IDP 2022 | COMMUNICATION DESIGN BRIEF:

Re-designing Period Product Packaging

2022

INTRODUCTION

The intentions of the IDP:

The Inclusive Design Program (IDP) is a web platform encouraging design students from all disciplines around Australia to practice inclusive design through the acknowledgment and understanding of intersectionality and empathy. Be it nationality, gender, age and religion, disabilities, ethnicity, socio economic status and geographic location, the key objective of the IDP is to propose briefs to you that address problems of inequities in our society. The IDP does this through connecting you with industry, community and other academic institutions through online resources, recordings, and live workshops. These will expose the students to user-centred design and research methods and directly engage them with diverse users.

The problem that needs to be addressed by answering this brief:

In this semester-long project, you will be asked to bring your design expertise to a real world project. The IDP in 2022 is addressing the stigma around periods, especially for those in the LQBTIQ+ community. Your challenge is to explore and understand issues of inequality and stigma facing your potential users. By going through a human-centred design (HCD) process, you will come to discover, define, develop, and deliver—identifying unique opportunities to respond to with a physical or digital product.

The stigma associated with menstruation:

A recent survey by charity Share the Dignity demonstrated that 42% of transgender men always hide anything that shows they are having their period (Connory and WhyHive, 2021). Period packaging and marketing feminises these products through design and promotes shame through modelling secretive behaviours (Connory, 2021). Given the dialogue about gender representation and the gendering of products that is taking place currently in the media, education and the community, IDP 2022 is well placed to offer you the opportunity to examine the role and impact of gender and how that can be challenged.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is de-gendering and what is the problem with under-representation and misrepresentation in the LGBTQIA+ community?

Simply put, de-gendering is the process of removing any visual signifiers or language used to denote gendered use of a product that plays on cultural stereotypes (i.e. pink and blue toys for children). The initial launch of the IDP in 2022 will focus on the problem of de-gendering period products through

rethinking the design of products, packaging, and the marketing of period products to and for the LGBTIQ+ community. While design is often focused on issues of "use" and "usability", this project will allow you to critically examine what goes under or misrepresented among period products. For example, what enables and constrains "use" of these products? How do issues of culture, safety, gender, pain, anxiety, and misconceptions come to affect use? How might design address these issues as an opportunity, act as a point of discussion, provoke insight, and advocate through artefact?

What are our supporting brands doing in this space?
You will be given the opportunity to work directly with LQBTIQ+ Health Australia, prominent brands like Cottons, Modi Bodi and noteworthy advocates in the area of period pride like Share the Dignity and Chalice Foundation—who will offer you a deep understanding of the market segment and most importantly the users. Acting as design precedents, these brands are a great way to highlight characteristics that are present among existing products. There are a variety of products to learn from: tampons, pads, wearables, and cups. Each product provides a unique value to the user, and through exploring existing brands and design precedents, you can build upon what's working and improve upon what is not.

Research and case studies about this topic:

Sanitary Secrets—100 pad ads in 100 years: Harmful norms and themes in period product visual communication
The Sanitary Secrets Exhibition (Connory, 2021b) and catalogue identified three themes and harmful norms that have been reiterated by graphic design over the past 100 years in Australian women's magazines. They included:
• The misrepresentation of periods as a medical problem;
• Coding the menstrual taboo using the colour blue, high fashion modelling, white clothes, the confinement of women to private domestic spaces, traditionally feminine roles/employment/sport and the oversexualisation of young women; and
• Modelling secretive behaviour between mother and daughters and through the design of packaging (Connory, 2021c).

Although these themes were identified in magazines, the packaging shown in these advertisements demonstrate graphic elements that may trigger period shame. For example, the predominance of a soft pastel blue in these ads shows that the use of red—the colour of blood—was too explicit for public consumption. Red was associated with the idea of shame and was avoided through most of the century. It is important to consider the meaning behind colours and the messaging you are trying to convey when designing your packaging.

