AN EXPLORATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL BRAND EXPERIENCE (EBE)

AS APPLIED TO THE DIGITAL PUBLISHING MODEL

THESIS

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Michael J. Bulsiewicz

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Committee Members Approved:

_____

Claudia Roeschmann, Chair

_____

Rose Newton

_____

Christopher Visit

Approved:

_____

J. Michael Willoughby
Dean of the Graduate College

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Carrie, and our daughter, Avery, who motivate and inspire me daily and have been so patient; my parents and family for their support; Bob Clarke and Paul Bowers for a great foundation; Gary LaCourse and Scott Selden as mentors and friends; and the Communication Design MFA program for providing an inspiring sandbox to broaden my horizons.

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Michael J. Bulsiewicz, BFA

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SUPERVISING PROFESSOR: CLAUDIA ROESCHMANN

As companies evolve to offer new media products, they can lean on the communication design discipline to find ways to help inform and acclimate audiences to the user experience.

Using the proven successful approach of an environmental brand experience (EBE), the Communication Designer (CD) can create controlled environments that communicate product functionality and reduce user apprehension.

The focus of this thesis is a case study exploration of how an EBE can be used to promote digital publishing content. This investigation will demonstrate how American publishers can embrace an EBE approach to educate and inform their audiences using DC Entertainment as an example.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the advent of the internet age came a paradigm shift in how audiences experience the written word. Internet media offered a compelling interactive alternative to print media and slowly proceeded to consume its market share. Traditional publishers of newspapers and periodicals experienced a steady decline in demand and revenues that continues today.

In 2007, mobile electronic reading devices, known as e-readers, gained traction as a new media and once again changed the landscape as print publishers could now offer audiences convenient access to electronic content in the form of e-books, regardless of their location. Three years later, Apple Computer introduced a tablet device called the iPad that created a *tipping point* for publishers of all media. As social science journalist and author Malcolm Gladwell explains, the tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips and spreads like wildfire (Gladwell, 2000). The success of digital publications for the iPad stem from combining the tactile experience of page-turn finger swipe gestures and stunning color reproduction found in print magazines with the interactive experiences of video and motion found on the web.

Condé Nast, one of the first magazine conglomerates to offer content for iPads, quickly discovered their tablet audience would spend upwards of 60 minutes reading digital versions of their print magazines. This attention span behavior was more akin to traditional magazine readers than those that read online content, and was early evidence of an emerging media (Moses, 2010).

Current market research indicates that one-fifth of the largest American publishers' sales are e-books, and while many are still drawn to print publications, e-books have shown

steady growth since 2008 (Simba Information, 2013). E-content is typically less than or equal to the cost of its print counterpart, and can be archived once it has been read by the user. E-book users can browse and purchase e-content directly through their e-reader device, such as a Kindle, Nook, iPad or other tablet, with a wi-fi connection to the internet. The key advantage with electronic content, or *e-content,* is the instant accessibility and availability of published materials, regardless of location or geography. Other advantages of e-content include the ability for users to enlarge size of content for easier viewing as well as audible content features for the hearing impaired.

As demand in the e-content marketplace fostered a competitive holiday season in 2009, the sales numbers painted a clear picture of the impact of e-reader technology. Bowker's Pub Track Consumer Survey stated that 34% of consumers reported reducing print book purchases during the 2009 holiday season when e-readers debuted. Conversely, Forrester Research projected the sale of 3-million e-readers in the American market (Kho, 2010). Just one year later, Apple's iPad was introduced and sold nearly 18 million units, while traditional e-reader shipments quadrupled to more than 12 Million (IDC, 2011).

In the midst of the publishing industry's transformation to digital, the $715 million cottage industry of comic books braced for impact as the waves of innovation hit shore. Like many of its magazine and newspaper contemporaries, comic publishers were hesitant to adapt to this new media that could forever change the landscape of their industry. The brick and mortar comic retailer stores that had previously numbered 10,000 in the nineties were now only 3,000 (Heer and Worcester, 2008). The drop in the comic fan-base was the product of multiple factors including competitive media, the internet and an aging demographic; but the advent of e-content brought the industry to a crossroad. Retailers, distributors and printers made the point at the 'Print Vs. Digital' panel of the 2010 New York Comicon that converting printed content to digital was necessary for the industry's survival (Cha, 2010).

As industry insiders discussed strategies for expanding revenues, publishers saw hope in the burgeoning comic e-readers becoming available for smart phones (phones built on a mobile operating system with internet access). One company on the forefront of converting printed comic book content to digital format is Comixology, a digital comics distribution platform that offers thousands of comic books across multiple mobile platforms. Their *Guided View* technology allows users to swipe, enlarge and tap their way through their favorite comics (Sintumuang, 2012).

The comic book industry saw this new cinematic presentation of comics for tablets as an opportunity grow their value beyond the collector market into a new form of mass-media entertainment (Heer and Worchester, 2008). From 2009–2010, the digital comics market grew from $1 million to $6-8 million, making it the fastest growing segment in the comics industry (Cha, 2010).

In the wake of these industry transformations, DC Entertainment conducted a transformation of its own, with an extensive brand overhaul in the fall of 2011 to better compete in the marketplace and transition from print to digital. These changes included the development of a new brand identity crafted by one of the world's leading strategic branding and design firms, Landor Associates, the appointment of a new leadership team, extensive updates to many of its intellectual properties and a rollout of same-day digital distribution. These transitions for the publisher come at a time when the most significant new profit center for DC lies within digital comics, yet the publisher has not addressed a physical environment to market these products.

With the speed of growth in the tablet market, many publishers are still exploring ways to market content to users. Innovative retailing giants have discovered ways to encourage exploration of e-content and profit as the audience adapts to this emerging media. Bookseller Barnes & Noble invested in their future when it created 784 *Nook* boutiques (*figure 1.1*) within their stores to allow users to explore e-content on provided *Nook* e-readers. This strategy of enabling their existing customer base to experience e-content

for themselves helped the bookseller gain twenty-seven percent of the e-reader market (Trachtenberg, 2011).

Apple Computer has leveraged the retail experience to help build their brand and gain market share. Since the early 2000s, they have changed the way technology is sold by emphasizing the experience rather than the product in its 407 Apple Computer retail stores (*figure 1.2*) in 14 countries. The stores encourage creativity and playfulness by using large open table displays devoid of clutter to allow its audience to sample software, send an email or just browse the internet.
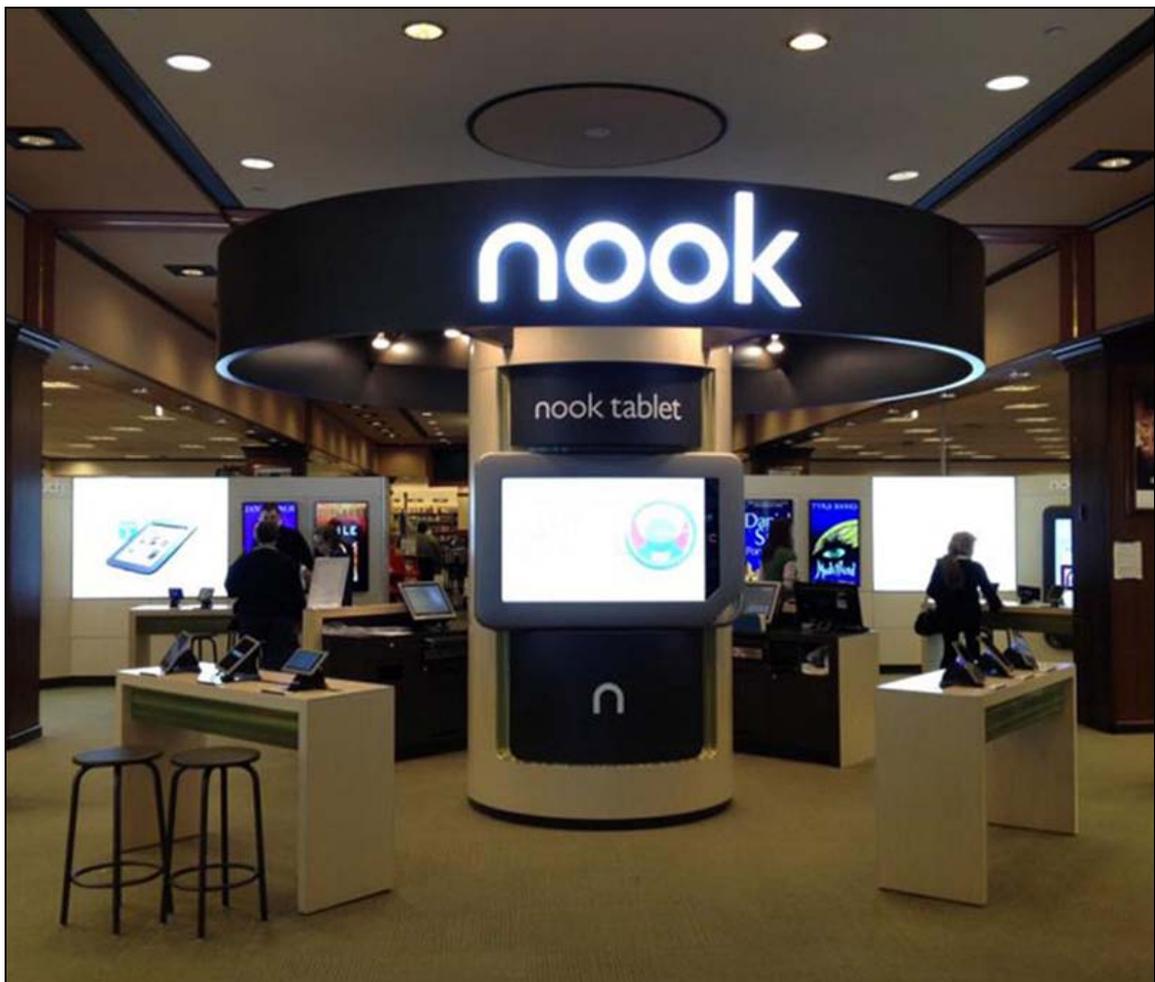
Figure 1.1 Barnes & Noble Nook Boutique

The open environment uses a neutral palette of organic materials with elegantly simple messaging to present an inviting, warm and smart atmosphere (Allen, 2011).

The comic book industry can follow the brand experience models applied by Barnes & Noble and Apple Computer to market their digital offerings in an environment that informs and encourages exploration. This approach would allow comic book publishers like DC Entertainment to educate and inform audiences on the user experience of its digital comic book product and provide an opportunity to expand their digital comic book audience.

