



designing digital experiences for youth





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designing digital experiences for youth

They dye their hair with Jello. They pierce and tattoo body parts previously left unmarked. They wear clothing five sizes too large or small for them. Why would anyone look to kids, teens and young adults for design advice?

Although easy to dismiss as fad-driven and immature, the Youth population in any era tends to forecast the future in the way they look, act and believe. That's certainly true with the current generation. They've been exposed to computers and digital devices from the time they were infants. Most have grown up in a world where cell phones, PCs, IM (instant messaging) and email have always existed. As a result, they're more tech-savvy than any other segment of the population.

While it's tempting to think of them as gadget junkies who adopt new devices for their entertainment value or "cool" status, they're also actively engaged in a technological exploration of language, games, social interactions, and self-directed education unlike any generation before them. Technology and what they do with it is shifting their experience of the world.

In one sense, this generation is no different than previous ones who have grown up with a given technology and by virtue of that fact become the first to truly embrace it. However, this generation's power to change perceptions of entire categories of commerce is compounded by their size. We need look no further for proof of their impact than the Youth market's endorsement of downloadable MP3s and the resultant effect on the music industry.

GENERATION GAPS¹

56.8 million



ECHO BOOM
(AGE 5-19)

47.4 million



GEN-X
(AGE 20-34)

69.2 million



BABY BOOMERS
(AGE 35-54)

THE MAJOR PLAYERS²

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS COMPANIES (FY 2001 SALES)

- Matsushita: \$61.2 B*
- Sony: \$58.5 B*
- Koninklijke Philips: \$28.8 B*
- LG Electronics: \$12.5 B*
- THOMSON multimedia: \$9.1 B*

INSTANT MESSAGING PROVIDERS (FY 2001 SALES)

- AOL: \$8.7 B*
- Microsoft: \$25.3 B*
- Yahoo!: \$717.4 M*

TOY COMPANIES (FY 2001 SALES)

- Mattel: \$4.8 B*
- Hasbro: \$2.9 B*
- Bandai: \$1.7 B*
- Sanrio: \$1.1 B*

MOBILE HANDSET COMPANY (FY 2001 SALES)

- Nokia: \$27.8 B*
- Motorola: \$30.0 B*
- Samsung: \$24.5 B*
- Siemens: \$86.2 B*
- Sony Ericsson: N/A (joint venture)*

ELECTRONIC GAMING (FY 2001 SALES)

- Electronic Arts: \$1.3 B*
- Sega: \$1.9 B*
- Nintendo: \$3.7 B*
- Activision: \$620.2 M*
- Infogrames: \$572.5 M*
- Capcom: \$388.5 M*
- Take-Two Interactive: \$451.1 M*



market overview

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO DESIGNING DIGITAL EXPERIENCE?

Engineering-Driven vs. Behavior-Driven Design

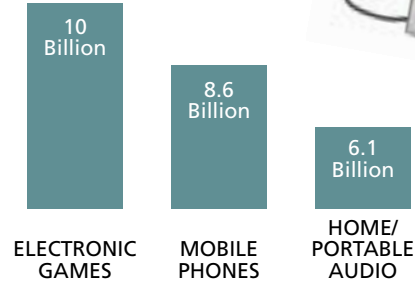
We still live in a world where too many of the devices we use are engineering-driven—where the genesis of the idea is not driven by true consumer needs, but rather by the capabilities of a given technology. In many situations, designers are designing for themselves or to showcase the most immediate engineering benefits. This is fine if you're a 30-year old designing for other 30-year olds, or an engineer creating for other engineers. It's rarely effective if your audience includes 13-year olds or people without PhDs.

Design that understands the behaviors and attitudes of the consumer in a deep and fundamental way stands the best chance for breakthrough success. This is especially true for design that complements consumers' existing behavior patterns instead of forcing them to learn new behaviors. Brenda Laurel, noted author and

Design that understands the behaviors and attitudes of the consumer in a deep and fundamental way stands the best chance for breakthrough success.

