

# NICK BELL DESIGN

A Pecha Kucha\*  
presentation given  
by Nick Bell on:  
Pecha Kucha Night  
D&AD President's Lecture  
Manchester  
8 November 2006  
Title: Cause and Effect

\*Pecha Kucha is the name of a quick-fire presentation format that was invented in Tokyo by British architects Kleine Dytham in 2005. Presenters must present 20 images that are projected on screen for only 20 seconds each. [www.pecha-kucha.org](http://www.pecha-kucha.org). Nick Bell was one of ten speakers on the night organised by D&AD. [www.dandad.co.uk](http://www.dandad.co.uk). This document is a record of Nick Bell's presentation in pdf form.

# CAUSE AND EFFECT

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We think of design as a way of improving the quality of life.

Not until we judge design from the point of view of the user is it possible to fully grasp its power.

– How it can ‘elevate the likelihood of’ us making ‘certain kinds of choices’ and help ‘shape certain kinds of behaviours’.<sup>1</sup>



Design usually takes place on the threshold of a power imbalance.

Between a controlling and cautious provider who metes design out and a suspecting though stoic public that design happens to.

With design we can choose to either: uphold relations as they are or begin to question them.



# STUPID

Design can make us more likely to be: STUPID

In America, the reason that pictures of coffins of dead US soldiers are not appearing in the US media is not because editors are getting threatening calls from the White House but because advertisers 'need a pleasant advertising environment'.<sup>2</sup>



ILL



Design can make us more likely to be: ILL

Tests prove we accept the portions that food is marketed to us in and that we tend to eat all we are served.

Standard portion sizes are increasing and most of us don't notice.

Eating more is a visual thing, which means if designers want, we can help people eat less.<sup>3</sup>

# SUICIDAL



CORSETTO DI LAC  
ZIONI DI PIZZO,  
GARÇONS. VELO  
RI DI PLASTICA,  
CONS. NELLA P  
ABITO DI CASHM  
MARC JACOBS. V  
STA; FIORE BULH

...but we are!

‘A vast industry is devoted to selling people images of themselves that bear no relation to reality... the most obvious of these is the celebration of extreme thinness just as childhood obesity becomes an epidemic’.<sup>4</sup>

Design can make us more likely to be: SUICIDAL

In Britain, 11.2% of girls self-harm.

Vogue Italia, September 2005. Photography by Mario Sorrenti.  
Wedding dress by Comme des Garçons. Model: Gemma Ward.

4. George Monbiot: The Willy Loman Syndrome, July 7, 2006. [www.monbiot.com/archives/category/advertising](http://www.monbiot.com/archives/category/advertising)



# VIOLENT



Design can make us more likely to be: VIOLENT

In children we know there is a link between junk food intake and violent behaviour.

What has also emerged is 'that children who watch more television eat more of the food it advertises'.<sup>5</sup>

Pressure groups want regulation but the right to advertise, it seems, has become enshrined as an icon of free speech.

5. George Monbiot: Feeding Crime, May 2, 2006. Referring to: Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, April 2006. [www.monbiot.com/archives/category/advertising](http://www.monbiot.com/archives/category/advertising)



# CRIMINAL



Mountjoy Prison, Dublin, Ireland. Photographer unknown.

Design can make us more likely to be: **CRIMINAL**

The bulk of our prison building designs date from the nineteenth century.

With their focus on surveillance and punishment it is no surprise that re-offending rates are running at 6 out of 10.<sup>6</sup> In adolescents it is 8 out of 10!<sup>7</sup>

Our prisons have become schools for a life in crime.

6. Adult Reconviction: results from the 2001 cohort, November 2004.  
[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/rdsolr5904.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/rdsolr5904.pdf)

7. Re-offending of juveniles: results from the 2004 cohort, June 2006.  
[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/hosb1006.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/hosb1006.pdf)



**EXCLUDED**



Design can make us more likely to be: EXCLUDED

How we choose to move influences the design of our neighbourhoods.

If we choose to drive, there is a chance the design of our neighbourhoods will exclude the sizable minority who don't.



The excluded may then be subjected to a polluted and dangerous environment where most services and information may not address them.<sup>8</sup>

Buford Highway, Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Photos by 'everysandwich' on flickr:  
[www.flickr.com/photos/everysandwich/tags/bufordfred/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/everysandwich/tags/bufordfred/) July 2006.

8. Our Ailing Communities. Interview with Richard Jackson, Metropolismag.com, October 11, 2006.



# HARDCORE



Designers can help redress the balance.

But when it comes to designing for behaviour change, the more top down our approach, the less likely we are to succeed.

Designers should stop solving problems, (telling people what to do).<sup>9</sup> As people are more likely to do the opposite.

Design can make us more likely to be: **HARDCORE**



# CO-DESIGN



Instead we should work with users rather than for them.

For designers to participate successfully in the emerging field of service design, it is going to require a fundamental shift in our professional identity.<sup>10</sup>

Open up. Share your expertise. Remind yourself that users are not the faceless masses.

# SHARED



Become people-facing, uncover need, foster dialogue and help to create capability in others.

Service design is not a 'single hit' like a lot of graphic design can be.

It is about 'enabling relationships' – of a time based nature – over a networked structure.<sup>11</sup>







Design can make it easier for us to be: **SAFE**

It might be ugly but this is the future in urban traffic signage.

All traffic signs, road markings and kerbs, that say to drivers 'This is your space', have been removed to make the road one big pavement.