Figure 1.2 Apple Computer Retail Store

This thesis will explore the development of an Environmental Brand Experience (EBE) for DC Entertainment to communicate to their audience about digital offerings and the user experience available on new media devices. This thesis is organized into multiple sections that document the case study exploration process with preliminary research, which

involves a five-stage development process consisting of understanding DC Entertainment's company background: analysis of their marketing initiatives, creation of a design brief, and analysis of visitor and site profiles for an industry EBE application. Next, the EBE solution is presented by means of strategic messaging, materials, type and color palettes, floorplan, renderings and support materials. The final section will summarize the findings and lessons of the EBE exploration along with areas to consider for further research.

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

As communication designers (CD) develop content for environmental brand experiences (EBE), they must not only consider marketing strategies that send powerful messages to their audience, but also environmental engagement strategies that capture their imagination. The research methods necessary for developing these marketing and engagement strategies are described in this section and consist of company background, marketing analysis, design brief, visitor and site profiles.

Company Background

Any project of the CD should begin with client research (Millman, 2008). Research provides valuable assets such as information, data and anecdotes about an organization that enable the CD to create relevant, powerful messaging solutions for a specific audience (Heller, 2012).

As the CD begins their research for developing EBEs, it is critical to learn as much as possible about the client and their competitive landscape. The brand audit is a common strategic tool employed by the CD to research consumer-facing companies. Marty Neumeier, critically acclaimed author of *The Brand Gap: How to Bridge the Distance Between Business Strategy and Design*, describes the brand audit as a formal assessment of a brand's strengths and weaknesses across all of its touch-points (Neumeier, 2006). In addition to a brand audit, the competitive brand audit offers a necessary view of the competitive landscape and can be very helpful in creating a strategy.

DC Entertainment is a house of brands owned by Time Warner consisting of DC Comics, Vertigo Comics and *Mad Magazine*. Since Time Warner acquired *Mad Magazine*

in the 1990s and later DC Comics and Vertigo, the company offers a strategic alliance with Warner Brothers Entertainment to distribute DC Entertainment characters and stories across multiple media platforms. These platforms include film, television, consumer products, home entertainment and interactive games. DC Entertainment is headquartered in New York, and is currently the largest English language publisher of comic books in the world.

DC Comics was founded as National Allied publications in 1934, and is credited with publishing the first comic book of all-original material. They are also responsible for launching the superhero genre with the introduction of Superman in the pages of Action Comics in 1938. Following the success of Superman, DC Comics went on to create such iconic superheroes as Batman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, the Flash, Aquaman and the Justice League of America.

Mad Magazine began as a comic book in 1952, and later evolved into the comic magazine satire format that continues today. Over the years, *Mad Magazine* has branched off into Broadway, television and various merchandising enterprises. The magazine is known for its irreverent and ruthless brand of pop-culture parody, and has generations of faithful fans.

Vertigo Comics is a brand extension of DC Comics that was created as the publisher found success with a comic book format featuring more adult-oriented themes. In an effort to maintain a clear brand focus, DC Comics launched Vertigo Comics in 1993 to feature material of an edgier, more sophisticated variety. In an effort to keep the brand extension more competitive, DC Entertainment has recently changed the Vertigo Comics business model to focus strictly on marketing *creator-owned properties*. Creator-owned properties protect the interest of publishers and creators by removing upfront creation fees, and offering profits and ownership rights to creators on the back-end based on the success of the endeavor. In the meantime, DC Entertainment has shifted some of the core Vertigo properties over to the DC Comics line after conducting some overhaul to its characters.

The Vertigo Comics realignment followed the DC Entertainment announcement in 2011 that their entire line of DC Comics would be re-launched in September of that year. Under new management and creative leadership, 'The New 52' would feature all-new continuities and character designs for the former DC and Vertigo Comics' library of characters. In addition to this notable overhaul, every comic book published henceforth would be available in digital format the same day as its print counterpart. This re-launch was met with huge success, as evidenced by quadrupling sales on Justice League, and doubling sales on nine other titles (Gustines, et al., 2011).

Competitive Landscape

DC Entertainment is currently the second largest American comic book publisher behind Marvel Comics, with Image Comics ranking in third position based on market share (Diamond, 2012). Marvel Entertainment is a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Corporation. Over its 70 year history, Marvel Comics has created some of the most successful comic book superhero characters of all time including Spiderman, Iron Man, the Hulk, Thor, and Captain America. Like DC Entertainment, Marvel utilizes its characters in entertainment, licensing and publishing.

Image Comics was formed during the comic boom of the 1990s by seven of Marvel Comics' best-selling creators. Their creator-owned business model influenced Vertigo's current model, and today publishes many successful titles such as *The Walking Dead*, *Invincible*, *Spawn*, *Savage Dragon* and *Chew*.

While Marvel Comics is the leading publisher in retail and unit market share, DC Entertainment closely follows in numbers. Despite its rank in third position, Image Comics trails far behind with only one-fifth of the market share of DC Entertainment, and one-sixth the market share of Marvel.

Industry Distribution

In today's market, print comic books are primarily distributed by Diamond Publications through comic specialty retail stores. Diamond pre-solicits comic books and related merchandise in a magazine called 'Previews.' While DC Entertainment and Image Comics market their products and merchandise through Previews, Diamond publishes a separate Previews publication exclusively for Marvel products. While this separate platform exclusive to Marvel provide a slight competitive advantage with print, it has no bearing on sales of digital comics for the tablet market.

With the increase in e-reader and tablet content users, many comic publishers offer their books in digital format in addition to traditional print comic books. However, Marvel and DC Entertainment are the only comic publishers to offer their digital comics the same day as their print counterparts across their line. With the popularity of the iPad, digital comic sales have skyrocketed (Cha, 2010). DC Entertainment stands to gain a competitive advantage and increase their market share by marketing digital offerings outside of their core demographic of comic specialty retail stores.

Marketing Analysis

Much of the information collected for the brand audit can be captured using analytical marketing tools such as the SWOT analysis and the ZAG assessment. The task of the CD in developing an EBE is to help companies achieve marketing objectives by implementing a marketing strategy. The SWOT analysis and the ZAG assessment help the CD examine consumer corporations from every angle in order to devise a strategy to achieve a marketing objective.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis (*figure 2.1*) is a marketing tool used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of a company or product. This technique was

developed by Albert Humphrey at Stanford University in the 1960s and 1970s based

on data collected from Fortune 500 companies (Helms, 2010). The SWOT analysis

prompts users to ask and answer questions that generate meaningful information about

a company, product or organization. This information can assist the CD in identifying

competitive advantages of a company or product. The SWOT methodology has found

success based on it simplicity and proven track record as a results-oriented strategic

planning tool (Helms, 2010).

Section Summary:

1) *The Strengths* portion helps users identify the strengths of a company.

2) *The Weaknesses* portion helps users identify the weaknesses of a company.

3) *The Opportunities* portion helps users identify the opportunities of a company.

4) *The Threats* portion helps users identify the pitfalls for a company.

Strengths

The Strengths of DC Entertainment lie within their classic and recognizable

costumed superheroes with long-standing histories of up to 75 years. They have amassed

fans over many generations, and have reworked nearly every character in its massive

re-launch of 52 titles in 2011 in an effort to appeal to a broader audience (Steinberg, 2011).

DC Entertainment draws from the unique resources of its parent company, Time

Warner, to help market their characters and properties across multiple media outlets. Just

as competitor Marvel Comics leverages parent company Disney to generate millions of

dollars in developing its characters for film, DC Entertainment must also leverage its

Warner Brothers relationship to remain competitive (Steinberg, 2011).

Many perceive the strengths of DC Entertainment to be their vast collection of iconic

characters, great storytelling and willingness to reinvent themselves. The recent appointment

of a new management team culled from the ranks of the DC creative department

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
What do you do well?	What opportunities are open to you?
What unique resources can you draw on?	What opportunities can you take advantage of?
What do others see as your strengths?	How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?
WEAKNESSES	
What could you improve?	**THREATS**
Where do you have fewer resources than others?	What threats can harm you?
What are others likely to see as weaknesses?	What is your competition doing?
	What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?

Figure 2.1 SWOT Analysis

demonstrates their commitment to being a creatively-driven company (Schuker, 2010).

Weaknesses

In evaluating the weaknesses of DC Entertainment, critics complained prior to the re-launch that the "DC Universe" had become overly complex, with new stories not following previous established continuity (Hahn, 1998). Although most of the continuity issues were addressed with the reboot, it was never marketed to its audience in a compelling manner. This is an example of how DC Entertainment can do a better job at generating more buzz on its core titles and characters.

Opportunities

The opportunities available to DC Entertainment include capitalizing on its strengths by emphasizing how the new company leadership is shaking up the status quo and providing relevant and exciting stories. DC Entertainment has many opportunities in its arsenal to capitalize on and use to its advantage.

DC Entertainment can highlight the updated continuities of their key characters with increased point-of-purchase efforts at the retail comic store level with freebies such as bookmarks, mini-posters and postcards. The standard price point on many of its titles are twenty-five percent less than other publishers, and they stand to gain market share by publicizing this fact more effectively. Providing cost incentives on first issues and new titles is a sales tactic employed by competitor Image Comics, and could be an effective means for DC Entertainment to drive readership and extend their success.

DC Entertainment has the potential to turn its strengths into opportunities by promoting its classic heritage characters. They need to raise awareness of the new creator-owned focus for Vertigo Comics through stronger marketing promotion. DC Entertainment can spread the word about the exciting efforts of the New 52 through multiple media outlets with its Warner Brothers connection, while continuing to grow its partnerships with Cartoon Network to create programs like the successful MAD animated television program.

Threats

The threats to DC Entertainment are symptomatic of the industry as a whole. With the endless supply of entertainment media options available to consumers, the comic industry has a shrinking audience with an aging demographic. The most apparent solution to this dilemma is to embrace new media and to strengthen marketing efforts for digital comics on tablet devices in order to grow a younger, broader audience and avoid alienation of their core demographic.

SWOT Summary

In conclusion, the SWOT analysis reveals that the strengths of DC Entertainment rest within its iconic characters and rich heritage reinforced by the character updates of the DC and Vertigo Comics overhaul. The weaknesses revealed by SWOT include the lack of promotion for simplified story continuities. The opportunities for DC Entertainment

include promoting their classic heritage and growing their audience through digital comics. The threats they face include a shrinking audience of print readers based on an aging and alienated core demographic.

ZAG Assessment

The ZAG assessment (*figure 2.2*) is a marketing tool used to evaluate the Focus, Trend, Differentiation and Communications of a corporate brand. Author and brand strategist Marty Neumeier introduced this marketing tool in 2006 when he published *Zag: the #1 strategy of high-performance brands*. The ZAG assessment prompts users to ask and answer questions that help the CD identify how a company differentiates itself from the competition. In order to compete in a fast market, inventive solutions that underscore your differentiation can move your company forward with a competitive advantage (Scanlon, 2006).

