

GIACOMO GABRIELLI

# IN FORMS WE TRUST

*A reflection on form design and its importance in modern society*



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# Introduction

**When skimming through a telephone bill, we decode a form to verify how much we have spent over the month. When punching a bus ticket, we are filling in a form with data regarding the time and place of our journey. When we pay for a cup of coffee, we receive a form providing us with information about our purchase. When voting for a candidate in an election, we express our political preference on a form.**

Forms are silent protagonists of our everyday life. They are all around us, and most of the time we do not even notice them: they are the *deus ex machina* that enables society to function, a means we blindly rely on and, as often happens with something so persistently present, a tangible reality we tend to completely take for granted.

The term '**form**', which can be confusing given its lexical ambiguity (for its obvious homonymy with 'form' intended as 'shape'), refers to **documents conceived to carry and store information for a large number of purposes**: ap-

plications, registrations, certificates, invoices, questionnaires, declarations, tickets are only some of the numerous identifiable categories, the lowest common denominator of which is the fact that they transport information.

We trust forms, but we don't particularly like them: they are an unavoidable necessity that is unconsciously associated with negative, annoying and unpleasant events and places, such as accidents, bills and hospitals. The indisposition towards forms experienced by both users and providers is therefore quite natural, and it becomes almost unavoidable if considering

the poor, unclear, unappealing and unfriendly design that most forms 'suffer' from.

What will be investigated in the following is whether design can actually help forms to be easier and more comfortable for people to use, and therefore make their use less painful from a practical, and hence psychological, point of view. Given the enormous quantity of documents that are issued on a daily basis, a conscious visual planning following a few simple but efficient guidelines, could prove to be the right medicine for curing forms' most common and lethal of diseases: **irrelevance and unclarity**.

**CHAPTER 1**

# **THE PARADOX OF FORMS**



## 1.1

# Why we need forms

Forms are at the same time an attribute and a necessity of the type of society in which we live.

Ancient models of human organization did not need them: a social structure limited to a small village, for example, would not have required such a means of control by the mere fact that everyone basically knew everyone else, and the information required from the villagers was very limited and manageable on a small scale. But, as society evolved and became broader and more complex, the necessity to manage data in a structured way became impelling: the Roman Republic, for instance, felt the need to keep track of its population (especially for taxes and military service purpose) through a written means of regulation such as the census.<sup>1</sup> The industrial society in which we live revolves

around forms: we value information and efficiency, and forms are quintessential tools we use to collect information in an efficient way. Institutions must keep track of enormous amounts of incoming data, and this data requires standardization in order to be manageable: this is the reason that forms have become ubiquitous for all aspects of our lives. From birth certificates to driving licenses, taxes, travel documents, medical triage, school and work applications, statistical inquiries, and innumerable other purposes, forms are the means by which every moment of a mem-

ber of society's existence is regulated.

When we talk about forms, we are talking communication. An unfilled-out form can be thought of as an empty, white canvas waiting for the painter's first brush stroke: the potentials are almost unlimited, as the result might be bad, or mediocre, or at best a masterpiece, but whatever the outcome, the action itself will transform the canvas into a means of communication by

**When we talk about forms, we are talking communication. An unfilled-out form can be thought of as an empty, white canvas waiting for the painter's first brush stroke: the potentials are almost unlimited.**

marking the artist's existence and individuality. Form documents are no different: they ask for information, channel it and allow the information to travel. Forms are therefore not only a

means of communication, but also the incarnation of communication at its essentials: in *The Form Book*, (2007) Borries Schwesinger defines them as *frameworks for communication, comprised of text and graphics, and including fixed and variable pieces of information*.<sup>2</sup> The framework becomes a means of communication once the form has been filled in.

The advantages of conveying information in a medium like a form document are countless.

First of all, a form reduces the need for oral communication to *nihil*: this is supposed to wipe out all possible language errors and other mistakes commonly caused by orality, errors that are likely to

lead to the wrong transcriptions of data.

The risk of making mistakes when writing down or memorizing dictated information should of course not be underestimated: a wrong address written on a shipping order due

to misinterpretation, for example, could be the cause of an incorrect shipping of a product to a client, or to the necessity of having the item returned and shipped a second time, not before checking the cause of the mistake. In both cases, this means a loss of money and time for the company, but also the potential loss of a customer. In short, as obvious as it may seem, none of the parties profit from erroneous information.

But the consequences of this kind of mistake could take a turn to the worse when, for example, it occurs in the context of healthcare: a wrong dosage of a medicine caused by a misunderstanding during

a phone conversation with a physician represents a tangible risk of serious consequences for a patient.

The superior reliability of written communication was the reason that led human beings

to feel the need to write in the first place. A well known Latin expression from the philosopher Titus Lucretius Carus (99 BC - 55 BC), while speaking in front of the Roman Senate, says: '*Verba Volant, Scripta Manent*'. Literally, 'Spoken words fly, written words remain'.<sup>3</sup> Information is written down, black on white, so that others will be able to access and make use of it, even long after it has been written. But conversely, Lucretius was also referring to the dangers of wrong or misleading *scripta*, which, unlike the spoken word, remains in time, and can thus bring about negative effects even long after its creation. Writing always requires a certain amount of caution, and this should also apply to written dispositions made to obtain information from others, such as the object of our investigation: form documents.

The fact that forms allow the meticulous storage and organization of information over long spans of time is another of their advantages: such documents stand the test of time and allow the accession of data regardless of how many years or decades have passed.

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Page from the H. O'Neill & Co. 1897-8 *Fall & Winter Fashion Catalogue*.

**Fig 3.**

The Italian medical prescriptions are compiled on electromagnetic machine-readable forms.



When we fill in the blanks in a form, we leave a mark. A form with our data written in it is the proof of our existence and of our presence in society: it is a stamp on virgin paper that can potentially outlive us by an indefinite number of years, an inheritance of individuality that we are often unaware of. The documents with our information on them will not only survive us, but also the people who issued them and required

us to fill them in, and possibly even their institutions. This is undoubtedly one of the powers and advantages of their amazing endurance. No matter what happens to the structure of a company, changes in its leadership or in its personnel, the merging with other business-

es or the failure of the company itself, the information provided by forms remains and is passed on. A telephone number or an email address thoughtlessly typed on a digital form could easily 'condemn' its user to endless harassment by vendors' calls and spam mails: once again, *scripta manent*.

The inevitable physical limits of paper forms have been overcome with the advent of the

digital dimension, which has provided them with a life that is virtually unlimited. Yet, after this acknowledgment of their extensive qualities and limitless functions, we may wonder: **why doesn't anyone seem to like forms?**

**When we fill in the blanks in a form, we leave a mark. A form with our data written in it is the proof of our existence and of our presence in society.**

**Fig 4.**

When filling in a form, we leave a mark of our individuality.



## 1.2

# Why doesn't anybody like forms?

What is fascinating and incredible about forms is that they are intrinsically gifted with a rather powerful conceptual contradiction: on one hand, they are an essential and indispensable means of communication. Without forms, companies could not hand out information to their clients or keep track of who they actually are, jurisdictions could not record names and

events, we couldn't keep track of our incomes and expenditures, or even take a bus or see a film in a cinema: forms are at the base of modern society, and it would be no overstatement to say that they are basically the oil that ensures that the gears of this system function smoothly. On the other hand, when it comes to using, planning and designing forms, no one

seems to acknowledge their intrinsic usefulness or actually credit them, as they should. Now, as shallow as this statement may seem, this is a concrete reality, and it is the baseline of the problem:

**forms irritate users, are taken for granted by providers, and are basically discounted by designers.**

Fig 5.

Detail of the 1040 American tax form.



### 1.2.1 Why users dislike forms

Let's face it: **forms can be a nightmare.**

It's a commonplace that we as users dislike forms. If asked about it, the majority of people will confirm this: we don't like reading them, we don't like filling them in or even the idea of having to deal with them. At best we consider them a mere nuisance, and at worst, one of civilization's necessary evils.

This is first of all a consequence of their function: forms are naturally associated with negative events, such as car accidents, legal and medical issues, taxes, bills, fines, divorces: moreover, they are also perceived as a bureaucratic means of control, a way of keeping a record of what we do, what we pay for, who we associate with, who we are. They can seem, in other words, a powerful and efficient weapon used by 'Big Brother' to monitor our life and to ask without giving back.

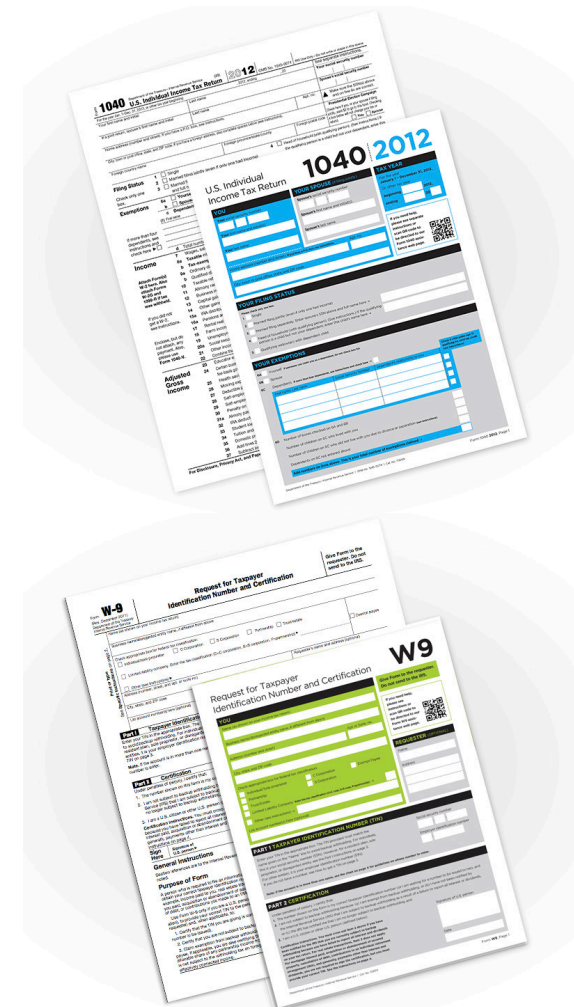
Secondly, but not least importantly, the way most forms are visually conceived is, itself, a cause of stress and discomfort. The sight of the American 1040 tax form will immediately generate a sense of hostility and negativity in any tax

payer (or tax evader): first of all for its function (taxes are often, with quite a dose of dark humour, listed alongside inevitabilities like death), but also for its sterile and complicated design. This is the perfect example of a form that, when used, does not put the user at ease, and it is undeniable that design design plays a very central role in this lack. The New York based design studio FormNation spotted the problem and came out with a brilliant redesign of the 1040 and the W9 US tax forms: this self-initiated project, developed for both hardcopies

and digital, shows how design can significantly improve and facilitate the experience of every day life. The new forms appear much clearer and more user friendly, with the prioritized sections

guiding the tax payer through the form, and the strong color-coding allowing the reader to immediately distinguish the two different modules. Thus, the confusion caused by the original forms is minimized. The project, however, has not yet been approved by the US government, which only goes to show how often the institutions themselves can be short sighted about this kind of issue.<sup>4</sup>

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**Fig 6,7.**  
FormNation's 1040 and W9 tax forms redesign.



### 1.2.2 Why providers dislike forms

The practical importance of forms is universally acknowledged, but their design is often underestimated and considered a practice that does not require specific visual notions. Companies and institutions prefer, therefore, to have their forms designed within their establishments, and this task is very likely to be entrusted to 'amateur' designers. A good example of this phenomenon is represented by the application form for the master courses at LUCA Campus Sint-Lukas Brussels (which will be analysed in chapter 3 as a case study). An official in the International Office of the school explained that he had designed part of the forms himself (he is not a graphic designer), while the rest had been put together by one of the secretaries of the Office. This is a case in point of the procedure by which documents are designed by personnel within an institution, who are knowledgeable about their workplace and duties, but who have little or no graphic training and no background in graphic design. Why does this happen? Economic rationalizations may certainly play their part. Hiring a professional designer to create the company forms is an extra cost that is considered avoidable. While institutions pay de-

**Companies find themselves with thousands of different forms none of which has a precise visual identity, which end up causing disorganization, mistakes, and time-consuming cross-checking, exactly the opposite of the intended result.**

signers for all of the graphic aspects of their communication, they are reluctant when it comes to spending anything extra on the design of their documents, a necessity that is seen as a pure formality and all in all, a rather unchallenging task. In the long run, however, a targeted and intelligent visual planning could save companies a lot of money and headaches.

A lack of visual knowledge about document design and procedure processes almost inevitably results in redundancy and overlap. Companies find themselves with thousands of different forms none of which has

a precise visual identity, which end up causing disorganization, mistakes, and time-consuming cross-checking, exactly the opposite of the intended result!

The effects of a visual planning can indeed be remarkable. In March 2014, most American and international newspapers published the story of Suvir Mirchandani, a fourteen year

old schoolboy from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who calculated that the US administration could save up to 24% of its printing costs (for an amount of almost 400 million dollars) by simply changing the official typeface of its documents from Times New Roman to Garamond.<sup>5</sup>

Type experts have since discredited this calculation. First of all, 12 points bodysized Garamond is actually significantly smaller, and therefore less readable, than 12 points bodysized Times New Roman: to maintain the same readability, the font should therefore be enlarged. But even if Mirchandani's calculation was right, and changing the font actually did save on ink, this would not necessarily translate to money saving: the government does not pay ink the way regular consumers do, because, as many companies do, it strikes deals with outside companies that charge per page printed, regardless of how much ink or toner is used.<sup>6</sup> Despite, or perhaps in part due to these criticisms, however, Mirchandani's calculation managed to put more

focus on the importance of design for economizing, and on how the numbers involved can indeed be significant.

Simplifying communication and helping organizations save money on this kind of expense is the task of the Simplification Centre, a non-profit organization directed by information designer Rob Waller. The Centre offers consultancy and training with both producers of information and users, and its work can be summed up as 'taking complex information and making it clear and simple for everyone to understand'.<sup>7</sup>

One of the examples used by the Centre to explain their work is the redesign of the UK Bus Lane Penalty Charge Notice. In an explicative document provided on the Centre's website in

which the old form and the new one are shown side-by-side, the potential users are asked: 'which of these notices would you prefer to receive in the mail? Which would get you to the next step fastest: paying the penalty charge, or challenging on solid grounds?' And likewise, the potential issuing authorities are asked: 'which one would be the most efficient, reduce the most enquiries and groundless appeals, and best represent your values?'<sup>8</sup> These questions are applicable to all categories of documents, which should always be conceived both from the point of view of the user and from that of the provider.

