

Live Simple: The A2 Green Guide and print materials for U of M housing.

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It really bothers me when I walk through my house to find lights left turned on or things plugged in that are not being used. I never really noticed these things, but after a couple of classes on the topic of the environment the ideas of sustainability and environmentally friendly living started to make an impact on me. I started to think more about the effect I was having on the world around me. Shortly after these classes I would be the one going around my house and flipping off light switches, unplugging unused items and making sure the recyclables got to the curb. I realized that it was time for my generation as a whole to start taking notice of these small things that can have a huge effect on our environment. I had always heard people talking about global warming and living more sustainably but it had always been white noise to me. I can't pinpoint the time when I thought "I need to do something about this," but my guess is it happened over a period of time when I was making sure my roommates turned off their lights or recycled. I just got fed up with always doing it for them and decided I needed to do something about it.

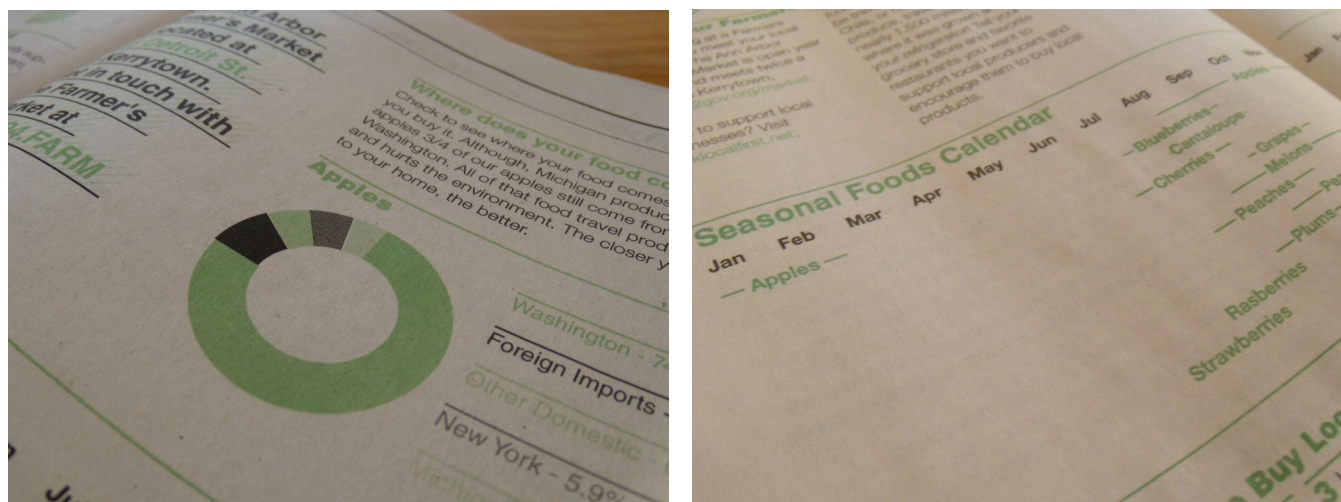
When trying to come up with ideas for my Integrative Project I drew off of all of these experiences and tried to figure out how I could help my roommates and fellow students become more environmentally responsible. How could I help remind them to recycle or use less water? After a couple of initial ideas I landed on what I wanted to do. With my Integrative Project I intend to bring awareness of climate change and sustainability to my peers. This is done through a variety of print materials focusing on environmental issues in a way that students can relate to. My hope is that these materials will make a difference in how students go about their lives and make an impact on our environment. My final pieces consist of a 24-page handbook, a brochure and a poster that all focus on sustainable living.

From the beginning I knew that I would have to craft my project in such a way that students would actually read it. In the age of online media and the immediacy of information I was apprehensive about how a little paper handbook would be able to make any significant changes. It was clear that this had to be more than a book of words. It had to be more than merely a bunch of text and some images that promote sustainable living. I would have to grab my audience's attention with humor, beautiful visuals, and a voice that they could connect with. This is the voice of a student talking to another student. It isn't a condescending voice like many books on this topic. I will tell them the information most pertinent to them. I will tell them about small things they can do everyday in their busy schedules that can help make a change for the better in our environment. The text in the handbook addresses the fact that most students reading this are renting, and that they can't always do some of the things normally mentioned when living "green" is brought up. The text makes the things to do to help our environment easy to fit into a student's daily schedule. Instead of having long arduous tasks, it instead has quick simple ones that students could do in their spare time. A book that I have used as inspiration for this is *An Inconvenient Truth*; it uses a large amount of photos and information graphics to get the point across instead of a lot of text. It takes what would normally be explained in a few paragraphs of text and boils it down to an information graphic and a short paragraph. That is what I am striving for in my handbook. I want the information to be easily accessible. However, the first part of this project was gathering the information.