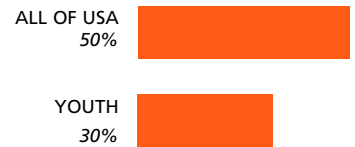
interaction design expert, comments, "You have a lot more room for error with a design that has a less-than-ideal interface if the pay-off aligns well with consumers' existing social patterns and behaviors." In fact, social behaviors are so powerful, they often compensate for poor interface design. We have seen teens in Japan who have learned to use Short Messaging Service (SMS) technology with Japanese characters on their cell phones without looking at the keypad—an incredibly difficult, non-intuitive feat. However, for them it's worth the effort to compensate for the design flaw because the payoff supports their pre-existing social communication patterns.

2001 SALES WORLDWIDE



Source: Consumer Electronic Association , 2001

MOBILE PENETRATION



Source: Cheskin, 2001

INTERNET USAGE

- AGES 9-17 (2000)
- 55% use IM often
- 53% play online games
- 21% are online everyday



Source: Roper Starch, 2001



THE EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL DESIGN

by Dr. Brenda Laurel

Brenda Laurel is an author and well-known human-computer interaction expert who focuses on interactive narrative and cultural aspects of technology. She is a member of the Graduate Faculty at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, and is also an independent consultant who works collaboratively with Cheskin.

To get a quick sense of the evolution of digital media and interface design, we need to go as far back as the 1960s. At that time, the first usability community for PCs was composed of human factors experts from aerospace and industry. Early designers from the human factors community had knowledge of physiology, human perception, and efficiency, and had been part of an exacting professional practice. In the late 70s and early 80s, a discipline referred to as man-machine interaction began to emerge, where more attention was paid to psychology and non-professional functions. Eventually, due to political concerns, the discipline began to be referred to as computer-human interaction and the community of practitioners coalesced in the ACM (Association of Computer Machines) special interest group SIG-CHI (Special Interest Group on Computer Human Interaction).

The CHI practice evolved to include concerns about the study of emotion, color, and even pleasure. However, throughout the 80s and most of the 90s, and in many cases today, the interface designers are seen as adding usability after a functional design is complete. At times it is still a battle to include usability as part of the design of a device or application from the beginning. The benefit of incorporating usability from the beginning of the design process is still not recognized. Fortunately, the industrial design and product design communities have generally done a better job of this than the computer community. Companies like IDEO have successfully extended their understanding of design into the computer world through the idea of experience design.

The notion of experience design is currently being promoted by the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) and other special interest groups and individuals as a successor to the previous interface concept. In addition, the curriculum I helped design in the Media Design Program at Art Center attempts to give students an integrated experience of the skills and sensibilities that will be called upon by a good experience designer.

Experience design is currently very well represented by Nathan Shedroff's book, *Experience Design 1*. The book develops the idea that the goal of a designer's work is not an artifact but the experience of a person or group of people; the thing designed is the means to that experience.

Neopets (neopets.com) is an online community site where an estimated 30 million "owners" create and care for virtual pets. Targeted primarily at tweens ages 8-12, the object is to create pets, name them, give them life, and keep them healthy. In order to do so you need to network with other kids on the site to buy food, medicine, and other amenities for your pet. The site is further extended by games, news and related community activities.

The site aligns well with pre-existing social practices and preferences of caring for a pet, participating socially in a community of peers, and aspiring to the behaviors of older kids. Christopher Ireland, Principal and CEO of Cheskin, comments, "The site introduces more sophisticated social patterns than kids that age normally get the opportunity to experience. For example, it introduces the concept of inflation: not a lot of 9 yr. olds understand inflation, but they get it fast. It also introduces auctions, quests, guilds, banking, barter and other "adult" concepts that might be considered too complex for young children. But, judging by the results, kids seem to thrive on them."

