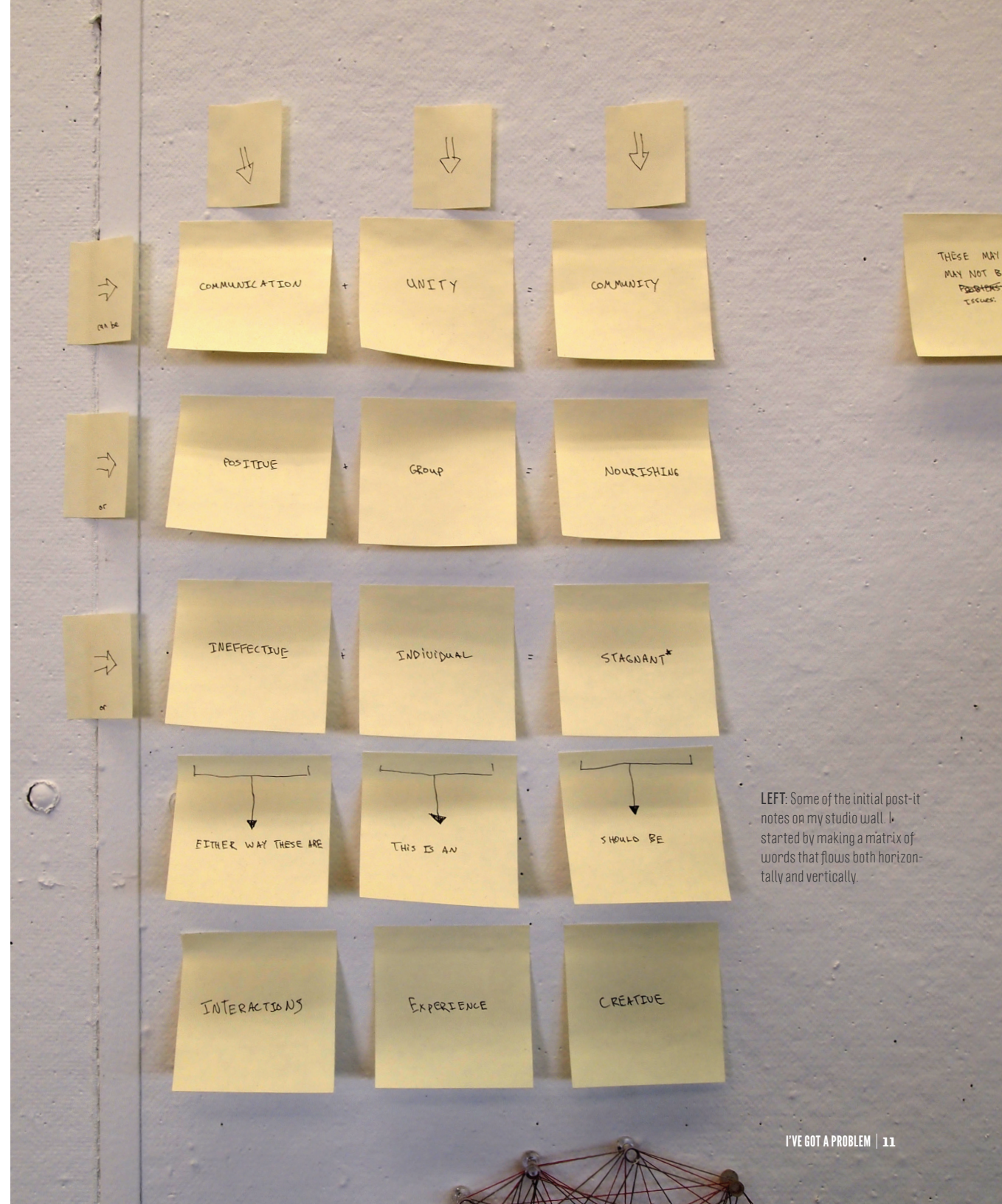
I am using the term *community* because it best represents what CD is and what its purpose is. The *American Heritage* science dictionary best describes what a community is in regards to my project:

Community | n.

A group of organisms or populations living and interacting with one another in a particular environment. The organisms in a community affect each other's abundance, distribution, and evolutionary adaptation. Depending on how broadly one views the interaction between organisms, a community can be small and local, as in a pond or tree, or regional or global, as in a biome.

The Communication Design Department is definitely a small community, albeit a community that started the year being mostly dysfunctional. I feel that members of this community should interact with each other, critique each other's work, and utilize the space provided to do so. Unfortunately from what I have found out, this is very far from the case.

COMMUNICATION + UNITY = COMMUNITY



LEFT: Some of the initial post-it notes on my studio wall. I started by making a matrix of words that flows both horizontally and vertically.

The Ecosystem and The Community

Everyone is part of a community, whether they realize it or not. The only way you really could not be part of a community is if you were living in isolation from any people or institutions. Communities are all about symbiosis and integration. Sometimes communities exist within communities, and these communities can affect each other in both positive and negative ways.

I need to clarify something right here. The CD community at CIA is part of the larger CIA community (ecosystem). From *my personal experiences* I have witnessed interactions between the larger CIA community (ecosystem) and the CD community. The relationship between the two is stagnant but not abusive. They do not coexist in a way that they both gain a lot of positive experience, but they are also not vindictive towards each other.

This stagnancy is an issue that can be addressed in three alternate ways: 1. Alter the behavior of the larger community (ecosystem) to have a trickle down effect to the smaller; 2. Alter the smaller community within and promote change to the larger ecosystem through recognition and replication, 3. Do both!

The belief and strategy I have for my thesis project is inline with that second option. I believe that an inward approach to creating a healthy culture is immediately more important than changing the entire ecosystem of CIA. It is infinitely more difficult to change the ways of a larger ecosystem when compared to a localized community. There is way more to take into consideration, and way more to accomplish to provide any change of worth. One year is hardly enough time to do the project I have done, and I can't imagine how long an ecosystem wide culture shift would take.

My thesis is for the members of the CD community. Their image in the larger ecosystem may not be the most important part of what they get out this process, but it does need to at least be taken into consideration. In regards to the larger CIA community, my process has been to cultivate from the inside out, so that the larger ecosystem can recognize the importance and values that CD at CIA is built on. Our culture can change their culture if they believe in our values.

I've Got Issues, Man

At this point in the project I was starting to recognize things that I had never thought about that could be creating issues and problems. I sat down with many of my classmates and the majority of the CD department to ask them about their experiences in the department. It was uncanny as to how similar everyone's answers were.

The next step in finding out where the problem truly lies was to put out surveys to the CD department. These surveys allowed me to figure out who my users are, and what issues they personally have with the way the CD community. I was as thorough as I could get in the Survey Monkey 10 question limit surveys.

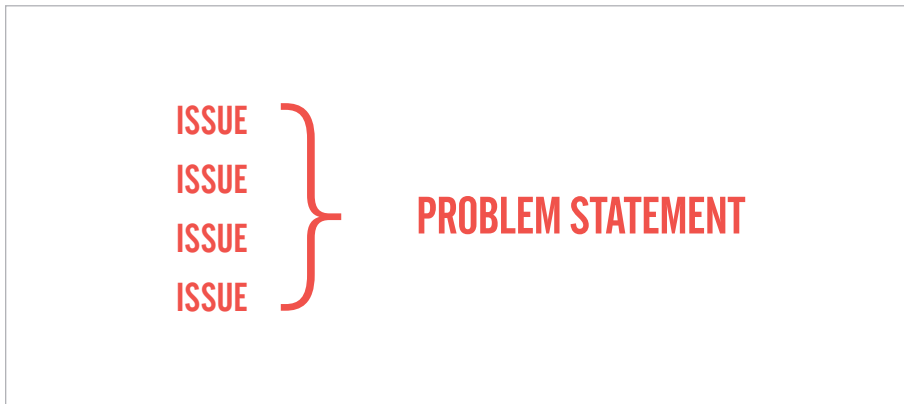
The results to these surveys were as I expected: very concerning. Members of this community are essentially not interacting with each other outside of class time. They aren't even going to their professors with questions they have about homework, or methods and techniques that they need help with. In addition to not interacting amongst the community, the majority of everyone was failing to utilize the studio space to work in. I obtained a fair amount of quantitative data from these surveys, which then put me in a great position to do some interviews.

As terrible as all of these results were, they started to point me in a clear direction. I now found myself asking "why?" a lot. I needed to get more personal information from individual people to figure this out, so I started to interview people and observe how they interact with each other.

