RPT2: Reflective Report on Graphic and Digital Design Journey

My enthusiasm for graphic design derives from my desire to communicate ideas visually. Transforming sophisticated concepts into arrangements that engage with people and bridging the gap between creativity and accessibility is something that has always interested me.

As I've journeyed through my graphic design tasks, I've been fortunate to engage in a variety of projects in both traditional and digital design. Each of these experiences has contributed significantly to my growth and expertise in this field.

Below, I will delve into a discussion of some of my recent graphic design projects, shedding light on the decision-making process behind the elements, principles, and file formats employed in each endeavour. These projects represent more than just creative undertakings; they reflect my growth as a content producer.

Throughout this essay, I aim to provide insights into the conception and execution of these projects. It's not just about showcasing finished designs but also about revealing the journey that led to their creation. I'll discuss the inspirations, brainstorming sessions, and design iterations that shaped these visual pieces.

Moreover, I'll candidly address any challenges and setbacks encountered along the way. Every content creator faces hurdles, and my experiences are no exception. These setbacks have been pivotal moments in my development, offering valuable lessons and opportunities for improvement.

In essence, this essay serves as a window into my world as a graphic designer, offering a glimpse into the thought processes and creative choices that define my work. Through reflection and analysis, I aim to provide valuable insights that not only showcase my progress but also offer inspiration and knowledge I've gained as a content producer.

In my apprenticeship at the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS), I've worked on various graphic and digital design projects which I will highlight today. I was involved in designing a series of instructional guides for staff Kings Coronation party packs.
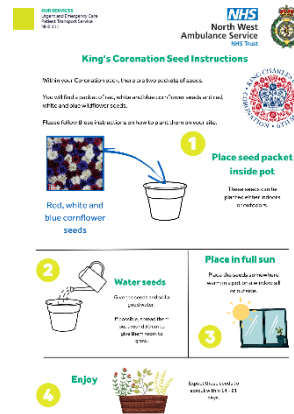
Additionally, I had the opportunity to actively contribute to a summer campaign to raise awareness among young individuals about the importance of not leaving their friends in vulnerable drinking situations. My role in this project involved crafting compelling videos that effectively conveyed this crucial message.

Leveraging my proficiency in Photoshop, I skilfully manipulated photographs to accentuate the predicament faced by the subjects in these scenarios, thereby creating visually impactful content.
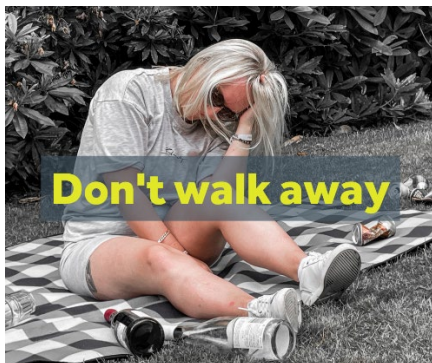
Furthermore, I collaborated closely with the Project Management Office (PMO) on a distinct project, which involved producing a video commemorating the team's achievements in honour of PMO Day.
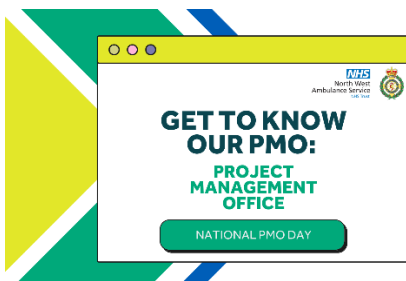
This project allowed me to showcase my versatility and adaptability in working within diverse creative contexts, emphasizing my technical skills and ability to collaborate effectively with cross-functional teams.

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Likewise, I had the privilege of engaging in a collaborative effort with our charity's executive director, wherein we developed visually arresting posters and comprehensive guidelines for the Three Peaks Challenge.

This project showcased my graphic design prowess and allowed me to collaborate closely with a high-profile figure within our organization, further enhancing my understanding of the charity's mission and objectives.

Together, we worked diligently to ensure that the promotional materials and guidelines for the Three Peaks Challenge not only captured attention but also effectively communicated the event's significance and logistics to participants and supporters alike. This experience deepened my commitment to the cause and underscored the pivotal role of effective visual communication in advancing our charitable endeavours.

Looking ahead, I have outlined three fundamental objectives that will shape my trajectory within graphic design. Firstly, I aspire to cultivate a comprehensive portfolio that chronicles my creative evolution and underscores my versatility as a designer. This portfolio will serve as a tangible testament to my growth and proficiency in the field.

Secondly, my dedication to this craft extends to a relentless pursuit of skill enhancement. I recognize the importance of staying abreast of emerging techniques and design trends in this ever-evolving domain. My commitment to perpetual improvement is underscored by my belief in gleaning valuable lessons from every creative endeavour, transforming each experience into a stepping stone toward mastery.

My graphic design interests span a broad spectrum, encompassing areas such as colour theory, where I delve deep into the intricate emotions of different combinations of hues. I am equally fascinated by the nuanced impact of aspect ratio on design composition, a facet that adds depth and dimension to my creative endeavours. Moreover, I am steadfast in my commitment to championing accessible design practices, ensuring my work resonates with a diverse audience.

In pursuing knowledge and skill enhancement, I have harnessed the power of modern design tools and applications, with platforms like Canva serving as invaluable resources. These tools have facilitated the creation of visually captivating posters, logos, graphics, and social media content and accelerated my growth as a designer.

As I embark on my professional journey in graphic design, I have further fortified my digital design prowess by harnessing the capabilities of Adobe tools, particularly Photoshop. This deliberate investment in honing my skills underscores my commitment to excellence and my

unwavering enthusiasm for the boundless creative possibilities that lie ahead in my graphic design career.

Software Proficiency

Before embarking on my apprenticeship journey, my fascination with the design world, particularly in visual communication design, had been a longstanding passion. In my quest to cultivate my skills and proficiency with various design software, I actively sought opportunities to experiment with multiple applications.

The commencement of my apprenticeship marked a significant turning point in my design journey. It provided me with a valuable platform to delve into many graphic design projects, with Canva emerging as my primary tool of choice. This web-based definitive design platform has proven to be an invaluable resource that has facilitated my growth and been instrumental in honing my design abilities.

Within the realm of Canva, I have revelled in the process of developing my skills and bringing creative visions to life. The platform's user-friendly interface, replete with graphic design tools, has been a game-changer. It affords creators like myself the ability to seamlessly manipulate images, whether it involves removing or editing backgrounds, enhancing videos, adding captions, or infusing animations. Moreover, the platform's extensive stock image library has further enriched my creative palette, enabling me to infuse my designs with various visual elements.
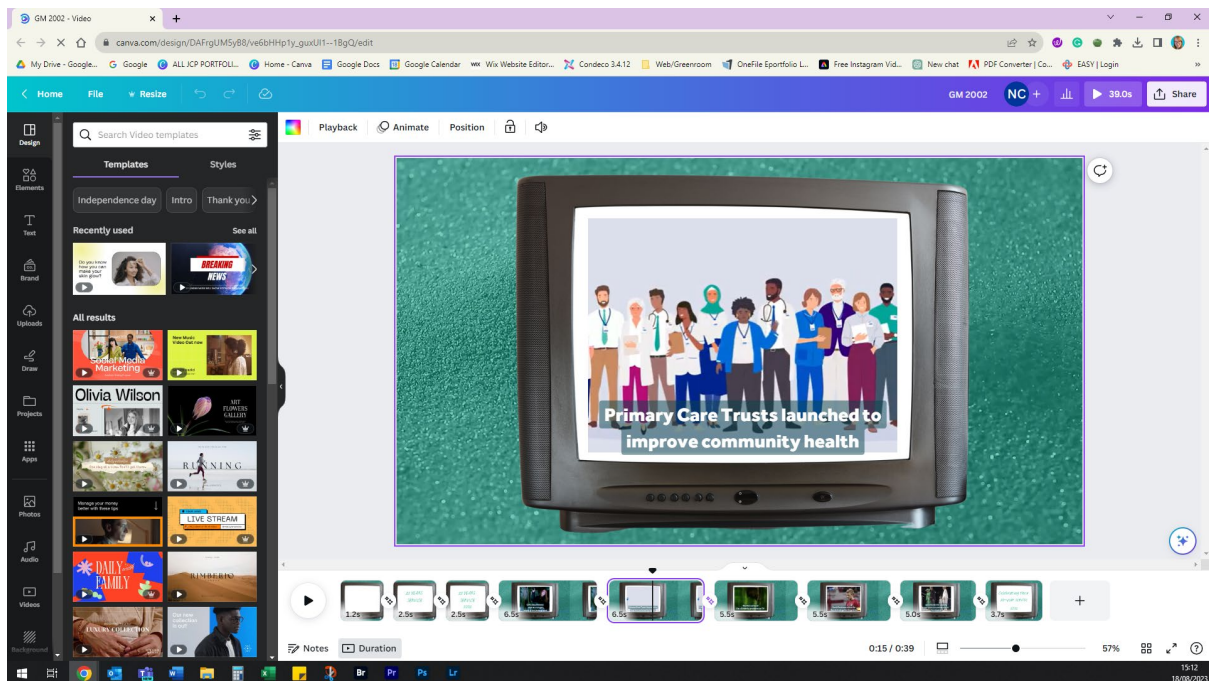
The versatility of Canva extends to its adaptability to various formats and platforms. It empowers me to effortlessly resize content, ensuring my designs are optimized for different contexts, such as transforming a Facebook post into a Twitter-ready form or tailoring visuals for other social media platforms. This flexibility not only enhances the effectiveness of my designs but also underscores the dynamic nature of the modern design landscape.

