CONVERTING HORIZONTAL MEDIA FOR VERTICAL PLATFORMS

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A MANUAL MADE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCOVERING, DEVELOPING, AND INSTRUCTING METHODS FOR MORE EFFECTIVELY CONVERTING HORIZONTAL MEDIA (TV, MOVIES, ETC) INTO VERTICAL MEDIA (PHONES, TABLETS, ETC) FOR VERTICAL PLATFORMS (SOCIAL MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT APPS, ETC).

SENIOR PROJECT PROCESS BOOK BY
ERIC HERNANDEZ
ABOUT ME

ERIC HERNANDEZ
Hey, I’m Eric Hernandez, a Graphic Communication Major concentrating in GrC Management. I’m from Los Angeles and have loved art, sports, entertainment, and graphics my whole life. I just love creating things and this major, and especially this project, have reflected that.
ABSTRACT

Today, most media is viewed on mobile phones and seen on a vertical screen. There are very few methods for converting horizontal media into vertical media for vertical platforms. This manual shows new ways to redesign horizontal content so that it looks better on vertical displays; I imagine watching things like the Super Bowl or the The Grammys on platforms like TikTok or Instagram with a new broadcast design that is more attractive.
PROBLEM STATEMENT

Mobile applications have widely adopted “portrait-oriented” user experiences and have thus centered their design around being portrait rather than landscape. Most media prior to smartphones were designed for landscape presentations (TV, movies, etc) and this causes a drop in experience when converting that older styled media into new styled platforms. There are currently only a few conversion methods and no methods for “portrait-first” media that would previously be landscape. A new set of methods for converting landscape media into portrait media would vastly improve their user preference compared to current methods and could create a new media channel for both the content and the platform if implemented.
PROJECT OBJECTIVE

PURPOSE

• I want to practice “design with a purpose.” Many times, my only purpose is to make something look attractive and this project should help me design with intention.

• When methods are driven by purpose they are easier to get adopted by others.

• Success will be measured by the ease of which someone else will understand why I developed the methods I did. This will be found through a survey.

DESIGN

• I want to develop new methods for a type of design work that is rarely explored. I have never developed fleshed out design concepts, I have only ever learned them.

• Success will be measured by a preference in the new methods rather than old. This will be found through the survey.
INSTRUCTION

• I want to understand my specific design method so well that I can teach it to anyone.

• I also want to be able to dictate a manual that is successful in being a single point of instruction. No teacher should be required to translate the text for the reader.

• Success will be measured by how well a reader/learner of the manual can understand it and possibly demonstrate it. This will be found through the survey.
DETERMINING SUCCESS

I monitored my project’s success by many criteria, including:

• Producing a paperback version of the manual that is printed, bound, and understandable by any level of designer.

• Producing a digital/PDF version of the manual that is uploaded to OneDrive and made accessible through a link or QR code.

• Producing an online version of the manual that appears as a website and better displays the new methods of conversion with video displays of the “before” and “after” media along with “How-to” videos instructing how to carry out the new methods.
TIMELINE

This project went really well for me. The work was able to be done almost exactly at the pace that I set out to do it. I have never had a schedule for a project before, aside from due dates. And the use of one for this project helped me greatly. I was able to make consistent progress on my project and assign some safety time in case I wasn’t able to stay on schedule. I found that sitting down and doing a ton of work all at once would get my work done more productively. I tend to be most productive when I work for most of the day on project. I benefited from shifting workflow plans during the middle weeks of my project. I figured out, in the middle of my project, that I could save overall workload by shifting the order that I created my visuals. It ended up pushing the finish date of some of my visuals back but ended up finishing them all at the same time.
To start the process of making the manual, I did research. I found that recently people started watching content on their phones vertically just as much as watching something horizontally. This rise in vertical dominance is also evident in the large amount of revenue that TikTok alone brings in a year. And most importantly, people don’t like watching videos horizontally on their phones.
INDUSTRY FINDINGS

I discovered that vertical screens are better at more focused content. That Platforms have a monumental impact on design space. That advertiser right now show faulty design practices for vertical media. And that there is variation in how much you can convert media.

MANUAL DESIGN

With all this info, I started designing my manual. I had to write out the manual, design the appearance of it, produce a printed product, and finally design a website version of it.
WRITING THE TEXT

In writing the text I had to decide on what ideas and concepts I wanted to cover in my manual. I wanted it to be instructional in language, like a school textbook. And lastly, I wanted to make it understandable by anyone. The least experienced designer should be able to get the concepts.

