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English 407

Statement of Goals and Choices
OED – In the beginning was “Media” ...

1.) This product is trying to inform the user about how and what affects different mediums. The user physically uncovers underlying personal conceptions about media (in the roots) as well as about those who have influence over it (on the trunk). It also shows how those with the influence shape the media outlets and the people involved in its production (on the branches). This is an interactive tool. The user physically gets to peel away layers of paper to gain a better understanding of the media- an industry that has a bad “wrap” for being manipulated by people with money. Finally, the tree argues about the relationships between certain mediums depending on their proximity to each other and location on the tree. This is done all while providing the user with some very basic history on the remediation of old technologies. The tree is targeted to students in high school who are taking introductory media, communication, or journalism classes. The creator of this product is a company called “Original Evergreen Designs” (with the acronym ‘OED’). This tree is just one model, the media model, of a series of trees. Their other products would presumably include things like “the family tree” for elementary aged children and the “revolution tree” for middle school history students. Overall functions: to inform, to make the user interact with it, to cause reflection.

2.)

Roots

Purpose	The texts that I placed on the roots are various institutions or things that affect how we see the media. They are things that shape our ideas and allow us to grow into our own personal perceptions of media. I felt that the roots were a great place to put this information because just as roots are the foundation of a tree, so do our ideologies act as the foundation of our worldviews, including how we see media.
Placement of the text	I did not place the compounds in relation to each other, but rather placed them based on the amount of text and the size of the root. Some of the roots ended up being longer than others so they ended up with the compounds that had a lot of text. For example “Media Education” and “Media-saturated” went on the small roots, while “Media studies” and “Media Mix” went on the larger roots. I wrapped the text around the stem in spirals, starting at the end of the root and working up towards the trunk. This was a deliberate choice because the ends of the roots are the oldest parts of a tree. The oldest quotations (part of the definitions) are therefore at the oldest part of the tree and as they get closer to the trunk they become more contemporary.
Creating the texts	In order to get the whole text on each root I had to come up with a creative way of making them. To do this I opened a word document

	and made it horizontal. I then pasted the text into the document and double-spaced it. I printed this out and cut out each line and then taped them together into a long strip. I then folded this in half (as some of them were VERY long). The font style, color, and order varied based on what the compound was.
“Media education”	Because it has to do with education I wanted the font to reflect academic texts. Nearly all professors want their papers handed in typed in Times New Roman size 12. Therefore, this compound adhered to those guidelines as well. I also removed the blue hyperlinks because printed documents have no need for web links.
“Media-saturated”	When I think of saturation, the first think of color saturation in photo editing. Because of this I chose to vary the texts color in several different highlighter shades.
“Media studies”	I made the same font choices for this compound as I did for “media education” for the same reasons.
“Media mix”	I opted to mix up the actual message of this piece because it is all about putting different pieces together “as most likely to achieve an impact on the public.” The impact I tried to achieve was one of surprise because this is a tactic that the media often uses to grab attention. Further, because the compound definition said “campaign” in it, I immediately thought of political campaigns (even though it says advertising). This made me want to use the same font that Obama had used in his successful campaigns during the last election year. I knew the font was Gotham, but it is a special font that you have to buy. I looked into fonts that are similar, but could not find any that were already programmed into Word. I shifted gears a bit and began looking for the font that Romney is using in his campaign now (Trajan). Again, I could not find this font on my computer, but I did find a similar one on word called Felix Titling.
Brown crepe paper	After creating and placing the text on the roots I decided to cover them with brown crepe paper for several reasons. First, I wanted the tree to look, well as tree-like as possible. Also, I wanted the text to be hidden because we often make judgments about the media. Finally, I felt like this would be a fun way to make the piece interactive.

