

Design Directions 2008/09

An innovative programme of awards

RSA

Introduction

The common theme, and the strength, of this year's projects, is the powerful and authentic contexts within which they set new challenges to designers.

From the ageing population to prisons, from post office closures to security in public places, these projects take real and contemporary issues as their starting point and ask designers to show how design can have an impact on emotive, sensitive and politically-charged areas through the application of design methods and processes (or the development of new ones).

Stakeholders and user groups are an important part of developing these responses but access to key people can be difficult. This year we have developed two major project areas under the heading of Design Directions Plus – Action for Age and The Visit. The 'Plus' is that for the first time, we are creating the opportunity for those shortlisted after the preliminary judging, to come together in a workshop with key people from these two project areas to gain deeper insight, guidance and invaluable feedback on moving their projects forward.

We hope these projects will excite and inspire many thoughtful, powerful and provocative responses.

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Dates for submission of Entry Forms/Fees and Work

Thursday 20 November 2008

Deadline for Entry Form(s)/fee(s) for all projects (including Design Directions Plus)

Entry Forms/Fees should be sent under separate cover – **not** with your entry – to:
RSA Design Directions Registrations
8 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6EZ
UK

Monday 17 Nov – Friday 12 Dec 2008

Submission period for all project entries (except Design Directions Plus*)

Entries will be accepted at **Brooks Transport Services Ltd** on any weekday within the dates stated between 08:00-18:00, excluding weekends and bank holidays. Entries arriving after 18:00 on 12 December 2008 will not be accepted

Please remember that entries should be sent or delivered to:

Brooks Transport Services Ltd
Unit 2/15
Second Avenue
Bluebridge Industrial Estate
Halstead
Essex CO9 2SU
UK

All entry forms/fees should be sent or delivered to:

RSA Design Directions Registrations
8 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6EZ
UK

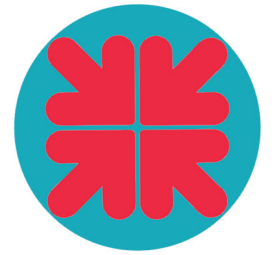
***Design Directions Plus**

Submission date for these projects (i.e. Action for Age and The Visit)
is Friday 9 January 2009

Action for age

designing a better future

Design Directions Plus is an exciting new concept that offers students the opportunity to benefit from valuable input on their project from key experts and stakeholders. It will expose them and their project concept to advice, feedback and input from people who are active in the field.



DesignDirections+

The Action for age project looks at the role of design in addressing some of the complex challenges, and the exciting opportunities, presented by an ageing population. In particular it addresses how older people can become isolated and marginalised, how their health and emotional wellbeing can become undermined and how, as a result, the quality of their lives diminished

Introduction

Falling birthrates, coupled with increased life expectancy due to general improvements in health, have resulted in an ageing population, and many more people can now expect to live beyond 85 years of age than ever before. Whilst this is to be celebrated it is nonetheless the case that as the population ages and more people live alone, social isolation amongst older people is emerging as one of the major issues facing society. Older people are also among the main users of health and other care services, so the potential future impact on these resources will grow making it an increasingly significant social and political issue as time goes on.

In responding to this project, you need to unpack and understand the experiences of older people, the circumstances that affect their lives and the pathways to loneliness and isolation. Whilst these are often linked to socio-economic circumstances, it is also the case that older people often have weaker social networks, preventing them accessing many of the things most of us take for granted: friends and regular company, stimulating activity and easy access to services such as shops, post offices and GPs.

You then need to reflect on the ways in which design can respond to some of the issues in ways that could improve the lives of those at risk. How can awareness be increased in society of the valuable role and potential contribution older people can offer: if they are engaged, active and have a sense of purpose, they can make a big contribution to our communities but will remain an untapped resource unless used.

Background

Ageing facts

- in the past thirty-five years the number of those over 65 grew by 31%
- in the past thirty-five years those under 16 declined by 19%
- by 2031 the number of over 75 year-olds in the British population is expected to increase from 4.7 million to 8.2 million
- by 2031 the number of over 85 year-olds is expected to be nearly three million compared to 1.2 million in 2006

Some stark facts

- among older people living alone, 17% rated themselves as 'often/always lonely', compared with 2% living with others: 80% of the 'often lonely' lived alone
- one in five people over 65 are alone more than 12 hours a day
- over one million people feel trapped in their homes
- a 2004 survey showed that over one million older people spent Christmas alone

Statistics such as these show how older people are more at risk of depression and ill-health brought about by isolation and loneliness.

Understanding the issues

When thinking about the issues of loneliness and social isolation in relation to older people, you need to understand what has led people to each of these two types of situation. For some it will be a continuation of their life experience; for many others, it will be a new and hitherto unknown experience brought about by changes such as bereavement. You should be clear in your mind when developing your response to the project, to which of these different 'pathways' (loneliness or isolation) you are responding. Also, try to understand the nuances between living alone, loneliness and social isolation. Loneliness refers more to how people think about the level of social contact they have (or do not have); social isolation is a measure of how disengaged people are in their wider community whilst living alone may not necessarily lead to either of those situations.¹

You should also take care when defining what you mean by older people. It is not a generic term for anyone older than you are yourself! You need to take account of different ages and stages along the ageing process. It is important then to have a clear idea of which group you are addressing in your response to the project and the issues that affect their lives. Your reading around the subject will often specify the age being referred to: an older person is often defined as one 65 years or over; the older-old will often be specified as 85 years and over, etc..

You are a designer – what can you do?

As a designer you will know how important it is to work meaningfully with users, other stakeholders and professionals in order to improve services, products and communications. Best practice is shaped by an understanding of people and their needs and responds to difficult problems in ways that improve and enrich their lives.

At the core of this project is the question: what can you do to improve the lives of those who are already – or who are at risk of – experiencing loneliness and social isolation? What insights might you uncover that could have an impact on the lives of older people in this way? Understanding, and making sense of the ways that people live and behave, and drawing insights from these observations is at the heart of what the best designers do – they simplify complex information and facilitate clear communication.

Designers can work with people in innovative and user-centered ways to create radical ideas which are visible and tangible; they can create connections between those ideas, identify, visualise and design key 'touch points' to make networks and services accessible and user-friendly; in this way they can begin to empower users to effect meaningful change and improve their quality of life.

Brief

Design a new service, network or other solution that would benefit older people experiencing, or vulnerable to, loneliness and isolation and that would help to improve their emotional and general wellbeing. How might you engage older people in the process of co-designing a response that would be meaningful to them? How can this process lead to more appropriately designed outcomes?

The format of the designed solution is flexible: it could be a service, a network, an environment, a piece of communication, an event, a new role, or it might take elements from several of these. The aim is to design a coherent solution that addresses the needs of the person/people you are designing for, lead to their greater integration into the community and improve their general wellbeing. Make sure you communicate the story of your project in a clear and engaging way that would make those with the power to make it happen take note.

Where we can, many of us use our own informal social 'care circles' when we need them – families and friends, colleagues, the internet, groups and societies etc – which offer shared knowledge and mutual support. However, while informal networks such as these can play an important role in our social and emotional wellbeing, older people are less likely to have good social networks and many have none at all.

What are the design opportunities where design thinking, methods and people-centred processes could develop and visualise proposals to support older people in new ways? Also, what are the opportunities for encouraging self-help using a range of media targeted at this growing demographic? The following are just examples of some issues that might shape wellbeing in older people and which you might choose to address in order to focus your work or you may identify a completely different issue through your own research:

– Bridging the generational gap

Social cohesion between the generations is an important factor, and will become increasingly so as the shift to greater numbers of older people in society progresses and the dependency ratio (that is, the number of people working supporting higher numbers of retired people) falls. Also, the classic model of the extended family living together has now almost vanished; in fact increased mobility makes it less likely that generations of the same family will even live in the same geographical area. The weakening of these ties results in older and more vulnerable people in particular, falling outside the care and responsibility of their families. Interestingly however some minority ethnic groups can provide another perspective. Whilst there are cases of poorer health and greater poverty levels, these can be offset by strong family and religious support networks.

How might younger and older people be brought together? What can you learn from different models of UK ethnic communities (some Indian and Pakistani groups for instance?). Could older people become involved in child-care for instance, establishing inter-generational contact where older people could teach children life skills based on years of experience? Payment would help older people remain financially independent and help establish an alternative 'care cycle' built on belonging while supporting older people's independence for longer. What are other ways to bridge this gap?

– Maintaining a comfortable environment

Wellbeing of older people is improved if their living environment is comfortable and well maintained. Older people often enjoy gardening for instance but could benefit from help with the 'heavy lifting' and bending aspects that make it less pleasurable and rewarding.

Could community gardening clubs, supported by neighbourhood guardians or wardens, encourage

neighbourliness and modest levels of activity in older people, and improve the safety, quality, appearance and social fabric of communities?

– **Eating well and staying well**

Experts increasingly believe that a healthy diet is important to reducing the risk of dementia as well as being important to maintain general good health.

How can this be encouraged? Malnutrition can be a common problem among elderly people, yet many older women will have had a lifetime of cooking and baking for the family. How could these activities help give a sense of purpose, stimulate the senses, rekindle memories and skills, build relationships, and improve health and wellbeing?

– **Active minds and bodies...**

Maintaining general good health aids general wellbeing. Exercise is shown to help lower the risk of mental health problems such as depression and give a positive sense of wellbeing; furthermore, although no hard evidence exists to support it, regular mental stimulation could help improve acuity and lower risk against dementia too.

How can design help to support people maintain their general wellbeing, outside the formal, clinical model? It is not only older people who need to keep active so are there cross-generational opportunities here? What might a service or informal social health network look like that fulfils this need? Is there a way of rethinking exercise-fitness incentives?

– **...and grumpy old men?**²

Whilst older people are particularly vulnerable to depression, older men are a high-risk suicide group. Men, and older men especially, are less likely to talk about many of the difficulties they experience, particularly around their mental health, or be proactive in seeking support or assistance.

How might this harder to reach group become engaged in the community and be drawn into activities that encourage their greater social inclusion? What are the innovative ways that community/neighbourhood services might use to engage with and address the needs and wishes of this specific group?

– **Belonging and involved**

Involvement in the local community is an important factor in promoting a sense of wellbeing and self worth and for older people it can help counter factors that lead to depression and isolation.

What new community/neighbourhood services could be designed that could enable greater wellbeing? What might the role of peer support and other initiatives, perhaps across the generations, look like?

2: The Mental Health Foundation is currently running a project called Grumpy Old Men? that aims to promote and support innovative services working with older men at risk of isolation and depression to help improve their mental health and well being

Tackling the design challenge

This project focuses on the lives and needs of a group in society that is likely to be outside your immediate and everyday experience, but to develop a response that is meaningful, you must uncover facts and insights that are based on real experience.

Some questions to help take your project forward

- How can older people become involved, supported and reconnected to their neighbourhoods and communities?
- Does the key to addressing the problem of loneliness and isolation lie with older people themselves? Will creating the opportunity for them to co-design their own outcomes lead to more appropriate services?
- Older people are a mine of information and experience. How can these be harnessed, valued and used?
- How can greater social cohesion between generations be fostered?
- What are the opportunities for new services, systems, networks and other solutions to counter isolation and support the health and wellbeing issues faced by the growing number of older people in society?
- What evidence exists which might point towards viable solutions?