**So what about designers?**



**Fig 8.**

At the same bodysize, Times New Roman regular appears bigger than Garamond regular.

### 1.2.3 Why designers dislike forms

Not all graphic designers consider form design an interesting or appealing practice. When talking about this research with fellow designers, their first reaction was a quite predictable reluctance to accept the idea as valuable. After talking about the topic at greater length to them, however, they had to admit the value of the subject and its undeniable importance. Making tangible and concrete improvements in people's everyday lives should be a fulfilling achievement for any designer!

Forms should therefore be seen as an opportunity to produce a design that matters and which can make a difference, not by adding new layers to the already saturated

world of visual communication, but by improving it, polishing and simplifying it, and making it more accessible. Designing a form is therefore nothing less than designing a way-finding system for a building: the user should be unconsciously guided in a clear and unmistakable way from the entrance to the exit, he should be

put in the condition of being able to find exactly what he is looking for inside the structure, and to move from one point to the other with confidence, and to return to his point of departure if that is what he needs to do.

The design of most of the forms we have to deal with in our daily experience is generally repetitious and monotonous. A form is a visual tool with a precise function, and its

design should embody that precise function, excluding anything that is superfluous and unnecessary. This does not mean, however, that the document can not be made visually more interesting and appealing. The real challenge for a form designer is therefore to combine

efficiency and appeal: user-friendliness also entails pleasing the eye, and functionality should not omit visual values. A user will be more willing to navigate through a website if it is well designed, and the same criteria apply to a newspaper or a book.

Why should forms be any different?

**When designing a form document, a designer is not simply arranging elements on a workspace: he is creating a navigational system. Design is the compass that allows the user to sail easily through the stormy seas of communication.**

The image shows the American CMS 1500 'Health Insurance Claim' form. It is a complex form with multiple sections and fields. The form is titled 'HEALTH INSURANCE CLAIM FORM' and includes a header with '1500' and 'NUCC Approved 1990'. The form is divided into sections for Patient and Insured Information, Physician and Supplier Information, and Billing Information. The form is a standard CMS-1500 form used for health insurance claims.

Fig 9.

American CMS 1500 'Health Insurance Claim' form.

# LIFECYCLE OF A FORM



## Providers

Providers are institutions or companies that manage large quantities of data, and issue forms for various purposes; they are usually at the start and end point of a form's life cycle, and often don't understand the importance of a visual planning when it comes to form design, so rather than hire professional, they prefer to design their forms themselves.



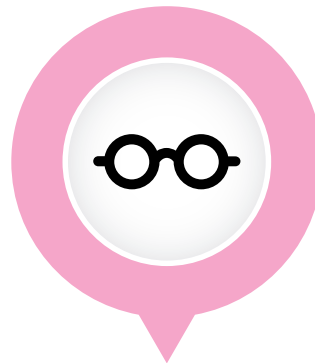
## Designers

Designers are specialists who's work gives the form a visual framework. Commonly, designers consider form design a boring and unchallenging practice, and show little interest in it.



## Users

Users are individuals who give the form a meaning by interacting with it. Once a form is produced, it is multiplied and handed out to an unlimited number of users. Users usually don't like to fill in forms, because of their poor design and often unpleasant functions.



**The provider feels the need for a form system to standardize data**

**The provider commissions a designer to build the form's visual framework.**

**The form is released to collect or to provide information. If meant to collect, users provide their data and return it.**

**If the form's purpose is to collect data, it then returns to the provider and the data is stored.**



CHAPTER 2

# HOW TO DESIGN FORMS:

*visual and psychological criteria*

## 2.1

### A form's ingredients

**Forms are essentially workspaces on which a number of visual elements such as lines, text, geometric symbols and spaces are laid out. While sometimes quite simple and easily deciphered, forms can also become extremely complex visual structures. The more fraught and chaotic this structure is, the more stressful it will be for the user to properly achieve his goals.<sup>9</sup>**

In *The Laws of Simplicity* (2006), the designer and computer-scientist **John Maeda** fixes as his first basic law to achieve simplicity in design and technology the concept of 'Reduce': the reduction Maeda talks about, though, should always be thoughtful, and the designer should try to find the right balance between simplicity and complexity. *The simplest way to achieve simplicity is through thoughtful reduction*, Maeda says: *When in doubt, just remove. But be careful of what you remove.*<sup>10</sup> Designing forms should also follow this principle: reducing can be a tool of clarity, but it should be

used with judgement. For example, a part of text explaining a requirement on an application might seem to make the general structure of the form more saturated, but it is actually very helpful for the applicant, and should therefore not be removed.

One of the main functions of a form is to ensure that all of the stakeholders involved in its usage cycle have to think as little as possible when dealing with it. That is, the form itself should guide the user to furnish the correct information being requested, and the provider to manage that information correctly. Forms are

therefore required to be standardized frameworks made of certain, familiar elements, whose function should be immediately recognized by the user.

Paper forms are conceived either to be filled in by hand, with a typewriter (although this system has practically disappeared) or by computer (and overprinted): nowadays forms also come in digital format, but the main compositional elements remain the same.

The **'archetypal' form** is made of a number of recurrent visual components, which can be synthesized in: **grid, text, blanks and checkboxes.**

# ARCHETYPAL FORM ELEMENTS

**HEADING\_ARCHETYPAL FORM ELEMENTS**

Notes\_Please fill out this form with your information.

1. Question

2. Question

3. Question

4. Date

5. Question

6. Question

7. Question

8. Question

11. Multiple choice question

12. Multiple choice question

13. Multiple choice question

14. Multiple choice question

15. Your signature

Logo

Contacts

Grid

Module for office use

Page numbering (marker)

**Fig 10.**

Model of a generic archetypal form with its basic components.

### 2.1.1 Grid

A typographical grid is an invisible tool for assembling text and image: it divides a plane into smaller fields that act as compartments, and allow the disposition of visual elements in a systematic and logical way. This design method has much in common with architecture, insofar as a building's facades can be compared to page layouts, and repeated dimensions such as columns can be compared to text and lines: the grid is an invisible but extraordinary controlling principle. The concept itself of a grid is inbred in typography from the nature of letterpress printing, as the letters were produced on a rectangular base, composed in horizontal lines and arranged in vertical columns. Type was produced in fixed sizes: typography was intrinsically a modular system.

In *Grid systems in graphic design* (1981), Josef Muller-Brockmann (1914 - 1996) defines the grid as *the expression of a professional ethos: the designer's work should have the clearly intelligible, objective, functional and aesthetic*

*quality of mathematical thinking.*<sup>11</sup>

The introduction of the grid is considered to be the biggest revolution brought to graphic design by the *Die Neue Typographie* and subsequently by the Swiss Style: it is thought that one of the main reasons that led to its development was the introduction of a three-column text page to accommodate tri-lingual publications (German, French and Italian).<sup>12</sup> The grid emerged very gradually: in 1940 the designer Max Bill (1908 - 1994) used a grid made of nine rectangles (three horizontal, three vertical), and in 1949 he started using a grid of two columns plus half a column, which allowed him to organize the photographs in different sizes and proportions.<sup>13</sup> Richard Paul Lohse (1902 - 1988), in *Neue Ausstellungsgestaltung* (New Exhibition Design), (1953), used a grid made of sixteen horizontal rectangles (4x4) for the ornament on the front cover. By 1960 the grid had become a routine, and it came to imply the style and methods of Swiss graphic design. On a practical level, the use of design grids allows

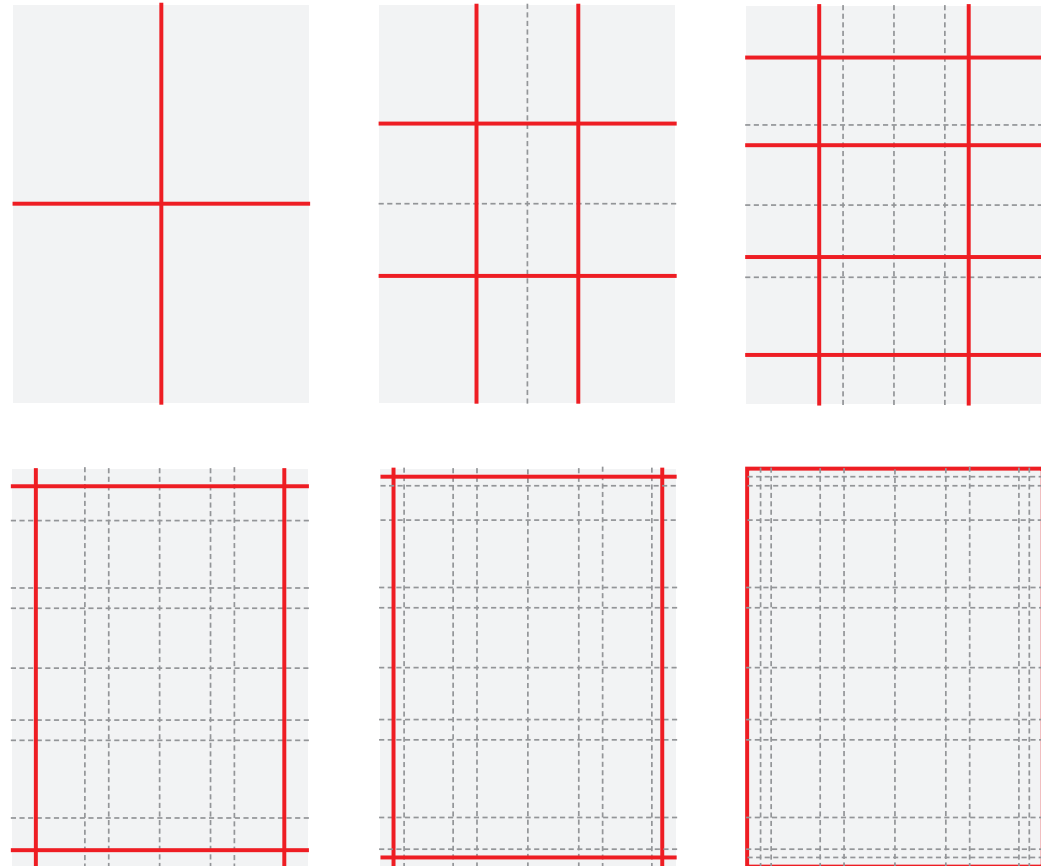
**Fig 11.**

The modularity of letterprinting makes typography itself a modular system, in which the concept of the grid is implicit.



the designer not only to imply a group, but also to guide the user's eye and to create a general sense of harmony in the visual composition: it is also the most important element for a designer in order to use the *Gestalt* law of alignment and the 'position' visual variable (which will be analyzed further on). A grid will set the rhythm and the meter of a design: this is very important for making the content accessible, helping the viewer to understand where to find the next piece of information within the layout. It sets expectations and defines the rules, timbre and, in some cases, the 'voice' of the design.

The simplest type of grid uses the **rule of thirds**, based on the golden ratio, on which leading figures in design, architecture and the arts such as Le Corbusier (1887 - 1965) and Salvador Dalí (1904 - 1989) based most of their work: this ratio refers to aesthetically pleasing proportioning within a piece (precisely 1:1.618).<sup>14</sup>



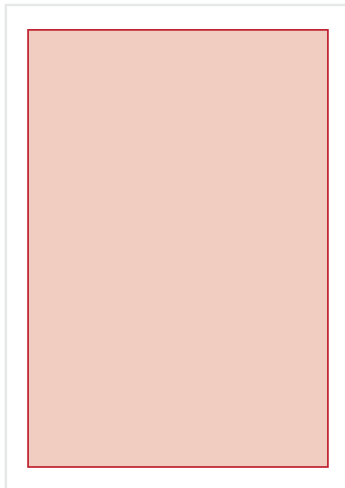
**Fig 12.**

Grid based on a continuous division of the paper size in the **golden ratio**.

**In form design, the use of the grid conveys some extremely important advantages: for example, columns and baseline grids allow designing systematically and in a more uniform way, giving the form a rhythm and a recognizable look. A design grid is structured with the following variable elements:**

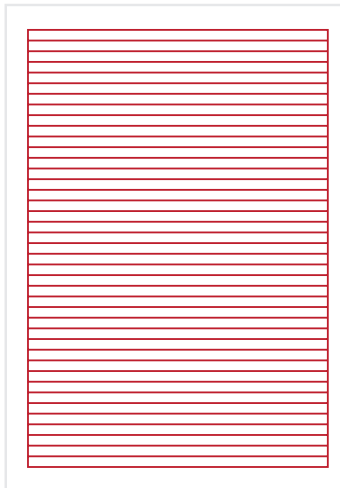
### Text area

The text area defines the printing space and the margins of the page: in book design this area is built for facing pages, but forms are usually conceived as single pages or groups of single pages in which the text area requires no mirror image.



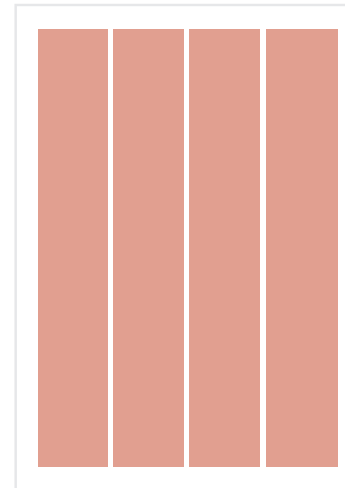
### Baseline grid

The baseline grid creates a uniform gap between all the lines in a text, and it makes sure that all the lines are evenly spaced (and easier to fill out). In forms, the standard baseline grid is 18 points high, which allows sufficient ergonomic space for the user to write in. Smaller text usually is generally not aligned to the baseline grid (only the first line is).



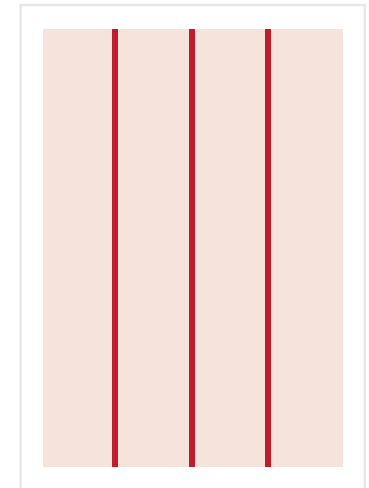
### Columns

Columns are vertical bands of modules. The more columns there are, the more flexible the layout of the form will be: layout elements can be extended across one or more columns, and the ways of dividing up a form are therefore endless. The number of columns will depend on the complexity of the content of the form and the overall size of the page.



### Gutter

The gutter is the space between columns: a wider gutter between columns will make them seem more independent, while a smaller one will suggest more cohesion. A wide enough gutter is necessary to clearly separate distinct blocks of text.



