

**The evolution of visual identities from static identities
to dynamic identities**

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Declaration

I declare that the work described in this dissertation is, except where otherwise stated, entirely my own work, and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university.

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Abstract

Dynamic identities or flexible identities are a relatively new concept. In the past a brand identity was just a single mark, usually in the form of a logo used for brand recognition – with the aim of providing consumers with a visual reference to allow them to differentiate between competitors. In the current climate, brands now act like platforms, and offer an experience that creates an emotional attachment. This paper will examine the evolution of a visual identity from static identities to dynamic identities.

This paper will also examine three recent dynamic identity case studies – it will use the case study approach to gain insight into the benefits and problems that may arise for companies or organisations using this dynamic system. The purpose of this paper is to offer an insight into how a dynamic identity can either impede or help the identity of a company or organisation.

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Epigraph

Everything in this world is changing and so should design. We exist in a dynamic world with living organizations that are crying out for dynamic brands.

– Nes, 2012, p.6

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Brand Identity is at the heart of today's society simply because branding is about manifestations of identity. As human beings living in today's technological world our identity is constantly changing to adapt to our environment. In the same way that we are adapting to our surroundings, brand identities are also adapting to changing styles and technology. They are moving on from simple static identities to highly interactive dynamic identities, acting as the heart of a brand (Nes, 2012, p.5).

1.1 Dynamic identity

What are Dynamic Identities? Where did this new design system originate from, and should we care? These are questions which many designers, students and professionals are starting to ask themselves. However, to many involved in the design industry, Dynamic Identities still remain a mystery. Dynamic Identities are taking over from Static Identities, which act as static components of a brand, now they too are refined in terms of relationships. Static Identities seek a 'singular truth' and a fixed form where a Dynamic identity seeks out 'multiple meanings' and has a flexible form. Dynamic Identities act as a beating heart at the centre of a brand, which in turn stimulates the brand to change, learn and adapt to living organisations (Ibid.).

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this research paper is to develop a better understanding of dynamic identities. The specific objectives of this paper are to:

1. Review the history of static identities and the importance of the logo.
2. Examine and discuss dynamic identities in the same light but with more of a focus on the components that are used within this dynamic system.
3. Explore three case studies in depth and discuss why these companies or organisations felt the need for this new dynamic approach over a more generic static design.

The three case studies examined in this paper will range from a major city branding to one of the most famous Institutes in the world. This paper examines the implications of using a dynamic system when it is not necessary for a brand and how a successful implementation of this design tool can add to the experience of a company or an organisation.

1.3 Justification

A review of literature shows that there is a serious lack of published material relating to this new design system. Dynamic identity is a relatively new concept, and it requires more understanding on this subject matter. The case studies intend to explore the components of dynamic identities and gain a better understanding of this flexible design tool. This study may be of interest to any organisations or companies considering dynamic identities, as a solution to their business needs for the future.

1.4 Constraints

This paper utilizes a case study approach, as it addresses a contemporary issue within identity design. This study can only be exploratory and descriptive in nature, and cannot be generalized. The information gathered for this paper relies primarily on secondary research, and informal discussions. Given the stated limitations, this study will serve the purpose of gaining insights into the components of dynamic identities.

CHAPTER 2: *Static Identity*

2.1 A brief history of brand Identity (logo)

Logos, trademarks or devices with similar functions of logos, have actually been around for at least 5000 years. Brand identities surround us in digital and physical space, using a silent vocabulary of colors, shapes, and typography. Brand designers give a visual identity to companies and organizations of all types. From cave painters to modern designers, artists throughout history have been reducing the complex down to simple ideas that communicate with the world (The Art of Logo Design).

Dating back to deep ancient times, logos are singular images that convey messages that go way beyond consumption – instead sparking thoughts that play heavily on the human condition. Historically speaking logos have been used as ‘sender’ marks primarily, which are more worried about the person sending them than receiving them (Ibid.).

2.1.1 Craftsmen

Craftsmen used logos as a means of establishing distinguishing characters. In the 19th century illiteracy was dominant throughout the world, as a result Aristocracy would have acquired shields, which were used as complex logos. Shields were used as a form of pictograms, which were used as a way of combating illiteracy. Mosaics were popular amongst the people in ancient Rome. Mosaics featured different animals and people. An elephant would mean someone. Craftsmen who took pride in their work would typically mark it, for example a potter. In the same way a painter would sign his painting a potter would leave his mark on his work. Farmers would mark their cattle to protect against potential theft. Nobody knows for sure when someone first demonstrated identity, ownership or creative and productive parenthood by means of a graphic device. All of these elements indicated who the merchant was and to Heller this was the beginning of the logo (Ibid.).

The craftsmen marks were conditioned by their physical medium that they worked with, these varied from stone, paper, wood, ceramic, silver and stone. Per Mollerup (1997, p.11) believes that it is a reasonable assumption that all social identity marks

and all certificates of origin are the result of both need and desire. It is equally safe to assume that branding, earmarks and farm marks have almost exclusively been inspired by need. Logos increased hugely as commerce, industry and technology increased which led to more and more competition.

2.2 What is a logo?

A great logo is memorable, it is appropriate to the brand and is simple so that it can work everywhere and look the same in every situation. A logo needs to be simple but it also needs to work as small as 16 x16 pixels or as big as a billboard. Is the logo appropriate to the brand, does it look too corporate, does it look too modern? Is it right for the company or product. Is it true to its heritage? It should be memorable, an example of this is the fedex logo with the hidden arrow in between the characters of the logo. Some people get it straight away but others have to be told. Memorable logos are logos that still look fresh today as they did 20 – 30 years ago. Logo design should be timeless. If a logo has been working and is recognizable and the company has spent millions of dollars to promote it, there is probably very little reason to redesign that logo. Logo design is a fashion business. Styles, typography and images change and over time trends come and go. What the designer wants from his logo is for the audience to be reminded immediately of that entity. That is what makes a successful logo. That is when it becomes timeless. People need the so that they will be cued into who they are and what they do as a brand.

The world and technology has evolved but the approach to logo design has been constant. It should be simple; it should be well drawn and should be interesting. A logo cannot express everything but it should definitely express the values that are important to that brand, whatever they may be (The Art of Logo Design | Off Book | PBS).

2.2.1 Logo as an identity

A logo is a sign. The sender of a logo uses their mark to identify themselves to the world. There are three ways to accomplish this: they may identify themselves as an owner, as a producer or simply as the sender of a message. This confirms that logos are signs and additionally, importantly, visually identifiers. Alongside performing as identifiers, logos can also guide the nature of a company or product. An instance of this would be Coca Cola. The Coca Cola brand name was coined to tell the consumer that the Coca leaf and Kola nut are important ingredients of the beverage. A logo occasionally does more than individualize a company or its products. It can have a value in its own right, and this value adds to the value of a company, a product or a service. Companies may develop the logo through advertising and by their reputation. (Per Mollerup, 1997, p.11).

2.3 *The importance of brand identity*

Even if people do not have an interest in brand identities they still cannot escape it. We are bombarded with logos on a daily basis. From the time we wake up to the moment we go back to bed, how many times are we confronted with a logo? According to Khalsa the average American sees 16,000 advertisements, logos, and labels in a day. Graphic designer David Airey did not believe this and to illustrate the constant presence of logos in his life, he decided to spend the first few minutes of a typical working day photographing logos on the products that he interacted with, beginning with his morning alarm. In the space of 30 minutes he encountered 32 different logos fighting for his attention, obviously there would have been hundreds more surrounding him but this experiment was from the view of his lens and not from his eye (Airey, 2010, p.2). Reuter's magazine proclaimed in 1997 "In the last 30 years, mankind has produced more information than in the previous 5,000." As a result of this huge increase in information, we are seeing identities that are increasingly similar to one another. This poses a problem for companies that are trying to differentiate themselves visually (Airey, 2010, p.2). How does a company or organisation create an identity that stands out from their competitors and gives them a unique experience?

