

7.1 Graphic Design

Graphic design is the process of creating visual media by combining text and graphics to effectively convey a message, usually for commercial purposes (such as marketing). Product packaging, logos, business cards, invoices, and books are all products of graphic design.

Effective graphic art serves the purpose intended by the designer and clearly communicates a specific message to the viewer. To do this, graphic design projects should begin with the following considerations:

- *Purpose of the design* (advertisement to get attention, brochure to inform the public, packaging to encourage purchase);
- *Characteristics of the audience* (culture, preferences, needs); and
- *Media to be used* (print, electronic).

7.1.1 Elements of Design

If you think about a graphic art project as though it is a recipe, then the Elements of Design represent the ingredients. The Principles of Design (discussed on pages 175–178) act as the recipe's instructions by explaining how to use each of these ingredients effectively. When elements and principles combine on a real or virtual page, the result is a composition. The principles and elements described on the following pages are relevant for both print and electronic (Internet and multimedia) composition. Use them as guides to create effective communication projects that are professional and pleasing to the eye.

7.1.1.1 Colour

Colour is a powerful component of design. It not only adds visual appeal, but is also important because of the message it sends.

When you select colours, consider their symbolism in relation to your desired audience. Reactions to colour are determined by a combination of factors: culture is one of them. If your audience includes people of a variety of cultures, make an effort to understand what meanings those cultures associate with colour. Figure 7.1 provides a chart describing the cultural significance of various colours.









Colours vary by hue (the shade or tint, e.g., red, green, yellow, violet, blue), value (the degree of lightness or darkness), and intensity (the strength of the brightness). Figure 7.2 on page 175 shows the colour wheel that graphics designers use.

Even with carefully selected colours for an electronic graphic design project, remember that what you see on your screen may not be what others see on their screens. To minimize problems caused by monitor display inconsistencies, it is important to understand the causes of those problems. If you use the 216 browser-safe colours, images will look good and will not dither, though this still does not guarantee that they will appear as intended for all viewers. Dithering is an automatic process that approximates colour and shading (using the smaller, 216-colour palette) when software cannot display the full range of colours in an image.

Since prehistoric times, people have searched for ways to give visual form to ideas and concepts, to store knowledge in graphic form, and to bring order and clarity to information. Over the course of history, these needs have been filled by various people, including scribes, printers, and artists. It was not until 1922, when the outstanding book designer William Addison Dwiggins coined the term "graphic design" to describe his activities as an individual who brought structural order and visual form to printed communications, that an emerging profession received an appropriate name.

— Philip B. Meggs in *A History of Graphic Design*

Figure 7.1
Colour and Cultural
Significance

Colour	Cultural Significance
 Red	<p>China — symbol of celebration and luck, used in many cultural ceremonies that range from funerals to weddings</p> <p>India — purity (used in wedding outfits)</p> <p>Western cultures — Christmas colour when combined with green; Valentines Day when combined with pink; indicates stop (danger) at traffic lights</p> <p>Eastern cultures — signifies joy when combined with white</p>
Yellow	<p>Asia — sacred, imperial</p> <p>Western cultures — joy, happiness, or cowardice</p>
 Blue	<p>Western cultures — strength, trust, serenity</p> <p>China — associated with immortality</p> <p>Colombia — associated with soap</p> <p>Hindus — the colour of Krishna</p> <p>Jews — holiness</p> <p>Middle East — protective colour</p> <p><i>* Note: Blue is often considered to be the safest global colour.</i></p>
 Orange	<p>Ireland — religious significance (Protestant)</p> <p>Western cultures — inexpensive goods, Halloween (with black), indicates caution at traffic lights</p>
 Green	<p>China — studies indicate this is not a good colour choice for packaging, green hats mean a man's wife is cheating on him</p> <p>France — studies indicate this is not a good colour choice for packaging</p> <p>India — the colour of Islam</p> <p>Ireland — religious significance (Catholic)</p> <p>Some tropical countries — associated with danger</p> <p>Western cultures — indicates go (safe) at traffic lights, environmental awareness, St. Patrick's Day, Christmas colour (red and green)</p>
 Purple	Western cultures — royalty
 Gray	Western cultures — loneliness, lifeless and loveless times or settings
 Brown	<p>Colombia — discourages sales</p> <p>Western cultures — earth, home outdoors, simplicity</p>
White	<p>Eastern cultures — mourning, death</p> <p>Japan — white carnations signify death</p> <p>Western cultures — purity (used in weddings)</p>
 Black	Western cultures — mourning, death; or power, sophistication

Adapted from webdesign.about.com.

Interesting facts about the use of colour in graphic design include:

- Colour visuals increase a person's willingness to read by up to 80 percent (Green 1984).
- Colour enhances learning and improves retention of presented information by more than 75 percent (Loyola University School of Business 1999).
- Colour advertising out-sells black and white by 88 percent. (Loyola University School of Business 1999).

Question :

On a separate sheet of paper, list and explain 10 things that you learned from the article. This could be definitions, facts, etc.

Before You Use Graphics in Desktop Publishing



From Jacci Howard Bear,
Your Guide to Desktop Publishing.
About.com

You think you have found the almost-perfect image on a Web site but it's not quite the right size. You make it bigger and suddenly it looks awful. You send it to a friend but they can't open it. You've hit several of the possible snags encountered when using graphics in desktop publishing. There's more to using graphics than finding a picture that you like.

Understand Graphic Formats

There are two basic formats: bitmap or pixel-based and vector. Web or screen display uses bitmap images. Print projects can use either format. Photographs are bitmap or pixel-based images. Clip art can come in either format. Bitmap images do not resize easily or cleanly and are best used at the size at which they were created. Vector images resize easily and with less distortion. They can be used at very large or very small sizes without loss of quality most of the time.

Choose Graphics File Formats

Most graphics file formats are either bitmap or vector. GIF, PCX, JPG, and TIFF are bitmap examples. Vector file formats include EPS, CGM, PICT, and WMF. For the Web, low-resolution GIF and JPG are the most common formats. For commercial desktop publishing TIF (bitmap) and EPS (vector) are the preferred formats. Other formats, while suitable for desktop printing, may not give good results or be incompatible with the software or resolution requirements of commercial printing.

Choose Graphics Software

Most print publishing needs an illustration program and an image editor for graphics. Some programs may incorporate features of both, but for most professional work you'll need each one. Each type of graphics program works primarily with either bitmap or vector images. Adobe Photoshop is an example of an image editor that works with GIF, JPG, TIF, and other bitmap graphics file formats. CorelDRAW is an example of an illustration program used primarily for EPS and other vector file formats.

Use the Right Color

The two most common color models are RGB and CMYK. In RGB, the color of the Web, images are displayed using combinations of Red, Green, and Blue. It's OK (and often preferable) to work with images in RGB format in your software. But when it comes time to have those graphics commercially printed they need to be converted to CMYK before placing the images in your desktop publishing document. Your graphics software can easily handle this task.

Questions:

- 1) What format are photographs normally in? What is the major disadvantage of this format?
- 2) Describe vector images. What program is often used with these types of graphics?
- 3) What colour model is used for most of the graphics found on the web?