

Interaction Design for Print Media – Teaching print media workflows by emphasizing the great diversity of print media products

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Abstract

In the printing industry, the term workflow denotes the sequence of production and business processes necessary for creating a particular printed product. The inclusion and perception of the single processes and sub-processes to be included can differ strongly according to various criteria. This is the nature and scope of the product itself, the availability of techniques, the method of manufacture, as well as the degree of automation. In other words, workflows clearly demonstrate the complexity of graphic media production. However, on the other side, workflows also underline the great diversity of printed matter in many perspectives. This is the broad range of products, the variety of techniques, and the possibilities of individualization. The creation of a print product is therefore always associated with creativity, and this creativity can be emphasized exactly where the responsible person wants to show individualism. It is precisely this potential of creativity that print media products offer, which I have been using on a trial basis since this semester as main methodology in the lecture “print production workflows” for teaching communication design students. Thus, the teaching methodology aims in particular at conveying complex topics by illustrating diversity and at the same time applying creativity. The methodology includes the following five elements. Firstly, the goal to produce a print product sets the basis for the lecture. On purpose, this print product has not yet been specified in more concrete terms by the lecturer. The only specifications and guidelines are, that the print product has to evoke an interaction potential between the viewer and the print medium on the basis of the underlying construction and/or the design. In addition, the processes required for production should be predominantly feasible on an industrial scale, and the product has to be actually also produced in our printing laboratory on campus. Secondly, possible measures to create interactive print products will then be presented in the lecture. For this purpose, the essential structure of print media production workflows will be explained, and possible processes and sub-processes will be presented as well. In particular, workflows based on product examples are shown. Thirdly, parallel to the teaching units, the students should then think about how their potential print product can be designed and constructed in order to create an individual print product that offers interaction between medium and viewer. Fourthly, based on the different concepts of the students, the unique print products are then created in our laboratory by choosing the required resources, processing those using the necessary machines, until the product is finally finished. The production is mainly done by the students themselves. Fifthly, all print media products are then presented to each other in a presentation. Here, the possible interaction as well as the necessary workflow and (sub)-processes for the creation of the print product should be addressed. Details about the concept, results from the currently still running lecture, exemplary products from students, and the then available feedback from students I would very much like to show at the conference.

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