I interviewed around 15 people (more than half of the department) and got some great feedback as to why people weren't interacting or using the studio. A lot of the answers ended up being about comfort. People simply did not feel comfortable working around others they hadn't established any rules for engagement with, as well as in a space they were uncomfortable in. I also discovered while interviewing the sophomores that many of them didn't understand fully what communication design is and all that it encompasses. They are unable to make an emotional bond to what they are learning because they do not fully understand. I believe that this misunderstanding of communication design was much more prevalent at the

beginning of the year for the entire CD community, as well as the larger CIA community (more on that in a bit).

But why? Why were all of these interactions lacking? To be completely honest, it took me most of the school year to actually figure it out. I went through what feels like a million different reasons, but most of them just didn't connect with what I was observing. There are so many facets that make even the smallest community complex, and CD is one of them (surprise!). I went through phases where I thought it was an issue of purely engagement, comfort, and character. These things can be considered sub-issues that stem from more fundamental issues, but their merit isn't worthy of discussing beyond that right now.



I kept up the search the entire year, uncovering new issues that seemed to make more and more sense. The more I started to trust my gut and not take everything I was being told by certain people as fact, the more I was able to move forward in my discovery of what had broken down the CD culture. It truly was a year long process that has lead up to the final problem statement.

Initially I thought the problem had more to do with just getting members of this community to communicate and interact with each other. Those are both great things to strive for, but they cannot fix a much larger problem on their own. There are other types of interactions that needed to be addressed too. Once I shifted my mind-set to this, things rapidly started to become more clear. I went through five

or six iterations before I finally narrowed my problem down to what it actually is: a problem based around the culture CD was built on. A problem that had kept the community from thriving and meeting its full potential.

The current experience the CD community is built on is one in which the importance of fostering leadership and nurturing personal relationships is overlooked. The absence of these qualities has developed a culture that is lacking in fundamental communication, collaboration, and passion for the community and its purposes. The CD community cannot rise to its full potential and maximize its overlying purpose with this stagnant and ineffective culture. It is missing a core experience in which members of the community all interact with and contribute to.



The most important thing to take away from this problem statement is that the CD community is unable to “rise to its full potential and maximize its overlying purpose.” Because honestly, why would anyone want to be part of a community that is not doing everything it possibly can for you?

(Hypo)thesis

Getting to the correct problem statement was hard enough, but getting to the thesis was surprisingly easy and also enjoyable. Regardless of whatever (wrong) version of the problem statement I was working with, I always had some strategy to implement into my project. Designing things that helped me discover the right course of action is how I attribute a big chunk of getting to the final version of everything. Because I was working with the community I interact with the most, I was able to see what was working and what was failing and retool from there.

My hypothesis changed as frequently as my problem statement did, allowing for a proper strategy to be in place for each different iteration. At mid-years it was all about establishing comfort between members of the community and also their studio environment. This isn't wrong, but it's not enough right. From the midyear point to the end of this project the hypothesis has evolved and matured into a thesis that really addresses the problem with a great strategy to provide change.

The problem ended up not being rooted in purely engagement of people to people, so why would my (hypo)thesis? The spring semester opened up my eyes to see that the problems occur in all of the interactions that go on in this community. There are person-to-person interactions, person-to-interface interactions, and person-to-environment interactions that all needed to be reevaluated and planned for. Getting these interactions to integrate naturally is where my solution will come from. Here is my thesis.



By designing *things* to influence and integrate *person to person interactions, person to interface interactions, and person to environment (system) interactions*, a “CD Experience” can be designed [for] to provide a starting point for a new culture to develop. This new culture will be fueled by communication, collaboration, and passion. It emphasizes the importance of strong leadership roles and personal relationships. When embraced, this experience can provide the opportunity for the community to reach its fullest potential.

Integration!

How do you integrate these three types of interactions? That has been my favorite part of working on this project. Since I am a designer I have the ability to create the things (physical artifacts) that influence the interactions I'm after. The ways I'm dealing with integrating these interactions is by aesthetics, purpose, and most importantly emotion. Aesthetics is pretty straight forward, make the things appeal to the senses in similar ways. Purpose, also straight forward; make the things influence interactions that promote communication and engagement. The emotional hook is the tricky one. Evoking a consistently positive reaction to all of the things that ties all interactions together can be difficult because everybody reacts in a different way based on previous experiences. I can plan for these interactions to take place a particular way, but a lot of it will be based on the user.

The following chapters will focus on what I've made to influence these interactions, and how I've planned for them to integrate.

CHAPTER THREE:

YOU SIR,
ARE A USER

WHO ARE THE

USERS

???

How Can I Make Things for Specific People?

Before I can show you the specific interactions and how they integrate to form an experience, you must know who I've been designing for. As I have stated before, this project is for the members of the CD community at CIA. Even though we are a small community, there are clear, discernible differences in our work and personal habits that affect who and what we interact with, how we interact, and why we interact. This chapter will give you a quick look at the members of this community.

Can I Please Have the Audience's Attention?

This project is broken down into three audiences, each of which benefits from this project in a different way, but add to the overall success of the project too.

Primary Audience

The primary audience of this project is comprised of those who are current members of the CD community. This includes current students and faculty. They will be the ones who benefit most directly from this project. For the primary audience, I am able to further differentiate between four user profiles by picking out key characteristics and habits. These user profiles will follow the rest of the descriptions of the secondary and tertiary audiences. The primary audience will actively take part in this project by being those who experience it first hand. They are the ones who will be part of the culture change.

Secondary Audience

The secondary audience of this project includes all who are interested in joining the community, or otherwise have recently left the community. This audience includes potential students including high school graduates, freshman applying to CD, transfer students, potential faculty, and alumni of the department. This audience will be what keeps the community from fizzling out. New members must join the community and want to be a part of what it stands for.

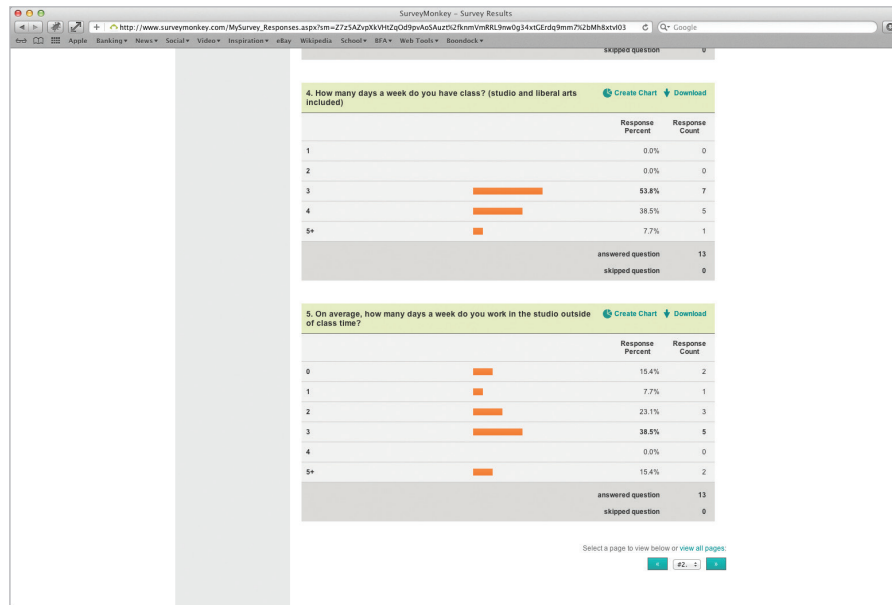
Tertiary Audience

The tertiary audience of this project includes all other outsiders who may be observing the community from near or afar. This includes the rest of the CIA community, potential employers, parents, etc. Their role in this project is to have a positive reaction to any observations they make about the CD community.

User Profiles

Now that we have established the three audiences of this project, I would like to share you the specific user profiles of those who I am directly designing for—the primary audience. For each of the following four profiles, I have compiled a short table of data and a description accompanied with a code name. This allows me to keep the users personal and effective to my goals, as well as provide a short and to the point synopsis of who these users are.

These user profiles are the results of surveys, interviews, and observations. I had to generalize to create these four user profiles, as the sample group for them is less than 30 people. Even though some may feel they don't fit 100% into one category, I feel that these four profiles are more than adequate for categorizing all of those who are members of the Communication Design Department.



ABOVE: Screenshot from one of the surveys administered to students. These surveys allowed me to see who, when, and how people are interacting in the studio environment.