Your 'user' group

Nothing will give you greater insight into the issues than speaking to older people themselves. This tangible human dimension needs to be added to your research and it will help you generate your own insights and understanding of those for whom you are designing. There are likely to be a number of networks within your community of which you are unaware and some of these are likely to include older people (religious or church groups, day centres for example). These will provide you with your starting point for contact. In addition, there are a number of organisations such as Age Concern, the WRVS, Help the Aged, Mental Health Foundation and others (local areas often have their own offices) who may be able to advise you and facilitate contact with older people and others in the field.

Listen and understand

Find out as much as you can about what concerns older people, what is important to them and what would improve their quality of life. Listen carefully and resist suggesting solutions immediately; assess their priorities and expectations first. You will benefit from involving them in co-designing your proposal as much as possible.

This may be by encouraging them to keep written diaries or to take simple photographic recordings of what enhances or impedes the quality of their daily lives, by accompanying them and recording their daily activities by video, photography, storyboards, or by listening to their perspective over a cup of tea.

Design and record your own interactions with those you consult. This might be face-to-face interviews, questionnaires, workshop activities or any other creative ways you think appropriate.

You need to:

- Understand the different needs of different people
- Keep a good record of your conversations and meetings

This form of evidence is central to the project as it will allow you to develop a dialogue with people, help identify issues, and record your process for your entry.

Other experts in the concept development

Who else do you need to consult or work with in partnership? Who are the key stakeholders? It will be essential to include other specialist disciplines as well as older people themselves. Who will help you identify the individuals and groups and whether they want to work with you, and who will have specialist knowledge about needs and issues? Might these be members of the local council? They could help identify what services currently exist, where the gaps are and who falls through them. Also, think about professionals in the field of social care and those who work directly with older people.

Within your university there are likely to be other courses that could feed into your research in a very helpful way. At the outset, why not seek out a psychology student, a social science student, a social care or social policy student and work with them to develop your project? This reflects how you might be expected to work in the real world, so why not start now? Factor in time to build trust and a team where possible.

Pushing the parameters

Although this might at first appear remote and uninspiring territory for a designer, use the constraints to stimulate your creativity. Do not limit yourself to how things happen currently but let your insights, research and conversations lead you into new ways of thinking about the issues and how they might be addressed.

Research/background reading

Some very useful and relevant research has been published which will provide an essential and valuable springboard for your ideas. Look at the Resources page on the project webpage for ideas. Also, familiarise yourself with services and networks that already exist so you do not duplicate these, although you may suggest building on existing models if you are adding a new and innovative angle to them.

Case studies

In recent years, there have been a number of interesting initiatives where design thinking and design-led strategies have addressed pressing and complex societal issues. For instance, in 2000, the DTI advocated four cornerstones for designing for an ageing population: design for social interaction, for flexibility, for independence, and for stimulation³. The Design Council's Red projects (2004-06)⁴, and DOTT07⁵ are more recent initiatives that explored and prototyped new ideas and services and you should look at the case studies on their websites. A number of pioneering design consultancies⁶ also address these issues through 'service' or 'transformation' design, and the balance of work in well-established consultancies is shifting from a predominance of product to service-orientated design.

3: www.education.edean.org/pdf/Intro009.pdf

4: www.designcouncil.info/mt/RED/ageing/

5: <http://www.dott07.com/go/alzheimer100>

6: e.g. thinkpublic, live/work, Participle, and Engine

Submission details

Action for Age is a Design Directions Plus project

Design Directions Plus is an exciting new concept that offers you the opportunity to benefit from valuable input on your project from key experts and stakeholders. It will expose you and your project concept to advice, feedback and input from people who are active in the field.

How it works

1 Hand in

You will have an extension on the usual hand-in date for Design Directions projects:

Friday 9 January 2009

At this stage you will need to submit:

- an A4 typewritten executive summary which includes:
 - a a clear statement of the problem/issue and how you identified it
 - b details of your concept
 - c how you conducted the research, the users you have consulted, and how it helped you understand the issues
- a sketch development book
- A3 format concept board(s) (max. 5) visually mapping out the proposed service, system or network or what it is you envisaged and how it improves on what is currently available
- A3 format user-centred storyboard/scenario board(s) showing older person interaction with the key 'touch points' of your service, system, network or design, what makes it accessible and user-centred and appropriate, annotated with other details, such as technology, and local services

2 Shortlist

Once the preliminary judging is completed, shortlisted students, whose projects are deemed to have potential for development, will be invited to take part in a one-day expert-led workshop. Here you will have the unique opportunity to work with key stakeholders in the project area in order to develop the project into robust, meaningful and user-centred outcomes. All reasonable costs will be covered.

Likely to be during the week of 30 March 2009 (this may change)

3 Final stage

There will be a presentation of the developed project to a specially selected, high-level panel. Candidates will be given details of what is required nearer the time, and there may be limited funds available to support final presentation development (e.g. film etc)

May/June 09

Glossary

Co-design

The process through which users, stakeholders and designers work collaboratively to improve their services, products or communications

Community or Network

A group of people connected socially by something they share or have in common. For example: they live in the same street, housing estate, village, or they share a common interest or occupation such as belonging to the same library, place of worship, club, allotment group etc

Social Capital

The value of all social networks (who people know) and the way that people want to support and help one another for the common good as a result of being part of a community or network

Social Value

The broader benefit gained by society through an individual or group action

Stakeholders

Everyone who is affected by or has an interest in a project or process

Collective efficacy

Social cohesion among citizens/neighbours combined with their belief that together they can achieve social outcomes for the common good

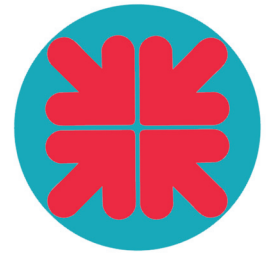
Empowerment

Having the capacity and the opportunity to play a full role in society in general (not just in economic terms but also in social, psychological and political terms)

The visit

designing the prison visit experience

Design Directions Plus is an exciting new concept that offers students the opportunity to benefit from valuable input on their project from key experts and stakeholders. It will expose them and their project concept to advice, feedback and input from people who are active in the field.



DesignDirections+

The Visit project looks at the role of design in addressing some of the complex issues associated with the experience of visiting in prisons. More broadly, it asks how design-led strategies might support the maintenance of meaningful family relationships with partners and children.

Introduction

Arriving. Signing in. Walking. Sitting. Standing. Waiting. Handing in possessions. Getting searched. Walking. Keys jangling. Doors unlocking. Walking. Doors locking. Getting searched. No windows. Disorientating. Queuing. Waiting.

These are not the experiences of a prisoner; they are the experiences of visiting someone in one of the UK's largest prisons.

Many prison visits by family and friends of prisoners take place each year in the UK and it is generally accepted that the more prisoners stay connected with the world outside through partners, children or parents during their time in prison, the less likely they are to re-offend. There are different pathways that address the risk of re-offending of which this is a vital one but others, such as education and training, support in prison in overcoming drug and alcohol misuse, are also important. Different prisoners – and their families – will have different needs (clearly where domestic violence has been a major issue in a family, then contact through visits may not be wanted or appropriate). This project cannot address all the issues, and so while participants should be aware of them it will concentrate on those specifically around visiting and family ties.

In approaching this brief, you need to use your research to develop an understanding of the system in place and then you will form a view on how visitors should experience prisons. Reflect next on the ways that designers usually create experiences through products and services and then look at the experience of a family visitor and the experience of being visited. Can design play an effective role in addressing the complex issues around this? How can the design or redesign of the experience of visiting prison – and receiving a visit – be part of a broader strategy that helps to maintain and sustain meaningful family relationships with partners and children?

Background

The UK prison population is currently over 83,000. A proportion of these people are on remand, which means they are not yet convicted but awaiting trial or sentencing. Going to prison does not just change the life of the prisoner but impacts on the lives of their family too.

In the beginning...

“When he got arrested it caused loads of fights in the family. People were really upset with him again. Mum didn't know at first until someone told her: I felt upset at first, and I missed him all the time. But I was ashamed and didn't want to tell people. We never got any information from anyone, where he was or telling us what was happening.”¹

15 year old male, father in prison

Visiting times are strict, security is extremely tight and of paramount importance and there is a rigid process to which visitors and prisoners must conform. For every visitor there is a 'first time', then for many it becomes part of their routine. For some prisoners, the benefit wanes as their visits become less and less frequent. It is thought that one in three prisoners in the system never receive a visit while inside.

When it works well, the service provided to those who are visiting prisoners is respectful, well organised and a positive experience. When it does not work, it creates anxiety and stress, can put further strain on family relationships and even lead to violence. It will also have an impact on the quality and value of the visit itself. A bad visit can be worse than no visit at all leaving both the visitor and the prisoner feeling frustrated, angry and stressed. The negative impacts of this experience are then taken home, or back to the cell, leading to problems for the family, the prisoner or the prison staff.

There are a number of charities and voluntary groups who support families of visitors and who are contracted to run prison visiting in many UK prisons². They have a hugely important role to play as intermediaries between families and the institution of the prison. Where they can, they help

1: This and all subsequent boxed quotes are taken from Action for Prisoners' Families publications and used with their kind agreement

2: See the Resources page on the Project web page for details

to address some of the practical and emotional challenges of living with a relative in prison. This can mean providing reassurance as well as signposting families to support for problems they may now face such as debt management, housing and benefit problems and a range of other services. These organisations also produce a range of materials, publications and resources to support families, children and prisoners themselves³.

Keeping in touch...

"We miss him; we want him to know what we think of him. We have to let him know in case he does anything stupid – you know, suicide or that. Have to make sure he doesn't do anything like that. If he knows we love him and miss him he won't do anything like that.

Siblings, aged 13 and 14, father in prison

Prisons: The Basics

- HM Prison Service and the Scottish Prison Service run most of the UK's prisons. Eleven of the 139 prisons in the UK are contracted out and run by private companies
- Not all prisons have a Visitors' Centre and some visitors therefore have to queue at the prison gates
- Prisons run and host a wide range of services for prisoners and their families. These could include: support during a prisoner's first night and days in jail, support in getting off drugs or alcohol, support for those with mental health problems, education and training including opportunities to take part in creative activities such as art and music
- Often prisoners are more anxious about the impact their imprisonment is having on their family than they are about their own experience in prison. Prisons provide a point of contact for prisoners and their families with many external agencies and organisations
- Prisoners and prisons are defined by a framework of four categories. Category A prisoners are considered to be at high risk to the public or to national security. Category D prisoners are those trusted not to escape and who are given the privilege of an open prison environment from which they are able to spend some time at home and carrying out work in the community
- The majority of prisoners in the UK are men. There are prisons for women and a number of institutions for young offenders (whilst you should be aware of the different types of provision, for the purposes of this project you should concentrate on prisoners who are eighteen and over)
- The experience of prison for men and women is very different; and prisons and the prison services are designed to reflect this
- Maintaining relationships between mothers and their children in prison, especially young children, is extremely important

- As a proportion of the whole prison population, mental health problems are more likely to be a factor contributing to the offences committed by women
- 7% of children will experience a family member in prison during their time at school
- The role of parents and grandparents, particularly in the lives of younger offenders, is extremely important. Prisons and young offenders institutions provide family counselling and education to improve the chances of young offenders once they return to life outside

Visiting...