Another pattern to occur in this collection of pad ads is the design of the packages themselves. Only 15 per cent of the ads made the package the hero image, suggesting that period products should remain hidden and secretive. For example, from the 1920s through to the 1940s packaging was very minimal with the brand name being the most prominent graphic on the box. From 1960 to the present day we see large roses, leaves, cotton flowers and floral filigree on period product packaging. Flowers can symbolise many things including new life, fragrant aromas, femininity and romance and these meanings differ between cultures, creating a dichotomy of interpretation and understanding. The choice of ambiguous floral metaphors aids the secretive behaviours that are promoted through the pad ads shown here.

1–3 Period product advertising that shows the dominance of the colour blue used to conceal associations with red blood.

4–6 Vague floral metaphors feature heavily in the history of period product packaging.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Utilising human-centred design (HCD) principles and processes, you will respond to aspects of inequity in menstruation packaging. Your artefact will act as a point of discussion and provocation for positive outcomes and change. IDP aims to promote empathy by engaging you with practical projects that support collaboration, consultation, and inclusivity.

PROJECT DETAILS/SCOPE

Challenges:
How might you address issues of shame and inequity with menstruation and period products through design? Every person has a different story and comes from a different context in the LGBTQIA+ community. What is significant, valued, and intentioned varies across users. The challenge, then, is not to find the one solution that fixes all problems but consider a package design that addresses an aspect of the problem based on your research into the users that provokes discussion and seeks positive change.

Deliverables:
A package design that addresses issues raised throughout a human-centred design process. You can use existing branding of our supporters (e.g. Cottons, ModiBodi), redesign their brands or create your own. This artefact should be supported with visuals that help to communicate it effectively. While you are tasked to create a package design, this can range from the practical to more speculative. You can explore package design through a commercial lens, using existing production techniques and materials or consider the way you address the problem as a provocation. It is up to you to identify how you want to approach these issues.

Timeline:
This project can be run from 4 weeks, through a whole semester or a yearlong. It is up to you. You can follow a human-centred design process that follows a double diamond methodology approach popularised by the British Design Council. A suggested schedule for different timelines is at the end of this document.

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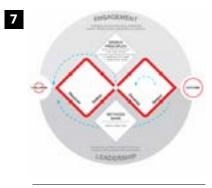**7** British Design Council Double Diamond Design Process

DISCOVER
Weeks 1–4: The first diamond helps designers understand, rather than simply assume, what the problem is. It involves speaking to and spending time with people who are affected by the issues. What already exists, and how can you learn from it? You can use video recordings with users from the LGBTQIA+ community and our program supporters supplied on the IDP website. You could also conduct your own

DEFINE
Weeks 5–7: The insight gathered from the discovery phase can help you to define the challenge in a unique way. What challenges have gone unaddressed in existing packaging?

DEVELOP
Weeks 8–10: The second diamond encourages people to give different answers to the clearly defined problem, seeking inspiration from elsewhere and co-designing with a range of different people. How might you ideate, test, evaluate, and iterate with others?

DELIVER

Weeks: 11–13: Delivery involves improving concepts, detailing, and refining your outcomes. How might you communicate effectively across stakeholders? Prepare your artefact for uploading to the IDP online exhibition.

SUBMISSION

To upload your work and exhibit your inclusive designs you will first need to create an account on the IDP website. You can continue to log into your account to make changes until the point where you submit. You and your lecturer must read the 'explanatory statement' before pressing accept and begin your submission. Your submission must include a focused research question, your research findings, and a brief explanation of your project. For designed outcomes, you may upload up to five high-quality jpeg images that best demonstrate your work. You should also upload a written pdf document if you'd like to compliment your images with further written research or an additional rationale. If your submission is research or strategy based and best communicated as a written document or proposal you can upload this work as a pdf. Save and reread your submission for mistakes or inconsistencies. Once you press submit you CAN NOT make any more changes. Detailed information about submissions is outlined on the IDP website: **www.inclusivedesignprogram.com.au**

CONCLUSION

Your challenge is to design packaging for a period product (or range of products) that addresses the issues of inequity for the LGBTQIA+ community discovered and is explored through the human-centred design process. In doing so, you will come to understand an inclusive design approach for addressing issues raised in your design practice.

