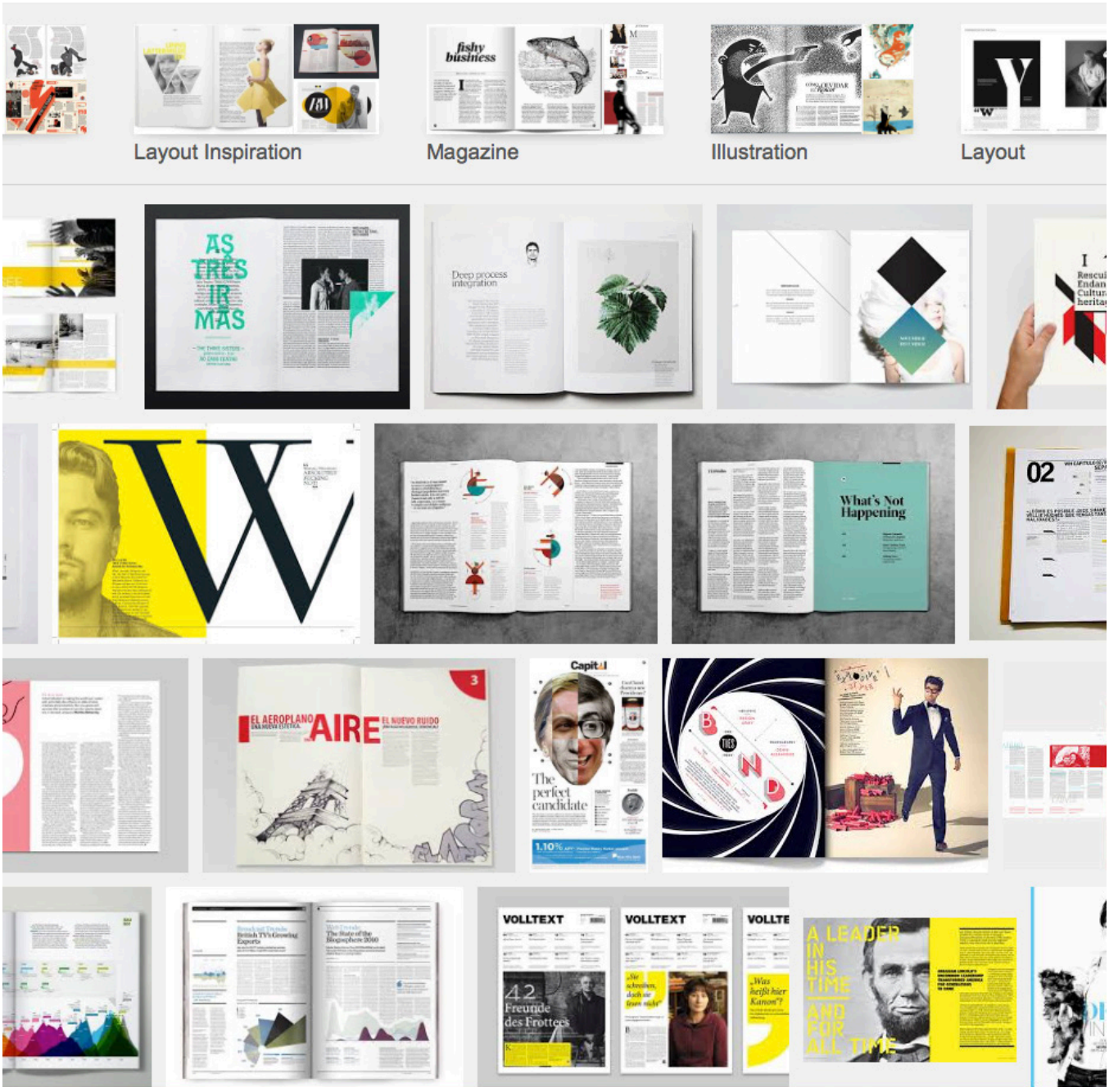
Unit 2: **Evaluation and Enhancement / Action Research Report**

Planned accidents

How do graphic design students utilise the internet for research?

Darren Leader



Unit 2: **Evaluation and Enhancement / Action Research Report**

Planned accidents
How do graphic design students utilise the internet for research?

abstract / distract

As educators we regard each new year of undergraduates as 'digital natives', individuals seemingly unafraid of the advances of technology but with little knowledge or experience of the world before the Internet. In the early 2000's, the online search engine and online community, 'Yahoo!' branded their audience as the 'digital generation' [1]; individuals connected to devices from an early age, leading a parallel life online where cyper-skills are perfected through constant online interactions of social and play. But how effective are their established skills when faced with academic challenges of research? This report endeavours to investigate how graphic design students at Norwich University of the Arts utilise the Internet for research. Where are they looking for inspiration? And does their multiple investigations provide extensive knowledge of the graphic design industry and its many specialisms. Have their established online habits, created short attention spans which result in limited lines of enquiry? Or can their established skills be enhanced to create improved methods of working and understanding.

Contents

1. Introduction	03
2. Literature Review	05
3. Methodology	07
4. Discussion	09
5. Conclusion	14
6. References	15
7. Bibliography	17
8. Appendices	18

Acknowledgements

Tina Barnes-Powell, PG Cert Tutor for encouragement and guidance.

Andi Sapey for setting the pace.