"It makes you feel horrible, like you have done something too. They watch you and make you feel guilty just for being there. They search you and make you take your shoes off and you feel stupid and it is horrible. You don't get used to it. You sit there waiting for them to call you. And you feel ashamed"

14 year old female, brother in prison

Brief

Design a service or other solution around the experience of the prison visit and the challenges of maintaining meaningful family relationships with partners and children. Examine the value of a prison visit remembering that a bad visit can be worse than no visit at all, leaving both the visitor and the visited feeling frustrated, angry and stressed with the negative impacts transferred to the home or within the prison. Consider the visitor 'journey' through the current prison visit system. Consider how design can support the idea that better contact between prisoners and their families reduces damaging behaviour by prisoners and rates of re-offending on release. Your solution should address the needs of the family and the prisoner and have some tangible benefit for both.

Remember that for this brief the format of the designed solution is open. You can design a service, a product, an environment, an interface with technology (not internet dependent), a suite of communications, an event, a role or an assembly of all of these. The point is to design a coherent solution with people and their needs in mind; and to communicate the story of your project.

Bear in mind that prisoners do not have free and open access to the internet.

Here are some issues as examples that you might choose to tackle in order to focus your work. These provide examples only and you may identify a completely different issue through your own research; this is fine too.

³: Publication list from Action for Prisoners' families: <http://prisoners-families.org.uk/php/bin/readarticle.php?articlecode=code:/php/web/publications.php&papercode=1>

1. Information and the visitor journey

For many, the experience of visiting someone in prison can absorb a great deal of emotional energy. It may involve long distances to travel, probably by public transport. Sometimes prisoners are moved between prisons with little or no notice. Visit times may not be particularly convenient and then there are searches and the sense of being watched. The booking and visiting procedures are detailed; they differ from prison to prison. Then it is difficult to talk openly with the prisoner. So, visiting a prison can be an unpleasant and sometimes upsetting experience. However, Visitors' Centres can play a big role and offer somewhere to relax after the journey and before the visit, and they try to reduce the stress of visiting in order to encourage family members to persevere with what can be a difficult commitment.

When things go wrong it can often be a problem with the design of information and communication. So, what might the design-led opportunities be that could address some of the recurring difficulties along the visitor journey? Think about what information needs to be communicated at the different stages, from the moment of arrival (or before) until the point of entering the visit hall to see the prisoner.

As is the case in the general population, not all prisoners or their families speak English and some will have problems with literacy and numeracy. A number of organisations nationally including the prison services provide information about prison visits. Details of some of these organisations are in the Resources section found on the project webpage on the RSA Design Directions website

2. Teenagers

"It would be good to have someone to talk to, knowing that there was someone there that you could always talk to. I think my mum should talk to someone and I think she would go to a group, yes a support group or something"

13 year old male, step-father in prison

Even in normal family circumstances, most teenagers go through a phase of being irritated and uncommunicative with their parents, not wanting to talk or share things with them, particularly about their feelings. For a teenager with a family member in prison this situation can be magnified and can result in a difficult time. Added to this, visiting may cause them to experience a range of emotions ranging from embarrassment, boredom and anger to sadness, nervousness and guilt. The relationship is strange enough and the pressure is on to make a visit a rewarding experience. It can therefore be the case that as children enter their teens they may choose to stop visiting their parent altogether.

One approach is to design services and experiences that try to replicate, within the prison environment, something 'normal' that happens at home. This is not easy. Some prisons have instituted

homework clubs⁴ whereby a prisoner can spend time with their child on their school homework. Introducing positive family relationships like this can help contribute towards the eventual resettlement of the prisoner back into the family and the community.

What could expand on this idea in an even more positive and beneficial way? Prisoners often have poor basic literacy and numeracy skills that may be an obstacle to employment and successful resettlement after release. What could be done to facilitate and encourage prisoner and child learning that is mutually useful and fun? How could this help to normalise the relationship?

What could the prison service, and the support charities involved, do to support teenagers and their parents that acknowledges the emotions at play as well as the challenges that the structure of prison visiting creates? How should new services look and feel to engage this group?

3. The visit and phone call

Bill found he started getting on better with his children when he stopped asking for their mum as soon as they answered the phone. Instead, he asked them about school, their friends and what they were up to.

Jamal's family are often out when he gets a chance to ring. He leaves a long message for each of them on the answerphone. His wife saves all the messages on a different tape so the children can listen to it.

Managing these two vital lifelines well can be an important part of maintaining relationships whilst in prison. However, they can so easily go wrong and put pressure on both the prisoner and the family.

Whilst there is no formal restriction on the length of calls, prisoners can only make calls during certain periods of the day and there is often pressure for them to finish calls quickly from other prisoners in the queues, so for those who find it difficult to have things to say on the phone, it can be particularly difficult. Bear in mind too that calls are monitored and whilst they may not be listened to in real time, they can be recorded and reviewed. You may also be aware that the high cost of calls from prisons has been the subject of a recent Consumer Council complaint to Ofcom, so this too can place an informal restriction⁵.

Similarly, and particularly at the beginning, visits can be difficult too, for reasons already mentioned.

4: BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7078898.stm>

Prison Service News <http://www.hmprisonerservice.gov.uk/prisoninformation/prisonerservice/magazine/index.asp?id=1821,18,3,18,0,0>

5: BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7470051.stm>

NCC http://www.ncc.org.uk/nccpdf/poldocs/NCC207_prisoner_phoncalls_supercomplaint.pdf

Where can design-led ideas help prepare for these contact times and manage the expectation around them? How can they be improved and better managed to help them be as positive and rewarding as possible?

4. Preparation for release

“Coming home won't be too good. Prison does a lot to your brain, because it's hard. It's hard for the family to re-adjust. Mum needs support because the family has grown different. Mum still thinks I'm 13”

16 year old female, mother in prison

As a prisoner's sentence comes to an end, the conversations in prison visits turn to plans for the prisoner's return back to life outside. For many there is anxiety about how they will slot back into family life. After a time out-of-the-picture a prisoner's family may have reshaped itself to manage without them and arriving back at home can disrupt the new arrangement.

For children and young people, it could be the beginning of another period of uncertainty and change. Whilst some will see it as the start of lives getting better, others will be anxious that disruption and worry will follow. It will also often be the case that young people will have grown up and changed by the time of the return, perhaps having particular responsibilities in the home that the new situation may disrupt.

What could happen in those months and weeks leading to release to ease the transition from life on the inside to life on the outside for prisoners and their families? What could those who run the visits at the prison do or provide? Think carefully about what a prisoner might be concerned about – and the concerns of the partner, a child or a parent anticipating a prisoner's return to the family.

Design challenges

This isn't the easiest of design contexts to research and there are a number of design challenges to consider.

Design at the edges

Many aspects of this project position it at the very edge of what designers might typically encounter. Unlike more accessible products and services in areas like health, education, personal finance or travel, the prison service is not easy to experience first hand. This presents two challenges. A practical one of access and secondly, of managing your time. We all have experience, for example, of airports that we can call upon, and could define problems and generate solutions quickly.

You will need to manage your time carefully allowing enough time to understand the context but remembering that the objective is to design something not simply to report back on the context.

Stepping into someone else's shoes

It is hard to get an insight into the experiences of those in prison and of those who visit them. You may have first hand experience or know someone who has. If not, there are groups who support prisoners and their families who you may be able to speak with you.

At the time of writing, the RSA is looking into arranging organised visits for students undertaking the project in order to provide first hand experience of a Visitor Centre and, where possible, a visit hall (where the visits actually take place). You should check the Design Directions website for details.

You should also inform yourself of the territory through media and newspaper articles, biographies and fiction – the stories told by people who have experienced the prison system for themselves. There are also a number of very useful websites that give help and insight in this area, particularly those of the groups who support prisoners and their families and these can be found on the Resources page, linking from the project web page on the Design Directions website.

Design is a process of improvement

Designers normally expect to create the very best product, service and experience possible for all those using it. In the commercial sector, service brands work hard to create desire and to make the experiences they design pleasurable.

What happens to prisoners is also the concern of public opinion. Some accuse the prison service of being 'soft on prisoners'. Think carefully about what it means to improve the experience in this context. Who are you improving the experience for and to what end?

Constraints are creative

The Prison Service is heavily regulated and procedure is critical to security. As a design context this can feel uncreative at first so it is important to remember that designers like constraints. Recognise the constraints and use them as a stimulus. At the same time don't constrain yourself by the way things are currently done. Think about the people involved, their journeys, the process, interactions and environments. Are there other ways of helping prisoners and families stay connected? What can you reference from elsewhere that might inspire an idea?

Research and process

Begin by making sure you have a clear and detailed understanding of the issues and problems. Only in this way will you be able to make meaningful and informed decisions about what you finally propose. Due to the unique subject of this brief and the challenges around research, the resources on the project webpage on the Design Directions website will be particularly useful.

Ten things to consider when you plan your work

- If you wish (perhaps through a visit as mentioned earlier) focus on a particular prison; its individual design and challenges. Look to generate a solution that is the very best in that context. It may be easier to arrange a visit to a lower category prison. Bear in mind that not all prisons have a Visitors' Centre
- You may wish to create a common solution, not site specific, but applicable to any prison or one that uses the network of prisons somehow as part of the design. (It may be that your solution is a service, product, interface or other communication that is applicable in most contexts). Remember that prisoners are often moved between prisons one or many times during their sentence
- People are often more important than place. How might what you design affect the relationships at play? Do you have a view on this?
- Think about all those involved no matter what part they play. You might consider new or different roles for people
- Be the governor. Use your point of view on prisons to set the tone for your work. It should be led by sensitivity to the many people and issues involved
- It could be particularly useful to think about similar kinds of experiences in very different contexts
- Consider how you might prototype the service. Remember that role-play is a form of prototyping as well as mocking up environments or web pages. The important thing is to learn through doing
- Collaborate with someone who isn't a designer; for instance, a psychology, social science or social policy student from your (or another) university who would make an interesting collaborator and add huge value to your project outcome
- Think about how you might test your ideas if access to end users is limited
- Think about how you might capture and tell stories as part of your process

Project aims

- to see how service design can impact on such an emotive, sensitive and politically-charged subject
- to provide an opportunity for young designers to think about design and their role as a designer in a new way
- to demonstrate how we might work on a problem that demands that we adjust existing processes or develop new ones
- to push the hard edge of service design into areas where it is difficult to gain first-hand experience

Submission details

The Visit is a Design Directions Plus project

Design Directions Plus is an exciting new concept that offers you the opportunity to benefit from valuable input on your project from key experts and stakeholders. It will expose you and your project concept to advice, feedback and input from people who are active in the field.