Primary User

AGE	19-23
GENDER	10% MALE/90% FEMALE
TITLE	COMMUNICATION DESIGN STUDENT
EXPERIENCE	1-3 YEARS
NUMBER OF CLASSES PER WEEK	3-4
NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF CLASS	0
NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH FACULTY OUTSIDE OF CLASS	0
SCHOOLWORK LOCATION	UNKNOWN, NOT IN THE STUDIO

“I Don’t Communicate”

The primary user for my project is a person that does not communicate well or often with any members of the community. They tend to be very introverted, and work in their own space (not in the studio). They choose not to utilize the studio space or the experiences, interactions and knowledge gained while in the space. In class they are under-spoken, and see interacting with others as an optional, and many times useless activity. When questions arise, they choose to keep it to themselves and struggle with the burden of ignorance instead of reaching out for help.

Secondary User

AGE	19-23
GENDER	100% FEMALE
TITLE	COMMUNICATION DESIGN STUDENT
EXPERIENCE	2-3 YEARS
NUMBER OF CLASSES PER WEEK	3-4
NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF CLASS	1-2
NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH FACULTY OUTSIDE OF CLASS	0
SCHOOLWORK LOCATION	HOME

“I’m Unavailable”

The secondary user is the type of person that has a lot of extracurricular activities going on in their outside life and cannot utilize the community and its facilities to its fullest extent. These users realize the opportunity to communicate and learn in class time. They participate actively in class, but not outside of class due to other obligations or lack of interest. When confronted, these people act pleasantly and actively, but they will not go out of their way to actively be a part of the community. Email is a very important asset for communication for this user.

Tertiary User

AGE	19-23
GENDER	25% MALE/75% FEMALE
TITLE	COMMUNICATION DESIGN STUDENT
EXPERIENCE	2-3 YEARS
NUMBER OF CLASSES PER WEEK	3-4
NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF CLASS	3-4
NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH FACULTY OUTSIDE OF CLASS	1-2
SCHOOLWORK LOCATION	MAINLY OUTSIDE OF THE STUDIO

“See You Next Monday”

User three is the type of person that commits only when it is convenient, or otherwise helpful to them. This user is mostly active during class time, and is seldom to moderately seen in the studio outside of class time. They are mostly pleasant to have a conversation with and will ask questions if needed, but these tendencies show no sort of pattern or frequency. When these users are actively involved in the community it is great for all its members, but unfortunately that is not all the time.

Quaternary User

AGE	19-23
GENDER	50% MALE/50% FEMALE
TITLE	COMMUNICATION DESIGN STUDENT
EXPERIENCE	1-3 YEARS
NUMBER OF CLASSES PER WEEK	3-4
NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF CLASS	4+
NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH FACULTY OUTSIDE OF CLASS	3+
SCHOOLWORK LOCATION	MAINLY IN THE STUDIO

“Can I help You?”

User four is the ideal user for this community. They are the users whom actively participate and organize in the community, and utilize the studio space to its fullest extent. They are often limited in interactions not by their own faults, but by the members of the community they are interacting with. These users are the ones who lead critiques, strike up conversations, and are ambitious about their work, as well as their neighbors’ work. Not afraid to ask questions, these users are very open with the community and see the value in every aspect of their education/instruction.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FIRST ONE TO BREAK IT WINS!

Who are we?

Something that has always bugged me about my time in CD at CIA is the lack of a department identity. I never really understood how something so integral to a communication design education could be absent from the institution teaching it. I thought the saying went practice what you preach? Not preach and do nothing.

If you were to look at some other, well-respected art and design schools such as Pratt, SVA, RISD, or Art Center, they all have a unique identity that was created for their Communication/Graphic Design programs. They are all fairly similar, containing a clear visual differentiation from their respective institutions, websites, and events that are regularly held and documented. I have always been put off that we at CIA aren't included in that list. We have the potential to be the greatest on that list, yet no one has ever seized the opportunity to do so.

The importance of creating an identity for a community is important on so many levels, and even more so when applying it to the goal of culture creation. The members of the CD community need to have something they can relate to, something they can call their own and something they can contribute to. It needs to be something that inspires emotional connections and provokes interest inside and outside of the community. It has to serve as a vehicle for integrating interactions as well.

I spent the first half of the year getting to know this community more in order to find out who they are and what sort of things they feel represent them. To make something that is purely my interpretation would be wrong. I am just one member of the CD community, and in the end an identity for a community is a representation of all the people who are a part of that community. It must be able to represent the past, present, and future of the community.

Break and Make

By spending a semester getting to know my community I was able to discover that everyone is very different. We all have some things in common such as an interest for design, and creativity, but we all have our own personal identities. It is very important not to disrupt someone's personal identity, or to give them an identity when creating one for the community. Their identities are what the community's

identity is contingent upon. The community is a representation of all us, together. Our identity is a message. We are lucky to be the people who have the ability to create a visual representation of that message. As long as we keep to that message and evolve our visual identity, we will retain our personal identities while contributing to our community.

So how can you possibly create a visual identity for those who are so unique themselves? *Make something that is meant to be broken.*

By broken I mean something that can change noticeably from the original while still maintaining a connection to the original aesthetic and message. The visual is something that should be interpreted based on the situation and used accordingly. As designers we have the knowledge to remake the visual identity in the best way possible.



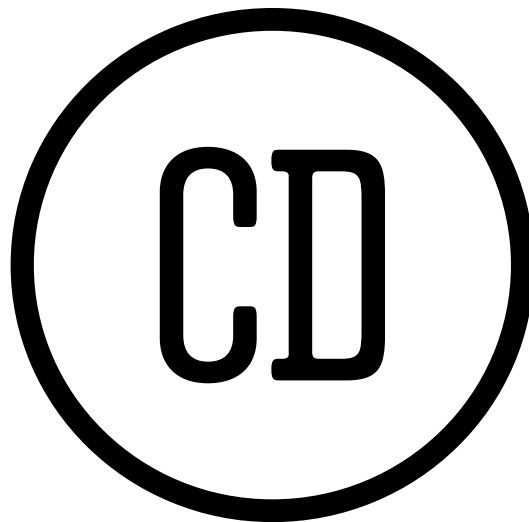
ABOVE: This is CD.

Please Break This

Based on the assumption that the community will follow the “break and make” rule that I just established, I designed a very bare bones visual identity for great things to be made from. It is simple, has no restrictions in the hands of a designer except do what makes sense. This is where it starts.

The visual identity I have laid the groundwork for has only three things: 1. A simple logo mark; 2. A typographic treatment for the identity; 3. A color palette. These are the building blocks to start from. These can be paired together in any iteration, or used to break and remake the identity.

There is no rule for pairing other typefaces other than it must function and look appealing. The color palette can be added or subtracted to based on use. We cannot alter something to the point where the integrity of the message is lost or subdued, and we must always maintain visual excellence in this identity's usage.



ABOVE: The Base logo mark of the CD Visual Identity.
RIGHT: Color palette and type version of the visual identity.



COMMUNICATION DESIGN

BREAK THESE AND REMAKE THEM
YOUR OWN WAY!

How I've Already Broken It

I spent a long time getting to the realization that not one symbol can represent the CD Community. I went through what feels like a million iterations that in the end were all really the same message broken into different visual representations. To illustrate what I mean by break and make, here are several of my “broken” versions of this identity.



ABOVE: “Broken” versions of the CD Visual Identity.

The Full Potential

Remember way back in Chapter Two when I mentioned the CD Community not capable of rising to its full potential, well I would like to define that now since the identity of this community is built around our values.

I have noticed that many of the members of the CD Community don’t really rely on their studio mates and faculty for feedback as much as they should. I feel that they are missing out on what could take their work to the next level because of this. I think if there were a message that explained to students the benefits of being in his small community and how it functions, they would be more open to utilizing their community. Here is what I have come up with:

The CD Community is built on a cultural experience that stresses the importance of interaction through communication, collaboration, critique and passion. This group of young designers will develop skills as leaders and a deep passion for design by graduation. These qualities will allow them to form healthy relationships with their coworkers and clients, as well as cultivate a strong portfolio that lands them the well sought after communication design jobs.

This new cultural experience I am designing for is built on being comfortable in your surroundings and with your peers so that everyone can experience personal and professional growth. This message has the intent of boosting the image of the community internally and externally based on the relationships made, work created, and opportunities that are presented to those in the community.

This is CD

This identity has been created for this community based on what they need and is just the beginning to figuring out what the CD community will be. The identity can transcend and connect our interactions both visually and through the values associated with it. When embraced by a member of the community, this identity can create an emotional connection to the community and its purposes. These connections are what ties together an experience.

CHAPTER FIVE:

LET'S GET TOGETHER.

