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UWRT 1103

12 November 2015

Technology has always been a part of my life and so I wanted my theme to be related to the subject. This was also a challenge to as I needed to find a subject that I didn’t really know anything about but, still involved technology. This was mostly likely the single greatest struggle that I faced, discovering a theme that I could find enjoyable researching while still fitting the criteria.

The original inspiration for my theme was actually when I was in class and we were looking at examples of website portfolios. Although some may have had great content, a large number of them has design issues that made them less appealing. I saw how design can influence people, including myself. When I saw a portfolio that was visually difficult to look at, I found myself assuming that the content inside of it was of the same quality. Out of curiosity, I looked at it for the creator’s point of view and tried to in a way to give them the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps to them the hard to stand colors, impossible to use navigation, and text that blends in with the background were all appealing to them. I began to wonder what made different designs appealing to different people and then it hit me then that this should be my theme for the inquiry project. I knew I couldn’t focus on web design alone because, although it can be a rather large problem, there are much greater issues that design can cause. How does the design affect technology? This was my starting point for the extended inquiry project.

The issue that I have chosen to focus on is much less socially focused and instead focuses on the board theme of innovation. I started with a simple question. How does design correlate with technology? I few sources later I found the need to revise my question into something more focused. How does design affect the success of technology?

A part of my inquiry project was looking that the historical side of design, how the past has influenced design and brought it to where it finds itself today. This is mainly done with a look at how power outlets have developed and become such a nonstandard between countries yet, despite the lack of appeal in some cases, effectively complete their job. For my main focus I branched off into two major categories, how design can be effectively in using technology to communicate and how it can be effectively used to allow a technology to be used on a grand scale. Communication was the origin on my idea which stemmed from when I looked at the example digital portfolios in class I thought, how could they better communicate with their audience? This of course is not limited to just websites, it can be applied to PowerPoints, pamphlets, takeout menus, and really anything that tries to communicate with an audience. Eventually my research lead me to a more technical aspect which became my second major category, how design allows technology itself to succeed. One of my favorite examples is the NASA Space Shuttle which I analyzed for possible points of failure caused by design. It would have been easier to find point of the space shuttle that couldn’t lead to failure. The design of critical components decide the faith of the entire shuttle.

My research process was quite similar to my process of wasting time and avoiding doing work that I should be doing, like this essay for example. I simply sat in a comfy chair and browsed news articles and posts on the internet that in anyway be stretched into sort of fitting into my theme that I had only loosely established at the time. I found nearly 50 sources and, once my poor laptop simply refused to open another tab, I started to go through them all. I quickly found that they were, for lack of better words, all over the place. This was what actually prompted the change in my inquiry theme and question that I mentioned above. As I looked through all of my sources, I found that I was most drawn to sources that were not simply speaking of design but in fact were going over how design caused a failure in technology. It was this that caused to wonder how it was that design could cause something like a space shuttle to fail and how design could cause something like the iPhone to endlessly thrive. My theme was greatly decided by the sources that I found rather than the opposite, more typical approach.

Overall I would love to do a more in depth study of the theme. In this project I was able to find out quite a lot about just how important design is to technology. The most interesting thing that I have learned by far would be would be how truly delicate something that seems so large and indestructible actually is. I would love to look at how critical design is to more average things like skyscraper for example. Hundred foot towers that lean over their city fighting the pull of gravity for their entire existence, just the thought makes me wonder how many places design is critical. Bioengineering would also be an interesting subtheme to look into. In bioengineering the design not only has to work but has to be effectively compatible with a living organism which I have no doubt greatly influences how the technology is created.

My theme was rather vague and as way my issue but, this is what made the project interesting to me. I could let my interesting wander and not have many restrictions. Of course it wasn’t perfect, far from it in fact. Several time I found myself researching something that vaguely fit but, I couldn’t really incorporate it into what I was working on without changing my project as a whole. That aside, I didn’t have an overwhelming pile of source mainly because in order to find a source I needed to have an idea of what it would be talking about. No one really talks about just design and technology, it is always in correlation to some sort of example. Negative aside, my theme was interesting and I had fun working on it.