2.3.1 Obama VS Romney

“A logoless company is a faceless man” (Airey, 2010, p.10)

Humans have desired and needed social identification for thousands of years now. Think about the previous examples of logos already mentioned, the farmer who brands his cattle as a sign of ownership or the potter who proudly marks his trademark into his pots.

For products and services that have a strong brand identity. It is the identity that people often think of first, rather than the product itself. Think of McDonald's, Microsoft, BMW or Tesco's. Chances are that without even showing you these logos, you would still have a fairly good idea of how they look. (Ibid.). To me one of the most important logos in recent history would have to be the 2006 Barack Obama presidential campaign logo.



Fig.1 *Obama 'O' logo (2006)*

The 2006 (Fig.1) resulting “O” has become one of the most recognized political logos in recent history (Finn, 2009, p.41). Who knows maybe it was Obama’s branding that beat Romney. One person who believes branding may have been a factor in him winning is Scott Thomas, who believes Romney could learn some lessons from the visual language of his opponent. Thomas is not a great fan of Romney’s branding campaign. According to Thomas, the lack of polish and uneven center of Romney’s campaign design is parallel to his lack of rapport and the result makes him appear untrustworthy. When comparing Romney’s “R” to Obama’s “O” identity, Thomas believes that the typographic choices of the Romney campaign reflect on him as a candidate.



Fig. 2. *Romney logo (2006)*

Romney’s logo (Fig.2) which was set in Trajan, which is an old serif style typeface set based on the inscription at the base of the Trajan column, a monument in Rome celebrating the Emperor Trajan's victory of a conflict caused by the 'resources of a fluctuating economy. The Romney campaign also uses the fonts Kepler, Whitney, Mercury, and a handful of unique scripts—all of which, Thomas said,

"are nice typefaces, but when paired in an inconsistent, haphazard manner illustrate a fickle voice" (Heller, 2012).

In contrast to this failed campaign in Scott Thomas eyes, we have the 2008 Barack Obama campaign. The Obama campaign has received high acclaim from the usually sceptic design community. In fact Thomas and his design team's 2008 branding was so successful that Obama kept it on after his campaign was over (Ibid.).

Graphic design for corporate identity, like design of any kind, is both an ongoing process and the result of the process. Every design programme needs to be adjusted to meet changing conditions. The next chapter looks at the development of static identities and the changes that have occurred over time.

CHAPTER 3: Dynamic identity

3.1 A brief history of Dynamic identity

More than 50 years ago, a brand was just a single mark used for brand recognition, which set it apart from its competitors. Now a brand has become a platform where people can come together, and create an emotional attachment through experiences. Brands need to constantly adapt to their fast changing environment in order to survive and thrive. Advances in technology have given brands the opportunities to create identities that behave like living organisms in a living world.

Beginning with Swiss design in the 50s, Karl Gerstners identity for the Boite a Music (record shop in Basel) is recognized as one of the first dynamic identities (Hewitt, 2008). In 1967 Wolff Ollins had taken on the challenge to redesign an identity for a relatively unknown paint company – Hadfields Paint, from the UK. Ollins had developed a dynamic branding that was unheard of at the time. Each can of paint had a different image of a fox on it. This unusual approach meant the product stood out from its competitors (Van den Bergh, 2009). Some time later another English design company from London, Newell & Sowell, redesigned another controversial “different cultures” paint scheme for tail fins of British Airways. This was a major redesign of what most people considered a successful British identity program, which was run by Henron/ Nehus/ Landor. The popular stylized union jack was to be replaced by 30 different color schemes applied to the tail of the airplane. Even though this and the previous example were not designed for the screen, they were still considered dynamic. They were dynamic in the sense that each identity was different for each product. This is an important point to consider, that even though these identities were considered dynamic at the time, they were static in their environment but dynamic in the public’s eyes (Ibid.).

3.1.1 Google Doodle



Fig. 3. *Google Doodles* (1998)

A more up-to-date example of a dynamic identity is Google. The most popular search engine started changing their logo in 1998. Google has changed their logo over the years many times with their “Google Doodles” (Fig. 3). It has been used to remember an event in the past, celebrate a birthday, or another special day. In the new digital age those logos have also become interactive. As dynamic as their identity is there will always be an element that remains constant, in the case of Google this is either the type or the colors. Alice Rawsthorn discusses Google's corporate identity (or lack thereof) in her recent NYT blog post. Google changes its search logo for holidays and other special days of the year, leading it to be seen as unsophisticated and sloppy. But is that really what is being portrayed? In the age in which people are wary of giant corporations, this changing logo and dynamic identity helps keep consumers interested. As she explains

"Google's clumsiness makes it look sincere. I like that it is a dynamic logo that it is able to change with the times and needs of design. It still can be recognizable -- the very name Google conveys to its audience the company. It is not just attached to one logo" (Rawsthorn, 2007).

3.2 What is a Dynamic identity?

To create a visual identity we need a logo, a set of colours and a font. That is all it takes to create a basic visual identity. This is how a lot of designers approached identity design in the past. In recent years, there has slowly been a shift towards designing more organic identities, taking advantage of the new technologies available that are readily available to designers. These various elements combined with a shift from print to screen has meant dynamic identities are now taking center stage in the design community.

This transition from print to screen has given designers the opportunity to create more vivid and varied identities, using a new logo each day if they wish. Technical and social media advancements have given designers the opportunity to create brands that behave like living organisms. These new possibilities have meant a brand has more interaction with its audiences and should be expressed within its identity.

3.2.1 Influence of technology

A brand identity should reflect the company or organisation's aims and values; the audience should understand what the brand believes, what drives the brand and why it exists. This is something evolving, growing and adapting to its environment and not something static and frozen in time. Similarly to our human identity, we grow up, we have a vision for our future, we have a close circle of friends but we also meet new people, we travel but most importantly we live. In the same way an organization is also an organic entity: influenced by economic and social circumstances or technological breakthroughs. According to Nes:

“Learning companies are dynamic and should therefore have a dynamic identity that is flexible enough to meet all these changes, to incorporate and reflect them. An identity should be as organic as the company it is designer for; it should speak its language, grow with it, and adapt to its environment.” (2012, p.6)

Dynamic identity is a necessary and inevitable evolutionary step in the process of a Brand Identity system. It is a reflection of the technological age in which we live. High-speed technology and the unprecedented access to information have made us more receptive, if not expectant, of change. With the evolution of computer based design tools and techniques, opportunities to explore new avenues in Identity system design are greater. Before the introduction of dynamic identity Paul Hughes believed identity design was dead, he believes that it should be alive. Everything in this world is changing and so should design. We exist in a dynamic world with living organizations that are crying out for dynamic brands (Ibid.). Within Graphic Design a common practice is the design of a 'logo'. A logo usually represents a limited outcome. According to Paul Hughes the problem with a static logo is:

“A ‘logo’ seeks a singular truth’ and a fixed form that captures this ‘truth’ resulting in a limited singular, and static outcome. In contrast to a static ‘logo’ could be a ‘holo’ (from holistic). A ‘holo’ does not seek a ‘singular truth’, or a fixed form that captures that ‘truth’. Instead it seeks, ‘multiple meanings’ and a flexible form. A holo is changeable, fluid and incomplete. It should be noted however that a holo is only successful when it balances the right amount of consistency and change. If there is too much change we lose meaning, identity, and connection. If there is too much consistency it becomes lifeless and is in danger of dying a slow death” (Finn, 2009, p.236).

People are becoming more and more connected wherever they are due to the major advancements in mobile and screen based communication. Technologies are becoming cheaper, more efficient and more available, with mobile handsets allowing for instant access to information about organisations, services, products, price and availability. Jon Hewitt from Moving Brands (2008, Hewitt) explains that

“In a world where some brands are seen on screens more than in print, flexible identity is a logical development” (Ibid.).

To adapt to this change in consumer behavior, brands will have to represent themselves in a much more dynamic fashion, focusing more on their identity will interact with their audience.