How it works

1 Hand in

You will have an extension on the usual hand-in date for Design Directions projects:

Friday 9 January 2009

At this stage you will need to submit:

- An A4 typewritten executive summary which includes:
 - a a clear statement of the problem or issue and how you identified it
 - b details of your concept
 - c how you conducted the research, the users you have consulted, and how it helped you understand the issues
- A sketch development book
- A3 format concept board(s) (max. 5) visually mapping out the proposed service, system or network or what it is you envisaged and how it improves on what is currently available
- A3 format user-centred storyboard/scenario board(s) showing interaction with the key 'touch points' of your service/system/design and what makes it appropriate

2 Short list

Once the preliminary judging is completed, short listed students, whose projects are seen to have potential for development, will be invited to take part in a one-day expert-led workshop. Here you will have the unique opportunity to work with key stakeholders in the project area in order to develop the project into robust, meaningful and user-centred outcomes. All costs will be covered.

Likely to be during the week of 30 March 2009 (this may change)

3 Final presentation

The final stage will be a presentation of the developed project to a specially selected, high-level panel. Candidates will be given details of what is required nearer the time, and there may be limited funds available to support final presentation development.

May/June 09

After the Post Office

re-imagining new services, new contexts

Background

There used to be 14,000 post offices in Britain but with over 500 already closed the government recently announced that Post Office Ltd would close a further 2,500. The introduction of new technologies, far greater choice in how services are accessed and changing lifestyles means people are visiting post offices less making the present level of service unsustainable. However, it remains the case that in many communities the local post office still plays an important social and economic role.

In rural areas in particular, where other services and shops have long since disappeared, the local post office is often the only remaining service available. The disappearance of the local post office could make life more difficult for poor and elderly people in particular and reduce the opportunities for social contact and communities to interact.

To compensate for some of the closures, the government has proposed the introduction of 500 outreach services where a subpostmaster as well as running their own post office, provides a part time service to nearby communities. It also says it wishes to encourage more community-run post offices to allow local people to create a service that suits the needs of their community, sharing their time, skills, experience and knowledge to make the service viable.

Brief

When something is removed it is often the case that something else has to be created in its place. If you were to view these changes as a catalyst to re-think the access and delivery of post office services in rural areas, what might it look like?

Remember that rural areas are affected not just by the loss of post office services; health, transport and other services also form part of the picture so you may wish to take a more holistic approach in formulating your response.

Design a service to replace the post office or one aspect of it. Focus in particular on the current role of post offices in rural communities. Remember that post offices are no longer just about posting letters – in fact, this has become one of their least significant roles in recent years. Examine

their value to local communities – are they a vital aspect of rural life or an out-dated and expensive irrelevance? How could they be improved, or is there an argument to replace them with something different?

Research and process

Begin by making sure you have a clear and detailed understanding of the issues and problems. Only in this way will you be able to make meaningful and informed decisions about what you finally propose. The resources page on the project webpage on the Design Directions website provides some links. You will discover others for yourself. This is a politically sensitive issue so make sure you read across the subject to take a balanced and informed view. This project is essentially about people and their interaction with a service and how a response to a need can be co-designed with users and other stakeholders.

Remember that good service design creates the conditions for people to connect successfully with each other and organisations, and so can promote real and positive change in everyday life. As part of the next generation of designers, understanding your unique role in bringing a design perspective to projects like this, through working with people is very important.

With this in mind, your research must involve contact with current service providers and users as a central part of your project; listening and understanding the issues from their point of view is essential in identifying the challenges you are addressing.

You may also wish to consider working on this project as part of a small cross-disciplinary team, perhaps bringing in other disciplines from social sciences (anthropology, human geography, management, ethnography etc), as well as other design disciplines.

RSA

As part of your research, you may capture and map what you do in any way you choose. This may include the use of storyboards, photographs, stories, film or any other medium you think is useful. This is central to the project and important for several reasons:

- it will be the method by which you communicate the progress of the project to the people you consult and work with
- it will form part of the work you submit as your Design Directions entry
- it is a record of your process and it should act as a guide, tool kit or set of instructions that could be used by others

Following on from your research you are expected to design elements of the service concept that you will be able to test and verify with your user group. These could include the physical environment, information communications, customer service elements and business elements such as brand and marketing, as well as interactive elements, such as website or other digital interface. These should be directly informed by your research and will form the core part of your submission.

Remember that whatever the context, as a designer you should always aim to create a product or service that is fit for purpose, looks good and is easy to use.

Aims of the project

- to signal new solutions to the loss of post office services in rural communities
- to provide new thinking and approaches to an issue that will have impact on the lives of many people and
- to provide an opportunity for young designers to think about design and their role as a designer in a new way
- to demonstrate that innovation can come from the edge (users, stakeholders, design) and not from the core (institutions, government etc) and to demonstrate how the application of the design tools and skills of visualisation, user research, rapid ethnography, usability and so on can lead to new responses to issues and challenges.

Some hints and pointers

- how will you get a real understanding of the issues?
- could you locate your project within a real community; rural or urban. It's hard to design without a context
- don't be afraid to form your own opinion through your design work about the policy to close some post offices, but remember to take the time to understand the issues from a number of perspectives
- what could you learn by adopting a very different perspective from your own?
- how might the money flow around the system and services that you design? What could you design-in to ensure that the system or service you design is sustainable financially?

- how will you express the opinions of those you spoke to through the design decisions that you make; clearly connecting insights to ideas
- remember, nothing beats a great idea

Submission details

You can submit your response in the way you think is most appropriate. However, bear in mind it needs to read with ease and speed.

Your process and its results are key to your submission, so do not bury them in an overly designed 'product' but use a clear and simple format to show what you did. One of your key skills as a designer is to present complex information in a simple way so take the opportunity to demonstrate this.

Find a way of recording and presenting the benefits of your user engagement work and the final outputs in creative ways like storyboards, photographs, diagrams etc.

The service concept can be presented in any medium and must include at least three of the following service elements:

- a visualisation of the user experience journey through the service you have designed
- concepts for a website that supports the service
- concept drawings of the environment or elements within it, emphasising look and feel
- samples of non-digital communications
- a definition of the new roles of the people working in the new service environment
- a diagram showing how different people and organisations might operate together to deliver the service and if possible, how money might flow around the system to make it sustainable

When presenting flat work you should use A3 lightweight boards (max 5). You should also include a typewritten report. For film submitted on DVD, make sure that any programmes required for viewing are preloaded (and will still be valid when we view it) and please clearly list loading and relevant viewing instructions. All submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage and that it can be displayed for judging.

Public spaces, safer places

designing in counter terrorism

A project for students of architecture and design

Developed in collaboration between the Home Office and NaCTSO (National Counter Terrorism Security Office), the RSA and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), this project aims to draw attention to the issues of security and counter-terrorism in the process of designing places visited and used by the public.

Background

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon; in fact, its roots can be traced back to ancient times. The defining characteristic of terrorism is the targeting of civilians as a means of achieving some political, ideological or religious cause. Some other characteristics of contemporary terrorism are:

- multiple co-ordinated attacks
- no warning attacks
- mass casualties
- targeting crowded places
- the use of person-borne and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (henceforth known as PBIEDs and VBIEDs. These are sometimes used in suicide attacks)

In 2007 there were approximately 14,500 terrorist attacks worldwide¹, resulting in around 67,000 casualties of which 22,000 were fatalities. The use of explosive bombs is still the favoured technique for attack, aimed at killing large numbers of people or destroying and collapsing buildings and killing the occupants.

Project Scenario

For the purposes of this brief, the following fictitious scenario has been constructed, based on a likely attack scenario.

In the summer of 2007 there was a devastating terrorist attack in the heart of a major city in Europe.

Two suicide PBIEDs and two suicide VBIEDs were deployed in Vincent Square, a piazza full of people enjoying lunch on a warm, sunny day. One VBIED was able to enter the front atrium of an office block facing onto the piazza. The resulting blast caused the building to collapse. The two PBIEDs were detonated within the crowd of people on the piazza and the second VBIED managed to get close to a building but was unable to penetrate it. Although there was extensive damage to the building it did not collapse.

The four devices resulted in over 500 fatalities and 1500 people injured. Most of the casualties were caused by the building collapsing and secondary fragmentation from glass and office furnishings (desks, office partitions and office equipment) flying through the air.

Design Challenge

Imagine that the national government and city authority now wish to re-develop the site of the attack. As the first stage in this process, they have organised a competition for architects and designers to respond with proposals for a new public space. The city is looking for a bold statement that demonstrates its resilience and optimism and the mayor of the city has stated "we want to see a phoenix rise from the ashes". As part of this, you may wish to re-name the new space to reinforce the sense of renewal it represents.

They do not have pre-determined views about what is constructed on the plot and local need might drive what is to be constructed there.

The application of well-considered design proposals that are appropriate to the space and the building(s)/interiors that will surround it are of paramount concern. Central to this, however, is the integration of security features and protection for the space, the buildings and those that use them, that will not compromise the integrity of the environment's design aesthetic.

The city's competition organisers have stressed that they want a beautiful public space and safe environments which can be enjoyed by the people using and visiting it, whilst ensuring that the devastating outcomes of the attack that occurred in 2007 could not happen again.

Brief

The city authorities want the new scheme to be an innovative and award winning public space. They want a scheme where consideration to both the external space and buildings, as well as the internal space and major items such as furniture and other internal features have been given careful consideration as part of the overall aim to prevent and reduce injuries to occupants as a result of a bomb blast.

¹ These figures are from the National Counterterrorism Center in the US, see www.nctc.gov

In considering what can be constructed and how the space can be used, you should select at least three of the following specific uses to be incorporated into your scheme:

- pub/club
- leisure/entertainment
- retail units
- cinema/ theatre
- hotel/restaurant
- offices/commercial centre
- residential

In order to best direct the skills and knowledge of each in the most appropriate way, the brief is divided into two sections: one for architects, addressing buildings and exterior space, the other for designers looking at interior spaces and the items within them. However, for those wishing to do so, the freedom exists to span both sections.

Furthermore, cross disciplinary teams are welcomed and encouraged (eg architect/designer; interior designer/textile designer etc).

Architecture students

The space will be approximately one hectare in size (10,000 square metres or the equivalent of a square, each side having a length of 100 m. As an example, Trafalgar Square in London occupies approximately one hectare). It can be a mixed-use development and it can be pedestrianised. The development should aim to showcase building design and can reach 20 storeys in height.

Within the design of the space, consider elements such as al fresco eating/drinking, as well as landscaping, public art features and retail.

Access roads should be considered in the design, allowing service vehicles to access the space to service the buildings and clean the area.

You should concentrate on the layout of the space and focus on building design and use of materials. Think about ways in which:

- the design of buildings can help to resist the over pressures caused by the blast wave from a vehicle bomb
- the building design can help prevent disproportionate collapse
- the parts of the building could provide refuge should a device be outside the building
- the glazing and cladding materials could be used to reduce secondary fragmentation
- the movement of people around the place is facilitated whilst keeping vehicles away from concentrations of people
- the imaginative use of landscaping and structures on the space could help prevent a VBIED attack on the buildings
- can anything be done to prevent or mitigate the effects of a PBIED?

