

# Reflection Paper

To: Dr. Toscano  
From: Solomon T. Franklin  
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Subject: Final Reflection Memo

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The Information Design and Digital Publishing class has provided me with a unique learning opportunity and a rewarding experience this semester. This course introduced and re-introduced me to fundamental design concepts needed for strategic visual communication. The key theme or thread throughout the semester was rhetorical theory. Rhetoric served as the central component of class discussions and assignments. Through repetition of discussing ethos, pathos, and logos, I better understand the importance of accurately using rhetoric, recognizing the constructed stereotypes about cultures and subcultures and being able to use these concepts to successfully design effective technical documents and persuade users. I have come to understand the pervasive impact that rhetoric has in academic disciplines, social movements, technology, religion, and almost every prevailing factor involving human communication. As a designer I have also learned the importance of the efficiently managing the document design relationship with clients and users. The structure of the class provided an all-inclusive atmosphere where the students could learn from each other as much as from the instructor. The encouragement to participate gave me confidence to share my experiences in class lectures. The combination of the discussions, workshops, and tutorials blended well to prepare the class for creating technical documents with appropriate rhetorical appeals. Key takeaways from the class are a greater respect for diversity, an appreciation for technical communication, and an awareness of how rhetoric influences my cultural values, daily interactions, and decision making process.

### **In-Class Assignments: Discussions, Workshops and Tutorials**

The class (row) assignments, discussion, workshops and tutorials were all beneficial to my learning experience. The first class assignment, creating a portfolio website, introduced me to the Adobe® Dreamweaver® software, and provided me the knowledge of how to use an existing template. By creating the portfolio website I learned the paradoxical simplicities and complexities of web and digital information design. The first content on the portfolio site was an interview of a classmate. The in-class interview assignment allowed me to meet a classmate in a different field, Kameron Freeman (architecture major), and learn about his current and future goals. The indication of how he saw himself and his future gave me a different perspective about my own aspirations. I further learned about my classmate's heritage, stereotypes, and the cultural lenses through which they viewed themselves, during the discussion on culture and subculture. Interestingly many people primarily defined their culture and sub-cultures regionally, several racially, and some economically. Others were bold enough to pronounce their conviction of faith or their practice of atheism. The eclectic blends of answers illustrate the wide-ranging diversity in today's global community. This exercise proved that technical communicators must always be aware of any a priori idea based on prior assumptions or social constructions. The class discussions were significantly enhanced with correlating workshops. The workshops allowed the discussions to take root and provide visual examples and evidence for the commentary. The group work discussions gave an opportunity to synergize in addressing the layout, conventions, construction, human factors and supratextual elements of multiple technical documents. The tutorials were necessary for the scope of the course. I increased my technical competence from the Adobe® InDesign® tutorials and learned to create savvy custom documents that primarily appeal to logos (e.g. graphs, charts).

## Document #1: Business Card and Letterhead

In *Document #1: Business Card and Letterhead* I intended to create a business card and letter head for a service driven organization. The method I used to create the name for my organization in this document involved, finding a word that could also serve as an acronym (used as a tagline) and could represent some type of animal. My target audience was primarily individuals in English speaking cultures, dedicated to supporting efforts for freedom, deem the name and acronym S.W.I.F.T. (**S**trategically **W**orking. **I**ncreasing **F**reedom **T**ogether). The business card was created landscape to best accommodate room for the name and tagline of the organization. The use of the cheetah icon and index was used in attempt to evoke ethos of confidence and progression, since the cheetah represents focus and insightfulness, in addition to swiftness and associated with movement. This was combined with the highly popular figure-ground contrast of the camouflage pattern, similar to that in the military, to evoke ethos of credibility for the organization. I used the font, **STENCIL**, for the name of the organization to convey the ethos of the organization. This typeface is similar to fonts used to represent military units focused around precision and strategic operation. In American culture the military is revered and seen in positive light. I set to utilize the admiration for the armed forces and associate these elements with the business. In the revised business card I adjusted elements within the document such as scale, opacity, proximity and color. I increased the size of the cheetah image at the top of the card, giving the card a more dynamic focal point. I decreased the opacity of the cheetah silhouette so it would stay a dynamic element on the page without overpowering the top image. I rearranged the order of the information, placing the name and title of the person ahead of the business name. In addition I lowered the proximity of the name, cheetah image, and tagline from the top to the middle business card. I designed the back of the

card to feature the cheetah silhouette in an orange overlay color and represent the ethos and pathos of the organization. Orange is an attention getting color that represents energy, and is associated with joy and stimulation. Orange is also signifies strength and endurance. The letterhead document originally included the watermark of the camouflage pattern within the full page. I adjusted the camouflage pattern to serve as a subtle enclosure at the top and bottom of the letterhead. I also added some lorem ipsum text to the letterhead to ensure that the camouflage pattern will not distracting the substance of the document. This document displays my information design abilities to produce a document for an organization and use visual rhetoric to communicate the organization's ideals.

