

Institution: Bucks New University
Unit of Assessment: 34 Art and Design
Title of case study: Creative Communications – the challenge of digital
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The Advertising Communications Research Group (Adcoms) consists of 9 staff and research students including Paul Springer Senior Lecturer 2001-2005 Principal Lecturer 2005-2009, Professor 2009-present and Gloria Moss, Senior Lecturer 2006-2009, Reader 2009-2013 Professor 2013. Adcoms champions two fundamental issues: 1) digital formats require different approaches to mass communications; 2) gender bias is inherent in the creation and reception of designed digital communications. Outputs have impacted on: perspectives of communications (eg Springer, <i>Ads to Icons</i>, 2007; Moss, <i>Gender, Design & Marketing</i>, 2009; Springer, P & Carson, M. <i>Pioneers of Digital</i>, 2012); practice (e.g. Creative Campus Initiative branding, 2010; positioning of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, 2013); thought leadership (e.g. referenced by DCMS policy 2012; keynote addresses for ProMediaTech, UKTI/Moscow, 2009; the China Advertising Association, Guangzhou 2006; expert presentation at the Global Diversity and Inclusion Conference, Barcelona, 2013 (Moss).</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Adcoms' work is based on postdoctoral research into the most effective global uses of digital for creative communications (Springer) and into the gendered preferences of designers and users of digital communications (Moss). In 2007, Springer's book <i>Ads to Icons</i> [1] prompted a number of commercial opportunities, following which Springer secured a CommercialISE Development Grant (Finance South East 2008) to reshape Adcoms as a commercial research platform. Adcoms now involves a range of activities spanning the generation of original communication content, through to production design. In practice this includes new communications intelligence, industry up-skilling, production of research informed interfaces and communications strategies. Activities include collaborative research with advertising agents, analyzing the potential for targeted internet reach, for example, national breast cancer detection processes using the global internet and designing original content for new interactive technologies for Universal McCann.</p> <p>Moss's research on gender and design decision-making used qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the creation and reception of web-based designs and the impact of unconscious bias on these processes [4,5,6,7]. A series of interviews with 40 design practitioners was analysed using a grounded theory approach to elicit views on impact of gender on design creation and preferences. Subsequent preference testing of over 60 web sites in the public domain, identified as having gender specific characteristics, informed by previous research outcomes [7] has been widely cited in the popular press and has informed consultancy work (see section 4).</p> <p>Springer's research employed analysis of incremental, radical and fundamental approaches to utilising digital channels for commercial communications [1,2,3,8], and speculated on attributes that resulted in more effective communications. Springer's investigation contextualised the shifts in media usage and its significance on advertising communications. This incorporated visual analysis, social history and media studies. Moss's work on the significance of gender on design preferences and decision-making merges design discourse, human resources and marketing themes. Consequently Springer and Moss's mixed-methodology delivered outputs for academic and commercial sector audiences. <i>Ads to Icons, How Advertising Succeeds in a Multimedia Age</i> (2007)[1] contained 100+ interviews within 50 case studies of new works across 13 countries: it appraised trends in mass media communications, identified benchmark campaigns and illustrated possibilities for digital communications: including virtual product environments and the first branded social networks. It also identified how marketing communications was leveraged to generate closer communications with target groups. Related activities to the core research included sponsored PhDs: (including Rapp Communications-sponsored Doctoral programme, Beaumont-Ellsworth, into breast cancer awareness communications and the internet, 2010) and contribution to Knowledge Transfer</p>

Partnerships (2012).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Springer, P (1st edition 2007; 2009) Ads to Icons, How advertising succeeds in a multimedia Age, Kogan Page (pp.316)
2. Springer, P (2007) in Reheating cold methods in a hot media environment Admap, World of Advertising Research Council (WARC, September 2007) pp.48-50
3. Springer, P, & Carson, M (2012) Pioneers of Digital, success Stories of leaders in advertising, marketing, search & social, Kogan Page, London www.pioneersofdigital.com (5,000 visits in year 1).
4. Moss, G (2009) Gender Design & Marketing, Gower, London
5. Moss, G, Gunn, R and Kubacki, K (2008), Gender and web design: the implications of the mirroring principle for the services branding model, Journal of Marketing Communications, 14 (1), 37–57
6. Moss, G (2012) Web design and diversity, in Moss, G (ed.) Lessons from Profiting from Diversity, Palgrave Macmillian, London
7. Moss, G and Gunn, R (2009), Gender differences in website production and preference aesthetics: preliminary implications for ICT in education and beyond, Behaviour and Information Technology, 28 (5), 1362-3001
8. Springer, P (2013) Saudi Advertising. Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow, Rumman Media, KSA Lebanon/Dar El Chima, Lebanon

