

VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS



The seating area prior to implementing the communication flags. (Notice that there is only one person at each table).

Designers
Lemon, Allison
Tucker, Meghan

Institution
Florida State University

Sponsored by
Jill Pable, Ph.D.

The problem

Outside the FSU library there are less than 10 tables for students to grab a quick lunch or spend time between classes. Although each table could seat at least six, there is typically only one student per table. The amount of seating is not being utilized.

The solution

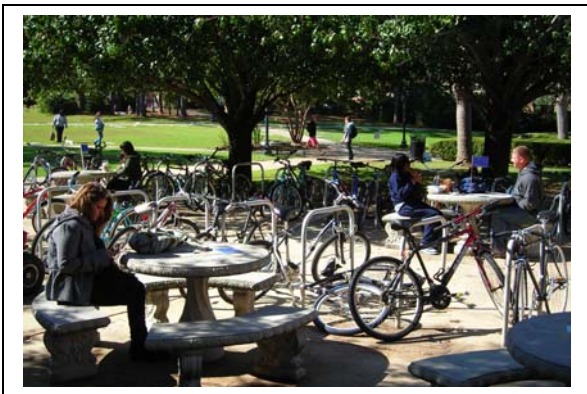
Majority of students are too timid to join a stranger's table. To encourage students to capitalize on limited seating we devised a flag system. Each table is equipped with a blue flag and instructions. If the student at the table doesn't mind if others join, then they "fly the flag", encouraging others to take advantage of the seating. If the student doesn't want to be bothered, then they do not fly any flag.

The solution's impact on its users

The overall reaction to the flag communication system was positive. Students found the design useful and innovative. Majority said they would continue to use such a system if it were permanently available. The flags distinctly solved the inadequate seating issue. Students who would typically stand capitalized on the encouragement the flags provided and found seating. The design was emphatically embraced, more so than anticipated. This helped us realize that the potential of design is infinite and extensive. It is not necessarily about completely restructuring a space or even changing furniture, yet restructuring the way people interpret the space and communicate with each other. We were impressed to find that the flags not only accomplished the intended goal, yet functioned in a way we had not foreseen. Students ended up socializing beyond the extent of our objective, and actually getting to know each other.



Here are two students, strangers to each other, who utilized the flag system. This maximized the use of available seating.

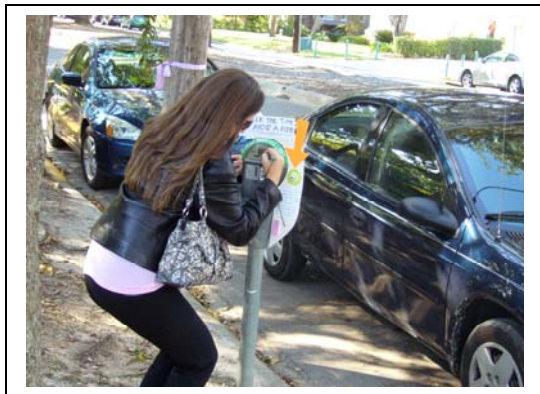


In the background are two students who took advantage of the flag system. In the foreground is a student who wanted privacy and chose not to fly her flag.

Check The Time To Avoid a Fine



“Check The Time To Avoid A Fine”
Parking Meter Sign



She thought the sign was helpful, and she used a post-it to remind her when to be back.



The Post-it Note Bandits? Maybe?

Designers

Jenny Longacre and Sarah Cowart

Institution

Florida State University

Sponsored by

Dr. Jill Pable

The problem :

When people put their money in parking meters, the meter tells them how much time they paid for, but they don't know the exact time they put the money in, unless they dig for their cell phone or check their watch (if they're wearing one). Without this time specification, people can be misled, and end up with a ticket (which usually includes a fine).

The solution :

Miniature clocks, strategically placed next to the "time allotted" screen on parking meters (making sure that they are visually accessible), inform the person of the exact time they inserted their money. Post-it notes are provided, along with a pen, so that the person can write down the exact time they need to be back before the meter expires, so that they don't receive a ticket. This solution can relieve any stress or uncertainty associated with paying for meter parking.

