VISUAL RHETORIC is a knowledge exchange project bringing together social scientists and graphic designers. It teams Masters design students from London College of Communication, part of the University of the Arts London, with social scientists, research students and academic staff from the London School of Economics. It explores the intersections between design and social science to see how design and social science can support each other and strengthen the impact of social sciences. This book documents the process of this experimental project.
‘The brain finds it easier to process information if it is presented as an image rather than as words or numbers. The right hemisphere recognizes shapes and colours. The left side of the brain processes information in a very analytical and sequential way and is more active when people read text or look at a spreadsheet. Looking through a numerical table takes a lot of mental effort, but information presented visually can be grasped in a few seconds. The brain identifies patterns, proportions and relationships to make instant subliminal comparisons.’

*The Economist, The Data Deluge 2010*
ANXIETIES ABOUT VISUALISATION

Generally speaking social science training focuses on logo-centric prose and statistics. But that seems to be changing as the demand and competence for visualisation is increasing, not least on the back of sifting through Big Data.

Historically, suspicions over visuals have been manifested in social movements of iconoclasm. Against the anxiety of being misled by the image, images have been defended in the following ways.

Visuals are traditionally advised for didactic reasons. Visuals teach by capturing attention, illustrating and supporting memory.

Visuals stimulate thinking. They are part of the creative process, for Aristotle, there is no image-free thinking. Recently this idea was revived by Arnheim’s meditation on ‘visual thinking’ (1997).

Visuals present identity. This is well established in the notion of a brand image, which presents the attributes with which we can identify.

The last reason is increasingly operational. Methodology training focuses social scientists on supporting truth claims. Performance brings also into focus that research needs to be harm-free to those who conduct it and to those who are observed.

But not only should social scientists seek the truth in ethically sound ways, they must also let the world know about it. This requires an additional effort of attention seeking beyond the peer group, to make the results travel and impact at the right places. Impact management requires attention seeking, where competent visualisation becomes essential.

But, how should time and resources be allocated between methodical work, ethical audit and competent visualisation that supports the outreach and impact efforts? Visualisation is part of the arts with its own specialisation and independent professionalism. Competent visualisation will soon eat into the resources of methodical scientific work. It seems therefore advisable to outsource visualisation rather than internalise it as a third research competence after methodology and morality.

The Visual Rhetoric project seeks to demonstrate experimentally untapped potential and bring designers into the research process as a matter of course.

Visual Rhetoric seeks to organise and institutionalise the collaboration between research and graphic design on three operative principles:

- The expressive competence of social science research should be outsourced, rather than internalised, so as to avoid over-burdening the research process;
- Rather than turning social scientists into amateur information designers, or designers into social scientists, to bring designers to the research process;
- A deliberate intention to promote a clash between habits of mind to yield the unexpected.

By fostering this model of collaborative learning, the Visual Rhetoric project supports new types of understanding, cognitive skill, as well as the application to provide a context for knowledge exchange within the student and research community. Within this initiative there are several opportunities to provide real world experiences of negotiating the relationship between client and designer, from considering the brief to supplying the output.

Anticipated benefits for design students could be:

- Opportunities to access the most recent and robust research on a variety of contemporary and historical, sociological, social-psychological, cultural and political issues
- Develop a greater breadth and depth of understanding about social science research and sharpen your analytical thinking skills, which are key for future employment
- Gain practical experience with designing complex information in static or moving formats
- Support social scientists in communicating their research findings to a variety of audiences that could help inform public policies
- Demonstrate the social value and impact of design
- Have the opportunity to better demonstrate and increase the impact of research.

And for social scientists benefits could be:

- Opportunities to visualise research and research results
- Develop communication skills. Learn how to communicate research in a more informative, expressive and persuasive way to non-expert audiences
- Develop a more informed understanding of the role of design in research
- Explore the role of visual representations and visualisation in understanding and interpreting ideas and findings, making sense of data and discovering new patterns
- Have the opportunity to better demonstrate and increase the impact of research.
INSPIRATION
The idea for the project emerged in 2009 through informal conversations between two individuals, one a social scientist from the London School of Economics (LSE) and the other a designer filmmaker from London College of Communication (LCC). As they discussed their approach to their own professional practice and as educators, they soon realised that the differences in habitus could become points of convergence.

Within LCC, post-graduate graphic design students produce compelling graphic design usually based on their own research. Their focus is more on the methodology of representation i.e. form, context, reception, static versus motion etc and less on the robustness of the data. On the other hand, LSE social scientists spend most of their time constructing strong evidence and very little time on the methods of communicating it. Imagine the possibilities if these two approaches were to pair up.

Perhaps there is potential to produce something engaging and unexpected.