### 2.1.2 Text

The text contained in a form is the essential element for revealing what its specific purpose is, how it is supposed to be used, and to ask the user the specific questions that the issuer wants answered. The way the text is positioned within the layout and the language used will strongly affect the form's usability, as well as the psychological approach that the user will have towards the form, and the user experience provided by the form in general.

The **Bauhaus** school gave particular attention to the use of typography, especially during the Dessau years (1925 - 1932) with the work of Herbert Bayer (1900 - 1985).<sup>15</sup> Bayer, a former Bauhaus student in Weimar and professor of the newly added typography and graphic design workshop in Dessau, made striking typographic design innovations along functional and constructivist lines. Bayer limited the use

of typefaces almost exclusively to sans-serif fonts, and designed 'Universal', a typeface that reduced the alphabet to clear, simple, and rationally constructed forms. This approach was consistent with the school director Walter Gropius' (1883 - 1969) advocacy of 'form follows function' principle. Bayer omitted capital letters, arguing that two alphabets (capitals and romans) are incompatible in design, with two totally different signs (such as capital A and small a, for example) expressing the same spoken sound: in 1925 the Bauhaus therefore adopted the use of only lowercase type *to save time and space*.<sup>16</sup> He experimented on text with flush-left, ragged-right typesetting without justification. Extreme contrasts of typesize and weight were used to establish a visual hierarchy of emphasis determined by an objective assessment of the relative importance of the words: Bayer also began using bars, rules, points, and squares to

determine hierarchy, but also to subdivide the space, unify diverse elements, guide the viewer's eye across a page, and call attention to important elements.

The choice of one typeface over another is up to the designer, and it is a rather important one, given typeface's crucial importance for the functional, aesthetic and psychological effect of printed matter.<sup>17</sup>

**Typefaces** can be divided in **serifs** and **sans serifs**, serifs being those having a small stroke at the end of the main strokes of characters. Commonly, serif typefaces are considered to be best for large amounts of continuous text, because of the higher differentiation of the character's features that helps the eye when having to go through large amounts of text: this is, however, not a fixed rule, and the choice is at the discretion of the designer, depending on what look he will want to give the form.





**Fig 13.**  
Herbert Bayer's 'Universal' typeface.



**Fig 14.**  
One of Herbert Bayer's cover designs for the Bauhaus magazine.

### 2.1.3 Blanks

Blanks, or gaps, are the basic instruments by means of which information is requested from the user. They are text-fields into which the user adds his written data: they can be graphically represented in various ways, using lines, boxes or empty areas.

Designers have experimented with several visual solutions for text-fields: solid lines, dotted lines, dashed lines, shadings, frames and cells are just few of the possible aspects that

a blank can take on. Some forms use text-fields with character dividers, but this solution is very limiting for the number of characters allowed, so they should be used only if absolutely necessary (machine-readable forms, for example, require this division). Divisions can be very helpful when used to ask for sums and numbers, such as money amounts (which are usually also asked to be indicated in letters) and dates (the requirement of which should always specify the ex-

act sequence, such as 'day - month - year').

### 2.1.4 Checkboxes

Checkboxes are used for multiple-choice questions, in which the user is given a range of possible answers and will have to check the one that he considers correct. The most common type of checkbox is a square with a visible stroke, but other solutions have also been attempted, such as circles, full colored squares, squares with shadings and more on.

Simple line after question. **Question** \_\_\_\_\_

Question and answer space underlined with two connected lines of different weights. **Question** \_\_\_\_\_

Question and answer space underlined with two separated lines of different weights. **Question** \_\_\_\_\_

Answer text field is a dashed line. **Question** \_\_\_\_\_

The question is highlighted in a dark field. The answer text area is a lighter field. **Question** \_\_\_\_\_

The question is highlighted in a box. The answer text area is a box with a lighter stroke. **Question** \_\_\_\_\_

The question is underlined. The answer text area is a box. **Question** \_\_\_\_\_

Simple kind of character dividers. **Question** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Other solution for character dividers. **Question** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Date requirement figure division. **Date** | d | d | m | m | y | y | y | y |

Other solution for date requirement figure division. **Date** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## 2.2

# Good and bad form design: four groups of notions

**As we have seen, the importance of form design can be widely underestimated, and this can partly be explained by the general indisposition towards the whole idea of forms, but at the same time it is also the main cause for it: it is therefore crucial for forms to be designed in the most simple, clear and understandable fashion possible.**

**What exactly distinguishes good form design from bad form design?**

Referring to typography, Beatrice Warde (1900-1969) claimed the best typography to be *invisible*: what she meant is that it should be suitable, appropriate, reinforce the meaning of the text and not mislead or distract the reader, since typography always subtly influences how we react to and interpret a document.<sup>18</sup> The design of a form should follow the same guidelines: it inevitably effects how a user approaches a document, but it should not do so in a distracting, misleading, or unpleasant way, and should therefore remain 'invisible'.

Good design is an essential factor in the efficient functioning of a form document: it should enable its user to quickly grasp how to utilize it in the most correct way possible, be it a form in which blanks must be filled out, such as an

application, or one that presents information, such as an invoice.

A document doesn't necessarily have to look good, but it has to work well. The rule of thumb here is function over form, or form in service of the function.

Not all designers dislike forms, of course. The affirmation in section Chapter 1 is more a provocation than a verifiable fact, but it was intended to set the focus on the problem and, despite its exaggerated oversimplification, it reveals some truth when referring to a general trend. The history of graphic design, however, does offer many examples that can be referred to as 'best practices', which designers can take in account as guidelines when approaching this challenging discipline.

The **Simplification Centre** is one of the main organizations in the design panorama that deals with problems regarding forms on a daily basis: it refers to its function as 'dealing with the communication of complex information'.<sup>19</sup> Rob Waller, the Centre's director, explains that one of the main services provided to customers is benchmarking, namely the evaluation of their documents based on a set of criteria, so that they can be compared to the quality of others based on strengths and weaknesses. The benchmark criteria used by the Simplification Centre are divided into four groups of notions that can be used as general guidelines for good form design: language, design, relationship and content.

### 2.2.1 Language criteria

The language used in the text component of a form is an extremely important factor in its proper functioning and for the way users will interface themselves with the document. Many forms employ a cold, impersonal, indirect, and sometimes obscure language, comprising unknown or ambiguous abbreviations and specialized terms, all of which adds to the discomfort and uncertainty of the user, who often must ask for clarifications.

The language used in forms should first of all be direct, and passive sentences are not recommended ('We will send you a refund' is more direct and immediate than 'You will be sent a refund'). It should also be as familiar and colloquial as is allowed by the typology and subject matter involved. Simple language is easier understood and speeds up the time required to read whatever is written on the document. Words from everyday language are also easier to remember, and also affect meaningful tasks

such as judging sentences to be true or false; thus 'good' is more efficacious than 'beneficial', 'get' is better than 'receive', etc. Courteousness is another important aspect: a form that uses pleasant, friendly words and expressions will make the user psychologically more inclined to complete it. Use of an active language, with statements referred directly to the user, and a terminology that includes 'please' and 'thank you' is a good start in this direction.

### 2.2.2 Design criteria: legibility

Design influences usability in a critical way, especially when it comes to the legibility of the fonts and of the text layout, and legibility passes through a number of factors, like typography, line length, and leading.

Typography is designing with type in order to communicate a message. Modern design tools offer the opportunity of using type in many sizes and styles, so that designers can easily be tempted into fancying up their de-

sign, and while this may be a fun exercise for them, the result may be less fun for the readers. A designer should therefore always put himself in the reader's place, and take into account that, when it comes to documents, readers often do not read the entire page from beginning to end; forms must accommodate the reader's aims and tasks, and it is the designer's mission to make these purposes clear and accessible, and to guide the user towards fulfilment of his or her aims as efficiently as possible. Designers can use graphic features in such a way that the document will stand out and differ from the norm, and this will be quickly picked up by the user and be taken as significant. Simple graphic features can be used to mark out different kinds of information.

One of the enemies of legibility is excessive line length: according to a well known empirical rule, an optimal length is between 50-70 characters or 7-10 words per line, depend-



ing on type size. Printed matter is generally read with the eye at a distance of 30-35 cm, so the size of the type should be calculated with this distance in mind. Studies have shown that down to 8 points bodysize Times New Roman type is acceptable, but the optimal size for legibility is considered to be 9-10 points bodysize: as seen in Chapter 1, however, the size of typefaces varies from type to type, so the size chosen will also depend on the typeface.

The leading is the distance between the baselines of successive lines of type. The eye cannot focus on excessively close lines so accurately that one line alone is read without the immediate surrounding area also entering the visual field: lines that are too close will therefore slow down the reading speed, because the upper and the lower line are both taken in by the eye at the same time.<sup>20</sup> A good leading can optically carry the eye from one line to the other, and give the reader more confidence and stability.

### 2.2.3 Relationship criteria

Clarity is absolutely essential with regard to the issuer or originator of the form; the perceived personality and authority of the commissioner of a document will affect how readers receive it. The identity of the issuer can be assessed in a number of ways, including the company's brand identity (logo, color coding, typefaces) or a certain tone of the communication, and any given form should always contain prominently placed contact details to give the user the possibility of choosing the channel he prefers to contact the issuer. The language spoken should feel credible for the recipient, depending on the source, and be calibrated to match the style and language to the content: linguists and sociolinguists (such as Brown & Yule, 1983; Hudson, 1996) have studied this issue for years. The tone used by financial services with long-time customers, for example, should be more personal and fa-

miliar than the one used in a speeding ticket or in an eviction notice: firms that use truly informal English for administrative documents risk losing credibility.

### 2.2.4 Content criteria

How the content in a document is organized delivers the form's purpose. The recipient should be immediately clear on what the communication is about, how relevant it is to him or her and what actions are required: content is closely linked to the design criteria, for it principally depends on the document's layout. When going through a document, we search for clarity of instructions and communication routes: are amounts clear? Are conditions clear? Do people know where to sign? This criterion becomes critical with forms which need to relate response boxes clearly to questions, and bills, which need to be very clear about amounts and dates.

## 2.3

# The visual variables

Some 'tricks' for designers to determine clarity consist in a strategic use of the so-called 'visual variables' that the graphic sign-system has at its disposal: these are finite to the graphic system, considered as a two-dimensional workspace, and not to real movement. In his book *Semiology*

*of Graphics*, the French visual theorist and cartographer Jacques Bertin (1918 - 2010) identifies eight essential visual variables relating to cartography that also inform the entire world of images: these variables are the essential tools that can be used to determine hierarchy in a document.<sup>21</sup>

### Planar dimensions

The plane's axes are the 'battlefield' on which the visual technician is operating, that can be used to determine hierarchy and grouping.

### Position

Objects arranged on the same axis, horizontally or vertically, appear to have the same hierarchical importance.

### Size

Objects of a similar size are perceived as being on the same hierarchical level: bigger, bolder items appear more important than thinner and smaller ones.

### Value

Objects that are equally bright or saturated appear to be on the same hierarchical level, while darker or less saturated ones will seem more important than the brighter or more saturated ones.

### Color

Objects with the same hue will be perceived as belonging to the same group, or as having the same hierarchical importance.

### Texture

Objects with the same texture will also be perceived as belonging to the same group, or as having the same hierarchical importance.

### Orientation

Objects facing in the same direction will be perceived as belonging together.

### Shape

All objects with the same shape are perceived as belonging to the same group.

## 2.3 Printed forms: DIN standards

In most of the world (except for North America), forms are almost exclusively printed on **DIN standard paper formats**, which are the most common sizes used for office and paper work. These sizes are matched by the **specific standardized dimensions of presses and cutting machines**, and the use of sizes outside of these standards would increase production costs.

The *Deutsches Institut für Normung* (German Institute for Standardization) is a non-profit organization founded in 1917 and based in Berlin.<sup>22</sup> In 1922 DIN published the 476 standard paper format, introduced by Doctor Walter Porstmann (1886 - 1959): this format, commonly known as the **'A' and 'B' series**, replaced numerous other paper sizes, and was later adopted by the ISO as international paper sizes 'ISO 216'.

The entire A and B series, together with the subsequently added C series (ISO 269), share

the **same aspect ratio**, namely the height to width ratio of all pages is the square root of two (1:1,4142). The unique property of this ratio is scaling: when cut or folded in half width wise, the halves also have the same aspect ratio. Each 476 DIN paper size is also one half of the area of the next size up: for example, an A4 folded in two by the long side will have the measures of an A5, an

A5 folded in two will have the measures of an A6 and so on. Moreover, the weight, and the associated postage rate, can be easily calculated by counting

the number of sheets used: since paper is usually specified in g/m<sup>2</sup>, this simplifies calculation of the mass of a document if the format and number of pages are known.<sup>23</sup>

One of the pioneers of standardization and of the use of DIN standards was the German typographer Jan Tschichold (1902 - 1974). Tschichold had fled Nazi Germany and moved

to Switzerland in 1943: he had been trained in the printing industry, and he saw in the new Abstract painting the basis for a new visual thinking.<sup>24</sup> He called this art *elementare* (elemental), *because it does not philosophize, because it is built exclusively of its own elements*.<sup>25</sup> Among his central principles, Tschichold emphasized the basic geometric forms (square and circle)

**Most forms are printed on A4 sheets of paper, and often they will need to be photocopied.**

and recommended the usage of formats used in Germany such as, precisely, the DIN standards, both relative to paper sizes and the disposition of the printed elements. He

defined elemental typography as *the creation of the logical and visual relationship between the given letters, words and text*.<sup>26</sup> He excluded any typographical ornaments, but admitted the use of printer lines (horizontal and vertical) and of the essential geometrical forms to *increase the sense of urgency*.<sup>27</sup> Tschichold showed enthusiasm for the simplicity of Nineteenth-cen-

