Social, Moral and Cultural Design Issues

Social Issues

In Design and Technology, social issues can arise when a new product has an unforeseen side-effect on a group of people. This can be a good or a bad thing.

For example, the rise in use of mobile phones to send text messages has increased the demand for such phones. This:
- provides employment for factory workers.
- enables people to keep in touch more easily.
- means that there is less need for people to meet each other in person.

Cultural Issues

Cultural issues can arise when a new product does not take into account the fact that a particular shape, colour or name can have very different meanings to different groups of people.

Designers need to take care not to offend groups of people with different traditions and beliefs. For example, different cultures celebrate religious festivals in different ways.

However, a careful choice of name, shape and colour can help promote a sense of unity between different global cultures.

Moral Issues

Moral issues occur when a new product could help someone do something that might be considered undesirable or illegal.

For example, children enjoy playing with toy guns, but some people think that this encourages them to be more violent. So, designing a toy gun might raise moral issues.

Another example might be designing a poster that discouraged teenagers from taking dangerous drugs. This would be considered by the majority of people to be morally good.

Written Question

Answer the following question using plain or lined paper.
Do not spend more than 10 minutes completing your answer.

i) Identify an actual graphic product you have in your home (e.g. a brochure, packaging, etc.). Briefly suggest what two of the social, moral or cultural issues might have been for the designer. (5 marks)

ii) Give a specific example of a situation in which a designer needed to consider social, moral and/or cultural issues. Explain how the designer responded. (5 marks)
Here’s what you need to know...

about environmental issues in graphic products.

See Design & Make It! Graphic Products Revised pages 7 and 68 (60 earlier edition).

KEYWORDS
Do you know what the following terms mean?
- Non-renewable energy
- Deforestation
- Biodegradable

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Go to: www.severnprint.com/severnprint.html

Environmental Issues

Environmental issues are concerned with the impact a new product has on nature:
- a product may be made with a high proportion of materials that cannot be replaced, or use chemicals that pollute the atmosphere. This can also be harmful to wildlife and cause changes to weather patterns and the land.
- some production processes use high levels of non-renewable energy.

Paper and Wood

Paper and wood are made from trees. In many parts of the world forests are being destroyed. This is known as deforestation.

A high percentage of paper and wood can be used again if recycled, reducing the number of trees that need to be cut down. It is also important to ensure new trees are grown to replace the ones cut down through the use of sustainable forests.

Plastics and Metals

Plastics are made from oil and metals are mined from the earth. There are only limited supplies of oil and metal.

The amounts of plastic and metal used in a product need to be reduced to the minimum. Some plastics and metals can be recycled.

Decomposition

A product may be difficult to dispose of when it has been finished with. This can cause further environmental problems. An aluminium tin can take up to 100 years to decompose. Some materials, such as untreated paper and natural fabrics, decompose much more quickly. These are known as biodegradable materials.

Written Question

Answer this question using plain paper.
Do not spend more than 10 minutes completing your answer.

Sketch a simple two-colour design for a T-shirt to promote organic food. Your design should contain the words ‘Have You Ever Bean Green?’ and contain a visual image. (10 marks)
Here’s what you need to know...

about the use of the 3 Rs when designing graphic products.


KEYWORDS
Do you know what the following terms mean?
- Reduce
- Recycle
- Reuse
- Components
- Environmentally friendly

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Go to:
www.efx.co.uk
www.freitag.ch
www.glassforever.co.uk
www.britglass.co.uk
www.incpen.co.uk

The 3 Rs

About the 3 Rs

When designing products it’s important to remember the 3 Rs: Reduce, Recycle and Reuse. The 3 Rs provide guidance on how to minimise the damage a product does to the environment.

Reduce

Use the least amount of materials and energy when making a product.

Recycle

Use recycled materials and/or materials that can be recycled after use (e.g. untreated papers, glass).

Recycled materials are those which can be used again in new products. This usually involves separating the materials into different types and then cleaning and re-preparing them.

Reuse

Use products and components (e.g. containers, electronics, fastenings) that have already been used and/or can be used again in different products.

Disadvantages

While these approaches help save the environment, the 3 Rs can bring disadvantages in terms of:
- increased costs of materials.
- manufacturing and recycling processes.
- products that may not perform as well as required.

However, many of the most successful designs manage to combine environmentally friendly issues with low-cost, quality production.

Written Question

Answer the following question on plain or lined paper.
Do not spend more than 5 minutes completing your answer.

Identify a specific graphic product (e.g. packaging or promotional material) in your home. Explain how the designer and manufacturer might have applied the 3 Rs to help make the product more environmentally friendly. (5 marks)
Here’s what you need to know...

about the use of environmentally friendly packaging.


KEYWORDS
Do you know what the following terms mean?

● Recycle
● Reduce
● Reuse
● CFCs

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www.thebodyshop.com
www.incpen.co.uk

Environmentally Friendly Packaging
Packaging and the Environment

The environmental aspects of packaging are of particular concern in the design of graphic products. Here are some of the things packaging designers and manufacturers do:

● use simple materials such as recyclable paper and card instead of plastics.
● minimise the amount of materials used, particularly where the packaging will only be used once and then thrown away.
● reduce the size, shape and weight of the packaging to minimise transport costs.

Packaging designers also:

● provide refillable containers that can be reused.
● avoid packaging materials that have been chemically treated during their production (e.g. using CFC gases), or that will poison the ground when decomposing.
● reduce the number of separate parts to make the package easier to throw away.

Written Question

Answer the following question on plain or lined paper.
Do not spend more than 5 minutes writing your answer.

The photograph on the left shows a household cleaning product. Suggest three ways in which the manufacturer might have taken environmental issues into consideration in the design of the container. (6 marks)
Environmental Graphics

Recycling Symbols

There is a wide range of graphic symbols used to show the environmental make-up of a product and its packaging.

- Some show the amounts of recycled materials used and the treatment processes involved.
- Others help remind users to dispose of the product and its packaging in the most effective way.
- These symbols are often coloured green.

**KEYWORDS**

Do you know what the following terms mean?
- Graphic symbol
- Recycle

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**Written Question**

Answer the following question on plain paper. You will need some colouring pencils and pens. Do not spend more than 10 minutes completing your answer.

The photo on the right shows a plastic waste bin where people can place paper and card for recycling. A local council wants to order 1,000 of these in an appropriate colour and with suitable symbols. Prepare for the question by making a simple outline drawing of the bin on a piece of plain paper.

i) Show the position of an appropriate recycling symbol. (2 marks)

ii) Add an appropriate colour to the bin and a symbol. (3 marks)