

A Digital Production Advantage: The Synergy of Visual Design & Technological Development

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Definitions

- **Digital Production:** The visual design and digital deployment of computer graphics. Prevalent in media industries, but not limited to marketing, advertising, entertainment, and includes the digital platforms of web, mobile, video and more.
- **Hybrid Designer:** A digital producer that combines the disciplines of art and technology. Skills usually divided into two professions, design and programming, merged in one person.
- **Motion Graphics:** Digital images that are the result of compositing visual effects and rendering animated media. These processes are guided by design principles.
- **Interactive Development:** The implementation of end-user interactivity. Includes defining the user experience, programming application functionality, and deploying digital platforms.

Abstract

In digital production the traditional separation of design and deployment into separate practices is outdated. My thesis explores the convergence of these disciplines into one Hybrid Designer.

The focus of my research is on the trends in the current creative processes of digital production. I observe industry trends to determine if there is a shift towards the Hybrid Designer. I interview digital producers in a range of creative industries. I then analyze their production techniques and reflect that with my own practice. This is compiled into a supported argument for the emergence of the Hybrid Designers, and to explain the hybrid advantage.

This information is relevant to digital producers of all levels. I share my findings in a final report and exhibit it via interactive web application. The web site features innovative interactivity with HTML5 and motion graphics. The site itself will be created by combining artistic and technical skills and will be a demonstration of a Hybrid Designer.

Interviewees

- **NavigationArts**
 - Field: Interactive Digital Agency, Web User Experience
 - Contact: Leo Mullen, CEO
- **Kaon Interactive**
 - Field: 3D Interactive Marketing Software
 - Contact: Justin Gettler. Creative Director, Production Services
- **Forge Worldwide**
 - Field: Digital Media and Advertising Agency
 - Contact: Mike Pilato. Creative Director
- **SapientNitro**
 - Field: Digital Advertising Agency
 - Contact: Rob Gonda, Global Head of Emerging Technology
- **Heads and Tails TV**
 - Field: Interactive Digital Developer
 - Contact: Phil Loiacono, Director of Photography

Research Process

- **Producers - Interviews**

- Interviews, video conferences, phone calls, e-mail and secondary sources will be used to research the listed professionals. Main points of discussion:
 - Background: degree, education, background in CGI, professional groups
 - Professional: describe industry, who collaborate with, type of clients, business model
 - Production: position, requirements, skills, specific work, role, collaboration

- **Production - Reviews**

- Based on production work, I will make an in depth evaluation in order to deconstruct their successes and to define the modern canons for motion graphics and interactivity. Evaluations will be based on the following rubric:
 - Aesthetics: style, theme, composition, coloring, typography, influences, assets
 - Function: design solution, purpose, intended message, call to action, use-case
 - Interaction: human computer interaction, graphical user interface design, platform(s)

- **Compile - Results**

- By the end of the interviews, I should have a defined understanding of the current state of digital design industries. This will guide my thesis in regards to how the production pipeline functions, why Hybrid Design is a beneficial skill set, and how that reflects to my own digital production practices.
- Additionally, after reviewing their production work, I will have a list of how and why each piece was successful in terms of digital design, motion graphics, and interactivity. From that I will have the supported research to state their canons in terms of aesthetics, function, and interaction.

Findings

- **Supporting Arguments for Hybrid Designer:**
 - Fundamental responsibility to know the framework. In order to harness the user experience, you need to know the technology.
 - Important to have visual acuity and understand interface design. The user interface guides interaction. And interactivity is key to bringing design into functionality.
 - Collaboration is paramount to successful digital production. The ability to communicate and translate across artistic and technical disciplines is useful.
 - Improve Computer Literacy. Design and programming leads to improved problem solving skills and allow efficient utilization of new technology and softwares.
 - The ability to take an idea from concept all the way to creation is powerful. This is especially desirable as startups and independent development grow.

Outcomes

- **Exhibit Research**

- Exhibit the research via custom website.
- The subject is the completed research on digital production.
- The content combines motion graphics and interactive techniques.
- Utilizing *HTML5/CSS3* the browser renders motion graphics.
- Professional networking with social media and partner websites.
- Responsive Design is functional across all mobile and web devices.
- Google Analytics tracks the site's traffic, demographics, and behaviors.
- Website relays the research data while demonstrating its practices at the same time.

Personal Statement

The Digital Design and Computer Graphics Industries are constantly evolving along with the technology around us. The production processes require expertise and collaboration across disciplines. A world renowned conference SIGGRAPH, the Special Interest Group in Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques, separated members to two factions “ART” or “SCIENCE”. However, I got a pin that says “I AM HYBRID”.

I believe that an interdisciplinary skill set, including both creative and technical knowledge, is an advantageous position in the digital production industry. As a budding professional digital designer, I want to discover what digital production companies are creating, understand how my skills can be applied, and envision the future of digital design.