Person to Person Interactions

The first and most important type of interactions in a community is person-to-person. These interactions are exactly what they sound like. They are the interactions that one person has with at least one other person. These interactions can take the form in almost any form of engagement. The type of person-to-person interactions I have been trying to influence is conversation. Conversation is the first step to creating a relationship in which you feel comfortable with another party. Without cultivating some level of comfort, you cannot hope to have a relationship that yields constructive conversations, critique, or collaborations.

Saying “Hi.”

Getting people to interact openly and freely has always been one of the main things I wanted to incorporate into this new culture an CD experience. I have found out that you can't rely on people to just start doing this when they are used to being introverted and keeping things to themselves. My solution to this problem is to inspire the members of the CD Community to feel comfortable talking and interacting with their studiomates.

At first I wasn't sure how to approach getting people together to talk about anything. Last year (2010-2011) I initiated a student run chapter of AIGA. Unfortunately it failed, with only a few people joining and many of those few not coming to meetings. I looked to these experiences when starting to think about how I wanted to corral people into talking this year.

I took some time to evaluate things I thought had gone wrong with AIGA last year. It was things like having to pay to join, infrequent meetings, no true strong leadership. I was OK admitting that those things were partly my fault, knowing that I could try again this year with something new.

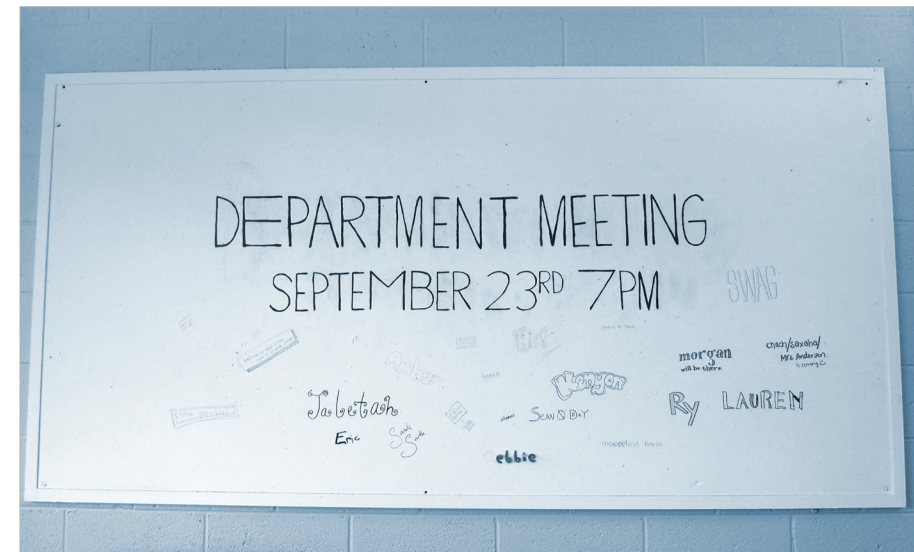
Before I reached the point of actually knowing what to do, I knew we had to have a department meeting. It was the third or fourth week of school and we still had not met as a group to discuss what was going on with the department. I took it upon myself to organize the department meeting, send out emails, and create something to get people interacting in an indirect way. I wanted to start easing people into interacting.

I did some hand set type on a wall in the CD studio that advertised the meeting and encouraged those who were coming to the meeting to sign their name on the wall underneath the message. This was very successful. About 95% of the department showed up and we got to talk with the faculty about what was going on in the department and go around the room and introduce ourselves to everyone. I know that seems very “elementary schoolish” but I was trying to let everyone know that it's OK to talk to people you don't know. We are all in this community together, and we need to act like it.

I was very pleased after that department meeting, and I knew that those sort of events needed to keep happening for my project to have any level of success.

Talk CD!

So the plan was now to create a group that was free, frequent, and well advertised within the community. I knew I needed this group to function as a way to break down people's protective walls so that they could get comfortable working around



ABOVE: The wall I drew on with Sharpie for the first department meeting of the year.

other students. My project would either turn into a reality or into a hypothetical based on how people react to these interactions.

The way that I approached this was by creating a new student group called “TALK CD!” This group’s purpose is to provide a comfortable, low key meeting place for the members of the community to come and learn, discuss their work, and to form relationships.

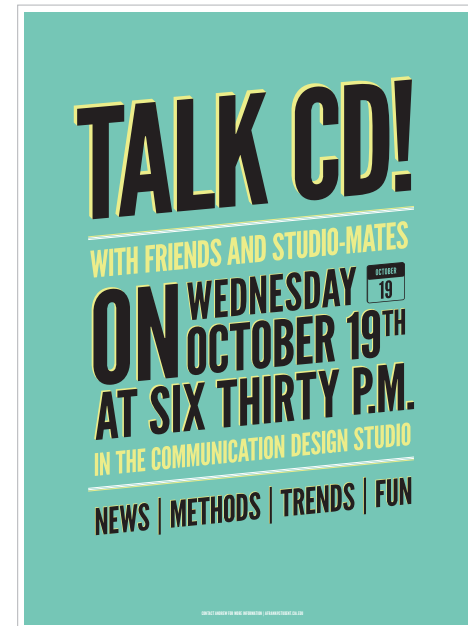
TALK CD! was a biweekly event focused on discussing new techniques, critiquing student work, and having fun conversation and snacks. My belief is that getting people to contribute to conversations outside of class time and with people not only from their classes but also from their community will instill a level of comfort and familiarity between students. Getting people comfortable enough to initiate conversation is the biggest obstacle to overcome.

First Meeting

I was very nervous for the first meeting I held for Talk CD! I wanted it to be a success— something that everyone would enjoy and want to continue to come to. I made an itinerary for the first meeting that involved introductions, a demonstration of a new technique, a conversation about workspace, and then anything else anybody wanted to discuss. I decided the best way to market this was to create posters and send an HTML email blast.

I started by creating the posters. I knew that I wanted to give a demonstration on how I made them, so it took me a long time to figure out how I would make them. I ended up deciding on a typographic poster, with some customization of paths, and using several effects in illustrator. The logo for Talk CD! came out of this process too. I was very happy with the series of posters, and got great reception from them too.

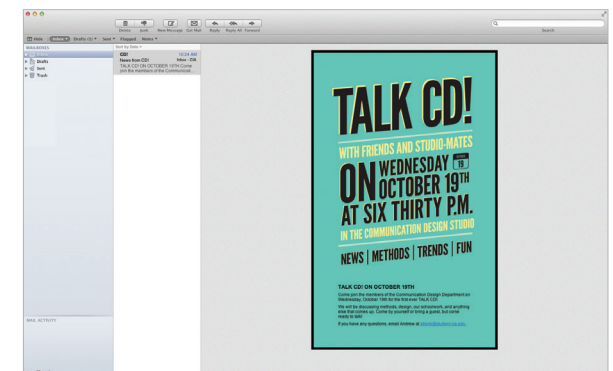
That first HTML email was a learning experience. I didn’t want to just send out a plain text email because I like to think my studiomates have the same appreciation for brand cohesion as I do. I wanted it to be an exciting looking email that people would see after the posters and link the two together and want to come to the meeting. I signed up for a mailchimp account, did a bunch of research on how HTML emails are designed and coded, then got to work on it. The first one was definitely a beginning point for emails to follow it.



TALK CD!



Images from the first Talk CD! event. Logo, posters, and photographs.





An image from the first TALK CD! People were contributing to the conversation, learning new techniques, and having fun.

The night came when the first meeting was held and the turnout was amazing. About 85% of the department showed up, and we had a really good time. I encouraged attendees to contribute to the conversation, and while they weren't as open to talking in front of everyone as I am, I was happy that they were contributing when prompted. Overall, a great success. I got a lot of feedback from the sophomores that they learned a lot and were looking forward to future Talk CD! events. I was very pleased at this, feeling as though I was actually creating some positive change. I decided that these meetings would be every other week from now.

More Talking?

I was eager to get to the next Talk CD! as soon as the first one ended. I wanted to continue building off of that initial energy that everyone was a part of and make this something people would look forward to. Unfortunately after the first meeting, attendance was never as good. I put just as much work into the events, but students told me that they are too busy with schoolwork and life to come.

I believe it had more to do with not wanting to speak about design outside of class rather than being busy. It is my belief that to build relationships you must converse about more than professional topics at events like this. It is my recommendation that in the future these types of events be centered around topics outside of design. I think personal connections will foster themselves easier and allow for relationships to develop quicker and deeper.

I decided that the amount of time these events took to prepare was not worth continuing into the second semester of the school year. Even though the attendance did not sustain as each new event occurred, I do believe that the first event played a very big role in getting people to start conversations with each other and start casual relationships. I would still call it a success, just not the success I initially planned for.