3.3 Dynamic identity systems

According to Nes (2012, p.7) there are six components to an identity. A logo is one of them, colour and typography makes three, and then there are graphic elements, imagery and language. When added together they form a system that builds a brands identity. Each of the six components helps magnify the brands identity. The more components that are defined, the more specified the identity becomes. But within these confines, there is certainly room for freedom. As this dissertation has discussed, moving logos have been around a long time before dynamic logos. The restyle of UPC and Swisscom, for example have resulted in an animated logo. However dynamic these logos may seem, they are nothing more than a moving version of a static logo. Much more freedom is needed to create a dynamic identity. Nes believes that one or more of the components could consist of different variables, resulting in flexibility to the identity. Fixed components help the user recognize their brand; it is the variability that gives a brand room to live and evolve (Ibid.).

3.3.1 Components of a dynamic identity

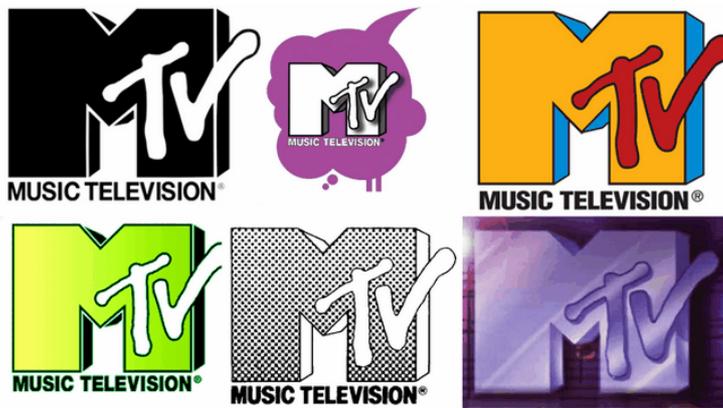


Fig. 4. *MTv* (1980)

Having one recognizable component that is fixed can open doors to enable the remaining components, ultimately resulting in a dynamic identity changing. In 1981 design agency Manhattan Design was one of the first to take this design leap when asked to re brand the identity for MTv (Fig. 4.). The dynamic system that they had designed meant that the ‘M’ and ‘TV’ had a fixed shape and position, but could be designed with thousands of variations of colours, shapes, textures, animations and illustrations. All of its duplicates have only aided to strengthen the youthful vibe that is synonymous with MTv. (Grillo, 1982, p.5)

3.3.2 Container ‘holding’ content



Fig. 5. *AOL* (2009)

Bruce Mau in 1994 following on from Manhattan's MTV design footsteps a mere 13 years later, designed a fixed word mark for the Netherlands Architecture Institute [NAi] onto a variety of materials and surfaces, maintaining consistency while communicating the various activities and strategies of the NAI. According to Nes (2012, p.7) this type of system is known as a container 'holding' content is still a common way to create a variable identity. Similarly to a container system is the notion of placing a graphic element or a container behind a fixed item. Wolff Ollins put this type of system to the test with the rebrand of AOL(Fig. 5). Behind the AOL word mark, a space was created that formed a projection or a platform for designers, illustrators and artists. Each time, different artwork is selected from a monitored data bank of images created by various artists around the globe. The fixed AOL wordmark component allows for freedom in another area, in this case the graphic elements and imagery. This sense of chaos is allowed because with the fixed word mark there will always be consistency with the AOL identity and brand.

3.3.3 DNA of a dynamic identity

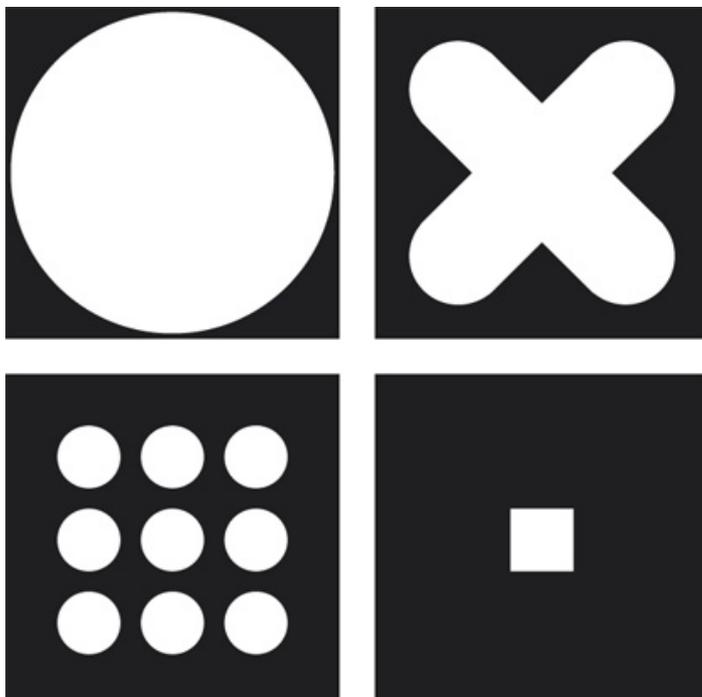


Fig. 6. *IDTV*

It does not necessarily have to be the ingredients, such as the four and black white pixels that form the DNA of the IDTV identity (Fig. 6). IDTV is the second largest independent production agency in the Netherlands. It is at the forefront in the development and production of television programmes, films, documentaries and events. The four unique pixels in different combinations and in various sizes allows for endless variations

3.3.4 Formula for a dynamic identity



Fig. 7. *Nikolaj Kunsthal* (2011)

Back in 1988, Google founders Sergey and Larry created Google doodles. Before Larry and Sergey departed for Burning Man, they created some experimental art on their search engine's homepage. Seeing an opportunity to infuse new life into the logo, they incorporated a rendering of the Man in the second o of Google. To an outsider, the stickman logo looked crude, hastily assembled. But to those in the know, it signaled where the Google crew would be that week. The impulse to tinker with the design triggered an organic change. Heading out the door to a festival celebrating ingenuity, they unknowingly had given birth to the Google doodle. For the Googlers, dressing up the logo that first time filled a void. With the company's founders and friends all heading to the desert, it was a way to communicate to users that if the search engine went down, nobody would be around to fix it. (Vise, 2005, p.72)

The formula for an identity – a set of colours in a particular order and a vague shape for the word mark – still stands, daily celebrating events and anniversaries. The formula could also be a fixed language in combination with a set colour and typography. The Nikolaj Kunstal (Fig. 7), for example used such a formula. Scandinavian Design lab took the Danish Arts Centre’s identity and gave it a tone/language to speak in. Because the location of the building is in a church, it allows the Nikolaj to preach its passion for art through biblical quotes.

3.3.5 Customized dynamic identity

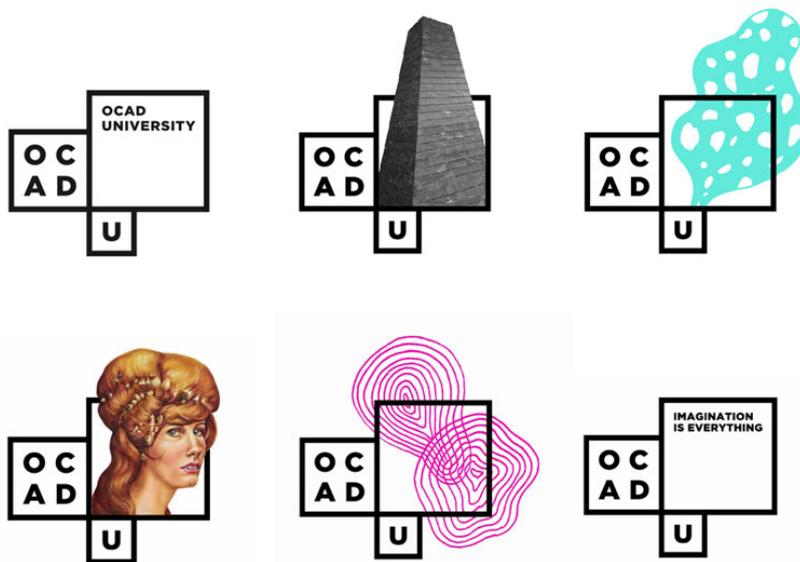


Fig. 8. OCAD University (2011)