During my apprenticeship, I've applied my skills across an eclectic range of design projects, from social media videos to GIFs, presentations, posters, and even animated graphic videos. Each opportunity has allowed me to put theory into practice and served as a testing ground for refining my craft.

In essence, Canva has emerged as my creative playground, a space where my passion for design converges with practical skill development. As I journey along this path of design exploration, I am eager to leverage my experiences and newfound expertise to contribute meaningfully to the ever-evolving field of visual communication design.

In my professional capacity, I have harnessed the full spectrum of capabilities that the design tools and features offer. This has empowered me to undertake a myriad of creative endeavours, from the conception and design of visually captivating posters intended for print to crafting intricate graphics that engage the viewer and even delving into the dynamic realm of video creation. Additionally, I've effectively tailored content geared towards social media platforms, ensuring that my designs resonate with and captivate the online audience.

Through these multifaceted projects, I've had the privilege of applying my design acumen in diverse contexts, each with unique challenges and requirements. Whether it's the meticulous attention to detail demanded by print materials, the need for impactful visual communication in graphics, the immersive storytelling potential of videos, or the strategic adaptation to various social media platforms, I've consistently demonstrated my adaptability and creativity in delivering compelling and practical design solutions.

My work experiences have allowed me to flex my design muscles and deepen my understanding of the profound impact that thoughtful and well-executed design can have in conveying messages, creating memorable experiences, and driving engagement. As I continue to hone my skills and expand my horizons in graphic design, I remain committed to pushing the boundaries of creativity and contributing meaningfully to the visual language of the digital age.
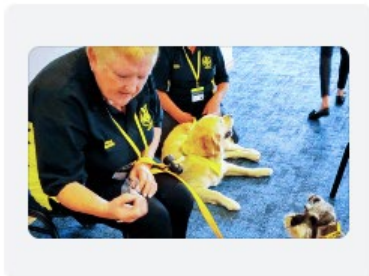
International Dog's Day Twitter
Twitter Post
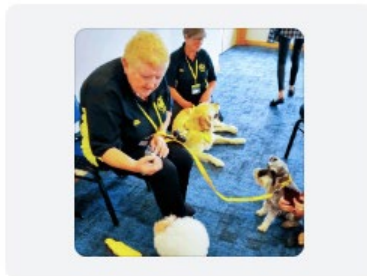
International Dog's Day Insta Squa...
Instagram Post

International Dog's Day Facebook
Facebook Post

Below is a certificate I received from Canva celebrating my 100th design.

In addition to my proficiency with Canva, my professional role has provided me with a wealth of opportunities to cultivate and refine my skills in Adobe Photoshop, an essential tool in the realm of graphic design. When I embarked on this journey, I had minimal experience with Photoshop, but I soon found myself immersed in a hands-on learning experience.

My responsibilities entailed various tasks, from image editing and the meticulous removal of unwanted elements such as watches, to building a foundation of skills that would prove indispensable for our content campaigns. Photoshop, a product of Adobe, stands as a formidable powerhouse in image editing and graphic design, catering to many creative needs.

Within the realm of Photoshop, I have delved deep into its rich and versatile toolkit, which includes the ability to work with layers, make precise selections of objects, apply filters, add text with various fonts and styles, utilise the pencil tool for intricate detailing, harness the power of the healing brush for seamless retouching, employ content-aware fill to intelligently replace image elements, and explore blending modes to achieve diverse visual effects.
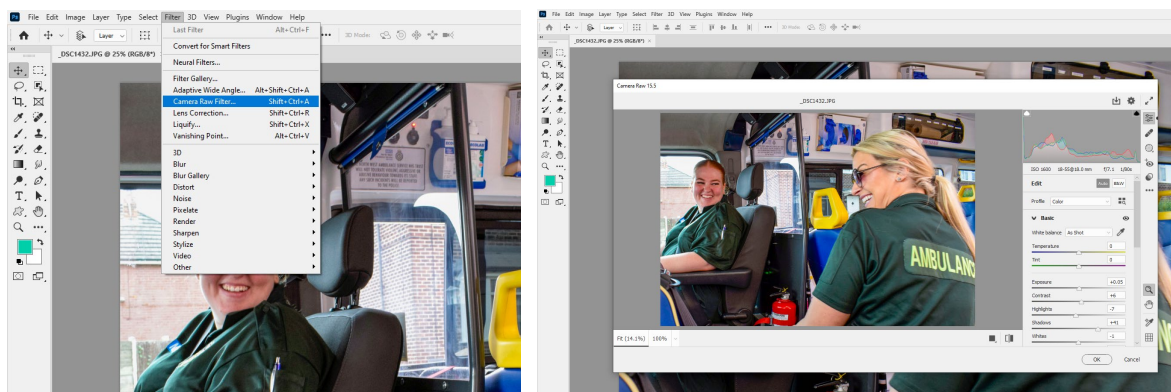
These functionalities collectively make Photoshop a robust and indispensable choice for content creators, enabling them to design multimedia that effectively communicates a wide range of messages, whether light-hearted, profound, or distinctive.

Photoshop's capacity to facilitate intricate image manipulation, combined with its extensive repertoire of creative features, empowers me to craft visuals that transcend mere aesthetics

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and engage viewers profoundly. This tool has become integral to my creative toolkit, allowing me to navigate graphic design's complex and dynamic landscape with confidence and expertise.

As I continue to harness the power of Photoshop, I remain dedicated to pushing the boundaries of my creative expression, ensuring that I can deliver compelling and impactful visual content that not only meets but exceeds the diverse needs of the ever-evolving digital media landscape.

Application of Elements and Principles of Design

Graphic design is everywhere, and it's a solid way to share ideas with pictures. Think about the excellent design of your favourite product, how a magazine page looks, or how your phone apps are arranged—graphic design is behind all of it.

Graphic design is like a secret language that uses rules and building blocks to make things look good and help us understand information better.

The Elements of Graphic Design

Lines are one of the foundational elements of graphic design. They can define shapes, create boundaries, convey movement, and establish structure within a composition. Lines come in various forms, including straight, curved, diagonal, and organic, each imparting a different feeling or mood to a design.

The choice of line type, thickness, and style plays a significant role in determining the overall visual impact of a design. For example, bold, diagonal lines can convey a sense of dynamism and energy, while thin, horizontal lines may evoke a feeling of calm and stability.

Shapes are two-dimensional figures defined by lines or edges. They can be geometric, like circles, squares, triangles, or organic and freeform. Shapes are fundamental to creating visual elements and defining the overall structure of a design.

Shapes can also be used symbolically. For instance, a circle often represents unity or completeness, while a triangle can convey stability or tension. The skilful use of shapes adds depth and meaning to graphic compositions.

Colour is a potent element in graphic design, as it can evoke emotions, set moods, and convey messages. The colour wheel, consisting of primary, secondary, and tertiary colours, is the foundation for understanding colour relationships and harmonies. Graphic designers utilize colour theory to create effective colour schemes that resonate with their intended audience. Colour harmony, contrast, and the psychological effects of different colours are all critical considerations in design.

Typography is the art and technique of arranging type to make written language legible, readable, and appealing when displayed. Typography encompasses many elements, including fonts, typefaces, type size, line spacing (leading), and line length (measure).

The choice of typography can significantly influence a design's overall feel and readability. Different fonts convey various personalities, from formal and elegant to modern and playful. Typography is a powerful tool for conveying information, setting the tone, and establishing hierarchy within a design.

