

Letter from the Editor

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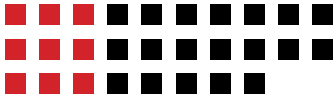
The notion of belonging to a broader community is central to the work we do as designers. This issue of Multi brings together a remarkable cross-section of pieces that center around the notion of inclusion. The global population is in a state of constant change. In the United States, the first of the baby boom generation has reached retirement age, and millions more are at the threshold between working years and golden years. Over the course of the twentieth century, substantial advances in medical care (even if hampered by a lack of universal or even rational accessibility to it) has nearly doubled the typical human lifespan, and in that same amount of time, economic shifts have made design affordable for nearly everyone. Along with these changes comes a renewed responsibility for the designer, and an increased need for design professionals and design educators to refocus the profession from one of making and doing to one of thinking and analyzing before making and doing. No designer is immune from this shift and no design—at any scale—is exempt.

This past July, while at the New Views 2 conference in London, England, I had the distinct pleasure of making the acquaintance of Terry Irwin. Her keynote presentation to the small group of us was thoroughly enlightening. Her notion of “worldview” as applied to design holds that we, as designers, run the risk of becoming myopic in our expertise, and in doing so, we often lose sight of the broader, large-scale implications of our work. I sense that what Terry asserts is true, because I (and many of my colleagues) hear similar comments from our students; the idea that one person has to be an expert to pay the bills, and that one designer can’t change the world. I believe that one person can be the first domino in a chain, and that one designer can be the agent for significant change.

PER CAPITA

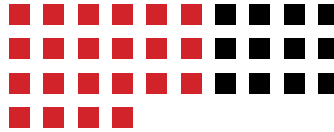
COCA-COLA PROD

UNITED KINGDOM



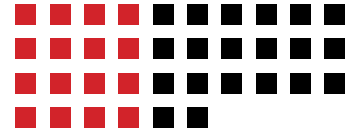
61 | 195

CANADA



157 | 243

SOUTH AFRICA



112 | 254

INDIA



0 | 7

CHINA



0 | 23

MOROCCO



20 | 74



SEVEN 8FL OZ SERVINGS



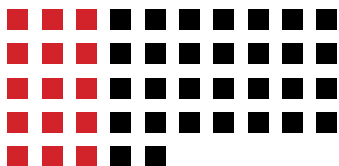
1987

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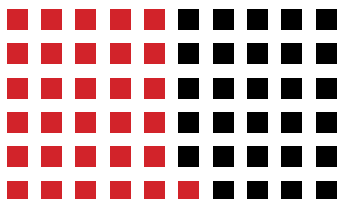
FOR THE YEARS 1987 & 2007

SPAIN



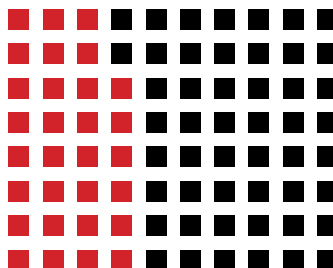
104 | 315

UNITED STATES



265 | 423

MEXICO



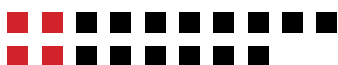
210 | 573

WORLDWIDE



37 | 83

FRANCE



27 | 128

GERMANY



120 | 178

END

2007



DATA PROVIDED BY THE COCA-COLA COMPANY

Figure on preceding pages: a chart designed by R.I.T. student Maury Postal depicting the increase of an international pastime, drinking Coca-Cola. Thanks to Prof. Bruce Meader for his assistance in developing this project and image.

Allow me to digress for a moment. Facebook is a phenomenon among the millennial generation, as well as many that aren't of that generation. It's a tool for connecting millions of people around the globe. Since its founding in 2004, about 17 million people have joined the social networking site. Ask any 20-something, an overwhelming number of people in that age group check Facebook more frequently than e-mail. Amazingly, this interest has spread to other age groups; about half the adult population of the greater Toronto area uses Facebook.

This story of Facebook is relevant to us as designers. Why? Because someone had to be the first user of the site. They told a friend, who told a friend... and so on. Within only four years, millions of users have subscribed to the site. Facebook has brokered change in marketing goods and services, interpersonal communication, information gathering, and possibly even presidential elections. It is a technological and social phenomenon.

I would argue that if Facebook can become a success, quite literally out of thin air, centered around the simple idea of keeping track of friends, that we as individual designers can begin to broker change in our profession. Collectively, we can force multi-national corporations to remove chemicals and other deadly substances from the products we buy, we can enhance our local economies, we can ensure that the work we do doesn't degrade the quality of life for future generations, we can use design as a means to include and promote social and economic justice. We can do all of this, and more, but someone needs to take the first step. We are at the threshold of a new design, and while we may all have a specific vision of the future, we cannot wait to develop a comprehensive plan or vision, we must begin to act, quickly and responsibly. Whether we feel ready or not, because as you read this piece, the future arrived.