Section Summary:

1) *The Focus* portion helps users identify the unique offerings of a company.
2) *The Trend* portion helps users identify where the company is currently prospering.
3) *The Differentiation* portion helps users identify the unique aspects of a company.
4) *The Communications* portion helps users and competitors identify with a company.

Focus

DC Entertainment can be defined as storytellers and mythmakers who have influenced generations of fans with sequential art stories that convince readers a man can fly. Their vision is to lead the comic book market in retail and unit market share. They can extend their success through growth to new readership in the digital market while sustaining their core demographic.

Trend

DC Entertainment is riding the trend of the 'New 52' character and continuity overhaul. They are also capitalizing on the successful policy of offering digital comics the same day as their print counterparts.

Differentiation

DC Entertainment shares the brandscape with Marvel and Image Comics, its two largest competitors. A brand aspect that makes them unique is their introduction of costumed heroes to the world by publishing the first costumed superhero comic book, Action Comics. If there's one aspect they can add to their brand to make it more successful, it would be growth in new markets outside of their core demographic of comic retail specialty shops and booksellers. If there were one element they could subtract from their brand, it would be the perception of complicated story continuities. The audiences that embrace DC Entertainment are comic distributors, retailers and consumers, in addition to those who experience DC Entertainment properties through other media.

Communications

If DC Entertainment identified the enemy it would be Marvel Comics, as they currently outperform DC Entertainment in retail and unit market share. DC Entertainment is referred to as the home of Superman and Batman. If they had to explain their company, they might defer to a tagline they have used in marketing campaigns and describe themselves as the 'World's Greatest Superheroes.' DC Entertainment can spread the word by talking about how they invented the superhero genre and the legions of fans that embrace them. The audience engages with DC Entertainment products online, using tablet and mobile devices, and within the printed pages of comic books and graphic novels.

When consumers engage with DC Entertainment products, they see revitalized

FOCUS

Who are you?
What do you do?
What's your vision?
How do you extend your success?
How do you protect your portfolio?

TREND

What wave are you riding?

DIFFERENTIATION

Who shares the brandscape?
What makes you the only?
What should you add or subtract?
Who loves you?

COMMUNICATIONS

Who is the enemy?
What do they call you?
How do you explain yourself?
How do you spread the word?
How do people engage with you?
What do they experience?
How do you earn their loyalty?

Figure 2.2 ZAG Assessment

characters, story continuities, branding identity and superheroes with godlike powers. They can reinforce the loyalty of fans by reinforcing the pride their audience feels in following their characters and stories.

ZAG Summary

In conclusion, the ZAG assessment reveals the focus for DC Entertainment is leading the comic book industry in retail and unit market share. DC Entertainment can capitalize on the trend of rebooting its entire line and its new policy of offering digital comics the same day as their print counterpart. The differentiating aspect of DC Entertainment is the heritage and legacy they've established with the invention of the superhero comic book genre. The communication they need to embrace is spreading the word about the excitement and availability of DC Entertainment digital comics.

Environmental Design Brief

The design brief is a tool used by the CD to clarify and focus the objectives of a design project, and is the essential foundation for every design project (Sherwin, 2012). The design brief is developed by the CD after preliminary client research and analysis, face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and e-mails with the client (Hughes, 2010). The brief should be sent to the client for review and approval prior to beginning design development. The goal of the design brief is to align the focus of the CD and client towards finding an equitable design solution that satisfies a marketing objective.

As traditional CD firms expand their service offerings, it is important to recognize that the design brief utilized to develop an EBE is slightly different than a traditional design brief. While the environmental design brief will incorporate many of the same brand and marketing considerations, it will also include many additional multidisciplinary considerations related to the project. For the purpose of the case study exploration discussed in this thesis, the environmental design brief (*figure 2.3*) used by the CD to develop an environmental design solution will be examined.

Section Summary:

1) *The Exhibit Premise/Rationale* describes the marketing objective behind the display.

2) *The Storyline/Narrative* describes the delivery campaign of the marketing objective.

3) *The Target Audience* describes the audience the marketing objective is tailored towards.

4) *The Activities* describes the method in which the marketing message is delivered.

5) *The Content* describes the vehicle that delivers the marketing message.

6) *The Visitor Outcomes/Messages* describes the take away message of the campaign.

7) *The Exhibition Approach* describes how the audience receives the campaign.

8) *The Visual Identity/Brand* describes how the campaign delivers a brand message.

Exhibit Premise/Rationale

Book Expo America (BEA) is the highest profile event in the North American publishing industry. The BEA exhibit is targeted at publishers, booksellers, agents, librarians and authors. BEA caters primarily to a Business-to-Business market, but as DC Entertainment markets to stakeholders involved in consumer business, they are ultimately marketing to a consumer audience. The event has a specialized area called the Digital Discovery Zone (D2Z), which showcases the leading providers of digital publishing content. As DC Entertainment seeks to expand outside of its core market of comic book specialty retailers and booksellers, BEA provides the ideal stage to target the mainstream e-content bookseller audience.

While rival competitors Image Comics began exhibiting at this show in 2012, DC Entertainment continues to miss an opportunity to exhibit in this growing market (Eaton, 2012). While DC Entertainment and Marvel have print representation in the Warner and Disney booths respectively, DC Entertainment is losing the chance to gain market share with a targeted display in the Digital Discovery Zone to market their digital offerings.

Overarching Theme/Narrative

BEA attendees will experience the excitement of DC Entertainment through the eyes of familiar pop-culture icons. 'My Heroes' will feature well-known media personalities expressing their true passion for DC Comics, *Mad Magazine* and Vertigo Comics.

The chapters of the story will include two vignettes featuring DC Comics characters and titles. Jerry Seinfeld will wax nostalgic about his lifelong obsession with the Superman mythos, while Director Kevin Smith will discuss his forthcoming Batman series, *Bellicosity*. Steven Spielberg will discuss how *Mad Magazine* inspired him, while celebrity-chef Anthony Bourdain will discuss his original graphic novel *Get Jiro* for Vertigo Comics. The interactive celebrity video message will provide a framework from which to navigate show attendees through the highlights of DC Entertainment's digital product offerings.

The 'My Heroes' premise is non-linear, as it primarily serves as a vehicle to explain the rich heritage and classic characters and properties offered by the company in an engaging new way.

DC Comics will feature two presentations about its marquee characters, Vertigo comics will highlight a new creator-owned graphic novel, while *MAD Magazine* will highlight the continuing heritage of its pop culture parodies.

Target Audience

Over the weeklong event, DC Entertainment can present their digital publishing programs to a series of booksellers and distributors in an effort to gain traction in new markets. For BEA, the primary audience is publishing professionals, booksellers, librarians, e-reader and tablet content developers. The BEA audience looks for impressive content and property franchises that could be highly profitable and marketable to their end-users. They are enamored with content and its potential for success within their market. The natural way to connect with this audience is through clever storytelling. A compelling narrative will draw an audience, while a cast of interesting and recognizable characters will sell them. With this brand experience approach, the aim is to appeal to the audience on an emotional level using audiovisual elements to amplify and reflect the brand message (Hughes, 2010).

Activities

Since DC Entertainment is harnessing the tablet market for its digital publishing push, each product station will feature product demonstrations as part of a video loop. Recognizable celebrities will each narrate their DC Entertainment connection while demonstrating how they currently consume this content on their tablet devices. They will explain why the DC Entertainment digital content is so exciting to them and how the technology is a game changer.

Each presentation area will be equipped with an array of digital tablets on yolks

EXHIBIT PREMISE/RATIONALE

Why exhibit at this show/location?
What do they hope to achieve?

STORYLINE/NARRATIVE

What is overaching theme/narrative?
What are the chapters of the story?
Is it linear/non-linear?

TARGET AUDIENCE

Who is exhibited targeted at?
      Is this a B to B or B to C market?
Who is primary audience
(income, gender, age)?
      What appeals to them?
      How do they learn?
      How do they comprehend?
Who is secondary audience
(income, gender, age)?
      What appeals to them?
      How do they learn?
      How do they comprehend?

ACTIVITIES

Are there demonstrations?
Are there presentations?
Is there computer interaction?
Is there live interaction?

CONTENT

What object(s) will be shown?
What is their purpose?
Should people interact with them?
What is their physical size?
Will these objects affect other booths?

VISITOR OUTCOMES/MESSAGES

What do visitors need to understand?
What is primary takeaway message?
What is secondary takeaway message?

EXHIBITION APPROACH

Is exhibit object or experience based?
What is tone/phrasing?
How is booth staff involved?

VISUAL IDENTITY/BRAND

What is umbrella identity?
Are there sectors?
Are there sub-brands?
Are there corporate fonts established?
Are there examples of branding materials?
Are there key branding messages?
Are there recent branding documents?
Are there recent ad campaigns to tie into?

Figure 2.3 Environmental Design Brief

cascading around each video display. The video presentations for each area will run back-to-back on a loop and push duplicate content to the iPad tablets during the presentation as sleep mode content. When a tablet is activated by touch, the user will supercede the sleep mode content and be able to explore DC Entertainment brand segment digital content.

The sleep mode content will allow the audience to view what the celebrities are seeing on their tablets within a proper context, with the idea that once a user watches the demo they will want to explore the content for themselves. This allows the videos

to introduce the basics of page navigation in a non-intimidating manner, and encourages further exploration from the audience.

Content

DC Entertainment will feature digital comic book content on tablet workstations representing all 3 brand segments at BEA. The purpose is to familiarize and promote DC Entertainment digital comic books to a bookselling and e-reader audience. By educating the audience to the content and interface and allowing them to interact with it, they are working towards meeting their marketing objective. The physical size of the content is determined by the size of the tablet device, but users will discover the multiple viewing options for content. Video demonstrations will inform the audience of the various ways they can navigate DC Entertainment content. The videos will feature audio within each of the tablet display areas; in addition, attendees will be provided with complimentary headphones to plug into jacks located in the counter surfaces to help avoid the distraction of ambient noise within the hall.

Visitor Outcomes/Messages

The audience need to understand the relevance of DC Entertainment in the digital world, and how their business model is evolving to cater to a broader pop culture entertainment audience. The primary takeaway message is that DC Entertainment has longstanding characters and titles that can now be enjoyed within the new media arena. The secondary message is how these properties and assets can become large profit centers for e-reader publishers, content developers and technology brokers through a profit-sharing business model with DC Entertainment.

Environmental Approach

The EBE developed for DC Entertainment will be both object and experience based.