The solution's impact on its users :

The signs definitely caught people's attention. Groups walking by would stop and read the captions, individuals parked at the meter assumed that there was something wrong with it (until they read the notice), and a few fraternity guys proceeded to take post-its off the sign and place them on all of their fingers; these were all unexpected results. We half expected people to ignore the signs and walk right past us; when in all actuality, they were quite willing to participate. When interviewed, the individuals agreed that this system was helpful to the public, and that it would remind people to be more conscientious about their time (so that they could avoid a fine). By creating something that utilizes a problem solution, in a unique way, that is both beneficial to the community and aesthetically pleasing, this proves that design really can make a difference.

The Step Up Your Health Challenge



Clare Gabas said, "I believe taking the stairs is healthier and quicker, but it would also depend on the number of flights I would have to climb."

Designers

Ashley PolICASTRI
Jhoana Antiquino

Institution

Florida State University

Sponsored by
Dr. Jill Pable

The Problem

It is estimated that people spend two thirds of their lives at their workplace, where physical activity is lacking. Too many people choose to take the elevator, which is more time consuming, rather than taking the stairs, a healthier option.

The Solution

To encourage people, as well as inform them about a healthier lifestyle, we designed an informative test. We challenged people to time themselves to see how much faster it would actually be to take the stairs versus waiting for and taking the elevator. We placed a clock at the first and second floor of the Student Services Building on Florida State campus. We asked that they checked the time and head for the stairs. Along the way we placed health facts and reasons to take the stairs for encouragement! On the second floor, they were instructed to check the clock to calculate how long it took them. Then to finish up the challenge they had to take the elevator down and again time themselves in order to compare their time differences between the two routes.



Brian Palompo said, "It was faster to go up the stairs than it took me to come down the elevator. It only took me forty-five seconds to climb the stairs, where the elevator took me a minute and a half."

The Solution's Impact On Its Users

People trying to take the elevator in the Student Services Building at Florida State University were very intrigued by how much healthier overall it is to take the stairs instead of taking the elevator. By informing people who came up to the elevator with interesting facts about how stair climbing can add life to their years, they quickly became very receptive and excited to take the "Step Up your Health Challenge"! The challengers were very astonished by their time differences between climbing the stairs and taking the elevator. All six people who took the challenge had clocked in with less time in climbing up the stairs rather than taking the elevator. Our assumption was correct! The challengers were glad they took the time out of their day to test and learn that taking the stairs can save them time and shed weight from their waistline! What our team learned from this experiment is that stair ways should be designed to appeal to people so they are excited to take the stairs rather than make them visually unappealing. Stairways need to be designed more appealingly to draw people in and at the same time occupy their minds off the workout to pump them up so they enjoy themselves!



"The time difference was about forty-five seconds. I know that if I saw this anywhere else, no matter where, I would have tried it. It compelled me to do it. No one would miss the signs or the clock; they would notice for sure! I thought it was cool!" said Chris Acob.

“Make a Difference Project”

The Table Divider



Above is the common seating problem in the Library. Students spread out their belongings and reduce comfortable work space for others.



This is the solution we created to maximize seating for four students at a table comfortably.



Above shows the solution's success as four students comfortably sit at one table solving the seating problem.

Designers
Jin Chung and Lauren Greenfield

Institution
Florida State University: College of Interior Design

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Jill Pable

The problem

In a generally crowded library, the study desks that have seating for 4 students are only occupied at most by 2 students. Each student takes over so much space, which leaves no workable desk area for other users. Students also feel uncomfortable sitting directly adjacent to unfamiliar students.

The solution

We created a space divider that utilizes the space effectively while providing individual study area. This consisted of two inch high mat board dividing the space into four areas. The dividers were high enough to separate individual's belongings and low enough for students for feel airy and conversational-friendly.