1+1=∞

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY
The LCC and the LSE operate with different timetables. The Graphic Design post-graduate course at LCC is one year with a January start. The academic year at LSE begins in October. Contributions from LSE social scientists are invited from final year PhD students and research staff. Many have other commitments and all are under intense pressure to produce outputs. So Visual Rhetoric creates a window of opportunity for designers and social scientists to meet. It produces annual ‘pairings’ between post-graduate design students and advanced PhD students, research and academic staff.

We have identified two windows of opportunity:

Workshop option
On the designers’s side, the Workshop option provides students with the opportunity to enhance their specialist interests and acquire skills and knowledge that can inform their personal practice and the development of their final Major Project.

Guide tutors help navigate outcomes via seminars, workshops and tutorials, ensuring the graphic design is best implemented. Outcomes vary from posters to short film work, for a variety of usage. The Workshops have been in two parts delivered over two separate weeks with a few weeks in between, the students then have a further three weeks to finish outcomes for hand in and assessment. The pairings are created, cultivated and moderated in an open yet directive way across both institutions.

Windows of Opportunity

LSE
- Publicise project
- Prepare social scientists for involvement
- Period of collaboration begins
- Next round starts at LSE

LCC
- MA Graphic Design course starts
- Workshops 1
- Workshops 2
- Hand in outcomes
- Start Major Project
- Hand in Major Project
- New intake at LCC

HOW?
Major Project
For design students their Major Project is a self-initiated output project related to graphic design. It will be based on extensive planning, research, investigation and production, underpinned by a firm methodological approach. Designers spend approximately six months to develop, study, experiment and articulate their ideas through, into or about use of graphic design, based on a personal area of interest or choice. If design students choose to collaborate with an LSE social scientist for their major project the pairings will be loosely moderated.

Below, we describe the central and collateral activities that supported the annual cycle of collaborations.

CENTRAL ACTIVITIES
Central activities are key to synchronising the LSE and LCC timetables and to effectively moderate the pairings.

Raising awareness and Recruitment
In January, when the LCC academic year starts, we email social scientists at LSE inviting them to register their interest in the collaboration. We promote the uptake of social science research among designers within both the workshop option and the major project.

Launch, Preparatory Workshop and Pitching
In early February, the cycle is launched with a half-day preparatory workshop for our social scientists called ‘How to brief a designer’. The aim is to explain the purpose and structure of the project, how to get the best out of working with a designer, clarifying roles and managing expectations. We train them how to pitch their key idea for a non-academic audience in one minute, which we film.

Social science projects uploaded to the project blog
The one minute video pitches are uploaded on the password protected project blog and social scientists complement them with a written, more detailed description of their social science research project.

Designers commit to Visual Rhetoric
By mid March, designers sign up for the Visual Rhetoric project.

Workshop Option delivered in two parts
The Workshop Option teaching is delivered over two separate weeks for parts A+B. Designers explore and discuss conventions for visual solutions to research data. They carry out a series of experiments in making information approachable and meaningful.

Designers choose LSE Projects
During Workshop Option A, designers look through the social science projects on the blog and chose the one they would like to collaborate on. Students contact each other.

Moderating the Meetings
Once pairs are formed, a number of moderated and non-moderated meetings take place between the partners. The goal is for the paired teams to meet face-to-face at least three times within the workshop option opportunity. The first and the last meeting before hand in are moderated. Further communication is negotiated between the partners.

Schedule of Activities 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 FEBRUARY</th>
<th>7 FEBRUARY</th>
<th>24 FEBRUARY – 8 MARCH</th>
<th>1 MARCH</th>
<th>11 MARCH</th>
<th>20 MARCH</th>
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<td>LSE</td>
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<td>UAL</td>
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<td>Sign up for cycle 2013</td>
<td>Workshop Social Scientists Preparation How to brief a designer</td>
<td>Projects uploaded to website</td>
<td>Research Festival Exhibition Visual Rhetoric Film screenings</td>
<td>Sign up for Workshop Option A+B</td>
<td>Designers choose LSE projects</td>
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<tr>
<th>21 MARCH</th>
<th>29 APRIL</th>
<th>22 MAY</th>
<th>29 MAY</th>
<th>3 JUNE</th>
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<tr>
<td>UAL + LSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st meeting between designers and social scientists moderated</td>
<td>Workshop Option B including 2nd meeting of pairs non-moderated</td>
<td>3rd meeting between designers and social scientists moderated</td>
<td>Hand in outputs for assessment moderated</td>
<td>Potential exhibition and official launch moderated</td>
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Hand in
At the end of May, designers hand in the visual outputs produced within the workshop option collaborations. Choice of format is negotiable for outputs and could be print, moving image or web content. Major Projects are submitted in November.

Group Feedback Session After the coursework submission, we organise a feedback session with designers and social scientists, who were part of the workshop option collaborations. This aims to provide a space to discuss the visual outputs, reflect back on the process for evaluation and share our experience of participating in the project and the challenges of dialogues between habits of mind.