Texture refers to the visual or tactile quality of a surface or material. Consistency can be simulated or implied in graphic design to add depth and visual interest to a composition.

While physical textures can be incorporated into materials like paper or fabric, visual textures are created using design techniques.

Texture can evoke feelings of roughness, smoothness, depth, or even nostalgia, depending on its application. Incorporating texture into a design can help convey a specific mood or theme.

The Principles of Graphic Design

Balance is a fundamental principle of graphic design, referring to the distribution of visual elements within a composition. Achieving balance is essential to ensuring a design feels harmonious and visually stable.

There are two primary types of balance in graphic design:

- Symmetrical Balance: Elements are evenly distributed on either side of a central axis, creating a sense of equilibrium. It is often used to convey a formal and structured tone.
- Asymmetrical Balance: On the other hand, Asymmetrical balance involves placing elements of varying size and visual weight in a way that still achieves a sense of balance. It tends to create a more dynamic and visually exciting composition.
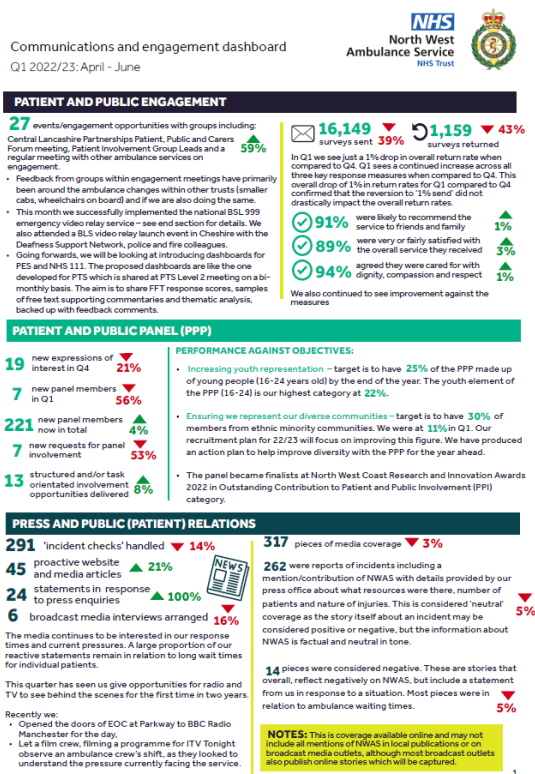
Contrast is juxtaposing elements with differing characteristics, such as colour, size, shape, or texture, to create visual interest and highlight important information. Contrast can be a powerful tool for directing the viewer's attention and conveying hierarchy within a design.

For instance, using bold, contrasting colours for headlines against a neutral background can make them stand out and draw the viewer's eye. Contrast is crucial for readability and ensuring that critical elements are easily distinguishable.

Emphasis involves giving prominence to specific elements within a design to make them stand out and convey their significance. This principle helps guide the viewer's attention and reinforces the message or purpose of the design.

Emphasis can be achieved through various means, including

- Size: Enlarging certain elements to make them more noticeable.
- Colour: Use bold or contrasting colours for emphasis.
- Typography: Employing distinctive fonts or styles for headlines and critical text.
- Placement: Positioning essential elements in prominent areas of the composition.

Unity is the principle that combines all the elements within a design to create a cohesive and harmonious whole. It ensures the procedure feels more unified than a collection of disparate elements. Achieving unity involves maintaining consistency in design elements such as colour schemes, typography, and visual style.

It ensures that all compositional parts work together to convey a cohesive message or concept.

Proportion and **scale** refer to the size relationships between elements within a design. These principles are vital for creating a sense of hierarchy, depth, and visual balance.

Using proportion and scale effectively means carefully considering the size and placement of elements relative to each other and the overall composition.

For instance, a smaller secondary image can complement a more prominent central image, creating a sense of depth and importance.

Repetition involves using consistent design elements throughout a composition to create a sense of unity and visual continuity. It can include repeating colours, shapes, fonts, or other graphics.

Rhythm, however, is the pattern created by repeating these elements. It can add visual interest and guide the viewer's eye through the design. A rhythmic pattern can develop a sense of movement and flow within a composition.

File Formats and their Significance

In graphic and digital design, file formats are the unsung heroes that wield tremendous influence over how visual content is created, presented, and shared. The choice of file format is not merely a technical decision; it is a creative and strategic one that can profoundly impact design projects' quality, efficiency, and effectiveness.

In this essay, we will explore the pivotal role that file formats play in design, delve into the characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages of standard formats like JPEG, PNG, GIF, and SVG, and showcase how designers must select appropriate forms based on project requirements, considering factors such as image quality, scalability, transparency, and compatibility.

File formats in graphic and digital design are the architectural blueprints that determine how visual information is stored, displayed, and transmitted. They are the vital conduits through which designers bring their creative visions to life and ensure that viewers faithfully realize them.

The importance of file formats can be distilled into several key aspects:

Quality preservation

File formats dictate the way images and graphics are compressed and stored. Choosing the correct form is pivotal in ensuring that the visual quality of a design is preserved, especially when transferring high-resolution assets across platforms or when printing images.

Compatibility

Different software applications and platforms have varying levels of support for file formats. Designers must choose forms compatible with the tools and platforms they intend to use, ensuring their designs can be seamlessly opened and edited without compatibility issues.

Efficiency

File formats influence the size of design files. Optimal formats balance file size and image quality, facilitating efficient sharing and loading of images on websites and digital media.

Transparency

Transparency is crucial for design elements that blend seamlessly with backgrounds, such as logos and icons. Some formats support transparency, enabling designers to create non-rectangular or partially transparent shapes.

Scalability

Scalable formats allow designs to be resized without losing quality, a critical feature for responsive web design, logo creation, and projects that require adaptability to various screen sizes and resolutions.

Common File Formats: Characteristics, Advantages, and Disadvantages

JPEG, which stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group, is an important file format in graphic and digital design. It's widely used because it balances image quality and file size, making it versatile and practical for various design needs. However, it also has its limitations, especially when it comes to preserving image quality during editing.

As part of my role, I am tasked with capturing a range of stock photos to be used in our social media, website, publications, and leaflets that will be distributed at events.

Let's break it down:

Characteristics: JPEG is excellent for colourful and detailed images, like photographs and graphics in many colours. It uses a method called "lossy compression," which means it intentionally removes some image data to make the file smaller. The goal is to keep the image looking good, even though some details are lost.

Advantages: JPEG is popular because it finds the proper middle ground between good image quality and a reasonable file size. This makes it perfect for websites and digital projects because JPEG images load quickly without sacrificing too much quality. It's also compatible with various devices and software, so it's easy to share.

Disadvantages: One drawback of JPEG is its lossy compression. When you edit and save a JPEG image multiple times, it can lose quality with each save. This can be a problem for designers who need to make many changes to their pictures, as it can make details less sharp and colours less accurate over time.

In simple terms, JPEG is a format that designers use because it finds a good balance between making images look nice and keeping file sizes manageable. It's great for websites where images must load quickly. However, it's not the best choice if you plan to edit the idea a lot because it can lose quality each time you save it. Designers choose JPEG when they need a practical format that maintains decent image quality while being easy to use on the web and with various devices and software.

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PNG, which stands for Portable Network Graphics, is a vital file format in graphic and digital design. It offers unique characteristics, benefits, and drawbacks that shape its role in the creative world. PNG is the go-to choice when designers prioritize precision, transparency, and maintaining image quality.

After the editing process, I convert images from JPEG to PNG to make downloading the assets easier for members both within and outside my team. By putting them into smaller files I am not limiting the quality but allowing quick access.

Characteristics: PNG is a type of file format that stands out because it doesn't lose any original image data when you save an image as a PNG. This means that the quality of your image remains top-notch, making it perfect for intricate graphics and detailed visuals. Another standout feature of PNG is its support for transparency. This allows you to create images with non-rectangular or partially see-through parts, making them fit seamlessly into different backgrounds.

Advantages: PNG is widely used in design because it excels at maintaining the sharpness of images. It's great for graphics with sharp edges, small text, or anything that needs to look incredibly clear. Icons, logos, and pictures with text all benefit from PNG's ability to keep every detail sharp and accurate. Additionally, PNG's transparency feature is a game-changer. It lets you create graphics that blend perfectly into their surroundings, making it ideal for logos and icons with no distracting backgrounds.

