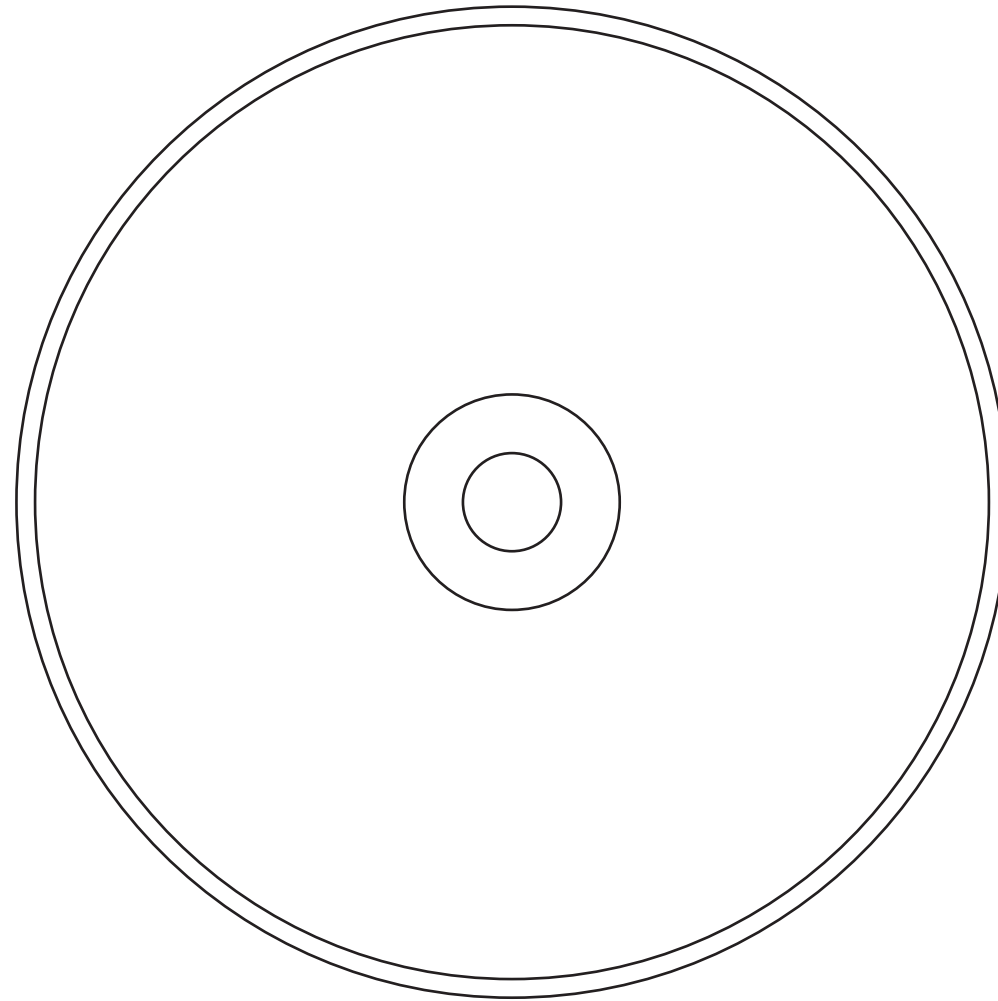


Welcome to todays blank sheet of paper



Establishing paper's position in 21st century society

Where now for paper?

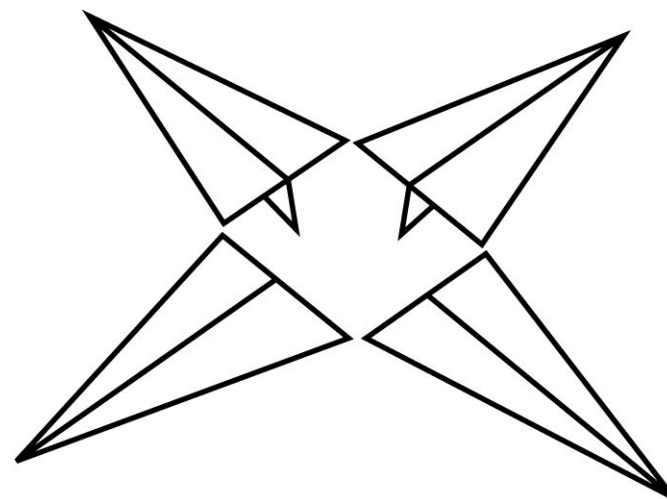
There's something we have to get out of the way first... hopefully this preliminary document is worth more than the paper it's printed on... as we ask why 'paper' is such a flat topic?