Collateral Activities
Collateral activities aim at consolidating the project on an institutional level.

Establishing a look for the Brand
It is important that all publicity and marketing material have a cohesive look for instant recognition. This needs to work across all the following support material including publications, posters and website.

Seminars
The monthly seminar series aims to provide a space where graphic designers and social scientists can debate about theoretical, empirical and methodological issues, challenges and future possibilities on the synergy between graphic design, arts and social sciences.

Exhibitions
The visual outputs are exhibited at an annual exhibition; this event can also be used to launch each annual cycle to create attention for the next round. The Visual Rhetoric project was exhibited at the LSE Research Festival, and attracted over 600 visitors. Between 2009 and 2012 we have used exhibitions to launch each annual cycle.

Best Visual Rhetoric Award
To encourage designers to continue to develop their visual outputs and reward them for their hard work, Visual Rhetoric offers an award. This goes to the best Visual Rhetoric project judged by a panel of two independent scientists and one graphic designer.

Website and Blog
These online platforms are instrumental in supporting the project as a teaching aid, a forum for discussion for participants and a publicity tool.

Seminars
Join Tony Credland from LCC to discuss in the first of our seminar series on 20th March 5.00 - 6.00 pm. This event is free and open to all with no ticket required. Entry is on a first come, first served basis.

London School of Economics, WC2A 2AE Department of Social Psychology S314
The first five years of the Visual Rhetoric Project have reaped exciting and varied work. By constantly improving the delivery method to promote flexibility and appropriate design outputs we sought to create maximum opportunity for knowledge exchange.

The following pages are extracts from some of the projects.

We at the London School of Economics research, a lot … and spend our time thinking … But we’re less concerned about visualizing. We’re not designers.

Their research process takes on a different emphasis. Well to be frank … The LSE could do with some of that. The Visual Rhetoric project looks at what could happen when these two cultures join forces.

Providing a new take on current issues around the things that matter: Health, Housing, social policy, inequality.

Over at the University of the Arts London, Post Graduate Graphic design students produce, beautiful, ordered stuff based on their own research into, well … all manner of things.

Over at the University of the Arts London, Post Graduate Graphic design students produce, beautiful, ordered stuff based on their own research into, well … all manner of things.

Pretty much anything. This experiment has the potential to affect process, both Research and Design. Producing unexpected outcomes. Not a Designer – Client relationship.


The central focus being HOW it is represented and what it should look like for maximum impact. Excellent Design Thinking. Thinking Design.

… but an enquiry into how the thinking of a Designer can affect the research process ... or if the graphic design process can be steered by the latest qualitative and quantitative findings.

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… but an enquiry into how the thinking of a Designer can affect the research process ... or if the graphic design process can be steered by the latest qualitative and quantitative findings.

After all, we both consider the same things: the how, who, why and what of it all. They say great minds think alike. Better minds think together. If you’re interested in being involved get in touch.
Project Summary

Using data from the National Office of Statistics, researcher Ben Wilson worked with designer Yun Jung Lee to visualise migrants’ characteristics, such as age, sex, citizenship, and their reasons for migrating at the time of travel for entering or leaving the UK between 1991 and 2009.

http://visualrhetoric.ac.uk/2013/05/02/ukinternational-migration/

Research

Ben says, ‘My research is on migration and the effects that migration has on other life events. To begin with I want to explore variation in childbearing between foreign-born and native-born women in England and Wales. I am also interested to explore different ways of visualising migration information: numbers of people, the movement of people, and the different experiences of migrants in comparison to those who don’t migrate. There are some very interesting challenges here. For example, how should we show changing migration patterns? Are maps the best way? Or discover something better than a map for communicating the big picture?’

This research project produced several outcomes as shown on this and the following spread. Many students were stimulated to visualise the data, this selection indicates the scope each project offers.

UK/INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Poster

Year 2011

Researcher

Ben Wilson, PhD student
Department of Social Policy

Designer

Yunjung Lee
MA Graphic Branding and Identity

FOREIGN BORN POPULATION IN BRITAIN

Poster

Year 2011

Researcher

Ben Wilson, PhD student
Department of Social Policy

Designer

John Holmes
DgDip in Visual Communication
**Project Summary**

Designer João Monteiro worked with researcher Luca Savorelli to produce the ‘SizeZero’ animated film, which examines the issue of eating disorders. The film was runner-up in the 2011 Disposable Film Festival. The music for the film was written by Peter Mckerrow.

http://visualrhetoric.ac.uk/2013/05/02/2449/

**Research**

Luca describes what motivated his research. He says, ‘The increasing concern of policymakers about eating behviours has focused on the spread of obesity and on people’s tendency to go on diet despite being underweight. What I found is that if being overweight is the average condition and the ideal body weight means being thin, increasing the latter may increase welfare by reducing social pressure. By contrast, health may be impaired since people are induced to depart even further from their healthy weight. Given that in the US and in Europe people are on average overweight, we conclude that these policies, even if welfare improving, may exacerbate the obesity epidemic.’

