

Brands in a digital age

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIM8IP7fP6Y>

I think we live in a very confusing world. Technology is exploding all around us - we don't need to all go into it, we all understand it. The fact that I'm sitting here blogging is an amazing development in technology and, if you're a brand, I mean, what do you do, how do you navigate through all this stuff? And, in a way, you can't - there is no blueprint for saying 'This is how you do it' - there isn't a kind of formula that says, 'Well you do a TV commercial, from the TV commercial you set up a website, when you've set up a website, you start doing blogs there, you go into video games...' It can be a multitude of options. I think in the end, when you're in a world like that all you can really do is simply say, 'Nobody really knows, so what I'll do is try and think of better ideas.' That's the only guarantee. The guarantee is to say, 'Actually I might be wrong insulating that medium, I might be wrong in starting there, I might be wrong in doing that... but actually what I can do, what I do know, is if I have a great brand idea there's a greater and better chance that that will communicate and get through,' - and that's the only guarantee.

Working with LG

We recently won the LG business which was a fantastic piece of business to win. Without giving anything away - as we are in the midst of creative development at the moment - I do think that we are going to stay true to the idea of 'Life's Good', which has been the LG line for some time - and which actually I think is a great line and actually does define what they believe and how they think about technology. The thing for us is to bring that line alive and give it a bit more meaning, but in essence they have a great optimistic view of the future and the wonderful things that it holds for us - and we will, hopefully, be communicating that in our work.

Technology & Craft

New technology has had a tremendous impact on the craft in our industry but it's important to remember that technology has always been a spur to creativity - right back to whoever invented a paintbrush and moved the idea of painting pictures forward. All of a sudden I could do finer detail, I could make more interesting pictures, I didn't have to use a blunt stick... So you know we must understand that technology is fundamental to the craft of any creative profession - and of course what you have today is this explosion of opportunity. The great danger, of course, in all of that is that you mistake idea for craft. But always one also then has to remember that we always say advertising is 80% idea but it's also 80% execution - so one thing can infect another - but the danger is that you become over-reliant upon technology, not on the idea that you are communicating. John Cleese had a great line - he said, 'Remember, nobody laughed at clever lighting.'

Technology & Design

I think when you look around today and there's one of those questions which is, 'How important is design in terms of technology?' - how it looks, how it feels. I think a lot of brands forget how fundamentally important that is because actually what great design does - apart from obviously it has a functional value, in other words it makes things work better, that's the primary function of design is to actually make things work

better, but also, it has a tactile quality. It makes you fall in love with it and it opens up the accessibility of that piece of technology which is fundamentally important as things change so fast and getting people to understand what they can and can't do. Design is making access or creating access to that technology easier to understand and easier to appreciate so design becomes ever more important. I mean, you know, we look at the design of cars we sort of go, 'Oh that's a fantastically sexy looking car' but we understand how cars work. When you're dealing with technology which is like, 'Well how does this work, what can I do with it?' design plays a fundamental part in creating a pathway to understanding that technology.

New versus old technology

Technology as it evolves, the old technology is always discarded or thrown away, and especially the 'apostles' of the new technology always kind of go 'That's all rubbish, nobody's going to use that anymore.' First of all we have to understand that one piece of new technology doesn't necessarily dismiss or denigrate the old technology it just it expands our possibilities, it expands our opportunities. I mean, I love taking pictures and I did an exhibition some time ago and of course I shot on 5x4 and it was brilliant with the quality I was getting but if I was doing that today I'd definitely be shooting digital, and I've shot some digital stuff and it was absolutely fantastic - and what it does for me is it just opens up possibilities. Film has a wonderful quality to it and I really enjoy using that, but sometimes the digital comes along and it really does open up the possibilities, so it doesn't mean to say that we'll shoot everything now on digital and that film is dead. Film is definitely being replaced in lots of places by digital but they're going to live together, they'll work together. So we mustn't dismiss one for the sake of another - we must look at the values of the new technology and work out how best to use it.

Favourite piece of technology

What's my favourite? It's kind of a hard one that - I don't have any one piece of technology that I absolutely adore. In a way the piece of technology I use everyday, I carry with me everywhere I always have, it's incredibly reliable, I think it's an invaluable piece of technology is this [holds pencil to camera] - it is the most fantastic invention, absolutely brilliant - and I like the development of putting a rubber at the end because that means if you've written something you don't like you can rub it out and start again. Isn't that fantastic? You can take that with you anywhere in the world, I don't have to plug it into anything and all I have to do is find something to write on, which can almost be anything. So, if you're to saying to me, 'Well, what's your favourite bit of technology?' I'd say, probably, that is. My other bit of favourite technology is what we're doing now - that is we're being filmed. Digitally, of course, as opposed to film. And, in a way, that's an incredible piece of technology - the fact that I'm sitting here chatting to you, this is going to be transmitted over the net and I think that's absolutely incredible. And it just constantly amazes me, every time we do it, every time I switch on my computer and see a blog or a piece of film, I think, 'Isn't that just incredible?'

Guilty secret

That bit of technology that I was a sort of pioneer in? My beta-max. And it still sort of not only burned a hole in my pocket but also burns a hole in my heart that it actually failed. And it was a great lesson for me, which was don't be an early adopter. I went in and was convinced by Sony it was going to be fantastic - beta-max was superior in terms

of quality... I bought the whole thing and there it is - all those tapes, that machine, gathering dust, me looking at it wondering, 'What the hell am I going to do with this?' The answer? Throw it out.

Extras

Life changing

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7aCDIy3x7A>

You know, is there a piece of new technology that has changed the way I do things or changed a habit? And, yeah, I suppose I would say my MP3 player - on which I've downloaded French lessons as I'm trying to learn French and I listen to that as I walk in in the morning. That's been a tremendous bonus to me. I suppose you could say, 'Well, you could have done that on a Walkman,' but somehow I can get so much more from the MP3 player - I can switch from one lesson to another and I can go back, and I can go, 'Well, that lesson was pretty good, I want to go back and hear that...' so it's the availability of stuff that is fantastic. So I suppose I'd say my MP3 player.

CES 2008

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjEyaZtNKco>

It was great going to see what was in Las Vegas. It was a fantastic thing to do because obviously all the technology is there in one place at one time. First of all, it's huge - you are just overwhelmed with technology. Therefore, the things that stand out tend to be the stunts - like Panasonic with the largest plasma screen in the world had a multitude of people around it. You could hardly get near it to see it. So when you present things like that, when you do things like that you have to think of some way of attracting people's attention. So, despite the fact that there is all this fantastic technology there, the thing you come away with is if you don't do something to stand out in some way or another, people don't notice you. I mean the other thing too is flat screens. My God, have I seen flat screens. I've seen more flat screens than I ever wish to see again. And they're getting flatter.