Commenting on society is a fulfilling opportunity, and a necessity in the modern world for every individual. Society designs technologies, systems and opportunities to satisfy desires as well as suppress them. Some designs are invisible design and others are transparent design.

A STUDY OF DESIGN HAS PROVEN TO BE A COMMENTARY ON SOCIETY, NOT MERELY A COLLECTION OF COMMENTS ON COMMON AESTHETICS AND RESPONSIBLE MOTIVATIONS WITHIN THE BROADLY DEFINED INSTITUTION OF DESIGN.

Efficient outlets for commenting on society are growing in demand in The UNITED STATES, and the rest of the world. To grasp ones own place in society, society at large must be examined. All people should be critical of themselves, others like them, others whom they think are similar, and of people who are completely foreign. Positive attributes of transparency must be illuminated. Many people hide their true feelings for fear of being wrong when often wrong or right are not applicable to their feelings and thoughts. Forming an opinion to a certain topic, in any area of life, is not something that must be a personal or secret experience. If it is understood that ones ideas are based on the particular experiences of their life then those thoughts should invite questioning, not dismissal. Expressing commentary and criticism in all aspect of life will enlighten those with the desire. I do not claim to have attained a mastery of all the subjects I wish to study and critique, with the proper design this can facilitate further dialogue and improvement of all kinds for myself, those close to me, and potentially those foreign to me.

Complexities in everyday living are only an illusion, opinions in every facet of life should be developed to gain autonomy and affect reality. The formation of no opinion is nearly equivalent to condoning the issue at hand. Allowing ones self to be effected by an outside force without understanding the force is a mindless decision. A person is no longer being controlled when an understanding of outside forces is gained through expression of effectively critical perspectives. One can imagine and assess potential consequences of an event or an experience when critically engaged.

IF WE DON'T COMMENT ON SOCIETY NOTHING WILL KEEP IT UNDER CONTROL. DESIGNS RESTRICTING AND MISDIRECTING CRITICAL THINKING EXIST IN POPULAR CULTURE.

Through the study of design and art one is able to grasp historic events as well as their social context. The historic creation of mass produced automobiles is a phenomenon that has shaped our world in myriad forms. The time in which this event occurred is a period that few can relate with. I for one can barely imagine a world without cars or the perpetual creation of new varieties of cars, or the promotion of these endless variations through forms of media barley imaginable by anyone of the time. Critical perspectives of the history of car design, styling, restyling, and advertising suggest the necessity of such aspects of car making exist solely to perpetuate profit for manufactures, although manufactures would claim alternative reasons such as consumer demand and ergonomics.

The effect of new media in peoples lives is another event which profoundly altered human relations and perceptions. Forming respected opinions is a daunting task in the world today in part due to this media and the industries it supports. Countless points of view exist counter to main

stream media even in small geographic areas. Change in pubic opinion does not take place if negativity is not expressed and received communally, television complicates this process. If people are not informed of injustice it can easily be concealed, become invisible, or become a part of daily life.

The opportunity and the ability to express a meaningful opinion in a ubiquitous open forum is necessary in todays world. The few at the top who hear one voice of opposition must not be given a chance to imagine it to be atypical of the beliefs that would be shared if the masses were given a chance to become enlightened. Do those in charge prefer people to remain without a voice or to have their voice distorted by false ideals?

One key area of society that perpetuates false ideals is Television. Television programing does not truly cater to the demands of viewers. Television executives decide what to show people, and how much to charge for it. Television programing is however our fault. By allowing television broadcasts (and internet access) to be controlled commercially by cable operators, such as Comcast or Time Warner, the people have said they are not interested in affecting the broadcasts.

Complacency can be a receptively vocal statement.

Television can be a broadcasting medium for the people, it is not a technology that inherently demands exclusion, neither is the internet. A limited amount of influential players do however control television and internet access.

Not only do they own 40 percent of the most popular programming, but of the top 26 channels in terms of subscriber and prime-time ratings, all but one (the Weather Channel) is affiliated with either a principal cable operator or a broadcast network [USPIRG (U.S. Public Interest Research Groups) 11].