Disadvantages: Despite its many strengths, PNG has some limitations. One of the main downsides is that PNG files can be more extensive compared to formats like JPEG. This can be a concern, especially for web designers who want their websites to load quickly. Large PNG files can slow page loading, creating a less-than-optimal user experience. So, designers need to balance PNG's excellent image quality and transparency with the need for smaller file sizes, especially when designing for the web.

In a nutshell, PNG is a file format that designers rely on for its precision, lossless compression, and support for transparency. Designers turn to PNG to maintain every detail in their images, especially for graphics with sharp edges and text. Its transparency feature is a lifesaver for creating graphics that seamlessly fit into different backgrounds. However, designers must be aware that PNG files can be more significant, especially for web use, so they must consider file size alongside their excellent image quality and transparency.

GIF, the Graphics Interchange Format, plays a unique and enduring role in graphic and digital design. GIFs have distinct traits and some notable benefits but also face certain limitations, making them a versatile yet specialized file format.

Some of the work I've created has been exported into a gif format for social media. These range from animated graphics, a video or social media reel.

Characteristics: GIFs are a file format primarily used for simple animations, graphics, and icons. One of their standout features is that they can be compressed without losing any image quality, which is excellent for preserving the original look of the visuals. Additionally, GIFs are famous for their ability to have transparent areas, allowing them to blend into different backgrounds seamlessly.

Advantages: GIFs truly shine with animations and graphics that use a limited range of colours. They load quickly, maintaining a reasonable level of quality, which is particularly beneficial for environments where smooth playback is essential. Furthermore, GIFs are straightforward and work well across various devices and web browsers, making them a preferred choice for small animations and icons.

Disadvantages: However, GIFs have their downsides. Their limited colour support makes them unsuitable for photographs and images with intricate colour variations and gradients. In such cases, the restricted colour palette of GIFs can result in a noticeable loss of image quality. Additionally, GIF files can be larger than more modern formats, which can be problematic when optimising website and digital platform loading times.

GIFs are a distinctive file format appreciated for their role in creating simple animations, graphics, and icons. They stand out because they can be compressed without losing quality and because they support transparency. Designers turn to GIFs for animations and pictures with a limited colour range, as they excel in loading quickly while preserving quality. However, there are better choices for photographs and images with complex colours, and their file sizes can be more significant. Designers choose GIFs when their characteristics align with the project's needs and limitations.

SVG, or Scalable Vector Graphics, holds a special place in graphic and digital design. SVG has unique qualities and various advantages, but it also has a few limitations that designers should be aware of. This file format is known for its adaptability and versatility.

Characteristics: SVG is a file format that uses XML (Extensible Markup Language) to define graphics. What makes SVG stand out is its ability to maintain image quality regardless of how much you scale it up or down. You can make an SVG image larger or smaller without

losing its sharpness or clarity. This feature makes SVG a valuable choice for various design purposes.

Advantages: SVG truly shines with logos, icons, and illustrations. They can maintain their sharpness and precision at any size, making them perfect for elements that need to adapt to different contexts. Moreover, SVGs are exceptionally lightweight and load quickly on websites and digital platforms. This speedy loading enhances the user experience for visitors to websites and users of digital applications. The combination of scalability and lightness makes SVG an essential tool for designers.

Disadvantages: However, it's important to note that SVG has limitations. They must be better suited for photographs or images with intricate gradients, shading, and various colours. Using SVGs for such content may result in losing image quality and fidelity. In such cases, formats like JPEG or PNG, better equipped to handle complex imagery, are more suitable.

SVG is a remarkable file format celebrated for its adaptability and versatility. Their ability to maintain image quality, regardless of size changes, makes them ideal for logos, icons, and illustrations. Additionally, their lightweight nature is a significant advantage for web-based applications. However, designers should exercise caution when considering SVGs for photographs or images with complex gradients and shading, as they may not deliver the best results. Designers turn to SVG when they need sharpness, scalability, and efficiency, especially for visuals that need to perform well in various digital contexts.

Selecting the correct file format

Selecting the correct file format is crucial to graphic and digital design. It's a decision that should always align with the specific needs of the project at hand. Each file format has its strengths and limitations, so designers must make informed choices based on the content they are working with and how it will be used. Let's delve deeper into the considerations for each format:

JPEG: JPEG is the format of choice for photographs and images with various colours. It's particularly useful when a certain amount of quality loss is acceptable, making it an efficient option for sharing images on the web and social media. JPEG uses compression techniques that reduce file sizes, resulting in faster loading times for web pages and easy sharing across various digital platforms.

PNG: PNG is preferred for transparency, crisp edges, or lossless compression. It excels at preserving image quality, making it perfect for icons, logos, and graphics that include text. PNG's ability to have transparent areas is invaluable when creating visuals that need to blend seamlessly into different backgrounds. Designers often turn to PNG for elements that require both precision and clarity.

GIF: GIFs are popular for simple animations, icons, or graphics with a limited colour palette. They're great at conveying motion in a compact format, making them ideal for creating attention-grabbing web elements. While GIFs may not support complex imagery or photographs, they excel at adding interactivity and engagement to digital projects.

SVG: SVG is the top pick for scalable graphics, such as logos and icons. What sets SVG apart is its remarkable ability to maintain image quality regardless of screen size. It is resolution-independent, ensuring that graphics remain sharp and precise whether scaled up

or down. SVGs are essential for responsive design, where visuals must adapt seamlessly to various devices and screen resolutions.

Choosing a suitable file format is pivotal in graphic and digital design. It should be made carefully, considering the content's nature, desired quality, and intended use.

Whether it's the realistic detail of JPEG, the precision of PNG, the animation of GIF, or the adaptability of SVG, each format has its place in a designer's toolkit.

Designers use these formats strategically to ensure their creations are visually appealing and optimized for their intended digital platforms and audiences.

Project Showcase

King's Coronation

This project was discussed in a team meeting before the palace confirmed that the new King Charles would have his coronation in March 2023.

My manager, Sarah, asked me and another colleague, Amy, to assist, and we worked as a trio to ensure the project was delivered.

We first met to brainstorm ideas. We discussed the King's naturistic views, his love of charity and the joy of sustainability and green initiatives. Compared to Queen Elizabeth II's jubilee the previous year, this staff-wide 'party pack' would be themed on King Charles' preferences.

The previous year, a cardboard box was filled with paper crowns, bunting, sweets, and jubilee-themed biscuits.

This year, we wanted to deliver under 400 party packs to all NWAS sites, and they would contain red, white, and blue flower seed backs, pots for planting, an instruction manual which I designed with a letter explaining the contents of the pack, union jack paper crowns, union jack bunting, King Charles face masks, biscuit tins with coronation emblem, more red, white and blue seeds and cardboard boxes.

I worked with Amy to order these items and purchased the seeds as well as picked up the King Charles face masks.

My primary role was designing the coronation party pack seed instructions and the letter in each pack for all sites.

It was an instruction on how to plant the seeds, a warning not to take too many biscuits or other items to make sure there were enough and a reminder to use the things and send us any images or videos they take so we could share them on our social media.

When designing the letter, I leaned on the previous format used for last year's coronation. Prioritising balance, I focussed on keeping symmetry to the layout of the letter.

I utilised contrast with the paragraphs by keeping them even, and I ensured the font was uniform.

I used emphasis by not using overpowering colour but instead using our primary colours to highlight key messages.

The letter had to have the right proportion and scale, so I tried to keep the page to one page, make sure the logo was used correctly and in the correct format as instructed by the brand guidelines and that the header and footer were pleasing to the eye but not distracting.

After designing the letter, I then worked on designing the party pack instructions.

Firstly, I researched the appropriate logo, messaging and colours sent out from the palace to the public sector and communications teams to prepare for the coronation.

This involved researching the palace website and then exporting various pngs and pdfs of the king's emblem.

I used this emblem as the cover page for the pack. The use of white space in our content is an integral part of our branding guidelines so I placed the emblem in the centre on a white background to show a link between the coronation and our branding style.

Having designed the cover page, I then created instructions for staff members and a guide for planting the seeds.

To start with, I designed the instruction pack on Canva. Picking a poster format, I used a white background with sections of rectangular shapes to split key information up, not only for ease of reading but to make it as accessible and straightforward as possible.

Using my list of items on our budget tracker, I gathered Creative Commons licensed images of the King Charles face masks, Union Jack bunting, flags and crowns, coronation-themed biscuit tins and the red, blue, and white coronation seed accompaniments.

King's Coronation 2023 Celebration Packs
What is inside the pack?