When I began to gather information I realized that getting the information, organizing it, and then putting it into a book that I would then design would be a daunting task. I was fortunate that halfway through this process I brought my idea of a handbook to the city of Ann Arbor and my idea of a brochure and poster to the University of Michigan Housing Department. They were both very receptive to my idea and after a few meetings both agreed to fund my project and provide the text. Even though

they were providing the text I still had a lot of say in what the text should be. We collaborated on the topics that we thought would be most pertinent to students. These were topics that had actions that we thought students could manage. For example, transportation and getting around campus is something students do every day. We decided it would be beneficial to have a map of Ann Arbor with all the campus area bus routes. We made it an important goal to retain the voice of a student in the text. From those meetings I realized that I could direct the handbook to the larger audience of students living off campus in houses and apartments and the poster to students living in the dorms through U of M housing. From there on it was about designing the pieces. Concentrating more on the design rather than the text allowed for me to create a more visually intriguing handbook, brochure and poster.

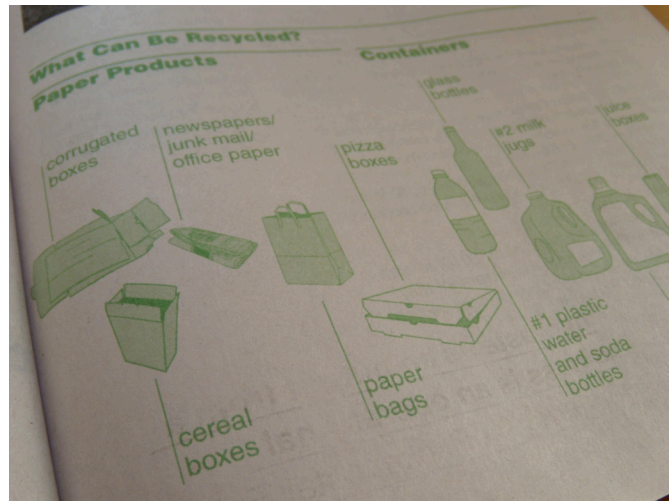
While the voice of the handbook is important I realized that the design would be equally important. I set out to have a simple system of relating the information to the reader. I use the same design on the left hand side of most spreads that shows the three to six action tips to take away from each topic. I also use illustrations to make the tips even more clear. I have images or information graphics on the right-hand spread that relate to the topic being discussed. One example of an information graphic I used was a graphic that showed the time of the year when certain produce is grown and available in this area. I used a different typeface to emphasize the main topic of the spread. I also made the main topic black instead of green like much of the other text to draw the eye to the overarching theme of each spread. All those factors ensure that the reader gets to the most important information first. The bold headings and illustrations do their job to draw the reader into the action tips second. These are the main things I hope the reader takes away from each spread. After the main topic of the spread and the action tips the rest of the information on the pages help to reinforce the main points.



// Left - An information graphic on where most apples come from. Right - An information graphic on the availability of local foods around Ann Arbor.

The topics that I chose to focus on were those I had set out to discuss with a few added topics from the city of Ann Arbor. In the handbook I discuss water and waste conservation, alternative transportation, energy efficiency, clean air, local foods, recycling, volunteering and enjoying the outdoors. I have sequenced it by how it would fit but also putting what will fit in students' lives the best first. An example of the type of information in the handbook exists in the local foods section. I have three reasons as to why you should eat local and use the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market. I also have an information graphic on the seasonal availability of local fruits and vegetables. Another information graphic illustrates where most of the food that we buy from the grocery store comes from. A student might not immediately go to the farmer's market after reading this but they might be more conscious about where their food comes from and make an effort to buy more local foods.

Another example of how this handbook is laid out and designed comes from the “Zero Waste” section. In this section I detail why the phrase “reduce, reuse, and recycle” is important. Reducing, reusing, and recycling all help to diminish your carbon footprint, which goes a long way in helping to slow climate change. For example, using refillable water bottles and taking your refillable mug to the coffee shop cuts down the amount of coffee cups and water bottles ending up in a landfill. I realized that sometimes it is confusing to know what exactly can be recycled and what cannot. To go along with the reasons to reduce, reuse and recycle, I have an information graphic on what can and cannot be recycled in Ann Arbor. There are illustrations of all the things that can be recycled like water bottles, milk jugs, glass bottles, cardboard, and pizza boxes to name a few. My handbook is set up to allow the reader to navigate through these sections with ease so that they can gather the information most pertinent to their daily lives quickly.