This research applies to the Film SizeZero and the poster.

**Poster**

**Eating Behaviour and the Social Pressure to be Thin**

**Year 2011**

**Researchers**

Davide Dragone
Department of Economics, University of Bologna
Luca Savorelli, PhD student, Department of Economics, LSE

**Designer**

Tomás Louro
MA Graphic Branding and Identity

**Film**

**SIZE ZERO**

**Year 2011**

**Researchers**

Davide Dragone
Department of Economics, University of Bologna
Luca Savorelli, PhD student, Department of Economics, LSE

**Designer**

João Monteiro
MA Graphic Moving Image
#### Project Summary

**Laetitia Rouget**

Laetitia Rouget visualizes Richard Davis’s research on the dynamics between armed forces and their host populations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how this impacts support for further violence. 

Research: Richard Davis’s research looks at the impact of armed forces on their host populations, particularly how armed groups adapt to capture the sympathy and support of their host populations. What Davis finds is that armed groups often adapt their values from fixed propositions to least-fixed propositions as they engage with the host populations, which provides greater decision-making latitude for the group and greater trust by the populations. Moreover, interventions for peace reduction often fail because state actors use cost/benefit calculations (like a rational actor), assuming the values between the state and group are similar, while armed groups tend to have different value structures, resulting in impasses.

With her research, Rouget seeks to grab the attention of academics, Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Secretaries, and national security decision-makers.

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#### Project Summary

**Lee Tesche**

Lee Tesche worked with researcher Aurelie Bashai Novosejt from International History at LSE to visualize the withdrawal plans from the Vietnam War under the Kennedy and Nixon administrations.

Research: Aurelie Bashai Novosejt’s research draws on her undergraduate research on the Vietnam War, traveling to Vietnam, meeting Robert McNamara and Henry Kissinger, working in the defense field, and wondering whether history has something to teach us for our decisions today. Her objective is to explore the extent to which the Pentagon had a decisive influence on the withdrawal and whether withdrawal plans reflected an internal agenda in the Pentagon. What she found is that paradoxically, the Pentagon was the least reluctant agency. Concerned with avoiding uncertainty and reducing costs, it resisted going to war and then argued for a fast disengagement. The shape of withdrawal plans was influenced by the two very different Secretaries of Defense, even against the military advice of others.

With her research, Tesche aims to cast light on the history of Vietnam, the American defeat, and the broader implications for our national security decision-makers.
Design Cansays, ‘Because of the large volume of data generated by the Urban Age City Surveys, I had to choose a particular aspect of research to focus on. To do that I used the graphics Jens sent to me and created graphics and diagrams myself as well.’

Project Summary
The film was developed by designer Can Timor in collaboration with Jens Kandt, LSE Cities and visualises data collected as part of the Urban Age Programme, which looks at various social, economic and spatial issues in cities globally.

Research
City surveys analyse and compare how residents of different cities around the world feel about their cities and respond to the challenges of social inclusion, the environment, transport, security and urban governance.

Researcher
Jens Kandt
LSE Cities

Designer
Can Timor
MA Graphic Moving Image

Research
The Underground Sociabilities research is about culture, identity and resistance in Rio’s favelas. It examined the lived worlds of favela communities and the work of two local organisations, AfroReggae and CUFA. The research findings were presented in a media-friendly format to address art and youth organisations, non-expert audiences e.g. NGOs engaged in social development.

Researcher
Sandra Jovchelovitch
Department of Social Psychology

Designer
Angela Bacon
MA Graphic Design

Research
City surveys analyse and compare how residents of different cities around the world feel about their cities and respond to the challenges of social inclusion, the environment, transport, security and urban governance.

Researcher
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LSE Cities

Designer
Can Timor
MA Graphic Moving Image

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Department of Social Psychology

Designer
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Researcher
Sandra Jovchelovitch
Department of Social Psychology

Designer
Angela Bacon
MA Graphic Design
Project Summary
In this animated film, designer Henrietta Ross worked with Wifak Houij Gueddana to capture the idea, methodology and key findings behind the MIFOS project, which looks at the different social interactions that underpin the process of developing and sharing open code.

http://visualrhetoric.ac.uk/2013/12/18/socialization-in-open-source-development-a-case-study/

Research
Wifak says, ‘My research asks how can we build sustainable software that has a capacity to endure and improve user capability? It explores how cross-disciplinary communities, including NGOs and social businesses in particular, can contribute to the sharing and development of open code as a process of social interaction. Communities of practice are also embedded in online information platforms and communication tools. Through interactions, open source development is a process of knowledge sharing and social learning. The different social interactions within online communities are fundamental to the process of sharing and developing open code. Through these interactions, we can identify and model new social and technical knowledge, and understand how they interact and are used by different users of software and social information.’