While the concepts are sophisticated, the interface is very simple—in many cases, a user can just point and click to participate in the activities. Ireland notes, "even young users who aren't avid readers or who can't type well can still participate in a fairly robust manner."

Instant messaging is another relevant example of behavior-based design. For most teens, their ideal form of communication is a face-to-face meeting. IM is preferred over email by many kids, teens and young adults because it more closely mimics this ideal due to its immediacy.

Ethan is a 19 year-old from the Chicago area. He says, "I'm not really a big fan of e-mail—I like to IM people more than e-mail. When you IM it's like talking to a person face to face and e-mail is like just leaving a message on the machine. It's like being at home with a friend in a coffee shop and just catching up on stuff on what is going on and stuff like that."



IM also allows the user to carry on multiple conversations simultaneously, an enhancement of what's possible in face to face situations. While to adults this seems excessively complicated, it ties in quite well with Youth's pre-existing social behaviors. As a result, its relevance supersedes its initial complexity.

Again, Ethan from Chicago, "I never talk to just one person at one time. I talk on average to 4 or 5 people at a time."

The challenge of designing around behavior becomes even more dramatic as technology changes those behaviors. The pervasiveness of IM is a new dimension of behavior that designers need to factor into other, seemingly unrelated, areas. Jason Rubinstein, General Manager of Online at Ubi Soft, notes "It's fascinating thinking of designing for kids who are complete IM hounds. The implication is that you design assuming that IM is always taking place in the background. Do you make it an inclusive part of the experience or lock it out?"

The Influence of Fashion

Digital technology is so complex, powerful and scientific, it's easy to forget or dismiss the relevance of fashion. But particularly with digital devices that are carried, fashion is a crucial design consideration. For the Youth market, it's often the most important consideration.

Fashion matters to nearly every teen and young adult, even if they look like it doesn't. It's a key tool of personal expression—one of the few they can afford and control. They use it to broadcast their social status (or their lack of social status, as some prefer). They also use it to align with other kids, teens and young adults who share their lifestyle. Because of this role, everything they wear and carry becomes part of their style statement. Digital devices become part of their ensemble, an accessory like jewelry, shoes and hats. In some cases, the objects themselves are "dressed up," such as in Japan where teens accessorize their cell phones with antennae that light up and wraps that recast the phone as a Sanrio character or other creature of interest.

Ani is a 19 year-old from Los Angeles. She notes that, "Looking good is important. I got a phone that was silver because it looked modern. I like the modern look, it makes me feel cooler, and when

people see it, they probably think it's a cool phone—so it all comes down to image."

While "fashion-less" technology can penetrate Youth markets if it is very novel and beneficial, it is always trumped by later versions that are more stylized. Beepers, cell phones, cameras, websites—even non-digital technology like roller blades and skateboards—can generate trial without much attention to style. But they fundamentally fail to expand beyond the early adopters unless they get the design aesthetics right. Brendan Boyle, leader of IDEO's toy invention studio, Skyline, explains, "Fashion has always been important. As a kid, I fought to get Converse All Stars. It's not a new trend; it's just heightened with the choices that are now available. You want to be cool at school amongst your friends. It's tremendously important."

Unfortunately, a preference for black is often mistaken for fashion sense. Few designers or marketers have training in fashion design, relying instead on their own taste or the latest "teen cool" forecasts from the media. Ten minutes of MTV should convince even the most skeptical among us that fashion has a deep and rich vocabulary which needs to be integrated into the overall design of a device.

Unfortunately, a preference for black is often mistaken for fashion sense.

Relevant Benefits

Despite their reputation for impulse consumption, most teens and young adults do not necessarily want the latest technology gizmo simply for the fun of it—they want tools that will help them deal with their increasingly complex, time-compressed lives. They're not easily seduced by circuits and chrome, unless the resulting product offers a real benefit over the existing approaches. When asked about improving communication, teens and young adults continue to report that their ideal mode remains real-time, face-to-face conversation. The value of mobile communication devices go up only when face-to-face is unfeasible—not in replacement of it.