### **Document # 2: Advertisement/Flyer**

*Document #2: Advertisement/Flyer*, is a document that audience driven. The flyer is promoting an opportunity to support the local Cincinnati schools and community through the purchase of OCHOCINCO's cereal. The flyer is targeting fans of the Cincinnati Bengals and Cincinnati citizens concerned with education. The colors, images and text of the document work in unison effectively communicate a campaign for charity. The headline of the flyer, "Cereal of Champions" evokes ethos and characterizes the cereal as an exclusive and valuable commodity. The headline font, **BEANTOWN**, conveys an ethos of athletic branding. The tagline "Support Your Team and Your Town," appeals to pathos, giving the reader a sense of ownership which could lead to either feelings of pride or guilt. The version of the document with the three very popular Bengals players featured (Chad Ochocinco, Terrel Owens, and Carson Palmer) appeals to ethos and sends the message that whoever buys this cereal can be a champion and revered like these sports icons. The image of the box of OCHOCINCO's with Chad Ochocinco's image on it, evokes ethos and familiarizes with style of the popular Wheaties "Breakfast of Champions"

campaign. In addition the partnership with the credible “Box Tops for Education” program appeals to ethos. Ochocinco using his likeness to raise money for schools and charity, appeals to pathos. The unspoken but emphasized message also sent to the buyer is the appeal to pathos revolving around the fact that purchasing this cereal is helping children in their community, which is going to have a positive impact on the world and future generations to come. The wording explaining the donation protocol along with the green overlaid amount (\$500) appeals to ethos and pathos, connecting every purchase of cereal to a \$500 donation, leaving the buyer feel important and empowered. The highly visible orange color scheme evokes both ethos and pathos. Orange appeals to ethos because it is representative of the Cincinnati Bengals team colors and logo. Orange also appeals to pathos because of its tendency to evoke an invigorating and joyous effect, so people will be happy to give. The orange Cincinnati Bengals logo along with the phrase “Official Cereal of the Cincinnati Bengals” evokes ethos of authority as the official stamp of approval. The gold bars surrounding the enclosed headline, appeal to ethos, being that gold often symbolizes high quality. The manner of transmission of this document is through print and digital means to account for the human factors of portability, not solely dependant on networks, and networkability, easy to update, reproduce and distribute. Ochocinco is infamous for his Twitter feeds, and would probably request the document as a file to be distributed digitally. The document would also need to be printed out and distributed at the Bengals home games, possibly placed as an ad in the game day brochures. In revising this document I retained the portrait orientation and took off the three athletes from the header. I enlarged two essential images: the image of the cereal box and the image of the Bengal’s logo to emphasize the appeal to ethos and to produce a more dynamic and cleaner design. Hopefully, the flyer and the message will appear more prominent by increasing size of the logo and cereal image.

### Document # 3: Tutorial

My *Document # 3: Tutorial/Fact Sheet* serves a two-fold purpose: 1.) a promotion and introductory piece about vector graphic elements; and 2.) a how-to document on changing the fill and stroke using the Adobe® Illustrator® software. The target audience is young individuals or novice tech lovers working with Adobe® software that renders vector graphics. This document is appropriate for this audience because appeals to the ethos of vector graphics as a higher quality of design style. This is reinforced through the choice font and images used within the document. The main headline font, *Italian Cursive*, 16<sup>th</sup> c., reflects a fluid, elegant and luxurious pathos. This same pathos is implied by the use of the repetition of Lamborghini® vector images and vector logo brands in the document. Lamborghini's® typically cost a minimum of \$200,000, so the implication is that the quality of this document aligns with the prestige of the Lamborghini® brand. The color scheme used throughout the document reflects the same ethos of the colors the Italian national flag. The document is created and folded in a way to maximize portability and to naturally guide the user through the information. The first unfolded sections unveil a factsheet highlighting key features of vector graphics. When the document is fully unfolds into a three-tier tutorial that follows a clear pattern, with the headings **1.Select**, **2.Fill** and **3.Stroke**. The colors on the tutorial serve as enclosures to direct the user in a chronological instruction. In the revised document, I briefly elaborate on the need for selecting the white color swatch as the stroke in this particular tutorial, so that the logo elements, primarily the crest shape, have an enclosure that provide a high level of contrast when placed on darker backgrounds. This document is a good representation of the capabilities of the Adobe® Creative Suite software's customizability. This document demonstrates an intelligent design where allows the designer was able to customize the elements within the document, including the proximity and parameters of the design canvas.