By paying ever increasing monthly subscription rates viewers are supporting every aspect of television programing. Believing higher prices are warranted because of higher costs to cable operators or due to increased cost of improved service is a fallacy.

According to FCC data, price increases have occurred even on a per-channel basis. . . Advertising revenues and revenues from New Services more than cover any programming cost increases. [11]

People must develop a voice on these issues and they must demand opportunities to participate in local television broadcasts of their own. Television can become an empowering media of the people.

After becoming comfortable attaining knowledge by utilizing the internet, one would likely find it difficult to comment on society with out its use. The internet can at times serve to make intentions more transparent, but it can also distort reality as television does so often. The internet ultimately presents users with innumerable resources of great value, control and censorship of this resource is just as debilitating as control and censorship of television. With out the internet my ability to access the open letter from Ben Davis of Buy (Less) Crap to Bobby Shriver, co-creator of Product (Red) would have been much more difficult. Finding this quote from Shriver, nephew of John F. Kennedy, and brother-in-law to Arnold Schwarzenegger, commenting on Product (Red) would likely have been even harder,

We don't want anyone to be thinking, I'm not making money on this thing, because then we failed. We want people buying houses in the Hamptons based on this because, if that happens, this thing is sustainable. [Co creator of Product (Red)] A mentality of greed spreads throughout a society in which little engagement occurs with important issues such as freedom of speech and equal rights to resources.

technologies

New avenues for broadcasting ones personal beliefs are growing in popularity. Are new technologies creating an environment to facilitate meaningful social commentary?

People all over the globe are searching for alternatives to attaining and broadcasting information. The internet is a powerful choice of expression for many. In addition to the opportunities presented by traditional web domains and social communities on the internet, personal and communal blogs are growing in numbers, YouTube, who's slogan is, "Broadcast Yourself", has been increasing in popularity for almost four years, all while national newspaper circulation rates and advertising revenues are declining with increasing speed (1, 2). YouTube is designed to facilitate the easy uploading and sharing of video. There is no limit to who can participate in YouTube, although it has in the past been temporarily banned by governments in China, Iran, Morocco, and Thailand, and is currently blocked in Turkey (36).

Youtube has a diverse range of content catering to as diverse an audience as can be imagined. The only theme that exists throughout YouTube is self expression. Not all choose to actually express unique thoughts or experiences, but by placing any content on the internet for viewing some type of commentary takes place.

The ease of access YouTube presents is revolutionary. The design of the site is aimed at user interaction. A person who has never used the internet, if directed to YouTube, could manage to play and search for videos matching some of their interests, perhaps a person who had never even used a computer could understand how to play videos. YouTube aims to have a transparent design.

YouTube is truly a medium of expression for the people. Some censorship does take place on Youtube, however copyright boundaries are crossed very often directly and indirectly through YouTube. Many full episodes of television shows are posted on YouTube (often in parts) or videos are posted informing viewers how to access the show on the web. YouTubers post video tutorials relevant to all areas of life. YouTube empowers people with the rights to broadcast social commentary to a wide audience, commercial television denies this opportunity and the FCC denies the potential of radio serving this purpose.

IF MEN WERE TO HAVE FREE ACCESS TO RADIO WAVES AND THEIR TRANSMISSION AND RECEPTION, THE STATE'S POWER WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED. MEN WOULD BE ABLE TO FREELY PROPAGATE POINTS OF VIEW THAT COUNTER THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STATE OR EVEN QUESTION ITS EXISTENCE. TO HAVE FREEDOM IN RADIO IS ANATHEMA TO THE STATE. IN ORDER TO RID THEMSELVES OF THE POTENTIAL THREAT, STATES HAVE TRUMPED UP THE PUBLIC INTEREST "NEED" TO HAVE STATE OWNERSHIP OF RADIO FREQUENCY BANDS. (JOHN COBIN, PH.D. FOR THE TIMES EXAMINER, 25)

Skype, and similar applications, empower people with the right to communicate freely, telephone companies and cable operators deny this opportunity. Cable operators now control the rights to television broadcasts, and also to internet access. The internet presents many opportunities for

effective communication. With the combination of radio transceivers and the internet, free communication could take place on almost any two points on the globe, with enough skill and ingenuity.