Drivers stop looking at signs and start looking at people.<sup>12</sup>

# GREEN

Design can make it easier for us to be: GREEN

One of the guiding principles of service design is the handing over of tools so that people can help themselves.

This is a 24/7 car rental service designed to help you not own a car.

Book online, find the car parked in your street, unlock with your membership card, key in your PIN and away you go.<sup>13</sup>

The screenshot shows the Streetcar website interface. At the top, there's a blue header with the Streetcar logo and navigation links: 'What's Streetcar?', 'Join', 'Locations', 'Pricing', 'For Organisations', 'User Guide', and 'FAQs'. The date '17:43 30 Oct 2006' is displayed in the top right. Below the header, the main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, a blue box titled 'The self-service pay-as-you-go car' describes the service: 'Streetcar's new Volkswagen Golfs are available on demand 24/7 for rent by the hour, day, week or month. Book any car in the fleet online or by phone, and then use your Streetcar smartcard to pick up and return the car. It costs as little as 4.95 per hour or 35 per 24 hours. More >>'. To the right of this text is a large image of a blue car's side mirror and door handle, with a yellow circular badge that says 'No joining fee!'. Further right, there are three buttons: 'Book a Streetcar' (orange), 'Member Login' (blue), and 'Join Streetcar' (green). Below these is a 'Location Search' section with a text input field for a postcode, a 'Go' button, and a link to 'Or click here to browse all UK locations >>'. At the bottom, there's a 'For Organisations' section with text: 'Streetcar for Companies, HR managers, Public Sector, Transport Planners. More>>'. Below the main content area, a section titled 'How does it work?' outlines a four-step process: 1. Book (By phone or use our easy online booking engine, with a graphic of '10.00AM' and a checkmark), 2. Unlock (Your Streetcard will let you into the car, with a graphic of a Streetcard), 3. PIN (Type a unique PIN into the dashboard, with a graphic of four asterisks), and 4. Drive (Use the car like it's your own, with a graphic of a car).



# HEALTHY

part of a project by the Design Council and Kent County Council exploring the difference design can make in the health sector.

What's this mob thing?  
See the centre spread or visit  
[www.weare mobs.org](http://www.weare mobs.org)

# your.mob.

## welliemob's weekly wellie workout

News, ideas, advice and listings.  
All you need for starting and running your mob.

[www.weare mobs.org](http://www.weare mobs.org)

Design can make it easier for us to be: **HEALTHY**

For these women keeping active was a habit they found difficult to maintain.

That was until a team of design researchers found out that they were more likely to exercise regularly if they were in a group.

They were all introduced to each other. Formed a 'mob'. And now they walk their dogs together accompanied by a personal trainer.<sup>14</sup>

14. ActivMobs, a platform that supports people to get active and stay active co-designed by the RED team at the Design Council and Kent County Council, 2005.



# NEIGHBOURLY



Paradise Park SureStart Centre, Mackenzie Road, Islington, London N1.  
DSDHA Architects. Photography: Edmund Sumner.

Design can make  
it easier for us to  
be: NEIGHBOURLY

When we get old,  
we'll want to look  
after ourselves,  
won't we?

But we might  
become isolated  
at home.

The current  
roll-out of 3,500  
children's  
centres nation-  
wide provides an  
unexpected  
opportunity:

A few design  
tweaks and they  
could be centres  
for grandparents  
too.<sup>15</sup>

15. Future Imperfect by  
Stephen Burke and Ann  
Rossiter. The Guardian,  
October 25, 2006



# ALERT

Design can make it easier for us to be: ALERT

Acting on information that a child's attentiveness in class is linked directly to how hydrated they are, product designer Mark Champkins, with a class of school kids, has prototyped water bottle designs that remind them to drink while they work.

They have also designed a bag that makes school chairs more comfortable.<sup>16</sup>



# INTERESTED



And if you still can't get them to concentrate, challenge them with something they are interested in.

Designers in America are creating Game Designer, software that will help high-school kids learn to design their own computer games.

In collaboration, students learn to strategise their way through complex situations.<sup>17</sup>

Design can make it easier for us to be: **INTERESTED**



# CARE



Design can make it easier for us to: CARE

Kiva is a pioneering money-lending web platform that delivers to the user an unparalleled depth of information and control.

From a list profiling low-income entrepreneurs you can choose who to loan to.

It has raised one million dollars, from more than 10,000 lenders, for businesses in 15 countries.<sup>18</sup>

Julius Esiat, butcher, Mbale, Uganda. [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)

18. kiva.org as brought to my attention by Jennie Winhall on the RED blog. Featured on Goodmagazine.com by Catherine Livingstone, September 5, 2006.

# REASSURE



Japan Rail trainseat upholstery, Japan.  
Photograph: Aaron Seymour, April 2004

From the perspective of service design we learn that it is empathy, support and dialogue that people want.

Not commodified products or branded services they don't have a say in.<sup>19</sup>

The mantra of service design is 'We are what we do, not what we own'.<sup>20</sup>

19. Journey to the Interface by Joe Heapy and Sophia Harper. Demos, July 2006.

20. [www.livework.co.uk](http://www.livework.co.uk)



Actions speak  
louder than words.  
It's a cliché. They  
do.

If your French is  
not up to it, ask  
the person next  
to you what this  
says and see if  
they blush.



Photography: Aaron Seymour, Paris, May 2003.