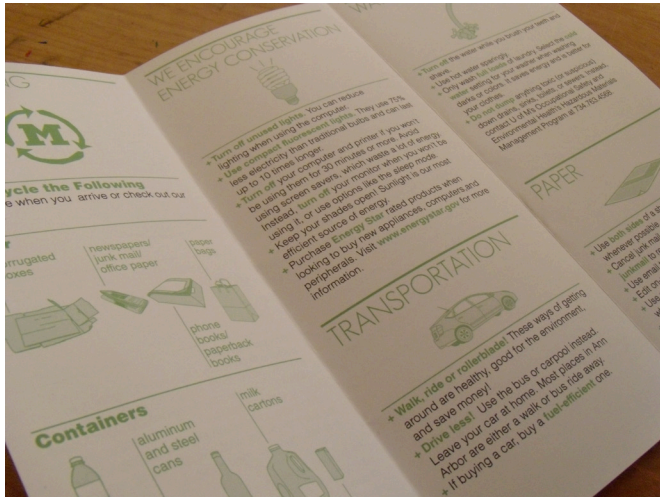


// Left - The spread discussing smart energy use. Right - An information graphic on what can be recycled in Ann Arbor.

The brochure is done largely in a similar way to the handbook but in a condensed form. The brochure is more text heavy because of the limited space. I still rely on illustrations and information graphics to accent my points but there is more accompanying text. The design is pretty straightforward. I use an illustration and a large heading on each panel of the brochure for each main topic. These topics are followed by bulleted text that tells the reader more about the topic. The only information graphic in the brochure is the one detailing what can be recycled in the dorms. While the information in the handbook is directed at students in off campus housing the information in the brochure is directed at students in the dorms. Some of the information that will shift from the handbook to the brochure are things like how recycling is run in the dorms. Students in the dorms need to know that even though they may not directly see it in their tuition whether or not they leave the lights on does have an affect on how much they pay. In off campus housing students see their energy bills while students in the dorm do not. It is important to impress upon them that using energy and water wisely still applies to them. While these two documents may be different in some ways the main points are very much in line with each other. The underlying point in all of this is to get students to not only live more sustainably but to get them to live more simply. Living more simply cuts down on everything. It cuts down on waste, water use and energy use which all cut down on your carbon footprint.


The posters that I designed will go in the dorms along with the brochure. They are a redesign of the posters that are already in place in the dorms. The posters are initiatives to get students to recycle or become aware that they can recycle in the dorms. One of the posters is smaller (8.5" x 11") and will

go in the recycling bins. It has the word "Recycle" on it spelled out with items that can be recycled. It also has an information graphic on it that says what can be recycled in the dorms. The other poster is a larger one (24" x 18") and is very similar to the smaller one. It goes into more depth about the recycling in the dorms and shows not only what can be recycled, but also where to take the recyclable materials. It also discusses special items like batteries, CDs, sharps (needles), and other electronic waste. The larger posters will be posted in the dorms throughout campus.



Residence Hall Recycling Made Easy

Separate paper and containers and place them in marked bins.
What's Recyclable:

Papers	Containers	Mixed Media and Other
 <p style="font-size: small;">Place flattened cardboard on the shelf.</p>	 <p style="font-size: small;">All glass, all metals and #1 and #2 plastics.</p>	 <p style="font-size: small;">All these products must be handled separately and placed in specially labeled containers or mailers. Look for more information in your waste/recycling closet or consult your RA.</p>
All other materials are trash.		
Questions? Want to help out? Email recycle@umich.edu or go to www.recycle.umich .		

// Left - The brochure that is going to be given to incoming freshman in the dorms. Right - The waste closet poster that will be posted throughout the dorms.

The production and distribution of these materials are just as important as the design of them. If they cannot get out to the students in a way that will catch their attention then what good are they? The plans for distributing the handbook are to get them to as many students living off campus as possible. The city and I will do this by delivering them to management companies and landlords that rent and lease to students. They will go into those management companies' move-in packets and will be in their offices. Another venue for distribution is through University buildings. Finally we hope to get them into students' mailboxes along with other mail. The brochures are much easier to distribute because students in the dorm are more of a cornered audience. Some brochures will be printed and handed out to students during orientation sessions and other festivities, which freshmen frequent. They will also be available at the office in the students' dorms. Finally the posters will be posted all around the dorms and possibly in students' rooms. For my show I would like to have 200 to 300 handbooks printed and available in a newspaper stand for people to take. I will also have the brochure and poster displayed, but the brochure and poster will be there just for show.

My hopes with these projects are that they will have a significant effect on how students move about their daily lives. The brochure and poster for incoming freshmen and others living in the dorms will hopefully leave a lasting impression as they move to off-campus housing. The handbook given to off-campus students will hopefully have a lasting effect on them when they move to another house or to another part of the world after school. I hope that my Integrative Project will be something that will make a change in this world, even if the change is a small one. If anyone who views these materials flips a light off when done with it or recycles a container instead of throwing it away, I have made a good start. Hopefully, this person continues these actions and tells friends about it. I have contemplated my role as a designer in today's society throughout this project. I think that graphic design can be used for more than pleasing aesthetics and graphic design is bigger than any one person. Finally, graphic design provides a service that can change the world or change the way a person thinks. I hope that through my Integrative Project I have provided a resource that changes the way my peers think about our environment.



// The set-up of my senior project.

Works Cited

Gore, Al. *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Rodale Books. 2006.