Researcher
Wifak Houij Gueddana, PhD student
Information Systems & Innovation Group, Department of Management
Designer
Henrietta Ross
MA Contemporary Typographic Media

SOCIALIZATION IN OPEN SOURCE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY
Year 2013
Researchers
Wifak Houij Gueddana, PhD student
Information Systems & Innovation Group, Department of Management
Designer
Henrietta Ross
MA Contemporary Typographic Media

COMMUNITIES
Project Summary
Designer João Jorge Pereira and researcher Stavroula Tsirogianni worked together on this film to visualise the ways in which members of the British public position themselves towards immigrants in the UK. 

http://visualrhetoric.ac.uk/2013/02/03/perspective/

Research
Stavroula Tsirogianni, Department of Methodology and Gordon Sammut, University of Malta say, ‘In this research we explore what types of points of view and values British people express when they talk about immigrants in the UK. We are interested in the ways in which they fail or not to take the perspective of immigrants and the values they use to position their own views or those of others. We are interested in the ways in which British people construct their own and others’ identities. We also want to understand the role of perspective-taking in the ways in which British people position themselves towards immigrants.’

The film enabled us to communicate the data in a more accessible and the data in a more informative and persuasive way.

Method
The data presented in the film came from interviews with British people and were analysed using discourse analysis.

Design
João says, ‘This workshop was very important for me. Graphics can replace several words, saving time, and space to the reader and to the medium. In this workshop I had the opportunity to explore also the moving image field and to learn further some techniques of it. The research I chose contained qualitative data. This proved more challenging and thrilling. The concept for the video is based on three interviews that best describe each type of perspective found in the research. For that I chose to use three human silhouettes to represent each interviewee. In the video I decided to divide it in three parts, without functional but more symbolic parts: the introduction, the interview and the conclusion. The interview parts have a more informative and persuasive style, in which the voice of the interviewee is heard. The ending is the most symbolic and persuasive part of the film, where the interviewee is the least necessary, and the film is the final statement of the research.’

The Atom and Nuclear Power
Poster
Year 2010
Researcher Martin Bauer
Department of Social Psychology and Methodology
Designer Pradnya Dighe
MA Graphic Design

UNPACKING BRITISH PERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS
Film
Year 2012
Researcher Stavroula Tsirogianni
Methodology Department
Gordon Sammut
Psychology Department
University of Malta
Designer João Jorge Pereira
MA Graphic Design
Winner of Best Visual Research Project 2012
Regina says, ‘My research is about the use and effect of laws regulating work and labour relations in China. I examine how Chinese workers’ rights are defined by law; what actors are involved in protecting workers’ rights; and how and why these rights are understood and actually respected. China is divided, with its continuum of authoritarianism and capitalism, and its urban and rural areas. „Workers” are understood in a legal sense, and that’s why a worker is tied to a place, but also a man. There are rights with legal and cultural aspects.

Research

Elias and Ryan say, ‘To structure the story we created a flowchart. We then came up with a storyboard to see how we can fit the story into a moving image piece. We then met again with Regina and asked her to clarify things for us and shorten the story. After a couple of revisions we got the final story and drew a new storyboard and recorded the voiceover. Once Regina gave us the go-ahead we started designing the styleframes for an animatic, before completing the final animation.’

Project Summary

Designers Elias Freiberger and Ryan Tung worked with researcher Regina Martinez Enjuto on this short animation on working conditions and labour rights in China.

http://visualrhetoric.ac.uk/2013/12/20/2776/

China is the second largest economy in the world — and the biggest exporter. Clothing, electronics, and cars are “Made in China”. But how, and by whom?

…enacted a new set of labour laws that in practice often don’t protect migrant workers’ rights. For example, construction workers work on a project basis without a contract. But how do workers act? The alternative is legal action. Just after the enactment of the new laws, labour disputes taken to the courts increased by 98%.

…and requires proof of a labour relation: the contract that often workers don’t have. Legal action can support individual workers, but only represent a 0.06% of the potential conflict. In China the right to strike is not contemplated in the laws and grassroots trade union organizing is not allowed, it has to be done through the vertical trade union. Still, some workers go on strike and bargain collectively with the employer. These are illegal actions and wildcat strikes. To support this, new actors have appeared: labour lawyers and NGOs. …they channel labour conflict into the legal system and act on behalf of workers. They frequently succeed in getting workers’ wages back. But it takes a long time …

…of the 900 million Chinese workers. It’s like the old Chinese proverb: a river is drying up, … and a child wants to save all the fish from dying; … he tries to, but he can only save as many fish as he can fit in his small hands.