King Charles
Face Masks

Union Jack
Bunting

Union Jack
Crowns

Union Jack
Flags

King Charles
Coronation Biscuits

Red, white and blue
cornflower seeds

Red, white and blue
wildflower seeds

I used the background removal tool on Canva to remove backgrounds on the images, placed them in frames, and then used our Effra font underneath to describe each image. The use of colour allowed me to section out the first set of equipment with a white background, and then the non-serious warning underneath was set out with an NWAS green background and NWAS yellow font.

Coronation Celebration Pack Guidance

The purpose of these packs is to enable you to join in the celebrations of this historical event.

The packs should be opened on the weekend of the King's Coronation to ensure fairness to those working on the weekend of 6 May.

We hope you enjoy them and look forward to seeing you all celebrate together.

On the second page, I used a box frame on Canva with the seed packets to provide clear instructions on how to plant them. Utilising animated graphics of a window with the sun shining, a plant pot, and an arrow helped visually describe the instructions and provide a metaphorical structure using a box shape.
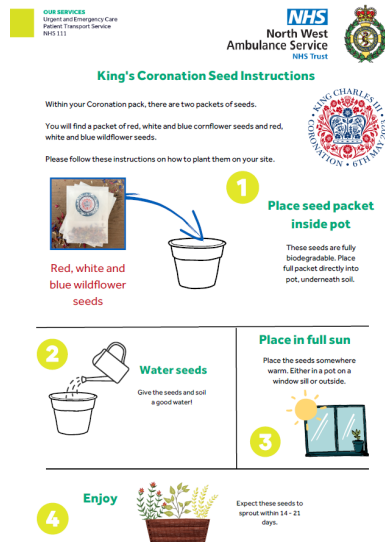
My choice in typography was our brand guidelines, Effra and Effra Heavy. The use of Effra Heavy dotted around the instruction pack highlighted the warnings and what not to do, while Effra passed out more informative guide-type instructions. Using Effra is a large part of our graphic design typography, and we utilise Effra Heavy for headings, warning messages, or when highlighting specific messaging.

King's Coronation Seed Instructions

The packs would all be printed and placed inside each party pack box, so I needed to export them from Canva into a selected PDF print, which will be the best option when designing content for printing. I didn't know at the time that I should have chosen the CMYK colour profile instead of RGB, as RGB is best for digital and CMYK is best for printing.

Beth Bretherton   Junior Content Producer Level 3

My content still printed well, and to save money as well as make sustainable choices, we printed them in-house on recycled paper. I printed all the packs and then held the other designs in a PNG format, which were repurposed for our internal staff Facebook group, staff bulletin, and the news section on our staff intranet.

The King's coronation emblem was also exported as a PNG for use on various internal communications assets.

Despite not having many graphic design related challenges, as a project we did find some challenges elsewhere. Firstly, our King Charles face masks were not purchased because they were not in stock.

On the day of packing, despite the company telling us they were going to get I touch, no one had heard back, so I got in touch with another company through Facebook and then travelled to Stockport to purchase the masks.

This change unfortunately reduced the amount of face masks we gave out but after re-calculating the amount needed, we realised it wouldn't be a massive loss.

Annual General Meeting

Every year, my company organises a vital event known as the Annual General Meeting or AGM. This gathering provides a unique opportunity for our CEO, accompanied by the organization's directors, to connect with members of the public.

NHS
North West
Ambulance Service
NHS Trust

Annual General Meeting.

6 September 2023

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During the AGM, we reflect on the financial activities of the past year, discuss our achievements and successes, evaluate whether we met our goals compared to the previous year, highlight our progress, and unveil exciting new projects. Additionally, we offer a glimpse into the future by sharing our plans and setting targets for the upcoming year.

The AGM is a recurring event on our calendar, but its significance becomes even more apparent during challenging times, such as in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic or other difficult years. It serves as a vital platform for transparency and communication.

Beth Bretherton   Junior Content Producer Level 3

In one of our recent team meetings, we discussed the preparations for the 2023 AGM. Typically, overseeing this event falls on my line manager, Caroline, and the external Communications Manager, Maddy. However, this year posed a challenge as the AGM was scheduled during Caroline's annual leave.

Initially, the organisers of the AGM contemplated recording and filming the event. However, given that this meeting provides a unique opportunity for the public to interact with our CEO and directors and receive real-time feedback, this option was quickly dismissed.

Instead, it was decided that the AGM would be recorded, and the audio would later be synchronised with the presentation slides to create a cohesive and informative AGM video.

I was entrusted with recording the event using an iPad mounted on a tripod and some recently acquired lapel microphones. These microphones would capture the audio, which would then be carefully edited and matched to the corresponding slides of the presentation.

Initially, there were concerns about subpar audio quality, but after review, I was confident it would work. To ensure clarity, each speaker at the AGM was provided with a lapel microphone and instructed to mute it while others were speaking.

Our approach to this project mirrored the collaborative trio practice used in the King's Coronation project mentioned earlier. I was responsible for recording the presentation slides, designing the overall AGM film, and handling the editing process. My colleague, Chris, focused on collecting and capturing the audio while Christina assisted with the presentation.

Our target audience for this AGM project included members of the public and key stakeholders such as our directors, CEO, and staff, who played pivotal roles in the presentation.

The timeline for delivering this project was relatively short, with the CEO's message being a critical component. Consequently, we had to work efficiently and effectively to meet our goals and create a successful AGM presentation.

Once all the audio was gathered, organised, and prepared, my next step was integrating it into Premiere Pro, a video editing software.

Before the Annual General Meeting (AGM) commenced, I collaborated with my colleague Christina to locate the presentation initially created in Microsoft PowerPoint.

I converted it from Microsoft PowerPoint into a video format to make it compatible with the video project. This transformation was accomplished by selecting 'Export' and then choosing 'Create a Video.' After this, I downloaded the video and inserted it into the timeline of our Premiere Pro project.
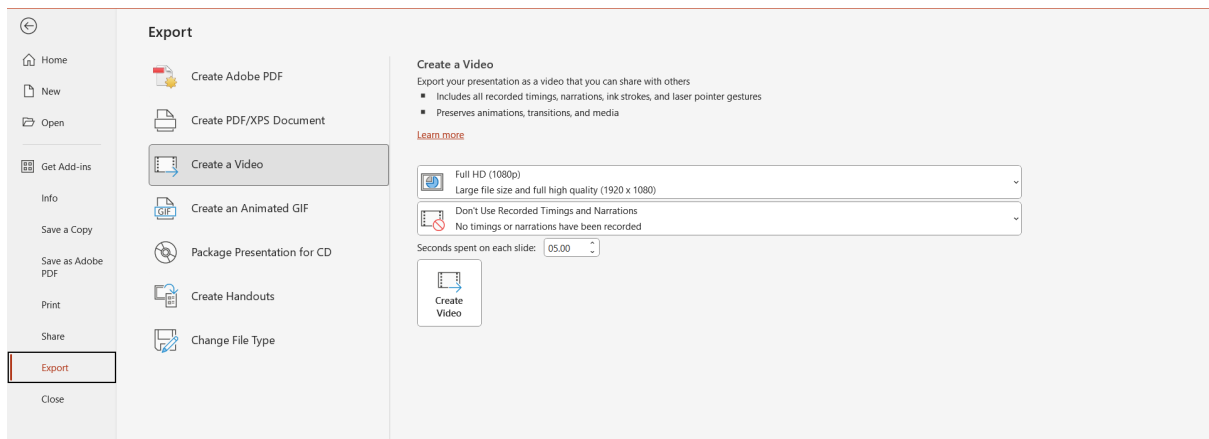
To synchronise the audio with the presentation slides, I used Premiere Pro's snipping tool to divide each segment. I think this process was greatly facilitated by following the guidance from an instructional iPad video I had recorded. I then incorporated the appropriately labelled audio from the lapel microphones used during the AGM.
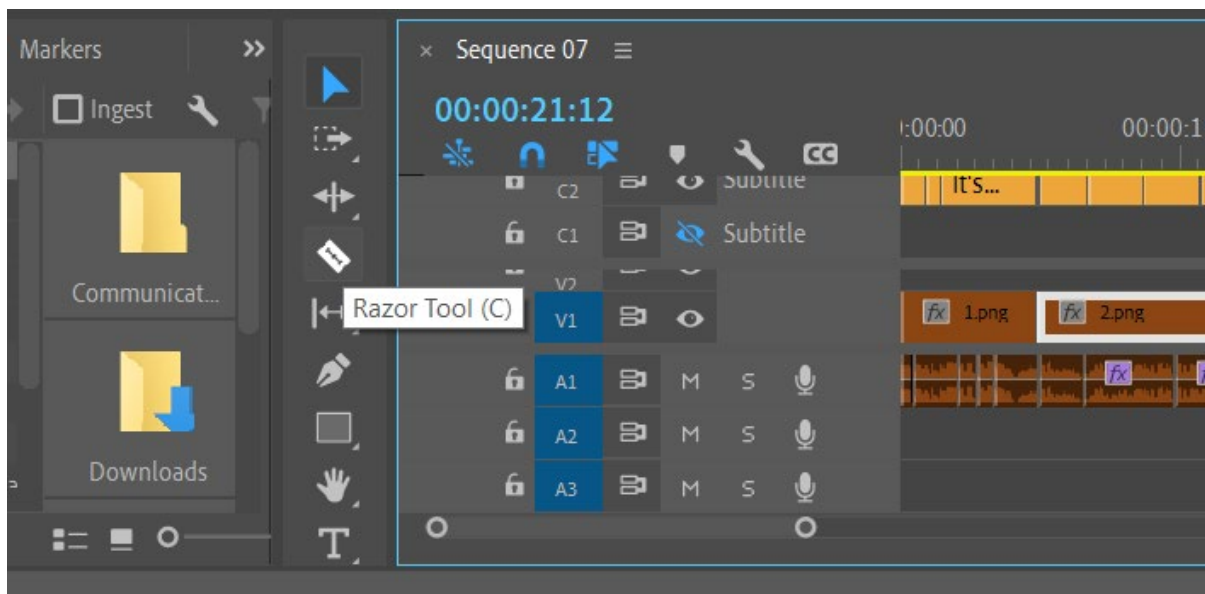
Theoretically, the presentation should have been complete and required no further alterations. However, during the editing process in Premiere Pro, I noticed discrepancies in theme and content alignment with the video. Some slides needed adjustments.