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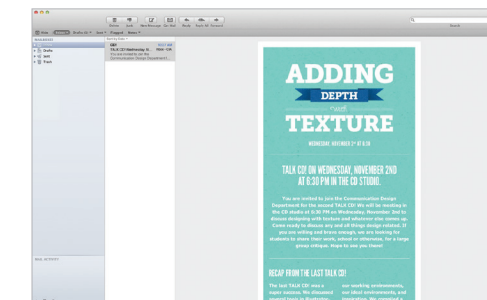
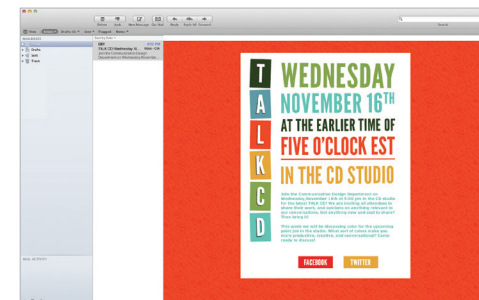
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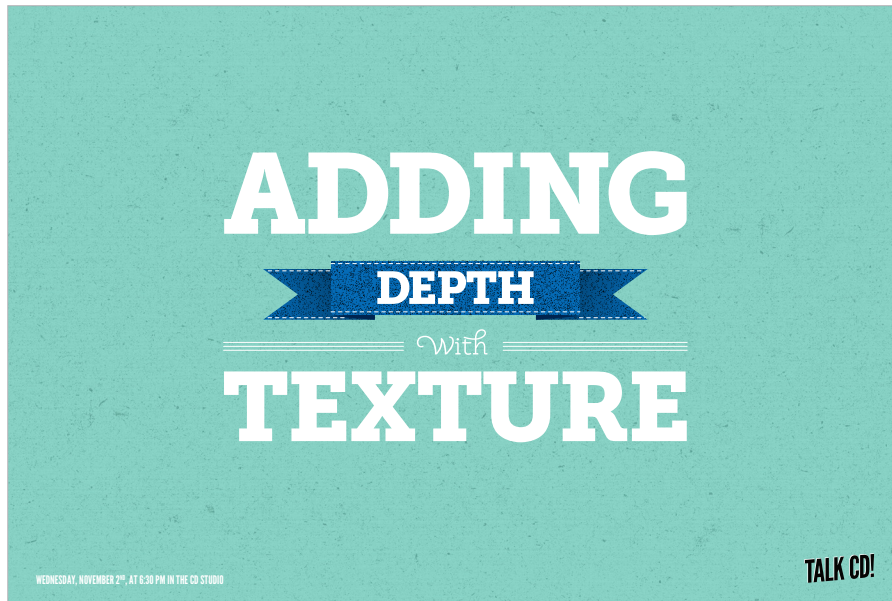
You are invited to join the Communication Design Department for the second TALK CD!
Wednesday, November 2nd to discuss designing with texture and whatever else comes up.
If you are willing and brave enough, we are looking for students to share their work.


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<div class="leftcol recap">
TALK CD! was a super success. We discussed several tools in it use
THIS WE DISCUSSED
  
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TOP LEFT: Sample of HTML Email Code
 TOP RIGHT: Pattern for Talk CD! 3
 MIDDLE: TALK Poster Series from Talk CD! 3
 BOTTOM: HTML Email Blasts



ABOVE: Poster from the second Talk CD! meeting. This one was about creating textures and giving your work that something extra.

Person to People Interactions

I took a leadership role this year. I spent a lot of time getting to know people in the CD community, and I think that helped form relationships not only for myself, but set an example for them to form relationships with others. Anytime someone would ask me for help I would respond with eagerness and tried to help as much as I could. From my experiences interacting with these people this year I can tell you that they don't want their problems to just be solved, they want help solving their problems. The passion and integrity is in each and everyone of these people, it just needs to be discovered.

CHAPTER SIX: INTANGIBLE CONVERSATION.

Person to Interface Interactions

I'm a nerd. I love technology, and I believe in the potential technology can play in design and our everyday lives. I'm very excited to be a communication designer right now because of all of the amazing changes that are happening with the internet and mobile devices. There is a whole new way to communicate and convey information that can always keep you up to date and informed. I have spent the past year and a half really refining my web technical skills in HTML, CSS, jQuery, and recently PHP. With these skills, I have been able to come up with a user driven way of getting people to communicate without actually being together.

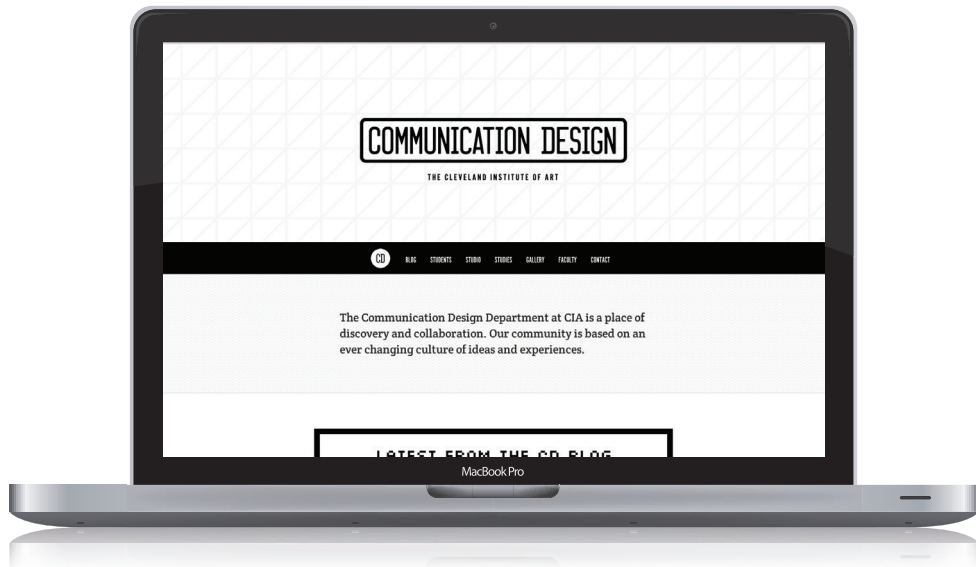
Some people may be scared of all of the ways you can stay connected or communicate online, but I believe it is something to embrace. With today's children and young adults being raised on social media (my personal experience was Xanga then Myspace then Facebook then Tumblr then Twitter) you have to integrate these sort of things into their lifestyles. It's how they know how to interact in the most honest way.

Our world is increasingly impersonal because of these things, but only because they are not directly integrated into our other day-to-day interactions. By evaluating what these social platforms do correctly and designing my own version of an online conversation, I have been able to develop a system that will promote conversation between members of the CD Community online. These online conversations will then help nourish person-to-person conversations.

By developing an online mode of communication, you can build relationships in an indirect way. Having a conversation online gives you a shield from harsh reactions and incomplete thoughts. It can give people the confidence they need to truly say what they want. Relationships are the driving force behind comfort and engagement regardless of who or what the relationship is with.

It's unfortunate, but some people are just awkward when engaging people face to face. More often than not, these people have much more confidence in a digital world. The website I have designed for this community is mainly for those types of people, followed by those who are busy and cannot always make time for person-to-person interactions. For both of those groups and everyone else too, the website functions as a hub for information in the department.





ABOVE: The Home Page of www.cd-cia.com.

Dot Com

What does a community site actually entail? It does all of the things you'd expect out of an educational institution. It has information on CD at CIA, information on the faculty and curriculum, a student gallery, and also a tour of the studio. This information is great, because it is what will attract new members to the community, but the fact is that this website needs to function for the current members too.

In order to meet these needs, I've set up the site with three main sources of news for current members of the community. The first is the CD Blog. The CD Blog serves as an administer curated news

feed for any and all things CD. It is where information on events goes, changes to the department, featured students, guest speakers, and so on. This CD Blog is for everyone to stay updated on the latest CD information. The latest stories appear on the homepage of the site, and an archive of all the blog's posts is available just one click away. At the bottom of each blog post is a place for conversation. As a member of the site you are able to comment on and/or start a conversation about the CD Blog post. This is how you engage people on this site, by having a conversation about a common topic.

The Second source of news for the community is the twitter feed. I know a lot of people hate on twitter for reasons like being updated too much, but when used in a calm and rational way, it truly is the best way for quick information to be shared. I have created the twitter handle @ciaCD so that information can be quickly shared with the community when there is no time to write a blog post. Some things don't require a blog post either. A quick tweet can solve that. The twitter feed is embedded into the homepage of the site. I think that a social media push is one of the best ways to get members of this community active in sharing information. By tweeting @ciaCD you can share information with your community. All relevant information will be retweeted and show up on the homepage of the website.