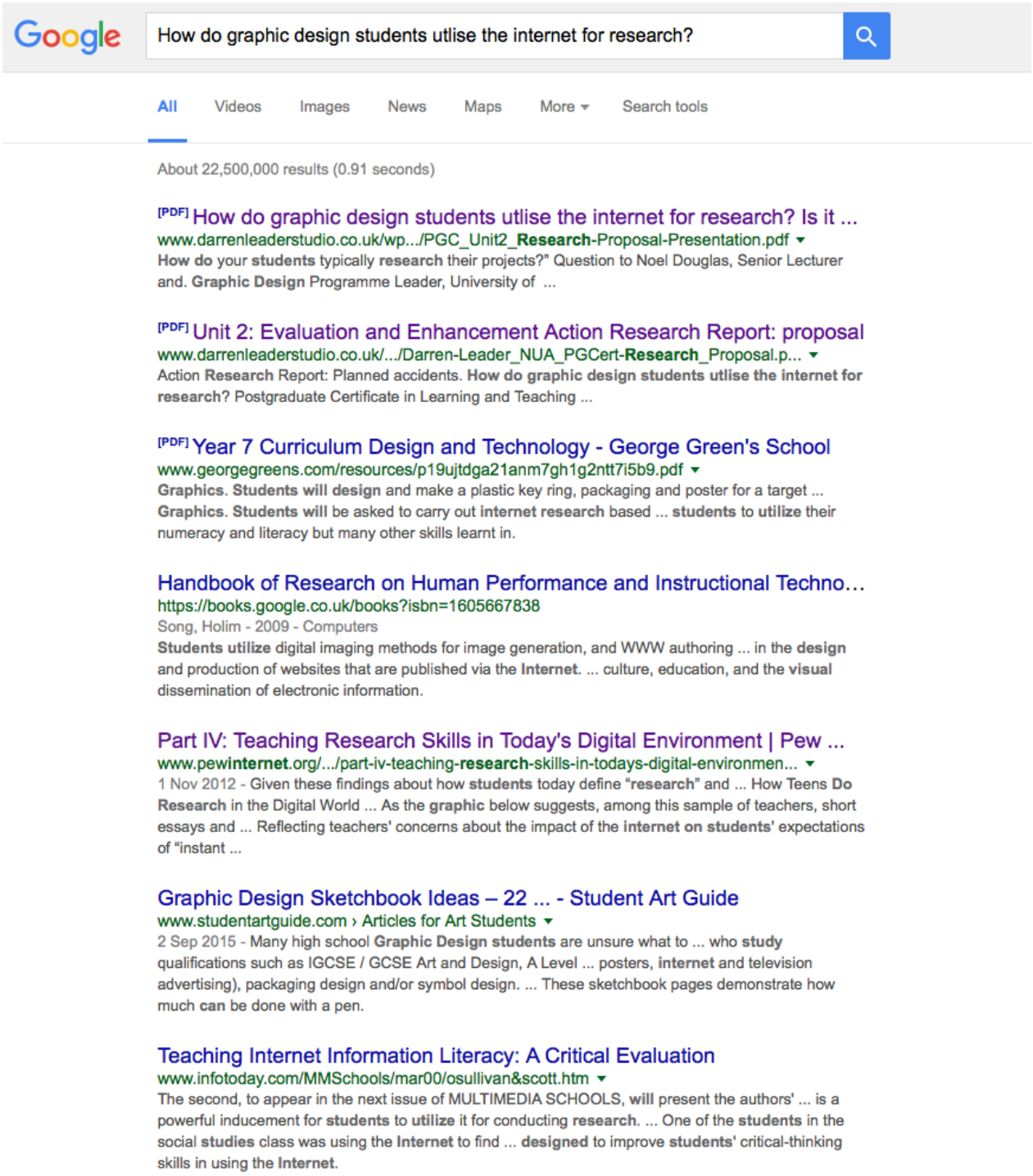
1. Introduction

Navigating the shallows

Students often judiciously follow recommendations from their tutors but it is not always clear how they independently research their projects and evaluate the results. And in some cases, limited online sources can be an occasional irritation for teaching staff. The subject leader for BA Graphic Communication at Norwich University of the Arts has previously referred to undergraduate graphic designers as the 'Behance generation'. Behance (www.behance.net) is an online space for creative portfolios which students choose to use as a research resource. Is it a manifest problem? For example, when finishing-up a tutorial, I randomly asked one particular student where they look for typographic inspiration. They made no reference to various work examples or named a favourite designer's web site. The vacant answer was, '…Behance'. Perhaps it is not that bad. Today's students know technology having used mobile devices from early adolescence. They are the 'digital generation', after all. However, when Noel Douglas, Senior Lecturer and Graphic Design Programme Leader at the University of Bedfordshire, was asked, "how do your students typically research their projects?". His weary answer was, "…Google images". [1]

How do graphic design students utilise the Internet for research? I Googled the answer. Two posts from my own blog (www.darrenleaderstudio.co.uk/pgcertjournal/start) was at the top of the list, but it was followed by a result from the Pew Research Center in the United States (www.pewresearch.org, 22.07.16). The link takes you directly to a report entitled, 'Teaching Research Skills in Today's Digital Environment' [2] which identified the concern that students have, "the inability to judge the quality of information, a skill the vast majority of teachers deem 'essential' for their students' future success". I was reassured to find another voice raising this issue, but who were the Pew Research Center and was their assessment trustworthy? Their site is certainly content-rich, detailing research in politics, social trends, science and technology. Click the 'about' section and it states, "Pew Research Center is a non-partisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. We conduct public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. We do not take policy positions". Cool. From there subheads such as 'mission', 'methods', 'people', 'funding', and 'history' progressively reassures the visitor to the Pew Research Center site that they can trust their work and motives. Like taking a book from a shelf, there was much to read. But additionally, opportunities to download reports, subscribe to a newsletter and sign up for alerts to the latest reports. This was the beginning and it was only the fifth entry from my Google search. Clicking back to the Google tab, I scrolled down the rest of the results, quickly discarding links which appeared to only tag [3] the keywords of my initial search. Then I had the impulse to leave the Pew Research Center site and check the news but knowing that what I really wanted was to have another coffee. Look out the window. Get distracted.

This report is not a concealed polemic against our brave new online world. However, it is an opportunity to discover how graphic design students at Norwich University of the Arts utilise the Internet for research. What are they looking at? Where do they find it? And does their multiple investigations provide extensive knowledge of the graphic design industry and its many specialisms. The 'Methodology' section of this report will detail an online workshop which measures how undergraduates use the Internet for research in the context of a typical course brief. The report will also chart the emergence of Web 2.0 [4] and the impact of its user-generated content. How trustworthy is the personal viewpoint of blogging compared to edited, curated content by trusted industry journals. And can there be a method to evaluate online content? Additionally, I want to identify if the increasing usage of social media is becoming a portal of influence. And if so, what is the ideal online persona to attract appropriate content. Click 'follow' and begin.



Above: Let's take a short-cut and ask Google,
"How do graphic design students utlise the internet for research?"

2. Literature review

In terms of education, we are currently living in a historical, transitional period where educators remember the world before the Internet, teaching students who were born into a society of constant data connectivity. The journalist Michael Harris regards those that remember the world of 'Before' [1] as digital immigrants, perhaps fearful of the new world but with valuable knowledge, "If we're the last people in history to know life before the Internet, we are the only ones who will ever speak, as it were, both languages. We are the only fluent translators of Before and After" (The End of Absence, Penguin 2014, P. 16). This gifts educators not only with a unique voice of experience, but an opportunity to guide students to utilise the Internet more effectively, rather than being spoon-fed by Google search results.

We cannot deny that the Internet is a powerful tool and its seismic impact on our behaviour is as revolutionary as the first printed word which educated and expanded the minds of the worldwide population. However there are implications to how we utilise this new technology. The author Nicolas Carr in his book, 'The Shallows' (Atlantic, 2011) fears that the Internet is re-wiring our brains to only absorb superficial understanding of complex information. In an academic context, we would previously immerse ourselves in books whose structure encourages concentration and stretches time as we read. However, the Internet speeds-up our engagement, as we search and survey multiple tabs of information.

Tara Brabazon, Professor of Media at University of Brighton is fearful of a student's over-reliance on the Internet not only as a research tool but also the speed of how we access its information, stating, "rapid reaction replaces thoughtful reflection" and "speed searching wipes away considered thought and planned research strategies" (The University of Google, Ashgate 2007). University education is a great opportunity for students to challenge their assumptions and transform the way they look at the world. However, those that choose to by-pass participation at university and discussion with their tutors and peers often regard their lap-top as a portal of education short-cuts. Tara Brabazon cites, "downloading information is a distinct experience from being challenged and critiqued", which highlights the importance of the tutorial [2] for discussion and workshop activity for meaningful learning experiences, "Google helps us find information, education helps us build knowledge". You tell them, Tara.

Implications of limited university engagement and the self-reliance of distance learning will be examined in the Discussion section of this report.