Base

Purpose	I wanted something to be representative of ground level. I decided that this area would be best suited for the basic definitions of “media” (not including compounds) because the definition is how everyone to the most basic degree views media. In order to represent ground level, I first thought about using some kind of a Styrofoam base, the kind commonly used in flower arrangements. However, this would be counterintuitive to the work I’d completed on the roots. From that point I was clueless so I decided to take a closer look at the actual definitions. I soon realized that should have been my first move. The
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	second definition of media has to do with “computing. A physical object used for storage of data. Unfortunately I did not have any floppy disks lying around, but I did have blank CDs. I suppose if I had been really creative I could have uploaded data onto the disk (but that would not be usable anyway because I had to cut it). The CD worked well because it has a hole in the center, just large enough for the tree trunk.
Placing the disk	Because I had already formed the roots, it was impossible to slide the CD over them. I decided that the best plan of action would be to cut a slit from the outside of the disk into the hole so that I could put it around the trunk. Cutting the CD would just make it crack into several pieces though so I heated the disk over steaming water from a teapot (a tool used later as well) to soften it. I then cut it with branch clippers (ironically enough).
Creating the text	To create this text I came across another problem- I did not have the label templates loaded onto my Microsoft Word. I went online and found a template and formatted the text around it. I also used different fonts for each side of the disk. The topside of the disk was typed in Lucidia Console size 11. The size was arbitrary as I chose whatever would fit well on the disk. However, I chose the font because it looked pixilated and reminded me of the font that strings of 0s and 1s are typed in. This reflects the shape of the disk and refers back to the definition of “storage of data.”
Placing the text	To mimic the functions of the OED itself, I decided to place the quotations on the under side of the disk. This follows the function of the OED that allows the user to hide the quotations or show them. Putting the quotes on the bottom still makes the text accessible, but it hides it from view unless the user makes the active choice to read them.

Trunk

Purpose	The trunk of the tree is supposed to represent those who have the power over media outlets and their messages. In this case, I chose the compounds “media elite” and “media baron.” Throughout my studies in media and communications I’ve learned that unfortunately, those with the power tend to be the ones that define what we all get from it. The trunk was appropriate for these people because it is the powerhouse of the tree and it seems to be the strongest.
Creating the text	I copied and pasted this text in similar fashion to the roots, making sure to double space, cut, and then tape together the definitions. However, I opted to use a gold color because it of course reminds me of what is in true control most of the time- money. I also made the font large and powerful, much like the elite and media barons. I used a 16pt Impact font. Also, I used an image of gold coins to separate the two compounds. Previously, on the roots, all of the definitions were

	separated anyway, but here I wanted there to be a clear distinction between the two. Instead of merely folding the string of text in half like I had for the roots, I placed one definition on each side (you will notice that one is slightly longer than the other for that reason). This was done because I wanted to show that the media elite and media barons are merely two sides of the same coin even though they are viewed separately in the OED.
Placing the text	In the same fashion as before, I wrapped the text all the way up the trunk. At the top of the trunk where the text ends, I marked a green dot so the user knows where to begin peeling paper off from. Obviously, I chose green because it is associated with “go.”
Brown Paper	See reasoning in the roots section. This part I definitely felt needed to be covered. Consumers of mainstream media really do not think all the time about the fact that what they are receiving is only a half-truth. The elite and barons are behind the scenes, very much like “the man behind the curtain.”

Branches

Purpose	Logistically this section of the tree was the most difficult to figure out. I had several different functions that I wanted the branches to serve. First, I wanted to highlight several of the mediums featured in the first definition, “the main means of mass communication, <i>esp.</i> newspapers, radio, and television...”. I also wanted to show how they physically evolved and how they relate to each other. However, I also wanted to include more OED content. Therefore, I assigned each group of media an OED compound (one of the following: media personality, media consultant, media darling, media man, and media-shy). I will explain how I assigned these later on.
Images are apparent to the plain eye	Unlike the tree trunk and roots, I felt that this portion should be uncovered because we are usually very aware of their place in our lives, whether we understand the messages and people behind them or not.
Why did I choose some compounds and not others?	I selected only 5 compounds that use “media” because of limitations. Time was certainly an issue, I had already been working on the project for about 7 hours by the time I reached the branches. There are an overwhelming amount of compounds (9 that I had not used at this point) and I just did not have the energy to do anymore than 5. Also, space was a limitation as the tree itself is quite small.
Media Personality	I assigned this compound to radio. Personality really comes through spoken language for me. The term media personality made me think about the days of early radio broadcasting when families would gather around the radio to hear someone talk. Therefore, I used radio images in conjunction with this term. The images from oldest to newest are: a large stationary radio, a portable radio, and an iPod.