RESOURCES

Rydström K. Degendering Menstruation: Making Trans Menstruators Matter. 2020 Jul 25. In: Bobel C, Winkler IT, Fahs B, et al., editors. *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies* [Internet]. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan; 2020. Chapter 68. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK565621/ doi: 10.1007/978-981-15-0614-7_68

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Connory, Jane and WhyHive, (2021), 'Period Pride Report: Bloody Big Survey Findings: Australia's largest survey on attitudes and experiences of periods.' Share the Dignity: Brisbane, Australia.

Connory, Jane, (2021a), Friday essay: I looked at 100 ads for menstrual products spanning 100 years — shame and secrecy prevailed. The Conversation.

Connory, Jane, (2021b), Sanitary Secrets - 100 pad ads in 100 years. Exhibition. Available from: https://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/file/0d14c97b-4ad3-44c2-9462-053a15a7c01a/1/2021-connory-sanitary_secrets_exhibition.pdf

Connory, Jane, (2021c), Sanitary Secrets - 100 pad ads in 100 years. Exhibition Catalogue. Available from: https://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/file/0d14c97b-4ad3-44c2-9462-053a15a7c01a/1/2021-connory-sanitary_secrets_exhibition.pdf

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ETHICS APPROVAL

This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact:

- Research Integrity Office: +61 3 9214 8356 or resintegrity@swinburne.edu.au
- Research Ethics Office: +61 3 9214 3845 or +61 3 9214 8145 or +61 3 9214 5267 or resethics@swinburne.edu.au
- Mail: Research Ethics, Integrity and Biosafety Office, Swinburne Research (H68), PO Box 218, Hawthorn VIC 3122
- Campus address: Internal Mail No. 68. Level 1, Swinburne Place South, Hawthorn Campus

SUGGESTED 12-WEEK PROJECT PLAN

Week	Phase	Theme	Activity
1	**DISCOVER:** Realities	Unpacking the design context	**Introduction of Brief:** Observation photo activity & card sorting Students take photos (or source them) of period products, how they're sold in stores, where users store them, where they're used at home/work, and sort images based on patterns. Students can use card-sorting or affinity mapping to identify themes.
2	**DISCOVER:** Unknowns	Human-centred insights	**Empathy Interviews:** Students interview users. These prompts are generative, open-ended, experience-focused, and empathy-based. Students practice exploring with users versus asking simple yes/no predetermined questions.
3	**DISCOVER:** Precedents	What's missing in existing products	**Precedent Analysis:** Students identify patterns that emerge among responses—what's missing and what's working. Can use AEIOU to organise precedent information for examination. Can use Cards for Humanity to check any assumptions or blind spots.
4	**DISCOVER:** Reframe	Feedback and development	**Deliverable–Opportunity Presentation:** Students share observations made across previous weeks. Students present "How Might We" questions that identify opportunities to explore in further weeks.
5	**DEFINE:** Ideation	Turning insights into ideas	**Develop Ideas:** Students begin creating ideas from their HMW questions. Students can utilise an activity such as Mash-Up to challenge their design response and open up possibilities, or bodystorming can be used to help develop ideas with a service orientation.
6	**DEFINE:** Synthesis	Turning ideas into concepts	**Concept Creation:** Students examine their ideas to create a single concept. This concept should focus on aspects of an overall experience, rather than individual features. Students consider the physical, cognitive, sensory, functional aspects of the design response.
7	**DEFINE:** Convergence	Possible design response	**Deliverable–Design Principles & Direction:** Students present their concept alongside design principles. These principles will help students make decisions and keep focus during prototyping and delivery of the project.
8	**DEVELOP:** Prototyping	Giving form to ideas	**Prototyping & Testing:** Students create physical artefacts to help refine their design concept; focusing on the overall experience. Students can use low-fidelity prototypes in conjunction with think-aloud protocol and emotional journey map to capture insights from users.
9	**DEVELOP:** Iteration	Refinement through feedback	**Refining & Evaluating:** Students begin converging and refining the features and functions that make design concepts feasible. Students begin developing the details (visual signifiers, services, product ecosystem) of their concept for project delivery and communication.
10	**DEVELOP:** Design Response	Product refinement	**Deliverable–Design Plan:** Students revisit their design principles to refine and develop their overall project. Students create a roadmap to bring their design response to fruition for semester delivery and communication.
11	**DELIVER:** Humanising Product	Telling the story	**Storytelling as Design Communication:** Students utilise aspects of story and storytelling to help communicate the value of the design response. Telling the story can help to show what affect the product has in the everyday life of the user.
12	**DELIVER:** Communication	Illustrating the value	**Visual Communication:** Students develop adjacent visual material or branding that helps to communicate the product's overall value proposition. Students focus on showing the value rather than simply stating it, perhaps using the Business Model Canvas to assist them.
13	**DELIVER:** Panel Review	Revisiting the context	**Deliverable–Design Outcome:** Students submit their final design response and critically reflect on the project overall. A panel discussion helps provoke reflection and challenge to practice.