The Google search stated in the Introduction of this Report, found the survey report, "Teaching Research Skills in Today's Digital Environment' (www.pewresearch.org, 22.07.16). The Pew Research report is equally concerned with the easy access of instant information from the Internet and the impact on student research skills, stating: "some teachers worry about students' over-dependence on search engines; the difficulty many students have judging the quality of online information; the general level of literacy of today's students; increasing distractions pulling at students and poor time management skills; students' potentially diminished critical thinking capacity; and the ease with which today's students can borrow from the work of others". It also found some evidence of poor engagement with university facilities, "These teachers report that students rely mainly on search engines to conduct research, in lieu of other resources such as online databases, the news sites of respected news organisations, printed books, or reference librarians".

However, it would be a mistake for higher education to deny the advantages of technology and cling to the methods of established pedagogy. Martin Weller, Professor of Educational Technology at the Open University, explores in his book, 'The Digital Scholar' (Bloomsbury, 2012) the possibilities for new forms of scholarly practice with new technologies and firmly states, "it will never go back to the way it was". [3] Rather than rejecting the possibilities of the Internet, educators can be at the forefront of change and influence, "the people best placed to understand and adapt will be those who have immersed themselves in the current technological climate" (2012, P.167). Martin Weller is not only an educator but a blogger and makes prolific use of social media platforms such as Twitter. Which makes him part of the Web 2.0 development of the Internet, which represents the creation of user-generated content, open-source material (eg. Wikipedia) and the idea of freely sharing content [4] such as film, video or the recommendation of 'found' sources; such content is then linked across multiple sites, creating busy traffic and enables Google to rank the popularity of that information. However, the growth of blogging has lead to some of the issues highlighted by this report, and as Martin Weller states, a key issue for scholars, "how do they maintain and judge quality in a world where everyone is a broadcaster or publisher?" (2012, P.157). The comparison with professional journalism should also be considered, though Martin Weller argues that as the blogger is free of editorial control, "the blog post may provide more thoughtful and detailed analysis of the subject". Critically, students have to be aware of the difference and be encouraged to share such material for discussion at a university tutorial. When students research online it is vital they filter information, which suggests the importance for educators to provide the necessary scaffolding for students to critically challenge online content and define themselves as independent thinkers rather than consumer's of Google content.

Potential scaffolding for student research is proposed in the Methodology section of this report.

Wherever we are, the access to the Internet is close by; sleepless at night we will be pick up our mobile device, check our emails, open news pages, check random facts on Wikipedia if a question comes to mind, and swipe the time-lines of our Instagram and Twitter accounts. How many times do we repeat that cycle? Michael Harris explores the idea that our absence from the Internet is required for contemplation and from there, originality will spark [5]. And it is vital that students and educators make time for reflection to resolve creative problems. Our psychological states responds well to solitude, "The spaces in our lives that technologies filled in were never barren places after all. Those spaces were where we stored magic, our hope, and the longing that drove our striving souls" (2012, P.203).

Reclaiming our time for reflection is important for idea generation, reacting to the triggers of our research and the examination of our assumptions and creative enquiry. Switch off the Internet. Go outside and observe the world and human life. Think on.

In summary, the impact of the Internet has concerned a number of writers and educators; it appears to be an issue acknowledged but without the necessary scaffolding that students require to challenge their findings. And there is evidence that the reliance upon the Internet is taking some students away from university to work at home. And this strategy can often result in mediocre grades and degrees. However, the Internet is also a valuable addition to the tool-kit for both educator and student, supplementing enquiry, understanding and creative direction. The Internet also encourages us to consume information and participate in a wider, cyper-world of human culture and activity. When utilised effectively with critical judgement the Internet is an ingredient to enable independent, self-directed learning.

3. Methodology

Workshops are an ideal activity to encourage experiential learning, group discussion and problem solving. Students at Norwich University of the Arts follow a programme of workshops in the context of their courses and are familiar with the activity and communication skills required for a meaningful learning experience. A workshop entitled, 'How do graphic design students utilise the Internet for research?' has been created to track their research practices, from research as a form of 'Googling' compared with more direct online sources. Those results together with evidence of their usage of social media will be valuable to review and disseminate.

The workshop features the following five sections:

1. **Feeling lucky** – measuring a student's use of Google searches
2. **Habit** – identifying their first choice online sources
3. **Social** – recording the student's engagement with social media as a research tool
4. **Knowledge** – clarifying their established awareness of professional designers, studios or agencies
5. **Beyond** – lastly, what form does their research take after online searches

Please see the Appendices section of this report for a printed version of the workshop questions.

Candidates

Surveying the responses from year 1 and 2 students in BA graphic design study are of particular interest, as these student groups have a methodology of research established from previous courses (eg. A Level or Foundation courses). Year 3 students are expected to have established better research methods (especially after working with the teaching staff after two years) but in the past there has been examples of limited research methods online (www.behance.net – still the reliable crutch). Although the emphasis is upon the results from year 1 and 2, it would be an advantage to allow participation from individuals from year 3 who feel that it would benefit their learning and challenge their present research skills.

Problems

Unfortunately there are no results to report at present (August 2016). Unit 2 of the PGC had not been scheduled for the following academic year but instead scheduled for the summer months of May to August 2016. Consequently, Unit 2 clashed with Year 2 and 3 assessments, followed by the Norwich University of the Arts degree show. In addition, the graphics department delivered two prestigious London shows, the first for industry and the latter for the D&AD New Blood festival. Not forgetting the celebratory graduation ceremonies. At the end of the academic year and the delivery of such a busy schedule, tutors minds can be understandably fatigued and occupied by valuable reflection.

Having identified that year 1 and 2 students were ideal workshop candidates, it was quickly apparent that they had already finished their year of study and had promptly left for the summer break. An alternative was explored by changing the original candidates to further education students currently at sixth form or college and identified as feeder institutions to higher education (Norwich School, Paston Sixth Form and City College Norwich). However, having contacted teachers and course leaders, this route faltered when security permissions were required. Perseverance was being severely tested and time was running out.

We have a remedy

Devising the workshop to function online became the best option, not only being relevant to the subject matter but also requiring no teaching room or participation by members of teaching staff. The workshop could be completed by the student at home and at their convenience, with the objective to submit to deadline.

Please access at: www.darrenleaderstudio.co.uk/pgcert-online-research-workshop.

However, timing of the workshop remained an issue and it is recommended to implement the first workshop during the next academic year. This will be outlined in the Conclusion of this report.

Future critical evaluation

The educator, Tara Brabazon regards unchecked information gathered via search engines as, "white bread for the mind"[1] (Inaugural Lecture, 2008). An evaluation tool can also be devised to assist students with their online research and form critical judgement of the various results discovered, whether from search engines or links followed from social media. Such an evaluation tool could also be hosted online and feature the following criteria:

What to consider when assessing a found link:

1. Does the link originate from a trusted news source or industry journal?
2. Does the link originate from a direct source, such as a professional designer, studio or agency?
3. If the link originates from a blog, is it written by an individual or by on behalf of an organisation?
4. Examine their blog writer's profile and professional background
5. If the link originates from a blog, remember that its written content is an opinion or viewpoint

What to consider when looking at graphic design work on portfolio or inspiration sites:

1. Does the photo credit the designer, studio or agency?
2. Is there a project title and description, and does it include a link to the original designer's web site
3. Evaluate how appropriate the content is in the context of your research
4. Could the content be useful for future research, eg. typography or layout / publication or digital

What to consider when looking at the site of a designer, studio or agency:

1. Read their profile: who are they, what is their specialism and who are their clients
2. Are they award-winning or profiled by industry journals or blogs
3. How does their work compare with projects profiled by industry journals or organisation

This criteria will be updated accordingly, to accommodate changing trends or platforms in the future.