Attendees will experience DC Entertainment and its digital publishing offerings using touch- screen tablets in unique video-driven interactive environments.

The tone of the messaging will be exciting and informative, with celebrity endorsements to entice new audiences with stellar content and interface experience. Booth staff will be present to assist and guide attendees, but not interfere with the experience of each presentation area. Once users leave the presentation areas, staff will be available for consultation and advisement.

Visual Identity/Brand

The umbrella identity for this case study example is DC Entertainment, which serves as a house of brands owned by Time-Warner. The sectors of this brand include DC Comics, Vertigo Comics and *Mad Magazine*. There are no additional imprints since the consolidation of the Fall 2011 brand overhaul.

The corporate fonts established as part of the updated brand identity in early 2012 include the typeface *Gotham* from the type foundry Hoefler & Frere-Jones. For the case study exploration, the Hoefler & Frere-Jones typeface *Tungsten* will also be utilized for the graphic messaging treatment. Examples of previous DC Entertainment print and point-of-purchase marketing materials informed the development of graphic messaging for BEA.

Design Brief Summary

The environmental design brief is used to clarify and focus the objective of the BEA space. The brief compiles information regarding the exhibit rationale, storyline/narrative of the space, target audience, activities, content, visitor outcomes, environmental approach, and the visual identity and branding of DC Entertainment at BEA.

Visitor Profile

The visitor profile (*figure 2.4*) is a tool used by the CD to achieve a high level of engagement with the EBE audience. Engagement is the process of connecting with an audience by attracting their attention to something compelling and memorable that gives them new insights about a company or its offerings. The primary goal of environmental and exhibition design is making connections with audiences (Hughes, 2010).

The purpose of the visitor profile is to help the CD gain a better understanding of the needs of a particular exhibit or environment audience (Hughes, 2010). The visitor profile helps the CD take into consideration how an audience will specifically engage with a space, depending on who they are. Everyone has a unique learning style, and the CD must provide forethought for these different audience members. Sensory engagement is a powerful environmental aspect for the CD to consider because it helps the audience make emotional connections with brands (Lindstrom, 2005). Another consideration is accessibility and safe egress for those with limited mobility who may visit an environment. With the thoughtful use of a visitor profile, the CD can give consideration to these environmental aspects to help increase visitor engagement.

Section Summary:

1) *The Visitor Engagement* section explores how visitors interact with the space.
2) *The Visitor Diversity* section explores how diverse visitors engage with the environment.
3) *The Visitor Learning Styles* section explores how various learners engage with the space.
4) *The Visitor Experience* section explores how the senses are employed within the space.

5) *The Visitor Accessibility* section explores how visitors gain accessibility within the space.

Visitor Engagement

Orientation to the space will be achieved with the multiple interactive video presentation areas focused on DC Comics, Vertigo Comics and *Mad Magazine*. Within each area, the audience can explore digital content with the provided tablet devices.

VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

How do attendees orient themselves to the environment?
How does the environment make attendees feel welcome?
How does the environment allow for social interaction?
How does the environment communicate with the attendees?
How do attendees learn in the environment?

VISITOR DIVERSITY

How does the staff address attendee wanting to discuss business?
How does the environment convey the big picture to window-shoppers?
What is the easiest way to avoid attendee disorientation?

VISITOR LEARNING STYLES

How does the environment cater to the visual learner?
How does the environment cater to the auditory learner?
How does the environment cater to the kinesthetic learner?

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

How does the environment use sound to enhance experience?
What kind of visual elements are used to enhance experience?
What kind of tactile elements are used to enhance experience?
How does the environment engage attendee's sense of smell?
How does the environment engage attendee's sense of taste?

VISITOR ACCESSIBILITY

How does the environment account for attendee disabilities?
How does the environment account for attendee accessibility?

Figure 2.4 Visitor Profile

Booth staff will be available to welcome the audience and offer assistance to those who need it. They will also distribute product literature containing complimentary download codes to sample products, and premium giveaways such as buttons, t-shirts and goodie bags.

The BEA environment allows for social interaction as the audience shares digital content with colleagues or has discussions with booth staff to answer product or company related questions. Literature and presentation areas will provide attendees with information about product and company offerings.

Video presentations will acquaint the audience with company content and demonstrate how it can be viewed on tablets. The DC Entertainment interactive web workstations will offer local web access to each of the 3 DC Entertainment brand websites, as well as the DC Entertainment umbrella site.

Visitor Diversity

For many companies attending events such as BEA, one of the goals of attending is to find opportunities to discuss business and partnership strategies with other companies attending the event. Anyone wishing to discuss business with DC Entertainment can meet with knowledgeable decision makers and exchange information in a private setting. The exhibit hall at BEA offers private conference rooms for exhibitors needing off-site meeting spaces, and DC Entertainment will have access to these meeting rooms as needed.

The BEA booth will convey big-picture messaging to window-shopper attendees by reinforcing brand messaging within booth graphics and premium giveaways.

In an effort to avoid visitor disorientation, the BEA booth offers multiple levels of wayfinding in an open floorplan.

Visitor Learning Styles

The environment caters to the visual learner through video presentations that demonstrate the basic functionality and ease-of use of digital product offerings.

The auditory learning audience can utilize the soundtrack to the video presentations, which provides an overview of how to view digital product content on tablet devices.

For the kinesthetic learning audience, the environment will offer hands-on product demos, encouraging free exploration of content. The DC Entertainment interactive web workstations will allow users to browse local versions of the websites to freely explore the DC Entertainment product line.

Visitor Experience

The audience will experience sound through the speakers located within each of the video presentation areas, which will provide targeted sound to each presentation area. In addition, booth staff will offer free headphones to help to reduce the distraction of ambient noise from neighboring booths.

The visual elements that will enhance the audience's experience include large format video presentation screens, interactive tablet content, interactive web content and graphic messaging.

A tactile experience of the DC Entertainment universe is achieved through tablet workstations, The DC Entertainment interactive web workstations and textured booth materials.

Visitor Accessibility

Audience members with disabilities can extend tablet interfaces on product tethers for better access to the product. Audience members in wheel chairs will be able to access all areas of the display based on its compliance with architectural standards of egress and access.

Visitor Profile Summary

The Visitor Profile is used to help gain a better understanding of the needs of the BEA exhibit audience. This document compiles information regarding visitor engagement, diversity, learning styles, experience and accessibility of the DC Entertainment booth at BEA. Data collected from the visitor profile can be used to address various environmental aspects specific to the BEA audience in order to increase visitor engagement.

Site Profile

The site profile *(figure 2.5)* is a tool used by the CD to gain a better understanding of the proposed site for the development of an EBE. The approach of the CD can be greatly influenced by site factors such as whether a space is open or closed, permanent or temporary, and if there are any structural or exhibit constraints that will affect the design (Hughes, 2010). If the space is within a larger space, the CD must give consideration to space orientation, which affects external and internal wayfinding signage. Other considerations for the CD include how the space and its contents are organized, and if the environment is experience or object based.

The site profile can help the CD and their team to create a strategy for implementing the experience within the site for maximum impact with the audience. As a CD prepares for an EBE, it's critical to take numerous site details into consideration in order to maximize effectiveness.

Section Summary:
1) *The Site Nature* section explores the permanence and layout of the space.
2) *The Site Orientation* section explores how to orient the environment within the building.
3) *The Site Constraints* section explores any structural or environmental constraints.

4) *The Site Wayfinding* section explores how visitors are directed to, and within the space.

5) *The Site Organization* section explores how the space and its content are organized.

Site Nature

The nature of the site is temporary, as the Book Expo America is a 3-day annual event held in New York. The site is open on all four sides as an island booth, allowing the audience full access to company offerings from all directions.

Site Orientation

The site will be displayed in the specialized Digital Discovery Zone (D2Z), which focuses on e-reader and tablet publishing content. The site will be located in a prime position oriented to face towards the main entry and front of the exhibition hall.

Site Constraints

There is only one structural constraint according to the rules and regulations of the BEA tradeshow event: all booths must be carpeted or offer a finished floor covering. Many of these types of limitations are standard industry constraints, which apply in most event applications but can vary depending on the host city.

The environmental constraints imposed by management of the event affect the presence of DC Entertainment at BEA. In the Digital Discovery Zone (D2Z) where the site is located, the color of the aisle carpet is green, which needs to be factored into the space with regard to proximity. Demonstration areas should be confined within the site, and should not affect or obstruct aisle traffic. With the island configuration of the site, graphics, logos or print are allowed to face neighboring booths, and all advertising can face into the aisle. Hanging signs may not go above a maximum height of thirty feet to the top of the sign, while structural elements may not exceed fourteen feet in height.

SITE NATURE
_____

Is the site permanent or temporary?
Is the site closed or open?

SITE ORIENTATION
_____

How should the site be oriented?

SITE CONSTRAINTS
_____

Are there structural constraints?
Are there environmental constraints?

SITE WAYFINDING
_____

How are visitors directed to space?
How are visitors directed within space?

SITE ORGANIZATION
_____

How is space organized?
How is content organized?

Figure 2.5 Site Profile

Site Wayfinding

The audience is directed to the space by the umbrella identity of DC Entertainment, which is addressed in the booth perimeter sign, which also addresses the secondary level of wayfinding for the DC Comics, Vertigo Comics and Mad Magazine brand identities. The third level of wayfinding occurs at the product level within the trade dress of the tablet user interface and the interactive website workstations.

Site Organization

The space is organized into four feature presentation areas and four interactive web workstations. The DC Comics, Vertigo Comics and *Mad Magazine* brands are featured within the four feature presentation areas. The interactive web workstations allow the

audience to learn more about DC Entertainment with self-driven content for each of the brands as well as the corporate brand.

Site Profile Summary

The Site Profile is used to help gain a better understanding of the proposed BEA exhibit site. The document compiles information regarding visitor engagement, diversity, learning styles, experience and accessibility of the DC Entertainment booth at BEA. The site profile addresses the nature of the site, how it should be oriented, structural and exhibit constraints, wayfinding and organization. Data collected from the site profile will help create a strategy for implementing the experience within the site for maximum impact with the audience.

In developing content for the EBE, information has been collected and analyzed regarding DC Entertainment, their marketing objective, their audience and their proposed environment. With this information, a relevant and informed design solution is created to meet their marketing objective of exposing their digital product offerings to new audiences.

The EBE involves many additional user experience and physical space considerations for the CD in comparison to a conventional print or web campaign. The brand environment appeals to its target audience on an emotional level with a sensory environment that communicates brand value beyond any single product (Hughes, 2010).