**Fig 15.**  
The A series  
measurements.

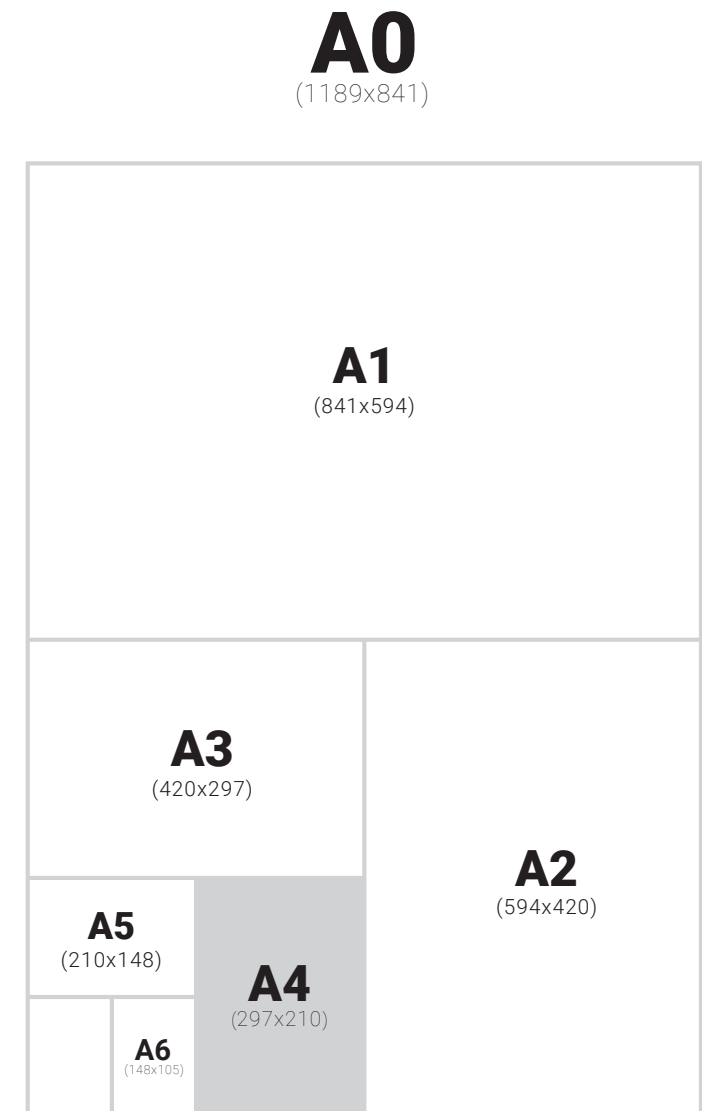
tury *grotesque* typefaces (Grotesk became the most common typeface of the New Typography and of Swiss design in general), which he chose as 'impersonal' typefaces in contrast to the use of an 'objective' means of illustration: photography. He stressed the importance of contrast, between horizontal and vertical elements, large and small type, closed and open groupings, positive and negative, color and black and white.<sup>28</sup>

Among all formats, **A4 is the most important for daily office use**, and is the most used paper size in the world: its dimensions are metric (210 x 297 mm: the values are rounded) and in addition to forms, its applications include letter paper, magazines, catalogues,

laser printer and copy machine outputs.<sup>29</sup>

**Most forms are printed on A4 sheets of paper, and often they will need to be photocopied.**

Laser printers, which ensure flexibility and are available in most offices, do not fill the whole page, as they require a certain bleed on the sides of the imaging drum, which distributes ink on the paper. It is therefore necessary to design with generous margins to avoid 'mutilating' the text and losing important data during the printing process: the bleed will depend on the printer, but usually it is advisable to consider a margin of 5 mm or more.<sup>30</sup> Some sets of forms will require to be punched with feed holes on the left side, so in some cases the left margin should be conceived for this purpose.





## 2.5 Digital forms

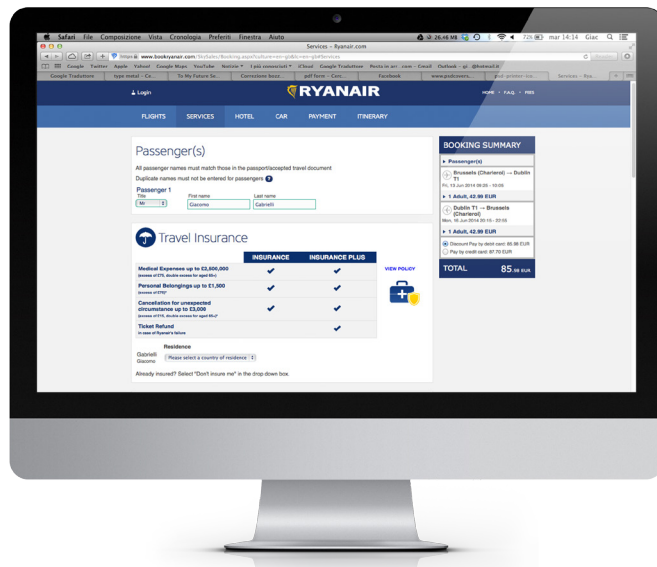
Digital forms are, without any doubt, the future of data storage, and they therefore would deserve a whole book of their own. Our main focus in this text, however, are paper-printed documents and their ergonomic-Psychological aspects, so regarding digital forms, we will stick to a few key concepts.

**PDF files** (short for 'Portable Document Format') are the meeting point between paper and the digital dimension. Their usage cycle can be entirely on screen,

or they can be printed and filled in by hand. Software makes it possible to include interactive functions in PDF files to make them easier to complete: they may for example be provided with automatic calculators, calendar and automatic filling functions. PDF files are a usually a combination of vector graphics and text (and raster graphics for photographs and other types of images), and they look the same on screen as on paper. Often forms are distributed as Word documents, but this format is quite easy to modify,

so PDF files are usually preferred.<sup>31</sup>

Digital forms are used on many websites and portals, and are an integral part of the website's interface. The advantage of this is that the way the information provided is checked real-time by the software to prevent, up to some extent, errors and misunderstandings. Digital forms are often used on websites for purchase, subscriptions, applications, questionnaires and many more functions.



**Fig 16.**

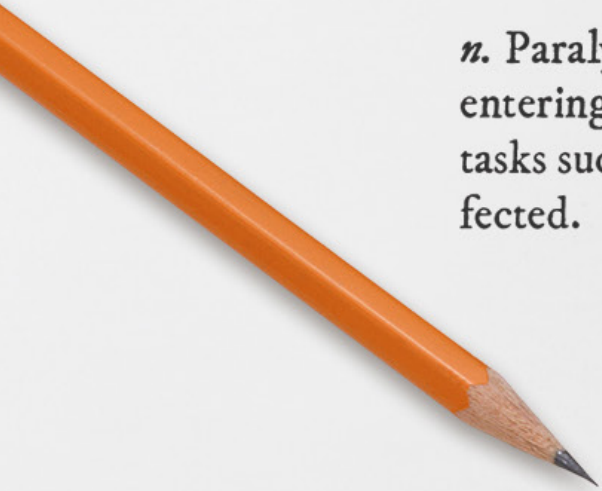
Digital forms are used by many types of web portals, for the most disparate functions.

**Fig 17.**

PDF files look the same on screen and when printed.

# formophobia

*n.* Paralyzing fear, distress, and nervousness caused by the act of entering personal information into a pre-made template. Making simple tasks such as applying for jobs, school, *etc.* almost impossible for the affected.



## 2.6

# Who we design forms for

**Forms are conceived to carry information from a point to another, and therefore several, different parties will be involved in a form's life cycle. When developing a form, a designer should therefore keep in consideration both the issuer's and the recipient's requirements, from a visual point of view, certainly, but also from the psychological angle.**

### 2.6.1 Issuers

The client (intended here as the issuer) is usually the individual, group, or institution that issues the form to collect the users' information, and is thus the first and the last agent to use the document. In general, when citing an 'issuer' we are referring to an entire institution rather than a single, distinct individual; the actual creator of the form, however, may be the head of a company or a department in a company, a secretary or an employee in charge of filing the information collected in a database. A form should therefore reflect the requirements of every aspect of the institution from which it originates: it should convey the institution's identity and policy, and it should be constructed so that the staff within its establishment can make good use of it in any moment. For example, if the issuer's storing system con-

sists in collecting the forms in ring binders, this will automatically mean that relevant information for identification (such as file numbers) should be positioned on the top/right part of the page, to allow the responsible personnel to be able to quickly skim through the documents and find what they need.

### 2.6.2 Users

**Formophobia**, also referred to as '**form anxiety**', is a non-officially listed, but medically known phobia which creates inhibitions, and generates fear and anxiety when a person is faced with having to provide personal information while filling in forms, especially the ones related to government and health-care.<sup>32</sup> Users encounter forms on two different levels, one visual and the other psychological, the visual level referring to the form's aspect

and design, and the psychological level referring to the message carried by the form and the way this message is communicated. **The psychological level of perception of a form is a central issue for its usability.** Some forms, for example death and divorce certificates, can be very hard to deal with on an emotional level: the person filling in the form may be required to provide details about a lost loved one or about a severe medical condition, a stressful experience that could cause emotional instability during his or her engagement with the document. The designer does not, of course, have the power to change the form's function or the user's past experience, but is endowed with the potential to enhance the user's comfort when the latter is obliged to interface him or her self with one of these information-gathering modules.



## 2.7 Hierarchy: the key to visual navigation

**Hierarchy**, a term that has often recurred up to this point, is by far the most important tool when planning a visual navigation. A layout that follows a hierarchic composition will naturally guide the reader's eye into understanding its structure and its functions: when it comes to forms this is an essential feature, because it will help to graphically express the organization of the text and, on a practical level, it will determine how quickly and efficiently the document will be employed (and the level of stress that this employment may cause in the user). Designers dispose of several tools to deter-

**by using in a targeted way spacing, different type weights and sizes and horizontal lines with different strokes, the page silently expresses its structure with through its 'typographical grey'**

mine a clear hierarchy in a composition: by using in a targeted way spacing, different type weights and sizes and horizontal lines with different strokes, the page silently expresses its structure with through its 'typographical grey' (the grey tone produced by black text on a white page). In this way, the more clearly designated main text, sections and the subsections enable the user to quickly skim through the document and find what he/she is looking for, and they accomplish this by expressing their role in the composition by means of their features alone, without the need for extra symbols.



**Fig 19.**

The typographic gray of a page can alone express hierarchy in the visual structure.

## 2.8

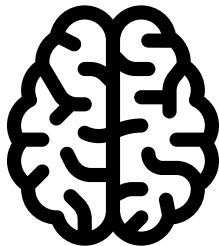
# Key cognitive concepts

In *'What makes a good document? The criteria we use'*, Rob Waller identifies four general key cognitive concepts and sixteen criteria (divided into four broad categories) that are essential to analyze the efficaciousness of a document.<sup>33</sup> The four general key cognitive concepts that Waller defines,

these being cognitive capacity, strategic reading, affordance and schemata, are the tools the human brain works with when information is encoded, and should therefore be used as guidelines when organizing data.

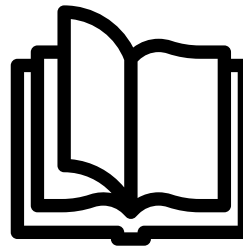
### Cognitive capacity

This refers to the limits on the amount of information that can be processed at one time by the working memory, as theorized by psychologists: the more information the user must assimilate, the more difficult it will be for his brain to process this information. For the same reason, users will read 'difficult' text at a slower pace.



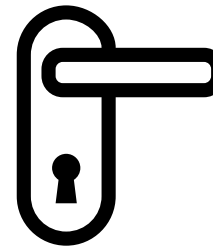
### Strategic reading

This indicates how readers select what they want to read depending on their goals. The better this selection is guided by the design of the document, the faster the user will achieve his objectives.



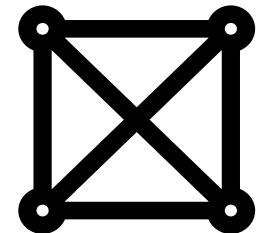
### Affordance

This is when the shape or the design of something encourages and allows certain actions. The classic example of affordance is a door's handle, which calls for the user to be held and turned in order to open or close the door.



### Schemata

Schemata are the pre-existing cognitive frameworks that our verbal understanding relies on, mainly based on experience: we expect certain things to work in a certain way. The more a person's experience expands, the more cognitive frameworks develop.



## 2.9

# The *Gestalt* laws of perceptual organization

The '**Gestalt Theory**' is a family of psychological theories formed within the Berlin School of experimental psychology in the first half of the 1920s, which have since strongly influenced many different research areas, foremost among these being visual design.<sup>34</sup>

The key concept behind *Gestalt* psychology is the attempt to understand psychological mechanisms by considering them as organized and structured wholes, rather than a sum of single parts. The German word '*Gestalt*' means 'shape', 'form', or 'figure', and it has since entered the English vocabulary with its intrinsic significance of 'whole, configuration of elements': the psychologists of the *Gestalt* School were indeed mainly interested in describing the processes by which singular ele-

ments are grouped into '*Gestalten*' by the brain during early visual perception. Their idea was that the brain works by researching efficiency with the least possible consumption of energy, and, to pursue this goal, it follows certain simplifying patterns that facilitate its cognition processes: we may thus say that the brain works in an 'ergonomic' way by trying to save time and energy, as does a computer dealing with the command to store and organize huge amounts of data. This mechanism (or principle) of optimization is very common in nature, and it can be observed, for example, in many of the functions that the body dispatches on a daily basis: our cell structure will always try to adapt, within its possibilities, to the environment, in order to save as much energy as it can.

Even though modern psychology has superseded most of the *Gestalt* school's principles, the so-called 'Laws of Perceptual Organization' remain a useful tool for designers to improve the quality and the clarity of their work.<sup>35</sup> Many of these laws are overlapping and can sound obvious and as if they simply fall back on common sense, but they are all actually very useful and should be kept in mind when planning a visual communication. The *Gestalt* laws were defined by the founder of the Berlin School, Max Wertheimer (1880-1943), along with his colleagues Wolfgang Köhler (1887-1967) and Kurt Koffka (1886-1941), who founded the '*Gestalt* approaches to Form Perception, which later translated into the so-called '*Gestalt* Laws of Perceptual Organization'.



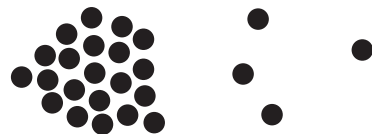
**Fig 20.**

From left to right: Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler and Kurt Koffka.

**Designers often use these principles unconsciously or on the basis of common sense, but sometimes the lack of clarity of a form depends exactly on a design lacking in common sense. Observing the *Gestalt* laws of perceptual organization is a useful first step towards clarity in form design.**

## Proximity

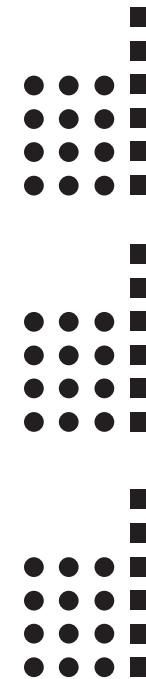
This law states that we tend to perceive objects close to each other as related and forming a group: the brain tells us that the disposition of certain objects and elements is not random, but it follows and underlying logic, a pattern. Individual elements tend to be associated more strongly with elements nearby than with others that are further away.