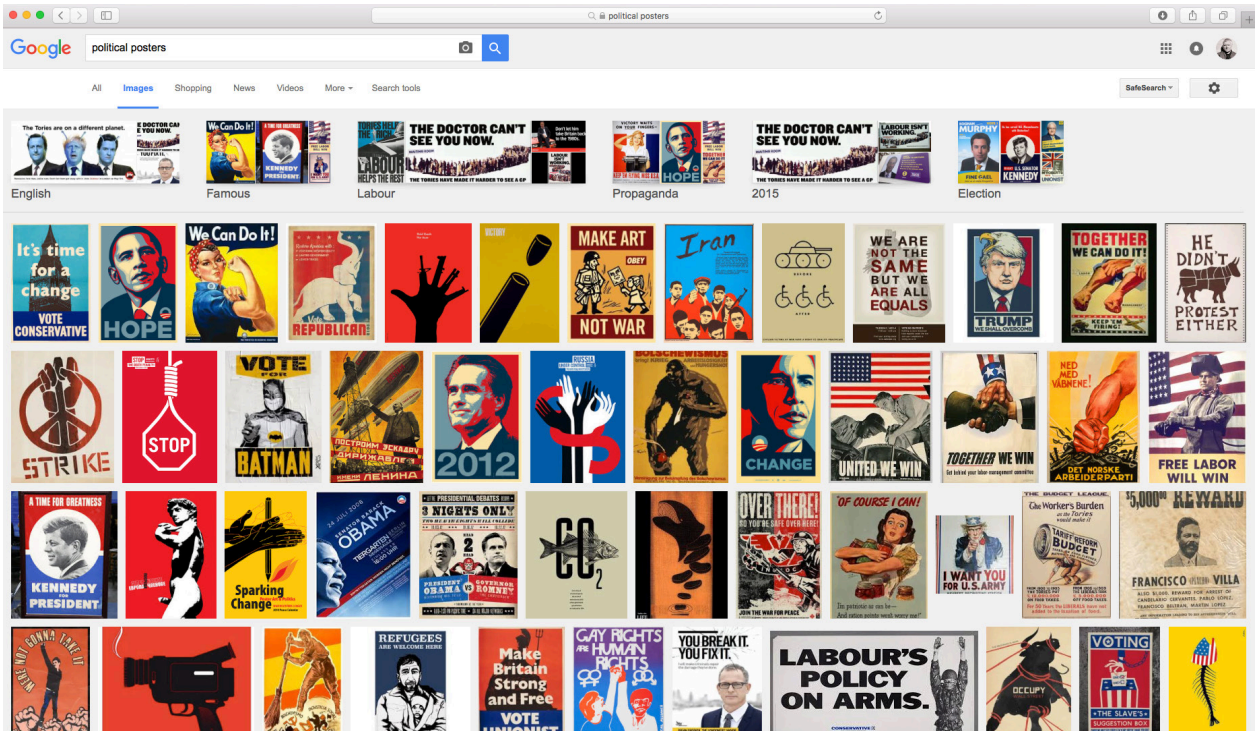
The evaluation tool could also include recommended links and advice on gathering visual material for personal reference, eg. collected jpegs on desktop for usage in research presentations at university. Copyright issues around photographic material will be important. The creation of the student's own photographic content in the context of blogs will be advised.

The potential application of the evaluation tool will be outlined in the Conclusion of this report.

4. Discussion

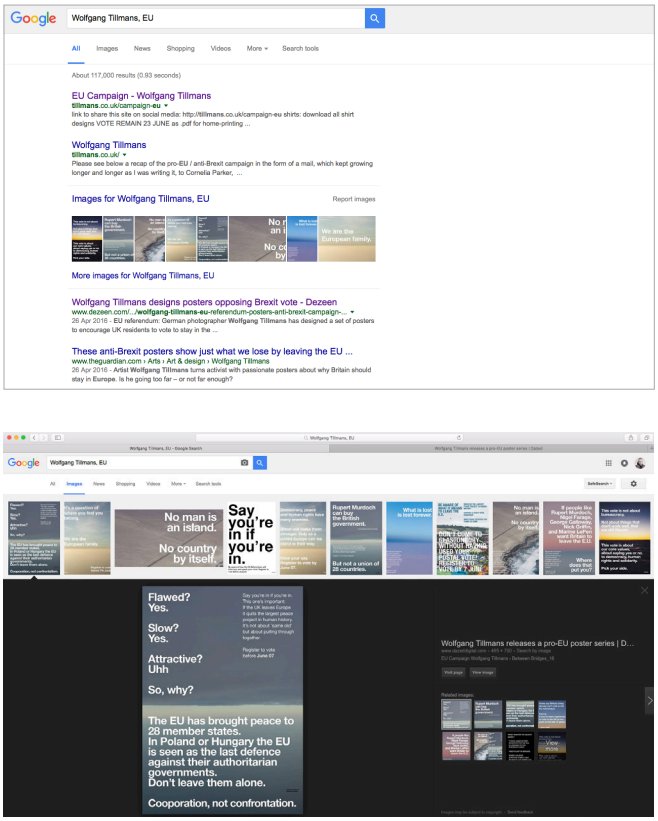
The question remains, 'How do graphic design students utilise the Internet for research?'.

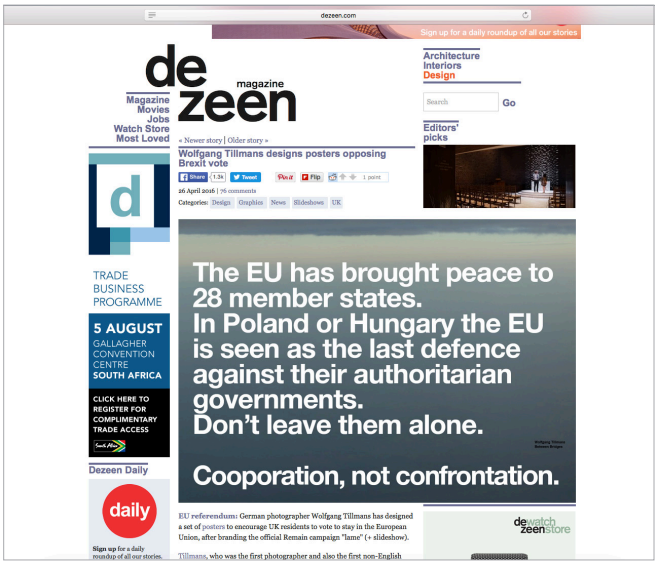
We can safely assume for a new subject area, a search engine will be firstly accessed. For example, if we try a Google search for 'political posters', it instantly delivers 31,800,000 results. The written listing of results can be over-whelming, so the next impulse is to click the Google 'images' tab, which reveals a multitude of vintage results, as well as suggested categories of 'English', 'Famous', Propaganda', '2015' and 'Election'. These category options are interesting, as they are encouraging the student researcher to broaden their search and use more effective keywords.



From here, students will be intuitively guided into a myriad of Google rabbit holes to visit the links which host their chosen images of interest. Next: critically evaluate and gather their visual ephemera, and take the results of their investigation to their next tutorial at university.