Planned input leads to controlled output. By allowing one of the components to be influenced by outside input can lead to more dynamic results. Take the OCAD (Fig. 8) identity for example. The OCAD identity allows the student to draw their individual mark. It literally becomes a shop window for that student. This entitlement of creativity is only granted for award winning graduate students. As OCAD matures, a library of dynamic identities emerges over time, recording the aesthetics and ideas that may have shaped its culture over time. This type of customized system is the first step towards letting the identity reflect a certain sense of community, creating an emotional brand. (Vit, 2011)

3.3.6 Generative dynamic identities



Fig. 9. *Nordkyn* (2010)

A more recent technique, which has less control, is the generative system. An example of a generative system being used today is an identity designed by NEUE for the Scandinavian Peninsula – NORDKYN (Fig. 9). To build this generative dynamic system, Neue used real-time data from a weather station. When using real-time data to feed a number of parameters, artwork is formed to generate the identity. Because the input is affected by the information, the identity reflects the world it is living in and adapts according to its real-time input. It becomes a living identity. (Nes, 2012, p.191)

3.3.7 Possibilities for dynamic identities

Possibilities for this type of input are countless: news, time, activity on a site or a building, visitors to a museum, weather (shown above), anything you could imagine really. Less control over the input means a more dynamic identity, as long as there is a component within the identity that is constant. The aim for any designer designing a dynamic identity with a generative system is to leave as much room for dynamism as possible, while maintaining identification or recognition of the brand.

CHAPTER 4:

Dynamic identity case studies

This chapter will look at three dynamic identity case studies. By focusing on one example of a bad dynamic identity and two good dynamic identities, it will offer a better understanding of the benefits and problems that may arise from using this flexible system.

4.1 Melbourne

In 2009, the City of Melbourne launched a new dynamic identity rebrand (**Fig. 10**). The Sydney office of Landor developed the design. According to Landor they wanted to create a destination brand that reflects Melbourne's cool sophistication, captures its peoples passion, and provides the city with a unified, flexible, and future focused image to help overcome political complexities and unite the disparate range of government entities (Finn, 2009, p.251) The dynamic identity was created to become an icon for Melbourne and for the city of Melbourne in particular. It was created to capture the city's status as a leading capital city with an international reputation for excellence, innovation and leadership. It was designed to represent their organization as a single entity while allowing for a variety of sub-brands with distinct personalities. Why did Melbourne feel that a dynamic identity would suit their needs over their 15-year-old static identity? According to their Melbourne website a dynamic identity for the future seemed to tick all the boxes. The dynamic identity can be used in different ways for different projects and on different platforms and still be recognized as the city of Melbourne. The identity uses a flexible design system, which can be translated for use in any medium, allowing for creative freedom. It will connect all their projects and programs to the city of Melbourne (Vit, 2009)



Fig. 10. *City of Melbourne* (2009)

4.1.1 Out with the old and in with the dynamic

Richard Henderson designed the previous Melbourne identity (Fig. 11) prior to this new dynamic rebrand 15 years ago. In response to Mr. Henderson's design, Christopher Doyle of Landor was reportedly quoted as saying that the old logo was "a bit daggy" and that Melbourne needed a new design to reflect its cool sophistication on the world stage (Finn, 2009, p.251). This comment particularly upset Andrew Ashton who believes it is alarming to think that the main reason for spending millions of tax payers dollars is that the logo designed by Henderson looked "a bit daggy" in a changing world. In respect to Henderson and his left work, Ashton mentions that Christopher Doyle's cheap shot to the incumbent design is uncalled for (Ibid). The problem with this new dynamic identity is that there seems to be a trend lately for brands to move towards a more contemporary look that references modern design, yet have no local context or references to heritage or culture.



Fig. 11. *City of Melbourne (old)* (1994)

4.1.2 Lack of unique identities

There seems to be a revolving door these days for modern brands, which are being hammered out to a discerning rate and replacing too frequently in contemporary communications. There is a danger that all brands will look the same. In the case of the city of Melbourne dynamic identity this is true. The new symbol could comfortably be used as a dynamic identity for Milan, Manchester, Moscow or Memphis as it has no sense of location, or place. There is a danger that this logo will only last as long as the dynamic identity is trendy. The logo is an interesting mark, however the mark would have worked better had Landor incorporated or built in an element of Melbourne's heritage or landmark. This may have given it a better representation of Melbourne rather than a generic look instead. As daggy as the previous identity may have been, Henderson's 15 year old Melbourne identity lasted this length of time because it included a sense of place within its design. People of Melbourne had felt a connection with the design. There is a danger of the Melbourne identity inheriting the same doomed outcome as another similar city rebrand NYC, which was designed by Wolf Olins (Finn, 2009, p.251).

4.1.3 Cities do not need identities



Fig. 12. NYC (2007)

According to Paula Scher (2008) the NYC brand (Fig. 12) is dumb, not because of what it looks like; it is dumb because nobody relates to it in any emotional way. The main problem with the NYC logo is that it was forced on to the public. The public did not discover it on their own, nor did they invent its meaning. It is a total fake representation of a real place. Melbourne and NYC are not alone; there is a current and popular notion that it is the norm to develop logos and marks for cities, counties, towns and countries – all of which are not supposed to have ‘logos’. They traditionally have seals, flags and, sometimes they have mottos, usually based on some history of who they are. And there is a cultural significance behind these items as well. (Identity p.124) Cities and countries also have landmarks, be it natural or man-made. If there is no flag, or seal, or immediately recognizable landmark that is emotionally resonant to a given place, a logo is not likely to help. It will be a fake representation, representing something that is not well understood in the first place. Paula Scher (2008) believes the most successful ‘rebranding’ of any city in recent history, occurred in Bilbao, Spain. The whole town was revitalized by Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum. The museum is a real place. It became a landmark, not a useless logo, not a branding campaign. It redefined how the people thought about Bilbao. Bilbao’s success was supported by an advertising campaign, where the public could learn more about the building. But I certainly do not believe Bilbao needed a logo, because most ‘places’ do not.

4.1.4 Context for dynamic identities

Dynamic identities work great when used in the correct context. In the case of the Melbourne identity, I cannot help but feel that Landor tried everything in his power to force this dynamic system to work. The main issue I have with using a dynamic identity for city branding is that problems arise before releasing a dynamic identity to the public. The problem evolves around isolating the older generation; the dynamic identity is aimed at a younger generation who are digital savvy people. According to Wolff Ollins, the older generation always gets alienated. People from his generation are always walking around saying things were much better when they were younger. But he does not agree that dynamic identities are alienating the older generation, if anything he thinks things were much worse when he was younger, Old people think young people are hopeless and young people think old people are kind of half-witted, which Ollins thinks may well be true. From my research I have found that Dynamic identities tend to work better for bigger organisations or technology driven companies. The next case study will be of an organization that successfully managed to use the dynamic identity to grow as a brand and benefit from this new design system. (Finn, 2009, p.31)

4.2 Casa Da Musica

This case study examines the identity for the Casa da Musica (**Fig. 13**), particularly how it uses the immediate context in which it is displayed as a means of altering the colour of the identity. The shape of the building, and the context in which it is situated informed the final visual and contextual syntax of the dynamic identity system. By examining the system used to alter aspects of the identity, the contextual nature of the identity is examined in response to the designed environment in which the building exists. This paper responds to some of the criticisms that have been made about the dynamic identity, and illustrate how these are nothing more than lack of knowledge about new methods of creating dynamic identity systems. This identity and the dynamic system that defines its variations illustrate that it is aware of and highlights the network of relationships that it is embedded in.