## **Document # 4: Brochure**

In my *Document # 4: Brochure* I designed a brochure or exhibit guide to accompany the future inaugural exhibit, “Let Your Motto Be Resistance,” to be featured in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American Heritage and Culture (NMAAHC). The document evokes the ethos of credibility being connected to the Smithsonian brand, and a pathos of pride associated with African America heritage, culture and legacy. The target audience is primarily youth patrons that visit the Smithsonian Museums. The brochure is appropriate for the audience. The concept of the brochure is derived from father of Black History, Carter G. Woodson, who stated “If you teach the Negro that he has accomplished as much good as any other race he will aspire to equality and justice without regard to race.” Therefore this gate-folded four-tiered document serves as mini exhibits that highlight four historical champions of the African Diaspora. Ultimately the visual rhetoric of the brochure is intended to engage viewers with history, inspire, educate, provide hope, and serve as an entrepreneurial blueprint for future generations. The overall design works for human vision. The colors in the panels of the brochure reflect colors, represented within NMAAHC and Smithsonian logos that imply certain cultural values and also attract attention to each individual exhibit. Each panel includes an image of the historical figures, promotion graphics that provide relative information about their experience, and a quote from each individual. The first panel, overlaid in light orange, features George Washington Carver, an American scientist and inventor famous for creating novel products from agricultural crops, such as peanuts, cotton, and sweet potatoes. Orange is associated with harvest, enthusiasm, creativity, and determination, all attributes of Carver’s industrial repertoire. The panel integrates a background texture image of peanuts that reinforce Carver’s inventions with agricultural products. Carver’s quote “*When you do the common things in life in an uncommon*

*way, you will command the attention of the world*” gives viewers encouragement to become a pioneer and to excel in the things that you are passionate about. The second panel, overlaid in light green, features Madame C.J. Walker, an entrepreneur famous for developing hair products for black women. Light green is associated with stability, endurance, and growth, which fits Walker’s entrepreneurial résumé. This panel incorporates an image of Walker’s hair growth product, representing the type of products that propelled her to become a billionaire. Walker’s quote *“I got my start by giving myself a start”* speaks to the power of resiliency and self determination. The third panel, overlaid in light blue, features Mary McLeod Bethune, is known for her advancements for blacks in education and civil rights. Light blue is associated with health, healing, and understanding. This panel includes an image of the United States Capitol building, symbolizing her time as an advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Bethune’s quote *“We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward goods ends”* focuses on the power of transformation. The fourth panel, overlaid in burgundy, features Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a Pan-African orator and entrepreneur that who’s sole focus was to liberate Black people around through world. This panel contains a black national flag, an emblem whose colors characterize Pan-African ideals: red for the blood of the African people and descendants, black for the people, and green for the land of Africa. Garvey’s quote *“Liberate the minds of men and ultimately you will liberate the bodies of men”* speaks to importance of knowing your history and having self confidence and pride in your heritage. One revision to this document involved lightening up the tint of the burgundy color in Marcus Garvey’s, to alleviate the “sinister” pathos. Dark red, or dark burgundy, denotes rage, and anger, as well as courage and will power. Based on these associations the color evokes an accurate pathos related to the reputation of Garvey’s leadership

style. The revised color is similar to the original tone but lighter to that of a reddish-orange tint, which is associated with domination, aggression and a thirst for action, attributes that are related to Garvey's approach to business. Also revised was the removal of the "NMA" and "AHC" on the inside panels, located with the phrase "Engage History." I chose to remove the "NMA" and "AHC" from both panels, and raise the location of the remaining elements to the middle of the brochure. Instead of placing the "NMAAHC" on one inner panel, I placed the logo on the back of the brochure. On the outer portion of the brochure, covering the front and back, I added a parchment texture to the previously white (blank) background. In addition I adjusted the color overlay of the four historical figures to blend with parchment. I also shortened the descriptive text on the front of the brochure.

### **Conclusion**

The awareness I gained from this course is invaluable. In our digital and global society visual rhetoric somehow impacts everything involved with communication. I heard a quote that stated, "In the land of the blind the man with one eye is king." Being able to see, discern and understand rhetoric as I hadn't before is vital to my progress. The principles I have learned in this class have enhanced my ability to create smarter, more effective, and more relevant information designs. My portfolio webpage, my documents and the knowledge I gained is a reflection of my growth this semester and an internal indicator of my future success.