

M O N O G R A P H

This monograph contains the collection of typographic and visual design work done by Akshansh Chaudhary at Parsons School of Design. The designs are grouped in series — advocacy, Shakespearean play, word map and symbols, each with its concept and theme.

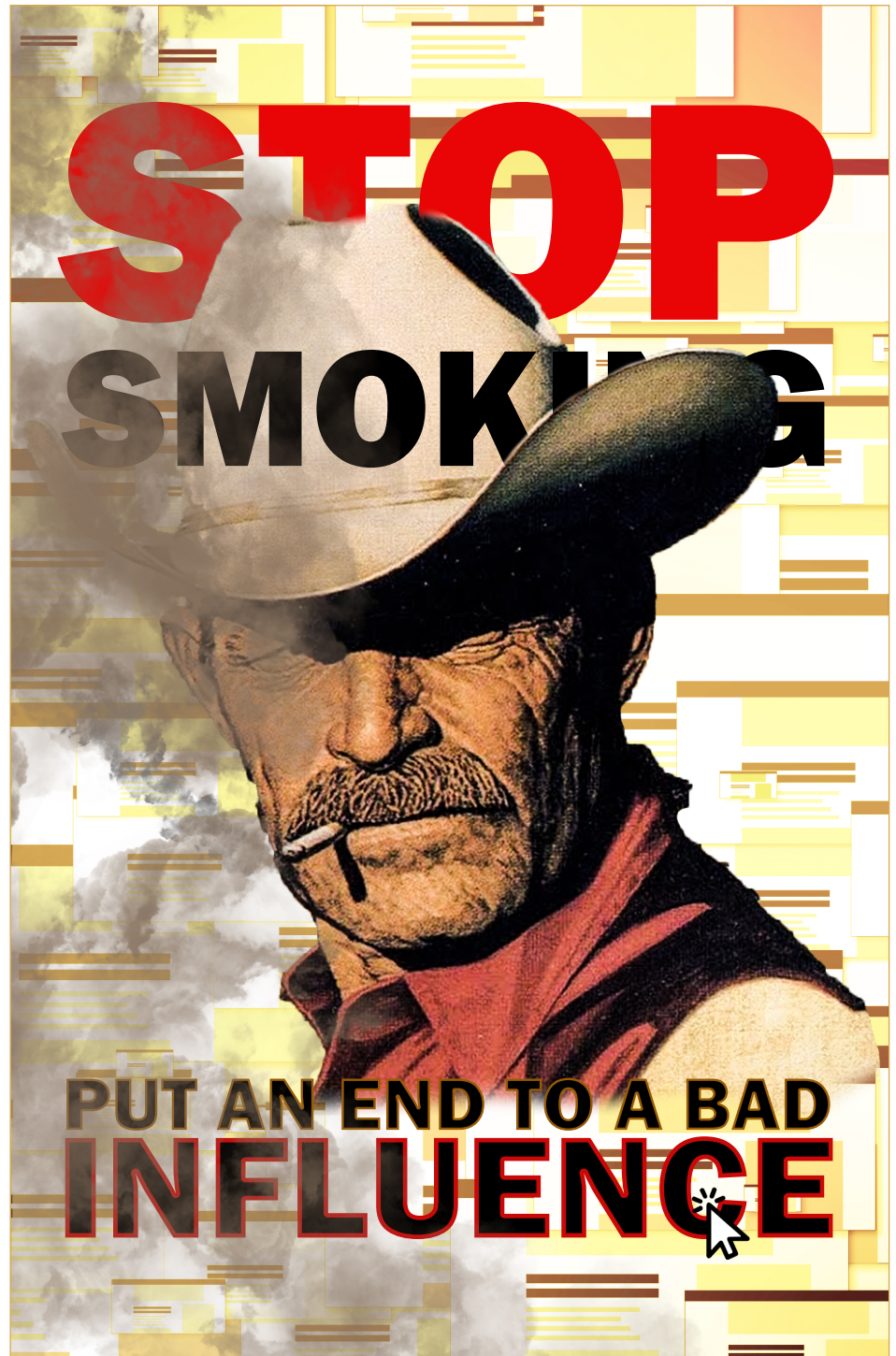
AKSHANSH CHAUDHARY

ment.
tal principles of interaction are per-
gies may change, but the fundamen-
for their interactions. Our technolo-
machines will follow these principles
Even fully autonomous, automatic
conceptual models will always hold.
dances and signifiers, mapping, and
feedback, and of the power of affor-
the principles of discoverability, for
ples of this book will not change, for
will stay with us. The design princi-
people across the world, across time,
and the ability to keep in touch with
been social beings. Social interaction
same. Human beings have always
of fundamental principles stay the
With massive change, a number