Focusing on the true desired benefit greatly clarifies design direction. For example, the desired benefit of IM is to be connected instantly with a selected circle of friends. While IM aligns well with Youth’s pre-existing communication patterns, it’s typically located on a stationary home PC. In contrast, teens and young adults are typically mobile. The benefit of “instant group connectivity” (rather than “an easy way to communicate on the PC”) suggests that a mobile IM device could be highly relevant.

Focusing on the true desired benefit greatly clarifies design direction.

The range of desired benefits is vast and highly subjective. There’s no *Ten Commandants* for benefits. For example, in designing game experiences, preferred benefits may depend on whether the player wants a lengthy engagement or an urgent quick hit. Sometimes the player is squeezing in a quick game while waiting for the bus. Other times he or she may engage in a drawn out



hot products

- SiPix Style Cam Blink
- Sprint PCS Vision Phone
- RCA RD1000 MP3 player
- AIM Wireless (IM on cell phone)

THE FUTURE FROM A YOUTH POINT OF VIEW

In the past for many adults, fear dominated their view of the future. While this trepidation has dissipated somewhat, for some there is still a lingering concern that kids’ preference for all things digital will result in them becoming physically and socially atrophied—a fear that technology will replace humanity in many important aspects of kids’ lives. But most kids, teens and young adults don’t share this fear because they don’t feel dominated by technology. Instead, they feel empowered by it. They have no desire to vegetate in front of a screen; rather, they look to technology as a way to integrate and augment their experiences.

Kim is a 15-year old from the Boston area. “I get online instead of watching TV. When I’m watching TV, I’m more going to be a blob since it’s just me and the TV, and I’m just bored on the phone with a bag of chips. But with the Internet, at least I can communicate with others—since that’s half the reason why I get on—and I’m busy and focused on the 20 conversations. That’s way better for me than just TV or Nintendo.”

Silicon is not the first element that has brought about significant social change and reinvented personal identity, nor will it be the last. “It’s important to remember that, as humans, we have been reconstructing our identity in fundamental ways for 50,000 years,” notes Dr.



hot services

- Movabletype.com—web log (“blog”) service
- Metacritic.com
- Netflix
- Trillian

duel with a friend that can last for hours. Desired benefits can be further impacted by the type of device. As Dr. Laurel notes, “When you take a computer game and move it to a hand-held device, the situated context is different; therefore the design needs to move to align with that new context.”



Laurel. Think about the dramatic difference realized by simply attaching pockets to clothing—unsurpassed portability (as well as unsightly lumpiness and the possibility of hidden weapons). It is not a qualitatively new distinction to reconstruct our identity in a fundamental way through inventiveness; it is just that youth are doing it now with digital experiences.

“We have been reconstructing our identity in fundamental ways for 50,000 years.”

Privacy Issues Could Moderate

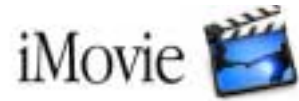
Youth typically have a different view of privacy than adults. Kids, teens and young adults value privacy when it protects their secrets or shields their behavior, but they willingly trade it for other values. For example, while IM provides instant group connectivity, it also affords surveillance. You cannot have one without the other. Most kids, teens and young adults don’t find this troubling. Their sense of personal vulnerability is low. The adult population is much more sensitive to the privacy invasion.



hot services

imesh.com
Kazaa media desktop

The youth perspective may change as they mature and their values and priorities evolve, or instead, their view may change adult culture. Nathan Shedroff, author of Experience Design, notes “It may well be that we become so dependent that we’re not willing to give something up, even if it can be demonstrated to be bad for us.”



hot products

Apple iMovie2
Short Text Messaging
Blackberry

Personalization Is in its Infancy

Personalization plays a role in nearly every youth-oriented product or service. Even if the level of customization is relatively low, kids, teens and young adults like to “tweak” the end product to more closely match their personal preferences. Obviously, the potential for personalization of digital experiences is almost unlimited, but it has proven very difficult to capitalize because consumers’ expectations are already very high. As Shedroff comments, “Because we’re used to dealing with people—we’re used to getting our personalized experiences from other human beings.” Other human beings who know us react to our likes and dislikes in an expected manner. It is tough for digital experiences to compete (by way of comparison, word processing had only to compete with the typewriter and the secretary.)