As new media evolve, companies need to recognize opportunities to connect with new audiences and gain market share. By implementing an EBE for Book Expo America, DC Entertainment has an opportunity to stand out as a leader within the digital comics market and to broaden their audience.

CHAPTER III

SOLUTION
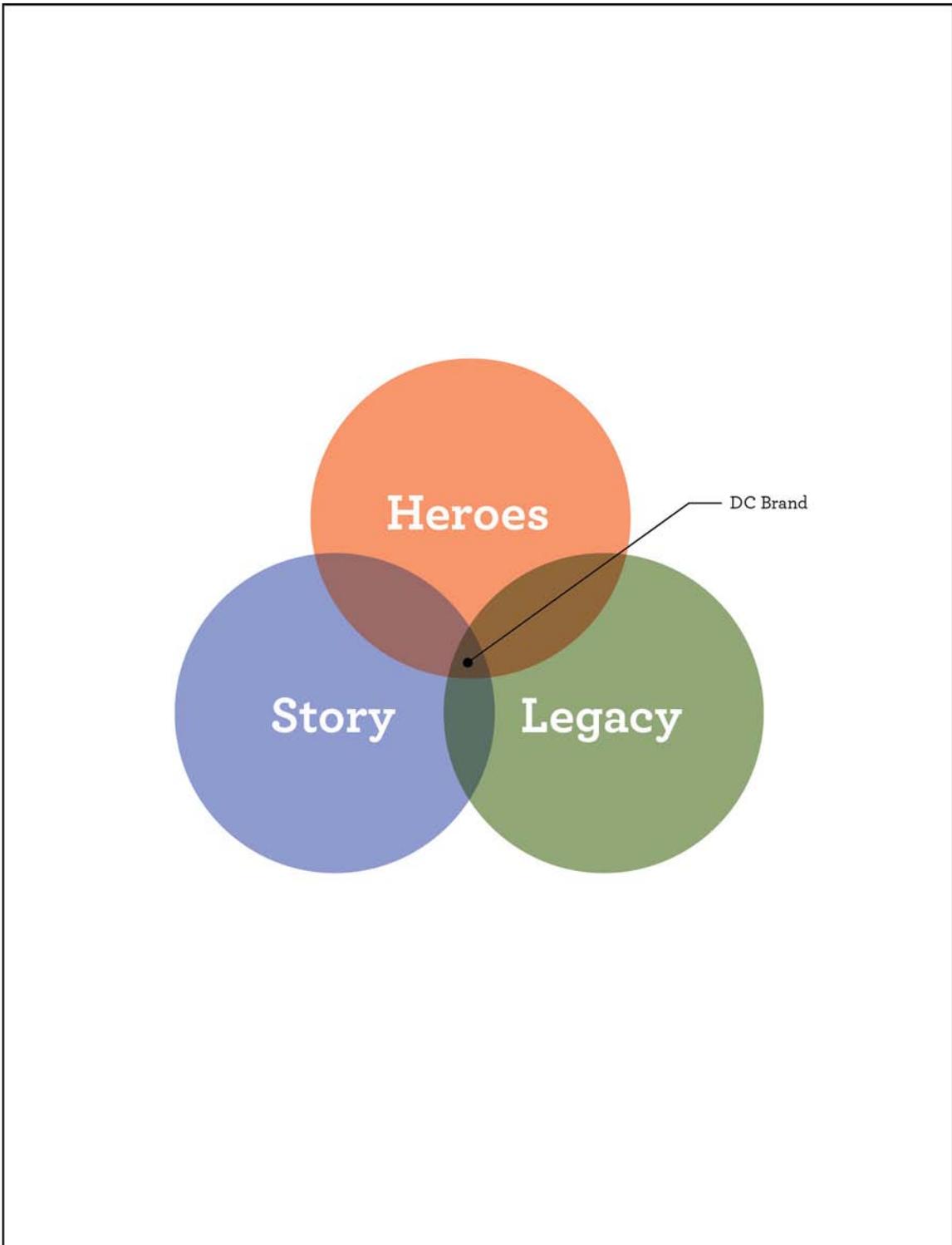
Figure 3.1 EBE Brand Pillars
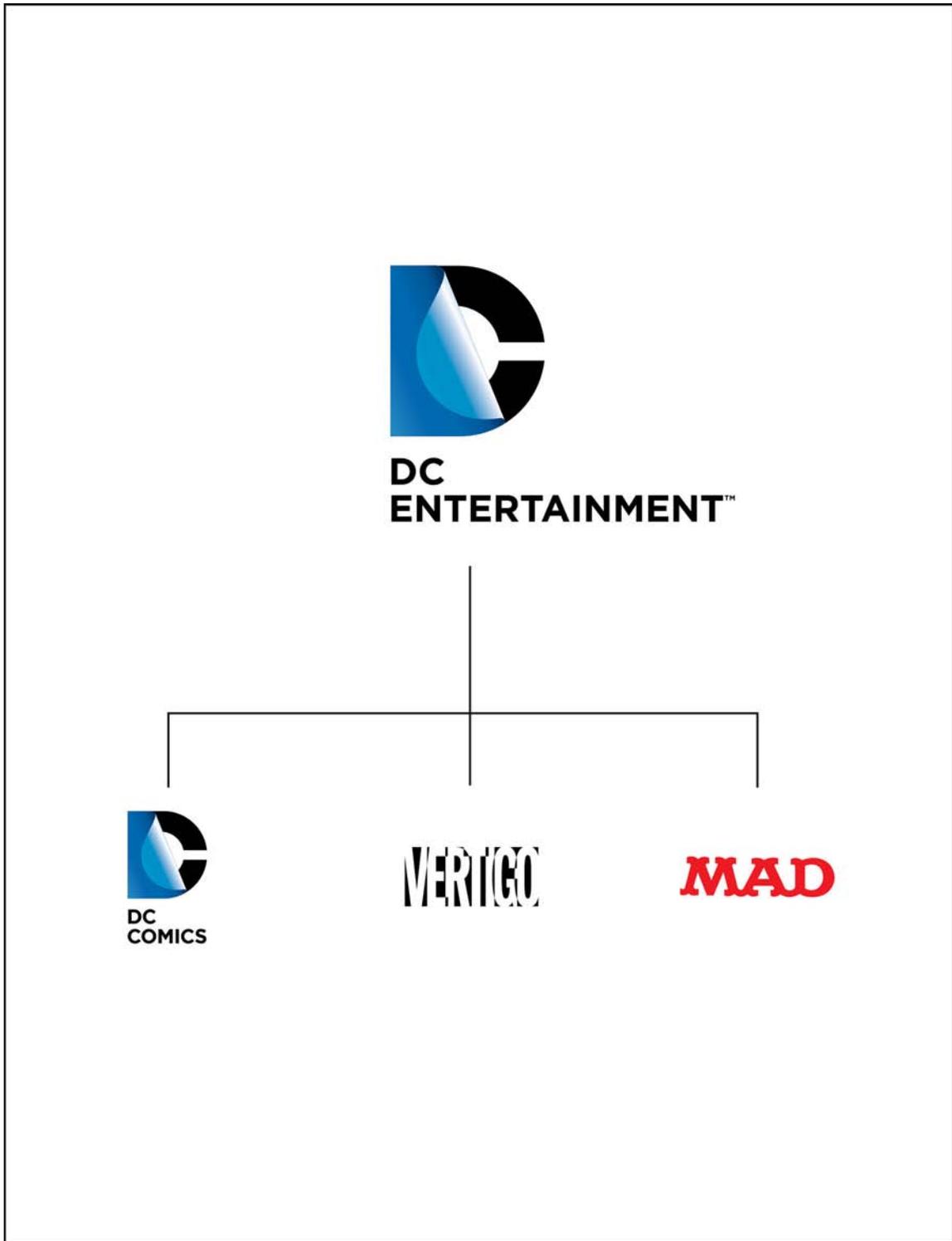
Figure 3.2 EBE Brand Identity
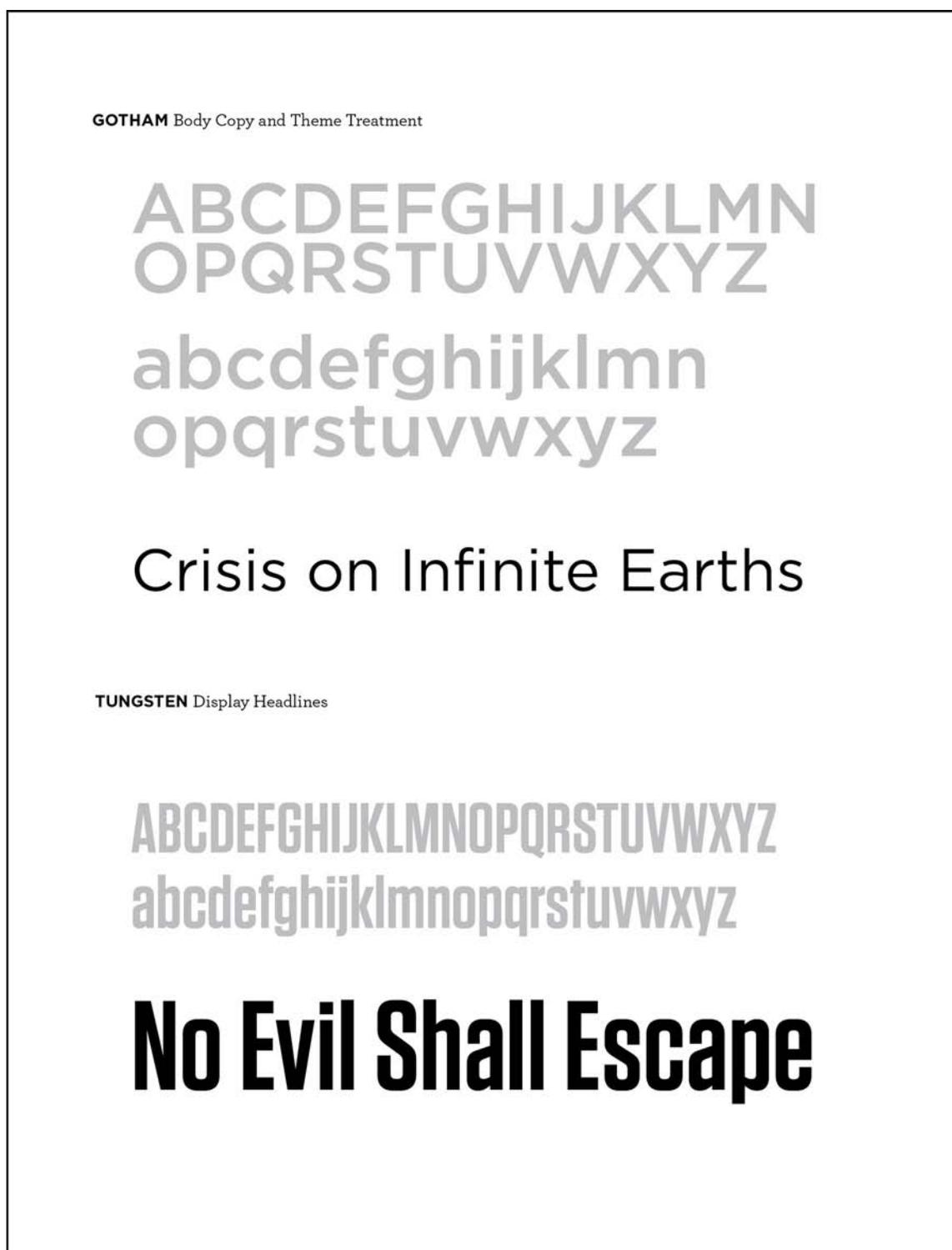
Figure 3.3 EBE Type palette