WHAT STAYS THE SAME?
AS THE WORLD CHANGES,
deadline.)

en, it's finished only hours before the
matter how much time you are giv-
the deadline. (It's like writing: no
in the last twenty-four hours before
the final results only seem to appear
the design team has been allocated,
design. No matter how much time
getting to an acceptable, high-quality
to meet these requirements while
strains, so it is up to the design team
and cost provide very strong con-
In product development, schedule
quality while meeting the schedule.
needs to deliver the highest-possible
is up to the product manager, who
When does the process end? That
into one.

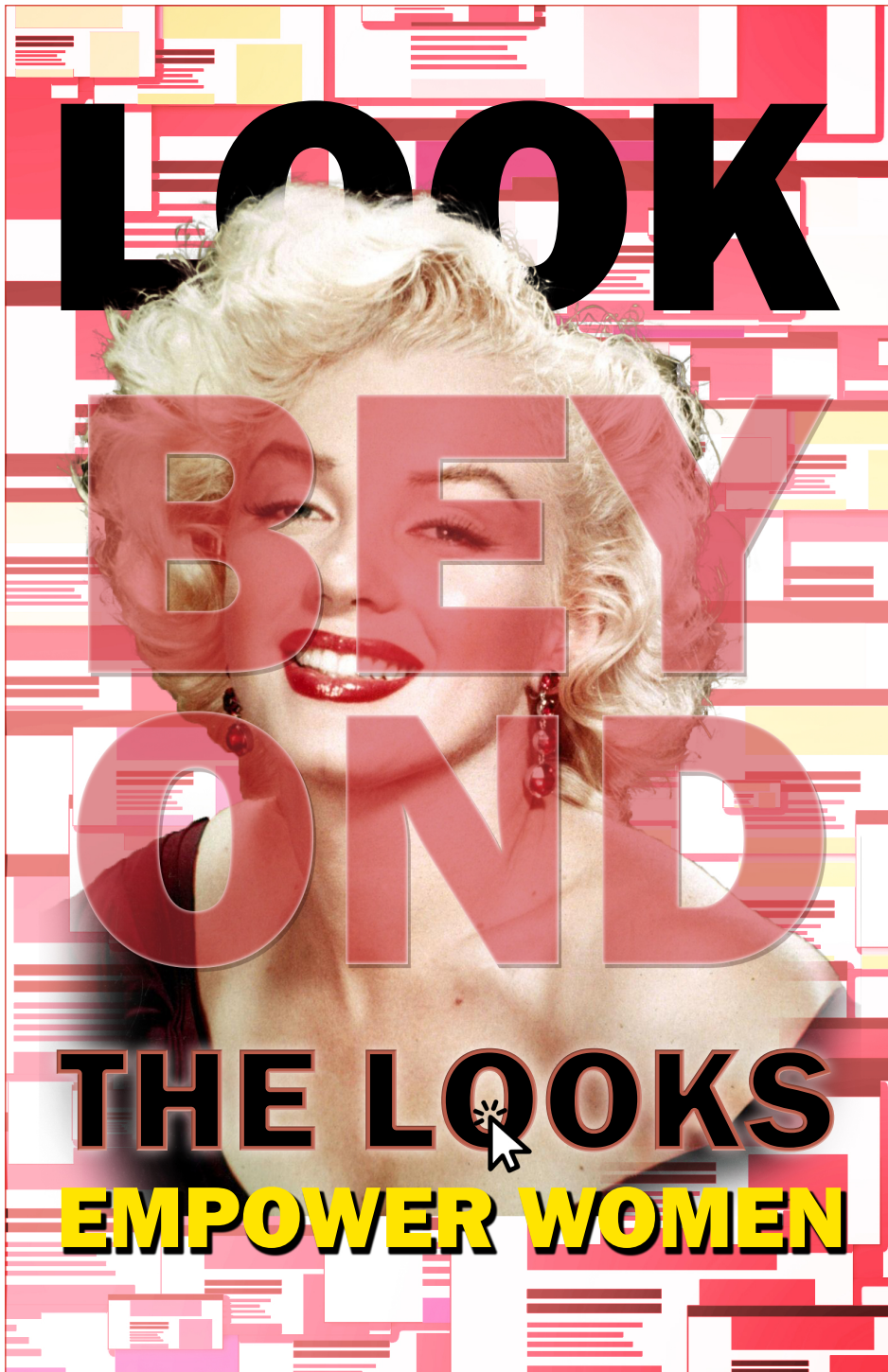
ent prototype ideas can be collapsed
upon a solution. The several differ-
erations, it is time to start converging
actual product. After the first few it-



