AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL FOR LIBRARY

This poster is designed to present the Main Library of Warsaw University of Technology’s (ML WUT) marketing and communication channels through which the public obtain information. Stake-holders are not only a target group but take part in an active creative way. Our projects’ purpose is to maintain a rewarding and effective co-operation with all involved. In the spirit of new 21st century interpersonal technology, this multi-platform is a two-way ‘street’ to both provide and gather information from users’ feedback, consistently pursuing and realising a visual-art based communicative marketing programme.

We incorporate the established learning benefits of visual and auditory stimuli with emphasis on clarity and comprehensible utility for society. For example our National Stadium exhibit was used for a permanent show at the Museum of Sport. Promotional films, an audio-content based channel, were made with the active involvement of the academic community. Our display-boards placed in urban open and internal academic spaces, comic-graphics, info-screens and a corporate visual identification system are created on the basis that people consume information via their senses. The following chosen projects from a larger collection are presented with further descriptions below.

In 2013 a nationwide photographic competition, Warsaw University of Technology Known and Unknown, was organised. Its aim was to promote a positive image of the university attracting attention to its architectural beauty, historical and cultural heritage. Communication with participating users was welcomed, and the most interesting photographs exhibited in the post-competition board display held on the perimeter fence of WUT’s main building, which achieved prizes from library sponsors. The library, which gained superb images for promotion material, also substantially contributed to the university’s marketing based on public relations.

This project’s purpose is to create a visual information system about the resources and services of ML WUT. It enables easy and faster multi-media transmission for library or near-by visitors. Screen placement was decided regarding often-used routes and where library users congregate. The main ideas refer to users’ most frequently asked questions with the library’s best promoted services. After the December 2013 launch, a survey concerned WUT’s community opinion of the new medium. Respondents were asked what Binho should show and its current presentation. Feedback helped to adopt new presentations to needs, e.g. users’ own organizations and research projects. These combined factors prove the usefulness of this communication channel at WUT.

In 2011 was the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prize awarded to Marie Skłodowska Curie for her discovery of new chemical elements: polonium and radium. This recognition was our inspiration to create a comic-strip about her life and scientific research. It was placed in the annual Student Union’s Academic Calendar 2011/2012, as an effective, practical and informative medium. Marie Skłodowska-Curie’s life-story is presented on four black-and-white pages with a graphic effect characteristic of the aesthetic of comics: expression via images, concise narrative and dialogue in speech balloons as a frame for reality. The new dynamics of this graphic design appeal to the young generation, while contributing also to the promotion of academic achievements of Polish science and ML WUT.

Organizing exhibitions is a very significant element in a library’s activity in the local community, allowing the opportunity to express its consciously created image. Each year a number of large, thematic exhibitions are presented in urban space areas or in the university, then placed as an electronic version in the Digital Library of WUT. One of our greatest successes was Forgotten Warsaw, presenting the capital immortalized in historical black- and-white photographs from our Iconographic Special Collection. It was favourably reviewed in the capital’s press with organizers interviewed across national radio and also presented at Warsaw’s International Archives Day. Feedback exemplified the scale of interest and recognition, as seen in this typical entry from the visitors’ memorial book: “Beautiful, informative and moving exhibition. It recalls the devastation and enormous changes of rebuilding and developing Warsaw. The photos of lost buildings and artefacts are very touching... The magical spell, charm and tragedy are most appropriately displayed.”

ML WUT’s internally-created Visual Identity System (VIS) is a set of rules and standards for visual communication: a logo-based, clearly-identified colour and typographic scheme as a purpose-built, recognizable library image to assist users. The aim of this specially-adapted guidance system co-ordinates unified application for the official WUT entity as a framework for its holdings and publications. The VIS consists of two related sets of information. The Brand Book describes the logo, its construction, colour and font, and also unauthorized brand modifications. In 2012 ML WUT organized a nationwide logo design competition, and the incorporation of the selected winning design became a key element of the library’s overall marketing and widespread advertising campaign. It has a refreshingly uncomplicated form, and should prove to be a timeless feature of stake-holder communication. The second set of information is the Book of Standards, with detailed rules for creating documents and examples of preferred styles and formats according to these guidelines. This now-standardised methodology was launched on the new website, in tandem with a uniform system of information plates, headed notepaper, and distinctive business cards for staff.

ML WUT can boast five promotional training-films, with English subtitles on our YouTube channel in a series Library is not a Monor. Humorously playing on the horror convention, each episode’s main character is confused student-user Symon who discovers the next step for library services thanks to mystical-like librarians, involved as actors, script-writers and production designers with the active input of WUT’s Student Theatre. Technical elements – scenes, lighting, assembling, special effects – were by the Students’ Internet Television, and the Students’ Film and Photography Club ‘Foxt’ provided five photo-shoots. All of these elements, together with the storyline and its original humorous twist, were adopted to users’ expectations and afterwards brought positive feedback from students.