Fig. 13. *Casa da Musica* (2007)

The identity system for the Casa da Musica, a Portuguese music hall situated in the city of Porto uses the shape of the building as a vessel for representing the myriad contingencies needed by the organization. The dynamic identity system designed by New York based design studio Sagmeister INC is a dynamic and varied identity system that captures the different uses and definitions of the building and its events. The architect behind this building is internationally renowned architect and theorist Rem Koolhaas, from the architecture agency OMA in 2005. After hearing Koolhaas describe the building as a “conglomeration of various layers of meaning”, Sagmeister realized that such a description could be applied from the ideas used in architectural discourse to one of graphic design, branding and identity system. The creation of a dynamic identity system needs to convey various aspects of an organization into one conceptual whole, to pair together different parts into a finished and distinct entity. By using the same language and reasoning as Koolhaas, Sagmeister realized that the built form would be able to inform the identity design, by using Koolhaas memorable design of the building itself, as the basis for the identity (Stefan Sagmeister: The power of time off).



Fig. 14. *Casa da Musica building (2007)*

The Casa da Musica building (Fig. 14) has an expansive presence, comprised of a slanted faceted surface with the concert hall positioned as a hollow space in the centre; surrounding the hall are smaller concert halls shared to more intimate musical types as well as different administrative areas. This arrangement was a response to the ‘shoe box’ typology: the need to develop a quadrangular room that adheres the acoustic needs of the music being played in the building. The allowances for these other rooms to be positioned around the concert hall are what give the building a distinctive form. (Nes, 2012, p.147)

When asked how he approached his identity design for Casa da Musica, Sagmesiters has said:

‘Our initial desire was to design an identity without featuring the building. Most architecturally interesting music-centre identities I had studied worldwide turned their architecture into a cold, static logo, forgoing the musical context at the centre of the building’s DNA. This desire proved impossible because as we studied the structure more we realized that the building itself is a logo. Koolhaus calls this “the organization of various layers of meaning”, which translates as into “logo-making” (Wiedemann, 2009, p.56)

This desire has impacted his approach to the Casa da Musica identity by turning the building into a set of six shapes (north, south, east, west, top and bottom) used as the set of basic logos. After modeling the building as a three dimensional form on the computer, it was then transformed into six variant identities [Fig.3.0]. Each of these logos acts as a flat model of the Casa da Musica, a series of uncomplicated yet deranged shapes. Coupled with the round and geometric typeface, the Casa da Musica identity is a neat and contemporary example of modern design. The rounded forms of the typeface provide a welcome parallel to the slanted form of the building. By allowing six varying modulations of the identity, visual flexibility is already incorporated into the identity system. This allows for a dynamic identity system that adheres the iconic shape and the name of the building – Casa da Musica – House of Music.



Fig. 15. *Casa da Musica six variants* (2007)

The primary components of the dynamic identity system are not supposed to be seen in isolation, but instead they act as a device to highlight the different meanings depending on their context. This provides a seemingly endless amount of chromatic variation based on the immediate context in which the logos are viewed.

4.2.1 Logo generator software

The customised designed software program ‘The Casa da Musica Logo Generator’ (**Fig. 15**) is used in the process of providing the colour system to be used when designing advertising material from the music hall that creates a harmonious relationship between identity and photography.

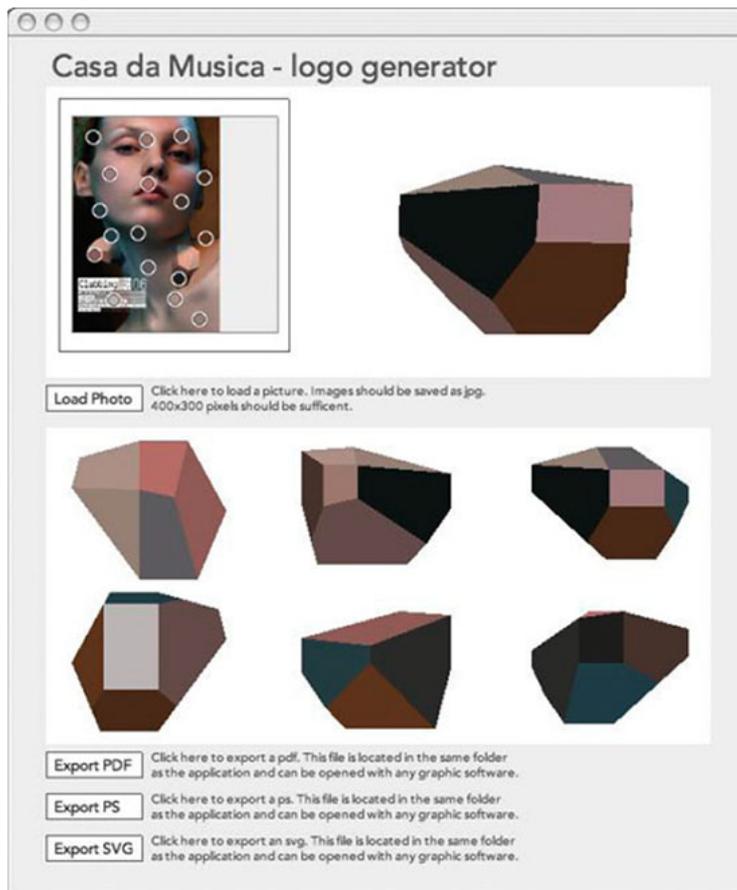


Fig. 15. *Casa da Musica logo generator software (2007)*

Once the image for the poster is finished – whether through photography or illustration – the system selects 17 points [Fig 3.2] from the image, recording the individual colour values of each point in the image. Each of these individual colour points are then transferred onto the 17 facets of the three dimensional system. This provides the colours to be used on the identity, reflecting those same colours used in the advertising material. These identities can then be exported using a variety of industry standard files to be used in the design programs when creating the final poster.



Fig. 16. *Mozart* (2007)

An example of this can be seen with the image of Mozart (**Fig. 16**), the majority of the image is one of dark colours: arranged by darkness with an influential focus of reds, whites and skin tones running through the image. The 17 points cover most of the available space of the image, ensuring that an average of the painting is covered. The colours are then transferred onto the base of the logo, creating a colorful imitation of the painting as a semantic layer on top of the object. The same colouring system can be seen in the logo generator, the collaboration between skin tones and shadows directing the facets seen in the bottom of the application.

4.2.2 Compromised position of the designer

A critique of this dynamic identity system could dispute that the system did not capture the collar, which acts to focus the eye onto Mozart's face. By generating a median of the colours within the circles, the system also fails to obtain the granularity needed to truly simulate this, or any other image. Whether through lacking of key components from an image such as this, or by generalising the given colours by taking an average within the circle, important components are excluded. In needing to generalise for the sake of implementation, systems like this miss out on the richness of visual experience. However, in other examples such as [Fig. 3.3] the omissions are not as obvious.

By using the Logo Generator system, the position of the designer is compromised, giving more control to the illustrator or photographer in developing the flexible colour values on the logo system. While art direction directs the overall aesthetic and style of the image used in pre and post-production, the overall choice of colours is removed from the designer's hand and placed in control of the computer. This need not be a negative view of the final design: whether Phillip Glass or the Chemical Brothers (Fig. 17) are performing, the relationship between identity and image will never pose a dilemma. The choice to use a particular side of the building gives the designer some choice to create contrast or a more pleasant and managed relationship between the two components.



Fig. 17. *Poster colour variations (2007)*

4.2.3 Dynamic identity applied to stationery

A similar procedural approach is used for the corporate stationery in creating the colour values for the stationery, in particular the business card (**Fig. 18**). The identity for each business card takes the colour values from photographs of the person the card is intended for. This develops a card that is an individual blueprint for each person, as well as reinforcing and acting within the expansive surrounds of the dynamic identity system. This system is different from the music posters discussed previously, by not including the original reference point in which to discover the context for the colours.