Users can connect their ham radio transceivers to their PC sound card and use the computer software to search for available repeater stations across the world. No longer are ham radio fans limited to the closest repeater station. If you live in Indiana, you can call into a repeater station in Mozambique and chat with local amateur radio afficionados instantly. (26)

Skype manages to do almost as good as Indiana to Mozambique; as long as there is an internet connection Skype allows people with this free software to communicate for free. Skype doesn't just allow textual messaging in real-time but also voice and video messaging if a users system can support a basic microphone, speakers, and a video camera. Skype can connect people in distant parts of the globe. Skype is far from ubiquitous, but Skype and Jaxtr both boast of having tens of millions of users, "if you're a Jaxtr user, you can now generate a local phone number for anyone and [a] call is then routed over VoIP" (27). Using Jaxtr is free in some cases, but rarely cost more than US \$0.50/min (plus a small connection fee). To call from a cell phone in the U.S. to a mobile phone in Germany costs US \$0.152/min. and US \$0.016/min to a land line. Subscriptions using this service are useful but free calls are available using VoIP (Voice over Inernet Protocol) in many forms. VoIP can even be integrated directly into websites, blogs, email services (like Gmail), and social groups like MySpace and Facebook.

The internet has facilitated creation of services that offer many unique opportunities to broadcast ones self in many forms. The internet is in this way similar to older forms of over-the-air broadcasts. Radio waves have presented the possibility to receive audio and video in various forms throughout history, theses possibilities are changing again in the current time period. DTV.gov explains a newly adopted FCC rule for new televisions being sold which only have an analog broadcast tuner; they must carry this warning:

CONSUMER ALERT

This television receiver has only an analog broadcast tuner and will require a converter box after February 17, 2009, to receive over-the-air broadcasts with an antenna because of the Nation's transition to digital broadcasting. Analog-only TVs should continue to work as before with cable and satellite TV services, gaming consoles, VCRs, DVD players, and similar products. For more information, call the Federal Communications Commission at 1-888-225-5322 (TTY: 1-888-835-5322) or visit the Commission's digital television website at: www.DTV.gov.

By receiving digital broadcasts new opportunities and areas of expansion are available, just as with the transition of analog to digital cell phone networks (Which took place FEBRUARY 17, 2008). U.S. citizens must be be critical of the FCC's decision to alert consumers of the transition so far into the decision making process. Digital tv is not a new concept and has been around since the 90s. The FCC who is involved in many aspects of the industries and concerns surrounding television has in the past, "considered rule-making that would place limits on the types of advertisements seen by children if the industry does not respond to growing childhood obesity concerns with adequate voluntary measures" (32). The FCC is very aware of the effects television has on the citizens of this

country. By not involving the people in the decision more actively to make this digital transition the FCC appears irresponsible to those it aims to protect. How will low-power television stations (local broadcasts) be effected?

To keep watching these channels, users will need converter boxes with an analog pass-through feature, but not every converter will include that feature. [Boston Globe Nov 2008]

Will the effects to local tv stations go unnoticed as the effects to GM Onstar users went unnoticed as cell networks switched to digital. This unexpected effect to owners of GM vehicles was expected by General Motors. ONSTARCLASSACTION.COM reads:

The complaint further alleges that GM and OnStar touted the life-saving benefits of OnStar and that like other vehicle safety systems, it would function for the life of the vehicle and would be transferable to subsequent owners. . . Subscribers are being told that if they want to continue to receive OnStar service, they have to purchase or lease a new or used GM vehicle with **digital equipment**.

