

The Making of the CUTC Foundation Logo

Design Objectives

The CUTC has had several logos over the years, often with little brand consistency. The CUTC Foundation did not yet have its own visual identity. Yet CUTC has established a notable brand over more than a decade of success. The design objectives were:

1. Design a pair of visual identities for the CUTC conference and CUTC Foundation that were distinct, but related.
2. Incorporate a connection with the values, mission, history, and aspirations for the future of the CUTC and CUTC Foundation.
3. The brand identities needed to strike a balance of being contemporary to feel up-to-date, but also classic to stand the test of time. They had to be professionally executed and released with proper guidelines and working files so that the designs could be properly implemented each year and also evolved in the future, should that be necessary.
4. The identity needed to work online, offline, in monochrome, and at greatly differing sizes given the wide range of media that the brand will be used upon (e.g. banners, t-shirts, websites, business cards).

Design Process

This project began by enlisting Mohanad Yajouri, a formally educated visual artist who has worked on developing modern brand identities and visual designs in the technology space for a decade. Aside from being reliable and very talented, he's a super nice guy who was willing to do this for a few beers!

In April, 2014 the process began with sharing of the [CUTC History, Vision and Values](#) and some of the logos of the past such as those below.

Year(s)	Logo
2002-2005	 The logo consists of a blue circular emblem containing a white crescent moon and a five-pointed star. To the right of the emblem, the letters "CUTC" are written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below "CUTC", the year "2002" is written in a slightly smaller, bold, black sans-serif font. At the bottom of the logo, the text "Canadian Undergraduate Technology Conference" is written in a small, black sans-serif font. <p>CUTC 2002 Canadian Undergraduate Technology Conference</p>

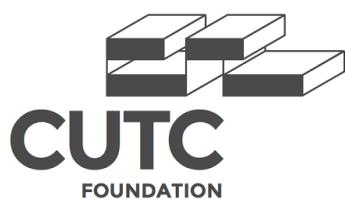
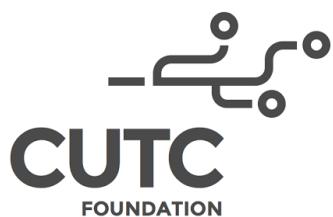
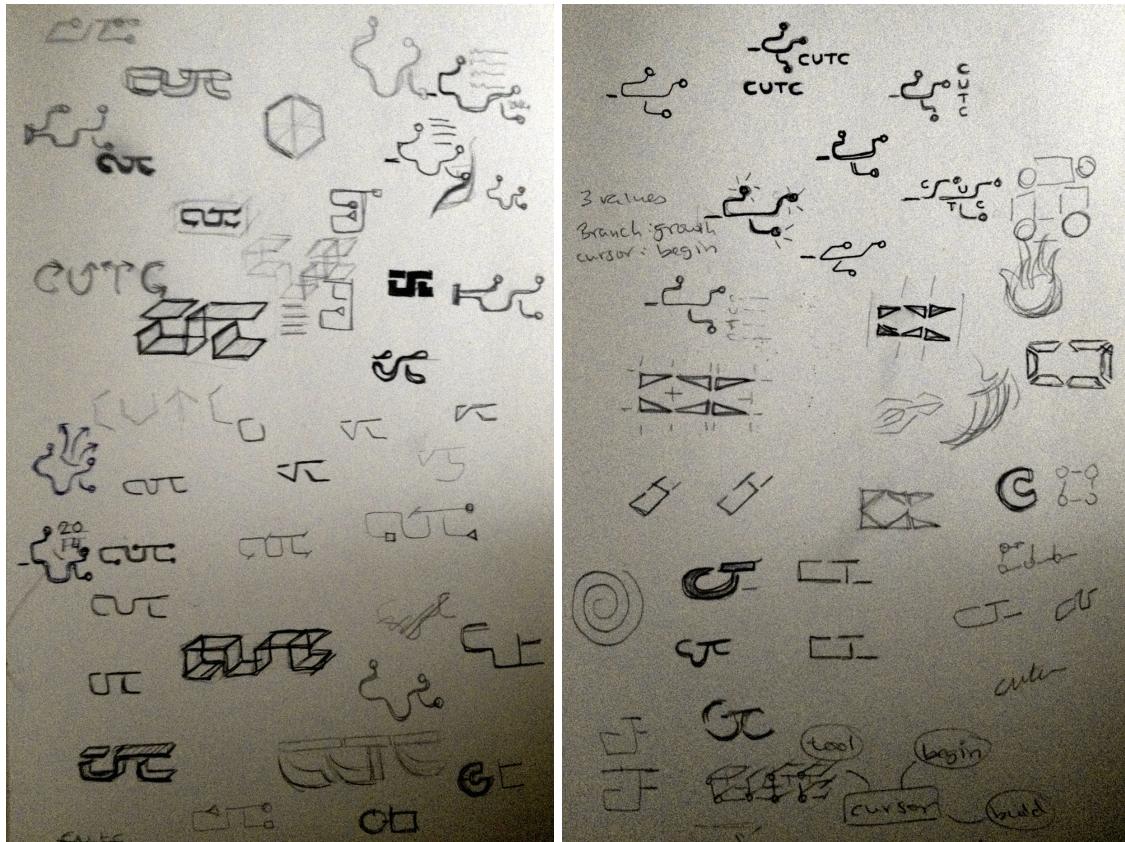
2006	 <p>cutc 2006 where the future goes™ www.cutc.ca</p>
2007	 <p>CUTC where the future goes ></p>
2008	 <p>cutc 2008 CANADIAN UNDERGRADUATE TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE</p>
2010	 <p>CUTC 10</p>
2011-2012	



At this time a detailed examination was made of other brand identities in the education and university space.