	This shows the remediation that radio has gone through.
Media Consultant	When I think of media consultants I think of speechwriters and public speaking in general. I used the technology of microphones and how they have changed. I hope that showing the technologies transitions in this way will encourage the reader to think about the fact that the way people are using them changes too. For example, the early microphones were stationary. The speaker had limited movement. After wireless microphones were invented, the speaker had movement, but they could not multi task very well because one of their hands had to hold the mic. Yet today we have headsets. These allow for a full range of motion and allow the speaker to use their hands so they can point at slides or pick up props.
Media Darling	This was probably the easiest compound to place with a technology. Media darling equates to Shirley Temple, Marilyn Monroe, Jimmy Stewart, etc. I always think of television, particularly film playing a huge role in how these people were portrayed. For that reason I used images of a film reel, VHS, and DVD.
Media Man	The media man definition was all about people whose job it is to sell advertising space. This is the only compound that gave me something definitive to grab onto- advertising. The mediums I used here seem to be very different, but they are all technologies that have been exploited for advertising potential. Newspaper, magazines, and websites. For the reverse side of the newspaper image I dyed the paper with tea to make it look older. The magazine I hung on the tree differently than the rest of the images. I hung it this way because it mimics the actual appearance of a magazine.
Media-shy	Finally, the media-shy compound was one that I associated with cameras. I think about how the paparazzi drive celebrities to be very secretive and “camera shy.”
Placement in relation to each other.	Obviously, each set of images is hung together on the same branch. Those closer to the trunk of the tree are the contemporary images of media & media technology while those on the outermost part of the branch is the oldest. I also arranged the groups near other mediums that I thought were similar. For example, microphones are next to radios, and radios are next to film. Finally, the media shy group I intended to place off by themselves. This did not work very well because the tree is so crowded, but you will notice that it is a bit farther away from the rest of the images.

Users Guide

Purpose	This one page guide that comes with the tree helps show the user where to start looking at the tree for texts. One look at the tree might lead one to believe that the only part with information is the top, but the guide explains that if you peel back the layers, you can learn more.
Fonts	I used three different fonts for the piece. 12pt & 24 pt BlairMDITC TT,

	Franklin Gothic pt. 14, and a custom downloaded font called Channel. Channel was used on the logo. Blair was used for headings because it is an all capital letter font that anchors the piece. I chose Franklin because it was modern and seems to be a good point between the flowy Channel and strict Blair typefaces.
Logo	I created the logo in Photoshop. I wanted it to be a very clean and readable design. I titled the company 'Original Evergreen Designs' because it followed the acronym of the Oxford English Dictionary.
Sidenote: I wish I had added a warning at the bottom of the guide that says, once you've dissected the tree, you can never return it to its previous state. This would have been an incredible way of saying that once you open your eyes to see how your views of mass communication are shaped, you can never return to ignorance.	

3.) The other options that I had in mind for this project were to use the word 'nix' or to use the word 'media.' I had a third plan as well, but it was really only created because it was necessary for the workshop and was not something that I was particularly excited about. My plan for nix was to create a family tree because a) it is my last name and b) because I felt that a family tree provided many opportunities to display OED data. For examples, birthdates, origin, and etymology. I ultimately did not do that idea because there were just so few entries on the word and I did not feel like there was enough material to work with. My other idea was to use the word media and create Facebook pages for the various compounds. In my mind, most of the compounds could be associated with a different person. For example, media baron, media darling, media junkie, etc... I ended up not doing that idea because I could not find a good way to argue anything through the medium of social media. Ultimately I chose a combination of the two because the tree format allowed me to make an argument about how different mediums relate to one another as well as how we perceive them based on our background and who controls the outlets. Using the word media gave me a lot of content to work with- over 2,000 words to choose from! With so many definitions and compounds, I was able to chose my favorite pieces and those that fit well together.

4.) This project would not be the product that it is today without help from:

- Dr. Shipka created the assignment and guidelines. She also helped refine my ideas during our meeting. She gave advice on how to make mold two different project ideas into one and advised me on how to make it into an argument. Her contributions during the workshop day to other students' project ideas also gave me a better idea of what she was looking for.
- Classmates encouraged me with positive feedback on blackboard. Erika also specifically encouraged me through text messages.
- A.C. Moore gave me access to the fake bendable floral pieces that I formed into the roots, trunk, and branches. They also had the brown crepe paper that I used to wrap up the roots and trunk. (Thanks cashier lady who gave me a 25% off coupon!)
- Electronic devices contributed to the text and image portions of this assignment, as well as necessary distractions. Including, but not limited to Microsoft Word, Internet

Explorer AND Safari, Photoshop, printer, laptop, PC, iTunes, Facebook being there for me every 5 seconds (ok exaggeration), Google, the microwave (to heat up my mom's awesome cream of crab soup for sustenance), and my cell phone.

- Mom, Dad, Aunt Cindy & Uncle Tom took time out of their game night to show interest in the project, offer suggestions, and encourage me. Mom also stopped at the store to pick up printer paper, which was much needed.
- Other: Pajamas, the running trail at Kinder Park, dafont.com, tape, scissors, stapler, and my wonderful boyfriend.

Works Cited

- "media, *n.*" The Oxford English Dictionary. 3rd ed. 2001. OED Online. Oxford University Press. 19 October 2012 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/>>.

Word Count: 3,276