## Similarity

Elements will be perceptually associated if they share common features and are similar to each other: the viewer will tend to more strongly associate objects when they share basic visual characteristics rather than if they show dimensional differences. Similarity is the criterion according to which we mentally categorize items in a composition; in design, similarity can be used to create a hierarchy of meaning in the layout of a page, so as to draw the user's attention to certain patterns, with titles, headers and body text, by using variables such as size, color and shape. Drop-down menus in websites apply this rule, in which the main areas of interest are presented as top-level navigation categories

and, when clicked on, the subcategories are displayed. This is a very efficient way to display hierarchical navigation links that are easy to understand and to use. Similarity should, however, be used conscientiously: if the design elements are indeed too similar to one another, it could be difficult for the viewer to recognize the structure of the composition. In laying out a form on a web page, for example, it is important to clearly separate the blocks of information and to group item description fields separately from name and address fields (like in a shopping cart interface), so that the user will easily manage to identify the information groups.



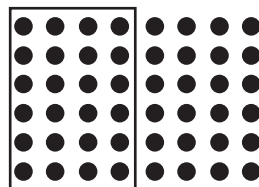


## Closure

We perceptually tend to close up or complete objects that are incompletely designated. At the same time, elements that are enclosed in a single space are perceived as a coherent whole. The law of closure actually has two applicative significances. Firstly, it is intended as the ability of our brain to 'fill in the blanks' in incomplete objects (a good example is the panda in the WWF logo that is represented only by the black spots, but which is clearly recognizable, indeed, as a panda): this is a consequence of our cognitive ability to complete what is incomplete, in the same way that we recognize a person's face even if it is partially obscured. Secondly, closure is intended as our perception of elements that are enclosed in a single space, as a coherent whole: therefore, items that are inside an area with clear boundaries will be

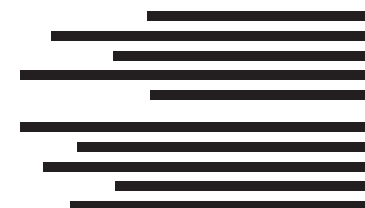
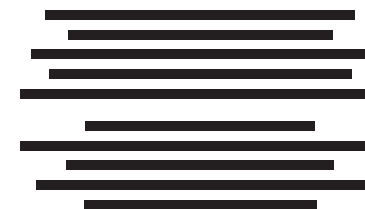
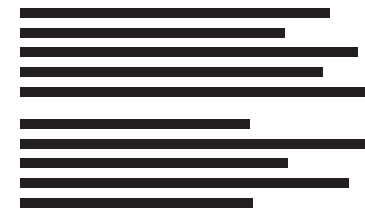


perceived as belonging to a distinct group. Closure should be used with common sense, and it increases in efficiency if combined with the law of proximity. An excess number of boxes, for example, may risk creating a redundant result and hence subtract value from a design. But this law can be very useful in a number of ways. For example, a dotted line can be used to create a divider in a page layout, avoiding the heaviness of a solid line, or a negative space can be utilized in logo design (as in the example of the WWF logo, or in many others, such as the FedEx logo), and can also be used to establish groupings within the page, since strongly defined boundaries create an active negative space, and if you have a clearly defined boundary in one area those adjacent to it will be defined accordingly.



## Alignment

This law can also actively help the viewer to recognize elements as a group. Two columns of left-aligned text, for instance, are much easier to recognize as separate groups than two columns of centre-aligned text. The law of alignment is particularly effective when used on a grid.



## 2.10

# How to test a form

Testing is an extremely crucial phase in any designing process.

When producing paper documents, it is very necessary to actually test them on paper, rather than only looking at them on a screen: the appearance of a document on a screen is very different than its appearance once printed. Lines and strokes, for example, will look sharper at higher resolution. The fact that documents are often reproduced on paper brings with it a series of ergonomic issues such as page flicking, binding and general navigation (the page numbering should be immediately recognizable). To

say nothing of the ergonomic issues related to forms that require hand filling.

The testing should be run **on both users and on the people responsible for the form's filing and storage**: forms should be easy to use for people, of course, but they also should be easy to store and file, and find and consult by the institutions who issue them and the people responsible for this.

**Color** is another important factor that requires forms to be tested on paper: colored forms should, as a matter of fact, also work in black

and white, since often they need to be photocopied or faxed. Certain color combinations should be avoided: it has been scientifically demonstrated that approximately one in eight men has some degree of red-green color deficiency (something more rare among women), so when using color-coding, the pattern should be reinforced with some other code, like a symbol. The European 'Accident Statement' form, analysed as a case study in the next chapter, uses blue and yellow as the two main colors: this is the only combination that is almost 100% discernible to color blind people.<sup>36</sup>

**Fig 21.**

Forms should be tested both on users and providers



**CHAPTER 3**

# **CASE STUDIES**

The following case studies all belong to the category of the so-called 'dialogue forms'.

Dialogue forms are a specific type of document conceived to create a silent dialogue between two parts, usually the provider and the user: the user is asked to provide specific information, which is later returned to the provider, who will utilize it, depending on what its function is. The information, therefore, travels from point A to point B and back again to point A, just as does a conversation between two interlocutors. It is commonly recognized that dialogue forms may cause extra stress and discomfort in the user, since they often

are obligatory in uncomfortable situations when the user is under pressure, and often need to be filled in by hand. The forms chosen for redesign have been suggested by personal experience and research, and the project, which served as a design exercise and further research tool, represents an initial attempt at the improvement of their design.

The redesign has been carried out by applying all of the principles studied during the research covered in the first two chapters.

The analysis and design processes are accompanied step by step by supporting images and details.

# MASTER APPLICATION FORM

## FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 2014-2015

**LUCA**  
SCHOOL  
OF  
ARTS

SEND PAPER APPLICATION TO:  
Campus Sint-Lukas Brussel  
LUCA School of Art  
Paleizenstraat 70  
B-1030 Brussels, Belgium  
for the attention of  
WIM AERTS

SEND ONLINE APPLICATION TO:  
wim.aerts@luca-arts.be

please tape  
photograph here

For all the requirements and the details about the application procedure, visit the website [www.sintlukas.be](http://www.sintlukas.be)

application #

## 1 Chose your master course

### 1.1 VISUAL ARTS:

major in ☐ fine arts  
☐ information design (graphic design)  
☐ social design (advertising design)  
☐ illustration / comics  
☐ photography

### AUDIOVISUAL ARTS:

major in ☐ film  
☐ animation film

## 2 Personal information

### 2.1 First Name

Family Name

Gender

☐ M ☐ F

Date of Birth

d | d | m | m | y | y | y | y

Place of Birth

Nationality

Document Type

☐ ID ☐ Passport

Document N°

### 2.2 E-mail

Phone

### 2.3 Permanent Address

Street and Street Number

Postal Code

City

Country



### 3.1

## School application

LUCA Campus Sint-Lukas Brussels is an independent art school based in the city of Brussels in Belgium. The school's official language is Dutch, but it offers several master programs in English, which are therefore open to international students. The application process, as outlined on the school's website, consists in the required the completion of forms, which must be submitted both on paper and online, and the submission of a series of documents regarding the applicant, most of which must also be submitted both physically and online (some exclusively online).

The current application process (as of 2013-2014) involves two main sets of forms: the 'Master Student Application Form', which asks the applicant for all of his basic information, and the 'Application for Master studies Using a Bachelor Degree Awarded Outside the Flemish Community', which asks again for the applicant's basic information, and upon which the

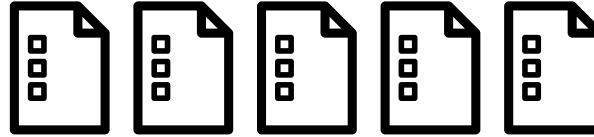
Assessment Committee will write their decision regarding the applicant.

Along with these two forms, the applicant must also submit a series of Diploma Requirements comprising an official copy of the Bachelor Diploma, a list of all the course units, and a 'full content description' of each course unit and a list of results, proof of English proficiency (Ielts or Toefl), a Curriculum Vitae, a motivation letter, a Master's project proposal, a portfolio, an example of a thesis (for example a Bachelor Degree thesis) and a copy of a document of personal identification. The requirements for the application immediately appear quite confusing and redundant. One of the main problems consists in the fact that the applicants are asked to submit the files 'in paper-form as well as digitally', but it is not clear, for example, if the portfolio and the thesis exemplar must be both printed and sent by email, a significant difference since often they consist in many pages.

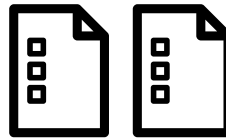
From an interview carried out with the person in charge of the International Office<sup>37</sup>, it was clear that the school authorities are well aware of the problems regarding the application process, and that in the next years this process will undergo a substantial revision. The current system is the result of the school's merging with the KU Leuven University, and thus the paperwork necessary for the application is the result of an overlap between Sint-Lukas' old form procedure and the modules adopted from the new institution. When asked about the design of the forms, the person in charge said that there had not been a general design project for them, and he himself had designed the 'Master Student Application Form' using a pre-set template from Leuven. Instead, the 'Application for Master studies Using a Bachelor Degree Awarded Outside the Flemish Community' form was created by one of the school secretaries.

**Fig 22.** (previous page)  
Hands holding the School application redesign.

# APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS



**Master Student Application Form**



**Application for Masterstudies Using a Bachelor Degree Awarded...**



**Motivation letter**



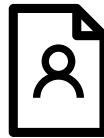
**Master project proposal**



**Diploma requirements**



**English proficiency**



**Curriculum Vitae**



**Example of previous dissertation**

<h1 style="margin: 0;">LUCA</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">CAMPUS SINT-LUKAS BRUSSEL</h2>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 100px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <p style="margin: 0;">(Please tape photograph here)</p> </div>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">MASTER'S STUDENT APPLICATION FORM</h3>	
<p><b>ACADEMIC YEAR 2</b> <span style="background-color: #cccccc; display: inline-block; width: 40px; height: 1.2em; vertical-align: middle;"></span> <b>/2</b> <span style="background-color: #cccccc; display: inline-block; width: 40px; height: 1.2em; vertical-align: middle;"></span></p> <p><i>This application should be completed in BLACK and by word processor.</i></p>	
<p><b>Instructions</b></p> <p>Complete the application form completely. Try to be accurate. If a question is not relevant answer by mentioning "not applicable" or "NA". Please <u>complete the form</u> by word processor, in English and return it in paper-form as well as digitally.</p>	
<p>This application form <u>doesn't automatically grant accessibility</u> into one of the academic master's programmes.</p>	
<p><b><u>Master's degree programmes</u></b></p> <p><i>Language</i> The official language of teaching of the master of visual arts and audiovisual arts is <u>Dutch</u>. However, for several master 'atelier' specialisations we provide an alternative English programme for theory as well as for practise related course units. If you join the programme in Dutch or English you will always have to proof your proficiency level of the used language of teaching. The levels and certificates required are described on the website.</p>	
<p><b>Required documents</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Diploma requirements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* a legalised or certified (official) copy of your diploma (check our website for the procedure)</li> <li>* a list with all course units that correspond with this degree and * a fully content description of each course unit.</li> <li>* list of results (report card)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Other requirements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* this master's application form + candidature form for the assessment commission</li> <li>* proof of English or Dutch language proficiency (proficiency levels and recognized tests: check website)</li> <li>* a curriculum vitae;</li> <li>* a letter of motivation;</li> <li>* master's project proposal: describe what type of project (+ theme) you would like to work at during your master</li> <li>* an example of a dissertation: if you made a dissertation in previous (bachelor or master) studies please submit a copy</li> <li>* Portfolio (reproduce it digitally and include dimensions and covering texts)</li> <li>* passport picture</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Return the application form and other application items to:</b></p> <p>Campus Sint-Lukas Brussel LUCA School of Art Paleizenstraat 70 B-1030 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)</p>	<p><b>Please send the <u>electronic</u> application to</b></p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:wim.aeris@luca-arts.be">wim.aeris@luca-arts.be</a></p>

*International master's student application form - page 1*

INT/017

# MASTER APPLICATION FORM

## FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 2014-2015

**LUCA**  
SCHOOL  
OF  
ARTS

SEND PAPER APPLICATION TO:

Campus Sint-Lukas Brussel  
LUCA School of Art  
Paleizenstraat 70  
B-1030 Brussels, Belgium  
for the attention of  
**WIM AERTS**

SEND ONLINE APPLICATION TO:

wim.aerts@luca-arts.be

*please tape  
photograph here*

For all the requirements and the details about the application procedure, visit the website [www.sintlukas.be](http://www.sintlukas.be)

*application #*

## 1 Chose your master course

### 1.1 VISUAL ARTS:

major in ☐ fine arts

☐ information design (graphic design)  
☐ social design (advertising design)  
☐ illustration / comics  
☐ photography

### AUDIOVISUAL ARTS:

major in ☐ film

☐ animation film

## 2 Personal information

### 2.1 First Name

Family Name

Gender

☐ M ☐ F

Date of Birth

| | | | | | | | | |

Place of Birth

Nationality

Document Type

☐ ID ☐ Passport

Document N°

### 2.2 E-mail

Phone

### 2.3 Permanent Address

Street and Street Number

Postal Code

City

Country

● ○ ○ ○ ○

Page 1 of 5

The lack of general design outlines and the fact that the modules were designed by non-professionals within the school is a good example of one of the previously identified problems: institutions usually prefer to design the forms themselves rather than hire professional designers, and this results in a lack of efficiency both on a strictly visual level, and on the level of the conception of the entire procedure. The school plans to eventually move the whole application procedure to an online dimension, which would undoubtedly be easier to access, sort, and store.

The project to redesign the Application began with the paper dimension: this appeared to be both a good exercise and possibly a useful temporary solution for the school.

The first step was an accurate analysis of the forms and their requirements, to locate all the irrelevant and redundant information and requirements.

From the procedural point of view, what seemed logical was to merge the two sets of documents into a single one called the 'Master Application Form for International Students 2014-2015' (specifying the year would make it easier to classify): this way the first pages will incorporate all of the applicant's informa-

tion, while the last will be for the School's Decision Assessment Committee to state the final decision regarding the application.

The result reduced the form procedure from two sets with a total of 7 pages (5 + 2), to a single set, for a total of 5 pages.

The redesign was completely based on hierarchies and navigation, both of which were lacking in the original forms, which utilize an excessively wide range of different weights and sizes of text (i.e., bold, italic and regular, without clear criteria), are overloaded with lines and boxes and do not clearly communicate the immediate priorities.