As the PC and other technologies become more sophisticated, true personalization of digital experiences become more feasible. But technology engineers and designers do not really yet understand human interaction well enough to emulate this behavior, and development is still in its infancy. Shedroff notes, “Amazon does a good job on the Web—it knows it’s you, it suggests things you like—but it’s still not a tailored experience.”

Convergence at Last

The old idea of convergence was that all devices would converge into one central device that did everything for you (à la the universal remote).



What we are seeing now is the hardware diverging while the content converges. For example, people want access to IM (or games, email, music files, etc.) across multiple devices (PC, laptop, cell phone, even game consoles, etc.). The hardware devices in this situation are fulfilling needs for different “situated contexts” (meaning where you are, what you are doing, and—in this case—what influence that has on your digital technology needs). For example, your email needs and expectations are different whether you’re at home, work, school, commuting, the airport, etc., and these different devices are designed to suit your needs for accessing content depending on where you are—your “situated context.”

Designers of technology could learn from companies in the food and beverage industry. These companies often focus on what they call “need states” (i.e., hunger, boredom, nicotine replacement, etc.). For example, a needs state that is relevant to a candy company might be “nicotine replacement.” These companies are very deliberate in targeting each of their needs states with a product offering. Companies offering digital devices could do the same for their need states, which in this case refer to as a person’s situated context—designing devices or experiences appropriate to different, relevant situations. Whether intentional or not, Sony does a great job of this—consider the range of PDAs, cell phones, game devices, PCs, and Walkman models they offer.

Changing Definition of Mobility

This convergence also points to a new paradigm for the mobile technology experience. Abbe Don, an interface designer who specializes in interactive product process and design, notes, “For adults, we think of mobility as being all about the Road Warrior—the business traveler. For kids, it’s a social experience.” For Youth, mobility is not only about keeping in contact with their social network while moving, but also about knowing where everyone else is, and the comfort that provides. We have seen teens who have become attached to logging on to their IM provider just to see who is online at that moment.

Arpie is a 23 year-old from the San Francisco area. “Everyday, so I can talk to my friends, I log on because I just want to see who is online. I kinda like

seeing how my friends’ days are going and see what makes them tick.”

This is an aspect of Youth behavior that can be easily overlooked or discounted; however, like trading privacy, this may be a behavior that follows them into adulthood and changes the broader culture. Digital mobile experiences may need to become more on-going, more spatial or more group-oriented.

Embracing Embedded-Ness

To many adults, embedded technology evokes visions of Frankenstein—a pieced together assortment of functions, wired loosely to create an overall effect that doesn’t quite live up to expectations. But youthful consumers don’t have that same bias and welcome the thought of having an embedded MP3 player into their jacket or cell phone jewelry. Some even accept the inevitability of embedded technology in their skin, veins or brain.

Brendan Boyle comments, “The opportunity is there and it makes sense. Designers will look for opportunities to embed technology. Just like the flashing lights in kids’ shoes, why not put all kinds of technological smarts in your shoes?”

ARE YOU ON TRACK?

While there are many examples of decent or even good digital experiences, no one has done a great job yet. “We’re in the horseless carriage phase—all is compared to what’s come before,” says Shedroff. Digital experiences are like TV at its inception in the 1950s, where the camera was pointed at the stage and, voila, there was programming. Shedroff goes on to explain, “We are not yet at the MTV level, where you have developed new languages. It is this generation of kids who will take it to the next level.”

