

Unread Messages

Rethinking our relationship with technology

The Aram Gallery

11 March – 9 April 2016

Creative agency Six:Thirty present Unread Messages. This design and research project explores ways in which technology affects how we think, act and behave.

Technology promises to liberate us, but this freedom comes at a price. The digitisation of our everyday lives saves us time and brings us closer to the people we love. Yet at the same time, we feel rushed, isolated or enslaved by our devices.

Based on research by project partner Northstar, Unread Messages attempts to stimulate discussion amongst designers and the public around the social and ethical implications of current and future communication technologies.

The exhibition features original digital, physical and interactive products designed to lead us towards a healthier relationship with devices and digital applications.

unreadmessages.com

sixthirty.pm

About Six:Thirty

Six:Thirty is a creative agency whose tools are design and technology. With insights and perspectives from design research, we build meaningful brands and user experiences that bring positive and lasting value.

We partner with businesses that share a passion for generating transformative ideas. From start-ups to global brands, their needs are the same: intelligent design solutions that bring a competitive edge.

By building, prototyping, user-testing, or whatever it takes, we refine and improve based on our learnings. The results are road-tested, risk-limited solutions.

Fidgety Machines

Takram London

Fidgety Machines is a response to a situation in which human beings have become machines that obsessively process information fed by social media. Hidden within this dynamic is our subservient relationship with the infrastructure that supports digital communication.

Over-checking of social media platforms, being the first to post events, and fear of missing out are pervasive aspects of obsessive compulsion. Rather than lamenting them, Fidgety Machines embraces these behaviours as positive skills.

#artificialselfie

Daniel Armengol Altayó

As smart devices and social networks entered our lives, hyper-connectivity has made our world move faster than ever with technology shaping the way we relate to other human beings, creating new languages and shaping our behaviours through small gestures and everyday habits.

The selfie phenomenon is a clear example of a gesture that every internet social being has adopted due to the mobile devices and social media's way of working, and its impact on society has been extremely high.

On one hand, as we all seem to repeat the same behaviours with a given technology, we ourselves start acting as predictable machines. On the other hand, we teach machines to understand us, giving them the ability to replicate gestures and habits in a surprisingly human way.

But, can we identify when a behaviour is becoming compulsive?

A selfie is a paradigmatic way to prove to the contemporary world that one exists - it is both a statement of some profound need to express oneself, and something that is indistinguishable from new modes of interaction proper to the social media aesthetics.

Nomu

Matteo Loglio

The ability to be always connected is often too much to resist. This can sometimes lead to a loss of control, with behaviours prompted by digital communication interfering with daily activities, work, and relationships.

These behaviours are often unconscious: they become mechanical actions triggered by the reward systems designed in these services, to get our attention and keep us scrolling. Nomu is designed to filter unwanted content from the online experience, it helps to enjoy the internet without distractions. Rules can be set for specific time units, then only the allowed content is displayed.

Nomu can be used to plan up to two hours of internet usage. Each coloured block represents an activity, composed by a time unit and rules to filter a specific set of websites, defined by the user. The tangible component works together with a browser extension that defines filters and blocks unapproved sites.

Window

Zanellato / Bortotto

We were interested in analysing the relationships we develop with our devices, and how this has deeply influenced our daily lives and productivity. Our identities, and almost every part of our lives, are filtered through technology; our realities directly affected. The mirror is the perfect vehicle for exploring this concept. There is something extremely evocative about seeing our image in a mirror.

This simple everyday object is direct, true, contemplative. It gives us an honest idea of who we are and of how people see us. The product we designed uses an LED lighting system housed behind a one-way mirror surface. When the LED lights are off, the mirror is completely reflective; when illuminated, the surface loses its reflectivity.

Connected to a device such as a mobile or laptop, the LED system analyses our online activities and monitors how we focus our energy throughout the day. The more time we spend on social networks – or other activities which keep us from more important tasks – the brighter the light will become, distorting our reflection in the mirror.

I/O

Paul Macgregor

This piece deals with theme of Compulsive Behaviours – specifically looking at the distraction of the internet and the disruption it can cause to the working day – the constant checking of news, social media and other, potentially harmful, browsing habits.

I/O is a browser plugin that is visible each time a user opens a new tab. Borrowing from nudge theory, there are no constraints, or limitations on the user – but instead simply a visual cue, alerting them to the time they have spent online that day and whether it is within their chosen limits.

In addition to the immediate visual feedback, the user can also look at more detailed information on their browsing over time – allowing them to identify patterns and habits. Research has suggested that people react better to suggestion than prescription. I/O looks to embrace that idea and gently guide users away from excessive internet use.

Social Storage

Dean Brown

In the good old days, our shelves carried vast CD collections and our wardrobe doors were adorned with holiday snaps. These personality-defining aspects have since been drained from our homes and siphoned discretely into Spotify, Instagram, Twitter and the like.

Social Storage responds to this contemporary condition, addressing the gap between our online and offline personas, where large facets of our "curated self" are locked inside our devices. Using mini projectors, this furniture collection softens the edges between the online and offline persona, bringing the most relatable aspects of the online experience out of the screen and back into the home.

Away From The Moon

Matan Stauber

In the digital era, our attention span is declining. While content and information are more accessible than ever, most people spend fewer than 15 seconds reading an online article. "Away From The Moon" is an interactive design web concept that explores new ways of creating engagement between readers and content in a sea of distractions.

Harnessing a built-in webcam, the website reacts and changes depending on the reader's distance from the screen. The article can choose to present different content, from a title or summary to full-length version.

Believe in Your Feed

Gastón Lisak & Nicole Vindel
in collaboration with Daniel Grau

The increased use of technology in our daily lives has made us more efficient and productive. Along the way, however, it has rendered our personal and collective memory weak and narrow. We have become accustomed to receiving real-time responses to everything.

Our memory and concentration have grown highly dependent. We are becoming shallow, only emotionally involved with an attack in Paris, the death of a legendary musician or debate about the refugee crisis when they are trending topics.

Our loyalties are fleeting. We would like to think that the ability to get excited (or emotional) and the collective memory are still related to the collective judgment.

We would like to think that we are still able to focus as a single entity (or thinker) with a collective judgment. We are free to give life to issues that are really important. We are free to feed themes we wish to be fed.

THE
ZAN
GALLERY

Six:Thirty

NORTHSTAR