Fig. 18. *Casa da Musica* stationery (2007)

4.2.4 Seed Media group

This approach was used to parallel effect for another identity system created by Sagmeister Inc. Seed Media group is a scientific publisher of books, magazines as well as films. As Sagmeister worked on the identity it became clear that the end effect should form a visualization of science and media. Science is culture, it encompasses us, and it is part of everything we do. Sagmeister was seeking for something open ended and fluid, a vessel they could fill with new meaning. The identity is based on phyllotaxis, a shape found everywhere from seashells to Greek architecture. It plays a role in zoology, botany, biology, physics, math and geometry. It belongs to the golden ratio and golden curve. Observing at the world through this scientific lens of the phyllotaxis, Sagmeister developed a chameleon like identity; it consistently takes on the shape of the medium it is placed on. On the business cards [Fig. 3.5] it shows a version of the portrait of the bearer (Sagmeister, 2012).



Fig. 19. *Seed media group* (2006)

The portrait of each cardholder is observed through the circles in the identity. The Casa da Musica business cards show a highly abstracted blueprint: the Seed media group cards show a figurative vacancy of the individual due to the higher granularity of the identity. Instead of collecting coloured reference points from the blueprint, the Seed media group identity takes an algorithm of colour values from the image.

The designer, not the reader, develops the output. Meaning is not read, but developed through the flexibility of the tool and its relationship to – in the example of the business cards – that the card is produced for. Both Casa da Musica and Seed media group demonstrate that Sagmeister Inc. are mindful on ignoring the barriers of static identity creation, towards a methodology that is open to new systems of thinking and operating.

4.2.5 Public reception

The public reception of this generative and open-ended dynamic identity began a heated argument on Brand New (**Fig. 20**) (an online design blog dedicated to brand identity). In unveiling their dynamic system for the Casa da Musica, the argument revolved around two different arguments on the merits of the Casa da Musica identity and the dynamic system. The disproving comments were mostly aimed at the form of the identity and the results of the system while the positive comments were in favour of a bold and novel procedure in the creation and extrapolation of the dynamic system. I will try and focus on opinions regarding the relational qualities of the logo generator and the use of context.

The image shows the text "BRAND NEW" in a very bold, red, sans-serif typeface. The letters are thick and closely spaced, with a slightly irregular, hand-drawn quality to the edges. The text is centered horizontally and occupies a significant portion of the page width.

Fig. 20. *Brand new logo (2007)*

A few of the bloggers did not take for granted or approve of a dynamic system: “besides the question [of] what the “official” identity version is” (Vit, 2007). This is merely a wish to view an identity as a basic reductionist mark, a hallmark of solid Modernism. In the example of the Casa da Musia, as with many other flexible and dynamic identities, there is not an ‘official’ logo, but merely a system of strict ideas that shift based on different factors or parameters. These factors can alter the shape of the identity, its condition in response to its context, or in this example, the identities colour. There is no official identity in as much as there is no official way in which to show the building. There is not one observation in which to view the identity, there are in fact six.

Most of the negative comments stem from a confusion about this dynamic system, and how it acts as a unified whole, especially in regard to the programmatic synthesis of the relationship between the colours of the identities and the advertising material. Because proper names have not been given in most examples, I will use the name that has been used on the design blog. One blogger in particular, Tactful Cactus, sees the problem with the dynamic system because he/she cannot see the identity as existing outside of the context:

*What I do have a problem with is when process trumps the end product.
The colors were chosen from a set grid placed over meaningful photos.
Once those colors are taken from the meaning of their context, they're just
random colors. (Vit, 2007).*

The six basic white and black landmarks are never considered to be seen by themselves, but behave as the framework and shape in which to respond to different factors. Another blogger, 5000, replied to this misunderstanding by explaining “the colors are derived from the environment that the logo is used in. They’re never taken out of the environment” (Ibid.).

This is not an outcome of method outdoing approach, but instead a firm approach set in place to increase meaning. To echo ‘5000’ “they’re never taken out of the environment” (Ibid.). This applies to the poster program, in which the immediate context is the advertising material, and for the business card, in which the context is the skin tones of the owner of the business card. One blogger (Alfonso) voiced the elegance of the system:

This algorithm doesn't mean to act in a void, like the example at the top of the post (figure/ground, in an consistent blank canvas). It is meant to me applied to an object. I know it looks displeasing on its own, but then it seems to me that one is not truly supposed to display it in this context less situation. After you see it supplicated in different ways, you discover its form, and its elegance becomes evidential (Ibid.).

This figure/ground that Alfonso references is a hallmark of Modernist display approaches. Alfred H. Barr Jr, formative Director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was one of the first people to use a colorless background in which to show artworks. Previously, artworks had been viewed close together, forming a clash of competing artworks, as was the style of the Pre-Modernist era. This was in part due to the realism of the image plane, which began a window into another world, with clearly explained parameters. With the modernist tradition, the position was for a truth to components, which developed in a search for vacant visual language of endless forms, by treating the canvas as a dormitory representational plane. These artworks longed to be seen in isolation, free of whimsicality: “Whereby the language of display emits a modernist, seemingly distinct aestheticism”. (Staniszewski, 1998, p. 123) This distinct aestheticism is no longer evident for the Casa da Musica identity. The identities are not supposed to be seen in a void, in a “white, ideal space”, but in relation to the poster (Ibid.). It does not live in a vacuum of autonomy, but only becomes clear when seen in the contingent link it has with the surrounding image. It is not used until it is in junction with another design component.

4.2.6 Lived language

Through this connection we should give credit to Pragmatism and its idea of a lasting language, that truth can be approached through lived experience. As James acknowledges: “In the shadow of a living language, the expression has no meaning except in the consideration of the situation” (William, 2010, p.68). Ideas only become sincere when used in context. The Casa da Musica identity, does not live in ‘true’ form as a black identity on a colorless background, it only becomes tangible when applied as a lived language. This dynamic identity system, and most others, can be viewed as a language, a vocabulary of components. While the Casa da Musica is not a voiced language, it is a living language, always adapting, adjusting and responding to the situation.

4.2.7 Components of Casa da Musica identity system

The Casa da Musica identity [Fig 3.7] is a system that is aware of its location within a dynamic network of relations and hopes to highlight those relations by functioning as a vessel in which different externalities can be made tangible. These externalities range from the semantic qualities of the occasions it is advertising, or they can be the make up of colorful values held within those posters. It acts as an abstract blueprint on business cards, presenting the identity of the business card holder through the identity. By using customised software it is able to frame the Casa da Musica building and organisation in a novel and interesting practice that emphasises the identity of the organisation as existing within a particular environment. Semantic components are contained within this specific environment, which do not encourage the form of the identity, but are merely applied to the surface. By creating a tool that is a visual reproduction of the building, Sagmeister has developed an identity that is able to emulate many levels of meaning at the same time. These levels go beyond the typical and static tools used by traditional means. Instead of visualising the connection the identity has various other design components through traditional means, it is able to fuse a wider level of purposes, without watering down the visual and symbolic components of the design. Through tentative means, the representation of the Casa da Musica building improves the abilities of this design tool. It is a basic tool, but it gives the identity the know-how to be affected by different externalities, all of which escalate the importance of the brand. It passes different scales, from the more immediate space of the printed poster, to the people that occupy and form the building and outward to the interaction with the wider public. Without all of these components interacting with the brand mark, it would not have the same distinctive characteristics that make it so interesting.

4.3 MIT Media Lab

Professor Nicholas Negroponte and Jerome Wiesner founded MIT Media Lab in 1985. The MIT Media Lab is one of the world's most renowned research and development centers. Funded by corporate sponsorship, the Media Lab counted with a \$26 million budget in 2009 – 10 and served 138 graduate students and 28 faculty and principal investigators.

Last year Media Lab, the Boston-based experimental faction of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), celebrated its 25th birthday. The occasion was marked by the launch of its new graphic identity (Fig. 21). Following the opening of the Lab's new home, E14, this February, the new logo also heralded a period of transition for the institution. In the run-up to the anniversary, the school recruited Richard The, a recent Media Lab graduate, along with E Roon Kang to reinvigorate the existing logo, a simple yet robust colour bar, which had been the institution's only dedicated graphic identity since its establishment back in 1985.