HEROIC
C95 M63 Y4 K0
HEX: #0064aa

STORY
C45 M36 Y34 K1
HEX: #939699

PARODY
C15 M100 Y100 K0
HEX: #d2232a

IMMORTAL
C0 M0 Y0 K0
HEX: #ffffff

FANTASY
C70 M80 Y80 K100
HEX: #060000
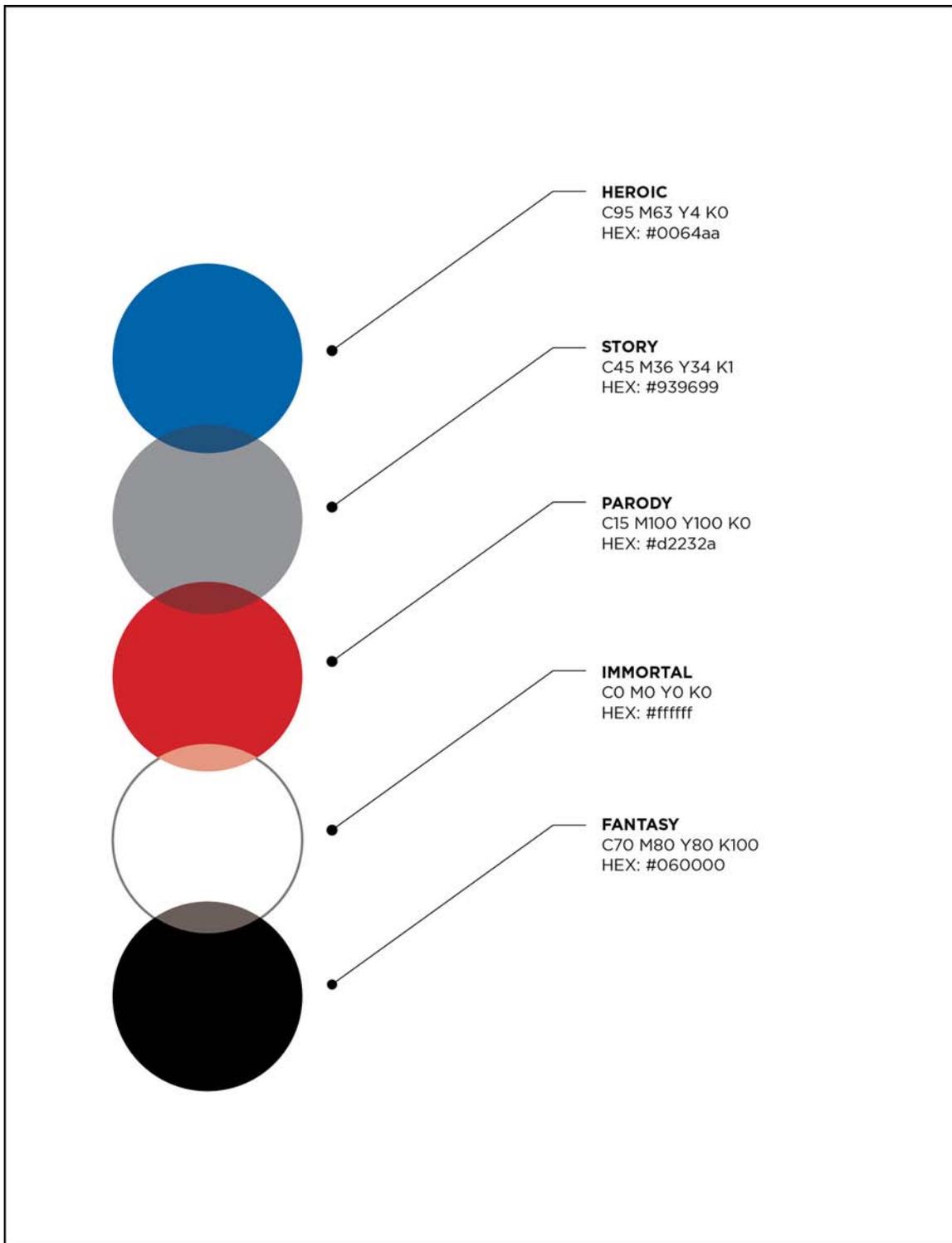
Figure 3.4 EBE Messaging Color Palette

FORMICA LAMINATE
914-Marine Blue
Matte Finish

Cabinet countertops

FORMICA LAMINATE
949-White
Matte Finish

Tower structure

DECOMETAL
M2022-Brushed Aluminum
Standard Finish

Cabinet surrounds

DECOMETAL
M4510-Anthracite Stipple
Standard Finish

Accents and spacers

ROSE BRAND
White Extenda
White IFR Stretch Fabric
Scrim

Frame and sign wraps

PERGOMAX
80122–Satin Beech
Floor w/padding

Exhibit floor

Figure 3.5 EBE Materials Palette
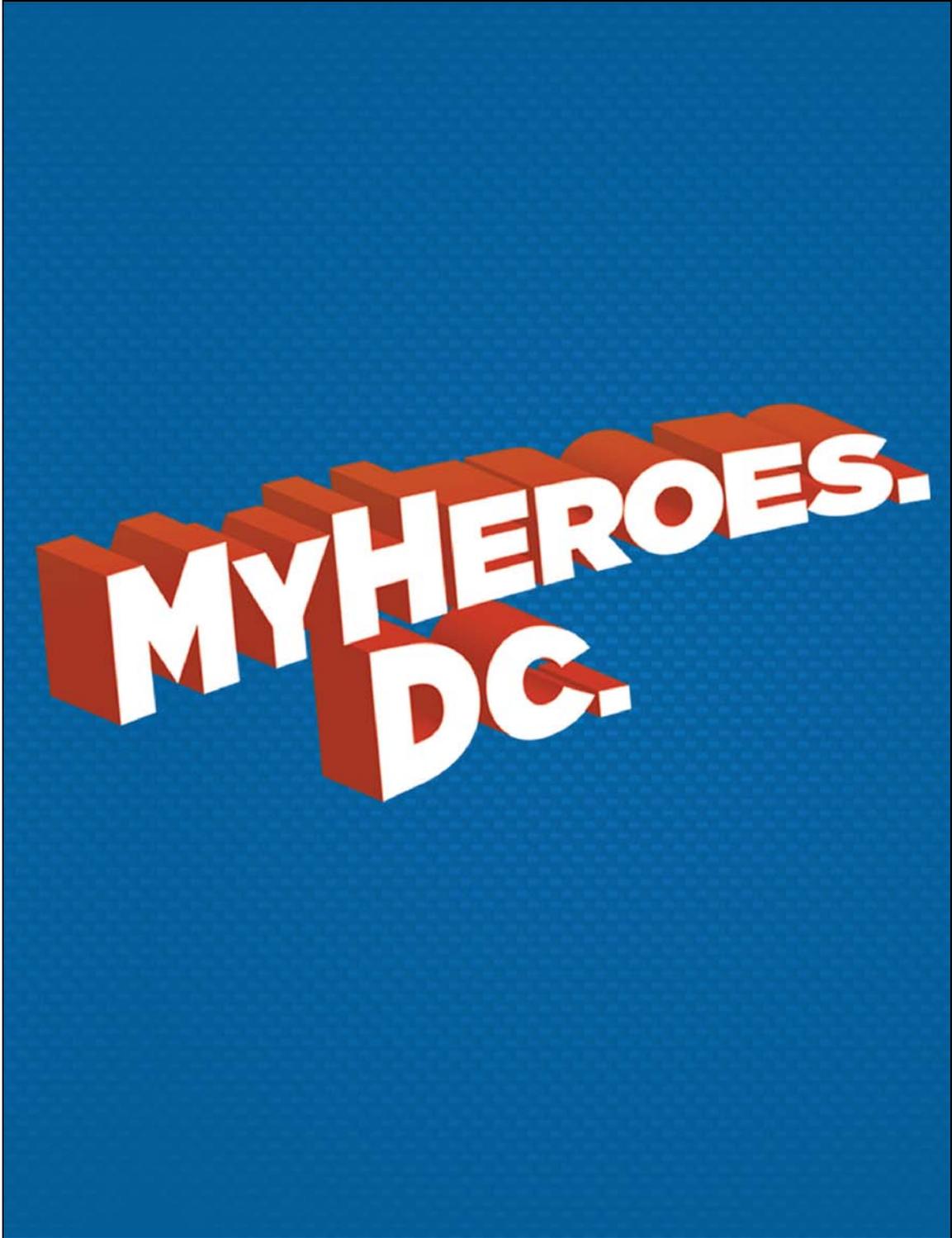
Figure 3.6 EBE Brand Messaging Treatment