Adopted from the classic Marlboro
package advertisement, this propa-
ganda poster provides a sense of how
traditional forms of advertisement,
which initiated with smoking, eventu-
ally led to the proliferation of digital
advertisement. Just as the back of a
cigarette package has the harmful ef-

fects of smoking mentioned, the post-
er shows the clickbait nature of ads in
the digital age.

**The poster is a part of the propagan-
da series on the influence of online
advertisements. Each visual in the
series follow the theme of bold type
with a strong visual.**



This is a propaganda poster, adopted from the renowned image of Marilyn Monroe. Throughout history, women have been presented as symbols of sexual pleasure. This poster forces the viewer to think beyond the norm and break the association of women with looks. The idea is to communicate

women empowerment and promote equality of women in personal and professional spheres. **The poster is a part of the propaganda series on the influence of online advertisements. Each visual in the series follow the theme of bold type with a strong visual.**

made in the abstract are invariably wrong. Requirements produced by asking people what they need are invariably wrong. Requirements are developed by watching people in their natural environment. When people are asked what they need, they primarily think of the everyday problems they face, seldom noticing larger failures, larger needs. They don't question the major methods they use. Moreover, even if they carefully explain how they do their tasks and then agree that you got it right when you present it back to them, when you watch them, they will often deviate from their own description. "Why?" you ask. "Oh, I had to do this one differently," they might reply; "this was a special case." It turns out that most cases are "special." Any system that does not allow for special cases will fail. Getting the requirements right involves repeated study and testing: iteration. Observe and study: decide what the problem might be, and use the results of tests to determine which parts of the design work, which don't. Then iterate through all four processes once again. Collect more design research if necessary, create more ideas, develop the prototypes, and test them. With each cycle, the tests and observations can be more targeted and more efficient. With each cycle of the iteration, the ideas become clearer, the specifications better defined, and the prototypes closer approximations to the target, the

ment, rather than just one. Like prototyping, testing is done in the problem specification phase to ensure that the problem is well understood, then done again in the problem solution phase to ensure that the new design meets the needs and abilities of those who will use it.

ITERATION

The role of iteration in human-centered design is to enable continual refinement and enhancement. The goal is rapid prototyping and testing, or in the words of David Kelly, Stanford professor and cofounder of the design firm IDEO, “Fail frequently, fail fast.”

Many rational executives (and government officials) never quite understand this aspect of the design process. Why would you want to fail? They seem to think that all that is necessary is to determine the requirements, then build to those requirements. Tests, they believe, are only necessary to ensure that the requirements are met. It is this philosophy that leads to so many unusable systems. Deliberate tests and modifications make things better. Failures are to be encouraged—actually, they shouldn't be called failures: they should be thought of as learning experiences. If everything works perfectly, little is learned. Learning occurs when there are difficulties.