Design students

You should think about ways in which:

- the design of interior space and the use of partitions could provide privacy in an open plan areas as well as protection against secondary fragmentation. How could this be achieved?
- spaces inside buildings could be designed to provide a safe haven, allowing people to stay safely in the building, protected from the threat outside the building
- design could help people navigate to these safe locations or how the use of suitable 'protective' furniture (which would need to be intuitive in its use) could be used in the event of an emergency
- interior furniture could be designed not to fragment when subjected to the effects of blast and how non-traditional materials could be used for furnishings to achieve this
- the design of items of furniture could prevent them fragmenting and flying through the air in response to the effects of blast, whilst still being able to be moved in the normal course of business
- the imaginative use of textiles and other materials, how street furniture, and lighting could be used to best advantage in these situations

Submission Details (for architecture and design students)

- A3 boards (max 5) showing design details and any plans
- a short typewritten text (max 500 words, sans serif 14pt) expressing the rationale for the chosen design options
- a further typewritten list of bullet points (sans serif 14pt) detailing the principal benefits of the proposed solutions
- models or mock-ups should not be submitted at the preliminary stage but presented in photographs or printouts mounted on A3 board. Shortlisted applicants will be encouraged to bring models to the interview
- one sketchbook only related to the brief
- all submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage, and that it can be displayed for judging

A changing world

personal care and surface covering products and services for a sustainable future

“Design is a creative activity whose aim is to establish the multi-faceted qualities of objects, processes, services and their systems in whole life cycles. Therefore, design is the central factor of innovative humanisation of technologies and the crucial factor of cultural and economic exchange.” (ICSID 2008)

“I believe in a better way” (Ben Harper 2007)

Introduction

It is seventeen years from now... 2025.

Can you imagine what the world will look like? What society will be like? What products and services we will all be using in our everyday lives? Cast your minds back to seventeen years ago (or ask parents and family!) – how different was life back then – back when we considered mobile phones to be a luxury and not a necessity; when the internet was an exclusive, niche market; when cassette tapes and walkmans were the new thing? Think how much has changed since then and imagine what might change between now and 2025 – the mind boggles!

Being prepared for an uncertain future is perhaps more important now than ever. As the world undergoes rapid and far-reaching changes – as economies transform and grow, as the world population increases and as the effects of climate change and resource constraints are felt more strongly – products and services can play a positive role far beyond their own direct influence. Their whole lifecycle will be imperative and building on their intimate relationships with consumers, enabling them to live more sustainably, could have a fundamental impact on how successfully we meet future challenges.

Future scenarios

This project introduces two different, but equally plausible, futures for 2025:

- Hive world – a centralised, consumerist society where government and large corporations are expected to solve problems. Trust in major brands is high.
- Patchwork world – a decentralised ‘do it yourself’ society where government and large corporations have not met people’s expectations.

The different worlds are based on social, environmental and economic factors and they raise some of the critical questions that you will need to consider in order to design products and services that will contribute to a sustainable 2025. Scenarios are plausible and consistent stories that we can use to explore possible futures. They are not predictions but provide stimulation to challenge our current assumptions, inspire creativity and add robustness to our thinking.

The future worlds are outlined in the map on the next page:

HIVE WORLD

A centralised, consumerist society

OVERLAP

PATCHWORK

WORLD

A decentralised 'do it yourself' society

Energy availability, systems & mix
The UK's electricity is centralised and relatively affordable and plentiful, gas is expensive.

Transport

Mobility has not changed much. Most cars are electric hybrids, trains are electric and few people fly more than once a year.

Desire for perfection

Mainstream culture is consumerist. Personal care and medicine have blurred and many products are tailored to personal genetics.

Technology

Digital paper is common-place. Nanotechnology, personalised medicine and synthetic biology are the technologies of the 2020s.

The internet & the world wide web

Everything and everyone is online and trackable. Most of the internet is under the control of governments and corporations.

Economy, disposable income

Economic growth is the main priority of the government. Society is consumerist and average disposable incomes are fairly high.

Where do people live?

Over 90% of people live in an urban environment. Rural communities have mostly withered away or are now holiday destinations.

Ecosystems

Most wild or previously fallow areas have been given over to intensive farming. Biodiversity is rapidly dwindling in the UK.

Local vs global

The world is a tightly interconnected network that focuses on getting water and food to wherever it's needed.

Response to climate change

35% decrease in carbon emissions since 2008. Some coastal areas have been abandoned; adaptation efforts focused on cities.

Home life & socialising

More than one in three people live on their own, fewer people have gardens and children are tracked online by their parents.

Shopping

Personalised products are highly popular and trust in brands is high.

Energy availability, systems & mix
A large portion of the UK's electricity is generated by over a million small and medium-scale renewable systems.

Transport

Mobility and congestion have dropped, driving is expensive and few people own cars. Flying is the preserve of the very rich.

Desire for perfection

Popular culture has fragmented into thousands of niche interests and there is a thriving grey-market for 'enhancement' products.

Technology

Open-source approaches have driven break-throughs in surprising areas.

The internet & world wide web

There are multiple webs, most of which are not under the control of any government or corporation.

Economy, disposable income

Economic growth is sluggish and many people have focused on minimising their living costs so that they can opt out of 9-5 work.

Where do people live?

Rural areas have become more attractive and many are nearly self-reliant for energy and food.

Ecosystems

Ecosystems are under great stress from rural sprawl but pockets of biodiversity survive in surprising places

Local vs global

The world remains interconnected virtually via the web and many people are more focused now on their local communities.

Response to climate change

40% cut in emissions since 2008. Millions of people live in vulnerable coastal areas and a recent storm has left 20,000 homeless.

Home life & socialising

More people live near their extended families and networks of friends. Flexible, modular housing is popular.

Shopping

Sophisticated online lending systems and peer-to-peer trading are now the norm.

2025



forum for the future
action for a sustainable world

Project themes

You have two market 'themes' to work within for your concept design:

Personal Care

This covers everything we do and use to keep ourselves clean and well groomed. (The term personal care is also used to describe the industry that manufactures consumer products used for beautification and in personal hygiene – such as shampoo, shower gel, shaving foam, moisturiser etc)

Surface Covering

This covers everything we use to protect and decorate surfaces – from the construction industry to DIY at home – such as internal and external walls and fittings. Currently available products include paint, wallpaper, varnish, etc

The brief

Your challenge is to propose product solutions and/or services that would thrive sustainably in 2025. You must respond to the 'future scenarios' above and propose a product/service solution for both Personal Care and Surface Covering.

Something to consider:
The need, not just the product.

You may wish to develop concepts based on the products and services we use today (shampoo/hairstylists, paint/decorators for example) and how they may be used in the context of 2025.

You are strongly encouraged to consider the need rather than the product itself.

If shampoo is the product, some needs are:

- to have clean, presentable hair
- to care for and protect your hair
- to feel/smell clean and fresh
- to provide indulgence

If paint is the product, some needs are:

- to protect the surface
- to decorate the surface
- to provide ambience

So the question you need to ask yourself is, "what can I design to meet these needs in 2025?" Not, "how can I design a bottle of shampoo or a can of paint for 2025?"

Research

Your responses should be built on a strong human-centred research rather than assumptions – and across a range of users rather than just your near-peer group. Different people have different needs and requirements; your solution might respond to a user need yet to be identified. With this in mind, you are strongly advised to conduct some empathic research to ensure your designs are human-centred as well as fitting within the future contexts. You may also find it beneficial to research the technical aspects of the product themes outlined above. What might these tell you about the possibilities for future development?

Submission details

Your submission should consist of the following:

- written descriptions of the two concepts
- visual representations of the two concepts

One concept should be relevant to the theme of personal care, the other relevant to the theme of surface covering. Both concepts should fit into a plausible future world of 2025 considering the future scenarios given.

The written descriptions should be no longer than one side of typed A4 for each concept and should cover the 'big idea' around your concept and how it relates to the future context of 2025. It should also detail your research journey and people/experts/other disciplines with whom you consulted.

The visual representation should show a full cycle of how the concept works covering:

- the 'purchase' of the product/service
- the user using the product/service (including any support)
- the end-of-life of the product/service (where relevant)

and should be presented as a combination of the following:

- illustrations/drawings on A3 presentation boards (max 4)
- one sketch/scrapbook (including research and sketches)
- film/photography where relevant
- prototypes/models where relevant (photographs at the submission stage only. Shortlisted candidates may bring actual models to interview)
- all submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage, and that it can be displayed for judging

Design against bicycle theft

don't give thieves and easy ride

This project is a collaboration between the RSA, the Home Office and the Bikeoff 2 research project funded by AHRC/EPSRC 'Design for the 21st Century' initiative. The aim is to mobilise students to explore how design-led strategies for secure cycling can reduce the risk of cycle theft, increase cycle use and afford UK cities and citizens the benefits cycling has to offer.

Background

Riding a bike can add nine years to a life¹ – better still it can make our cities a safer, healthier, cleaner and quieter place to live it!

Bicycles are quick (for journeys under five miles), healthy (reducing risk of obesity and heart disease), affordable (equality of opportunity), non-polluting (zero emission) and low hazard (less harmful than motor vehicles), placing cycling in a unique position to contribute to better health, fewer absences from work, reduced congestion and pollution and to save lives². There is also evidence to suggest that increased cycling would lead to mental health benefits, physical development benefits, social benefits, potential reductions in the number of accidents and even tourism opportunities.³

In light of these facts, in 1996 the National Cycling Strategy set a target to quadruple cycle use by 2012. In 2004 this target was dropped as it was considered unattainable. Not only is it unlikely to be met, but according to the National Cycling Strategy Review, cycling activity has actually fallen over the past 10 years.⁴

Cycle theft is the single greatest deterrent to cycle use after fears over road safety; secure cycle parking is identified as the second greatest enabler after provision of safe cycle lanes.⁵

Research has shown that 17% of cyclists experience cycle theft, and of these 24% stop cycling and 66% cycle less often.⁶ If we are to achieve and sustain increased cycle use we must address the issue of cycle theft.

The Government accepts that to get more people cycling they must act to increase cycling infrastructure, including secure cycle parking, to reduce cycle theft. They are investing £140 million over the next 3 years to facilitate cycle use. The financial resources have been made available but if the benefits of cycling are to be realised design innovation must keep pace with capital investment.

The problem

What?

There are two kinds of bike related theft. Theft from bicycles; components and accessories (typically, stolen parts and accessories can fetch 25% of RRP) and Theft of bicycles; theft of the whole bike - frame, components and accessories (typically, a whole bicycle can fetch 10% of RRP)⁷.

Where?

In cities such as London and Brighton and Hove the majority of bicycle⁸ thefts take place when the bike is left unattended or 'parked' in a public place; however across the UK as a whole the majority of reported bicycle thefts are from private homes, sheds or garages. These figures may reflect the nature of cycle use and availability of 'off street' parking opportunities in these locations. City geography and traffic congestion promotes cycle use for commuting, working, shopping and mobility and population density makes off-street parking limited. Outside of cities, daily mobility often involves greater distances and cycling is often a leisure pursuit. Reduced population density and associated land availability means the presence of sheds and garages provide off-street cycle parking. Either way, bicycles left on the street, in a garden or shed are a target for theft. Bicycles left in a hall, corridor or lobby are a nuisance, without designed accommodation, and in shared households also a target for theft.