Figure 3.7 EBE Messaging–*Publishers Weekly* Pre-Show Trade Ad

Interactive Web Workstations: Areas 3, 5, 7, 9
Video Presentations: Areas 2,4,6,8
Reception Desk: Area 1
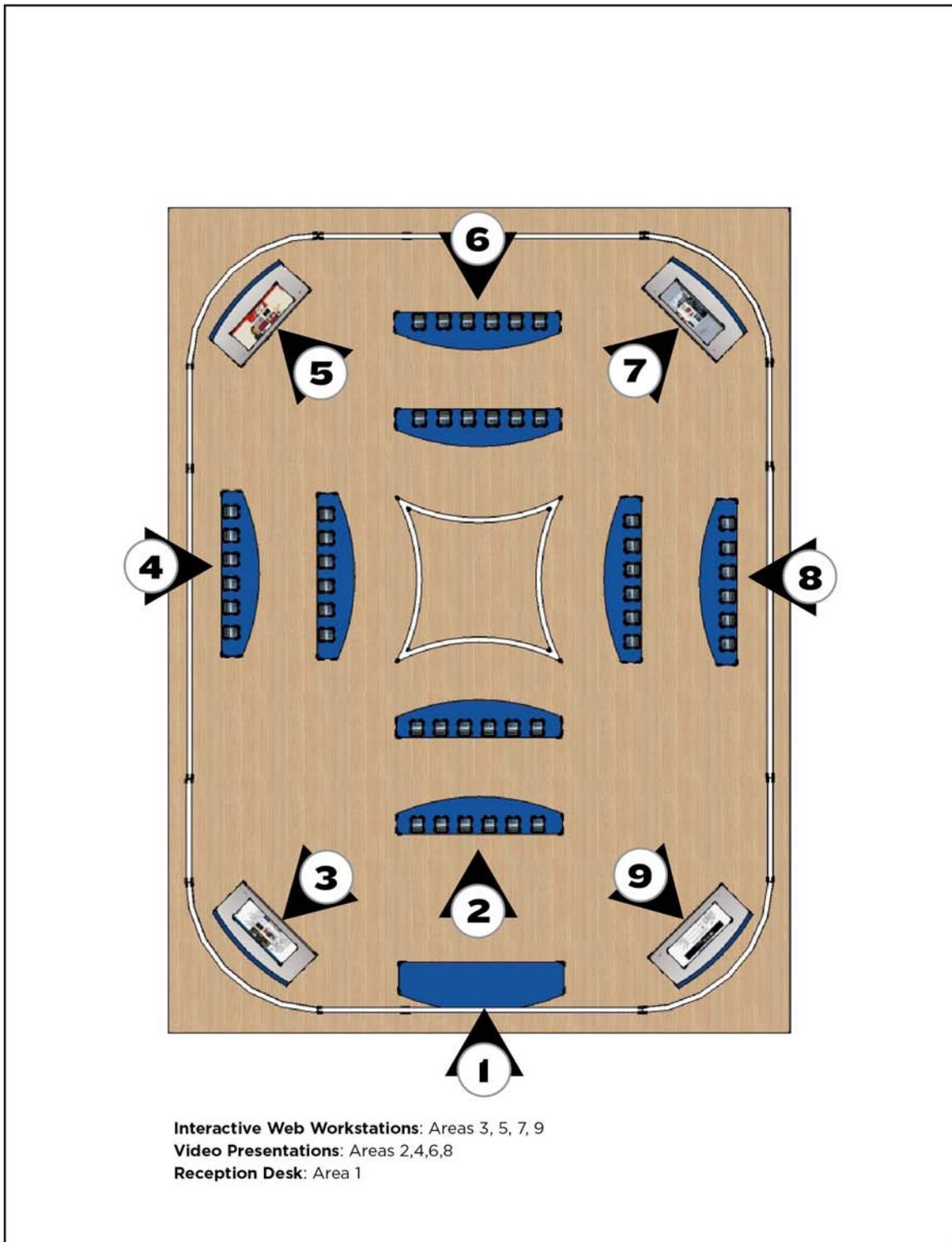
Figure 3.8 EBE 30' x 40' Floorplan Configuration

Figure 3.9 EBE Birdseye Perspective View

Figure 3.10 EBE Aerial Detail

Figure 3.11 EBE Typical Video Presentations: Areas 2, 4, 6 and 8

Jerry Seinfeld:
Superman and DC, my heroes. (2:00)

My obsession with Superman began when I was just a kid.

The day finally came when I finally convinced my parents to buy me an official Superman Halloween-store costume. I was physically ready. I was mentally prepared. And I absolutely believed when I put this costume on that I would look exactly like the Superman I had come to know on television and in the movies.

Unfortunately, these costumes are not exactly the superfit that you are hoping for. You look more like you're wearing Superman's pajamas. It's all loose and flowy. The neckline comes down to about your stomach. You got that flimsy little ribbon in the back holding it all together.

But seriously, I love Superman. He's a symbol for everything we believe in. If you had to quickly name several things you associate with American culture: baseball, Wall Street, Ford, the white house, apple pie, Mickey Mouse...Superman!

And now DC Comics has created something else that the twelve-year old boy in me won't be disappointed to try on. Now I can read all of my favorite Superman stories on my iPad, which is very tablet-worthy!

The main page has my library, which lists my comics chronologically. Once I pick an issue, the rest is pretty easy, just flip through the pages like you would with print. Only it's better because when you hit a splash page, you can zoom in to see all the super details...Great Scott!

I can also use something called panel-by-panel view; if I double-click a panel, like that, or double-tap rather, it zooms it in, and you can start reading this comic, and it guides you through each panel at a time. Every hero has a weakness, and I have found my Kryptonite with digital comics from DC.

Superman and DC, my heroes.

Figure 3.12 Jerry Seinfeld Video Presentation: Areas 2, 4, 6 and 8

Kevin Smith:
Batman and DC, my heroes. (2:00)

A few years back, DC Comics made my dream come true when they let me do a BATMAN comic book mini-series with one of my best friends - COMIC BOOK MEN Stash manager, Walt Flanagan.

It started with BATMAN: CACOPHONY... It continued with BATMAN: THE WIDENING GYRE...and in 2013, the blood will run in the final chapter of the battle between Batman and Onomatopoeia.

It was great to return to the wheelhouse of Batman and Gotham City and I'm honored and humbled to follow the great Batman scribes over the years like Miller, Morrison, and Dini. What's so appealing to me about Batman is all of the emotional scarring and darkness; that human imperfection is very compelling to me.

Hopefully my injection of twisted humor into the Batman mythos won't detract from the Pantheon of greatness that is Batman.

Luckily, you don't have to be connected like Bruce Wayne to be able to read digital comics on tablets. DC Comics has a free app for iPad, Droid, Kindle and Nook users that makes everyone feel like a millionaire playboy.

This is the main page, which is your library. Whatever comics or graphic novels you purchase end up here, listed alphabetically. Just pick a title and the rest is pretty intuitive, just flip through the pages like you would with print. Only it's better because when you hit a splash page, you can zoom in to see all the dark gothic details...like this.

The other really cool feature is something called panel-by-panel view; if you double-click a panel, like that, or double-tap rather, it zooms it in, and you can start reading this comic, and it guides you through each panel at a time. It's a gadget you might find in Batman's arsenal, but you won't have to pummel bad guys to enjoy it!

Batman and DC, my heroes.

Figure 3.13 Kevin Smith Video Presentation: Areas 2, 4, 6 and 8

Steven Spielberg:
MAD and DC, my heroes. (2:00)

Comic books and B-movies were an important part of my childhood, and like so many of my generation, I was a nerd kid who loved the escapism of reading my comic books or being spellbound by the latest movies.

The early 1950s was an interesting time for both comic books and science fiction movies. And while the comic books of that period were mostly the standard super-hero and funny animal fare, the comic books published by William M. Gaines were a refreshing exception.

One of the comics that Gaines published was MAD, which ended up becoming one of the most influential magazines of the century and one I've enjoyed over the years. MAD's brand of irreverent parody continues today to roast television, film and pop culture, and I love them for it! After all, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. As Mad's mascot Alfred E. Neuman would say, What me worry?

Just as MAD magazine has documented social change over the years, the emergence of digital media has been a game-changer for this generation. Now fans of MAD, like myself, can enjoy MAD wherever I am with the Mad Magazine app. All of my monthly issues of MAD end up here, listed by month. Just pick an issue and the rest is pretty intuitive, just flip through the pages like you would with print.

The best part is when I get to the MAD fold-in, you don't have to fold the back cover, just press a button. If I want to see things close-up, I can use something called panel-by-panel view; if you double-click a panel, like that, or double-tap rather, it zooms it in, and you can start reading the issue, and it guides you through each panel at a time.

It's a whole new reading dynamic, and as someone who loves the details of each scene, the Mad app with panel-by-panel view is fantastic.

MAD and DC, my heroes.
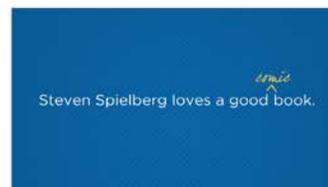
Figure 3.14 Steven Spielberg Video Presentation: Areas 2, 4, 6 and 8

**Anthony Bourdain:
Vertigo and DC, my heroes.** (2:00)

Get Jiro, from Vertigo Comics, is about a sort of dystopic
future ruled by chefs; an elitist near-future and something
that sure resembles Los Angeles, where warring gangs of
chefs slaughter each other over seemingly inconsequential
points of culinary minutia. You know, to serve tomatoes
out of season might be a death sentence.

Our hero is an old-school, edo style traditional sushi chef,
who's very good with a knife, who really, really doesn't
like it if you abuse his sushi. This is also a world where
decapitating a rude customer would be considered
completely understandable and acceptable. So in a lot
of ways, it's an expression of both my worst fears and
darkest...secret wishes.

In the early sixties, I was a comic nerd and enthusiast,
a wannabe comic writer, so yeah this is and overgrown little
boy's dream come true. One of the great innovations for
the comic fans of today is the emergence of digital comics
on tablets.

Vertigo Comics offers a free app for Ipad, Droid, Kindle and
Nook users that's a game-changer. This is the main page,
which is your library. Whatever comics or graphic novels you
purchase end up here, listed alphabetically. Just pick a title
and the rest is pretty intuitive, just flip through the pages like
you would with print. Only it's better because when you hit
a splash page, you can zoom in to see all the savory details...
like this.

The other really cool feature is something called panel-by-
panel view; if you double-click a panel, like that, or double-tap
rather, it zooms it in, and you can start reading this comic,
and it guides you through each panel at a time. It's a whole
new reading dynamic, and it's really compelling new way
to read comics.

Vertigo and DC, my heroes.