To rectify this, I took screenshots in Premiere Pro using the 'prt sc' function and imported them into Canva, a design tool.

In Canva, I edited the screenshots and created new slides that matched the overall presentation theme. These new slides were then added as extra content to the original presentation.

After saving the changes, I uploaded the updated presentation to the Premiere Pro timeline.

Beth Bretherton   Junior Content Producer Level 3

In designing the additional slides, I maintained a consistent style to ensure uniformity with the existing presentation. On Canva, this involved selecting a background, positioning a speaker's image in the centre, adding a description and welcome text like other slides, and duplicating this slide and changing the images and typography messages for each of the key speakers. These additional slides connected the audience with the speakers, enhancing clarity during the presentation.

In addition to the AGM slides, I was also responsible for incorporating two films: one depicting our organisation's activities over the year and another showcasing our recently completed strategy.

Unfortunately, this addition significantly increased the size of the overall video file. Working from home, my computer struggled to handle the size, repeatedly crashing, and Premiere Pro refused to open. To cope with this, I had to make multiple copies of the file to complete the project. Regrettably, these technical challenges caused a delay, and despite my best efforts, I missed the deadline.
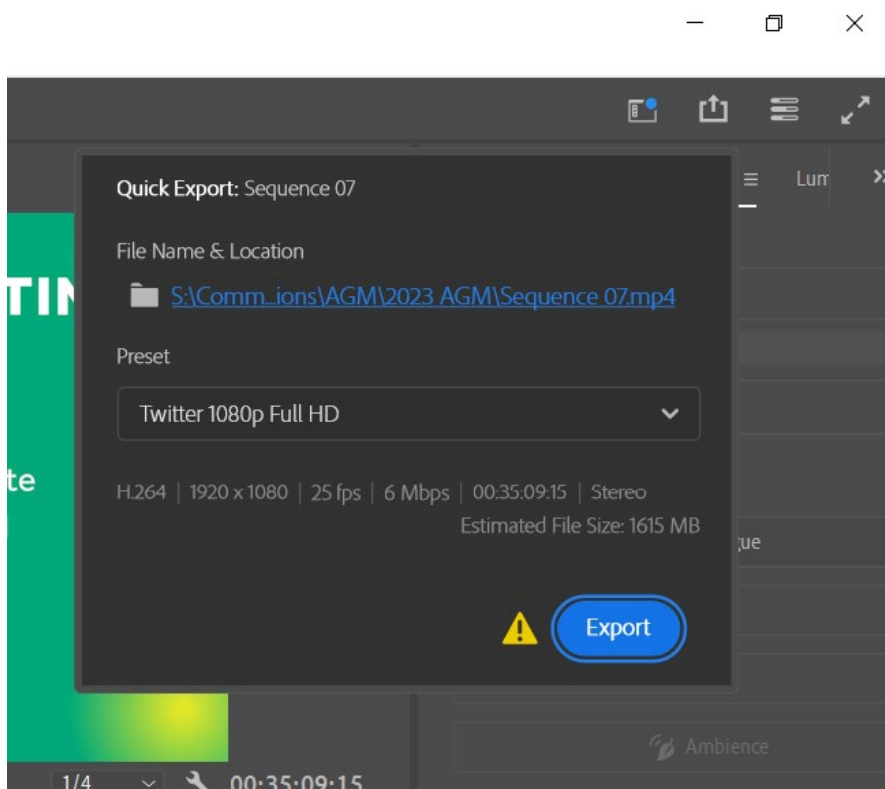
In hindsight, I realise now that when initially exporting the presentation as a video, I should have chosen a smaller file size but prioritised quality for visual appeal.

When encountering these issues, I attempted to resolve them by periodically working from the office and exporting the video using our work desktop computer connected to our shared drive.

During one visit to the office, I panicked when I thought I had lost the exported file. Fortunately, I had saved it but mistakenly placed it in the wrong folder (the new version), and I recovered it from my recent work section in my folders.

When I finally exported the video, it was submitted for management review. Unfortunately, it returned with numerous subtitle errors.

Due to the multiple crashes and the video's length, I overlooked some auto-generated captions that featured American spellings instead of British English. These discrepancies included words like "stabilize" instead of "stabilise."
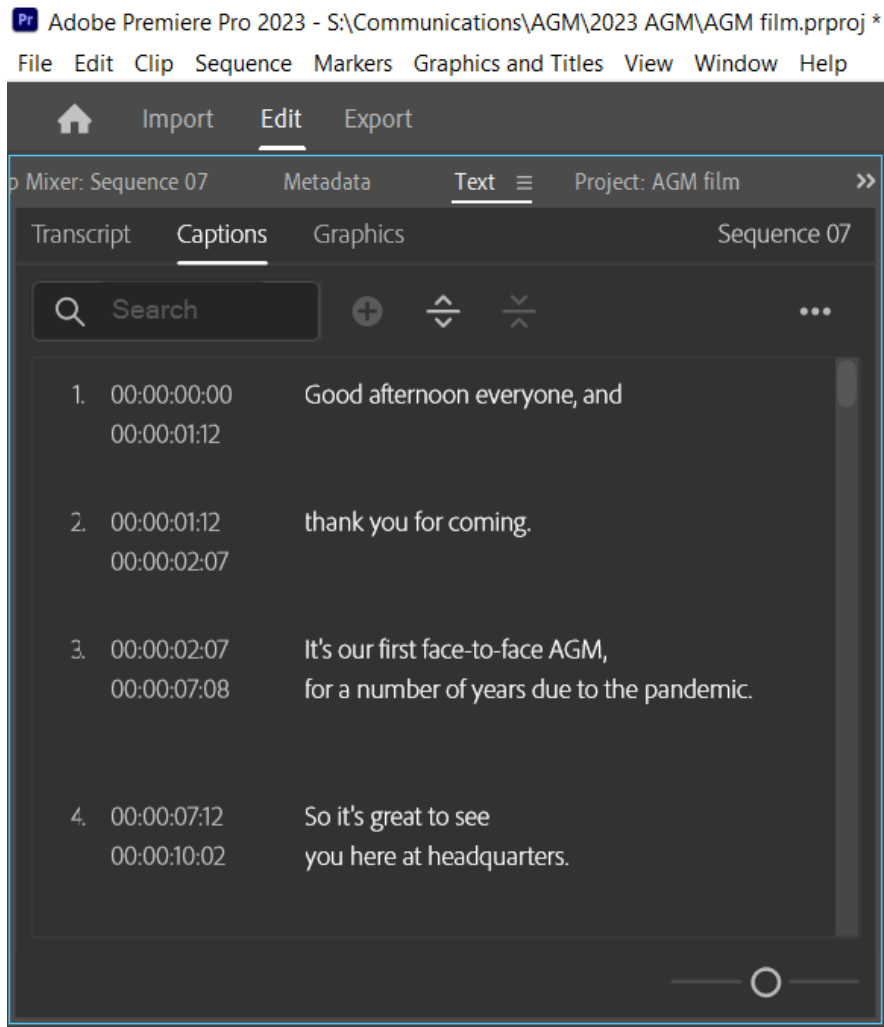
Additionally, some captions failed to match the spoken content. In my haste to meet the deadline, I had overlooked portions of the speech and needed to re-align them correctly.