What is clear from this first research task is the abundance of materiel found, which necessitates the student to filter and judge how appropriate their results are to inform the next stage of their project brief. The next tutorial meeting will be crucial to challenge and discuss these research results, which will have informed the student on usage of language, engagement with issues and how its visual style has delivered the message. The tutorial could highlight a need for deeper investigation and recommendation of the next course of enquiry. For instance, the discussion could divert into the recent EU referendum and its usage of poster campaigns. In this context, I would recommend an investigation into the interventions made by the photographer, Wolfgang Tillmans. Search: 'Wolfgang Tillmans, EU'.





Above: **Meaningful research online; search results for 'Wolfgang Tillmans, EU', identifying the photographer's site and articles by reputable new organistations and critical journals.**

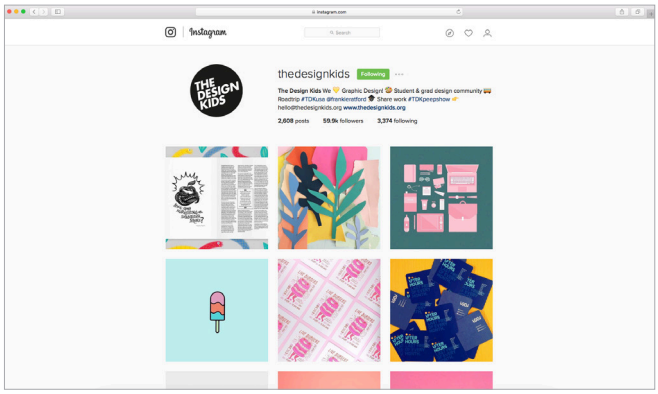
Importantly, the direct link to Wolfgang Tillman's site is at the top of the Google results which reveals the photographer's intentions and motivation for being involved in the EU referendum debate. It also details his dissatisfaction with the promotions by the Remain campaign and recommends usage of his own posters, free to use by individuals within their own communities. Further search results are also informative, linking our enquiry to articles by news organisations such as The Guardian and commentary by critical, cultural journals which create debate and form opinion. Recommended links, such as itsnicethat.com and dezeen.com broaden understanding, and become 'trusted' because of editorial scrutiny and intelligent writing. The educator Martin Weller cites Jurgen Habermas, a social philosopher and his comment, "critics, writers, academics regulate content and information for the masses", illustrating the need for trusted information.

However, the development of Web 2.0 has seen the proliferation of blogs by individuals often writing from the point of view of their own expertise or as independent observers and commentators. In these cases, students need to be aware of the distinction between blogs versus news and cultural journal sites and evaluate these sources accordingly. These independent viewpoints are still valid and broaden debate and commentary, it is advised that the student researcher to firstly read the blog writer's profile to evaluate their professional credentials, survey the variety of blog stories, its links to external sites and follow the writer's engagement via social media. Evaluation of such diverse content and communication will build their trust in the blogger's independent stand-point. Often, regular blog writing can elevate the perception of the writer to that of an 'expert' and as result become 'trusted' in the view of the reader. Additionally, within the graphic design industry, there are also many blogs which are visual portals of design appreciation and help nurture awareness of contemporary design projects and their practitioners. Blogs such as visuelle.co.uk and thisiscollate.com are a valuable sources for students to monitor and visit daily.

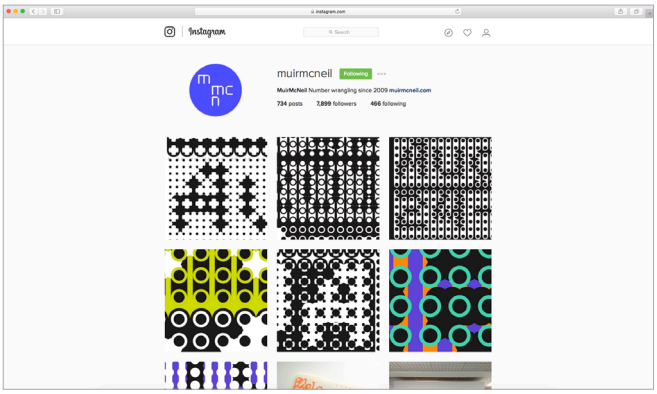
Planned accidents

The prominence of social media is another part of the development of Web 2.0 which initially was viewed as a frivolous pursuit, but when used effectively as a valuable research tool can enable unexpected discoveries and generate informative results. However, the student needs to engage with these channels by creating new accounts which separate the worlds of social and professional, and are dedicated to design appreciation and chart their own individual undergraduate development to professional practitioner. Instagram and Twitter are recommended platforms, and by following leading industry figures will create a lively and inspirational feed to check and the potential to follow links to unexpected and unplanned avenues of creative practice. By writing an informative profile, which includes a link to your own blog or website and posting your own creative content, soon provides evidence that you are worth following too. Over time you create your own worldwide network of practitioners and influencers who freely share inspiration and discoveries. Like attracts like.

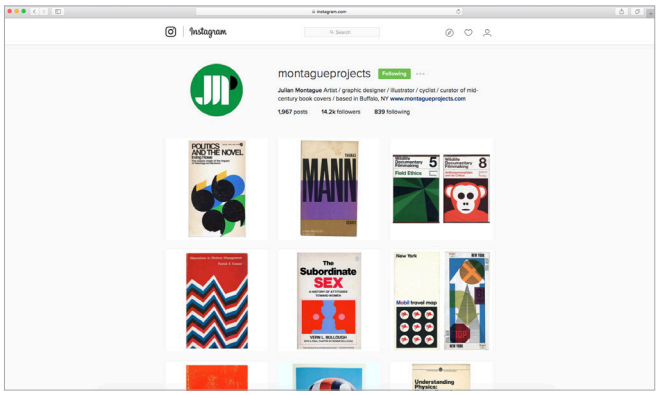
Below: Example links of graphic design appreciation, via Instagram.