In fact, paper is back big time! And it never went away. In this document we explore various strands of thought looking at, and towards, the future and the role of paper as a commodity. It's important to note that while paper consumption is up, the big challenge for paper manufacturers now is to decommoditise the market, and enable greater charging (as in pricing polarity) by adding-value back-in. We're doing exactly that in another sector.

All of this involves giving people what they want, and this requires helping your 'boffins' to develop ideas, determine direction and deliver. We'd like to be the next people on your boffin roster... initially there will be an obvious bias on our immediate awareness and influence as a business + creative consultancy. That having been said, we ignore the stream of confetti thrown at us by paper manufacturers. Our disinterest has hardened as the majority of designers now neglect paper as print media as they have become preoccupied with software issues.

In the studio the primary concern is the quality of print from their digital printer whether it be laser, inkjet or bubble jet, and how the paper accepts it. This subtle shift in the priority of paper locally, due to IT, has a knock-on effect in their relationship with the Printers (capital P for the people that is, not the machines). The main dialogue with Printers concerns file formats or postscript matters and files are transferred remotely; no-one physically handles the job... and yet paper is a tactile medium. The choice of paper dictates the way ink interacts and the way the final product feels... but as we will see, the feel good factor of paper in an historical context is being squandered.

We used to carry intimate and private papers, write love letters and sign great treaties. Are we sacrificing the emotional content of paper in favour of its chlorine content? And more profoundly are we taking paper for granted and, therefore, removing any chance of charging a premium? Let's find out.



2. Where now for paper?
3. Papyrus to Papers'R'US
4. Stop splitting hairs, or reeds...
5. Write, wrap, wipe...
6. Paper, paper everywhere...
7. Drawing a blank
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Papyrus to Papers'R'US...

If we talk about plain paper, as in laser/copy/writing paper it's incredibly difficult to differentiate between papers of different value. The distinguishing characteristics are by definition unbrandable as they are carrier mechanisms. It is our printed messages which brand them.

So, if we take them out of their packets in the office environment and confuse them (by asking them some tricky questions - chances are they'll look blank;-) we really don't know which is which.

As tactile measures, papers and boards are described by their 'tooth' and 'snap' to name but two. The science of paper used to be a widespread concern, but the specifiers have become more concerned with the message than the medium. And the message has become obstructed by new digital and technological issues which demand a lot of attention.

We can be so busy managing IT issues that by the time we come to specify paper the time, energy or resources left are depleted and we make an 'informed decision' i.e. we do what we did before, and use what we used last time. That depletes the status and value of paper in the communications chain.

And yet:

“of all the components that can affect the quality and ultimate impact of a finished printed product, the base stock often plays the most critical role. The choice of such variables as adhesives, inks, and coatings depends in large part of the type of substrate being converted.

But when working with paper, how does one choose between the hundreds of base stocks available? Among the most important paper characteristics to be considered when choosing a substrate are paper strength, base sheet uniformity, moisture content, smoothness, gloss, ink receptivity, brilliance, whiteness, and coating type. The importance that each of those characteristics plays can vary from job to job.”

Paper characteristics: starting the job right

Edward Boyle

This extract from a 1996 article demonstrates that paper is a confusing and demanding topic from the get go. Given all of the other demands on our time, what can we say about paper that makes the time investment sufficiently rewarding.

Papyrus went the way of the Brontosaurus. It was all that reed picking and splitting, and the drying and the beating... by the time you'd finished making your papyrus chances were that you'd forgotten what it was you wanted to say... maybe that's our message?