1 Journal of American Medical Association, 2003, 'Years of life lost due to obesity'

2 Valuing the benefits of cycling, A report to Cycling England, May 2007

3 Valuing the benefits of cycling, A report to Cycling England, May 2007

4 Department for Transport – Delivery of the National Cycling Strategy: A review, March 2005

5 Department of the Environment transport and the Regions. 07/97:Supply and demand for cycle parking.

6 Transport Research Laboratory, 1997

7 Malek, 2000

8 British Crime Survey 2004-05

Why?

Bicycles are 'Hot Products' and can be described by the CRAVED model of theft targets:⁹

Concealable: stealing a bike can look like unlocking a bike and a thief on a bike looks like anyone else on a bike

Removable: poorly locked means easily removable

Available: millions of bikes on street or in sheds up and down the UK

Valuable: components 25% RRP, bicycles 10% RRP

Enjoyable: everyone likes to cycle and 'sporty' bikes are twice as likely to be stolen

Disposable: lack of effective registration and high demand for bicycles makes bicycles easily disposable

When?

Timing of theft varies according to local context but generally theft occurs when there are a lot of bikes around unattended and particularly when those bikes are unobserved, either due to no formal surveillance and too few passers by, too many passers by (crowd cover), low lighting levels or obscured sight lines.

How?

Bikeoff research has identified six common theft perpetrator techniques. These are illustrated and described in detail in the online design resource that supports this project but can be summarised as:

- cutting through the lock or the object its locked to
- picking the lock
- levering the lock apart
- lifting the bike and lock over the object its locked to
- striking the lock to break it apart
- unbolting the components to remove all the parts of the bike not secured by the lock

The challenge

Statistically a bicycle is stolen every minute in the UK with less than 5% returned to their owners.¹⁰ Bike owners are more likely to have their bike stolen than motorcyclists are their motorbike, or car owners their car, indicating that cycle theft is easier or less risky than theft of other vehicles.¹¹ The challenge is to change this situation: how can cycle security be improved, without compromising the ease and enjoyment of cycling? The aim is to design functional, attractive and secure cycles, anti-theft cycle accessories (locks), secure cycle parking (furniture and facilities) and anti-theft cycle schemes (e.g. registration schemes) to promote cycling.

When designing new products designers take on board, consciously or unconsciously, factors and issues which influence their decision-making process. These may be classified according to 'models,' through which we can gain a greater understanding of the design process, and the agendas behind it. This project is concerned with an analysis of and response to a system of use.

When considering a system of use, it is often beneficial to consider alongside this, a system of misuse and abuse. Taking a 'sideways' look at products from the point-of-view of a non-typical or undesirable user such as an adaptive criminal, gives great insight into ways of tackling crime through design.

Designers rarely take on board issues of crime prevention in the design of new products. Vulnerability of a product to crime, or to the criminal use to which a product might be put, are most often problems noticed in hindsight with a view to some sort of post-design fix. This is far from ideal.

A key skill that designers have is to make sense of the way people live and behave, and draw insights from those observations. This allows them to visualise radical ideas and solutions. In the same way they need to be able to anticipate and visualise the benefits and problems with particular systems – in this context, bike security, personal security, anti-social behaviour, access, property theft, vandalism – and what the appropriate design interventions might be to improve them.

Recent years have seen a number of initiatives that address crime issues from an environmental and situational point of view, including Secured by Design (SBD), Designing out Crime Association (DOCA), Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and COPS guides www.cops.usdoj.gov/default.asp?Item=34

A more reflective, culturally aware and predominantly object-based approach may be seen in work created by the 'Design Against Crime' (DAC) Research Centre at Central Saint Martins. The research of the Bike Off Research Initiative was set up in January 2004 to establish how the design of cycling related objects and environments, as well as communicating best secure practice to cyclists and providers of cycle infrastructure, may reduce the risk of bike theft.

This Design Directions project requires you to draw on the findings of the above research, now summarised in the Bikeoff 2 design resource at www.bikeoff.org/design_resource, as well as your own innovative research around cycle use and security.

⁹ Hot Products: understanding, anticipating and reducing demand for stolen goods by RV Clarke, Police Research Series Paper 112 (1999).

¹⁰ In UK, 439,000 incidents of bike theft according to BCS 2004-5 (just under 1 bike stolen every minute); this compares with 102,680 incidents reported to police.

¹¹ International Crime Victim Survey, 2000

Understanding context

The context of cycle use and cycle parking affects the circumstances of theft and so a clear understanding of context of use (and theft) is essential to any design-led anti-theft strategy.

Understanding the context of any parking event, and any theft of a 'parked' bike, requires the designer to consider:

- a bike(s) and its components
- a lock(s)
- how the lock(s) is applied
- what the bike is locked to
- the immediate location of the above and
- the surrounding environment

It also requires consideration of how the people experiencing the parking event described above may behave and, as has already been stated, the designer's skill of drawing meaning and insight from these observations is an important part of what they offer. Whilst user-focused design practice is becoming more mainstream, there needs also to be an understanding of the context of use, requiring consideration of multiple 'users' and an understanding that not all 'users' react in the same ways to products and services, nor in the ways envisaged.

The term 'users' doesn't accurately describe the relationship between the design and those whose experiences and actions need to be considered so the term 'actors' is used to describe those individuals whose 'actions' impact on the context.

'Actors' may have a positive relationship with the parking event (cyclist, security guard) or a negative relationship with the parking event (bike thief, obstructed pedestrian). Consideration of these actors and the behaviour that the designer wants to both encourage and prevent from them is central to designing an appropriate strategy that will deter abuse or theft.

It is useful to consider each actor's behaviour in relation to your proposed design from the perspective of 'risk', 'effort' and 'reward'. A successful solution is likely to be one that reduces risk (of theft) and effort (of use) and increases reward (enjoyment, aesthetics, convenience) for positive actors (a cyclist or passer by) whilst increasing risk (of getting caught) and effort (of stealing) and reducing reward (of theft) for negative actors (a bike thief).

When there are conflicts between desired outcomes (for example "my solution is really secure but takes slightly longer to use") then it is up to you as the designer to mediate these conflicts and justify your reasoning for the way in which you do so.

Brief

You are asked to consider how design of cycling related products, infrastructure, schemes and services might contribute to reduced risk of cycle theft without compromising the ease and enjoyment of cycling and indeed make people want to cycle more!

You should address the needs of cyclists but also consider the roles, requirements and responses of other 'actors' relevant to your proposals. You could design a bike, a lock, a piece of cycle parking furniture, a parking environment, a combination of the above or some other innovative method of achieving the desired objective. Your solution may be 'stand alone' or somehow integrated into a larger system or strategy. Whilst you may submit developed proposals for one or more 'items' above, you should do so within the context of a broader system for use and explain this context within your submission.

The project webpage on the Design Directions website provides resources to help you highlight the important issues. You must refer to this in your research. You are asked to explore the topic from your own perspective and to address a specific context of your choice. So what do the people you observe currently do with their bikes? How, with a little creative insight, could you create something that would make their lives better, easier, more efficient, more enjoyable? Innovation often comes from the edge rather than the obvious routes and this is what your observations and action research should uncover.

Things to think about

- It is essential that you consider the following:
- who is the person (people) that I am designing for?
 - why do they use their bike? (Reduced travel costs, green issues, health or lifestyle issues)
 - how often do they use their bike? (Daily, weekly, weekend only)
 - what type of bike do they ride?
 - what are their needs and priorities?
 - what are the behaviours that you want to promote and prevent?
 - what is the environment in which they will experience/engage with your design?
 - what solutions already exist in your chosen design area or related design areas and what is good and bad about them?
 - how does your proposal relate to the aims and objectives of other cycling stakeholders?

Work out your design priorities by talking to those you are designing for and also, perhaps, those that you are designing to foil. For example different users may demonstrate different sensitivities and responses to risk and convenience – how would you accommodate such differences or is it unnecessary to do so?

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What is the intervention? How does it relate to existing patterns of use, and/or design provision – clearly communicate what it does, for whom, and why.

How does the intervention work? Is it easy and enjoyable to use? Does it reduce reward for the thief, increase effort or risk of detection and arrest? How does it thwart the offender whilst facilitating legitimate use? Might thieves develop countermoves (for example some kind of tool to defeat the improved security?) Can your design guard against this?

How is your design to be experienced? What will be its impact, both direct and indirect, on the actors you consider? What will it be made from? Who will make it? Consider cost implications – could your design be implemented?

Your proposal should clearly explain how you explored the issues and how this influenced your design proposal.

Outcomes/submission Details

The delivery must be a written outline together with a visualisation of your device/product, environment, service, system idea that addresses the issue. This must include the communication, through any medium you see relevant, of the following:

- 1 **A statement of creative strategy** – this is your big idea. It is essential and should be done whether you are proposing a device, product, a service or environment. It should be no more than 500 words
- 2 **Evidence of research** – including information about whom you consulted and how this led to your strategy and proposal – this can be in sketchbook/report form and be a mix of visuals and words
- 3 **Realisation** – this is how your proposal tackles the issue and can be presented in the form most appropriate to your chosen solution. For example the options might be:
 - A3 boards (max. 4) showing design development and final designs; if you submit a product solution, one board must show all elevations of it to provide an understanding of the assembly
 - a written outline together with a visualisation of your service idea submission on CD (PC or MAC) or DVD – please list clear details for loading and any other information that will enable the content to be easily viewed; please test your discs prior to submission and check that they are virus-free – any discs that cannot be opened will not be judged. Director and Flash applications should be saved as Projectors for the relevant platform (PC or MAC) and clearly labelled as such
 - any models or mock-ups should be submitted as photographs or printouts mounted on A3 board (this can be in addition to the four design boards)
 - do not submit 3D work at this stage
 - one sketchbook only (if relevant), related to the brief
 - students short listed for interview will be asked to prepare a five minute presentation outlining their proposal
 - all submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage, and that it can be displayed for judging

While you were sleeping ...

the process of anaesthesia re-designed

Design Directions 2008/09
An innovative programme of awards

While you were sleeping ...
Brief devised in collaboration with
Aircraft Medical
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rsadesigndirections.org
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Background

Going in to hospital for an operation is a supreme act of trust. We have to trust not only in the skills of hospital staff who take care of us and make decisions about our health but increasingly, the sophisticated technology they employ.

On no one's shoulders does this responsibility weigh more heavily than those of the anaesthetist, whose job it is to sedate the patient and take over all life functions during the surgery that could not be survived otherwise. In a highly emotive environment such as intensive care, they also provide advanced life support, continuous monitoring of the patient's physiological status and control the level of pain experienced.

The nature of modern healthcare means that complex medical devices and equipment are an integral part of most healthcare interventions and treatment. Developments in healthcare technology mean that equipment is often multi-functional and software-driven. Anaesthetists rely on, and have to be able to understand easily, an increasing variety of these medical devices that are often designed by competing manufacturers in an international market.

A modern operating theatre or intensive care unit can often appear cluttered with screens, monitors, cables and tubes to be managed, increasing the potential for operator error. They are also busy environments, with teams of as many as 10 or 12 people working around the patient during the process. Concentration can often be a challenge.

Every hospital, public or private, seeks to maximise the weekly throughput of their operating theatres with the staff resource they can afford. The logistics involved in moving the patient, preparing them for surgery, setting up drugs and equipment and gathering patient information, have an impact on this as much as the time taken to perform the procedure.