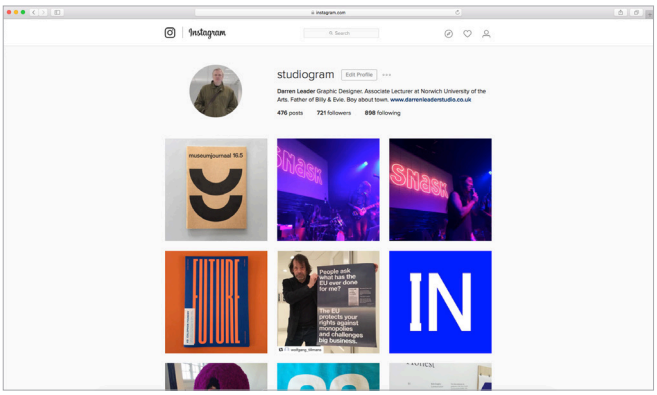
The Design Kids



Muir McNeil



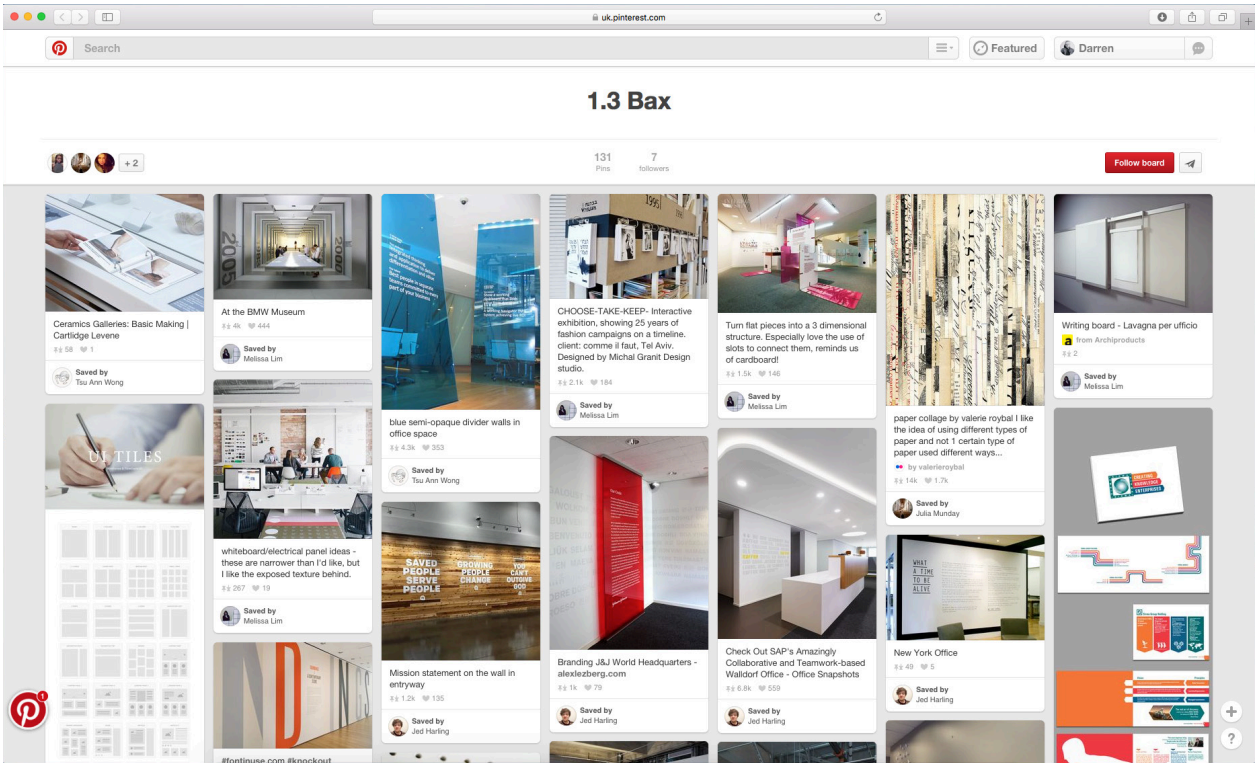
Montague Projects



Studiogram

Success for the hive mind

We can learn from the 'digital generation' too. At Norwich University of the Arts, a live industry brief for BA Graphic Communication Year 2, was briefed in response to a project set by Baxter Healthcare. Students were encouraged to form collaborative teams, share research duties, discuss ideas and assign roles working toward presentation to client. At each stage, the university tutorial process of review was maintained and it was here that one particular group presented their research results via the inspiration site pinterest.com. The group had created a dedicated Baxter Healthcare pinterest page which grouped together their visual research (http://pin.it/bHdcvlV). Impressively, all members of the group could contribute, sharing their discoveries to the group and 'be on the same page' when understanding the demands of the brief and setting the bar of their own creative ambition. Crucially, each image example featured a title, description and link to the original source, plus the name of the student who posted the discovery. The live brief was a tremendous success, with a sound foundation set by this research method. I took note.



Above: Year 2 group utlising Pinterest to share research for a live brief for Baxter Healthcare, an example of best practice,

Together stronger

Tara Brabazon, states in her book, 'The University of Google', (Ashgate 2007) that she is against, 'learning done via the Internet' or learning in isolation, and asserts that, "it is the relationship between teachers and students that configures an interpretative matrix around and through data." In my own teaching practise I have observed two strands of behaviour that begins in Year 2 and later manifests in Year 3: those that attend university and those that conduct their learning from home. There are probably circumstances that justifies non-participation (it is an expensive decision given the rising cost of tuition fees) but it is a risky strategy. The contingent who daily attend university often work collaboratively, support one another's learning and absorb every atom of information from tutorials, lectures and the facilities available from the university experience. They are mostly successful, gaining the degree that they have worked for and later the job they have striven for. As for the second category, Tara Brabazon was told by one design student, "I get uncomfortable sitting in a classroom where everyone is working at the same pace" (2007, P.60), which is mystifying given the nature of the graphic design industry but says a lot about the personal development of the student and their wish to withdraw. It is this group that every course wants to engage with and provide the scaffolding and support they require to succeed.

However, universities are exploring further methods of distance learning. Online courses are being made available by futurelearn.com where 'programme learners complete a series of short open courses and buy a certificate of achievement for each' (The Guardian, 'Moocs to earn degree credits for first time in UK at two universities', May 2016) [1]. Perhaps these are the answer for students who do not embrace the on campus learning experience. However I doubt how seriously employers in the graphic design industry would regard these qualifications, or more importantly the experience and world view of graduates who are reluctant to leave their bedrooms.

The three year degree course is a great opportunity to personally and professionally develop. The rewards are there to be enjoyed and worked for; it is the experience of the journey which results in the ultimate destination of employment.



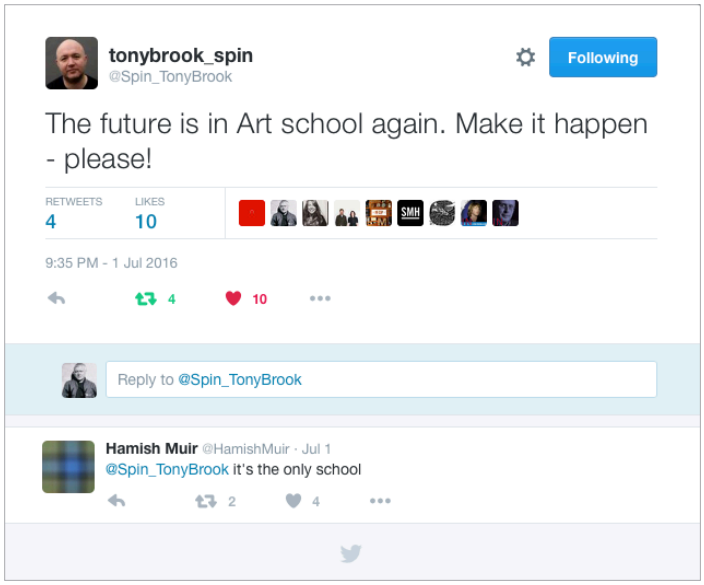
Above: **BA Graphic Communication Year 3 still working hard in the Studio as the weekend (and assessment) approaches.**

5. Conclusion

When new students arrive to study at an art school institution, their assumptions and practice is challenged and their development begins. Their understanding and experience is shaped by year 1 and from year 2, projects are set to broaden their understanding of industry, question societal issues and resolve communication of complex information. While educators are aware of dyslexia [1] in the literary skills of some students, it would be wrong to assume that all students can adequately utilise the Internet as a research device. In year 1 of the graphics course at Norwich University of the Arts there is a programme of workshops which covers typography, advertising and layout skills (for examples, visit www.darrenleaderstudio.co.uk/pgcertjournal/start), this report recommends that the graphics course would benefit from the introduction of a lecture and workshop which highlights the issues around the reliance of the Internet as a research tool and recommend better working methods.