The new forms proposed use the font Lato, a sans serif typeface, set in bold at 19 point bodysize for the titles, bold at 13 point bodysize for the section titles, bold at 10 point bodysize sentence case for the titles of the sub-sections, and roman at 10 point bodysize sentence case for the main text. The sections are divided by using spacing and horizontal lines, with different stroke weights as well: double lines set at 4 points strokesize for the beginning and the end of the document, single lines set at 1 points strokesize to divide the sections, lines set at 0,25 points stroke-

size under the requirements and dashed lines set at 0,25 strokesize to write on. Spacing also divides the body of the document from the navigation guide on the left, in which a colored number system indicates the numbers of the section and the sub-section. The pages are numbered with a dotted system similar to those used on websites, which allows the user to continuously keep track of the order of the pages and of their total number, and of his/her progress in the application procedure.

The first page of the old form required the user to tape his picture (but not to write his name!), and was mainly concerned to list the documents required for the application: this information is of course useful, but a link to the school's website with an online list could be just as effective, and save space. One of the course director's complaints was also that the way the forms are now designed does not allow the school officials and professors to skim through them and immediately see the applicant's name and the master's course he is applying for. The first page of the new form therefore asks for this information immediately, followed by the applicant's contacts.

# ACCIDENT STATEMENT

Sheet 1/2

1. Date of accident	Time	2. Locality:	Place:	3. Injury(es) even if slight
		Country:		no <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/>

4. Material damage

other than to vehicles A and B ☐ objects other than vehicles ☐

no ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ yes ☐

5. Witnesses: names, addresses, tel.: .....

## VEHICLE A

6. Insured/policyholder (see insurance certificate)

NAME: .....

First name: .....

Address: .....

Postal code: ..... Country: .....

Tel. or E-mail: .....

7. Vehicle

MOTOR	TRAILER
Make, type	
Registration N°	Registration N°
Country of registration	Country of registration

8. Insurance company (see insurance certificate)

NAME: .....

Policy N°: .....

Green Card N°: .....

Insurance Certificate or Green Card valid from: ..... to: .....

Agency (or bureau, or broker): .....

NAME: .....

Address: .....

Country: .....

Tel. or E-mail: .....

Does the policy cover material damage to the vehicle? no ☐ yes ☐

9. Driver (see driving licence)

NAME: .....

First name: .....

Date of birth: .....

Address: .....

Country: .....

Tel. or E-mail: .....

Driving licence n°: .....

Category (A, B, ...): .....

Driving licence valid until: .....

10. Indicate the point of initial impact to vehicle A by an arrow →



11. Visible damage to vehicle A:

12. Remarks:

## 12. CIRCUMSTANCES

Put a cross in each of the relevant boxes to help explain the drawing

\* delete where appropriate

A		B
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	* parked/stopped	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	* leaving a parking place/ opening the door	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	entering a parking place	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	emerging from a car park, from private ground, from a track	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	entering a car park, private ground, a track	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 6	entering a roundabout	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	circulating a roundabout	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	striking the rear of the other vehicle while going in the same direction and in the same lane	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
<input type="checkbox"/> 9	going in the same direction but in a different lane	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	changing lanes	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
<input type="checkbox"/> 11	overtaking	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
<input type="checkbox"/> 12	turning to the right	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
<input type="checkbox"/> 13	turning to the left	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
<input type="checkbox"/> 14	reversing	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
<input type="checkbox"/> 15	encroaching on a lane reserved for circulation in the opposite direction	<input type="checkbox"/> 15
<input type="checkbox"/> 16	coming from the right (at road junctions)	<input type="checkbox"/> 16
<input type="checkbox"/> 17	had not observed a right of way sign or a red light	<input type="checkbox"/> 17
<input type="checkbox"/> 18	state number of boxes marked with a cross	<input type="checkbox"/> 18

Must be signed by BOTH drivers

Does not constitute an admission of liability, but a summary of identities and of the facts which will speed up the settlement of claims

13. Sketch of accident when impact occurred

Indicate: 1. the layout of the road - 2. by arrows the direction of the vehicles A, B - 3. their positions at the time of impact - 4. the road signs - 5. names of the streets or roads

14. My remarks:

15. Signatures of the drivers

## VEHICLE B

6. Insured/policyholder (see insurance certificate)

NAME: .....

First name: .....

Address: .....

Postal code: ..... Country: .....

Tel. or E-mail: .....

7. Vehicle

MOTOR	TRAILER
Make, type	
Registration N°	Registration N°
Country of registration	Country of registration

8. Insurance company (see insurance certificate)

NAME: .....

Policy N°: .....

Green Card N°: .....

Insurance Certificate or Green Card valid from: ..... to: .....

Agency (or bureau, or broker): .....

NAME: .....

Address: .....

Country: .....

Tel. or E-mail: .....

Does the policy cover material damage to the vehicle? no ☐ yes ☐

9. Driver (see driving licence)

NAME: .....

First name: .....

Date of birth: .....

Address: .....

Country: .....

Tel. or E-mail: .....

Driving licence n°: .....

Category (A, B, ...): .....

Driving licence valid until: .....

10. Indicate the point of initial impact to vehicle B by an arrow →



11. Visible damage to vehicle B:

12. Remarks:

15. Signatures of the drivers



## 3.2

# Accident statement

Anyone with a driving license sooner or later may have to deal with the 'Accident Statement' form. This unique document serves as a 'friendly' statement between drivers, and is used by insurance companies to quickly help resolve controversies regarding car accidents.

The form is essentially divided in three parts: one part for each driver to individually fill in with his personal details and the details regarding his vehicle (on the left and on the right), and one part in the centre that must be completed with the details regarding the accident, such as the time and specific location, the contact information of eventual witnesses, and the dynamics of the event. A portion of the form, that at the bottom centre, is a blank space in which the users are meant to sketch the road layout and the position of the vehicles, to help in explaining the dynamics: this space pushes beyond the central section, overlapping the colored parts on the sides. Above the drawing space there is a list of actions, and the driver responsible for a specific action is supposed to check the relative checkbox (and, at the end, calculate the number of boxes he has checked), to give a nar-

rative explanation of the accident. Each copy of the form traces everything written on it onto a second form beneath it, so each driver can have his own copy to send to his respective insurance company.

The division in thirds and the horizontal parallelism of the requirements has a specific purpose: through this means each driver is easily able to keep an eye on the information being written by the other driver, in order to avoid fraud and to ensure a maximum clarity and transparency. The main problem with this form is that the sequence of the filling-in actions required is not immediately clear, and this may cause a certain discomfort for a person using it for the first time, given as well the probably altered mental state which he or she may be experiencing after a car accident. In the original form, the users must fill in the white parts, which refer to the accident and its circumstances; the system in its entirety is quite efficient, but the feeling has been that it needed a clearer distinction between the sections, and a unified style of navigation. In fact, the form as it appears is somewhat confusing: the fields with the details about the

time, place and witnesses, from points 1 to 5, are clustered at the top of the page (occupying its whole length), each one in its own frame and numbered with white numbers in blue boxes: the narrative jumps over to the blue and the yellow sections (one per driver), with the numbering being black on light blue in closed frames, and then again to the white part in the centre, where the numbering is yet again different (black on white for point 12, black on blue for points 13 and 14). The whole structure is overloaded with different styles and elements, and shows an excess of linear elements.

The redesign is aimed, in the first place, at reducing the confusing disposition of the elements in the original form: the division in thirds has been maintained, but the left and the right areas are now reserved exclusively for the driver's personal info, with all the other information placed in the centre. The color coding (that could not be changed, since blue-yellow is the only combination which is almost 100% distinguishable by people with color blindness) has been made more prominent: the blank area where the accident should be sketched is wider.

**Fig 25.** (previous page)  
Hands holding the Accident Statement redesign.

**Constatazione amichevole di incidente - Denuncia di sinistro** (Art. 8 D.L. n. 357 del 1978 convertito legge n. 30 del 1977)

Se è firmato completamente dai due conducenti non produce gli effetti di cui all'art. 3 e 5 D.L. n. 357 del 1978 convertito legge n. 30 del 1977 o successive modifiche.

1. data incidente	ora	2. luogo (comune, provincia, via e numero)	3. feriti anche se lievi
4. danni materiali veicoli oltre A o B oggetti diversi dai veicoli no si		5. testimoni: cognome, nome, indirizzo, telefono (specificare se si trova al luogo dell'incidente o no)	
6. contraente/assicurato (se non coincide il conducente) Cognome Nome Codice Fiscale / Partita IVA Indirizzo (comune, provincia, via e numero) C.A.P. Stato N. Tel. e E-mail		6. contraente/assicurato (se non coincide il conducente) Cognome Nome Codice Fiscale / Partita IVA Indirizzo (comune, provincia, via e numero) C.A.P. Stato N. Tel. e E-mail	
7. veicolo A. MOTORE B. RIMORCHIO Marca, Tipo N. di targa o serie Stato di immatricolazione Stato di immatricolazione 8. compagnia d'assicurazione (se non coincide il conducente) Denominazione N. di polizza N. di Carta Verde Certificato di assicurazione o Carta Verde Valido dal al Agenzia (o ufficio o intermediario) Denominazione Indirizzo Stato N. Tel. e E-mail La polizza copre anche i danni materiali al proprio veicolo? Cognome Nome Data di nascita Codice Fiscale Indirizzo (comune, provincia, via e numero) Stato N. Tel. e E-mail Patente N. Categ. (A, B, ...) valida fino al		7. veicolo A. MOTORE B. RIMORCHIO Marca, Tipo N. di targa o serie Stato di immatricolazione Stato di immatricolazione 8. compagnia d'assicurazione (se non coincide il conducente) Denominazione N. di polizza N. di Carta Verde Certificato di assicurazione o Carta Verde Valido dal al Agenzia (o ufficio o intermediario) Denominazione Indirizzo Stato N. Tel. e E-mail La polizza copre anche i danni materiali al proprio veicolo? Cognome Nome Data di nascita Codice Fiscale Indirizzo (comune, provincia, via e numero) Stato N. Tel. e E-mail Patente N. Categ. (A, B, ...) valida fino al	
10. indicare con una freccia (A) il punto d'urto iniziale del veicolo A		10. indicare con una freccia (B) il punto d'urto iniziale del veicolo B	
11. danni visibili al veicolo A		11. danni visibili al veicolo B	
14. osservazioni		14. osservazioni	
15. firma del conducente A		15. firma del conducente B	

La denuncia non deve essere modificata dopo la firma e la separazione degli esemplari.

Federe a tempo la denuncia all'Assicuratore

Fig 26.

Front page of the original European 'Accident Statement' form (italian version).

**ACCIDENT STATEMENT**

▼ start here

<b>Vehicle A</b> 6. Insured/policyholder Given name Family name Address (street, postal code, city, country) Phone number or e-mail address 7. Insurance company Company name Policy number Valid from to Agency E-mail address or phone number 8. Driver A Given name Family name Date of birth Address (street, postal code, city, country) Driving license number Driving license category (A, B, ...) Driving license valid until E-mail address or phone number 9. Vehicle A Model, type Registration number Country of registration	<b>1 Time and place</b> Date of the accident Time Country Place <b>2 Material damage</b> To vehicles other than A and B To objects other than A and B <b>3 Witnesses</b> <b>4 Circumstances</b> Mark your choice with a cross (X) in each of the relevant boxes to help explain the accident. Delete by crossing out the option when necessary. <b>VEHICLE A</b> <b>VEHICLE B</b> 1 Parked/stopped 2 Leaving a parking place/opening the door 3 Entering a parking place 4 Emerging from a car park, from private ground, from a track 5 Entering a car park, a private ground, a track 6 Entering a roundabout 7 Circulating a roundabout 8 Striking the rear of the other vehicle while going in the same direction and on the same lane 9 Going in the same direction but in a different lane 10 Changing lanes 11 Overtaking 12 Turning to the right 13 Turning to the left 14 Reversing 15 Encroaching on a lane reserved for circulation in the opposite direction 16 Coming from the right (at road junctions) 17 Had not observed a right of way sign or a red light Write in the number of boxes marked with a cross by each driver	<b>Vehicle B</b> 6. Insured/policyholder Given name Family name Address (street, postal code, city, country) Phone number or e-mail address 7. Insurance company Company name Policy number Valid from to Agency E-mail address or phone number 8. Driver B Given name Family name Date of birth Address (street, postal code, city, country) Driving license number Driving license category (A, B, ...) Driving license valid until E-mail address or phone number 9. Vehicle B Model, type Registration number Country of registration
--	---	--

**10 Point of impact to vehicle A**  
Indicate the point of impact to vehicle A with an arrow or a cross.

**10 Point of impact to vehicle B**  
Indicate the point of impact to vehicle B with an arrow or a cross.

**5 Sketch of the accident**  
Draw a simple sketch in which you show: 1. Layout of the road 2. Vehicles A and B and their directions with arrows 3. Road Signs and Road Names

**11 Visible Damage to Vehicle A**

**11 Visible Damage to Vehicle B**

**12 My remarks**

**13 Signature of Driver A**

**13 Signature of Driver B**

MUST BE SIGNED BY BOTH DRIVERS  
This form does not constitute an admission of liability, but a summary of identities and the facts which will speed up the settlement of claims.

Fig 27.

Front page of the European 'Accident Statement' form redesign: front page.



This division into thirds also suggested the idea of adding an **extra function** to the form.

On the back of the page there is now a step-by-step guide to the parts that each driver should fill in, so that if one of them falls in confusion,

he can fold the third over and just follow the instructions. Often at the time when the form has to be filled out, people are very psychologically upset, having just been in an accident, and the conditions of the environment are usually ex-

tremely unfavourable (for instance it might be in the middle of a busy street, or somewhere in the dark, or when raining). Thus, any addition that can help diminish the stress of such a situation could potentially be of great help.

The figure illustrates the redesign of an accident statement form, showing three stages of the process:

- Original Form (Left):** A single-page form titled "ACCIDENT STATEMENT". It contains sections for:
  - Vehicle A:** Insured/policyholder (Name, Address, Phone, Email), Insurance company (Name, Policy number, Valid from/to, Agency, E-mail address or phone number), Driver A (Name, Family name, Date of birth, Address, Driving license number, Driving license category, Driving license valid until, E-mail address or phone number).
  - Vehicle B:** Similar fields to Vehicle A.
  - Point of impact to vehicle A/B:** Indicate the point of impact to vehicle A with an arrow or a cross.
  - Sketch of the accident:** A grid for drawing a simple sketch of the accident, including the layout of the road, vehicles A and B, and their directions with arrows. It also includes fields for "Visible Damage to Vehicle A/B", "My remarks", and "Signature of Driver A/B".
- Redesigned Form (Middle):** The same form as the original, but with a "Step by step guide - vehicle A" overlay. This guide provides instructions for filling out the form, such as "Fill in with the info of the insured person or the policyholder. If it is the same as the one that should be provided in section B." and "Read the detail about the insurance company on the insurance certificate module, which should always be inside the car.".
- Folded Form (Right):** The redesigned form with the "Step by step guide - vehicle A" overlay folded over the form, demonstrating how it can be used as a reference during the accident investigation process.

