

Instructions

ASSIGNMENT SHEET 1 SEPT. 2011

Creative people often write instructions that other people interpret:

- A composer writes a score, but the piece only becomes music with the help of musicians who interpret that score during performances.
- Architects draw plans and write specifications, which contractors use as a guide for construction.
- A restaurant's executive chef creates recipes, but line chefs prepare dishes for daily services, responding to the needs of the dining room and the quality of the ingredients available.
- Playwrights create scripts, but those scripts only come to life with the work of directors and actors.
- Television screenwriters enjoy more control over their work than film writers, but even so, their stories are also shaped by directors, actors, cinematographers, and editors.

The interaction designer writes scripts, of a sort, but the players are even more varied than on stage. Users choose their own paths through websites; content editors add new material; browsers and hardware vary. Some users might not be able to see; others could be browsing without a mouse.

In this world, a designer's vision shifts to a larger scale: not the layout of a particular article, but a recipe for making many articles; not a series of pages held together by a sewn binding, but a logical structure that describes how pages connect conceptually.

This assignment explores ways of offering and interpreting instructions.

Part 1 Choose an article on the NPR website. Conceive of an idea for a “cover” for the article, one that both identifies the piece and expresses the ideas behind it. The cover may include any text or images; the cover must include the original title. It should be something that a designer can create in no more than 90 minutes.

COVER SPECIFICATIONS:
8 in. × 8 in. trim size
black + white or color

Do not create the cover. Instead, draft a set of instructions that tells another designer how to produce the cover. Your instructions may take any form.

DELIVERABLES. One set of instructions for creating a cover.

DUE: 8 Sept. (Give your instructions to another student.)

Part 2 You will be given another student’s instructions, chosen at random. Follow the instructions and make a cover. Do not consult with the original designer for clarification, help, or approval. You are not required to spend more than 90 minutes on this task.

DELIVERABLES. One cover (see specifications).

DUE: 15 Sept. (Present your own instructions, as well as the cover that you have created.)