Today, China’s workforce is more than 900 million, of which, approximately 245 million are rural migrant workers, the new working class. The cheap labour key to China’s “economic miracle”. In 2008, the government of the Communist Party of China ...
Throughout the 5 years the project has gained momentum, the process has changed with continuous reappraisals of both delivering methods and managing expectations of collaborators. The project has become ‘institutionalised’, to mark the fact, that we are not really there yet within both universities, in that it is promoted and supported across LSE by HEIF5 funding which allowed Visual Rhetoric to establish a Knowledge Exchange Post which is crucial to keep the annual cycle of activities going. At the LCC, Visual Rhetoric became embedded within the curriculum, the output of the design students work is assessed and marks given contribute to their Masters of Arts award.

The number of outputs increased significantly over the years, as did the variety of output formats. During the fully supported period of Visual Rhetoric 2012 and 2013, the project produced close to 30 designed outputs.

If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.
Albert Einstein
A variety of outputs have been produced including:

**Poster**
These are large format prints, usually A1 size, designed with a specific audience in mind, perhaps to summarise complex information or to publicise a specific event.

**PDF Presentation**
Designers were frequently required to present documentation of their thinking for discussion, this was usually in the form of a digital presentation which was submitted as evidence of process.

**Visual Summary**
For hand in designers are required to produce a printed document, which describes the designer’s experience of collaborating with the social scientist and their own design process.

**Process Video**
The summary is also documented in video form, a simple laptop recording where the designer narrates their experience of collaborating with the social scientist and their collective approach to the task of design.

**Film**
In many cases the pairs choose to produce an animated short film.

This last year has seen the most comprehensive outputs directly linked to social science research projects and we are hoping these will prove to have the most impact.

**ACTIVITIES**
As well as an increase in outputs more supporting activities were on offer to keep the project buoyant...

**Meetings**
The pairs met as frequently as possible instigated by an initial meeting between each social scientist and designer once the project had been allocated.

**Exhibitions**
Design work produced from previous years is exhibited at various events in the LSE Calendar including a Visual Rhetoric launch event most years and the LSE Research Days where many LSE students display their research in a variety of visual forms such as posters, photographs, or films.

**Awards**
In 2012 the project introduced a competition offering a sum of £300 as prize money or a month’s work experience with an LSE social scientist as an incentive to submit the best Visual Rhetoric project.

**Seminars**
In 2013 a series of successful seminars with eminent and stimulating speakers on different aspects of visualisation were organised. These were hosted at the LSE, were well attended and promoted a healthy debate.

Tony Credland, designer and lecturer from LCC questioned the use of Autonomous spaces and asked how graphic design could engage dialogue within the public sphere.

Kelly Krause, art director for the International weekly Journal Nature spoke about Visualising Science.

Chiara Ambrosio Lecturer in History and Philosophy of Science UCL talked about Artistic Visualisation as Critique.

And Aarón Rosen from the Theology and Religious studies department at Kings College talked about People of the Image, drawing on arts and interfaith dialogue in Judaism, Christianity and Islam; all three religions having an iconoclastic tradition.

**Workshops**
Various design-related workshops are delivered to social scientists by designers.

Each annual cycle is launched with an event where social scientists pitch their projects to the designers to entice them to engage with their research. These pitches are filmed and posted on the project Blog.
For social scientists, the benefits of the collaboration are categorised in these themes:

**Reasoning and Imagination**
Social scientists talked about how their collaboration with the designer led to a process of discovery, deducing key messages, revealing new patterns and ways of structuring ideas:

- It made me better understand how my ideas fit together in order to explain my work.
  Social scientist, 2012

- ‘It made me understand how my ideas fit together to explain my work and helped me reflect on my topic from a fresh perspective.’
  Social scientist, 2012

- ‘Working together with a student from another discipline and seeing how a multi-disciplinary approach can add very significant value to your research, especially in making our otherwise academic data more comprehensible by a wider audience.’
  Social scientist, 2012

**Collaboration as transformative**
Social scientists reflected on their perceptions of impact, the collaboration helped them appreciate the role and function of design within the conduct of their own research.

- ‘Working with the designer I learned that less is more’
  Social scientist, 2013

- ‘Working with the designer I learned how interdisciplinary approaches can increase the impact of research.’
  Social scientist, 2013

- For me the best thing was to witness someone with a non-research background create such an innovative representation of the stories behind the data that I know too well’
  Social scientist, 2012

For designers, the learning experience is summarised as follows:

**Analytical Skills**
By having an insight into the social research process designers valued the opportunity of gaining a better understanding of it’s complexity and talked about the impact this had on their own work.