The third and final source of news is the one I am most excited about. It is the student run blog. This blog is completely populated with user uploaded content. Users to this website can simply log in to the site and post an entry. I intend for it to be used for online critiques of work, or conversations about relevant topics to design, but that will be completely left up to the community. The main goal is to have people conversing through the site when they are unable to in person. The conversation happens in the same way as the main CD Blog—a conversation is placed at the end of each post.

I Made This as Nerdy, I Mean Awesome as Possible

This is the part of the book where my true nerdism will shine. Please excuse me while I geek out in this explanation of the CD website. I've built three really awesome features into this website. The first is about what we've touched on already, user uploaded content.

I had a hard time deciding how I was going to build this site. I knew that I wanted people to be able to upload content to it, but I wasn't sure if I should just hard code it to prove a design concept, or to try and make it a 100% functioning model. I ended up going with the latter, and it was definitely a struggle.

I built the site on the content management system (CMS) *Wordpress*. *Wordpress* is an open source PHP and CSS theme based CMS. Basically when you start working with *Wordpress* you have two options: work from a pre made theme and change how it looks, or start from scratch and program the functionality as well as how everything looks. Normally a designer would go for that first option, but I decided

to tread into unfamiliar waters and go with that second option. I believe that the content of a site should be as integrated into the interactivity and look of it as possible. That's the reason I decided to do it that way, to be more consistent in my goals. I made this entire website from scratch, and it was HARD!

I learned really fast that I was way out of my element in attempting this. I had to start over after working on it for three weeks because I had done some fundamental things wrong. I struggled through it though and learned a ton about the platform and also PHP. I am glad that I did it, because I have a much greater appreciation for the people who do this for a living. They are all superstar geniuses. Because I struggled through this process and built it the way I want, the site has no extra baggage with it. It does what I want it to do and nothing else. It's easy to update and easily accessible for users.

The second thing I want to share is that the website is black and white, until you interact with it. Every section of the website has two states, inactive and active. The inactive state will always be black and white, and kind of dull looking. But when you interact with it comes to life with color and in some instances animation. To me, the internet is like a story. You can always get the information from the pages, but when you create a personal connection to the things happening on screen it becomes an experience on its own. That is the goal of the site—to inform and to entertain.

The way I was able to accomplish this is using a ton of CSS (cascading style sheets for all of you non internet folks) styles. CSS is how you style how things look, and from this experience of designing and building the site, one super great way of programming in interaction. With the latest iteration of CSS3, you can program things to move, resize, and “breathe” in a natural and very fitting way. This is truly a metaphor for the community and experience. Without an experience, life is just dull.

The last of the techno mumbo jumbo I want to talk about is the fact that the site is responsive. What this means is that at any size screen, be it a giant monitor, or the screen on your phone, the content will reflow to a tailored experience for that size. This means no pinching and zooming to see things, and no mobile only site. Everything just works the way you'd want it to on whatever device you are browsing in. Plain and simple when you're browsing, not so much for development.

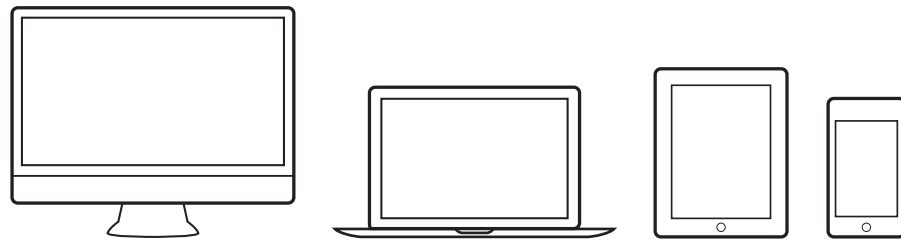


ABOVE: The Home Page of CD-CIA.COM as you interact with it.

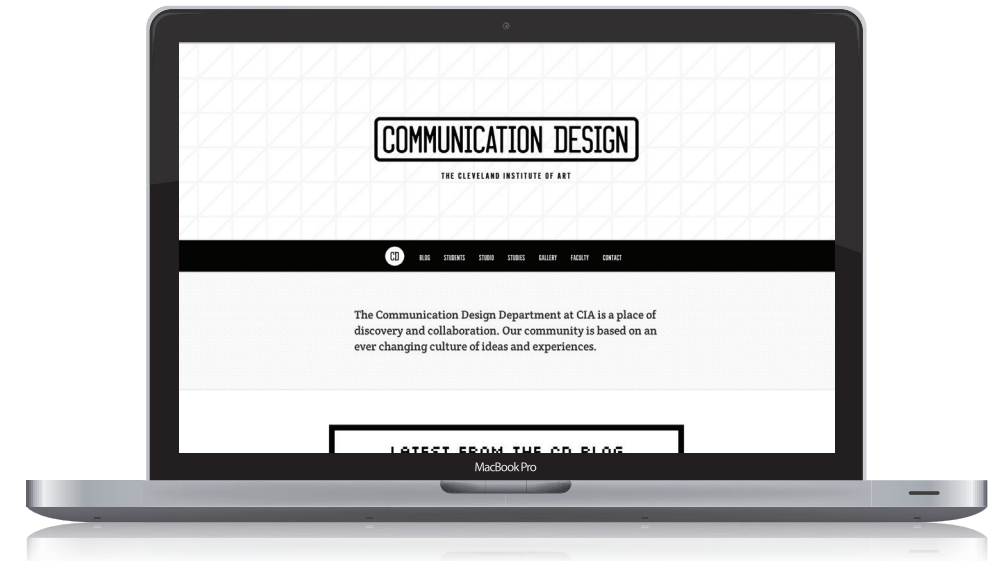
Designing a responsive website makes you think in an entirely different way. You can't think in absolute sizes because things need to reflow as the screen size changes. You have to think in terms of percentages and proportions. You also have to have a strategy prior to designing for how content will reflow at different sizes. If you don't take all of this into consideration, the browsing experience becomes ineffective and more trouble than it's worth.

The way that all of this is accomplished is through CSS and @media queries to target specific sized browsers. @media queries allow you to set rules for certain sizes that differ from other sizes. They are fantastic, and I expect to be using them for the rest of my life.

I developed the site with a 12 column flexible grid that resizes at four different breakpoints: big monitor (1200px + wide), tablet (768px wide), small tablet (640px wide) and phone (480px or less wide). Each of these breakpoints required a good deal of CSS to make the content fit and function correctly, and I am very happy with how it turned out.



ABOVE: Designing a website to be responsive will display content in a different, but specific way on each of these devices.



CD-CIA.COM illustrated on a laptop, iPad and an iPhone. The content does not change at all, only the CSS to create a tailored device specific experience.

Time to Sign In

It is the end of the school year and I am just finishing up the website. I wish I could have finished it sooner, but time just did not permit. At the time of writing this I have had six beta testers on the website, and plan to enroll everyone before I give a presentation on my thesis.

I believe that if this community utilizes all of the features and functionality that I have built into this website that they will definitely have a positive experience in integrating the social aspects of being a community from person-to-person to person-to-interface. These two types of interactions will feed off of each other and create more personalized and in-depth engagements and relationships.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WELCOME HOME.

Person to Environment Interactions

The last type of interaction I have been working with this year is person-to-environment interactions. These interactions take place between a person and a physical space, or a system of artifacts, other interactions, and people. I have mainly been dealing with designing a physical space that influences these other parts of a system. Physical spaces fulfill many purposes including a place to meet, a place to work, a place to keep your things, and a place to interact with other people. To understand the importance of a person-to-environment interaction you must first understand the connection between mental and physical spaces.

The connection between a physical place and a mental place becomes clear if you really think about it. The more comfortable and happy you are in an environment, the happier and more comfortable your mind set will be. People want to work in environments they feel comfortable in. If someone does not feel comfortable in a space, they tend to avoid it. In addition to comfort and happiness, there are benefits to working in a common workspace—you get feedback and engagement from others which makes you grow in whatever situation you may be in.

This year I spent a lot of time evaluating the mental to physical connection in the CD studio. It turns out in the beginning of the year it wasn't so great, so I replanned and redesigned our studio.

This Was Not a Happy Place

The CD studio was so underused at the beginning of the year; it was disgusting. One of the main reasons that I enrolled at CIA was because of the studio space that every student gets to call their own. I wanted my own area to pin things up in, fill with my things, and to make a comfortable location to work and learn in. Unfortunately, the CD studio did not provide these things in the capacity I thought it would.

