BRIAN DIXON

Experiencing the Structure
THIS TALK

Visual communications theory.
Research through design.
A case.
Ontology.
A framework.
Thinking further.
THIS TALK

Envisaging a native mode of knowledge production for visual communications.
INTEREST IN THE VISUAL

Art and design history, visual anthropology, visual sociology, visual culture, information visualisation, and cognitive psychology.
THE THEORETICAL LANDSCAPE
THE THEORETICAL LANDSCAPE

Fragmented epistemologies...
THE THEORETICAL LANDSCAPE

‘Visual intelligence/Cognition/Perception
Visual literacy
Graphic Design/Aesthetics
Visualisation/Creativity
Visual culture/Visual rhetoric/Visual semiotics
Professional performance: Photography/Film/
Video/Internet/Mass media/Advertising/PR’
(Moriarty and Barbitsis 2004:10)
THE THEORETICAL LANDSCAPE

‘Who...
Says What...
To Whom...
In Which Channel...
’
(Fahmy, Bock and Wanta 2014:vii)
RESEARCH THROUGH DESIGN
Bang et al.'s (2012) model of research through design
A CASE
A CASE
A CASE

Investigating how a mobile map could be designed to allow a walker to remain aware of their surrounding environment in use.
A Contextualised Graphic Syntax for the Design of a GPS-Enabled Wayfinding Interface to Visually Support an Urban Recreational Walker’s/Wanderer’s Situation Awareness in Use

The interface was designed to visually support an intrinsically motivated urban recreational walker’s/wanderer’s situation awareness in use, when walkers are from Britain and Ireland, and seeking to apply exploratory wayfinding practices. Its aims to:

- Orientate the walker with:
  - A distorted integral metric space
  - A static labelled node displaying the user’s location
  - Responsively rotating labelled nodes representing the direction and order of landmarks
  - Responsively rotating labelled nodes representing the direction of urban districts

- Relate to the surrounding environment with:
  - When compared to conventional GPS-enabled wayfinding interfaces

- Offer a limited amount of content and interactivity:

Through the above, the walker/wanderer may perceive a direction-based and clear/simple design, with features that enrich their experience and/or provide a grounding/reassurance. Further, they may identify a link between the information presented on screen and that which it represents. In terms of meanings, walkers/wanderers have been seen to commonly identify such an interface as being for use in immersive situations, e.g. touring, exploration or wandering.
A Contextualised Graphic Syntax for the Design of a GPS-Enabled Wayfinding Interface to Visually Support an Urban Recreational Walker’s/Wanderer’s Situation Awareness in Use

The interface was designed to visually support an intrinsically motivated urban recreational walker’s/wanderer’s situation awareness in use, when walkers are from Britain and Ireland, and seeking to apply exploratory wayfinding practices. Its aims to:

1. Orientate the walker with:
   - A distorted integral metric space
   - A static labelled node displaying the user’s location
   - Responsively rotating labelled nodes representing the direction and order of landmarks
   - Responsively rotating labelled nodes representing the direction of urban districts

2. Offer a limited amount of content and interactivity when compared to conventional GPS-enabled wayfinding interfaces.

Through the above, the walker/wanderer may perceive a direction-based and clear/simple design, with features that enrich their experience and/or provide a grounding/reassurance. Further, they may identify a link between the information presented on screen and that which it represents. In terms of meanings, walkers/wanderers have been seen to commonly identify such an interface as being for use in immersive situations, e.g. touring, exploration or wandering.
A DESIGNER’S ONTOLOGY
A DESIGNER’S ONTOLOGY

An ontological position is often implicitly linked to an epistemological position (Crotty 1998:10).
A DESIGNER’S ONTOLOGY

Objectivists claim that ‘social phenomena confront us as external facts’ (Bryman 2008:33).
A DESIGNER’S ONTOLOGY

For constructionists, the world is constituted in our experience and, so, is in a constant state of revision (e.g. Lincoln and Guba 1985).
A DESIGNER’S ONTOLOGY

Where we locate the reality of our design outcomes?
A DESIGNER’S ONTOLOGY

Generalisability.
Transferability.
EXPANDING INFORMATION DESIGN THEORY

Yuri Engelhardt’s The Language of Graphics (2002) provides a framework which can be universally applied in the analysis of graphic representations.
A graphic object or a composite graphic object

INTREPRETING THE GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION
- Types of correspondence
- Modes of expression
- Information roles of graphic objects
- Type of represented information

which may be seen as:

A SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE
- A graphic space
- A set of graphic objects
- A set of graphic relations

which consists of:

SYNTACTIC SEMANTIC
A GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

INTREPRETING THE GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION
- Types of correspondence
- Modes of expression
- Information roles of graphic objects
- Type of represented information

A SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE
- A graphic space
- A set of graphic objects
- A set of graphic relations

SYNTACTIC

SEMANTIC

ADDITIONAL ANALYTIC LEVEL

which may be seen as:
- A graphic object or a composite graphic object

composite objects involve:

which consists of:
- A graphic space
- A set of graphic objects

A SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE

interpretation

interpretation may include a consideration of:

inevitably has:
- A user in a physical/social situated context.

which involves:
- Meaningful spatiotemporal episodes

wherein the following may be experienced and transformed through interaction:

the above may relate to the:
THINKING FURTHER
THINKING FURTHER

How particular typographic arrangements are experienced by particular participant groups.
Further adaption could allow for a description of the more exacting structural details of typefaces and, again, set these beside participants’ experiences of that work.
THINKING FURTHER

A knowledge base that designers own.