**Enriched knowledge**
As designers chose projects to visualise they gained access to robust new research and data.

- The best thing about the collaboration was the opportunity to work with a content that was real, interesting, appealing and produced by an accredited group of researchers in a subject that really interests me and relates to me and to my country.’
  Designer, 2013

- ‘The best thing was to learn how to manage with a lot of information to decide which information is useful for the project.’
  Designer, 2012

- ‘The best thing about the collaboration was the opportunity to work with a content that was real, interesting, appealing and produced by an accredited group of researchers in a subject that really interests me and relates to me and to my country.’
  Designer, 2013

- ‘The best thing was to learn how to manage with a lot of information to decide which information is useful for the project.’
  Designer, 2012

**Industry skills**
Visual Rhetoric cultivated a spirit of partnership between designers and social scientists rather than a client-designer relationship.

- ‘The best thing about the collaboration was to be in contact with my PhD partner who gave me all the useful data and information about the research; having a kind of designer-client relationship was definitely a beneficial experience for me as a graphic moving image postgraduate student.’
  Designer, 2012

- ‘I have made a difference to my design approach because I had to think very much about functionality and the fact that it had to get a certain message across.’
  Designer, 2013

- ‘I now have a better understanding of how much work it takes to put up a survey, how much research and efforts there is behind these details.”
  Designer, 2012
Outcomes from this project are already having an influence on the way in which research projects are disseminated and potentially secure impact in the future.

Michella Tinelli
Social scientist on film ‘Making Choices in Health Care’
http://visualrhetoric.ac.uk/2013/01/14/making-choices-in-health-care/

‘The film produced for my project looked at how patients choose health care, using simple, appealing animation it was initially used to recruit patients for participation in a survey and later for dissemination purposes. It now features on many European health websites. I have been invited by the Social Research Association to present a paper on promoting and disseminating health care research using infographics.’

Martin W Bauer
Author of Atom, Bytes and Genes – Public Resistance and Techno Scientific Responses, NY, Routledge, 2014
http://visualrhetoric.ac.uk/2013/02/06/me/

‘The poster designed within this collaboration embodies data from a whole chapter of my book, it visualises information hard to articulate in a captivating way. It has appeared in LSE publications and garnered interest from a Washington think tank working for a congressional committee about nuclear power.’

Bankole Falade
Department of Social Psychology
LSE; bankolefalade@hotmail.com

‘The film created for my project was about the Oral Polio Vaccine controversy in Northern Nigeria as reported by the press. It is very hard to visualize succinctly, a media corpus of 643 articles from six newspapers over a period of nine years. However, designer Geoff Kwok Ho Li produced an excellent interpretation which I use regularly for teaching social psychology and data presentation to Masters level students as it drives home the points very quickly. It also has hundreds of hits on YouTube.’

Jacqueline Priego-Hernandez
LSE Department of Social Psychology
http://visualrhetoric.ac.uk/2013/12/20/underground-sociabilities/

‘Angela Bacon’s web banner produced for the Underground Sociabilities project at the LSE is a fine example of social media friendly infographics used to visualise at-a-glance findings that emerged from the project. It captures key processes of social development and exclusion in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas. Something that we have been struggling to communicate.’

Janet Hartley
LSE, Pro-Director Professor
February 2011

‘This project is an exciting opportunity to explore how data visualisation can open new possibilities for exploring, communicating and portraying the complexity of research in the social sciences in simpler and more effective ways.’

Professor Iain MacDonald
Napier University

‘I have been so inspired by this excellent initiative that I am planning to duplicate it at Napier University by encouraging collaboration between our Bioscience department and our motion graphics course. I would be very interested in learning from your experience to give ours the best chance of success.’

Anita Larson
PhD graduate in Public Administration in the USA and working for the Department of Education interested in doing a postdoc with the Project.
August 2012

‘Many people in my line of work have difficulty communicating performance results in clear and compelling ways. Possibly because most of us are nerds or because we lack training and creative guidance. I see this area as one of the critical ways in which we can engage citizens... I was preparing a new lecture on communicating research effectively and my students really enjoyed learning about the creative methods students devise to make research clear and interesting. What wonderful and important work you are doing!’

ACADEMICS SAY

Visual Rhetoric has received enthusiastic response from within the LSE and beyond

DESIGNERS SAY

Ailbhe McNabola
Head of policy research, Design Council
12 October 2012

‘The Visual Rhetoric project is a great example of what we call ’the transformative power of design’. It is rooted in education so is equipping the designers of tomorrow, and it is bringing design expertise and creativity to improve the communication and commercialisation of research’

Adam Frost & Tobias Sturt
Designers, The Guardian
January 2013

‘This is a brilliant initiative, incredibly exciting and inspiring, particularly in how it creates collaborations to discover new ways to communicate with audiences.’
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Social Science

In this attempt to construct a productive dialogue between social scientists and designers, the Visual Rhetoric model shows that this involves careful management of expectation, engagement and institutional learning, as both Social Science Research and the graphic design processes operate to different criteria. This five-year experiment has been an exploration of why both cultures need this collaboration, and how it might be accomplished. It has also successfully demonstrated what can be achieved and to what effect.