4 Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Adcoms researchers' global impact has been through consultancy work, publications and impact on businesses and DCMS policy on 'Digital Giving in the Arts' [2]. The crux of the activities centre on two principles 1) digital formats require different approaches to commercial communications; 2) gender makes a difference in design and communication preferences for industry.

Consultancy

Dissemination has been through engagement with knowledge-share opportunities - Havas Media Holdings (Senior Global Managers, Columbus University, NY, 2008) and keynotes for The International Festival of Promotion and Advertising Technologies ProMediaTech-2009, Crocus Expo., Moscow - invited by UK Trade and Industry/British Embassy, Moscow [1](Springer). Consultancy engaged senior managers with research outcomes on gender and equalities (Moss). Examples include: consultancy provided to O2 Telecommunications on ways of optimizing store design through an application of principles developed in research on gender marketing (Moss); consultancy to the 'Magic Circle' Allen and Overy on the impact of conscious bias on the firm's profitability and panel membership of the 'Diversity Works for London project, (Transport for London) examining diversity impact measures (Moss).

Adcoms activities were profiled in *Business Excellence magazine*, Russia [1]). *Ads to Icons* (2007, 7,400 copies sold) received more than 60 endorsements, including MIT Advertising Lab, Wu Xiaobo (President, China Advertising Association) and Peter York in *The Independent*. It was Highly Commended by the 'Orange Choice Review for Academic Libraries of the United States' (2007). Invitations followed from UKTI and the British European Design Group to present UK perspectives on 'Design, IP and the Ideas Economy', alongside Kegang Wu (Director, UK-China Chamber of Commerce) during the China International industrial Design Expo, Wuxi (2010). This was followed by trend analysis for the rebranding of retail chain Trendy International, Shenzhen (recommended by sector leaders Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business, Beijing, 2011).

Impact case study (REF3b)

Springer was commissioned to research the problems of an emergent Saudi digital culture and the need to promote indigenous designers who understood the growing environment in the Arab world. The resulting book, *Saudi Advertising. Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow* involved interviews with over 30 leading practitioners, to identify a context for the region's emerging digital communication 'voice' and the challenges to successful development. Outcomes of the research were employed to design the curriculum and structure for a private college of communications backed by Saudi's largest national newspaper publishers Okaz and GCC media firms including Tihama and the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce. It launched with Saudi's first international advertising colloquium on 'Advertising in the Digital Age' in 2013 (speakers from the China, USA, Europe and the Middle East; 300 delegates from across the Arab region) [10].

Following major press coverage, Ford appointed Moss to advise on optimised web design (2007) and in 2009 she was invited by *Innovario* and *Proctor & Gamble* to run a workshop for their design teams attended by a range of companies including Nokia, to raise awareness of gender bias in digital communication design. She was subsequently invited as a speaker to Bayer Healthcare, Germany (2013, E4k) as part of a company-wide initiative on diversity, with her talk on gender marketing, streamed throughout the group and viewed by over 600 employees. Also invited as Expert Speaker for global IT firm Atos in 2013 (a digital company operating in 48 countries) attended by UK Cabinet Office and SME representatives to improve the presentation of online tenders (email evidence of workshops can be obtained from Bucks). Further engagement with industries and publics has been through radio interviews [8], Google at Social Media Week, London 2012 and the Global Diversity & Inclusion Conference, London, 2012.