The potential for designing digital experiences that appeal first to Youth and subsequently to the mass market is undeniably huge. But what should companies, marketers and designers do to capitalize on this? What are the steps to maximize the potential for success with this generation of kids, teens and young adults? This topic could easily produce enough text for a book, but in the interests of brevity, we’ve summarized the steps



and intentions Cheskin believes underlie successful experience design for the Youth market.

A Simple Plan

In any project, there's no substitute for a tight design plan that consists of following key steps:

1. Understand your target audience in a deep and fundamental way;
2. Be clear about your internal competencies—what you can really deliver well;
3. Have an accurate idea of the equities of your brand or corporate identity;
4. Develop design principles to guide the development of the experience;
5. Adhere to all of the above in the execution phase.

These areas are the foundation of an effective design process, and without such a roadmap it is very easy to lose sight of key determinants of success. They can also help you become more efficient and speed development, if for no other reason that it helps reduce the time spent arguing.

Design Principles

Most companies do not do a thorough job of formulating and articulating design principles for products they are developing. It is easy to fall into the trap of designing first and then determining if there is any demand among the target audience. This is why a huge percentage of all products and services fail—there is incentive to do it quickly rather than to do it right.

The following are over-arching principles intended to inform the design process for digital experiences targeted at the youth market. More specific principles will be useful once you have a defined target audience and product/service to offer them.

- Create a sense of fun and spontaneity
- Provide Personalization
- Incorporate Fashion Elements into Design
- Promote Connectivity—make it mobile
- Include Creative Tools
(i.e., create custom music/movies, clothing, etc.)

Research That Informs Intuition

Designers and marketers can use research to inform their intuition, enabling them to more easily answer the questions that arise in the design process and make better decisions. This is the kind of information that can inspire designers, leading to breakthrough products that delight the user, not simply evolutionary design that is more of the same.

To create appealing experiences for Youth the design team needs to understand this target audience in a deep and fundamental way. This is not about getting answers back from a survey or figuring out whether users like blue icons or red. This means understanding their existing social practices, including the extensions and augmentations of these practices, and understanding the relationship between these patterns and their personal and social identities—in essence, how they define themselves. A deep understanding of Youth allows the team to make better decisions at every step of the design process.

Craig Allen, Sr. VP of Licensing and Production of Content for Digital Media at Jim Henson Interactive explains, “Testing to understand the abilities of a target audience is a crucial step before entering into a new project. We try to perceive behavior patterns that could be enhanced through technology.” He offers the following example, “IM is just a better form of a walkie-talkie. It's non-intrusive communication between consenting parties.”



If the research is designed properly, it will allow true understanding of the user experience, and will stimulate the design process. It can also help calm clients, giving them confidence when creating breakthrough ideas, and building consensus internally. In some cases, as projects progress, the original gem of an idea gets chipped away to the point where it's no longer recognizable. Research can help solidify and document original inspiration, creating Design Principles that guide the development. This helps the team stay true to the opportunity that was first identified, and helps keep the gem from being dulled.

Unfortunately, too often research is brought in late in the overall design process, well after many fundamental decisions have been made. At that point, research plays the role of arbiter of consumers' tastes, simply providing a "thumbs up" or a "thumbs down" for the design. Not an ideal situation and one that often leads to an adversarial relationship between the designer and the researcher. However, if research and consumer feedback are incorporated at the earliest

phase of the design process, the entire team can benefit from the data and knowledge. Allen comments, "You need to study kids, look at what they're doing, and see what they are talking about on the playground. Bring them in at early stages of design development and ask what they're interested in, collaborate with them versus treating them as something to get to in your U&A study."

"Go spend time with a kid."