The hardest part of design is getting the requirements right, which means ensuring that the right problem is being solved, as well as that the solution is appropriate. Requirements



This poster is adopted from the US Army propaganda in the early 1900s. The sketch of Uncle Sam with a background of several webpages symbolizes the intrusion advertisements have had since the time government started using them for propaganda. The web symbol on Uncle Sam's hat

adds to this symbolization. The look and feel of the text in the poster simulates the original, with the intention of drawing attention towards the change in context and language. **The poster is a part of the propaganda series on the influence of online advertisements.**

use it together, one person operating the prototype, the other guiding the actions and interpreting the results (aloud). Using pairs in this way causes them to discuss their ideas, hypotheses, and frustrations openly and naturally. The research team should be observing, either by sitting behind those being tested (so as not to distract them) or by watching through video in another room (but having the video camera visible and after describing the procedure). Video recordings of the tests are often quite valuable, both for later showings to team members who could not be present and for review. When the study is over, get more detailed information about the people's thought processes by retracing their steps, reminding them of their actions, and questioning them. Sometimes it helps to show them video recordings of their activities as reminders.

How many people should be studied? Opinions vary, but my associate, Jakob Nielsen, has long championed the number five: five people studied individually. Then, study the results, refine them, and do another iteration, testing five different people. Five is usually enough to give major findings. And if you really want to test many more people, it is far more effective to do one test of five, use the results to improve the system, and then keep iterating the test-design cycle until you have tested the desired number of people. This gives multiple iterations of improve-

Romeo & Juliet



**WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE**

Directed by:
Helen Newsom

Previews begin October 1st

922 W. 50th St.

Cuny Rosenthal Theatre

Tickets available through telecharge.com

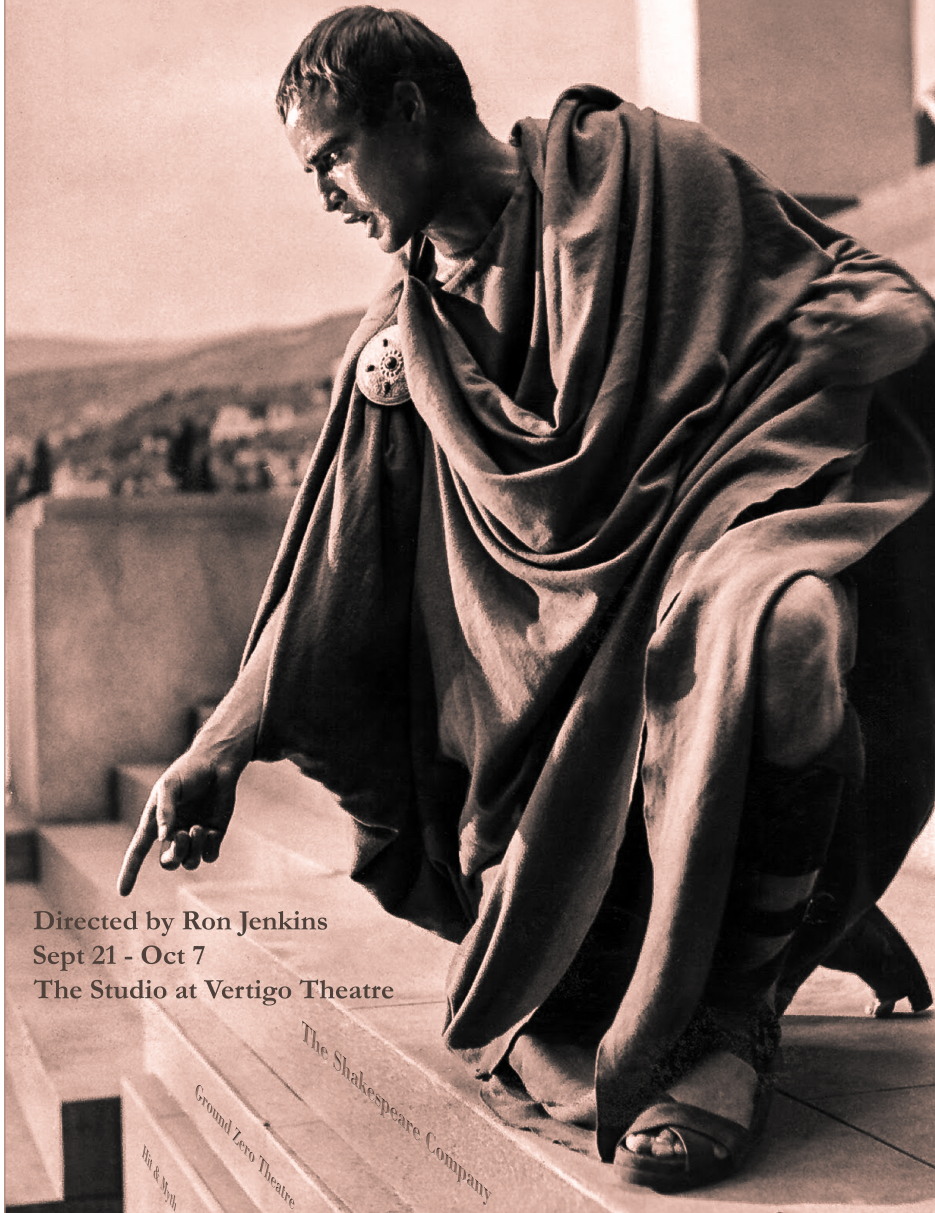
This is an invitation poster for Romeo and Juliet. The rough red texture background adds to that effect. The center piece shows a broken heart with splashes of blood gushing out as the sword immerses into the heart. It gives a sense of the tragic nature of the play, with partial moments of happiness