Fig 30.  
Folding process of the redesign.





# Birth certificate application

Please use black ink only. Make no erasures, whiteouts, photocopies or other alterations.  
If requested fields are unknown, please leave un-filled.

## 1 BIRTH DETAILS

1a. Given name \_\_\_\_\_

1b. Family name \_\_\_\_\_

1c. Gender ☐ male ☐ female

1d. Date of birth

1e. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 PARENT 1 DETAILS (use maiden name if mother)

2a. Given name \_\_\_\_\_

2b. Family name \_\_\_\_\_

2c. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

2d. Date of birth

## 3 PARENT 1 DETAILS (use maiden name if mother)

3a. Given name \_\_\_\_\_

3b. Family name \_\_\_\_\_

3c. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

3d. Date of birth

## 4 YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO BIRTH EVENT

☐ Self ☐ Father ☐ Mother ☐ Other(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for requirement \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

OFFICE USE ONLY

District N°

File N°

Registry N°

## 5 MAILING ADDRESS INFORMATION

5a. Given name \_\_\_\_\_

5b. Family name \_\_\_\_\_

5c. Street and street N° \_\_\_\_\_

5d. Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

5e. City \_\_\_\_\_

5f. Province \_\_\_\_\_

5g. State \_\_\_\_\_

5h. Phone \_\_\_\_\_

5i. Fax \_\_\_\_\_

5j. E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## 6 SERVICES REQUESTED

6a. ☐ Short form € 25 per certificate

6b. ☐ Long form € 30 per certificate

6c. ☐ Certified copy € 32 per document

6d. ☐ Courier service € 20

## 7 PAYMENT TYPE

7a. ☐ Cheque

Submitted by ☐ Mail ☐ In person

7b. ☐ Money order

Submitted by ☐ Mail ☐ In person

7c. ☐ Credit card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express

Submitted by ☐ Mail ☐ In person ☐ Phone/Fax

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiring date


Signature \_\_\_\_\_

7d. ☐ Cash payment


7e. Your signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Fig 31.** (previous page)  
Hands holding a Healthcare form.

<b>EMERGENCY ROOM/HOSPITAL ADMITTANCE FORM</b>															
Form to be completed by residential staff prior to bringing the individual with mental retardation to the Emergency Room or admitting the individual to the hospital.															
Date: _____	Completed by: _____ Relationship to Individual: _____														
Name: _____	Nickname/Likes to be called: _____														
DOB: _____ Soc Sec #: _____	<b>Health Insurance (Type &amp; Numbers)</b>  Primary: _____  Secondary: _____														
Address: _____															
Phone #: _____															
<p>Allergies: _____</p> <p>Living Status: Group Home _____ Family Living _____ Lives Independently _____ Other _____</p> <p>Nursing Supports Available at provider agency? (circle) Yes or No; RN and/or LPN Name: _____</p>															
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <b>Emergency Contacts</b>   <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Name (Provider Agency): _____</td> <td>Name (Family): _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phone Number: _____</td> <td>Relationship: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phone Number (After Hours): _____</td> <td>Phone Number: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>County Contact Person: _____</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phone Number: _____</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phone Number (After Hours): _____</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> </div>		Name (Provider Agency): _____	Name (Family): _____	Phone Number: _____	Relationship: _____	Phone Number (After Hours): _____	Phone Number: _____	 		County Contact Person: _____		Phone Number: _____		Phone Number (After Hours): _____	
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Phone Number (After Hours): _____	Phone Number: _____														
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Phone Number (After Hours): _____															
<table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <b>Primary Care Physician:</b> _____  <b>Phone Number:</b> _____   <b>Neurologist:</b> _____  <b>Phone Number:</b> _____   <b>Psychiatrist:</b> _____  <b>Phone Number:</b> _____                         </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <b>Reason for ER visit today:</b> _____    <b>Current Medical Problems/Diagnoses:</b> _____    <b>Level of Mental Retardation (circle one):</b>                              Mild   Moderate   Severe   Profound                         </td> </tr> </table>		<b>Primary Care Physician:</b> _____ <b>Phone Number:</b> _____  <b>Neurologist:</b> _____ <b>Phone Number:</b> _____  <b>Psychiatrist:</b> _____ <b>Phone Number:</b> _____	<b>Reason for ER visit today:</b> _____   <b>Current Medical Problems/Diagnoses:</b> _____   <b>Level of Mental Retardation (circle one):</b> Mild   Moderate   Severe   Profound												
<b>Primary Care Physician:</b> _____ <b>Phone Number:</b> _____  <b>Neurologist:</b> _____ <b>Phone Number:</b> _____  <b>Psychiatrist:</b> _____ <b>Phone Number:</b> _____	<b>Reason for ER visit today:</b> _____   <b>Current Medical Problems/Diagnoses:</b> _____   <b>Level of Mental Retardation (circle one):</b> Mild   Moderate   Severe   Profound														
<p><b>Consent Status:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CAN give own consent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CANNOT give own consent. Has a Legal Guardian.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CANNOT give own consent. Does not have a Legal Guardian. Phone Number: _____</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Has a Substitute Healthcare Decision Maker.</p>															
<p style="text-align: center;">Name: _____ Phone Number: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Medical Durable POA: _____ Phone Number: _____</p>															
<p><b>Resuscitation Status:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DNR****</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full Resuscitation</p>															
<p>If DNR, List Reason: _____ Date DNR Given: _____ By Whom: _____</p>															
<p><b>Consent for Release of Information to Provider(circle one):</b> Yes   No</p>															
<p>Date of Last Tetanus: _____ Date of Last PPD: _____ Date of Last Flu Shot: _____</p> <p>Date of Last Pneumovax: _____ Date of Hepatitis B Vaccines: _____</p>															



**Fig 32.**  
Example of 'Emergency Room Admittance' form.

 <p><b>West Jeff Plaza Location</b>          4525 Westbank Expressway          Suite A          Marrero, Louisiana 70072          (504) 349-6570          (504) 349-6575 fax</p> <p><b>TAX ID#: 20-0405536</b></p> <p><b>Office Hours:</b>          7:00 am - 6:00 pm</p> <p>• Walk-Ins Welcomed          • STAT Service Available</p>	<p><b>FAX SCHEDULING</b>  <b>Box to: 504-349-6575</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Release Films   <input type="checkbox"/> Release CD   To: _____  <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmation Report - Fax # _____</p> <p>APPOINTMENT TIME: _____ DATE: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #cccccc; padding: 5px;"><b>Same Day Service – Same Day Report</b></p> <p>PATIENT NAME: _____</p> <p>PHONE (H) _____ (W) _____ (CELL) _____</p> <p>DATE OF BIRTH: ____/____/____   SS#: _____</p> <p>INSURANCE: _____ PHONE: _____</p> <p>MEMBER #: _____ GROUP#: _____</p> <p>DIAGNOSIS: _____</p> <p>COMMENTS: _____</p> <p>AUTHORIZATION #: _____</p> <p>REFERRING PHYSICIAN SIGNATURE: _____</p>	<p><b>PHONE SCHEDULING</b>  <b>Call: 504-349-6570</b></p>
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<p><b>BUN LEVEL</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>_____CTA ABDOMINAL</td><td style="text-align: right;">74175</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA PELVIS</td><td style="text-align: right;">72191</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA AORTA/ILACS</td><td style="text-align: right;">ABD &amp; PEL – 74175/72191</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA BRAIN</td><td style="text-align: right;">70496</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA CAROTID</td><td style="text-align: right;">70498</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA CHEST</td><td style="text-align: right;">71275</td></tr> </table>	_____CTA ABDOMINAL	74175	_____CTA PELVIS	72191	_____CTA AORTA/ILACS	ABD & PEL – 74175/72191	_____CTA BRAIN	70496	_____CTA CAROTID	70498	_____CTA CHEST	71275	<p><b>CT VASCULAR STUDIES</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>_____CTA NECK</td><td style="text-align: right;">70499</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA THORAX</td><td style="text-align: right;">71275</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA RUN OFF UPPER EXTREMITY</td><td style="text-align: right;">73206</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA RUN OFF LOWER EXTREMITY</td><td style="text-align: right;">73706</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA OTHER</td><td style="text-align: right;"></td></tr> </table>	_____CTA NECK	70499	_____CTA THORAX	71275	_____CTA RUN OFF UPPER EXTREMITY	73206	_____CTA RUN OFF LOWER EXTREMITY	73706	_____CTA OTHER		<p><b>CREATININE LEVEL</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>_____CTA MAXILLOFACIAL</td><td style="text-align: right;">70487</td><td style="text-align: right;">70488</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA NECK + SOFT TISSUE</td><td style="text-align: right;">70491</td><td style="text-align: right;">70492</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA ORBITS</td><td style="text-align: right;">70481</td><td style="text-align: right;">70482</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA SINUS/PARANASAL</td><td style="text-align: right;">70467</td><td style="text-align: right;">70468</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA TEMPORAL BONE (IAC)</td><td style="text-align: right;">70491</td><td style="text-align: right;">70493</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA THORACIC SPINE</td><td style="text-align: right;">72129</td><td style="text-align: right;">72130</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA UPPER EXTREMITY</td><td style="text-align: right;">73201</td><td style="text-align: right;">73200</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA UROGRAM PROTOCOL</td><td style="text-align: right;">ABD &amp; PEL w/w</td><td style="text-align: right;">74175</td></tr> <tr><td>_____CTA OTHER (specify)</td><td style="text-align: right;"></td><td style="text-align: right;"></td></tr> </table>	_____CTA MAXILLOFACIAL	70487	70488	_____CTA NECK + SOFT TISSUE	70491	70492	_____CTA ORBITS	70481	70482	_____CTA SINUS/PARANASAL	70467	70468	_____CTA TEMPORAL BONE (IAC)	70491	70493	_____CTA THORACIC SPINE	72129	72130	_____CTA UPPER EXTREMITY	73201	73200	_____CTA UROGRAM PROTOCOL	ABD & PEL w/w	74175	_____CTA OTHER (specify)		
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**PATIENT'S PREVIOUS TEST FILMS ARE NECESSARY FOR COMPARISON TO GET THE MOST ACCURATE RESULTS.**

**Fig 33.**  
Example of heart test appointment form.

[illegible]

**Fig 34.**  
Example of 'Health Insurance claim' form.



### 3.3

## Healthcare

Health care related forms can sometimes be very difficult to be dealt with, due to their unpleasant functions.

This very broad category can cover an individual's entire life span (and actually also go beyond it!) and the forms can be of various kinds: from medical records, to certificates, to prescriptions, to health questionnaires, and so on. Not all of these forms have negative functions, of course; birth certificates and hospital release forms, for example, can be very relieving to fill in. But many of the forms used for health care issues do, indeed, bear the burden

of extremely unpleasant occurrences, along with a design that is often boring, cold and banal: treatment approvals, death statements, burial dispositions are only some of the many documents of this sort that people have to go through during their lives.

The idea for this part of the project, which is still being developed, is to collect a certain number of this kind of documents and design a series of health care related forms with different functions but similar visual features. The project began by choosing some functionally 'extreme' forms, such as the aforementioned

'Certificate of Death', and an 'Application for disposition of human remains'; these particular forms may vary from country to country (or even from state to state in the USA), so the redesigns contain the average information requested by each documents.

This series of healthcare documents will become broader; the other redesigns are a 'Cardiac Arrest Registry' (the machine-readable document that the medical personnel has to fill in after treating a patient struck by cardiac arrest) and a 'Birth Certificate Application', but there are indeed many more to work on.

MAIL OR COUNTER APPLICATION FOR AN  
AUTHENTICATED MICHIGAN DEATH RECORD

www.michigan.gov/mdch

STATE FILE NUMBER (If Known)

INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHENTICATED CERTIFICATES		
Authenticated (exemplified or containing an Apostille) records are typically required by foreign governments for an adoption, work visas, marriage in a foreign country, or establishing residency. You must specify which country requires the document. The processing of an authenticated certificate takes approximately 3 to 4 weeks after receipt in the Vital Records office. Please allow additional time for mailing and our Department's receipt of your payment.		
APPLICANT (PERSON REQUESTING RECORD) PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY AND LEGIBLY		DATE:
Applicant's Name:		
Address:		City/State/Zip:
K APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: Must be signed in order to process		K (Sign Here)
Daytime Phone: ( )		Home Phone: ( )
K Please specify which FOREIGN COUNTRY requires the document (Cannot be U.S.)		
REQUESTED DEATH INFORMATION	IF THE EXACT DATE OF DEATH IS UNKNOWN: Please indicate the year you want searched. If the record is not found in that year's files, we will search the files for the year before and the year after. If you want additional years searched, please see the payment box for additional information.	DATE OF DEATH Month Year
NAME OF DECEASED: (Name at time of death) First Middle Last		
GENDER Male Female		
PLACE OF DEATH: City County State		
PLEASE PROVIDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION (IF KNOWN) THAT WOULD HELP US LOCATE THE DEATH RECORD:		
Decedent's Date of Birth: Mo Day Year OR Decedent's Age at Death: Decedent's Place of Birth: State Country		
Decedent's Mother's Name: First Middle Last		
Decedent's Father's Name: First Middle Last		
REQUESTING AN AUTHENTICATED MICHIGAN DEATH RECORD		
The Michigan Vital Records office has records of deaths that occurred in Michigan and were filed with the state since 1867. Some of the records were not filed with the state; more records are missing from the pre-1906 files. Anyone is eligible to request a copy of a Michigan death record if the application is completed and signed and the required fee is paid.		
PAYMENT - NO ORDER WILL BE PROCESSED WITHOUT PROPER FEE SUBMITTED WITH A SIGNED APPLICATION		
SEARCH FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE: Fees are established by state statute. A search fee covers the cost of the basic 3-year search and includes either one authenticated copy of the record or an official statement that the record is not filed with the state. A basic search includes the files for the year specified as the death year, as well as the year before and the year after.		
REFUNDABLE FEES: Payment for additional copies will be refunded if the search indicated that the record is not filed with the state. A refund check would be mailed to you by the Department of Treasury, usually within 3-4 weeks.		
RUSH SERVICE: Applies to processing time in Vital Records and not the Great Seal. WE CANNOT PROCESS YOUR ORDER WITHOUT PAYMENT. IF MAILING, PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER.		
PAYMENT MUST BE MADE IN U.S. FUNDS BY CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO THE STATE OF MICHIGAN		
Search (non-refundable) Includes One Authenticated Copy \$ 29.00 \$		
Additional Authenticated Copies (\$15.00 for each additional authenticated copy) \$ 15.00 \$		
EXPEDITED RUSH SERVICE (Additional) \$ 10.00 \$		
Additional Search When Exact Date is Unknown: \$29.00 fee includes a 3-year search Each additional year is \$12.00 per year		
Specify Which Additional Years to be Searched: \$ 12.00 each		
TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$		
Mail application with payment to: QUESTIONS: (517) 335-8666		
VITAL RECORDS REQUESTS PO Box 30721 Lansing MI 48909		

Fig 35.