SUGGESTED 6-WEEK PROJECT PLAN

Week	Phase	Theme	Activity
1	**DISCOVER:** Realities	Unpacking the design context	**Introduction of Brief:** Observation photo activity & card sorting Students take photos (or source them) of period products, how they're sold in stores, where users store them, where they're used at home/work, and sort images based on patterns. Students can use card-sorting or affinity mapping to identify themes.
2	**DEFINE:** Ideation	Turning insights into ideas	**Develop Ideas:** Students begin creating ideas from their *Discover* phase research (Week 1). Students can utilise an activity such as Mash-Up to challenge their design response and open up possibilities, or bodystorming can be used to help develop ideas with a service orientation.
3	**DEFINE:** Synthesis	Turning ideas into concepts	**Concept Creation:** Students examine their ideas to create a single concept. This concept should focus on aspects of an overall experience, rather than individual features. Students consider the physical, cognitive, sensory, functional aspects of the design response.
4	**DEVELOP:** Prototyping	Giving form to ideas	**Prototyping & Testing:** Students create physical artefacts to help refine their design concept; focusing on the overall experience. Students can use low-fidelity prototypes in conjunction with think-aloud protocol and emotional journey map to capture insights from users.
5	**DEVELOP:** Iteration	Refinement through feedback	**Refining & Evaluating:** Students begin converging and refining the features and functions that make design concepts feasible. Students begin developing the details (visual signifiers, services, product ecosystem) of their concept for project delivery and communication.
6	**DELIVER:** Panel Review	Revisiting the context	**Deliverable–Design Outcome:** Students submit their final design response and critically reflect on the project overall. A panel discussion helps provoke reflection and challenge to practice..

SUGGESTED 4-WEEK PROJECT PLAN

Week	Phase	Theme	Activity
1	**DISCOVER:** Realities	Unpacking the design context	**Introduction of Brief:** Observation photo activity & card sorting Students take photos (or source them) of period products, how they're sold in stores, where users store them, where they're used at home/work, and sort images based on patterns. Students can use card-sorting or affinity mapping to identify themes.
2	**DEFINE:** Ideation	Turning insights into ideas and concepts	**Develop Ideas & Concepts:** Students begin creating ideas from their *Discover* phase research (Week 1). Students can utilise an activity such as Mash-Up to challenge their design response and open up possibilities, or bodystorming can be used to help develop ideas with a service orientation. Students examine their ideas to create a single concept. This concept should focus on aspects of an overall experience, rather than individual features. Students consider the physical, cognitive, sensory, functional aspects of the design response.
3	**DEVELOP:** Prototyping	Giving form to ideas	**Prototyping & Testing:** Students create physical artefacts to help refine their design concept; focusing on the overall experience. Students can use low-fidelity prototypes in conjunction with think-aloud protocol and emotional journey map to capture insights from users.
4	**DELIVER:** Panel Review	Revisiting the context	**Deliverable–Design Outcome:** Students submit their final design response and critically reflect on the project overall. A panel discussion helps provoke reflection and challenge to practice.