The first action would be to run the workshop outlined in the Methodology section of this report and chart its results, which would build a case for a new addition to the course programme. Workshop questions can also be updated according to these results and then a new workshop run in every subsequent year. Retaining the initial workshop would be ideal as the experiential experience will enable students to examine their online research practices and reflect upon better approaches. The recommendation of the evaluation tool (also described in the Methodology section of this report) could also be expanded and become the template to check future online graphic design research.

Finally, the implications of this report goes beyond how students research online, but how they extend their investigation beyond the screen and access the facilities of the entire university. By urging students to analyse how they engage with the Internet and questioning the quality of their gathered material, would build confidence to share their findings. Hopefully this would also build a resistance to the urge to retreat home to singularly rely upon the Internet for their education. The prize of independence is gained by participation and being a part of the discussion with tutors and peers; it is the sound foundation to becoming a successful industry practitioner and creating challenging, progressive work which elevates the worldwide reputation of UK design education and industry.



6. References

Abstract / Distract

1. 'Yahoo!' the online community and guide to the wide world web, branded their audience the, 'digital generation'. This term was present in their marketing communications. I worked on their account in the early 2000s at the advertising agency, MBA, London.

1. Introduction: navigating the shallows

1. The question "how do your students typically research their projects?", was put to Noel Douglas, Senior Lecturer and Graphic Design Programme Leader at the University of Bedfordshire, at 'Unit Live', a Unit Editions event at Logan Hall in London, March 2016.

2. 'Teaching Research Skills in Today's Digital Environment' taken from www.pewresearch.org

3. Tag: a keyword or term assigned to information which describes an item enabling it to be found by browsing or searching. Also, popularly used as hash-tags in social media for grouping information and participation under one heading.

4. Web 2.0: known as the second stage of the Internet which features user-generated content and linking out to social media channels.

2. Literature Review

1. Michael Harris in his book, 'The End of Absence' (Penguin, 2014) defines the dividing line of the digital generation: "If you were born before 1985, then you know what life is like both with the Internet and without. You are making a pilgrimage from Before to After".

2. Tara Brabazon is a passionate advocate of the tutorial, stating, "the tutorial allows students to independently dialogue with their peers – connecting their research to the tutor's interpretation". ('The University of Google', Ashgate 2007).

3. "It will never go back to the way it was" ('The Digital Scholar', Bloomsbury, 2012) – Martin Weller refers here to the familiar academic practice of publishing research papers and established teaching practices – without technology. Surely established academic practice will naturally adapt, I do not think the methods of discussion and critique will disappear, even if it is not face-to-face. Though I dread the prospect of 'facetime' and screen-to-screen chat via Skype.

4. The idea of 'freely sharing content' is quickly becoming a fallacy, as the goodwill of credit and copyright are being asserted not only for photography but written content. Even music which was the victim to piracy, is now being regulated by subscribing to streaming sites such as Apple Music and Spotify. But in the early days of Web 2.0, copying and re-blogging other writer's content was rampant due to easy access via search engines.

5. Michael Harris is correct in the assumption that creativity is bourne of absence, "We need such absences in order to think and see for ourselves. Indeed, the kind of thoughts that present themselves in our emptiest moments – the moments when we stare out of train windows or hover on a lawn to monitor the sky – are the only thoughts that can deliver a strange new understanding" ('The End of Absence', Penguin 2014).

3. Methodology

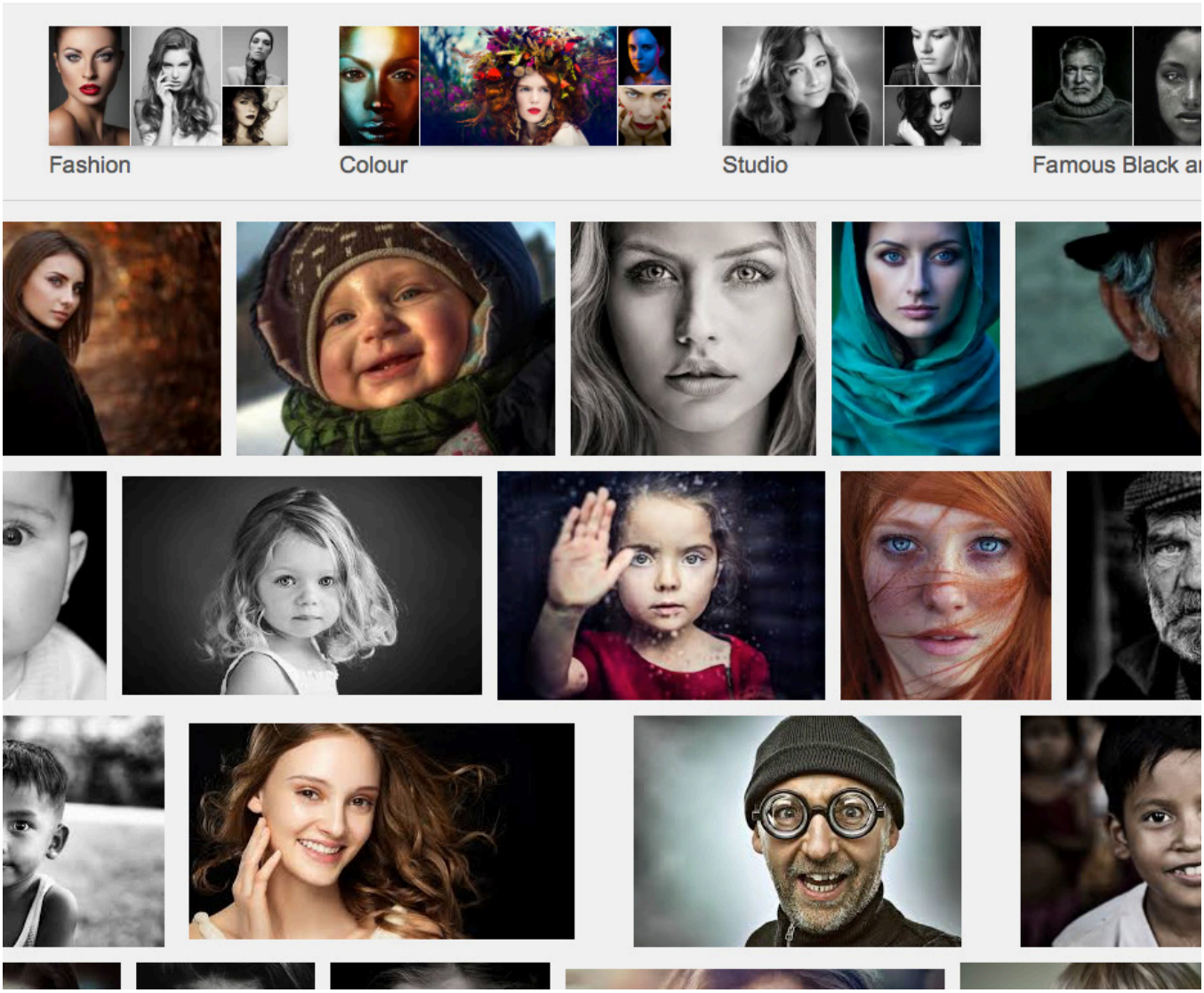
1. In 2008, Tara Brabazon delivered an Inaugural Lecture entitled, “Google is White Bread of the Mind”: www.theguardian.com/education/2008/jan/22/academicexperts.highereducationprofile