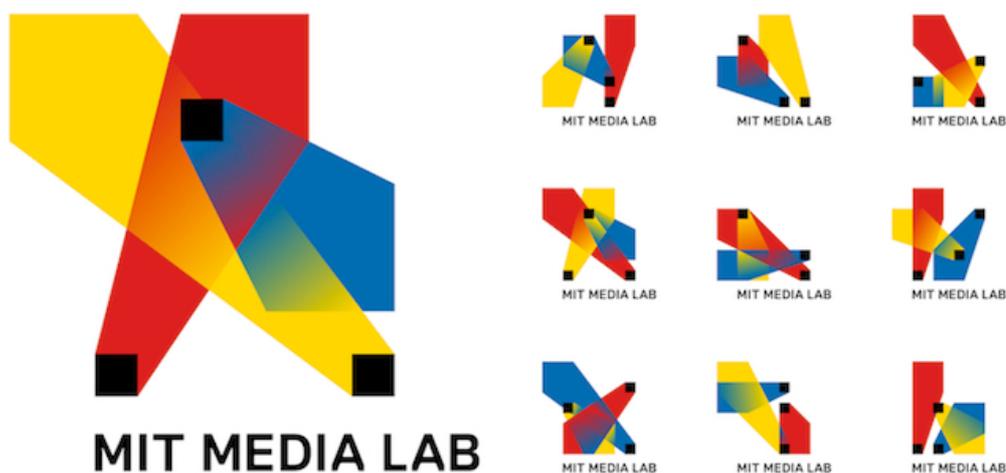


Fig. 21. MIT Media Lab (2011)

4.3.1 New dynamic identity

David Small, a Lab professor until last year who instigated the redesign, felt it was time to give Media Lab a fresh start. ‘It is meaningful that it marks the end of 25 years and that this is for a new generation for the next 25,’ says Small. The main ambition of the design was to encompass all aspects of the Lab. The Logo embodies its unusual focus group-based structure; its keen encouragement of cross-disciplinary education and research, its transparency both to the public and between researchers. The original graphic identity by Jacqueline Casey (Fig. 22), developed in 1984, was however a more fundamental basis for the new logo. That was based, in turn, on a paneled wall mural by Kenneth Noland, which was painted directly on the metal skin of the atrium in the IM Pei-designed Wiesner building (which used to house the Media Lab until recently) and continues along the exterior surface of the building.

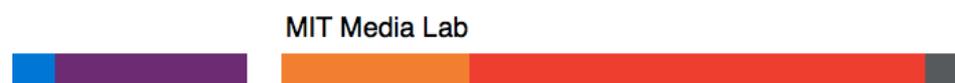


Fig. 22. *MIT Media Lab (1984)*

By the time Small returned to work at the Lab, 10 years after graduating, the identity was a redundant feature with little in the way of a graphic unity to the expansive subsets of researchers and the main institution itself. ‘Jacqueline’s identity might have been one of the first changeable systems to be designed,’ says Small. ‘It bugged me how much they had ruined the original identity – I’m not sure anyone was left who knew it was even a system.’ Taking the original logo as a starting point and referring to tangible aspects of the school – the new building’s glass atrium structure and its coloured stairs demarking the different zones of research within it – the new logo stretches the limits of graphic design. ‘It was a complex process,’ says The, who now works with Berlin-based practice The Green Eyl (MIT Media Lab Identity, 2011). ‘Because the school is so broad in its scope and reputation.’ Brought on-board by Small, The was the perfect candidate for the job, having previously worked on interactive and adaptive installations with designer Stefan Sagmeister (Casa da Musica) in New York.

4.3.2 40,000 variations



Fig. 23. *40,000 variations* (2011)

Using a custom-made algorithm the new design features three intersecting coloured spotlights, which can be organised into 40,000 various shapes and 12 colour mixtures (Fig. 23). The new identity provides the Media Lab with 25 years' worth of individualised business cards, which was the starting-point for the rebrand. Each Media Lab Professor and student can pick from the range on offer and acquire his or her own quirky logo shape and colour composition (Labarre, 2011).

According to Small, these will eventually act as a key to access people's profiles and work. 'The business card could be waved in front of a computer and open a new world,' he says. This also avoids the everyday problem of devolving a core identity. Rather than countless reproductions diluting the Media Lab brand, instead they merge the different personalities of all staff and students with the institution's stated mission. The MIT Media Lab identity according to Nes is a generative dynamic system. This generative system opens up at least one of the elements of a dynamic system, which allows the identity to exist as a living character. It allows the identity to be influenced by external data, which puts the MIT identity into a real-time environment. The identity reflects the world that it exists in, and adapts in response to its input. (Identity p.153)

4.3.3 Media lab influences

Could other organisations ensue the lead of the Media Lab and develop their own generative logos? Kang is not sure. "It made a lot of sense for us because this is for the Media Lab, where there is a strong emphasis on individuals' own interests," he says. "Not all organisations are necessarily like that or need to communicate that, but when it does make sense, there is a lot to explore. As our culture becomes more dynamic, there will be an increased need for a new kind of branding where a brand manual does not detail every single aspect of a brand"(Wiles, 2011)

Kang and The's identity is based on the idea of intersection. Underlying the pattern is a five-by-five grid (**Fig.24**). While the identity is dynamic and generative, the use of the grid allows the designers to have some sort of control over the output. According to Kang there is a set of rules that limits some of the variety, in order to ensure consistent aesthetics. For example, there needs to be at least one intersection between spotlights, and at least one has to reach the outer border, or some identities would be very compact. The colours taken from a mural by Kenneth Noland in the original MIT Media Lab make the identity feel vibrant while keeping true to the heritage of MIT. The invisible underlying five by five grid in the finished device represents the physical, academic, and intellectual environment provided by the Media Lab.

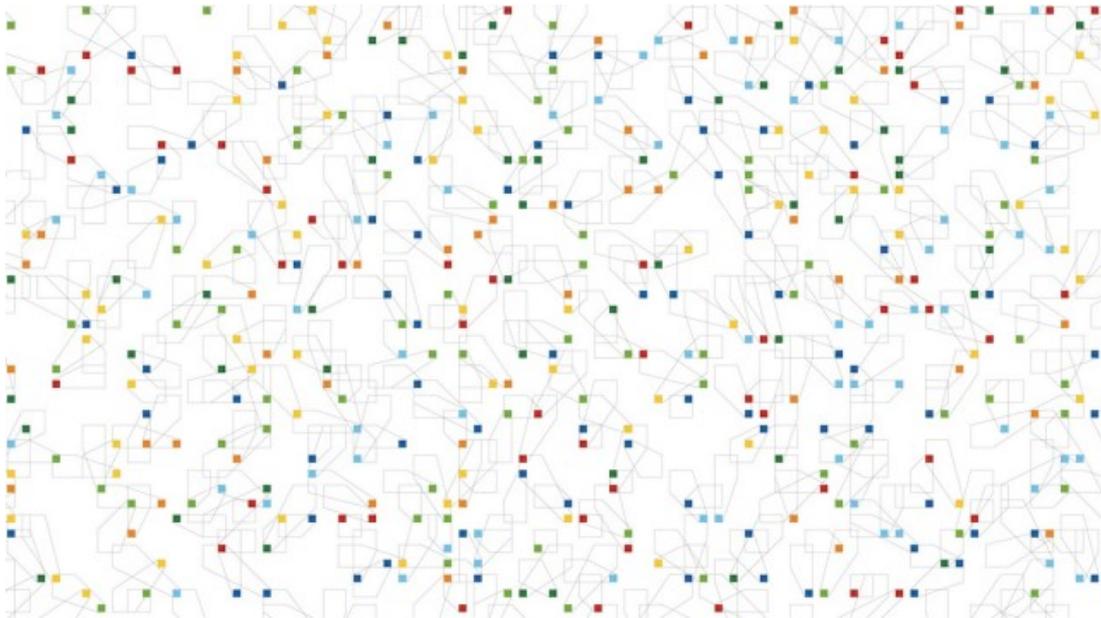


Fig.24. *Underlying grid* (2011)

4.3.4 Identity without a leader

Although consented by many, the rebranding highlights the Lab's need for such articulation; something that Small feels is crucial to its future growth and direction. 'Since being established, the Lab's mission has become much broader,' he says. 'In 1989, when I graduated we were awaiting the Internet and social media. But now it is a changing environment.' Under the latest directorship of Frank Moss and guided by the credo 'inventing a better future', the Lab has become increasingly adaptive to new encounters, shifting its research to include contrasting fields of study such as nanotechnology and biomechanics. While its research is behind the fundamental technology of countless ground breaking commercial products including Guitar Hero, Lego Mindstorms and campaigns such as One Laptop per Child, the Lab's graphic logo remained misleading.