Publications

Pioneers of Digital, success stories from leaders in advertising, marketing, search & social (2012; over 8,000 hardcopy/Kindle sales as of 09/13) was a collaboration between Springer and Mel Carson (Microsoft, Seattle). The objective was to profile and appraise the most significant twenty worldwide commercial digital communicators and successful campaigns. As well as analysing key factors, the book also identified new attitudes to creativity, originality and zeitgeists. It led to citations in the UK Government report on *Digital Giving in the Arts* [2], democratising philanthropy. The book has been profiled in USA Today [4] leading to an invitation to offer expert commentary on the 'First Digital Election' for Forbes [5], on behalf of Blue State Digital and Stray Dog Media (US). The work is recommended reading to WPP plc's network of world-wide communications companies. It is publicly recommended by Facebook's Vice-President of Global Marketing and Stephen Fry. The book has led to keynote invitations including Global SocialMediaWeek@ Google Campus (for organisers LikeMinds, 2012 [7]). The book is distributed in Europe, the USA, Australasia, China and South Korea.

Moss's research on distinctions in male and female-produced web designs, published in the *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 2006, was syndicated internationally and profiled in many global news outlets including The Times, Wall St Journal and NY Times, prompting three book commissions on diversity and design from Gower press – including *Gender, Design & Marketing* (2009), forward by the president of the Chartered Society of Designers. Subsequently, her research on digital preferences was featured in the Huffington Post (2012) and the Independent, March 2013 [9].

Practice

Nationally, practical applications of research were developed through knowledge transfer activities, including analysis of the brand identity and design implications for a new product range for Pure H2O Company (worth £95k, KTP Associate Ceri Almrott 2010-12) and branding/web development for the UK Creative Campus Initiative/Cultural Olympiad (£20k, 2010-12). In 2011 Adcoms broadened applied research activities through the 46-strong EU advertising educators network *Edcoms*. In 2013 the *Institute of Practitioners in Advertising* commissioned Adcoms to research the value of subject centres in the age of digital networks (£16k). A digital guide using principles based on Moss's research was created for an EU Comenius project supporting social enterprise development for school children in UK and Turkey.

Impact case study (REF3b)

Conferences

Bucks hosted Edcoms' first conference in the UK (2012 [6]). Expert presentation at the Global Diversity and Inclusion Conference, Barcelona, 2013 (Moss) was attended by Directors of Diversity and HR from FTSE 100 and Fortune 500 companies (e.g. L'Oreal; Unilever; Bayer; HSBC). Springer was selected as the European presenter, one of 6 global keynotes, at the Sri Lankan Institute of Marketing conference 2013 <http://www.ceylontoday.lk/22-23917-news-detail-imc-2013.html> attended by national business leaders.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Minyaylo, Alexey, Business Excellence magazine (Russia) "'Пельмени - вылей похлебку на себя!'" (translation: "Eaten pelmeny - pour out the broth on yourself!" - a. play on famous Russian viral advertising); No.11 2009: 40-43: profile of Adcoms communications research at Bucks New University.
2. Cited in UK *Department of Culture Media & Sport Policy on Digital Giving in the Arts* (Matthew Bowcock) http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/news_stories/9605.aspx
3. Conference & publication, Jeddah College of Advertising, Jeddah, 2013 <http://www.ubt.edu.sa/jca/brochure.pdf>)
4. USA Today, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2012/12/10/pioneers-of-digital/1757055/#>;
5. Forbes, invited special article by Springer on the Presidential online campaigns - '2012: The First Digital Election' <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ciocentral/2012/11/05/2012-the-first-digital-election/#>;
6. Edcoms (European Foundation of Commercial Communications Education/European Association of Communications Agencies, Brussels) Annual Conference hosted by Bucks New University, 'Consumers As Creators: Is the tail wagging the dog?' Profile and videos link: http://www.eacaeducation.eu/PageFromDb.aspx?page=conference_2012;
7. *Social Media Week* 'Pioneers of Digital' @ google Campus [full keynote, <http://new.livestream.com/SMWADV/events/1574824> (2012) and SMW organisers Like Minds 'Thought Leader' events in conjunction with Telefonica; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYmBN23JLgM&feature=youtu.be> (2013);
8. Gender preferences and design, broadcast on BBC Woman's Hour (2010) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00rqhs1>
http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/02/2010_11_tue.shtml
http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00rqhs1/Womans_Hour_16_03_2010/
9. Moss research profiles in The Independent on Sunday <http://independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/shopping-its-all-in-the-gender-8547059.html> - - and the Huffington post – 'Women actually like pink laptops'; http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/03/02/study-shows-women-like-pink-gadgets_n_1315702.html (both 2013)
10. Launch colloquia <http://www.ubt.edu.sa/jca/brochure.pdf>