and sadness. The ampersand symbol (&) between the title words "Romeo and Juliet" symbolize a bridge being formed between the two emotions.

The poster is a part of a series based on the plays by William Shakespeare. The abstract and organic look is maintained in the series.

Julius Caesar

by William Shakespeare



Directed by Ron Jenkins
Sept 21 - Oct 7
The Studio at Vertigo Theatre

The Shakespeare Company
Ground Zero Theatre
1111 & 11th

This is an invitation poster for the play, Julius Caesar. The sepia background and the extra sharp details of Mark Antony along with the title symbolize the Roman times. In this moment in the play, Antony points to Caesar's grave and uses carefully chosen words to persuade the audience into believing

in Caesar. The placement of play details along with the engraved text on the stairs is to highlight the intensity of the scene which is not visible, but is a recorded moment in history.

The poster is a part of a series based on the plays by William Shakespeare.

The wizard was actually just an ordinary person but, through the use of smoke and mirrors, he managed to appear mysterious and omnipotent. In other words, it was all a fake: the wizard had no special powers. The Wizard of Oz method can be used to mimic a huge, powerful system long before it can be built. It can be remarkably effective in the early stages of product development. I once used this method to test a system for making airline reservations that had been designed by a research group at the Xerox Corporation's Palo Alto Research Center (today it is simply the Palo Alto Research Center, or PARC). We brought people into my laboratory in San Diego one at a time, seated them in a small, isolated room, and had them type their travel requirements into a computer. They thought they were interacting with an automated travel assistance program, but in fact, one of my graduate students was sitting in an adjacent room, reading the typed queries and typing back responses (looking up real travel schedules where appropriate). This simulation taught us a lot about the requirements for such a system. We learned, for example, that people's sentences were very different from the ones we had designed the system to handle. Example: One of the people we tested requested a round-trip ticket between San Diego and San Francisco. After the system had determined the desired flight to San Francisco, it asked, "When would you like to

actually know the reasons. Quite often the solution to problems is discovered through stupid questions, through questioning the obvious.

PROTOTYPING

The only way to really know whether an idea is reasonable is to test it. Build a quick prototype or mock-up of each potential solution. In the early stages of this process, the mock-ups can be pencil sketches, foam and cardboard models, or simple images, made with simple drawing tools. I have made mock-ups with spreadsheets, PowerPoint slides, and with sketches on index cards or sticky notes. Sometimes ideas are best conveyed by skits, especially if you're developing services or automated systems that are difficult to prototype.

One popular prototype technique is called "Wizard of Oz," after the wizard in L. Frank Baum's classic book (and the classic movie) "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz."



