

Examination Roll No - 18312911011

Date & Time - 04/12/2021 @ 9:30 AM

Name of Program - Btech (IT & MI)

Unique Paper Code - 911713

Title of Paper - Visual Art & Aesthetics

Semester & year - VII semester / IV year

18.6

Icon is considered as one of the categories of signs. Signs can take many forms. They can be words, numbers, ~~seconds~~, photographs, paintings, road signs and more. They are categorized as - Icon, Index and Symbol.

Semiotics is the study of sign processes, which are any activity, conduct, or process that involves signs, where a sign is defined as anything that communicates something to the sign's interpreter. This communication, usually called a meaning, can either be intentional or unintentional.

Semiotics includes the study of signs and sign processes, indication, designation, likeness, analogy, allegory, metonymy, metaphor, symbolism, signification and communication.

Ferdinand de Saussure, one of the founders of semiotics, defines sign as the basic unit of meaning and has two parts.

1) Signifier - The form of a sign. The form might be a sound, a word, a photograph, a

facial expression, a painting etc.

2) Signified - The concept or object that's represented. It might be an actual object and not its form, or painting.

There are three classes of signifiers - Icon, Index and symbol.

Icon has a physical resemblance to the signified, the thing being represented. A photograph is a good example as it certainly resembles whatever it depicts. Take a picture of a tree and the resulting image will look like that tree. The icons we use in digital interfaces are all signs are not specifically icons as defined in semiotics. Icons are one possible type of form ~~of~~ a sign might take. An icon is meant as a direct imitation of the object or concept.

When user interfaces were first being created, most of the signs were imitations of real objects. Think documents, folders and printers. This is possibly why we refer to all signs in user interfaces as icons, but the original signifiers used - were icons in that



resembled what they represented.

Icons are further classified as -

1) Resemblance Icons - They are direct likenesses of the object they represent (camera icon for a camera app in smart phones). It works best when the representation is simple and direct. They're most effective when communicating simple actions, objects and concepts, however they are less effective as the complexity increases.

2) Exemplar Icons - It depict a common example of the class of objects they represent (trouble or rake to represent gardening). They show examples that are commonly associated with an action, object or concept. They work well to show examples of the signified.

3) Symbolic Icons - They are similar to exemplar icons but, are more effective at a higher level of abstraction (cracked wineglass to indicate something is fragile). Symbolic icons are best used when the actions, objects or concepts being represented are well-established.

4) Arbitrary Icons - They have no relationship to an object or concept and their association must be learned (computer on/off power button). They have no logical connection between signifier & signified or when the representation has become a standard or convention. There is no reason why blue underlined should be link but it's become the standard online.

Hence, signs can communicate by resembling what they represent by implying what they represent or through arbitrary representations.