GM had time to respond to the needs of consumers when informed of the analog to digital conversion, but years have past since GM could have acted and there is still unrest in consumer interests. Commenting on issues relating to the control of over-the-air-waves is easily suppressed with the suppression and control of resources. The effects of altering and suppressing communication methods has a far reaching influence. Will the U.S. government \$40 coupons provide people with the converter boxes that grant access to the wide variety of content that they deserve?

systems

CERTAIN AREAS OF SOCIETY ARE ABLE TO AVOID WIDESPREAD CRITIQUE.

Invisible design is responsible for illusive aspects of society. Time and money are two concepts that have been designed with little investigation since their conception. The Oklahoma State Department of Education is reconsidering the design of their system of time (35). Oklahoma has implemented a Time Reform Task Force to analyze the use of time and how to most benefit the pupils of the state. When is the best time for students to learn? When is the best time for anything? If our use of time can change can our use of money as well? The, "Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act, a UNITED STATES federal financial statute law passed in 1980, [which] gave the Federal Reserve greater control over non-member banks" effected our usury laws. What new laws can pass to have money function more efficiently in our current sate? Perhaps time and money are not flawed, but inspecting theses and all aspects of mass culture will promote responsible awareness of important issues. Mass culture revolves around mass media; television, internet, mobile devices, and ever emerging forms of dissemination and digression.

Within the realm of mass media comments on society are received and typically accepted by millions, or more likely tens or hundreds of millions. Mass culture in the UNITED STATES affects all U.S. citizens, not excluding those living in isolated communities. Events such as American Idol reach

massive audiences receptive to all types of information, the culture of television watching in its current state is promoted with little interference, and enduring praise through practices like this one.

American Idol is "in their seventh (season) with ratings in the 20[million]-plus" rage (USA Today following an obsession 14).

There are other franchise shows with a loyal and predictable audience to influence such as, three current and three prior manifestations of Law And Order and additional spin offs nearing a cumulative 40 seasons running(15).

CSI's franchise of three shows, "are syndicated in 200 countries to a global audience of two billion" (16).

CSI explores the world of forensics and presents its perspective to the world. At least in the U.K direct influence can be seen. There is a growing number of students attaining first level forensic science degrees(19). The downside of this effect is that,

Universities may be capitalizing on the popularity of the subject in order to fill science departments", and ultimately leaving students unprepared for the real world. "The police service, in particular, needs recruits who are numerate, articulate and inquisitive. These qualities are in short supply, even amongst graduates." (bbc.co.uk 18).

At London South Bank University a combined film studies and forensic science degree attempts to utilize popular media as wells as forensics studies to better prepare students for the real world. Mass culture celebrates the necessity of questionable ideologies.

The UNITED STATES influences the rest of the world even at the basic consumer level. Goods consumed in the U.S. are produced in countless places around the globe. The U.S. has long been, "the top export market for almost 60 trading nations worldwide" (12). China is now surpassing the United Sates in some aspects as an influential nation,

China's total import and export reached US 2.1738 trillion in 2007, rising 23.5% year on year [for 6 years], exceeding US 2 trillion for the first time, and achieving a 1 trillion increase in three years"(13).

China is a nation that is affecting the entire globe in a time much different then the period in which the U.S. secured domination of the global economy. What messages do the consumers of China send the rest of the world? Are Chinese consumers aware of the results of their habits through transparent design? Are U.S. consumers becoming aware? I fear the voices of protest that were silenced in China during the 2008 olympic games is only a taste of the true state of Chinese censorship and control. Denial of power to the people is not isolated to China. Environmental and psychological changes are happening at a global level. Resources of the Earth are being unnecessarily exploited while most are complacent or ignorant to the abuse and injustice.

DESIGN CAN ACT AS A SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM WHILE ENCOURAGING THE INSPECTION OF THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM, AND FUTURE PROBLEMS. DESIGN CAN BE SOCIAL COMMENTARY.

Planned obsolescence is never advertised. A time-table is never introduced to consumers to inform them when a new product should be purchased, at least not directly. Choice of materials and

production methods typically only involve the manufacturer and governing agencies, consumer education as well as consumer input is minimal in most cases.