I knew when I started this project that something had to be done about the room we call our studio. It is supposed to serve as the meeting place for class, the area provided by the school in which to work and grow as designers, and a place that students spend a lot of time creating relationships and making friends. Essentially it is a place of interaction. The studio has the potential to be fantastic, but unfor-

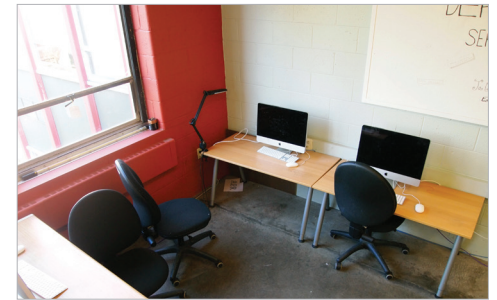
tunately with the way the studio was set up, students and faculty alike did not feel the personal connection to “their space.” They didn't feel like coming to the studio to work outside of class time, and because of this they missed out on the benefits of having a potentially great studio. This is extremely unfortunate, as one of the main reasons many people come to CIA is for studio space.

The CD studio was dim, dingy, dirty, and cluttered with unused furniture that took up a ton of space. It was an uninspiring and scary place to be when all by yourself. Classes were held at the front of the room where the student workspaces blend in to. This became a huge problem when people wanted to work in the studio and a class is being held. This situation creates the feeling of being unable to utilize one's own space.

A studio space should be creatively inspiring, welcoming, and have the ability to serve multiple people and multiple functions at the same time without interrupting one another. A studio space should be customized to its users and their specific needs. A studio space should have the ability to change easily to accommodate new users and new purposes. A studio space should be a reflection of who is using it. That is what I aimed to accomplish.



EMPTY STUDIO: 3 PM on a Thursday



EMPTY STUDIO: 5 PM on a Friday



EMPTY STUDIO: 3 PM on a Sunday

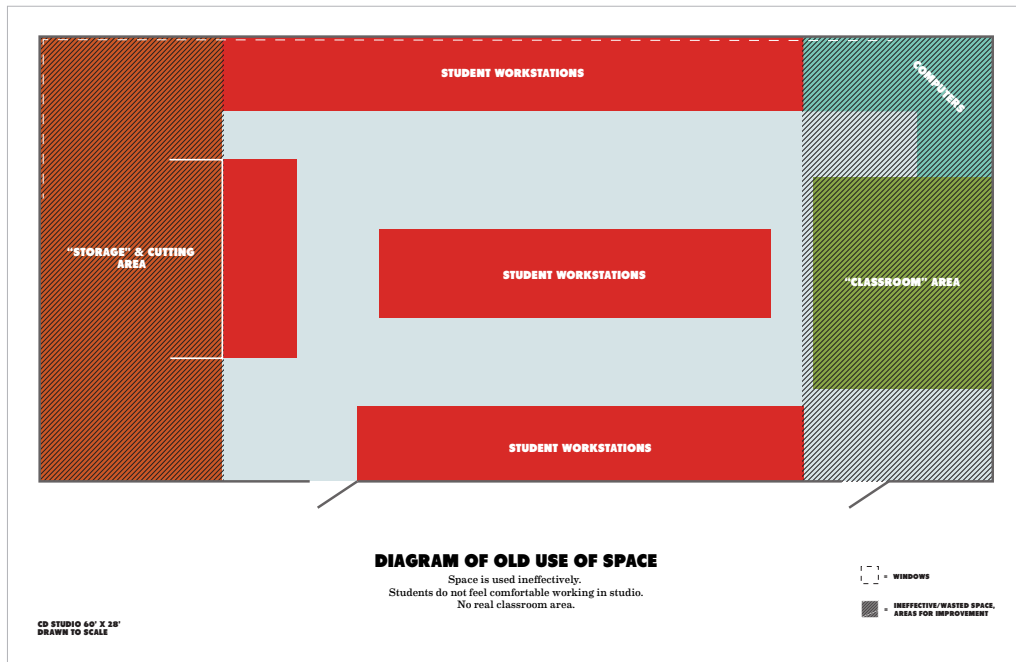


DIAGRAM: Old Usage of CD Studio Space. Wasteful Areas.

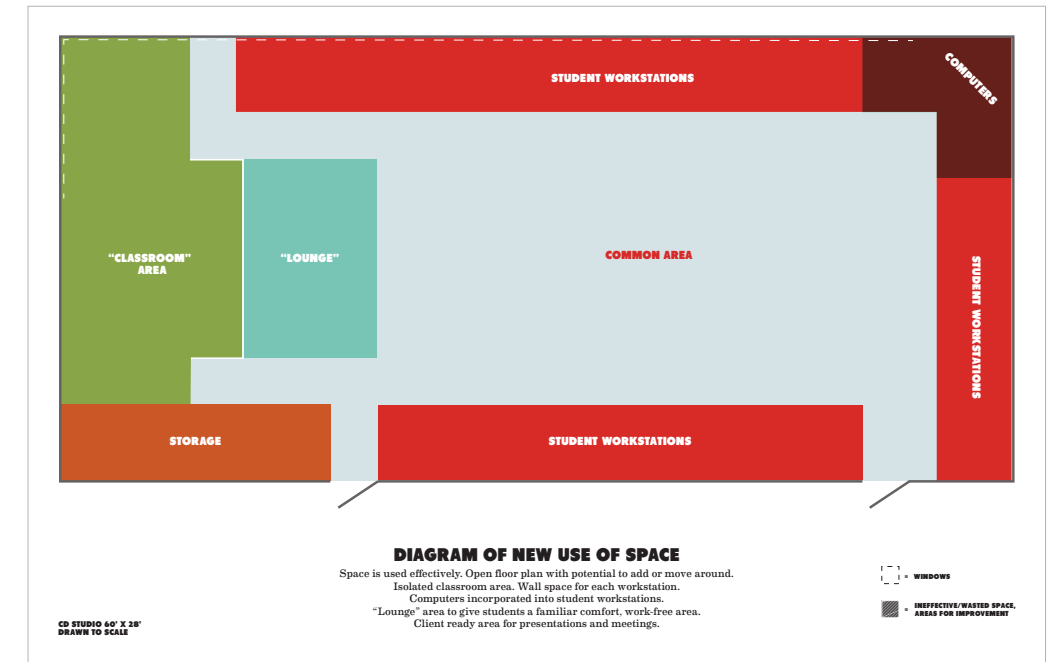


DIAGRAM: New Usage of CD Studio Space. Much better!

Why is That Even Here?

At the beginning of this project it became clear very quickly that something had to be done about the studio space in order to get members of this community to use it. Not only do I want people to use the studio as a place to work, but as a place to interact with each other, have conversations, form relationships, and critique work in progress. All of these things were absent from the CD culture at the beginning of this project, and students were unable to reach their full potential because of this.

I had to find out why it was that people were choosing not to utilize the studio space outside of class time. In order to make any sort of reasonable change, I had to find out what people thought of the space, where they normally do their work, and what makes them comfortable. After speaking with nearly everyone in the department, and asking them the same questions, I heard the same answer over and over again *“I don’t feel comfortable working in this creatively uninspiring, cluttered, closed off room.”* The only upside to

these answers was that I was feeling the same way and that we all wanted something similar.

It was then that I started to evaluate what the actual issues the studio had. Aside from being dirty and painted displeasing colors, the studio was not set up in an effective way. The entire back of the studio was full of unused cabinets and broken equipment. Just removing all of this junk freed up loads of space for a more effective layout. There is no CD classroom

and class was held in the middle of the students work area. There was nothing on the walls to inspire creativity and comfort of the students. Overall, the studio was vacant because it was set up to be vacant. I really started to think *“Why is all of this crap here? No one uses it. It needs to go.”*

Fanatically Fixing Fixtures

Now that I had a better understanding of the sort of things people took issue with, I could start asking what they wanted. Paint was a common theme in those conversations (for good reason). The members of this community all wanted something that makes you happy to be a part of, something that doesn't make you depressed the moment you walk into it. We looked at paint swatches as a group and decided on a direction to go with color.