State of Michican 'Death Record'.

mo.099

## Certificate of death



Please use black ink only. Make no erasures, whiteouts, photocopies or other alterations. If requested fields are unknown, please leave un-filled.

1 DETAILS OF THE DECEASED		2 YOUR DETAILS	
1a Given name		2a Given name	
1b Family name		2b Family name	
1c Gender <input type="checkbox"/> male <input type="checkbox"/> female		2c Full address	
1d Date of birth <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		2d Relationship to deceased	
1e If under 1 day <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		2e Date <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
1f Place of birth		2f Signature	
1g Citizenship		3 CERTIFICATION OF DEATH by certified physician or coroner	
1h Full address		I hereby certify that the foregoing particulars are correct as near as same can be ascertained and I further certify that I:	
1i Occupation		<input type="checkbox"/> Have not attended the deceased	
1j Civil status <input type="checkbox"/> never married <input type="checkbox"/> married <input type="checkbox"/> widowed <input type="checkbox"/> divorced <input type="checkbox"/> separated		<input type="checkbox"/> Have attended the deceased and the death occurred at at the date indicated above <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
1k Surviving spouse		3a Given name	
1l Name of father		3b Family name	
1m Maiden name of mother		3c Title or position	
1n Date of death <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Hour		3d Address	
1o Place of death		3e Date <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
1p Cause of death by natural causes:		3f Signature	
1q Cause of death by non-natural causes: <input type="checkbox"/> homicide <input type="checkbox"/> suicide <input type="checkbox"/> accident <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify ▼)		FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
1r other cause:		District N° <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
1s Place of death		File N° <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
1t Type of facility (if so) <input type="checkbox"/> hospital <input type="checkbox"/> clinic <input type="checkbox"/> institution <input type="checkbox"/> private <input type="checkbox"/> other		Registry N° <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
1u Name of facility		Received at the office of the civil registrar by:	
1v Address of facility		Given name	
1w Autopsy <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		Family name	
1x Corpse disposal <input type="checkbox"/> burial <input type="checkbox"/> cremation <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify ▼)		Title or position	
1y other disposal:		Date <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
		Signature	

Fig 36.

Archetypal 'Certificate of Death' form design.



**Fig 39.**  
Nova Scotia 'Birth Certificate Application'.

**Fig 40.**  
Arhetypal 'Birth Certificate Application' form design.

# End Notes

1. A census is the procedure of systematically acquiring and recording information about the members of a population: the first censuses are said to have been taken during the early Pharaonic period in Egypt in 3340 BC and in 3056 BC. One of the most famous censuses in history is the Census of Quirinius, which took place in 6/7 BC during the reign of Augustus, for the enrollment of the Roman provinces of Syria and Judaea for tax purposes. This census is often connected to the early life of Jesus Christ.
2. **Schwesinger, Borries.** 2007. *The Form Book: best practice in creating forms for printed and online use.* Germany, United Kingdom: Thames & Hudson Ltd
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4. **FormNation.** 2013. *Tax Forms.* <http://www.formnation.com/work/tax-forms/> Consulted on February 4th, 2014
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7. *Report on the Centre's first two years*, 2011. Available at <http://www.simplificationcentre.org.uk>
8. *Simple Action 1*, 2013. Available at <http://www.simplificationcentre.org.uk>
9. **Schwesinger, Borries.** 2007. *The Form Book: best practice in creating forms for printed and online use.* Germany, United Kingdom: Thames & Hudson Ltd
10. **Maeda, John.** 2006. *The Laws of Simplicity: Design, Technology, Business, Life.* USA: The MIT Press, p. 1
11. **Muller-Brockmann, Joseph.** 1981. *Grid systems in graphic design: a visual communication manual for graphic designers, typographers and three dimensional designers.* Switzerland: Verlag Niggli AG, p. 10
12. *Die Neue Typographie* was at the basis of the Swiss style's graphic notions, and it revolutionized the design of print, introducing concepts such as white space, plain letterforms and photographs, and cutting out symmetry, drawn illustration and ornament. The Belgian Henry van de Velde (1863 - 1957), credited as one of the founders of the movement, is considered a pioneer of modern design, and represented a leading figure for the practical and ideological attitudes which can be embodied in one single principle: the application of logic to every kind of design. The Swiss Style refers to a cultural phenomenon that came about in Switzerland in the 1920s and outgrew its confines in the following decades, becoming a fully-fledged international style. Switzerland's geographical, political, economical and cultural conditions made it the perfect crucible for such a unique and diversified visual current: it's central position (and neutrality) in the middle of Europe, the possibility of an open cultural confrontation with Germany (due to the common language), but also to cultural factors such as the Swiss interest in precision and craft skills and the importance that Swiss society has always given to graphic design, translated in a cultural ferment that successfully imposed its vision and ideas on the whole European artistic community for many decades to come. Among its most notable features are its continuous attempts to achieve greater clarity and readability through typography, the complete exclusion of ornament, a preference for photographic images over illustration and the use of posters. The legacy of the Swiss style is still very significant for modern graphic design, and many of its principles are considered crucial in form design, above all the use of the designer's grid.
13. **Hollis, Richard.** 2006. *Swiss Graphic Design: the Origins and Growth of an International Style.* United Kingdom: Laurence King Publishing Ltd
13. Max Bill had been a student in the Bauhaus, and had therefore probably been strongly influenced by the artistic movement *De Stijl*.
14. Le Corbusier's *Modulor*, a system of arithmetic ratios based on human dimensions, could be used to make divisions of the printed sheet, the area and the margins, and it attracted many young designers and typographers.
15. The legacy of the Bauhaus school is still incredibly influential in the world of visual arts, decades after its closure in 1933, to the point that we still speak of a 'Bauhaus style' in design, and its teaching methods and approach towards artistic disciplines are still widely accepted and applied in art schools. The active existence of the Bauhaus was, all in all, very short, totalling only 14 years, from 1919 to 1933, during which time it had to move three times (from Weimar, to Dessau, to Berlin) before closing as a result of pressure from the Nazi regime. The school was founded by architect Walter Gropius, and counted among its teachers and lecturers leading avant-garde artists of the period, e.g., Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian, Marcel Breuer and many others.

What made the Bauhaus such a revolutionary and outstanding reality was the fact that its pedagogy united an artisanal, scientific, and graphic education to the final scope of industrial production, aiming at a collective contribution that was based on craftsmanship: this approach was not very far from what had been professed by the arts and crafts movement, but it shifted that same ideology to a much more concrete and applicable level. The spirit of the school was that of a community, and Walter Gropius never hid the fact that the Bauhaus aimed to educate the students so that the entire society would benefit from it.

**Droste, Magdalena.** 1990. *Bauhaus Archiv: 1919-1933*. Germany: Benedikt Taschen Verlag GmbH

16. This statement was repeated on the school's letterhead.
17. **Muller-Brockmann, Joseph.** 1981. *Grid systems in graphic design: a visual communication manual for graphic designers, typographers and three dimensional designers*. Switzerland: Verlag Niggli AG, p. 19
18. **Warde, Beatrice.** 1955. *The Crystal Goblet: sixteen essays on typography*.
19. The Simplification Centre was founded in 2009 by the designer Rob Waller in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication of the University of Reading. The Centre became an independent organization in 2011, and operates ever since as a registered charity.
20. **Muller-Brockmann, Joseph.** 1981. *Grid systems in graphic design: a visual communication manual for graphic designers, typographers and three dimensional designers*. Switzerland: Verlag Niggli AG, p. 34
21. **Bertin, Jacques, translated by William J. Berg.** 1967-1983. *Semiology of Graphics: diagrams - networks - maps*. USA: Esri Press
22. DIN is a world leader in the development of standards and specifications, and its goal is to develop standards that have validity worldwide: the DIN standards are usually designed with primarily domestic significance or as a first step toward international status for the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) of which DIN is Germany's member body.
23. An A0 sheet has an area of 1 m<sup>2</sup>, so its weight in grams is the same as its basis weight in g/m<sup>2</sup>; a standard A4 sheet made from 80 g/m<sup>2</sup> paper weighs 5 g, as it is one 16th (four halvings) of an A0 page.
24. Jan Tschichold continuously stressed in all of his publications the importance of art to design, and stated that the New Typography's main antecedents were to be sought in Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism and Dada.
25. *De Stijl*, vol 4, n° 10, 1921
26. *Elementare Typographie*, 1925, p. 200
27. *Typographische Mitteilungen* n° 10, 1925, pp. 198, 200
28. Jan Tschichold's principles, by 1960, were at the basis of everyday practice in Switzerland, but in the 1920s they received a hostile reception by the printing trade, who referred to them as a 'Communist style'.
29. The United States, Canada and Mexico, are today the only industrialized nations in which the ISO standard paper sizes are not used. U.S. office applications use the paper formats 'Letter' (216 × 279 mm), 'Legal' (216 × 356 mm), 'Executive' (190 × 254 mm), and 'Ledger/Tabloid' (279 × 432 mm).
30. Margins or 'safe areas' are often set 6.5mm inside the trim.
31. **Schwesinger, Borries.** 2007. *The Form Book: best practice in creating forms for printed and online use*. Germany, United Kingdom: Thames & Hudson Ltd
32. The medical director of the New York Office of Mental Health, Lloyd Sederer, said, referring to Formophobia, that "Somebody may avoid or be phobic of completing their taxes because they're afraid that they'll be overwhelmed by the process, or it may be revealed they've done something that's improper and they may be afraid they owe money, so they manage it by avoidance". An inciting incident or triggering event can sometimes create a phobia, he says. For example, a stressful tax audit could lead to a phobia that lasts years.
33. **Tom DiChiara.** *Who The Health Knows: Is (Tax) 'Formophobia' A Real Thing?*  
<http://upwave.com/stress/unusual-phobias-tax-for-mophobia>
34. Available at <http://www.simplificationcentre.org.uk>
35. The *Gestalt* psychology has its roots in a number of older psychologists and philosophers, such as Ernst Mach, Christian von Ehrenfels and Oswald Külpe, and was founded in 1922 by Max Wertheimer along with colleagues Wolfgang Köhler and Kurt Koffka. Wertheimer, Köhler and Koffka founded the 'Gestalt Approaches to Form Perception', which later translated into the so-called 'Gestalt Laws of Perceptual Organization'.
36. **Falcinelli, Riccardo.** 2011. *Guardare, Pensare, Progettare: neuroscienze per il design*. Italy: Stampa Alternativa & Graffiti.
37. Color blindness (color vision deficiency, or CVD) affects approximately 1 in 12 men (8%) and 1 in 200 women in the world. The most common form of color blindness is known as red/green color blindness and most color-blind people suffer from this type. Although termed red/green color blindness, this does not mean that sufferers confuse red and green; it means they mix up all colors that have some red or green as part of the whole color. For example, a red/green color-blind person will confuse a blue and a purple because they are unable to perceive the red element of the color purple. There are several types of color blindness: protanomaly is a reduced sensitivity to red light, deuteranomaly is a reduced sensitivity to green light and is the most common form of color blindness, while tritanomaly is a reduced sensitivity to blue light, and is extremely rare. From [www.colorblindawareness.com](http://www.colorblindawareness.com)
38. The interview took place on December 10th, 2013, at LUCA Campus Sint-Lukas Brussels.



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1. Various examples of forms.  
Designed by the author.
2. Page from the H. O'Neill & Co. 1897-8  
Fall & Winter Fashion Catalogue.  
<http://olddesignshop.com/2013/10/free-vintage-ephemera-1890s-shabby-catalogue-order-form/>
3. Italian medical prescription example.  
[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:RICETTA\\_MEDICA.jpg](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:RICETTA_MEDICA.jpg)
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<https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/MasterImage/p-form.jpg>
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- 6,7. FormNation's 1040 and W9 tax forms redesign.  
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8. Comparison between Garamond and Times New Roman  
typefaces' bodysize.  
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<http://cms-1500-insurance-claim-form-filler.download-668-136001.datapicks.com>
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Vector graphic, designed by the author.
13. Herbert Bayer, Universal Typeface, 1925.  
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14. Herbert Bayer's cover for an issue of the Bauhaus magazine.  
<http://thinkingform.com/2012/04/05/thinking-herbert-bayer-04-05-1900/>
15. A serie paper sizes.  
Vector graphic, designed by the author.
16. Example of digital form. Mockup, self designed. Screenshot  
from Ryanair website.  
<http://www.ryanair.com>
17. Example of a PDF form, on screen and printed. Mockup, designed by the author.
18. Formophobia: definition, designed by the author.
19. Typographical gray in a layout.  
Vector graphic, designed by the author.
20. Portraits of Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler and Kurt Koffka.  
Vector graphics, designed by the author.
21. Detail of a doctor filling in a form.  
[http://www.silverpinedocs.com/images/slides/s\\_forms.jpg](http://www.silverpinedocs.com/images/slides/s_forms.jpg)
22. Hands holding the School application redesign. Mockup, designed by the author.
23. Page 1 of the application for international students at LUCA Campus Sint-Lukas Brussels, original set of forms (7 pages total). Author's collection.
24. Page 1 of the redesigned set of forms (5 pages total).
25. Hands holding the Accident Statement redesign. Mockup, designed by the author.
26. Front page of the original European 'Accident Statement' form (italian version).  
Author's collection.
27. Front page of the European 'Accident Statement' form redesign: front page. Designed by the author.
28. Back page of the original European 'Accident Statement' form (italian version). Author's collection.
29. Back page of the European 'Accident Statement' form redesign: front page. Designed by the author.
30. European Accident Statement form redesign, folding process.  
Designed by the author.
31. Hands holding a Healthcare form. Mockup, designed by the author.
32. Example of 'Emergency Room Admittance' form. Author's collection.
33. Example of heart test appointment form. Author's collection.
34. Example of 'Health Insurance claim' form. Author's collection.
35. State of Michican 'Death Record'. Author's collection.
36. Archetypal 'Certificate of Death' form design. Designed by the author.
37. State of California 'Application and permit for disposition of human remains'. Author's collection.
38. Archetypal 'Application for disposition of human remains' form design. Designed by the author.
39. Nova Scotia 'Birth Certificate Application'. Author's collection.
40. Archetypal 'Birth Certificate Application' form design. Designed by the author.

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