Technological advancement will best meet this demand for speed, productivity and profitability if it is well thought out in terms of the complete environment and in the context of patient safety.

This means:

- how it interacts with patients
- how it communicates with healthcare staff fulfilling different roles and responsibilities
- how compatible it is with other components, software or systems
- how it is sterilised or disposed of safely

The Future

What will the future look like? What relationship might we have with technology? How do we surrender more complex tasks to machines but still retain and maintain trust? In all this, what role will the anaesthetist have?

Look elsewhere in medicine, and current trends indicate that robot assisted surgery will one day be the norm. Greater levels of accuracy can be achieved with less trauma to the patient, in less time. It seems logical therefore to ask: what anaesthesia tasks could machines perform in the future?

Information technology will change the way we participate in our own treatment. Remote monitoring of health conditions via the internet or mobile phones will focus on early diagnosis or prevention of illness creating new forms of live patient records available to doctors. How might this technology change the flow of patients, staff and information through the hospital?

Artificial intelligence systems that continuously monitor patient data may soon begin to make decisions about the treatment we receive, allowing less staff to focus on more acute care.

How might an anaesthetist work alongside a digital colleague? Is there still a need for an anaesthetist at all?

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The Brief

Explore how healthcare, and the role of the anaesthetist specifically, might change in the future.

Your greatest asset will be to develop a deep understanding of present day anaesthetics as a basis for your vision of the future. Try to map out the overall function of the anaesthetic department – the physical use of space, the psychological landscape, the flow of patients and staff, the management of information, etc.

Your ideas about the future need not be constrained by existing technologies – although, as with good science fiction, they should be robust enough in their reasoning to withstand scrutiny.

It may also help you to investigate developments outside the operating theatre or intensive care ward:

- how will medicine change?
- how will society change?
- what parallel systems or organisations could be relevant?

It is up to you to define the scope of the creative outcome of your research. For example, you could:

- define it as a system or service design project
- re-design the operating theatre/intensive care environment
- design an anaesthetic control interface
- design the 'patient experience'
- focus on a single piece of anaesthetic equipment
- the research itself could even be an outcome (see Research section)

You should feel free to respond to the creative challenge in any way you feel appropriate. The brief is open to all disciplines – interior design, service design, graphics, multimedia, product design, architecture. Just remember to make anaesthesia your focal point, rather than related disciplines such as nursing or surgery.

Important

In order to talk to staff within a hospital you must first obtain ethical clearance and the permission of the Trust before doing so. Please do not simply walk into a hospital or clinic and approach staff. You may find it easier if your tutor writes, via the university, on your behalf to your local NHS Trust to arrange a visit or conversation.

Possible approaches to your research

Where possible, you should visit hospitals and talk to staff to gain first hand insight about what it is like to be an anaesthetist, nurse, surgeon, support staff member or patient.

A good way to focus this user-centred research is to employ the concept of job-mapping¹. Break the role down into its component parts and analyse each step from the user's perspective. The key is to focus on what they are trying to achieve, not just what they are doing. For example, when an anaesthetist notes down a reading from a heart monitor every five minutes it is merely a means to an end. What they are trying to do is to detect any change or trend in vital signs, which is an indication of the patient's physiological reaction to the surgery and determines what the anaesthetist should do next. How could this job be made easier, faster, more engaging or reliable? Looking creatively at patterns of behaviour (that the users themselves may even be unaware of) will help you achieve an innovative vision of the future.

Rather than leaving all this valuable research in your sketchbooks, part of the deliverable package will be to present your findings in an engaging way. You may choose to make creative research the scope of the entire project.

Submission details

- A3 presentation boards (max. 4) showing design development and final designs with one board showing an outline plan to provide and understanding of the scheme, product or service
- A3 presentation boards (max. 2) showing research findings and conclusions
- a short typewritten report (max. 400 words, sans serif, 14pt) expressing your idea development from research to final designs, to help position your proposal
- a further typewritten list of bullet points (sans serif 14pt) detailing the principal benefits of the proposal
- any models or mock-ups should be submitted as photographs or printouts mounted on A3 boards (this can be in addition to the four design boards)
 - do not submit 3D work at this stage
- for system or service solutions submitting visualisations on CD (PC or MAC) or DVD, please list clear instructions for loading and any other information that will enable content to be easily viewed. Please test your discs prior to submission and check that they are virus-free. Any discs that cannot be opened will not be judged. Director and Flash applications should be saved as projectors for the relevant platform (PC or MAC) and clearly labelled as such
- one sketchbook only, related to the brief
- all submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage, and that it can be displayed for judging

1: Job-mapping: www.strategyn.com/publications/articles.asp

Designing for elegant frugality¹

sustainable graphic design

Design Directions 2008/09
An innovative programme of awards

Designig for elegant frugality
Brief devised in collaboration with Sophie Thomas
(Three Trees Don't Make A Forest)
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Background

IN 2007, 70% of US GDP was generated from consumption.² UK household waste has been growing by 2-3% per cent a year.³ The average shopper in the developed world adds three tonnes of CO₂ to their carbon footprint by simply buying stuff.⁴

We are living in a society where we demand bigger, better, more and as a result are living beyond our needs and more importantly, the planet's needs.

According to the WWF's Living Planet Report the human race as a whole is now using 25% more natural resources than our planet can replace. These statistics are even worse in the developed world. If everyone lived like people in the UK, we would need three planets to survive. If our patterns of consumption in the UK were repeated around the world, by 2050 we would need an extra eight planets⁵. This runaway demand on natural resources is putting massive pressure on the environment we depend on.

Even though climate change has been on the agenda for many years, we still seem to be stuck in a state of denial and confusion. Society wants to act but does not know what to do or how to do it. (From 16 million consumers surveyed by M&S-25% said they would make changes if it were easy, 10-15% were passionate green crusaders, 35-40% would make the small sacrifices but asked what difference would they make. Only 25% said they were not interested in sustainability.)⁶

Now there is a role for the designer to help galvanise permanent behaviour change. We should be rolling up our sleeves and dealing with this challenge. By utilising the power and the effect of the messages and ideas we promote and by developing responsible practices that can create sustainable and effective design.

1: credit to Jonathon Porritt for the phrase 'elegant frugality'
2: Jonathon Porritt, July 2008 <http://designerbreakfasts.dsc.net/node/129>
3: Friends of the Earth: www.foe.org.uk
4: How to reduce your carbon footprint- Jo Yarrow
5: Friends of the Earth www.foe.org.uk
6: Mike Barry, M&S, Hay on Earth, May 2008

Brief

The focus of this brief is you, the designer. It centres on the impact of your professional practice, your decisions, and the processes you use. Whilst what you do must have maximum impact on your audience, it must also have minimum impact in its resource use and ultimately on the planet. At the heart of this brief is your recording of your own process and conclusions, and an evaluation of your material choices. You will need to make informed, innovative choices some of which may be surprising.

You – as the designer – will decide your focus audience and your own subject matter. Research the kinds of problem you think design practice can engage with, it is not just about big issues, small changes can have a larger effect on us all; perhaps it is a consumerism issue, a packaging challenge, or maybe a societal problem, it is up to you. Then you will need to understand the breadth and depth of your possible audience.

Create and produce an original, persuasive and behaviour changing strategy for the issue you feel it is important to address.

To create a sustainable outcome bear the following in mind:

- know your audience. To be effective you need to understand that people are often inconsistent and ill-informed, weak-willed and not easily persuaded from their normal behaviours – so, what can you do that will encourage them to make better choices and decisions about their consumption and life-style that can be sustained?
- your strategy must have longevity and room for growth. Do not be restricted by your choice of media or the scope of your idea. Research your visual-savvy audience and do not underestimate them. What has worked in the past? What can you learn from this and improve on? Remember to make your outcome arresting in its message about lifestyle habits and consumption, but that will have the effect of ultimately reducing society's consumption levels

RSA

Research

You must show evidence of your research; this should be thorough: work with facts, and be honest. Do your own research and build your argument and design conclusion. Remember that original ideas come out of original research.

Submission details

- a typewritten summary (no more than two sides of A4) which includes:
 - a clear statement of the problem/issue and how you identified it
 - where you did your research, how you conducted it, who you consulted, and how it helped you understand the issues
 - conclusions of your research
 - details of your strategy and concept
- a sketch development book
- no more than 4 x A3 lightweight card boards that show your concept
- all submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage, and that it can be displayed for judging

Designed to quit

breaking the smoking cycle

Background

In the current climate the pressure on smokers to quit has never been greater. Many countries are adopting policies that prevent smoking in many public places in society and branding it an antisocial habit, in an attempt to encourage people to lead healthier lifestyles.

In the UK alone, smoking is known to be the principal avoidable cause of premature deaths - 106,000 in the UK every year (87,000 in England). Over 9 million adults in England still smoke.¹ A number of pharmaceutical companies, including GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), have product ranges that include therapeutic nicotine (TN) solutions as part of a cessation strategy to help people to overcome addiction. These products and services are used by people worldwide who are trying to overcome their dependence on tobacco².

People's desire to stop smoking is triggered by a number of things, such as signs of physical/health problems, a higher need (e.g. pregnancy), family concerns or simply that they are fed up with the habit.

Surprisingly the vast majority of smokers say that they want to quit at some stage, with few people saying that they are 'happy smokers'. There is a big opportunity to convince more people to try to stop smoking with therapeutic nicotine and not rely on 'cold turkey' or using willpower alone. This method has a high level of failure because such unsupported withdrawal does not provide the soothing and stress relief that smokers get from a managed tapering off effect of more gradual withdrawal. Using therapeutic nicotine can double a person's chances of giving up cigarettes, although current figures show that only two out of ten attempts will use this method (see Fig 1 in the Resources section). Even though consumers understand aids can help, they are concerned that therapeutic nicotine will become a new crutch. Some people have the attitude "why do I need to use nicotine to get off nicotine", whilst other people wrongly believe that nicotine is the dangerous part

of cigarettes; in fact it's the other 4000+ gases and compounds in cigarettes that cause the damage!

In order to break this cycle people need help to 're-pattern' their lives so that they can either overcome the needs addressed by cigarettes or find positive outlets for them.

The Brief

Use the insights above as a guide, and design a therapeutic nicotine product or service solution that aims to break the cycle illustrated. This may build on existing products but this is an opportunity to explore new platforms and technologies, so do not constrain your thinking by concerns for R&D validity.

A successful solution will understand the emotional state of the smoker and the role tobacco plays in people's lives, such as how and why they became dependent in the first place. How will your solution effectively replace this dependency and reduce anxiety in a convenient, intuitive and easy to use proposal? What might be the incentives that will form part of the solution and how can these lead to behaviour change that is achievable and sustainable?

Remember that if your solution is a product, it sits within the 'over the counter' category and will therefore be purchased in the retail environment and will require secondary packaging. This is the first point of contact with the consumer/shopper so consider their behaviour in this area – how will you gain their attention and confidence (i.e. shelf impact, sensory cues).

As a designer you must also bear in mind issues such as sustainability within your submission, especially with regard to the secondary packaging where choice of material will be key.