Design can invite critiques, reinterpretations, and elimination. A design can be conceived as an intermediate step between an unsuccessful design and one in which responsible activities occur. Perhaps a package for a specific product is seen as being unnecessary, the ultimate arrival at the use of no packaging may require a temporary design solution to facilitate the transition. This design solution may take the form of a physical product, a graphical design or it could be a novel systematic approach like ones promoted by the designer of the reusable Mi-bag. The site of the designer reads:

Focused on creating usable, life-improving designs, with a keen attention to aesthetics, independent designer Naoko Shibata founded ID-A Designs to create products that balance form and function in perfect harmony. (37)

This is the voice of a responsible designer, and one whose designs can influence a variety of consumers who can have a large impact on the entire world.

Individual citizens of the world can collectively voice opinions and solutions to important issues only if given the right opportunities. Rarely are opportunities/systems presented to U.S. consumers with the intentions of making change, or benefiting people in need. without personal gains motivating the decisions. Cellforcash.com attempts to show people how they can make money from recycling cell phones. Cellforcash.com attempts to help the environment and expose the cause of problems. This is a unique approach to solving a problem that could have large profit for one individual instead of benefiting many. The system involves a sort of transparency to justify its necessity and its potential. Traditional recycling programs promote recycling only in profitable communities for the benefit of the environment while also attaining personal wealth. While cellforcash.com does profit and although it doesn't attempt to solve the cause of the cell phone over abundance, it is not shy about exposing the amount of surplus cell phones in existence, and the growing numbers,

THERE ARE CURRENTLY MORE THAN 200 MILLION CELL PHONE USERS IN THE US WHO UPGRADE THEIR OLD CELL PHONE, ON THE AVERAGE, EVERY 18 MONTHS. THIS MEANS THAT MORE THAN 130 MILLION CELL PHONES ARE EXPECTED TO BE REPLACED THIS YEAR! (23)

The figures presented by the visual artist Chris Jordan would add up to about 155 million discarded cell phones in 2007, a rate of about 425,000 a day (24).

A design intended to comment on one aspect of society may unintentionally bring to light new or additional information.

The desire for profit is strong, often stronger than the desire to do good. A business will typically only perform an act seen by the public as good if there is profit involved. During the holiday season Starbucks promotes certain varieties of their products as (Red). Product(Red) is an organization which defines itself as an economic initiative, not a charity (3). Product(Red) does do good, if only in spreading a message to those who are ignorant to suffering around the world. One must ask themselves; who does (Red) help the most, and is there a loser? Most companies in the UNITED STATES will not put something into its business plan unless profit is involved. Do companies like Starbucks

join a movement such as (Red) to help people in need, or to sustain a profitable business? This is as much a mystery to the public as the true cost of a cup of Starbucks coffees.

Buy (Less) Crap is an organization formed in response to the popularity of the Product(Red) campaign. Buy (Less) Crap asks consumers to,

JOIN US IN REJECTING THE TI(RED) NOTION THAT SHOPPING IS A REASONABLE RESPONSE TO HUMAN SUFFERING. WE INVITE YOU TO DONATE DIRECTLY TO THE (RED) CAMPAIGN'S BENEFICIARY, THE GLOBAL FUND(4).

Buy (Less) Crap's Ben Davis would say that believing your consumption habits helps someone is (Red)icu(Less). Buylesscrap.com promotes bypassing unnecessary steps to help others. Although the intentions of the beneficiary of (Red), The Global Fund are well directed, perhaps its focus can be aimed even more efficiently. Perhaps the vaccines and medicines offered by the The Global Fund can be produced in the countries that need them the most, by the people inhabiting those countries. Perhaps they would work for free (or very cheaply as they already do) in hopes of saving the life of someone near to them, or themselves. Perhaps the money can be given in a more sustainable fashion, that perpetuates the self sufficiency of those in need.

GIVE A MAN A FISH AND YOU FEED HIM FOR A DAY; TEACH A MAN TO FISH AND YOU FEED HIM FOR LIFE".

Does this saying resonate more in our current state of being?

"Teach a man to fish and you ruin a perfectly good business opportunity"

Even good intention must be examined. Transparency is a must for projects like (Red) to truly help people.