A significant lesson I've learned from this experience is the importance of pausing, listening carefully, and ensuring that work is of the highest standard before exporting it and seeking feedback.

While crafting this film, I consciously applied the principles of balance, emphasis, and unity to ensure a polished and coherent final product.

Let me elaborate on the thought process behind these decisions:

- Balance: I aimed to strike a balance between different elements within the film. This included ensuring that the information presented was clear and transparent, particularly regarding the identity of the speakers, in alignment with the audio.

- To achieve this, I approached the project as an outsider, unfamiliar with the presentation's key messages. By adopting this perspective, I created slides that complemented the audio and addressed potential viewer questions.
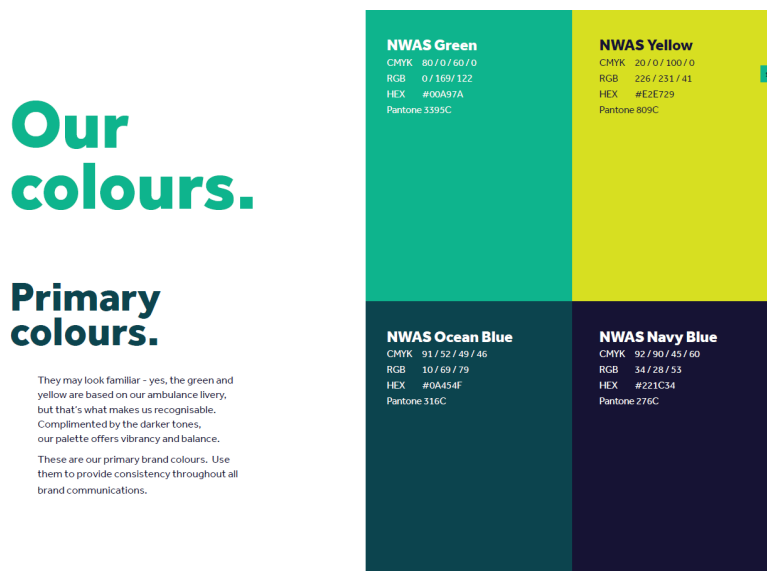- Emphasis: Recognizing the importance of emphasizing key messages, I critically examined the audio content. Upon careful review, some portions of the audio were found to be superfluous and could have contributed more to the overarching narrative or essential points.
- To maintain conciseness and ensure that every statement added value to the overall film, I utilized the cutting tool in Premier Pro to trim these sections, avoiding unnecessary verbosity.
- Unity: To achieve a cohesive and visually appealing film, I implemented the principle of unity. All the slides adhered to a consistent theme and style, which I closely aligned with the tone and content of the audio.
- I also maintained continuity by adopting the previous Annual General Meeting's (AGM) style of displaying the AGM films in full-screen. This choice was deliberate as it aimed to preserve brand uniformity and convey a consistent message to our audience.

My approach to designing this film was guided by a commitment to creating a balanced, impactful, and unified visual experience that aligns seamlessly with our organisation's brand identity and messaging.

In addition to adhering to the principles of graphic design, I also made sure to incorporate and follow the essential elements of design in our project. These elements encompassed colour, typography, and more.

The **colour** palette we employed for this project was meticulously chosen from the officially approved selection outlined in the branding guidelines of our organisation, the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

Our colours.

Primary colours.

They may look familiar - yes, the green and yellow are based on our ambulance livery, but that's what makes us recognisable. Complimented by the darker tones, our palette offers vibrancy and balance.

These are our primary brand colours. Use them to provide consistency throughout all brand communications.

NWAS Green
CMYK 80 / 0 / 60 / 0
RGB 0 / 169 / 122
HEX #00A97A
Pantone 3395C

NWAS Yellow
CMYK 20 / 0 / 100 / 0
RGB 226 / 231 / 41
HEX #E2E729
Pantone 809C

NWAS Ocean Blue
CMYK 91 / 52 / 49 / 46
RGB 10 / 69 / 79
HEX #0A454F
Pantone 316C

NWAS Navy Blue
CMYK 92 / 90 / 45 / 60
RGB 34 / 28 / 53
HEX #221C34
Pantone 276C

These colours are considered our primary hues and hold a pivotal role in defining our brand identity. To infuse variety and enhance the visual appeal of our design, we also integrated a few shades from our secondary colour palette.

Our colours

NHS blues

NHS Dark Blue	NHS Bright Blue	NHS Light Blue	NHS Aqua Blue
CMYK 100 / 75 / 2 / 18	CMYK 90 / 48 / 0 / 0	CMYK 67 / 2 / 0 / 0	CMYK 88 / 0 / 11 / 0
RGB 0 / 48 / 135	RGB 0 / 114 / 206	RGB 65 / 182 / 230	RGB 0 / 169 / 206
HEX #003087	HEX #0072CE	HEX #41B6E6	HEX #00A9CE

NHS neutrals

NHS Black	NHS Dark Grey	NHS Mid Grey	NHS Pale Grey
CMYK 0 / 0 / 0 / 100	CMYK 58 / 32 / 18 / 54	CMYK 35 / 14 / 11 / 34	CMYK 7 / 1 / 3 / 2
RGB 35 / 31 / 32	RGB 66 / 85 / 99	RGB 118 / 134 / 146	RGB 232 / 237 / 238
HEX #231F20	HEX #425563	HEX #768692	HEX #E8EDEE

NHS greens

NHS Dark Green	NHS Green	NHS Light Green	NHS Aqua Green
CMYK 93 / 10 / 75 / 43	CMYK 91 / 0 / 100 / 0	CMYK 65 / 0 / 100 / 0	CMYK 94 / 0 / 48 / 0
RGB 0 / 103 / 71	RGB 0 / 150 / 57	RGB 120 / 190 / 32	RGB 0 / 164 / 153
HEX #006747	HEX #009639	HEX #78BE20	HEX #00A499

NHS highlights

NHS Purple	NHS Dark Pink	NHS Pink	NHS Dark Red
CMYK 90 / 99 / 0 / 8	CMYK 26 / 99 / 12 / 50	CMYK 18 / 100 / 0 / 8	CMYK 9 / 100 / 54 / 43
RGB 51 / 0 / 114	RGB 124 / 40 / 85	RGB 174 / 37 / 115	RGB 138 / 21 / 56
HEX #330072	HEX #7C2855	HEX #AE2573	HEX #8A1538

NHS Red	NHS Orange	NHS Warm Yellow	NHS Yellow
CMYK 0 / 95 / 100 / 0	CMYK 0 / 51 / 100 / 0	CMYK 0 / 33 / 98 / 0	CMYK 0 / 0 / 100 / 0
RGB 218 / 41 / 28	RGB 237 / 139 / 0	RGB 255 / 184 / 28	RGB 250 / 225 / 0
HEX #DA291C	HEX #ED8B00	HEX #FFB81C	HEX #FAE100

Secondary colours.

The extended NHS colour palette offers an extensive range that is perfect as a secondary colour palette to support our primary colours.

Use these colours sparingly to provide flexibility and differentiation between communications. Do not use as dominant colours.

They are good to highlight certain key information or within graphs and infographics.

This deliberate selection process was essential to ensure that our project seamlessly aligned with NWAS's established branding standards, maintaining a unified and consistent appearance throughout.

Regarding typography, we consistently utilised the Effra font family, including Effra and Effra Heavy, across all our project materials. When designing captions for Premiere Pro, a video editing tool, I followed a specific workflow. First, I transcribed the spoken content, and once the captions were generated, I employed the selection tool to choose all of them. Then, I applied the Effra font to ensure uniformity.

While subtitles in most of our videos typically use the Effra font, the formality of this film led me to opt for Effra Heavy for a more fitting appearance.

As the speakers in the room weren't visible, I relied on matching audio with images. Consequently, I designed subtitles with distinct backgrounds and font colours to correspond to each speaker.