An important technique for understanding the consumer is, as Abbe Don succinctly puts it, "Go spend time with a kid." Designers are designing products for kids to use today. It is very different being 13 now versus back when current designers were that age. It is critical to spend time with them and obtain as real a context as possible. Hang out with them while they are online as Ms. Don does with her 13-year old cousin. "It's invaluable, he thinks out loud while playing the SIMs (a computer game published by Electronic Arts). He gets cheat sheets online, he's instant messaging all the time simultaneously. As he's doing the SIMs, I'm learning how he views the world."



case studies

MTV

Of all the interactive multi media sites out there, MTV has one of the strongest offerings. Blaire Bercy is a former co-host of a teen talk show on the Oxygen Network, and is currently developing a TV magazine show for Highwood Productions called "GirlSite" (www.girlsite.com). She states "MTV.com is the best, beats them all hands down, you get everything: you can hear music samples, get text information on celebrities, and see video clips." The site also has message boards, where visitors are encouraged to send their thoughts. "There's the message boards, and all those quotes that make you famous at High School go up on their site."

The site is also very effective at being simple and straightforward while still offering deep and interesting information. Kids may go there just for news or to check out hot trends, but they are further engaged by the option of diving through the MTV archives, or links to other, related sites. Even though most of the time they just go for the direct information (i.e., news and trends), they site offers them the depth of content that will engage them and get them to want to come back.

The site also helps kids stay amazingly current when it comes to music and fashion culture. "If you are the one person in your group of friends who faithfully goes to MTV.com, you pretty much know what's happening before everybody else."

nick.com

The Nickelodeon website is another good example of digital experience design. It is fun, and fun quickly—the experience is immediate. It is also easy to understand the information architecture, unlike other sites where content is organized not from the user's perspective, but by the company's own business unit organization. Notes Abbe Don, "the bigger the company the more guilty they are of this—it has nothing to with what users value."

Along those lines, nick.com does not worry about branding itself as a part of parent company Viacom. Within the site this corporate content exists, but it is not a crucial part of the user experience, and therefore it is low in the information hierarchy of the site.

The Blair Witch Project

A good example of digital experience design is Blair Witch, which integrated the website with the film experience. Although released 3 years ago, no other entertainment property to date has been as effective at transmedia integration. "There's an enormous back-story, and therefore a very good reason to go there," says Dr. Laurel. This design keeps the property and the franchise alive, beyond the life cycle of the theatrical and video release. The designers of this site understand that it is the total experience, not just marketing and merchandising that are important. In contrast, many movie-related websites are literally no more than the press kit online.

One effective way to approach the design of such a trans-media opportunity is to design the overall experience first, then determine what elements of that experience are best communicated through each medium. For example, what part is the site; what part is the movie; or where might a hand held device fit in? And how do the all help build the total experience, and not just marketing and merchandising?

Cirque du Soleil

Cirque du Soleil exemplifies an essential component of engaging digital experiences. This aspect of the experience relies on being unequivocal about who you are and what you are trying to express, and doing that at every point you touch the audience. "There's a very specific point of view that is apparent throughout the Cirque du Soleil experience; whether it's the venue, the costumes, the music, or the way they appear onstage," states Abbe Don. They effectively carry this message through at each point of interaction with their audience.





suggested reading

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sources & references:

1. US Census 2001
2. Sales figures as self-reported by each individual company respectively.

Credits: Many thanks to all the people who contributed to this report, especially Miguel Lyons-Cavazos, Craig Allen, Brendan Boyle, Abbe Don, Amy Francetic, Tara Phillips, Jason Hofmann, Christopher Ireland, Brenda Laurel, Jason Rubenstein, Nathan Shedroff, and Blaire Bercy.



Cheskin is a consulting and research firm grounded in marketing and design. At the heart of the company's work is the recognition that innovation and success rest on in-depth understanding of people, their cultures, and the influences that motivate them. Cheskin provides clients with a fresh perspective that guides profitable innovation at every point of the product development process, from identifying unmet customer needs, to visualizing new concepts.

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