The solution's impact on its users

We observed students throughout the days and there were more students at that one table than most of the ones around them. The students kept their belongings in the designated areas of the table which left sufficient room for any other possible users. The problem of excess personal space was solved once the students realized that they could claim their designated space without it being invaded. This allowed others to feel comfortable enough to use the table even though it was already being used. Our ultimate goal was to maximize seating by making students feel more comfortable. The outcome has showed that when people have some type of boundary securing them, they are more comfortable in their space. Thus, more people sit at one table which helps solve the seating problem in overly crowded areas.

The Portable Shelter



Samuel with the Portable Shelter



Samuel using the shelter as a seat with some essential items.
(blanket, crossword, sanitizer, clock, pillow, etc.)



Samuel using the built in sleeping shelter

Designers
Chase Lackey and Shantel Wallace

Institution
Florida State University Interior Design Dept.

Sponsored By
Jill Pable

The Problem

According to the Big Bend Homeless Coalition an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 people experience homelessness in Tallahassee, FL each year. We felt that the homeless population who weren't able to get help from a shelter needed a multipurpose storage unit to help sustain them.

The Solution

We created a portable storage unit with a built in sleeping shelter. Instead of recreating the wheel we decided to take a preexisting object (a cooler) and enhance it so that it would benefit a homeless person. We added a tent like structure that would protect the user from rain or wind. We also put some essential items inside the unit like a blanket and pillow. Inspirational messages and photographs help give the user a sense of hope.

The solution's impact on its user

We visited The Shelter, a non-profit organization that provides lodging, meals, showers and beds to those in need. After speaking to that staff we were told that not all of the people at the shelter during the day were provided a bed at night and other services they offer due to lack of resources. We were put into contact with Samuel who was currently living on the streets of Tallahassee. We presented him with the portable shelter and demonstrated the features. Samuel felt that overall the enhanced cooler would be very beneficial to him, especially the pull out shelter. It would be a good way to stay protected from outdoor elements. The items we included with the device are as follows: blanket, clock, pillow, hand sanitizer, scope, crossword puzzle, notepad, pens, and a trash bag. He felt that all the items would be very useful. Another feature was the inspirational messages and destination photos we put on the lid of the cooler and the top of the fold out shelter to give him a sense of hope and to act as a mental escape from reality. The fact that the device served multi functions was an ideal solution. Samuel was very appreciative of our efforts and we feel that he will definitely be able to incorporate it into his everyday life.

PEEPER SCREENER

Designers
Alexa Rae Hosner & Margret Vilhjalmsdottir

Institution
Florida State University

Sponsored by
Dr. Pable



THE PROBLEM

To accommodate the large student population, computers are placed very close together allowing for no privacy when surfing the web, completing schoolwork, or working on any other personal task. This becomes noticeably uncomfortable among many individuals as there is only an unspoken rule pertaining to minding one's business that not all adhere to.

THE SOLUTION

We created a maneuverable unit that will be placed in between each computer monitor. By pulling a tab on each unit, the user can extend the personal screen to the desired level of privacy, as some may be studying with a partner. The screen can extend to the edge of the table allowing for not only a private computer use, but a personal study area that eliminates surrounding distraction.

THE SOLUTION'S IMPACT ON ITS USERS

After installing the unit, we noticed that some students were hesitant to use the screens. One student had even said, "I don't want to seem rude by sectioning myself off." Other students thought the idea was "neat" and stated, "This would be really cool to have permanently."

Although we received mixed reactions about using the units, students responded positively to the idea. We feel that if there had been more than two units installed others would have felt less awkward towards using them, and would have confidently engaged themselves.

Another comment was directed to the noise created by pulling out the screen. Because of being constructed out of cardboard boxes and paper, the friction made a noticeable sound which also affected the amount of use.

If able to reconstruct, we would use materials that were smoother, eliminating any noise that may draw attention to the user. The design was successful in that it served intended purpose to provide privacy and a defined space.