(continues...)

1: Department of Health

2: Over 6.5 million people have successfully quit using GSK therapeutic nicotine brands over the last 12 years.

Submission Details

Entries must comply with the following:

- A3 boards (max. 4) showing design development and final designs; one board must show all elevations of the product/package to provide an understanding of the assembly
- a short, typewritten text (max. 400 words, sans serif, 14pt) expressing your idea development from research to final designs, to help position your proposal
- a further typewritten list of bullet points (sans serif, 14pt) detailing the principal benefits of the proposal
- any models or mock-ups should be submitted as photographs or printouts mounted on A3 board (this can be in addition to the 4 design boards) – do not submit 3D work at this stage
- one sketchbook only, related to the brief

If your submission includes a system or service, the delivery must include a written outline together with a visualisation of your system/service idea.

This must include the communication, through any medium you see relevant, of the following:

- 1 Evidence of exploration of the key issues, including collaboration with others
 - 2 A 'value proposition' for the system/service – including who will benefit, how is it provided, how it is accessed, how does it add value
 - 3 A system/service proposal, demonstrating how it would work using either A3 lightweight boards or CD (PC or MAC) or DVD – please list clear details for loading and any other information that will enable the content to be easily viewed; please test your discs prior to submission and check that they are virus-free – any discs that cannot be opened will not be judged. Director and Flash applications should be saved as Projectors for the relevant platform (PC or MAC) and clearly labelled as such.
- students short listed for interview will be asked to prepare a presentation outlining their proposal and will be expected to bring along 3 dimensional material to support their presentation
 - all submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage, and that it can be displayed for judging

Postage Stamps

alternative energy sources & energy conservation

Background

Royal Mail's Special Stamp programme is developed with regard to a number of criteria that include the following:

- to commemorate important anniversaries
- to commemorate events of national importance, as well as significant contemporary UK successes on the international stage
- to reflect the contribution of the UK to world affairs in the broadest range of activities, from the arts and humanities to science and technology
- to explore 'the British way of life', celebrating the diversity of cultures and interests within the UK
- to contribute to the cultural life of the UK through the patronage of art and design, and thereby act as a showcase for the best of contemporary British creative talent.

The programme is also designed to include a variety of subjects, imagery and techniques in order to appeal to the interests and tastes of different groups over the year's programme.

The Brief

Today's sources of power are becoming a significant cause for concern, as many of these are either non-renewable or nuclear. A recent poll indicates that UK citizens are increasingly aware of the threat to the environment and climate caused by the ways in which energy is currently produced and used.

Alternative energy may provide the way forward. Alternative energy development focuses on increasing the proportion of energy obtained from renewable resources in an effort to ease the impact on climate change.

The brief is to explore and design stamps that will bring attention to this issue and promote awareness about alternatives. Examples of alternative energy sources to be considered in your research are solar, wind, tidal and water power, as well as geothermal energy and biomass.

Also consider the role of energy conservation in reducing the consumption of existing resources (e.g. triple glazing; wall and roof insulation); energy efficiency (e.g. efficient domestic boilers; using low power appliances; washing clothes at lower temperatures); utilising the heat that is generated in electricity rather than wasting it (Combined Heat and Power).

The target audience is broad, as the topic will strike a chord with young and old; stamp collectors and general public.

We encourage contributions from designers, illustrators, photographers, typographers, painters, etc as well as collaborative projects.

The set will feature six stamps, featuring the Queen's head and values 1st, 48p, 50p, 56p, 72p, 81p (note: do not include the 'p' in the designs). Any of the stamp template sizes supplied electronically may be used but students are invited to make new recommendations within these general size constraints. However, the design must work within a maximum depth of 37mm.

The images you create should work at stamp size, in isolation and as part of a set. The approach should engage as broad a range of the public as possible.

In researching the background, we ask that you do not contact associated parties (other than for the purposes of obtaining information packs that would be available to the general public) or lobby groups to discuss the project.

Market

- a stamp is a receipt for a service and is available to anyone within the UK wishing to use the postal service
- this service covers the globe and therefore the stamp is an ambassador for the UK when travelling to overseas destinations
- a new and younger generation of stamp collector

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Aims

- to produce an innovative response that goes beyond conventional treatments and styles – look at recent examples of innovation in stamp design
- to demonstrate originality of thought and approach based on sound research

Guidelines

When considering the design of a stamp, it is important to remember the following points:

- think on a small scale from the outset
- the Queen's head must appear top right or left facing towards the design and must be in a correct relationship with the overall stamp size (this is shown in the PDFs on the resources page for this project – please see Postage Stamp web page). If using overlays, ensure they are easily lifted to reveal the original artwork
- once research is complete and decisions have been made on your overall approach, preliminary visuals should be reviewed at stamp size
- since a stamp on an envelope is evidence of the pre-payment for postage, and because the recipient is primarily interested in the content of the envelope, each stamp must convey an immediate message
- design should combine clarity with an attention to detail
- there should be a clear visual distinction between one stamp design and another to ensure that there is no confusion between the different values when the stamps are being sold at the post office counter.

Submission details

Entries must comply with the following:

- an A3 board showing the six designs, ideally rendered four times larger than actual size
- an A3 board showing reductions of the stamps at actual size
- two A3 boards demonstrating the development of the thought process from the original research to final concept
- a short, typewritten text (max. 50-100 words only, sans serif, 14pt) expressing your 'big idea', to help position your proposal
- one sketchbook only, related to the brief (optional: to be submitted only if the applicant wishes)
- the price may appear anywhere provided it is legible; it should not appear over an intricately textured area
- overall, the design of the six stamps should produce a consistent and cohesive visual impression
- all submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage, and that it can be displayed for judging

Wired for fitness

designing with steel wire for sport and recreation

Background

Sport and recreation can play a huge role in helping to keep people of all ages and abilities fit and healthy. This plays a core role in Government policy – for example, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has strategic priorities that include encouraging schoolchildren to take up sporting opportunities, and a focus on halting the year on year increase in obesity in the UK population. Their objectives refer to widening opportunities for people of all ages to participate in sporting activities.

Both sport and recreational activities show evidence of variations in participation between different groups. Factors such as age, health and ability, as well as socio-economic issues, ethnicity and ease of access can all influence the individual's level of participation, and the development of healthier communities.

The challenge

The purpose of this brief is to explore the possible application of steel wire within a sport/recreation/fitness context.

Steel wire is a product that has many forms and uses across a wide range of scales. Your challenge is to use it to design a product or an environment that will help people improve their health and maintain a better level of fitness.

This could take a tightly focused form such as recreational or sports products, or a wider view that explores its application in environments such as leisure/sports centres, games pitches, or local parks - evidence shows that there are links between the quality of local environments and people's physical and emotional wellbeing.¹

Where appropriate, you could try to involve local people - community groups or individuals - to identify local needs, or those who will be using your design, in order to influence your decision making throughout the process. This should include those across the age and ability range.

Your proposal should try to promote a personal responsibility for a more active, healthier lifestyle and encourage new norms of behaviour.

How might this material catalyse the development of new products/environments that could impact on new and lasting lifestyle trends to make healthy activity attractive?

Use your design thinking to explore a range of INNOVATIVE IDEAS, even if you may eventually reject some of them for practical or cost reasons before your preferred proposal is made.

U.K. Steel Wire

Steel Wire is an extremely versatile and attractive material that exhibits distinctive technical, aesthetic and environmental qualities: it is appealing and beneficial in a wide range of applications.

- The virtues and qualities of steel wire and cables – it exhibits ultra-high strength: in the high carbon steel sector there has been a big push in recent years towards higher strength steels, driven by cost and weight reduction, under the 'lighter – stronger' heading. One example is in the cables used for yacht rigging and other structure supports, which are being produced in increasingly higher tensile strengths. For exercise machines there is call for high strength wire filaments to form the wire cables, essential to their safe function. High strength wire filaments and cables must also be used for safety equipment, harnesses and barriers particularly where high tension is required
- it is an aesthetically attractive material: steel wire is used in the fashion industry and in a variety of other applications such as components in the garment industry (e.g. hooks and eyes, bra supports); fine wire can also be woven into cloth. At a different scale, architectural wire cloth has aesthetic qualities that make it ideal used as a skin allowing subtle changes of colour and light at different angles, and it offers a myriad of options for interior application as ceilings and screens
- it is an environmentally friendly material: steel lasts longer than many other materials and offers long term value for consumers. Steel is also 100% recyclable (over 50% of new steel comes from old re-melted steel scrap), meaning less waste in landfills. Stainless steel is durable, hygienic and environmentally friendly and is therefore less of

¹ Tackling health inequalities: A Programme for Action, Department of Health, July 2003

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a burden on the country's waste disposal and recycling resources. It cleans easily, making it the first choice for strict hygiene conditions, such as hospitals, kitchens, and other environments where sanitation is a priority

Given the versatile nature of steel wire and its broad range of potential end uses, this project seeks to engage as wide a range of discipline responses as possible (e.g. product, engineering, architecture, interiors, fashion etc) to develop responses to the brief that exploit its innate properties and strengths. The judges are looking for ideas, concepts and strategies that would both support the buoyancy of the U.K. Wire Industry and promote sport and recreation, leading to improved fitness and health, amongst all sections of the community. Be aware that simple products can be made directly from the raw material (e.g. screws, springs, fixings etc) and then covered with metallic or other coatings for protection or decorative effect.

- Some useful facts about steel wire
- steel could be used to redesign many plastic articles to exploit its greater strength (think of other materials that could benefit from being replaced by steel wire or cable)
 - structures and other products could be re-designed using high strength steels both for their structural and aesthetic qualities, combined with hygiene
 - its strength, durability and attractive appearance make it highly suitable for robust applications
 - its shape retention in woven form and its suitability for strong yet near invisible fastenings make it desirable in the area of sporting products including garments and footwear

Submission details

We are encouraging multi-disciplinary team entries from a wide range of design disciplines such as product, interior, architectural, or fashion design, in combination – where appropriate - with relevant areas such as engineering, and production technologies. While we realise the inherent difficulties of multi-disciplinary entries, individual discipline entries are welcome but consultations with representatives of other relevant disciplines should be made clear and be well-documented.

You may respond to this challenge taking any approach, as long as you have clearly identified the problem or opportunities, and understand the qualities of the material, and current and potential new applications for this through your research.

Your flat work submission must include a single A4 overview sheet stating the design issue, how you identified it, and what your design delivers for the end users.

You should also include:

- research showing which sources and who you have consulted, how this was done, and how it helped you understand the relevant design issues and opportunities
- evidence of your research and understanding of the suitability of the properties of the material and production technologies for the conditions and uses envisaged
- evidence of working or consultation with other disciplines as part of your research and concept development and of how the idea was developed
- visualisations of the application of your ideas and how your proposed design would be used. These can be photographs of practical experimental work with wire if it is appropriate to your design project
- documentation of how your concept has been evaluated and, if appropriate, how this improves on existing solutions and applications
- flatwork should be submitted on lightweight card (max 5 boards, size A3) and accompanied by no more than 3 sketchbooks/reports
- all submitted work should carry an RSA label on the back; this is to ensure the safety of your work whilst in storage, and that it can be displayed for judging