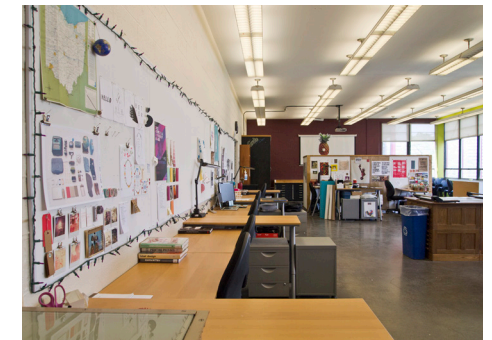
Besides giving the studio a much needed paint job, I reevaluated the use of the space and formed a plan to rearrange furniture, and get rid of clutter. This clutter was a lot of those empty cabinets I mentioned earlier. This part of the project relied heavily on using the studio's space and contents in a more effective way rather than buying new materials and furniture to fill it.

I submitted the plan for the new studio in early December (2011) and it was approved! The studio was renovated over winter break and everyone was surprised and super happy when they got back from break. CD now has the best, and coolest studio at CIA!

The new studio has an open floor plan, allowing for easy transportation of one's items and self through the studio. This makes the whole room feel much more welcoming and invites students to be a more integrated part of their community. The new floor plan I designed leaves a wide open space in the middle of the room to be used whenever and however the students need it. The computers, printer, and cutting tables are all centrally located here for everyone to use.

Moving the classroom area behind the partition that was already in place at the back of the room was key to creating a comfortable atmosphere during class hours. This involves moving a table and a projector to the back of the studio after removing much of the unused cabinetry and trash that used to be there. This created an isolated environment for classes, and increased the student workspace a lot.

Something that the members of this community expressed interest in having was a lounge area in the studio. Part of the design process is having a comfortable conversation. Whether that is with a classmate, client, or professor, a comfortable conversation leads to more intimate details and design. The consensus of every-



LEFT SIDE: The studio before the new design.

RIGHT SIDE: The new studio.

one was to have an area reserved for this comfort, for taking breaks from work while keeping students in the studio. Unfortunately this part of the project never came to fruition. It wasn't in the budget to purchase the special fire rated furniture the fire code requires. There is room built into the studio space if and when the budget exists to make the purchase.

Welcome Home?

The new studio is great. Everyone agrees on that. It is clean, a pleasant place to be in, and definitely inspires conversation when people are in it. The problem that still exists is that people don't utilize the studio enough outside of class time. They still prefer to go work on their own from home. I believe that this is a learned response from the old culture that CD had. Now that I have initiated change, the community is in a transitional period that will take awhile to get everybody to the studio all the time. It will change, I know it will.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE FUTURE.

Integrations

No that's not a typo. It's what I'm now calling integrated interactions. It's to the point, and a heck of a lot less syllables. This entire year has been about making things to influence and integrate the members of the CD Community at CIA's interactions. I'd be lying if I told you everything went to plan, but I'd be telling an even bigger lie if I said things aren't slowly changing for the better.

The importance of integrating interactions is only superseded by having an experience, but as you know from reading every word in this book (wink wink) that these truly are the same thing. Without a planned definition (an experience) interactions have no way of being integrated. They are only single occurrences with no greater meaning than whatever happens in that interaction.

The interactions I have been targeting this year are slowly but surely integrating into an experience. The commonalities I have worked very hard to instill in each type of interaction are what is pulling them together. These are qualities of conversation, comfort, self-expression, and passion. Emotion transcends these qualities and is what is giving meaning to these interactions, allowing them to integrate.

This project I have worked on all year has truly been a learning experience for me. I have learned how to engage people in a way where they genuinely feel like I care, because I do care. I think this approach has helped people feel as though I'm working with them, rather than for them. This principle is what I believe the new culture should be based on.

What Works

I discovered this year that you can't completely influence an interaction and you can only plan for the near future. When people are put into a situation where they need to make a decision, they look back at their previous experiences for guidance. Due to the fact that not everyone has the same experiences, interactions will always be interpreted in slightly to greatly different ways. But what you can plan for is what they will get out of the experience that integrates those interactions. That experience will always be growing and changing into something even better suited for a community.

So what actually worked this year? I would argue that it all worked on varying levels. The identity of the department was well received, and people were excited to hear that they could break it and remake it. I think that having this option to create something for yourself as a designer is very important. There isn't enough emphasis on designing for personal joy (anywhere) in my opinion. I think that the identity is doing a good job at pulling the things I made together visually.

With the person-to-person interactions I think the most effective part is that people have developed comfortable relationships in which they have conversations much more frequently than before this project. Talk CD! was kind of a flop because people didn't want to talk about design outside of class, but it did start these relationships off in a good way. Since the first event that broke the ice for everyone, it is my observation that members of this community are much more open with each other.

As far as the person-to-interface interactions I am unsure how it will play out. Enough time has not passed since the website was finished to create any reasonable observations. I do believe that if it is embraced and updated regularly that it will fulfill its goal of creating online conversations that help members of the community grow. Only time will tell. I can say that with the initial excitement from the beta testers, I am optimistic that it will be used as a tool for everyone.

The person-to-environment interactions are doing quite well at the time of writing this. People are so much more pleasant and comfortable while working in the studio. It truly does put its inhabitants into a much healthier state of mind for designing, communicating, and collaborating. I am thrilled at the reception it has had, and I think that in the coming years it will attract more and more people to work in it after hours, which in the end builds the CD Culture even more.

The things that I've made and the interactions they are meant to influence are the heart and soul of the CD Experience that I have designed [for]. It is important to always remember that however effective all of these things are for anybody, that the reason they are effective is because they are being embraced and nurtured. Without embracing them and working with them to grow, you cannot hope to have the CD Experience.

The Long Run

I'd like to share a universal principle with you: the past is where everything went wrong, the present is where we fix it, and the future is what we look forward to. The CD Community's culture was shattered at the beginning of this school year, and I spent the year working with my community to fix it. The future of the CD Community will reap the benefits of our work this year.

Anyone who would say that the past doesn't matter is crazy. It is the reason why we are where we are today. It is where we had our experiences that shape our present interactions. But the important thing to always remember is to not live in the past. You can only experience in the present, and these experiences are what create change. The reasons why this project needed to be done are truly because of a lapse in leadership and personal relationships that left the community with an ineffective culture. It is important to learn from the mistakes of the past and change for the better. We must move forward to new and better experiences.

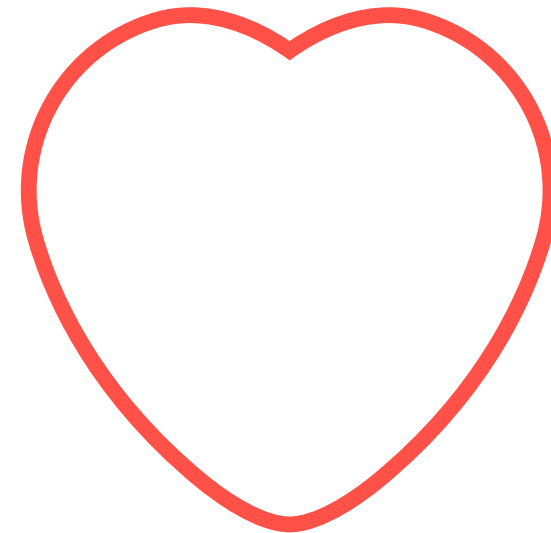
This year long project that I have just wrapped up has affected me in so many different ways. It has given me joy, fostered new friendships, taught me to be a leader, stressed me out to the point of exhaustion, and even made me sick enough to spend a night in the hospital. I truly have poured every ounce of myself into this project not for myself, but because I believe that it is something worthwhile. I want this community that I have been a part of for the past three years to grow and prosper regardless of where I end up.

I have learned this year that patience is truly something I need to work on. I was expecting instant change out of this project with minimal push back from my audiences. I thought that every member of CD would be on board to change and have a great year of interacting amongst each other while building relationships and skills. I learned that there will always be those who resist change and just recede back into what they are currently comfortable with, regardless of it being the healthiest action. I did get through to many people though and I think the rest of their time at CIA will be all the better because of it. I experienced that if you are trying to change someone's behavior or culture, you need to think in terms longer than a year. It is something that changes slowly over time.

Culture is something that is ever evolving, something that changes as the people who experience it change. Communities are representations of those who they serve. Their first objective is not to make someone into something, but to serve people in the way that they *need* it to.

I see my thesis as a success only if it continues. I have developed an experience to integrate the interactions members of this community have everyday. The things I made this year were well received, and the conversations I shared with my community were invaluable. The CD culture is now in a transition period where it will either mature into something great, or end up where it was at the beginning of the year. I have hope that with the proper leadership and personal relationships that this experience will continue to grow and mature. It will make CD rise to its fullest potential and beyond.

The future is now in the hands of The CD Community. I wish you luck and that you let your passion guide you.





THIS IS CD

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ANDREW FRANK IS A COMMUNICATION DESIGNER.

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