Now the institution has an identity – albeit an adaptive and personalised one – it has no honorary head after director Moss resigned in February 2006. It seems an unusual situation for a brand to define an institution's identity without a leader to follow. So while the new identity develops on the Media Lab's history and considers its current purpose, it will be down to the new leader to take the institution out of a transition phase and indicate a clear approach for the future.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

Since the 1950^s the demand for organisations to communicate with their audience in a dynamic manner has increased significantly. The downside to technological and online advancements is having a huge effect on the way we communicate to each other. It is clear to see why dynamic identities are on the rise, with information being readily available to us at the click of the button. Increased company transparency with their audience becoming better informed as Internet and mobile devices improve puts more pressure on organisations to adapt in order to represent every aspect of their business.

Differentiation between the types of dynamic identity systems is useful when cross analyzing to find out the capabilities of each type of method, but you should not restrict yourself to each element type. New dynamic identities are constantly crossing the barriers between each method creating crossbreed system combinations. While dynamic identity systems can achieve flexibility through interaction, movement, transformation and adaption they cannot all be achieved in every system type.

5.1 Insights into dynamic identity case studies

The three case studies highlighted some important insights about integrating a dynamic system into these three brands. The first insight this paper discussed was that cities in fact do not need any type of identity either static or dynamic. The reason for this is that a city is in fact an identity; the buildings, the people and the culture make up a cities identity. Introducing a dynamic system as a cities identity only causes confusion with its audience, if a country feels the need to brand a city than it should pay close attention to heritage and interact with their people to find out exactly what they would want out of their identity. In the case of the city of Melbourne it was a case of integrate a dynamic identity because it is a trend at that moment in time. The danger of this is that like most trends in design they only have a certain shelf life before becoming stale and in need of replacement.

Secondly, dynamic identities tend to work best when used in the proper context. In the remaining two case studies, MIT and Casa da Musica, the flexible design system were both a success because there was a dynamic environment at the heart of these two organisations. MIT is world renowned for being at the forefront of technology and science; they wanted an identity that did not follow the banal static identities that were being used at the time. The dynamic identity is a tip of a hat to the Media Lab's spirit of cross-pollination, with each spotlight symbolizing a single individual. The MIT staff come from many different backgrounds – they are engineers, scientists, artists, designers -- and have very different ways of thinking, seeing, and working, At MIT the staff cross paths, collaborate, and inspire each other, and that is the success of MIT. The Media Lab has outgrown this notion of traditional, with researchers working in areas ranging from human computer interaction to neurobiology or nanotechnology. The dynamic logo is an effort to capture the dynamism that defines MIT as an Institute; this would never be achievable with a static singular identity. (Labarre, 2011)

Both Casa da Musica and MIT integrated their building/ environment into their dynamic systems, for a successful dynamic identity an organization must integrate their building or environment into their identity? Maybe, the most important factor when designing an identity either static or dynamic is to stay true to their heritage or values of that brand. This is why MIT and Casa da musica were a success because underlying these beautiful dynamic systems was a rationale explanation for under going this design system. It is a case of function over form, whereas Melbourne was a case of form over function. The explanation of using dynamic system for the Casa da Music was after hearing Koolhaas describe the Casa da Musica as a “conglomeration of various layers of meaning”, Sagmeister (2006) realised that such a description could be applied from the ideas used in architectural discourse to one of graphic design, branding, and in this case a dynamic system.

5.2 Future Dynamic designs

Many audiences will never see more than one iteration of the logo system. So, if any individual variant is weaker than a singular instance of the logo, the overall identity will suffer. Showing 100 variations of a mark might look great in a design case study, but the multiplicity probably would not matter to your audience — most of them will assume the logo they see is the primary graphical face of the organization. So, all the qualities of a great identity must be present in each and every variation of a brands mark.

5.2.1 Helping brands stand out

As designers, we are aware of helping our clients' brands stand out. The principle of doing something new or different is not trivial, since our media maelstrom drives brands to do increasingly more to gain visibility. Creating a dynamic identity can help bring needed visual vigilance to an organization, but it should not be a gimmick at the core. This kind of design thinking only works when it is an outgrowth of the brands distinctive DNA – some essential values of the organisation or company, whether it is the style of a building, nature of change, or illustrating the fickleness needed to play in a specific industry. Some brand identities might need to show a shift of service or product, while others see adaptability as critical competitive benefits, and other organizations have evolution written into their foundations. Is the dynamic system built to support modularity?

5.2.2 Correct Context

A dynamic identity works especially well for Casa da Musica and MIT, because of the structure the logos live in. Both organisations have to play with the appearance of their identity, but this extra freedom only works because the identities live within precise support systems — Casa da Music always appears as one of six different variations, its size is relatively consistent, and is always used in the correct context. The consistent use of media and placement, adds a coherence that a pocket folder or Times Square billboard could not. MIT Media Lab’s identity works because underlying the identity is a five by five grid (Labarre, 2011). The invisible underlying five by five grid in the finished device represents the physical, academic, and intellectual environment provided by the Media Lab. While the identity is dynamic and generative, the use of the grid allows the designers to have some sort of control over the output. There is a set of rules that limits some of the logo variations, in order to ensure consistent aesthetics.

5.2.3 Not every identity has to be dynamic

This paper discovered through three various case studies that a static identity is just as effective as a dynamic identity. In the case of City of Melbourne, the paper discovered how a dynamic identity actually hindered the brand instead of making it unique. It was a case of form over function and the heritage of Melbourne as an identity was lost behind the shapes and colours of this new dynamic identity. In the case of Melbourne a simple static identity with elements from Melbournes heritage would have been a much more successful approach, the people of Melbourne would have had an identity that they could have related to and felt a connection with.

5.2.4 Future of dynamic identities

It might be enticing to consider a dynamic identity for an organization or company, but before a designer decides that a dynamic identity is the right decision for the brand, they should first consider whether or not the brand is that of a dynamic nature. If the brand has no connection with a dynamic identity then it will simply be lost within the dynamic system that it is created within. In some cases it may just be as simple as making a static identity work harder. Maybe it just needs to be more flexible across applications to have the visceral impact that is needed. A well designed, thoughtfully considered identity should be able to make the jump from the printed page, to a web version on most platforms.

If the brand is that of a dynamic nature and the designer feels that a dynamic identity is the right decision then it is important to establish which of the identity components is going to predominantly generate the flexibility and which is going to predominantly help maintain recognition. Components that can be both fixed and variable include orientation, colour, size, texture, arrangement, repetition, layering, abstract, shape and grid type. Rules commanding these devices must take into account the Gestalt theory of Visual Perception (similarity, proximity, figure and ground, symmetry and continuation). This allows for the effective generation of patterns, links between related objects and an emphasis on certain aspects with the system without tarnishing the coherency. Dynamic identities are adaptable to change while static approaches run the risk of not anticipating change quickly enough. Nobody knows exactly what the future may hold, but one thing is certain...change is inevitable

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