RECENT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF (RED)'S BUSINESS MODEL SUGGEST THAT CONSUMERS, WHEN BUYING CERTAIN (RED) PRODUCTS, CANNOT KNOW EXACTLY HOW MUCH MONEY MAKES IT TO CHARITY. ADDITIONALLY THERE IS THE CONCERN ABOUT HOW MUCH MONEY HAS BEN SPENT ON ADVERTISING BY (RED)'S PARTNERS... IT'S TIME FOR (RED) TO ASSERT INNOVATIVE AND LEADERSHIP ROLES. . . (RED) AND ITS PARTNERS (SHOULD) PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSPARENCY. LET CONSUMERS KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAS BEEN SPENT, BY WHOM AND ON WHAT. [BEN DAVIS IN A LETTER TO (RED)]

opportunities

TRANSPARENCY IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR GLOBAL VILLAGE IS NECESSARY IN A WORLD IN WHICH THE CHOICES OF A FEW AFFECT MANY.

Transparent design is for those who have nothing to hide. Transparent design at a basic level is exposing ones self; imparting ones true intentions and feelings. By exposing your ideas you have everything to gain and nothing to lose, unless you are dishonest, greedy or inhuman.

Ethiopian farmers mistreated by coffee distributors who force prices are focusing on a method to educate those who consume products that effect their livelihood. The price of coffee beans in ethiopia is likely to change as consumer awareness of injustice is likely to occur with widespread knowledge gained through means such as copyright assignment to certain varieties of prized ethiopian beans.

OXFAM ENCOURAGES THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE MARKET-BASED STRATEGIES TO GAIN MORE BENEFITS FROM TRADE. THE ETHIOPIANS' STRATEGY ON COFFEE IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY BECAUSE THEY ARE SEEKING TO USE TRADEMARKS – A PART OF THE MODERN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SYSTEM – TO BENEFIT POOR FARMERS. (6)

Successful business models are designed. These designs must be imparted to consumers. Brand awareness is the consumer recognition of a brands existence and availability(24). True brand awareness, or recognition should include knowledge of a brands intentions, motivations and global impact. Brand awareness should determine justification for a brands existence. Starbucks should be seen as a greedy brand. Starbucks opposed and impeded the copyrighting of Ethiopian beans by Ethiopians pursuing appropriate representation, Starbucks however denies this. No doubt further transparency on this issue and others would make Starbucks look irresponsible and inhuman. Not imparting ones means to success should be seen as an attempt to hide secrets for self interest, and perpetual profit and to hide injustices and malpractice. Starbucks does however facilitate consumer contributions at 5 cents per purchase to go to The Global Fund to help Africans in need.

I intend to create truly transparent designs. I intend to create products that cater to those in need while ignoring the creation of personal wealth. I plan to use my ingenuity to better inform consumers of alternative forms of consumption lifestyles and non-consumption life styles. I will not be complacent to the way things are. I plan to envision a future that is like the past. I plan to show my true intentions to everyone. I plan to develop further efficiency in informative writing to facilitate dissemination of my thoughts and intentions. The actions of Ben Davis are very powerful, well directed, and should influence any engaged listener. In a letter to Bobby Shriver of Product (Red) Ben Davis condemns current practices of (Red) while encouraging positive growth, consumer respect and administrative transparency (4).

Commenting on society is necessary otherwise it will run rampantly and uncontrollably into absurdity. A demand is growing by people to be heard in new ways. Although avenues for expression are growing certain areas of society remain illusive an unchecked. Design can be transparent instead of invisible. Transparent design will promote inclusion of consumers, and promote healthy living. Certain monumental invisible designs debilitate the potential of society at large. Overcoming and understanding concepts which are absent from everyday living will empower our nation and set an example for the rest of the world.

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Its difficult for one person to remember all the new names of the guests at the dinner party but it is easy for the guests to learn one new name. Cooperative groups of people have the most power to be critical of an outsider, as long as that outsider does not somehow manage to control opinions.