Stop splitting hairs or reeds...

Let's look at the history of paper for a - er - page:

When people waste paper, we say 'they cut down trees for people like you...' and it's totally unnecessary. This is an extract from **Arturo Pérez Reverte's** *The Dumas Club*:

"What about the paper?"

The bookbinder listened carefully to the to the sound of the pages as he flicked them. "Excellent paper. Nothing like the cellulose they use nowadays. Do you know the average lifespan of a book printed today?"

"Sixty years. Sixty miserable years. In a century's time, almost all the contents of today's libraries will be have disappeared. But these books, printed two hundred or even five hundred years ago will remain intact..."

We have the books, and the world, that we deserve... Isn't that so?"

"Lousy books printed on lousy paper."

"That's right. Cellulose paper turns yellow and brittle as a wafer, and cracks irreparably. It just ages and dies."

"Not the case here. Rag content paper, which is as it should be. Good paper handmade from rags, it'll withstand the passage of time, and human stupidity..."

The advent of cellulose-based paper is another one of those commercially-driven decisions that belittle our history. Check out Pete Loveday's pro-Hemp rap in Plain Rapper Comix 2:

"Paper making... it's generally accepted that paper first appeared in China in the first century A.D., though of course the word 'paper' comes from papyrus, it's original forerunner. Certainly the earliest surviving true paper dates from second century China, and interestingly enough it was a re-cycled material, made mainly from hemp rags. Paper making spread slowly across Asia, first to Korea and Japan, where it was fashioned into everything from dwellings to armour. In 793 it reached Iraq and from there was adopted throughout the Islamic world, but 20 or more years earlier the Chinese had already printed a mass-produced prayer book using copper plates. Copies still exist, and the paper is 100% Hemp. Still readable too! How long do you suppose your modern paperbacks are going to last?" Anyone detect a theme here?

"So, here was a vital step forward for information storage and communication. While Europe struggled with parchment here was little incentive to challenge the Church's virtual monopoly on literacy, but in Asia even if knowledge didn't exactly become public property, it was at least possible to preserve and even expand it. The Dark Ages were a European phenomenon... the first European paper mill didn't appear in Spain until 1150, introduced by the Moors, and the second in Italy, wasn't built until 1276. Paper making only reached the uncouth shores of England in 1494, when the Middle Ages were effectively over and capitalism was beginning to erode the feudal system.

And from then until the late 19th century perhaps 75%, perhaps as much as 90% of the world's paper was made from Hemp, almost entirely recycled from threadbare fabrics, with the addition of small amounts of (also recycled) flax and later waste cotton.

Hemp was and is still the perfect plant for paper making... the fact is that Hemp is among, the world's most efficient producers of biomass. You can grow ten tons per acre in four months, or even larger crops if soil and climate are particularly good. In many parts of the world you can harvest two crops a year even from relatively poor soils. It will yield at least four times as much paper per acre than can be obtained from trees that take 20 years to grow It's the perfect crop and the perfect source of paper, the original source, and it provides a higher quality paper than can ever be obtained from wood pulp... unfortunately in 1854 an American Patent was granted for a wood pulping process."

