

Digital production – week 5

The following is taken from the New Brunswick Virtual High School course Digital Production.

Common Design Elements

The **mass media** surrounds us every day with messages, images, news, advertisements, information, ideas, and entertainment. The mass media includes every medium (any technology or method that delivers messages or information) that delivers messages to large numbers of people over great distances, primarily television, radio, movies, magazines, newspapers and the Internet.

The mass media competes constantly for your attention, and this competition constantly increases as digital media and messages increase. This creates a challenge for individuals and small organizations to make their messages (e.g., images, videos, songs, stories, advertisements) stand out. A poorly designed message has almost no chance of catching people's attention in such an environment. Regardless of the message, applying a few basic design elements can help it attract attention more effectively.

Target Audiences

Every message has a sender and a receiver. Some messages are intended for a single person, others are meant "for the whole world to hear." We call the intended receivers of a message the **target audience**. When you create a digital message—whether a song, video, image or document—you probably have a target audience. If you don't, then you should!

Knowing and understanding your target market enables you to focus your message and your efforts. When you know about the interests, needs and opinions of your target audience, you can create a product that speaks directly to your audience, or matches your audience's tastes and interests. Your message is more likely to be received and then have the effect you are hoping for.

Advertisers are masters at knowing their target markets. Authors, artists, photographers, movie directors and you also create more effective messages and products when the target audience is kept in mind. If you don't think you already do this, then notice how your speech changes when you talk to a parent, a friend, a police officer, a potential boyfriend or girlfriend, a principal or a doctor. Intentionally developing this awareness can improve your communication skills.



Image used by Tourism New Brunswick to promote tourism (rappelling) at Cape Enrage. Target audience, young adults, both genders.



Image used by Government of New Brunswick promoting a program to help seniors stay in their homes and communities as long as possible.



Poster used by Health New Brunswick, promoting effective hand washing to children.

For each example of an element that can be included in a digital product, identify the group or groups that are likely to be among its target audience.

Question 1

Family images that include grandparents and grandchildren

Question 1 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult women
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian seniors

Images of families that include grandparents are most likely to appeal to an older audience.

(Do you agree?)

Question 2

Music from the 1980s

Question 2 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult women
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults

People who were young during the 1980s, **middle-aged adults**, would most likely notice and enjoy music from that time. Of course, if 80s music is currently popular as retro music, then a younger audience would also be a possible target.

(Do any of your friends like this music?)

Question 3

Image of the Great Wall of China

Question 3 options:

- Chinese-Canadian adults
- young children
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults
- seniors
- young adult women
- young adult men
- Teenagers

An image that reminds everyone of China would likely catch the attention of people with strong connections to China, such as **Chinese-Canadians**. If the image were part of a tourism message, it might also target adults who are interested and able to travel to China.

(Is it possible that teenagers might be interested? In what context?)

Question 4

Cartoon animals

Question 4 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult women
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults

Generally, cartoon animals appeal to **young children**.

(Do you think that MANGA and ANIME are cartoons aimed at young children? Who is the likely target audience of MANGA and ANIME?)

Question 5

Images from the D-Day landing of troops near the end of WWII

Question 5 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult women
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults

Seniors, who were alive at the time and have strong memories of the end of World War II might focus on these images. Since the Netherlands were among those countries liberated at the end of the war, Dutch-Canadian adults might also be among such a target audience. What about students who are currently studying that period of history?

(What are your thoughts on this? That was 75 years ago, not many people who were adults then are still around.)

Question 6

Texting abbreviations like GR8, OMG, BTW, CU, THX, B&

Question 6 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult women
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults

Teenagers are certainly a target audience when texting terms are used. Since **young adults** were teens only a little while ago, they are also included. You might also argue that **parents** can be a target here, as they often like to try and keep up with things in their children's culture.

(Do you know what each mean? Do you regularly use any?)

Question 7

Hello Kitty

Question 7 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult women
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults

The Hello Kitty character is clearly marketed to **young children**. If the options included "female children and teens," that would be more accurate. Although the image originated in Asia, there is no reason to think it appeals to adults with Asian heritage.

(What is Hello Kitty?)

Question 8

Classical music

Question 8 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult men
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults

Classical music appeals most strongly to **seniors** and **middle-aged** adults.

(Is this only group that likes classical music? Do you?)

Question 9

Images of Disney World

Question 9 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult women
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults

Images of Disney World appeal most strongly to members of families that travel together on holidays that include "kid-friendly" entertainment so the target audience would be **younger children, teenagers, and parents**.

(Why do you think older adults were not included?)

Question 10

A BASE jumper in a wingsuit (squirrel suit)

Question 10 options:

- young children
- teenagers
- young adult men
- young adult women
- parents
- middle-aged adults
- seniors
- Chinese-Canadian adults
- Dutch-Canadian adults

This sport appeals particularly to **young adult men** who are most likely to take risks to enjoy extreme sports. Of course, others are also interested in this thrilling sport, though mostly through watching online videos.

(The frontal lobes of men are not fully developed until the mid twenties – thus this sport.)