We have constructed and tested a model that includes recognising the windows of opportunity, key procedures for the social scientist-designer collaboration, and the necessary supporting activities for this to work. This operation engages different and independent habits of mind, without expecting each specialist to cross discipline; for social scientists to become designers and designers to become social scientists. To deviate from this principle would be a capital mistake, inefficient and an enormous misallocation of limited resources.

Hopefully in this book we have shown reasons why the Visual Rhetoric model should not remain punctual or merely an extended experiment. It has to become part of the fabric of any research institution and no longer rely on the initiative of individual social scientists or designers. The link between Social Science Research Institutions and Design Colleges must become routine. As a matter of course designers must become an integral part of the social science research process.

This second, routine stage of the VR project will make it an integral part of the institutional activities based at LSE and a leading design college. Feasibility of this model collaboration is proven, and the moral support is strong and ubiquitous. However, a change in organisational culture is a slow process and cannot and should not be forced by impatience.

We reported here the Visual Rhetoric model as a beacon of a successful departure. Our experience as moderators, organisers and participants in the Visual Rhetoric project has challenged ways of thinking, and we defined the necessary tasks to bring about the culture change in the social sciences. Visual Rhetoric must institutionalise the collaboration between social science research and graphic design on three operative principles:

- The expressive competence of social research needs to be outsourced rather than internalised to avoid overburdening the research process;
- Rather than turning social scientists into designers, or designers into social scientists, bring professional designers in early into the social science research process to encourage a transformational effect;
- Clashes between different habits of mind will yield the unexpected which is the intention.

One of the motivations for reviewing the current model of delivery is implicated by emerging limitations within the design school.

For example there is limited time for design students to engage fully with the depth of the research as it conflicts with other pressures of their studies. Some students choose this option to gain experience of engaging with information design for the first time, so the best, most experienced students are not necessarily gravitating towards the project. Better outputs and engagement would be achieved if the project was directed at design students with a specific interest in information design or already with a specialism in data visualisation.

As pairings need monitoring, students need chasing to commit to what is essentially an add on to their demanding post graduate schedule. As far as dissemination and administration, both institutions need to provide appropriate and substantial support.

All these issues would be resolved if the project was core content for an information design specific course at postgraduate level allowing time for full engagement.

Design Research

By collaborating on a new design this project could have a significant contribution to the landscape of emerging information design as well as allowing opportunities for access engagement and impact that words on paper alone inhibit.

Design Education

For example, a PhD in Design for Social Impact (or similar title) could be outlined as follows:

- On this new PhD you will produce design based on live, social science research projects currently being undertaken at the LSE. Collaborate closely with final year PhD research students and academic staff to create unexpected outcomes and capture current research in depth. Expected outcomes may well help shape policy by encouraging a wider debate and understanding of the big issues.
- By visualising research your design work could not only effect outcomes but have significant impact on the research process itself offering a unique opportunity to think deeply about your own process of design research.
- This design PhD welcomes opinion formers from a range of design disciplines from traditional graphic design, illustration, motion design, photography, film and animation.
Potential business model

There is another direction that this collaborative experiment could take, that is one of enterprise. Throughout the project we have been approached by many organisations asking if they could be considered for inclusion – to have the opportunity to offer their statistical research up for exploration by experienced graphic designers’ either in a bid to make sense of what they have already in order to share information in a contemporary context or to experiment with the graphic design process to see what additional outcomes could be encouraged.

So far we have had interest from many organisations that are thinking about new ways to represent research or just want to learn from our collaboration. These include: The National Office of Statistics, Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion, Nuffield, Royal Society of Medicine and The Department for International Development, as well as many other universities offering courses in scientific research or graphic design.

One spin off idea would be to set up a design hub of ever changing resident graduate designers, fed by companies and research groups with small and large data sets in need of visualization. This would offer opportunities for designers, social scientists and industry and enable a constant stream of material to be experimented with or merely brought to the fore for further access. The hub would be overseen by a small team who could offer a number of things, as well as managing new clients.

For example:

- Short courses for industry designers wanting to recharge or learn new skills
- Basic awareness for social scientists interested in the design process
- Research into impact of design methods digging deep into why certain presentations allow information to be understood while others do not. All the information within the Visual Rhetoric project, both teaching and learning, could feed into a research hub and new knowledge exchange library
- All findings could have a significant impact on the shape of future education models in our digital age.

REFERENCES

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We believe the meeting of different habits of mind can harness fresh perspectives, and from merging horizons create new exemplars of knowledge exchange.
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