For the initial speaker, we used an NWAS yellow background with NWAS teal font for the second speaker, we utilised the NWAS teal background with white font, and finally, for the last speaker, we employed an NHS blue background with white font.
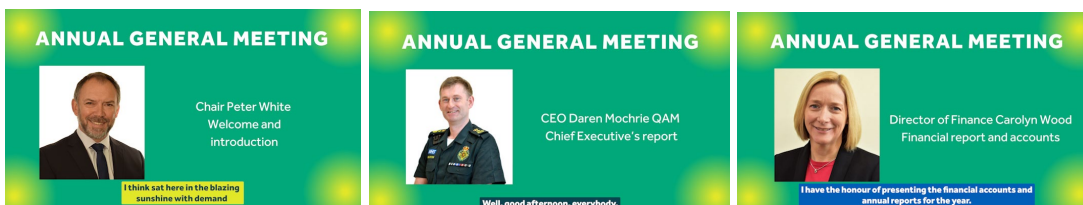
Over time, I have streamlined this process, making it more efficient by using the selection tool to modify multiple subtitles simultaneously. I simply select the relevant ones, adjust the font, colour, and size, and then save the changes.

Following this process, I meticulously review and align the captions with the audio playback to ensure accuracy. I recognise room for improvement, particularly by modifying the auto-generated captions.

For instance, setting them to English instead of European and ensuring they automatically use British spellings instead of Americanised versions. This improves the overall quality of our work and reduces the pressures that can impact meeting project deadlines.

Infection Prevention Control Manual Cover Refresh Task

The Infection, Prevention, and Control (IPC) team at NWAS approached our Communications team requesting to update their IPC manual's cover page.

My colleague, Christina, delegated this task to me, entrusting me with the responsibility of crafting a fresh, improved, double-paged IPC cover.

This handbook is crucial in informing our staff members about how to prevent the spread of bacteria and the necessary steps to ensure the safety of our organisation's staff, volunteers, and patients. However, it became evident that the cover page had remained unchanged since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consequently, whenever any updates related to the manual were shared with our staff, the response was lukewarm at best. Therefore, there was a hope that revamping the cover page would invigorate and engage our audience more effectively.

The brief we received was to design an A4 poster featuring a map of the North West, with refreshed and updated images for each location.

Additionally, the IPC team expressed an interest in incorporating a collage of graphics that would effectively highlight the core themes of the Infection, Prevention, and Control team.

This multifaceted approach aimed to create a visually appealing and informative cover that would not only catch the eye but also communicate the importance of the content within the manual.

To tackle this assignment, I used Canva to design an A4 poster. To get started, I delved into the subjects outlined in the brief and explored whether other IPC teams in various NHS organisations had already developed related designs.

My approach involved creating two distinct versions of the poster. The first version centred around the map, aligning with the initial concept mentioned in the brief.

The second version, on the other hand, featured a collage style, incorporating various graphical elements to convey the key themes related to Infection, Prevention, and Control.

INFECTION, PREVENTION AND CONTROL MANUAL

This dual approach allowed for flexibility in visualising and presenting important information while catering to different preferences and communication styles.

I was inspired by a colleague who used a hexagonal format in a different presentation, and I thought it resonated well with the theme of the IPC team. In my view, hexagons embody a sense of warning while also conveying a formal and sturdy presence.

For the background, I decided to keep it clean and white, utilising white space effectively.

I then integrated our NWAS character graphics and incorporated an ambulance graphic from Canva. Since this poster was intended to accompany the IPC manual, I made sure to include our official NWAS letterhead in the header and footer sections of the Canva poster.

To evoke the sensation of a moving ambulance, I positioned the ambulance graphic at the bottom of the poster, with green trees nearby to symbolize a sense of motion and progress.

My vision for this poster involved a collection of hexagons, each encapsulating IPC-related themes. These hexagons featured graphics like hand-washing, one of our characters donning a high-visibility jacket, a heart with a beeping white line, an apron in our NWAS green colour, an Earth graphic wearing a mask with bacteria nearby, a pair of hands donning

protective gloves, an NWAS character portraying a staff member in a wheelchair, a yellow and black warning triangle, and a bucket with cleaning equipment.

These visuals were chosen to effectively convey the core messages of Infection, Prevention, and Control.

Regarding typography, I selected the Effra Heavy font for the header because its solid and substantial appearance aligned with the IPC team's messaging and overall tone.

INFECTION, PREVENTION AND CONTROL MANUAL

In addition to typography, I recognized the pivotal role of colours in this project. To break up the hexagonal collage, I incorporated a variety of our NWAS colours. Some hexagons remained transparent with a dotted outline, while others featured NHS blue, NWAS dark green, yellow, and a few were rendered in a pale green shade.

This deliberate use of colour not only added visual interest but also contributed to the overall impact of the poster, effectively conveying the diversity of IPC-related topics covered.

While working on the second poster, which featured a map of the North West as per the team's request, I took advantage of a pre-existing map that had already been created and saved in our shared folder. This saved me time and ensured the map was readily accessible for our design project.

After importing this map into Canva, I proceeded to carefully select various images that best represented each service area location, seamlessly integrating them into the map.

To maintain visual consistency, I continued to employ hexagonal shapes and incorporated relevant images into each hexagonal frame, leveraging Canva's resourceful library of visuals.

These hexagons were strategically positioned around the map, with informative subtitles placed below each one to explain their respective locations.

Throughout this design process, I adhered to the principles of graphic design, with a particular emphasis on achieving balance, proportion, and alignment.

In the case of the map cover poster, I aimed for radial balance. This entailed establishing a central element that served as the focal point, around which a group of other elements was arranged.

To create visual balance, I relied on the map to guide the viewer's attention toward the centre.

Additionally, a series of lines were strategically employed to direct the viewer's gaze to each individual location on the map.

To maintain proportionality and ensure a cohesive visual experience, I standardised the size of the hexagonal frames. This step was crucial in preventing distractions or confusion for anyone reading the poster.

Alignment was another key consideration, ensuring that all elements coexisted harmoniously and were correctly positioned around the central map.

In addition to the hexagonal frames and the central map, I incorporated the ambulance graphic and tree visuals from Canva. I believed these elements would not only enhance the overall design aesthetics but also establish an emotional connection with the staff members reading the manual.

This combination of design choices aimed to create a poster that was both visually appealing and effectively conveyed the geographical aspects of the IPC manual.

Once both designs were finished, I transformed them into PDF files suitable for high-quality printing.

Initially, I shared these PDFs with the IPC team, but I also took the extra step of converting them into Word documents using Adobe software. This dual approach made it more convenient to distribute the materials and allowed me to offer two different formats for accessibility.

My next task involved seamlessly integrating the Cover poster into the IPC manual, complete with the incorporation of the new branding elements. The result was a comprehensive and cohesive manual. I promptly forwarded this completed manual to the IPC team for their thorough review and assessment.

Following a productive meeting to discuss the options, the IPC team reached a consensus in favour of my proposed hexagonal collage design.

Consequently, they chose to proceed with this version. I provided them with the finalised copy, and they proceeded to print the poster for distribution across all sites within NWAS (North West Ambulance Service).

Clear instructions were also given to individuals to visit the designated green room to access the full manual. This ensured that everyone had access to the relevant materials in an organised manner.

In my journey as a graphic and digital designer, I have experienced remarkable growth and achievements that have profoundly shaped my creative path. Through relentless dedication and a commitment to learning, I have honed my skills in graphic design, utilizing tools such as Photoshop and Canva to create visually stunning content.

All the projects mentioned previously have not only allowed me to showcase my ability to craft compelling visuals but also challenged me to convey complex information in a visually engaging manner. They have been a testament to my evolution as a content producer, blending aesthetics with functionality seamlessly.

These experiences have taught me the importance of effective collaboration, communication, and meeting strict deadlines. They provided an invaluable lesson in adaptability, ensuring that my designs met the specific needs of each project.

Yet, these achievements have not been without their challenges. I faced moments of self-doubt, design blocks, and the pressure of perfectionism. But each obstacle became an opportunity for growth. I learned the power of resilience and the significance of seeking inspiration from various sources to overcome creative hurdles.

I aspire to continue developing my skills in graphic and digital design. I plan to explore emerging design trends and technology, keeping my work fresh and innovative. I am excited to expand my repertoire by delving into animation and 3D design, allowing me to offer a broader spectrum of creative solutions to my clients.

In conclusion, my journey as a content producer in graphic and digital design has been marked by growth, achievements, and invaluable lessons. The challenges I've faced have only fuelled my determination to excel further. With a passion for continuous improvement and a commitment to pushing the boundaries of my creativity, I am eager to embrace the exciting opportunities that lie ahead in the ever-evolving world of design.

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