Figure 3.15 Anthony Bourdain Video Presentation: Areas 2, 4, 6 and 8
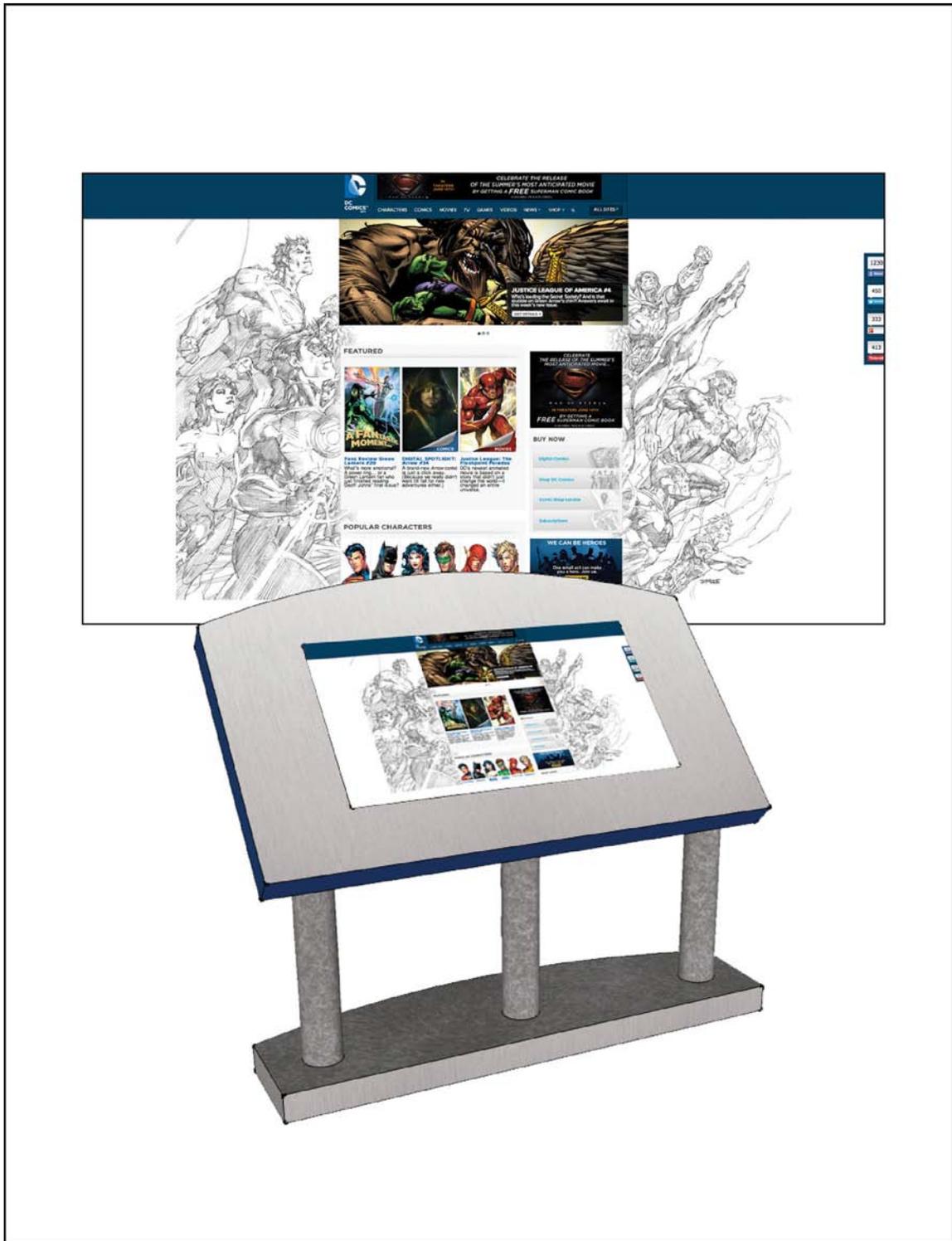
Figure 3.16 DC Comics Interactive Web Workstation: Area 3

*Figure 3.17 MAD Magazine* Interactive Web Workstation: Area 5
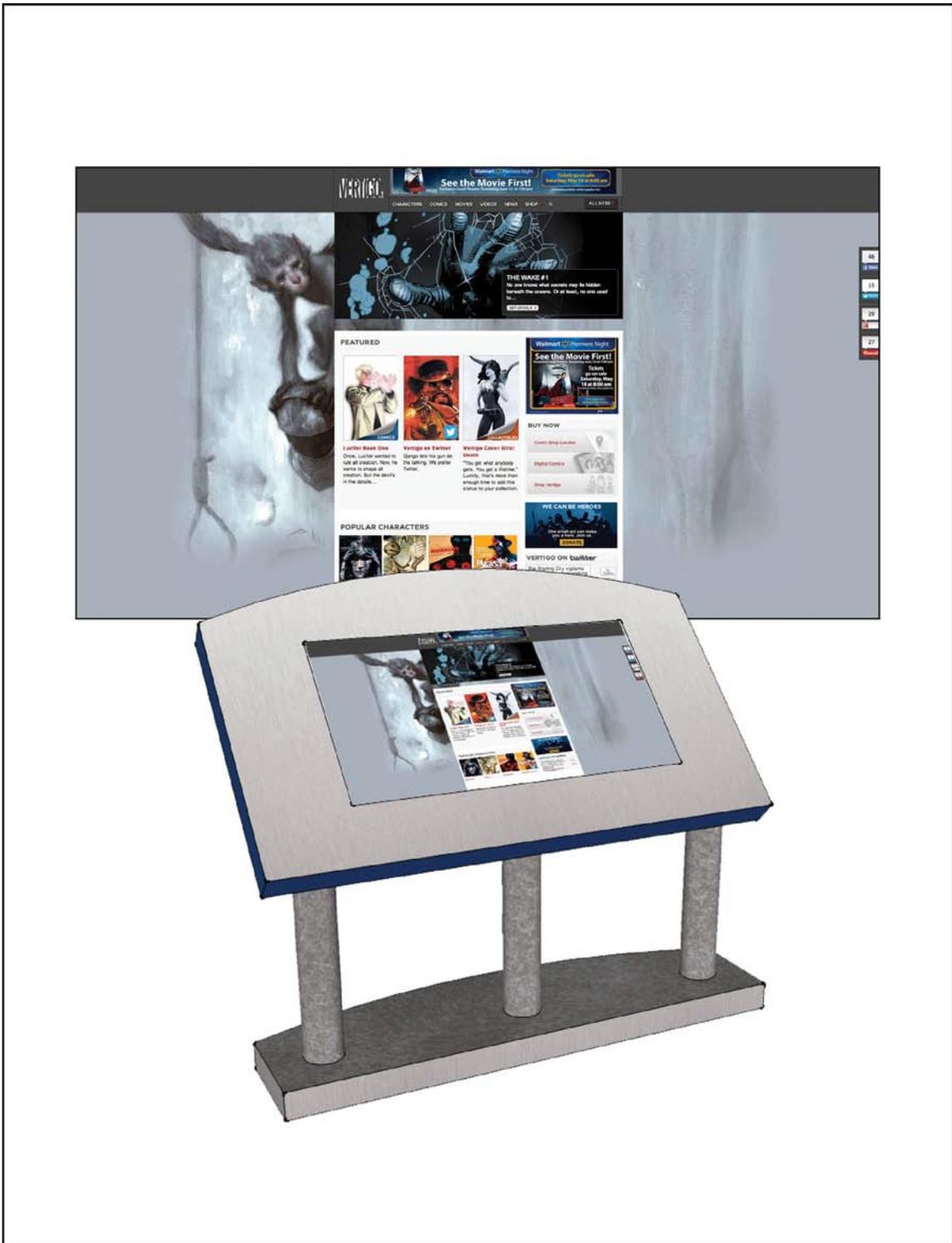
Figure 3.18 Vertigo Comics Interactive Web Workstation: Area 7

Figure 3.19 DC Entertainment Interactive Web Workstation: Area 9

Figure 3.20 EBE Literature/Digital Comic Preview Promo

Figure 3.21 EBE Apparel-Staff Shirts

Figure 3.22 EBE Premium Giveaway: T-shirts

Figure 3.23 EBE Premium Giveaway: Buttons

Figure 3.24 EBE Premium Giveaway: Goodie Bag

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This thesis *An Exploration of the Environmental Brand Experience (EBE) as applied to the Digital Publishing Model* investigates how companies can educate and inform an audience about new media products to break into new markets.

The Hybrid EBE Model

This thesis introduces a hybrid model for Communication Design (CD) that combines design and marketing strategy with visitor and site profiles for effective EBE solutions. As the lines begin to blur between the CD and the Environmental Graphic Designer (EGD), it's important to develop tactical methods to help companies accomplish their marketing objectives.

Within the EGD industry today, exhibit and environmental design firms use multidisciplinary design teams to develop effective EBE solutions for their audience. As traditional design firms look to expand their service offerings, it is essential for them to recognize the tactical approach necessary for successful EBE outcomes.

Bridging the Gap

With the explosion of revenue growth in digital publishing based on the adoption of tablets, it is apparent that publishers need to find ways to reach their audience. For the case study explored in this thesis, the user experience is demystified and explained to a diverse audience. Publishers need to make the audience comfortable with a product that traditionally offered a very tactile experience; they need to educate their audience on how

to achieve that experience using digital media in an EBE.

Future Research

      The adoption and use of the hybrid design development method outlined in this thesis would improve the design process for developing an EBE by clarifying and defining the approach. Future research could explore how to proliferate this process within the discipline. With an online portal, design practitioners could get assistance with the developmental process by following prompts and entering data about their clients.

      As publishers embrace interaction within their digital media, it is inevitable that the print reading experience will soon be surpassed by the digital reading experience. As technology advances, future research can investigate how to effectively market these experiences to an audience with an EBE approach.

      The EBE approach could also apply to other markets, which justifies further exploration. With the explosion of the content available for the mobile and tablet market, numerous e-content providers producing apps, games and utilities could benefit from instituting an EBE approach to widen their market penetration.

      Educational institutions can investigate how they can harness interaction in class textbooks and e-content for the virtual classroom. While many students are transitioning to online classes, it is important to market new forms of education to the parents and guardians of future prospective students, and institutions could benefit from harnessing an EBE tool for recruitment fairs.

      News and magazine conglomerates could use an EBE approach to create interactive newsstands to inform and raise awareness of the enhanced user experience found in digital editions. Publishers can no longer afford to take for granted that consumers will find their product through an online intermediary, they should instead create an environment to harness their audience.

      From a social media perspective, digital publishers have an opportunity for instant

feedback on stories and features presented on tablet devices, much like web behaviors. Further investigation of how publishers could harness social networking in an EBE could provide interesting insight.

As the CD discipline continues to evolve along with emerging media and technologies, we must always strive for innovation by design and think beyond norms dictated by conventional wisdom. The only constant is change, and the CD discipline must embrace innovation and critical thinking to accommodate the needs of an ever-changing landscape.

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http://search.proquest.com/docview/900816491?accountid=5683

VITA

Michael J. Bulsiewicz was born in Rochester, New York on December 6, 1973, the son of Joyce C. Gilot and Robert P. Bulsiewicz.

After graduating in 1995 with a B.F.A. in Graphic Design from the State University of New York at Fredonia, Mike worked as an Environmental Graphic Designer in Rochester.

Following a move to Texas, in May of 2009 he entered the Graduate College of Texas State University-San Marcos.

Permanent Address:

5323 Coral Gables Drive

Houston, Texas 77069

This thesis was typed by Michael J. Bulsiewicz.