TYPOGRAPHY

In designing the look of the manual, I chose to go with a minimalistic design for the covers and pages. I made really sharp and vibrant visual examples, and I made the pages large and easy to consume.
PRINTING

For printing, I went to UGS and decided to make it spiral bound to come off as more approachable. I used large pages and strong colors. And I wanted the manual to be durable, I used thicker paper than I would see in other manuals.

WEB PUBLISHING

Next, I designed the website. I chose to use Adobe Portfolio because it was simple and it capture the minimal design I used in the print version. I also divided chapters into separate pages rather than them all being in one page with the reader needing to scroll for ages.
VISUALIZATION DEVELOPMENT

The most fun part for me was the creating of the visuals for the manual. I started by choosing what content I was going to be using, then assigned each content to a specific conversion concept or step. This allowed for readers to be able to see conversions carried out on different media. After those were completed I was easily able to take still images from those videos to use in the still versions.

VISUALS

The visuals consisted of different types of conversion, showing different levels of severity. There are also “point and look” images that show specific aspects of concepts. And there were also broken down visuals that showed the pieces of the content that would be shuffled around for conversion.

UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY

In doing my project I discovered that many brands and companies don’t show good design practices when making vertical content. This, Little Caesars ad for example has overlapping text that makes half of the information illegible. There is room for industry improvement shown here and my manual adequately covers this.
PROJECT REFLECTION

What Went Well

This project went really well for me. The work was able to be done almost exactly at the pace that I set out to do it. I set out to make a moderately useful instructional and experimental manual, but I ended up finding great discoveries in current trends of design and discovering new ideas that can be extremely useful in how businesses advertise. My deliverables, printed/pdf/website manuals, all turned out better than expected. Especially the printed version of the manual was much more attractive in-person than in my head.
Tips/Techniques That Helped

Gantt Chart Scheduling
I have never had a schedule for a project before, aside from due dates. And the use of one for this project helped me greatly. I was able to make consistent progress on my project and was also able to assign some safety time in case I wasn’t able to stay on schedule.

Making Time for Bulk Work Periods
I found that sitting down and doing a ton of work all at once would get my work done more productively. I think this would only work for people who have trouble with taking small bites out of projects. I tend to most productive when I work for most of the day on project.
Being Able to Change Plans

I benefited from shifting workflow plans during the middle weeks of my project. I figured out, in the middle of my project, that I could save overall workload by shifting the order that I created my visuals. It ended up pushing the finish date of some of my visuals back but ended up finishing them all at the same time.

What Could Go Better

Everything turned out better than I expected, but I wish I would have had an extra pair of eyes that could take a look at my manual. The writing and layout of my manual had many mistakes in the early drafts, and I would have liked to have an experienced graphic designer or publisher look it over so I wouldn’t have to look over it multiple times because my eyes were preconditioned to overlook the mistakes since I was the one who made them. I should have reached out to someone I know that has experience in publishing or in writing.
Problems/Challenges I Faced

Manual Theme
I had trouble with creating the visual theme of the manual. The cover and pages needed to have a consistent appearance, but this made me struggle with deciding on a design. I ended up spending way too much time settling on a cover and this pushed back the time I had for designing the inside of the manual. I should have chosen a mood/theme/look faster.

Binding Consideration
I spent a lot of time working with UGS because I ended up sending them a file that was not made with binding in mind. My margins didn’t consider the space needed for binding, and I ended up needing multiple rounds of revisions for making my manual file ready for printing and binding.

Page Layout
I had trouble designing the pages of my manual. I think this was because I have had a long length of time since doing this type of design work in GrC 318. All the taught methods and practices from GrC 318 eventually came back to me and I implemented them, but there was more time allotted to it than possible.
What I Would Do Differently

More Expansive Scope.
I had a lot of time to do my project, and it benefited from that, but I think my manual could have had more topics covered in it. I would have loved to speak on industry trends in the past, present, and future; or maybe even a chapter about how independent creators have discovered design methods for their own content that can be aptly used in my manual’s ideas.

Different Page Dimensions
I found that my manual’s page dimensions were slightly unattractive and didn’t quite match the image in my head. I would have preferred a more slender manual. I imagined a manual like one you would get with a large appliance that you need a manual to understand how to use.

Adding Durability
After I had the manuals printed at UGS, they spoke to me about how they offer plastic pages that can go over the front and back covers. This is meant protect the manual from getting scuffed and damaged. I would have liked to add these to my manual.
REFERENCES


