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Networking event

Paul Kim's Daily News Innovation Lab

4/12/17

Most of the students from my class and I attended an event today. The event was located in the Microsoft building on 42nd and 8th avenue. The topic that was discussed was determining whether or not design was ethical or unethical morally. I chose this event because it was always a question I asked myself constantly. Is design subliminal control or is it empowering and motivating?

There was many speakers in the panel from different agencies that had different fields in design. Many, if not all the panel speakers gave their opinions on the topic along with personal experiences to boost the credibility of their answer. Paula Murgia, seasoned innovator at Wunderman advertising agency had her opinion on how she believes design is a 50/ 50 game. Murgia said, "Design is in between ethical and unethical and commercial lies right in the middle." What I learned from this statement was that design can be both ethical and unethical. Design, can be whatever it needs to be, depending on the designers intent along with the designers effort to have that message communicate to the viewer. For example, If a designer designed an ad for Marlboro cigarettes, the design intent is unethical because the intent is to get the viewer to buy cigarettes which can potentially kill. However, if the designer designed an ad that can potentially save their lives such as a public service announcement to stop smoking, that is when design becomes ethical.

That leads me to the next speaker in the panel, John Carlin. Carlin also agrees with Murgia, and says that design can be ethical and unethical all together. Carlin as a app designer has encountered ethical

and unethical aspects of design. He designed an app that made it easy for youth males to play video games and watch cartoons simultaneously. This was labeled according to the New York times as a fall of civilization. This to him was a very successful application, however was unethical because it deprived social interaction. On the other hand he also had his fare share of ethical designs. He made an ad to encourage people to change their personal lives to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Last but not least Kelly Helfrich. Helfrich says she joined the design world to make ends meet but when she stuck with it because the part of design she loves is sports and youth. She loves these parts of design because they are ethical. The sports part of it builds great conversation with her husband which strengthens their bond, while the youth part of it promotes youth empowerment and motivation for the upcoming generation.

All in all I learned that design can be in an optimistic sense, ethical and can encourage, and motivate people, if that is the message the designer wants to portray. However, design can also be unethical depending on the intentions of the designer behind it.