4. Discussion

1. The Guardian, ‘Moocs to earn degree credits for first time in UK at two universities’, May 2016: www.theguardian.com/education/2016/may/26/moocs-earn-degree-credits-first-time-two-uk-universities

5. Conclusion

1. Dyslexia is recognised as a problem for learning at university, but support can be inconsistent across some institutions. The need to support students by helping to reduce stress and provide the necessary scaffolding is critical to their learning experience and confidence to succeed. This student’s experience is worth reading: www.theguardian.com/education/mortarboard/2013/oct/14/more-support-for-dyslexic-students



7. Bibliography

'The End of Absence', Michael Harris (Penguin, 2014)
'The Digital Scholar', Martin Weller (Bloomsbury, 2011)
'The Shallows', Nicolas Carr (Atlantic, 2010)
'The University of Google', Tara Brabazon (Ashgate, 2007)

Site links:

www.pewresearch.org
www.theguardian.com/education/2008/jan/22/academicexperts.highereducationprofile
www.theguardian.com/education/mortarboard/2013/oct/14/more-support-for-dyslexic-students

Unit 2 Journal:

www.darrenleaderstudio.co.uk/pgcertjournal/start

8. Appendices

Includes:

1. A Brief History of the Internet: 'game changers' and 'must-haves'

2. 'How do graphic design students utilise the internet for research?' – first draft questions

The workshop can be viewed and taken online at:
www.darrenleaderstudio.co.uk/pgcert-online-research-workshop

3. Report references of Descriptor 2 (Teacher Fellow)
Demonstrating engagement with the UKPSF

1. A Brief History of the Internet: 'game changers' and 'must-haves'

The development of the Internet has taken place during our professional careers and during the lifetime of our students. Here's a selections of the key moments of change:

- **1994** – Yahoo! The guide to the world wide web launches
- **1995** – AltaVista the first search engine for online content
- **1996** – Hotmail offers users their own email accounts, 'You've got mail'
- **1997** – Google another search engine for online content starts to take over
- **1997** – Links.net first blogging platform arrives
- **1999** – Blogger the popular blogging platform launches
- **2001** – Wikipedia the open-source site for the history of everything
- **2003** – Wordpress the popular blogging platform launches and soon becomes a popular website platform
- **2003** – Apple iTunes launches
- **2004** – Myspace one-time popular site for musicians to enage their fanbase
- **2004** – Facebook launches and asks you to upgrade your timeline and profile
- **2005** – Youtube launches enabling upload of user-generated film content, and stamps on copyright
- **2006** – Twitter the social media platform to post your messages with 142 character limit
- **2006** – Behance the online portfolio site launches
- **2007** – Tumblr the image based blogging site which can be customised by the user
- **2007** – Apple iPhone launches
- **2010** – Instagram app for image sharing and posting quickly becomes a success
- **2013** – Snapchat the app for temporary image sharing: enjoy the time-limit
- **2016** – Pokaman Go app breaks the record for the most downloads in one week since launch

2. ‘How do graphic design students utilise the internet for research?’ – first draft questions

PGCert Unit 2: Research task

Name:

Course: **Year:**

BRIEF

How do you intutively navigate the internet as a research tool?

How deep or brief is your investigation and how many unexpected discoveries do you make? To gauge how you typically research online, you are tasked with finding exemplars of editorial design within contemporary practice, with a focus on independently published titles. The objective of your research is to discover and document magazines that feature innovative examples of typography, layout and photography or illustration.

Independent magazines cover a variety of specialisms, such as:

Arts	**Design**	**Fashion**	**Food**	**Lifestyle**	**Literature**
Sport	**Men**	**Music**	**Women**	**…and many more**	

You can research across all these subject areas, or narrow your investigation if you wish.

Please state your understanding of an independent magazine:

Please complete the following five sections:

1. HABIT **2. SOCIAL** **3. KNOWLEDGE** **4. FEELING LUCKY** **5. BEYOND**

Please turn over

PGCert Unit 2: Research task

SECTION ONE: HABIT

Do you have a favourite site that you typically visit first for inspiration?
Please state (if more, please list in order of preference):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Once in your site of choice, please list discoveries relevant to your research:

What is your next action?
Please state how you document your findings:

How often do you conduct research during a typical project?

PGCert Unit 2: Research task

SECTION TWO: SOCIAL

Do you typically use social media as a research tool? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
If yes, please state:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

If you find examples of relevant interest, do you search and click external links? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If you did click external links, please state the social media site:

_____

Please list external links.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please turn over

PGCert Unit 2: Research task

SECTION THREE: KNOWLEDGE

Prior to your search online, have you identified a specialist designer, studio or agency? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

How were they found?

☐ **general knowledge** ☐ **recommendation** ☐ **found in print media**

If your answer is yes, please state the name of the specialist:

Please list the links of your successful search results, relevant to your research:

How important do you think it is to identify industry practitioners?

☐ **Very important** ☐ **Sometimes important** ☐ **Not important**

How important do you think it is to identify industry practitioners from history?

☐ **Very important** ☐ **Sometimes important** ☐ **Not important**

Do industry practitioners influence your work? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

PGCert Unit 2: Research task

SECTION FOUR: FEELING LUCKY

Do you search Google by: ☐ **Keyword** ☐ **Question** ☐ **Both**

Please list your keywords or questions

If your keyword search or question was successful, please list the links relevant to your research:

Please turn over

PGCert Unit 2: Research task

SECTION FIVE: BEYOND

This section deals with how you typically progress your research offline.

Which of the following do you reference during a typical project?

☐ **books** ☐ **industry magazines** ☐ **printed examples of best practice**

☐ **tutor recommendation** ☐ **peer recommendation**

During this current year of your course, have you had the opportunity to contact a designer within the industry directly?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If yes, how did you make contact: ☐ **email** ☐ **social media** ☐ **or was it organised by the university**

Did they respond? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Please detail the context of your dialogue and their recommendations:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH TASK.

3. Report references of Descriptor 2 (Teacher Fellow)

Abstract / Distract

Paragraph 1: A1, A2, A4, A5, K3, V1, V4

1. Introduction: navigating the shallows

Paragraph 1: A2, A3, A5, K3, K4, V1, V3, V4
Paragraph 2: K1, K4, K6, V3, V4
Paragraph 3: A1, A4, K3, K4, K6, V3, V4

2. Literature Review

Paragraphs 1–7: A1, A2, A4, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, V1, V2, V3, V4

3. Methodology

Paragraph 1: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, V1, V3

Paragraph 2: A1, A2, V1

Paragraphs 3–4: K2, K4, V3

Paragraph 6–7: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, V1, V3

4. Discussion

Paragraphs 1–3: A1, A2, A3, K1

Paragraph 4: K4

Paragraph 5: K2, K3, K4

Paragraph 6: K1, K3, K4, K6

Paragraph 7–8: V2, V4

5. Conclusion

Paragraphs 1–3: A1, A2, A4, K6, V2, V4