This word map shows the worldwide mobile cellular subscription in the year 2016. The intensity of the color and the size of the text both indicate the increased subscriptions (per 100 people) in the respective country. This series follows a pattern of text divided in two sections. The visualization on top shows a region/continent wise summary of the data and the bottom section shows the stats based on individual countries. The data has been taken from the World Bank Database.

generating ideas: many of these methods fall under the heading of “brainstorming.” Whatever the method used, two major rules are usually followed: Generate numerous ideas. It is dangerous to become fixated upon one or two ideas too early in the process; Be creative without regard for constraints. Avoid criticizing ideas, whether your own or those of others. Even crazy ideas, often obviously wrong, can contain creative insights that can later be extracted and put to good use in the final idea selection. Avoid premature dismissal of ideas.

I like to add a third rule: Question everything. I am particularly fond of “stupid” questions. A stupid question asks about things so fundamental that everyone assumes the answer is obvious. But when the question is taken seriously, it often turns out to be profound: the obvious often is not obvious at all. What we assume to be obvious is simply the way things have always been done, but now that it is questioned, we don’t



This word map shows the worldwide internet usage in the year 2016. The intensity of the color and the size of the text both indicate the increased usage (percentage) in the respective country. This series follows a pattern of text divided in two sections. The visual-

ization on top shows a region/continent wise summary of the data and the bottom section shows the stats based on individual countries. The data has been taken from the World Bank Database.

Design research supports both diamonds of the design process. The first diamond, finding the right problem, requires a deep understanding of the true needs of people. Once the problem has been defined, finding an appropriate solution again requires deep understanding of the intended population, how those people perform their activities, their capabilities and prior experience, and what cultural issues might be impacted.

IDEA GENERATION

Once the design requirements are determined, the next step for a design team is to generate potential solutions. This process is called idea generation, or ideation. This exercise might be done for both of the double diamonds: during the phase of finding the correct problem, then during the problem solution phase.

This is the fun part of design: it is where creativity is critical. There are many ways of

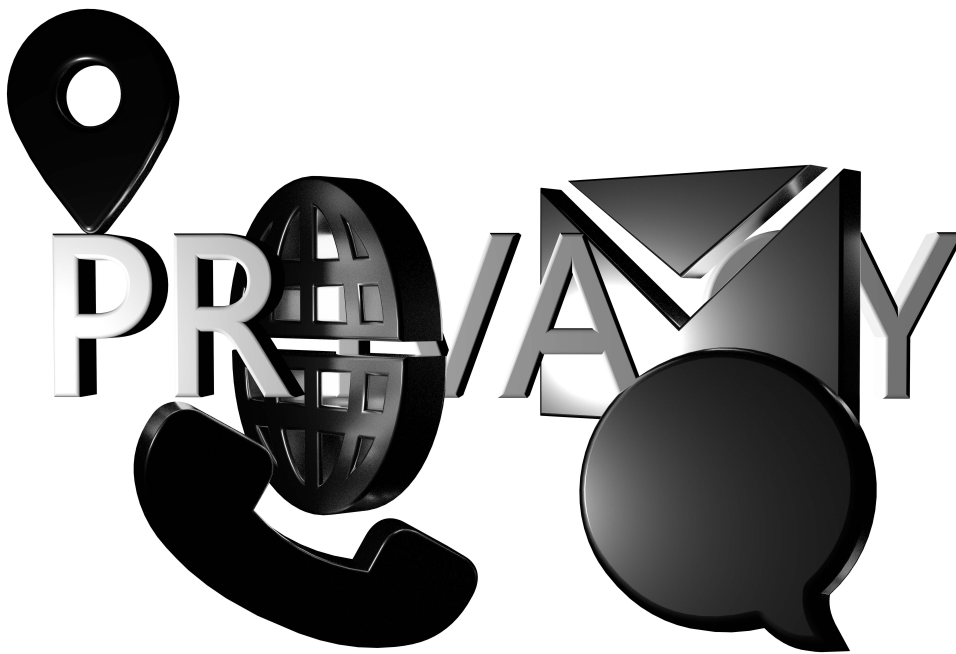


This word map shows the worldwide Carbon Dioxide Emissions in the year 2014. The intensity of the color and the size of the text both indicate the increased CO2 emission in the respective country. **This series follows a pattern of text divided in two sections.**

The visualization on top shows a region/continent wise summary of the data and the bottom section shows the stats based on individual countries. The data has been taken from the World Bank Database.

status or group membership. Here, although they perform useful functions, they are also fashion statements. This is where teenagers in one culture differ from those of another, and even from younger children and older adults of the same culture. Design researchers must carefully adjust the focus of their observations to the intended market and people for whom the product is intended.