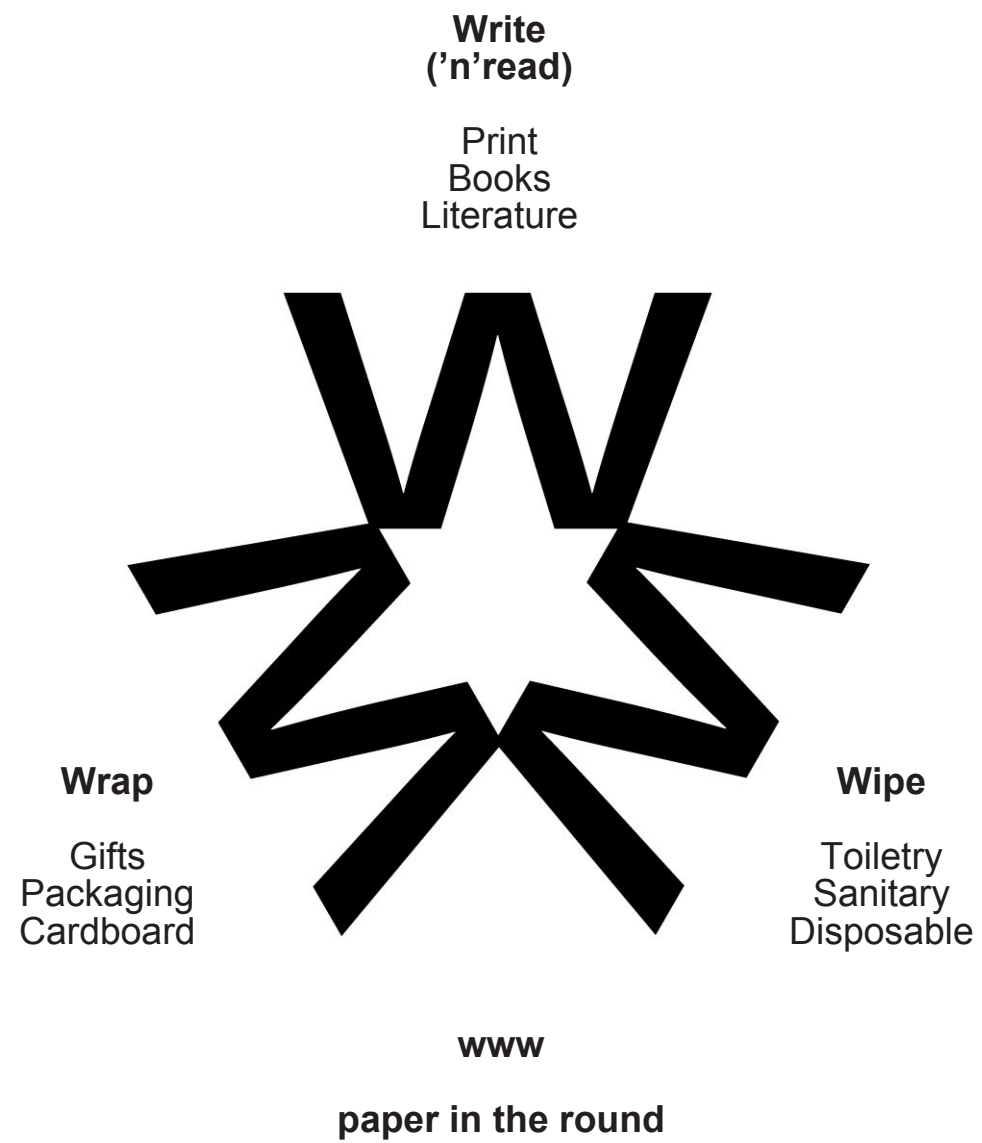
Ironically, George Washington grew Hemp... but eventually newer 'smarter' processes and products held sway... the American sway - the progressive U.S. economy. But even more ironically given the Asian origins of paper, since 1974 Europe has been creating a huge deficit in the balance of trade within India by exporting paper mill technology to them... what next, selling polystyrene blocks to Eskimos to make igloos? If that's not been done already, it was my@ idea!

Write, wrap, wipe...

A day in the life of paper... in the morning we perform our ablutions and we read the morning paper, and the cereal boxes, even the milk's in a bloody carton (Tetra Brik® or Combi Blok®). Melamine surfaces cover paper 'textures' and patterns, and yet we use paper far less imaginatively than our ancestors. In Japan paper was used to make armour, dwellings - and yes - undoubtedly origami;-)

Paper is very versatile. When people say 'I haven't got a pot to piss-in' there's no excuse, hospitals have disposable bedpans and strange genie-lamp shaped pots to -er - piss in. At this point I'll refer to pp.288-289 eco-design handbook by Alastair Fuad-Luke from Thames & Hudson, not to say just how great it is that things are going in the right direction, but also to say what an abject display of imagination. There must be, should be, loads of things that could be, should be made of paper in it's widest context. Let's get people thinking about paper as a progressive material... in fact, let's stop people taking paper for-granted.