Style	References
More contemporary	MICA OCAD Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Hochschule Hannover Hutchins Center for African and African American Research
More classic	Avenir College Emily Carr School of Visual Arts University of Waterloo 1 (University of Waterloo 2) The Royal Academy of Engineering

The team started with the divergence stage of brainstorming with various iterations of low and high fidelity sketching exercises. Some of the artifacts are included here.



Through rounds of feedback over the following months the team started to enter the convergence stage of pursuing certain ideas in greater detail. Ideas centered around pixel-based symbolism of technology that also picked up a metaphor for individual people coming together to form CUTC.

1

2

a

cute

b

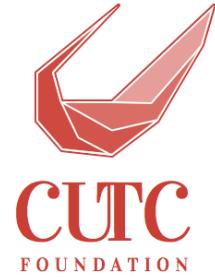
auto

c

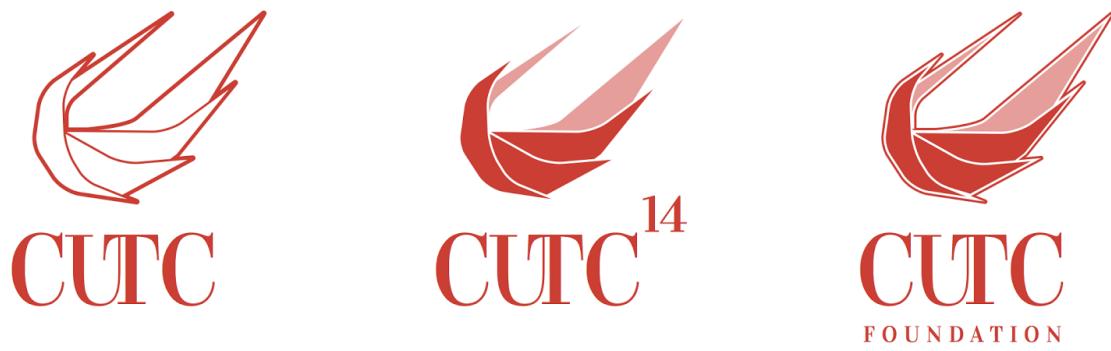
auto



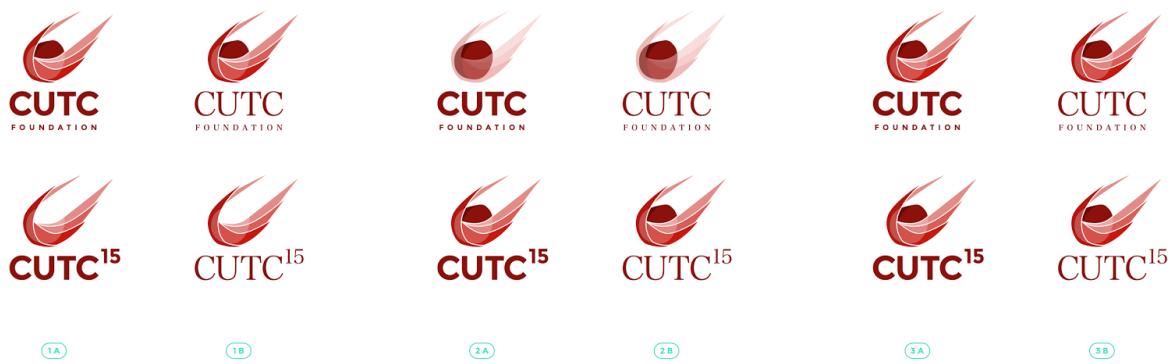
The team was not satisfied with how this design iteration was converging to meet all the design objectives of the project. A new direction was pursued based on earlier ideas employing the symbol of a meteor or comet that picked up on cues from earlier logos and conveyed an energy and emotion that felt appropriate. A new treatment of the typography was used that sought to achieve a balance between the more modern and classic motifs. Playful experiments with character kerning was done to explore the idea of uniting university students and technology.



As this direction was explored, it began to resonate more and more with the design team as new connections to the design objectives emerged.



Several further iterations of refinement were done, including tests with people outside the design team.



Designs converged upon a very pleasing result that satisfied the objectives nicely while staying fresh and not too literal to the goals.

Final Design



Symbolism

The comet represents effusive energy, forceful impact, timeless inspiration, and discovery through the use of technology.

The new logos invoke this meaning through their style and symbolism and were felt to achieve the design objectives the best of all options considered.

The design team wishes to leave the joy of drawing their own connections open for viewers, after sharing a few brief comments on some of the design choices that were made.

Values

The team felt there was delightful connections between the comet and the values of the CUTC Foundation:

- Learning Through Doing: CUTC events are student run with *distant external influences guiding their path along the way*.
- Youth Leadership: Brilliant people *making a big impact in the future got their beginnings many years ago*.
- Strength in Diversity: It is people and *ideas beyond our regular world that inspire learning the most*.

CUTC Foundation and CUTC

The team wanted to achieve a lasting brand for the CUTC Foundation, as well as a distinct but related one for the conference itself.

Style

The style of the logo is clean, distinctive, recognizable, and memorable. It is intentionally not obvious or literal, nor likely to be confused with other brands. It is intended to be simple to reproduce in various mediums online, in print, on a t-shirt, at different sizes, and in monochrome.

Typography

A sans-serif typeface was the obvious choice for a technology brand. The experiments with serif typefaces did not end up feeling united with the direction of the comet symbolism. The free, web-optimized [Montserrat Bold](#) typeface finally selected was felt to feel modern but also timeless.

Color

The energetic red that was used in the last four years was carried forward in the logo. This provided some brand continuity, effectively conveyed a Canadian aesthetic, and felt modern without being either too traditional or too trendy.