Will the product be used in some country other than where it is being designed? There is only one way to find out: go there (and always include natives in the team). Don't take a shortcut and stay home, talking to students or visitors from that country while remaining in your own: what you will learn is seldom an accurate reflection of the target population or of the ways in which the proposed product will actually be used. There is no substitute for direct observation of and interaction with the people who will be using the product.



Is Obscured.

In this piece, the arrangement of symbols around the text obscures the meaning of the text, giving a sense of the convolution taking place in the media today, and the information we receive. The uneven lighting adds to the confusion of the user not knowing what is real

and what isn't.

This series uses the primary symbols of social engagement — chat, email, call, web, and location — and visualizes them in three dimensions. The grayscale outlines the dark reality that we are living today.

one, design researchers have the goal of determining human needs that can be addressed through new products. For another, product cycles are driven by schedule and budget, both of which require more rapid assessment than is typical in academic studies that might go on for years. It's important that the people being observed match those of the intended audience. Note that traditional measures of people, such as age, education, and income, are not always important: what matters most are the activities to be performed. Even when we look at widely different cultures, the activities are often surprisingly similar. As a result, the studies can focus upon the activities and how they get done, while being sensitive to how the local environment and culture might modify those activities. In some cases, such as the products widely used in business, the activity dominates. Thus, automobiles, computers, and phones are pretty standardized across the world because their designs reflect the activities being supported. In some cases, detailed analyses of the intended group are quite different from Japanese women, and in turn, very different from German teenage girls. If a product is intended for subcultures like these, the exact population must be studied. Another way of putting it is that different products serve different needs. Some products are also symbols of



We live in a world where user privacy is convoluted and hidden behind Terms and Conditions Agreement. In this piece, the text shows a disconnect with the symbol, giving a sense of the broken nature of privacy today. The uneven lighting adds to the confusion of the user not knowing what is real

and what isn't.

This series uses the primary symbols of social engagement — chat, email, call, web, and location — and visualizes them in three dimensions. The grayscale outlines the dark reality that we are living today.

OBSERVATION

The initial research to understand the nature of the problem itself is part of the discipline of design research. Note that this is research about the customer and the people who will use the products under consideration. It is not the kind of research that scientists do in their laboratories, trying to find new laws of nature. The design researcher will go to the potential customers, observe their activities, attempting to understand their interests, motives, and true needs. The problem definition for the product design will come from this deep understanding of the goals the people are trying to accomplish and the impediments to their experience. One of its most critical techniques is to observe the would-be customers in their natural environment, in their normal lives, wherever the product or service being designed will actually be used. Watch them in their homes, schools, and offices. Watch them commute, at parties, at mealtime, and with friends at the local bar. Follow them into the shower if necessary, because it is essential to understand the real situations that they encounter, not some pure isolated experience. This technique is called applied ethnography, a method adapted from the field of anthropology. Applied ethnography differs from the slower, more methodical, research-oriented practice of academic anthropologists because the goals are different. For



This piece adds a dimensionality to a conventional visiting card design. The divided extruded and engraved layers create a visual of the elements coming alive and standing in three dimensions. The angled typographic style adds to the 3D nature of the piece. The sharp color contrast of the sides of the

visiting card serve as a reminder that there are two sides of a coin, and the outcome changes with a flip.

This series uses the primary symbols of social engagement — chat, email, call, web, and location — and visualizes them in three dimensions.

DETCENNONOC

DON NORMAN

This side of the book is a design piece by Don Norman, taken from his book *Design of Everyday Things*. It serves as a design inspiration guiding the visual style and simplicity of the artworks presented in this piece. The text runs in parallel to the monograph to create a visual consistency.