If we adopt the sponsored design competition route, we'd do it taking a 'less is more' approach; there would be no brief, just an open invitation. The brightest people would accept by defining the venue and the event... and while some people would attend 'the opening of an envelope' our delegates would redefine and extend the envelope.



Paper, paper everywhere...

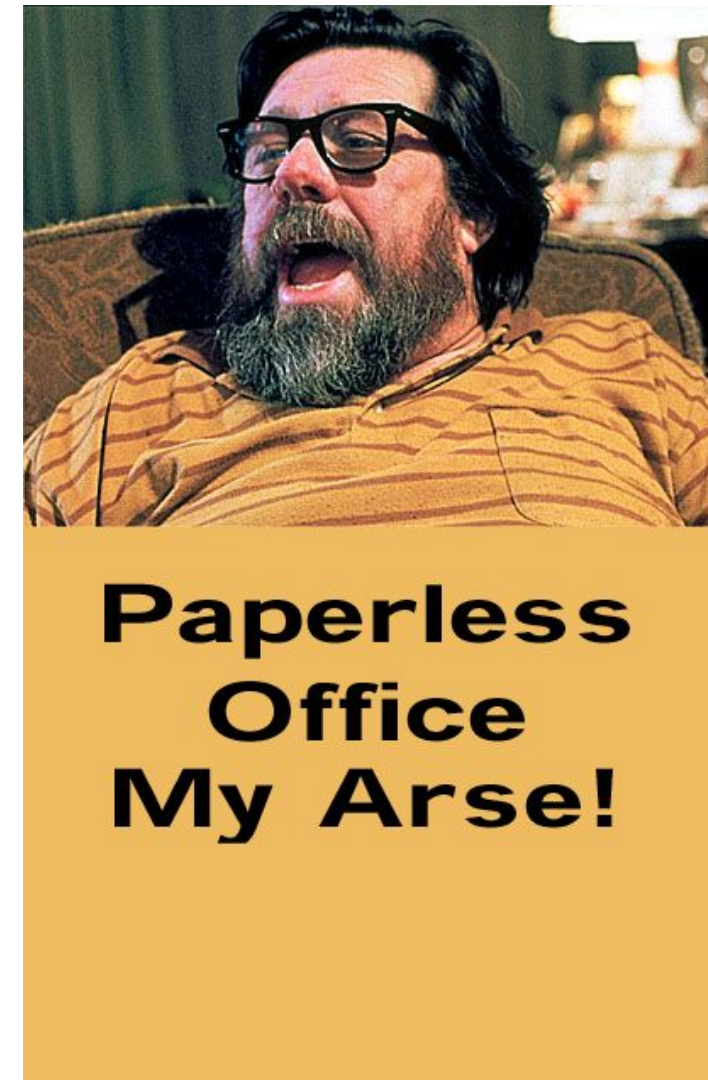
And not a drop of ink. That's not strictly true, but there is a brilliant ruse used by all computer printer makers. Subsidise the front-end cost and charge a premium for the cartridges. They may or may not use ink, but amongst your thermals and your toner cartridges and lasers, you've got bubble jet printers, and ink jet printers.

If the pen was mightier than the sword - and not overlooking the fact that you needed something to write on - we've got a whole arsenal of print mechanisms at our disposal. And we need them. Even the mighty Billy Gates admits that you have to print something out to read it; reading onscreen is a pastime only recommended by Advil, and other purveyors of headache cures.

Thanks to the advent of the internet and the explosion of middle-management, people print out more crap than ever before in human history. Middle-mangers used to run around with clipboards - now they play with clipart. The beauty of technology is that not only do you get to print the bit you want, you get blank pages which contain data invisible to the naked eye. Clearly there's more to computers than meets the eye.

Office paper specifications now read like Autotrader: White Inkjet coated 110 gsm 6-8ppm, only one owner;-) It's all about cost and speed, and that IT trump-card compatibility.

Not all printers print the same on the same media, it's like choosing Michelin or Bridgestone's when you don't know if it's going to rain in the office or not?



Drawing a blank

Technology too often dictates the pace and the format. There are reams of people who use wizards and templates. For them 'the blank sheet of paper scenario' is marketing territory, and you don't go in unless you're armed with a pre-populated 18-gauge template.

But for we bold right-brain rising creatives types the blank sheet is an invitation; we RSVP with some alacrity and energy.

... and that's the idea as per p.5 an anti-doh!-te to the demotion of paper to menial output media or carrier mechanism.

Simply say papersvp, or better still say nothing at all and see what we get...



Show me your papers...

Paper itself rarely has any identity, yet it tells us who we are, and tells our history. Paper is utterly profound and yet totally overlooked. Even lies become truths when written down on paper, because we do tend to believe everything we read.

In our lives we may never achieve Great Deeds, but we own deeds. Papers that record not only who we are but what we're worth. Bank statements are abstracts of our finances and we rely on certificates of birth, marriage, examination and upon life's final inventory, a death certificate.

You have a log book (in the US a pink slip) for your car, and James T. Kirk had his Captain's Log, but that of course was the future and no-one wrote anything down... do you think the U.S.S. Enterprise had/has/or will have a log book?

Now our identities are held on plastic and security concerns across the world suggest that we'll eventually rely on a retinal scan or an instant DNA test, but human nature dictates that we need proof outside ourselves that we are who we are. It's less 'How do you do' than 'How do you do who you are'. Is your ID paper-based or plastic-based?

Think of all the profound events, inventions and art (including music) that began with writing on a not so simple piece of paper...



Punchlines + deadlines

The Brewery is already working with Eastman Chemicals to tackle similar problems. They were in danger of becoming the forgotten supplier of bulk chemicals, and thus, at the end of the food chain, trading on price not value, offering commodities not solutions. Which is a real pity as new innovative thinking is constantly done by the boffins - and they are employed by, guess who?

So our job is to create new relationships between the thinking and innovation power hidden in Eastman and their end customer who is looking for new thinking and innovation all the time. Using their skills to provide unique solutions to problems and challenges the branded manufacturers face.

Sound familiar?

But before you ask yourself what qualifies The Brewery to initiate and implement this process, we can do better than point to our credentials, we can demonstrate that we - like sisters - are doing it for ourselves;-)

In creative circles there is an industry joke, or rather creativity is an industry joke. The poor status of creative agencies is entirely due to these communications businesses failing to communicate their value; so, when the going gets tough, it's marketing and design that are stripped from suffering corporate budgets.

In business consultancy there is an industry joke that the business consultant as someone who takes your watch, tells you the time, and then returns the work with a fee note. There is also a tendency towards dry, dessicated 80-page documents with no punchline.

Business + creative is not simply an equation; it denotes synergy and a team of people dedicated to progress rather than process. The Brewery is not an expendable service. We're a tough-minded resource weaving the two inseparable strands of business and creativity into a tough flexible framework for improved commercial performance and success, and satisfaction. Wonder why no-one thought of it before?

Because they weren't The Brewery. We don't just make observations, we provide you with opinions and place them in the context of an opportunity. This isn't about brand differentiation per se, this is also about day-to-day delivery of service levels and assistance that actually make your job easier and more enjoyable.

This preliminary document isn't the place to get touchy feely, so let's look at a few of the team's achievements across an unparalleled customer roster:

- Encouraging BT customers to make more frequent calls of greater duration.

- Creation of the UK's first real retail bank: Midland.
- Re-kindling the MINI brand for BMW.
- Making Vodafone "Live!"
- Creating the Virgin Drive Thru'

No doubt you have to consider our proposition and services in the context of your present strategy, but we would, of course, urge you to try us and see just how much talent there is on tap at The Brewery. As we hope you will have gathered, we'll move with alacrity and agility straight-to-meeting if you think it appropriate. Your preliminary points of contact are:

Julian.Ingram@thebrewery-london.com and
Glenn.Platt@thebrewery-london.com

However, any member of our team would be delighted to provide you with whatever additional information, credentials, references or assistance which you may decide applicable. Given the subject matter you may prefer to put pen to paper:

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